BIBLE TREASURY VOLUME 9

by Unknown

A collection of articles and writings from Bible Treasury Volume 9, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

227 Chapters

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Chapter 0

Bible Treasury Volume 9

All Things Are of God: Part 1

(2 Cor. 5:18)

The coming in of Christ by incarnation laid the foundation for a new course of action between God and mankind, according to what Christ was in the glory of His person and the perfection of His ways and work. The objects too for which He came opened out in their accomplishment on earth two new centers of operation for God in grace and government; and these were at the mount of transfiguration by personal glory and righteousness, finally at the cross by His substitution for the guilty. On the mount of His transfiguration He shone resplendent in a light above the glory of the sun; and was invested with honor and majesty, when there came to Him such a voice from the excellent glory, “This is my beloved Son, hear him.” He clad Himself with righteousness, as a cloak; and stood the accredited possessor of far more than man had ever received and forfeited. How different afterward was the garden of Gethsemane, where this same man of sorrows sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground! Still more different was mount Calvary, when Jesus was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and His visage was more marred than any man's, and His form more than the sons of men. His majesty and kingly power were also denied Him, and the soldiers stripped Him and put on Him a scarlet robe, and platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him saying, “Hail king of the Jews.”

But between Himself and mankind there yet lay outside all this the fierce wrath of God against sin; and into this deep suffering and woe He passed, when, as the sacrifice offered up to God without a spot, He was the substituted One, and cried, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”

This is what these two centers were to the Lord—on the mount of His transfiguration, the voice from the cloud claimed Him as worthy to receive honor and majesty—on the mount of His crucifixion, when under the judgment of God for our sins, and the sword awoke against the man who was Jehovah's fellow, He cried with a loud voice as the forsaken One and gave up the ghost. If these two mountains, in their varied characters, were all this to Christ; what must they have been as the new centers of operation between God in His holiness and sinners in their sins, and between the throne of God's righteous government and the world? They became indeed the great turning-points of another history, and got their answer from God in the rent veil which till then had concealed Him; and in the resurrection of the second man into the heavens which received Him. The glory of the Father took Him from the cross (the place of His own victory in divine counsels and foreknowledge) and from the sepulcher, where He overcame him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and He was carried up in the cloud crowned with glory and honor. The second Man has gone from the cross to the right hand of the throne of God and become the head of a new creation; nor is there any other but this representative man in the heavens where God is. A believer in Christ must therefore look out of himself to Christ, and if he would know the present truth about himself, “this truth is in Jesus.”

It is a wonderful thing (when understood) to see bow by the cross of Christ we pass out of our old relationship and standing in Adam with the penalties and consequences of sin which rested upon us as connected with the man who fell. Death has done this. By the death of the last Adam we are forever separated from the condemnation and judgment inflicted on the first. It is as wonderful to see how through the risen and exalted Son of man we pass into our new standing of acceptance and completeness before God, and enter upon our relationships as sons of the Father, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. The ascension of Christ has done this. By His exaltation we know ourselves made the righteousness of God in Him. Again, how blessed it is to be made conscious that the Holy Ghost has come down from the Father and the Son to dwell in us as the temples of the living God, and to make true in us that which is true of us in Christ. Only thus can such verities become our most familiar thoughts, our daily bread, and source of supply to us as new creatures in Christ. We are kept in this nearness to God by a power equal to that which quickened us and set us in these relationships with our glorified Head and Lord. How else can communion and enjoyment with the Father and the Son be maintained in us against all the contradictions of the flesh, the world, and the devil, unless the fact of our new creation can be displayed to faith in Christ at the right hand of God, as well as what we are by grace as in Him? An important scripture for the establishment of the Lord's people in the truth about themselves is shown in Eph. 4: “But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth.”

The Holy Ghost, true in His operations in us, cannot therefore accept the experiences we naturally have of ourselves, as ruined and in the flesh (before we heard or learned Christ) as the ground of that work which He is come down to carry on in us, as redeemed out of the Adam state in which we were by nature. The Holy Ghost testifies of Christ to us, and witnesses that “as Christ is, so are we in this world.” He therefore judges and keeps the sentence of death upon every motion in the flesh, which if followed out would make us unlike Christ. Working mightily in the inner man, He produces in us as new creatures the affections which are suited to the Father and the Son for the fellowship into which we are called. Moreover, the Spirit of God is true in divine operation to the work of Christ at the cross, keeping the old man in us under death, which was there judicially put to death in Christ, “knowing this that our old man has been crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

The motives also which are supplied to us for practical conduct, necessarily spring from the truth between God and ourselves, as to what we are by the death and resurrection of Christ, namely, How shall we that have died to sin, live any longer therein? And again, “Know ye not that so many as have been baptized unto Christ Jesus, have been baptized unto his death?” It is important to see that Christ is the rule of the Spirit's testimony to us and work in us, both as to life and death; and that Christ must therefore be the object and rule of our faith and intercourse with God. Equally important is it to get—our hearts and consciences assured that God Himself owns none other than Christ as the ground of His present and future actings towards us. It is evident that all steadfastness and growth in a believer in Christ, as regards himself and his intercourse with God, about sin and holiness, the flesh and the Spirit, grace and righteousness, heaven and hell, depend upon the person and work of Christ, as the established and unchangeable basis of all communion

between us, as redeemed unto God, by the blood of His Son.

With a view of bringing these precious realities nearer to our souls, and ourselves more under their power, we may consider a little in detail, and perhaps in application, the blessed facts already stated. These are, that God is unalterably true to Christ and His work, that the truth about ourselves is now in Jesus and nowhere else, that the Holy Ghost both by testimony and operation in us is true to the person and work of Christ on earth and in heaven, and that we are called out in faith and in fad to be true to the truth, by learning Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life. Such are the gracious lessons which the Father's love has given us to know, as eternal realities between Himself and the children of His adopting grace. The soul that is not learning them in communion with God, under the anointing of the Spirit in the peace which passeth all understanding, must be thrown back from Christ upon self, and the bitter experiences of what the flesh is; and thus be tossed to and fro by its deficiencies one day, or the hope of attainment the next. Consequently there will be conflicts with evil and disappointment every day. Multitudes find busy occupation on this ground of self-seeking, making their being something the object instead of Christ. But building ourselves up in our most holy faith is building up one another in Christ; and to this we will now turn.

A great question upon the matter before us is, What do we understand by “as the truth is in Jesus?” One way of reply, and helpful as introductory, may be to ask what the truth was about us in Adam, by his fall. The first half of the epistle to the Romans is largely occupied with an answer to this question. Measured by the righteousness of God there was none righteous, no not one; measured by the glory of God all have sinned and come short of the glory of it. Further, “by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned.” Thus judgment came upon all men to condemnation. Besides this, as children of Adam, chapter 7 speaks of the indwelling sin and imparted corruption; and as a consequence of these actual transgressions and guilt, so that our state as under condemnation and our alienation from God by nature are summed up in these words, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?”

(To be continued)

All Things Are of God: Part 2

(2 Cor. 5:18.)

(Concluded.)

Into the midst of this ruin and misery, this scene of God's dishonor and of Satan's triumph, Jesus came to glorify the Father, to deliver man, and to destroy the works of the devil. He who alone could work redemption such as the sinner needed endured the righteous judgments of God (which else were powerless to Him) by which to deliver us. He wrought by means of the penalties which God had inflicted upon men, and so wrought by them as to put away forever the offenses and sins, on account of which they had been pronounced. Prophecy had pointed to this wonder-working Redeemer, "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Consistently with this prophecy and after all that had been foretold was accomplished, He laid His right hand upon John in the Apocalypse, 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, and have the keys of death and hell." The penalties were endured by Him who could work out deliverance by nothing else. They were employed to glorify God, to put our sins away, and to defeat Satan who held them in his power. Penalties are now gone and sin is put away by the sacrifice of Himself, and God will finally cast death and hell into the lake of fire. When nothing further remained for Christ to do, and not till then, He said, "It is finished, and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost."

It is necessary to take this survey of the work of our blessed Lord, in order to pursue our inquiry, whether God is invariably true to Christ and His work on the cross, as the only rule of His action towards us. The last act of Christ in laying down His life, and the first new action of God in raising Him up from the dead, ought never to be separated in our souls any more than the last loud cry and God's answer by the rent veil. Otherwise we separate redemption and resurrection.

But before a believer can get happily into this position as one with Christ, it is of immense moment to see that God does more than rend the veil that hid Him from the earth and shut us out from heaven.

The place and relations of God, consequent upon the finished work of His Son, are as completely changed towards us, through redemption, as they were previous to the fall, when God walked with Adam in the garden of Eden, and after it when He drove out the man. So that our question is really twofold: not merely is God true to the work of Christ on the cross and at His right hand in heaven? but will God be true to Himself and His relations to the crucified Savior in death, and to the exalted Son of man in glory? After the resurrection of the second man what place can Adam have with God? Properly this ceases to be even a matter of inquiry, since God has made it the whole subject of a new revelation to us in the gospel of His grace, "All things are become new." As truly also another history has commenced with man in the heavens, and between God the Father and His redeemed people on earth, concerning all His purposes and counsels, made yea and amen in righteous title by Him who has gone up to God. It is that same work, which has put away our sins

and by which we are saved, that has glorified God; and on account of which the Christ who did it now sits on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens. Further, and as regards ourselves and the altered relations of God towards us, having accepted the blood of Christ as the propitiation for our sins, God correspondingly takes His place upon the mercy-seat and proclaims a gospel of salvation.

Having judged our transgressions on Christ, and divine righteousness having found its answer in the death of the substitute, God takes another place at the cross, no longer as a judge, but as “the just God and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” The One who was delivered for our offenses being raised from the dead, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. The cross has thus been the place of judgment, of blood-shedding, and of death. Christ has suffered, the just one for the unjust, to bring us to God. This is what the cross is to the believer, to Christ as the victim, to God the judge of all. Death is there where Christ bowed His head and gave up the ghost. Life is beyond it where Christ now is with God, crowned with glory and honor.

Is God true to these two centers—the cross below where Christ was, and the throne above where Christ is; and does He make these the unchanging rule of His actings towards us? Let us take our stand at the cross as believers, to see our sins and iniquities on Jesus; yea all that we were as in the flesh brought under the hand of God for judgment on Christ. By means of righteous condemnation on Him, the guiltless One, all that was against us has been brought down by death into the place of ashes, where all has been consumed by the fire of God's holiness and wrath. Can God deny Himself in what He condemned and judged upon Christ and reduced to ashes under divine wrath? Can He deny Christ in His sufferings, death, and atoning blood? Nay, His own glory was wrought out here by these means, and Satan overcome. What does He say to us, and what must He do for Christ but declare, “I am he that blotteth out your transgressions as a cloud, and your iniquities as a thick cloud?” God is true to the work of Christ and to His own judgment of sin and the flesh at the cross. All has been carried down to death, and by means of death left in the silence of the grave. Christ is risen out of it, and we in Him. Nothing else has gone up. The blood is before God, sprinkled in the holiest where He dwells, and a new and living way opened which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. The blood of Christ which shuts out all fear of judgment (since it is the abiding answer to judgment) has opened the heavens to us, and we come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. This is what God is towards us.

Again, will God be equally true to Himself, to Christ, and to believers, as regards life and righteousness and glory in the risen Christ on the throne? Surely, for it is He who says, “Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,” that in the enjoyment of this oneness with Christ we might glory in the Lord. It is God who has wrought this for us. It is He who made Christ to be sin for us, that has made us to be the righteousness of God in Him, and we are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. No, there is no other rule which God accepts as the ground of His actings towards us but what He has declared Christ to be at His right hand in glory. “God who hath commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.” Moreover, “we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

The unvarying testimony of the apostles in their epistles is to establish the saints before God in Christ. Peter writes to them as “scattered strangers,” and “obedient children,” but “begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” Further, he says, “God hath raised up Christ from the dead and given him glory, that your faith and hope may be in God.” Indeed we may ask, “What could the Holy Ghost do by the apostles but glorify Christ, and in this way? Such is His present ministry, as Jesus declared of Him, “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he shall show you things to come.” The passages already quoted show as to redemption, righteousness, and resurrection, that Christ is made of God all these to us, and that we have the full effects of them in Christ, proving that God has no other ground of acting towards us. Further, as regards life, Paul writing to the Colossians addresses them as associated with Christ. “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,” and “when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Once more as respects “life,” the apostle writes to the Ephesians, “But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Nothing can be plainer than this, “that as He is, so are we in this world” Throughout John's epistles also the same blessed truth is insisted on.

Again, as to glory and the coming of the Lord, we shall find the same great fact holds good, which we have been examining as to our justification and redemption, both in life and righteousness. Indeed the coming of the Lord is the very point at which all is consummated. Then we drop forever the image of the earthy man and put on the image of the heavenly. Then we shall be presented faultless, before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Our Lord's own words are decisive: “If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.” So John affirms: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” The consideration of facts like these, between ourselves and the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, cannot fail to bring our souls under the power of that blessed hope of the Lord's coming, and our rapture into the air to meet Him, which will in truth close up all between us and the earth that is earthy. “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain [unto the coming of the Lord] shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

Lastly, another kind of proof and an equally important one may be found in the fact of the Spirit dwelling in us and the Spirit being with us as the Spirit of truth and the glorifier of Jesus. This “promise of the Father,” fulfilled at Pentecost by the descent of the Holy Ghost, is what our Lord referred to on the last day, the great day of the feast of tabernacles: “Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink:” and it is added, “This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given], because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” So also in the Galatians: “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” In either of these instances, how could such an unspeakable gift reach us as the indwelling Spirit,

were it not that God has no other ground of action towards us than the worthiness of Christ? Observe, further, how truly God acts in us upon this truth: “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” These scriptures are quoted to show that the Spirit not only testifies of Christ but dwells in us, because we are Christ's, owning us as bought with a price and working in us accordingly, that we may “glorify God in our body [and spirit which are God's].”

The title and claim over us, by sovereign grace and the Father's love, are thus complete upon all points, and founded upon the perfection of the finished work of Christ. “Sealed and indwelt by the Holy Ghost as we are, there is no room left for uncertainty, much less for misgivings and fears. On the contrary, the soul passes on into its own proper blessedness in Christ, as well as out of its own conscious wretchedness, as once connected with a body of sin and death, rejoicing in the liberty wherewith Christ has made it free. Once outside ourselves, we reach the power that has carried us out, and are free to take part with it against the flesh in ourselves that it has been against, and to use it in favor of what it has created and formed in us that is new. As was said at first, it is a wonderful thing to realize that “all things are of God,” that “old things are passed away, and all things are become new.” We are therefore among those in whom these great facts are to be manifested, by that mighty power of God, both now and hereafter.

In conclusion, it may be well to call attention to the contrast between this love of God, which is the spring and source of all the blessedness connected with our present and eternal relations, and the impotency of every existing institution and human organization, which only contemplate the improvement of man as he is and where he is: in other words, the difference between divine and human philanthropy is in question. And the difference is nothing less than this, that the kindness and love of God towards man has appeared, in that He has not spared His only begotten Son, but has given Him up for us all. By the ways and means which have occupied us in this paper, God has brought back man to Himself by nothing less than a self-sacrificing love, which gave the Son who is in His bosom.

Man can do nothing like this, even in his own circle—he has no such resources. Man has nothing better than himself and his schemes for his fellow, and is reduced therefore to confederacies, organizations, &c. These are all powerless as to conforming men even to the benevolence which has instituted them. The philanthropist cannot by these means create benevolence between man and his fellow, so that he should love his neighbor as himself, much less love God with all his heart and soul and strength. Mere institutions and their endowments do not even secure the attendance of those for whose benefit they were established, nor is it by church extension that the inhabitants of a country can be made true Christians. The best of these may perhaps embrace the idea of drawing man nearer to God, but the necessity of his being brought by substitution and sacrifice is yielded up: otherwise the scriptures and testimony to Christ would be prominent, and Christ Himself be everything.

But the love of God in sending forth His Son (the Man whom He had in reserve) has formed the way, by redemption through the blood of the slain Lamb, to make us new creatures in Christ and thus unite us by the Spirit to Himself as born of God—one in the Father and the Son. In the world's alienation from the love of God and its growing departure from truth and from light, under the delusion and sleight of Satan and of men, all things are of men. But where the light of the

knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has shined into the heart, all things are of God; who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. Old things have passed away, and all things are become new. J. E. B.

Chapter 3

Correspondence

Dear Brother,—

It is a pity that Archdeacon Perst should have entered the field with (to say no more) so little information on the points in question. Those who have provoked him, however zealous, seem to me rather ill-taught souls who, having hut a small spice of truth commonly seen among “Brethren,” are using it in ways which “Brethren” would deplore as decidedly as the Rector of Gateshead. The “The Evangelist” you have sent me is a sorry sample of Christian teaching.

But the Archdeacon, if he deemed it wise and right to censure these people at Gateshead, should not have ventured to speak of Christians elsewhere of whom he knows so little. He quotes extracts from the British and Foreign Evangelical Review, as unfounded in statement as can be, written (I presume) by an Irish Presbyterian Minister called Croskery. When a dozen or so of his charges were cited by Mr. Isaac Ashe in the Record some time ago, I gave them a distinct contradiction. Not a word more was heard of them then; one is sorry to see a respectable Christian repeating such things now. It is false that “Brethren” hide from the converted their convictions on ministry, the law, baptism, or any other truth. It is true that with the unconverted they adhere as exclusively as possible to the gospel of God's grace or His warnings for despisers. What but malice or ignorance could put an ill construction on that which is so plainly according to God?

As to the detailed charges Mr. P. makes, let me say in few words, that no brother known to me (and I know them well for nearly thirty years) holds sanctification in the sense which excludes personal and progressive holiness. We all insist on practical growth in this respect, but we also hold, what most now deny, absolute sanctification from the beginning of God's vital work in the believer. (1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thess. 2, 3.) Probably the best refutation ever written of Wesley's “Christian Perfection” came from the pen of a brother. I do not believe one person in communion with us holds the perfectionism in flesh which is here imputed to us as a whole. Next, we should put away (as we have put away) anyone for denying the duty of confessing our sins to God. Again, I have myself written an exposition of the Lord's Prayer, in which it is expressly laid down that “forgive us our sins” belongs only to those who can truly say “Father;” as it is a question of His daily government with His children, not of the unrenewed who have never found remission of their sins by faith in Jesus. The prayer was for the disciples' use, before the Holy Ghost was given; afterward they were to ask the Father in Christ's name, as we do now. As to the law, I am not surprised at the want of knowledge displayed about both the scriptures and our views. Suffice it to say here that we abhor Antinomian license as heinous iniquity, and acknowledge our unqualified obligation to obey every word of God, more especially or distinctively to have our mind, walk, and worship, framed and governed by the New Testament or apostolic scriptures. But this does not warrant the assertion of the law as the Christian rule of life. On the contrary, scripture is explicit that by “them who are under the law” the Spirit intends the Jews (Rom. 3); as we are distinctly said to be “not under the law but under grace,” where the apostle is discussing Christian walk, and not justification. (Rom. 6) But we should denounce him who would disparage the law, which is good if

a man use it lawfully: whether the Archdeacon does so may he doubted by those who will gravely compare 1 Tim. 1:9 with his use of it. Further, when he says that we exclude children, servants, and other unconverted persons from family prayer, he is confounding us with the Separatists or Walkerites, the very antipodes of “Brethren,” and is grossly deceived. So he is as to ministry: for we hold it to be a permanent and divine institution, though we deny the corruptions of it among Romanists and Anglicans as well as Dissenters. He combats a phantom; for nobody among us holds that all are teachers or preachers, or any save those whom the Lord gives and sends. At the same time Mr. P. is wrong to put ministry on the ground of common sense; for it really is a matter of faith, and, like every other Christian privilege, depends on the Holy Spirit who glorifies Christ. Again, as to baptism, it is enough to say that Mr. Perst is wholly in error in supposing that it is ever done among us as a sign of leaving a denomination for “Brethren.” We should all repudiate such an enormity with one heart and mind. Many among us baptize the children of believers; many not satisfied that christening of infants is scriptural have been baptized as an individual question (and this I have known in the English Establishment and elsewhere too). But all repudiate re-baptism. The pamphlet of which Mr. P. speaks emanates from a party opposed to us, unless I am greatly mistaken: certainly “Brethren” are in no way responsible for it. I purposely abstain from commenting on irrelevant matter; but the Archdeacon will own that I have joined issue fairly on the charges made. Ample disproof of them he will have already received in the form of tracts, &c. sent by book-post. There is but one course under such circumstances open to conscience and candor, not to speak of love.

Ever yours in Christ, W. K.

To A. M. P.

Chapter 4

On Atonement

Atonement. The mere notion of dying under the bands of wicked men destroys all the glory of the cross. We read, Christ gave Himself, offered up Himself. Here we find the holy perfectness of His own soul in a way nothing else shows. What love! What devotedness! What giving Himself up to the Father's glory! (John 10:18; 14:30, 31.) You will say, How could this glorify the Father—to give up Himself to a cruel death and wrath? Because of your sins: they made it necessary. If love was to be shown you, it must be in this way. God's holiness must be maintained—the impossibility of allowing sin. Instead of you being taken away from before Him because of your sins, they were to be taken away in atonement, as they could not be allowed, that you might be in peace and know the God of love. (Rom. 5:8.)

Chapter 5

To Correspondents

It seems right to say that Bishop Strossmayer wrote not long ago to the Français, repudiating the speech at the Vatican Council against papal infallibility attributed to him in many home as well as foreign publications. He declares that he never uttered anything derogatory to the Roman see. If one did not know the casuistry of worldly religion, this might seem decisive against the thought of such a speech from him; but it is likely that, if delivered at all, it may have been so highly seasoned by others as to afford an occasion of denying its genuineness when the dogma was passed, and the heat of opposition gone. It is hard to suppose that Bishop Strossmayer said nothing like it in the face of the general rumor.

Chapter 6

The Blind Man and Lazarus

(John 9, 11.)

Objections have been raised to these accounts on the ground of their not being mentioned by the other evangelists, and John's writing long after.

But these miracles or signs were immediately in connection with the subject the Holy Ghost employed John to treat of. One was in demonstration of His Sonship in the direct way of power; and the other, of the light-giving power which accompanied the recognition of His mission, leading to the owning of Him as Son. Now I repeat here, what I have already said, that the Holy Ghost must have an object in writing such histories. He is not—could not be—a biographer, to write a life with circumstances which there was no divine reason for communicating. He was revealing Christ under various characters of glory, Son of God, Son of David, Son of man, Emmanuel.

Now let us examine whether there is not such a definite bearing of the two miracles referred to as is to be expected in a history given of God; whether they do not bear the stamp of a divine revelation of Jesus. From chapter 4 John's Gospel had systematically unfolded the new thing in contrast with Judaism. Spiritual worship of the Father instead of at Jerusalem or on Gerizim. (Chap, 4.) Life-giving power, instead of human strength using ordinances; judgment executed to secure Christ's glory in those who rejected Him: here He is the life-giving Son. (Chap. 5.) Next, He is the humbled Son of man instead of King Messiah in Israel, the spiritual food of faith while away, having come down from heaven and been crucified. (Chap, 6.) Then, the time for His glory before the world being not yet come, the Holy Ghost is to be given to believers, witnessing His heavenly glory as Son of man. (Chap, 7.) Then He is the light of the world in contrast with the Jaw; but His word is rejected (chap, 8.); as is the evidence of His works (chap, 9.), of which hereafter. He will at any rate have and save His sheep. (Chap, 10.) That closes the direct revelation of Christ in the gospel.

From chapter 9 we have the public testimony given by God to Him who was rejected—first, as Son of God, life-giving, resurrection-power, was His proper glory; and Lazarus is publicly raised. This sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God, and that the Son of God should be glorified thereby. Hence all say, “If thou hadst been there, he had not died.” They knew His miraculous power of healing; but now, close to Jerusalem, the most public testimony possible is given to His life-giving power as Son of God. How truly this is in its place is seen by this, that after this we have His glory as Son of David publicly proclaimed by His entry into Jerusalem, and the time come for His glory as Son of man marked by the Greeks coming up: and then the Lord shows that to this the cross is necessary, and looks in spirit at the coming hour. Thus the peculiar bearing of this remarkable miracle is clearly seen—the public indication of Christ as Son of God who raises the dead.

Now Matthew is employed by the Holy Ghost to present Christ in another way—that of Emmanuel, Messiah. Hence the Spirit does not give what was specially used to prove another point; but He

does give with much more detail the riding in as Jehovah, the King Messiah, with all that followed on it—in the judgment of Israel, chief priests, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians—every class, in a word, and the whole moral position of those who rejected Him; and then He shows from Psa. 110 that the Messiah ought to leave them, and to ascend up on high, because He was David's Lord as well as David's Son. That is He gives in greater detail what was suited to His subject. Again in the case of the blind man, the same considerations apply. “We have the contrast between the blind receiving sight from Him who is the true light of the world, and the judgment of those who set up to be lights, and that by the most ignorant believer who finds his place with the rejected Son of God. And mark the process. First, in the typical act, He puts clay on the man's eyes—a figure (I doubt not, from what the apostle says) of Christ come in the flesh. But this operation in itself produces no effect; but the moment he washes in Siloam (which, says the apostle, signifies “sent”), he sees. That is, the moment he, by the purifying word and Spirit, recognizes that Christ is the sent One, all is clear. In result, the poor man, the subject thus of the delivering power of Christ, honest of heart, bears witness to the power of which he had experienced the effect, knowing Jesus only as a prophet; but, having received in his heart the authority of His word and mission, he immediately receives Him as Son of God, and prostrates himself before Him. The rest are blinded; for the effect of His mission is, that they who see not might see, and they who see might be made blind.

Chapter 7

The Breaking of Bread

Probably not a few readers have seen a tract entitled thus and a little more. The avowed object is to show that the phrase nowhere occurs in scripture to represent the Lord's supper.

The first remark I would make is that the writer deceives himself (or, more likely from its character, herself) in thinking that this identification is a peculiarity of “Brethren” so-called. So have all Christians hitherto thought, though some (nay, perhaps all, certainly the “Brethren") have taken in more than that institution of the Lord. Nobody denies that the phrase may and does apply to any meal; but ancients and moderns, catholics and protestants, no less than “Brethren,” have believed that it is emphatically appropriated in scripture to the eucharist. Nay, Romanists have constantly availed themselves of the acknowledged fact to argue hence for the denial of the cup to the laity; and the reformers were never tempted to cut away the ground of their adversaries by saying that the “breaking of bread” nowhere in scripture means the eucharist. Our author, or authoress, however, is no way daunted by standing alone.

My second remark is that 1 Cor. 10:16 shows beyond cavil that the phrase distinctly, but not exclusively, belongs to the Lord's supper. “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.” No doubt here the cup is also spoken of, and even before the breaking of the bread. But it would have been cumbrous, save in the original institution or in a doctrinal discussion such as we have here and in 1 Cor. 11:20 - 32, to have mentioned both parts of the supper. The Spirit, therefore, when alluding to the fact historically, was pleased with perfect wisdom to refer to it under one, and of course the former, of the two, that is, under the breaking of the bread rather than the cup.

And this is entirely confirmed by the usage. Take the very first instance in our only divinely inspired and authoritative history of the early church, Acts 2:42. As the converts of Pentecost persevered in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, so did they in the breaking of the bread and the prayers. Can any intelligent or even fair mind persuade itself that such an association admits of ordinary meals? That the Lord's supper should be joined with the prayers of the saints or the apostles is simple and suited; the proposed view is mere and self-evident grossness.

The same result appears from a consideration of the two closing verses of Acts 2. Breaking of bread in the house or at home is contradistinguished from being' constantly in the temple with one accord (where of course they could not celebrate the Lord's supper); but it is named, as distinct from both, that they used to partake of food with gladness and singleness of heart. No scholar who weighs the passage will dispute that, if τροφ■ς “meat,” or rather food, referred to ■ρτον “bread” going just before, it must have been preceded by the Greek article, the absence of which is as decisive grammatically as I believe the bearing of the case to be for our instruction in our worship as well as daily life.

That Acts 20:7 points to the Lord's supper needs no further reasoning. The day and the assemblage for the purpose are plain enough for all who have hearts for Christ and that central feast of His own in remembrance of Himself and His dying love. It was just recently, but before this that the apostle had separated for the future the mixing up of a meal or an agape, with the Lord's supper, because of the disorder at Corinth. Did he himself sanction at Troas what he had just forbidden in an inspired Epistle?

These things being the facts and doctrine of scripture, it follows that the writer is in this opposed to the Lord, and most foolishly blames the Christians who are carrying out His mind in the matter. But it is false that “Brethren” separate from others for any such reason, but because saints in general have abandoned the ground of God's church gathered to the Lord's name and lapsed into corrupt Catholicism or denominational protestantism, in practical denial of the one body and one Spirit. Still nothing can be more unfounded than to sever the “breaking of bread” from the Lord's supper if we bow to scripture. It is also to lose the connection of its observance with the Lord's day, the standing and recurrent witness of our unity, as baptism once for all is of individual Christianity; both quite independent of officials, as we see in the Acts and 1 Cor. 11.

Chapter 8

Mr. A. Moody Stuart on Brethren

Dear Brother, Visiting a Christian friend in the north of Ireland a short time ago, I glanced over the “Life of Elizabeth, last Duchess of Gordon,” and found in it a statement, which, one must presume, expresses views generally entertained among godly Presbyterians. The copy I saw was the fifth edition (1866): so that the representation there made has gone forth widely and long uncontradicted. As you well know, we are in the habit of letting most of these notices pass without a word, especially where their ignorance and coarseness suffice to refute their ill-will; as of Carson, Croskery, of D. Macintosh, and suchlike. But the piety and the character of Mr. M. Stuart, who has condescended to no improprieties of the kind, make it desirable to give him a distinct answer. We may be sure that he would not knowingly circulate what is unfounded.

I cite in full from pages 174, 175: “After her decease the charge of Plymouthism was brought against her Grace's memory. But 'there must be order in the church' was the expression of her own sentiments on that head; and while she had valued friends abroad belonging to the communion, there was not one of her associates in Scotland over whom the Plymouth doctrines had any influence. With the ‘Brethren' the good Duchess had nothing in common, save our common Christianity. Her brotherhood was not like theirs, first severing other churches and then their own. Their frequent enunciation, 'He's a good man, but I could not break bread with him,' was contrary to every thought and feeling of her heart; for there was no good man throughout the world, with whom she would not have been too happy to sit at the table of the Lord, only counting herself unworthy of the privilege. So with their other peculiarities. In her clear and strong views of the imputed righteousness of Christ she differed from such of them as deny it, and in her love for the Lord's prayer from those who reject it as legal; in her fervent admiration of nature she differed from others; in her firm belief in the perpetual obligation of the Ten Commandments, and of the Sabbath as one of them, in her appreciation of the inestimable privilege of infant baptism, and in her high value for the Christian ministry, she differed from them all.

“Her daily life at Huntly Lodge was a testimony against those doctrines which level all earthly distinctions; a constant witness to the scriptural institution and the attractive beauty of a regulated order in the world,” &c.

Certainly her ordinary way and Mr. M. S.'s biography should sufficiently protect the Duchess from reproach of sympathy with those who are styled Plymouthists by all who in practice sanction the present state of Christendom. Her grace was a Presbyterian larger-hearted than most, and with this we heartily sympathize. But one who found it so hard a struggle to cast in her lot with the Free-Church movement had certainly not learned to judge tradition enough to go farther.

But how strange the notion that “there must be order in the church” condemns the very Christians who have left the disorders of denominationalism, in order to walk, and to walk ecclesiastically too, in subjection to the Lord acting by His word and Spirit! To me it has been for more than a quarter of a century a matter of as much surprise as shame that our brethren who do not even pretend to own the sovereign action of the Spirit in the assembly can venture to use such a text as 1 Cor.

14:40 ("Let all things be done decently and in order") against the “Brethren” who alone are acting on it in the simplicity of faith. Why do they not blush to refer to God's order, which they never think of carrying out from Lord's day to Lord's day, which they cannot carry out as the Free, any more than as the Established, Church of Scotland? No intelligent believer can question what was the comely order laid down by apostolic authority. Far be it from us to covet tongues or external signs. They never were the best gifts; they do not, could not, suit the circumstances or moral state of a fallen church. Far from any of us then be the pretension to have all the early church had, or to be wistfully seeking for what, if it could be conceived to reappear, must, as things are, prove a snare.

But here we have the order of God's assembly for prayer, for singing, for thanksgiving, for prophesying; and if we are God's assembly, with what face stand any before the Lord who practice habitually a wholly different arrangement, founded on the directly antagonistic principle of one man's controlling action? Entirely do I believe in and value individual responsibility for preaching the gospel, or instructing disciples, as Paul did in the school of one Tyrannus. We have liberty, we are bound, to use our gifts for Christ. But the Christian assembly stands on another footing—the recognition of His presence therein who divides to each member of the body as He will. “For ye may all prophesy, that all may learn and all may be comforted.” That this is not practiced among Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, or others, is too well-known; but will they dare to say it is obsolete? Does the absence of a tongue, or of sign-gifts, annul all the chapter? If they say, Yes, why do such men or women talk about “order in the church,” when they thus blot out by their unbelief and willfulness the only order in it He ever established? If they say, No, why do they not seek grace and faith to practice His “order in the church?” This it is “Brethren” desire above all things to do: if they are feeble (as indeed they are), why do not those who think themselves strong and wise try to help them? Can they say that they do or even desire this? Can they deny their hostility to those who stand and suffer for God's order in the church? I humbly think the departed lady and her associates might have been all the better for adding to “our common Christianity” a little deference to the sole order God's word furnishes for the church.

But we are told that “her [the Duchess's] brotherhood was not like theirs, first severing other churches, and then their own.” Now is it not universally confessed by all intelligent men that the associations of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, are not churches or assemblies according to God's word, but rather such sects or divisions as we are warned to avoid? Is not this felt by those who form the Evangelical Alliance? The difference is that others stay in what they know to be unscriptural, “Brethren” not only own but on principle abandon it as wrong. Who are acting with most conscience toward God? And if evil doctrine broke out in the midst of “Brethren” worse than any they had left behind, were they not right and thoroughly consistent in putting away or abandoning those who would cleave to it? Even if Mr. M. S. had not faith to act thus, he ought not to refuse his sympathy to what is manifestly due to the Lord, unless indeed his predilections be with those who hold or make light of heterodoxy as to Christ, which I should be sorry to think. Certainly, if we departed from nationalism and dissent to fall back on the imperishable truth of God's assembly and on the Savior's presence with those gathered to His name, were we but two or three, it would have ill become us to have preferred our own ease and peace to His name when dishonored in our midst. Yet for refusing to be parties to union at His expense we are censured: will the Lord blame us for it? I am confident He will not. The blame of others is a light thing comparatively in our eyes; it may be serious another day for themselves.

“Their frequent enunciation, 'He is a good man, but I could not break bread with him'“ strikes me as a strange assertion; for in thirty years' intercourse and ministry in Great Britain, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Holland, Germany, I have never heard such a thought once, even from the least enlightened brother. I do not say that Mr. M. S. has not encountered some such most mistaken and untoward speech, and often too; but I am assured that his acquaintance must have lain with persons wholly unworthy to represent” Brethren's” principles or practice, wherever this had been their language or feeling. It is their distinguishing feature that the table of the Lord is open to all who are His, where they are known to be walking as such; and this, as a matter, not of courtesy towards them, but of honoring Him in His members, according to the place they have in the assembly of God. Hence they might not only break bread but speak in worship or to edification, without the smallest violence to their conscience. On the other hand, where there was deliberate maintenance of, or indifference to, evil against Christ, no name, place or reputation would induce “Brethren” to receive such. We are not so far off then, as Mr. M. S. imagines. “Our common Christianity” goes farther than many think: only act on it, and you will find the hostility, not only of the world, but yet more of worldly Christians. With the same persons you would be the best Christians going if you believed all we believe and stayed where they are, theorizing, but dishonest, perhaps breaking broad in every form of disunion to show how much you value unity.

It is probably the same thing with “their other peculiarities.” Thus none of the “Brethren” accept the notion of inherent or infused righteousness as our justification before God; not one but holds that Christ is of God made to us righteousness, and hence that the Lord imputes righteousness to the believer apart from works. Hence we have no sympathy with the Arminian slur (be it J. Wesley's word or any other's) that “imputed righteousness is imputed nonsense.” But we do not therefore embrace the hypothesis that imputation means Christ's obedience of the law imputed to us. Scripture grounds it on Christ's obedience up to death—the death of the cross whereon sin was judged and God glorified about it; so that it is God's righteousness to set Christ in heaven and accept us in Him. And we too, having died with Christ, are thereby delivered from the flesh, the law, and the world, as the apostle elaborately shows; and thus, had we been the most zealous of Jews, we are no longer under law, having died to that wherein we were held and belonging to another, even to Him who is risen from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Again, while admitting that mistaken things have been said by many “Brethren,” I had never heard of one daring to say the Lord's prayer was legal, or to reject it as legal; nor could any right-minded soul among them yield to the Duchess in love for it. The question does not lie here at all; but whether the accomplishment of redemption did not lay a new basis for believers, when, as the Lord Himself told them, they should ask the Father in His name, and this by the Spirit given to them. Hitherto (He said, long after they had been taught the prayer) they had asked nothing in His name. To go on as before is disrespect both to Christ's work and to the presence of the Holy Ghost, ignoring and slighting Christ's own words.

Nor is it true that men of calm and holy judgment among “Brethren” disparage the beauty of nature. God forbid! Only it is possible that the Duchess made sight-seeing or the cultivation of flowers an object of her life, in a way which most of us feel to be beneath a Christian. (Compare 2 Cor. 5:15 - 17; Col. 3:1 - 4.)

As to the perpetual obligation of the Ten Commandments and of the Sabbath, there is a, radical difference: not that “Brethren” hold, as many did at the Reformation and since, that the law is abrogated, but that we, Christians, have died with Christ and are risen with Him and are hence on a ground to which the law never did and never can apply. Such is the doctrine of the New Testament (Rom. 6:15; 7:1 - 6; 10:1 - 6; 1 Cor. 15:56, 57; 2 Cor. 3; Gal. 2 - 5; 1 Tim. 1:9). Accordingly it teaches that we meet to remember Christ in His Supper on the first day, the resurrection or Lord's day, not on the seventh or sabbath day which beheld His grave. (Acts 20:7 Cor. 16; Rev. 1:10.) It is really sorrowful and humiliating to have to defend the simplest, most fundamental, truth thus lost sight of by well-meaning souls who are, as usual, stern and sharp and haughty against all who have learned a little beyond themselves.

Evidently neither the late Duchess nor Mr. M. S. understands this, the liberty wherewith Christ makes free; and their lack of acquaintance with it lies at the bottom of their inability to appreciate the position taken by “Brethren” as to righteousness and the law. Only such persons should take heed what they say or whereof they affirm, as the apostle admonishes.

Further, many more than Mr. M. S. will be astonished, I dare say, to hear that what he calls “the inestimable privilege of infant baptism” is appreciated by a great number of those who by their adversaries are styled Exclusives, Darbyites, and such-like nicknames.

One of these also, in speaking for all, long ago explained that we have the highest value for Christian ministry in every kind and measure, prizing nothing more than its freest exercise in responsibility to the Lord, and objecting to nothing but un-Christian ministry. It certainly does seem to us childish, if not presumptuous, to hear how these good people flatter themselves that they differ from us in their “high value for the Christian ministry.” They are sincere but under the merest illusion. Did the Duchess really differ from us in the principle? How came her biographer to make such assertions? The Scotch are believed to be a reading public. They ought then to have known better. For if their denominationalism sunders them from us, our writings are accessible enough and should be weighed before they write about what they so little understand.

It is well-known, that “Brethren “in general are utterly opposed to what is called radicalism; and that they were long ridiculed at first as a knot of high Tory gentlemen and ladies, unable to endure either the corruptions of Anglicanism or the vulgarity of dissent, and so establishing a sort of Madeira climate for their delicate lungs. Thus an infidel leader once wrote in one of the most respectable reviews of the Nonconformist party.

We may express some surprise too at the quarter whence such a charge emanates against us; for Scottish Presbyterians have been thought only less democratic than English Congregationalists, neither of them being equally considered remarkable for their loyalty or their lowness.

Finally, life at Huntly Lodge may have been worthy of all respect as opposed to levelers, and a fair specimen of a “regulated order in the world;” but for this very reason, on Mr. M. S.'s own showing, it could not be a real testimony to death with Christ from the rudiments of the world. It was an effort to live in the world aright, not the walk of those consciously risen with Christ and seeking the things above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

You are at liberty to use what I now write, for the correction of errors and the help of all who would know the truth.

Yours affectionately, To W. W., Edinburgh. W. K.

Chapter 9

The Call of the Bride

The Substance Of a Lecture On Gen. 24

We live in a time when everything is questioned, at least everything that is of God; and, in reading this chapter to you this evening, I am glad to present the truth of God from that part of His word which, if it has been the object of especial attack, furnishes the simplest and plainest witness to the prescient wisdom and goodness of Him who wrote it for our instruction.

It would not be intelligent for any one to look for the revelation of the church of God here. There is no intimation of the union of Jew and Gentile in one body. But, when the mystery was revealed, those who bow to scripture can see how God had prepared its place and type, although its character was not yet revealed. Nor is this so merely in an isolated point, but there is a well-defined connection of truth clearly foreshewn in what precedes and follows. What a testimony then, if this be so, have we here to the absoluteness of inspiration! Some have looked at scripture as containing God's word, but not as itself His word. An actual sample from the middle of a book like the present will be found to bespeak God in every word.

The portion, to which I direct your attention now, commences with chapter 22. This is not an arbitrary beginning. The chapter is introduced thus: “And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham.” It is a new set of divine pictures of the truth. The father is asked to give up his son, “thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest"-an unheard of trial; to offer him for a burnt-offering on a mountain of Moriah. Under sentence of death the son rests till the third day; then, when the surrender was proved complete, and the hand stretched forth, and the knife to slay the son, the hand of the father is arrested, and a ram, caught by his horns in the thicket, is substituted. Thus did God provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering; for no type can reach up to the height or go down into the depth of the truth: God's Son is God's Lamb.

Perhaps there is no child of God who has not learned that we have here a shadow of the offering of His Son. This every soul that values scripture, and bows to the corresponding light of the New Testament, must acknowledge. But this is not all. The Holy Ghost confirms it by signatures, which show His hand and mind. The very order is instructive. Most, we know, are apt to be content with less. They see the love of God set forth in the sacrifice provided; they see the substitution of the ram answering to Him who died for our sins. And there they stop; but the New Testament does not. In Heb. 11 the apostle Paul gives us most distinctly another step, telling us that “Abraham offered up his only begotten, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called:' accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure.” That is, it is intimated that in Gen. 22 we have a shadow, not merely of the death, but also of the resurrection, of Christ.

But there is another allusion to this scene in the New Testament, to which we must turn for a little in the third place. It is found in the use the apostle makes of it in Gal. 3 He there lays the greatest stress on the one Seed as contrasted with many:-a use of Genesis which is often a great difficulty

even to believers. They cannot doubt the statement made, yet feel that they do not understand it. They know that “seed” in all languages may mean many, just as much as one; and so they are conscious that the force of the passage escapes them. Paul must be right, they are assured: why, or what he means, they know not. When men raise difficulties, they are apt to go farther and judge the word which is beyond them.

They would do far better if they looked to God as well as into the word of His grace.

The point here I believe to be this: the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham out of heaven, and, after Isaac was taken from under the knife (the figure of death), Abraham is shown the ram, and offers it: and then the angel of Jehovah called a second time, and said, “By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.” This sorely perplexes the hasty reader. How strange that the apostle should lay the greatest stress upon “one seed,” whereas the text seems to speak of very many! But read more, “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Now we come to the point in Galatians.

There are two kinds of blessing before us; not only two measures but two orders of blessing. The blessing of a numerous seed comes first; and, here, where number is attached to the seed, the blessing is distinctively Jewish in character, down to possessing the gate of their enemies. By and by God will assuredly make this good; He means to bless as well as to deliver His earthly people; He will maintain the divine government of the world in Israel. He intends to make all good when Satan has made the worst of it. His purpose is to wrest out of the hand of the destroyer his seeming victory. And, when His people are brought down to the lowest, then will be God's opportunity. He will lift them up, and set them at the head of all earth's blessing and glory. The prophets are full of this; but the earliest book pledges it, and this in connection with the sacrifice of Isaac in the figure.

But there is more to be noticed, and more closely. The same apostle lays stress on the one Seed; and with the one Seed presents another character of blessing; and this is the emphasis in writing to the Galatians. The enemy was trying to make the believers in Galatia become Jews (of course in principle only, not in matter of fact), in order to ensure the blessing, insisting on circumcision for the purpose. Thus they were in danger of surrendering all that was most precious in Christianity. The apostle seeks to recall them, and that in this way; where the one Seed is spoken of (without reference to number, not the numerous seed), there is blessing to the Gentile promised, and to the Jew distinctively. This he applies to Christ risen, “and in thy seed [where there is nothing about the sand or the stars] shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” It is not the gate of their enemies possessed by the Jews, but the Gentiles to be blessed; the former in relation to the numerous seed, the latter in relation to the one Seed. I repeat, this is the point of Gal. 3:16. Our blessing is not even with Christ Himself as Messiah here below, but with Him who was crucified and is risen from the dead. In short, it is a character of blessing altogether new on the other side of death, with the risen Lord Jesus, the “one Seed.” So we become Abraham's seed, not by being circumcised, which is on this side of death, but by faith in Him who died and is raised again. It is before God the complete blotting out of man in the flesh, and the introduction of a new man in the risen Christ, in

whom there is neither Jew nor Gentile. And faith acts on what is before God.

There is also another thing which is an immense difficulty to many in this connection. Sarah dies in chapter 23. According to doctrine too common in Christendom, Sarah ought to be henceforth alive and vigorous. Such, lam persuaded, would have been the ordering of the type if man had arranged it, for such is the thought current in theology. But according to scripture Sarah dies; it is not Hagar, the old covenant after the flesh, but the mother of the Seed of promise, who then passes away. What is the meaning of this? If Gen. 22 have its clear illustration in the Lord's death and resurrection, and His purpose forthwith to bless the Gentiles in Christ with a totally different kind of blessing from that of Israel however true it also is to be in its season, what is the meaning of the death of Sarah at this point?

The Acts of the Apostles may make all quite plain. After the gift of the Holy Ghost the apostles presented the Lord Jesus to Israel as such, addressing them as “men of Israel,” and pledging the truth of God to the assurance that, if they only repented and received Him they had put to death on the cross who was now risen by the mighty power of God, all His promises would be made good to them. This is very particularly marked in Acts 3 “The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our father hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses.” And again, “Those things which God before had shown by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

Is it not evident that here is the distinct proffer of God through His servant to make good all that was promised to Israel? But they refused. The consequence was, that His offer for the time entirely lapsed. Sarah dies. There is no more presentation of the covenant of promise. Thus it had been made in the close of Acts 3 “Ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed; unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Such was the offer; but the offer was rejected, the consequence of which we see in no further presenting the word of the Lord after that sort, in no subsequent overture to Israel on any such ground. Sarah dies. It is not that Sarah is not to rise again; and, as surely as she is literally to rise again, so shall the covenant of grace re-appear, under the returning Son of man, for both houses of Israel.

What follows according to the Acts? An extraordinary apostle is called out, and fresh ground is taken; nay, it is too little to speak of the change so. The secret that was kept hid from ages and from generations is told out by a new and suited instrument. Saul of Tarsus becomes the characteristic witness not to the mother of the Seed of promise, not to the accomplishment of what God has pledged Himself from the first to make good to the line of Abraham; but a bride is to be called out from the world, formed and fashioned and got ready for the risen Bridegroom. The apostle Paul becomes the special and typical “minister of the church.” Thus do the Old and New

Testaments perfectly tally together.

Just so in our next chapter, Gen. 24, follows a wholly new scene, in the most significant way corroborating what has been said; and this I shall endeavor to pursue as God has given it. “And Abraham was old and well stricken in age, and Jehovah had blessed Abraham in all things, and Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and I will make thee swear by Jehovah, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell, but thou shalt go into my country and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.”

The Canaanites, as every one moderately taught knows, were the future enemies of the chosen people, already in the land, Satan's instrument to exclude, if this were possible, or at least to oppose and corrupt, those who were called of God. They typify, according to Eph. 6, our foes, the world-rulers of this darkness, spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, with whom our conflict has to be maintained. Accordingly, it is, as all will admit, not from demons or fallen angels that God calls to the fellowship of His Son. It is from the world that sovereign grace is forming a bride for Christ.

This then is the charge of the father to his steward, servant over all that he had, “Thou shalt go unto my country and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.” The servant has his fears, at any rate he presents his difficulties. “Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou earnest?” And Abraham said unto him, “Beware thou, that thou bring not my son thither again. The Jehovah God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.” There is no one point more insisted on in the chapter than this: Isaac the risen son, is to remain exclusively in Canaan; on no account is he to leave it.

Let us compare him with others. Abraham had been called out from Mesopotamia himself, and thence had he brought his wife. Afterward, Jacob goes back from Canaan, and far away he marries Leah and Rachel, and thence returns. But, while the call of the new bride goes on to Mesopotamia, Isaac must remain in the place which is the well-known typo of heaven: at least, during that transaction, the bridegroom abides only in Canaan. The Son of the Father, while the bride is being called, has no relation with the world, and is seen exclusively in heaven at the right hand of God. And this is just as distinct as to Christ in the New Testament doctrine, as the injunction respecting Isaac is imperative throughout its type in Genesis. It is an infinite privilege to be blessed with Christ; to be blessed not only by Him but with Him, and not only with Him but with Him in heaven in the presence of God. But such is our blessing, who are in the place whence He has been ignominiously cast out; and our blessing is in Him now, while He is at the right hand of God.

Is not this the heavenly place of Christ which the Spirit of God shows Himself pressing with manifest care in the chapter just read? “Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me into this land; must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou earnest? And

Abraham said unto him, Beware thou, that thou bring not my son thither again." During the call of the church, Christ sustains no direct relationship with the earth; He is simply the glorified Head on high. Before this He had come to the earth; and it was here, and here only, although in Him lifted up from the earth on the cross, that God's mighty work of redemption could be accomplished by His Son, whom the Father spared not but gave for us all. Here man had sinned, and here sin must be judged; but it is in heaven, and only in heaven, that Christ is viewed in relation to the bride. It is from heaven that the Holy Ghost comes down; it is for the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven that the bride is destined, and it is while the risen Bridegroom is in heaven that she is in process of being formed here below, before He comes to receive the saints to Himself and present them above.

This settles many a grave question. And it is Christians particularly who trouble themselves about the matter; for others count it fanaticism and are not interested in it. Your association with Christ as the heavenly Head is, therefore, what Satan wants to frustrate; for if your strength and blessing depend on your seizing your true relationship to Christ and the reality of Christ's relationship to you, the effort of the foe is to sever all he can between Christ and the church; while the active working of God's Spirit is to put and keep the believer, and not only the individual but the church, in the living present consciousness of His and our relationship, for God is looking for conduct founded upon it. How then can the suited conduct be, unless you know the standing and relation on which it depends and from which it flows? The affection, and the intimate union, and the obedience which belong to the wife, are inseparable from her relationship. In another they would be most improper and the grossest sin. If the wife does not so walk, she utterly fails. But the known relationship is the ground of the duties that we owe.

In the midst of the then revealed scene which a Jew, perhaps some Christians, might regard merely as a domestic story, the Spirit of God has traced out the typical lineaments of our call and relationship to Christ, all-important to our souls now, the sweeter because one sees from Genesis how it was from early days before God; as indeed, we know from the New Testament, it was purposed in Christ before the world was. Here we see its shadow, and, what seems to me of high value, in relation to the system of promise on the one band and, above all, to the sacrifice of the Son of God on the other.

But we have to notice also other notable features that fill in the sketch, and befit such a scene. Let me again impress on you the great truth that even here we see the church is founded on the finished work of Christ, as an accomplished fact; yea, not only on death but also on resurrection. Here the Son is risen and stands in a new place altogether. In this place Christ is found under the representation of Isaac, received from the dead in a figure, who, keeping himself entirely to Canaan, is in the acknowledged and undeniable type of heaven. When we think of the previous history of Abraham, or of that which follows in the case of Jacob, Joseph, or any other, the solemn restriction of Isaac alone is the more remarkable. We see what a tendency there was for the family likeness to repeat itself throughout, from father to son. This makes it all the more striking as a fact; how much more where we see its full meaning in Christ as our heavenly Head and Bridegroom now! Isaac had that typical place all to himself. There was no one of the patriarchs so remarkably seen in Canaan from first to last, so emphatically there alone in relation to the call of Rebecca. If God would set forth a Bridegroom exclusively heavenly, how else could He do it so effectually? Isaac is on no pretext and for no end to quit Canaan, whatever the difficulties of bringing home the

bride.

The Spirit of God, we already remarked, brings out the same truth openly to us in the Epistles of the New Testament, and in substance too in the later parts of John's Gospel where Christ is shown putting us in His own place above. Yet in the Old Testament Christ is often presented as the One who should reign over Israel, restored and blessed in their land; who should judge and rule all nations. And so without fail, He will, for Scripture cannot be broken; and, if the word of God could waver for the earth, who could trust it for heaven? The Psalms and Prophets are full of glowing visions of the day when the once humbled Messiah shall reign from sea to sea and bring the days of heaven on the earth; and hence the saints of old, though not without heavenly outlooks, as we know from Hebrews, regarded justly the earth as the future sphere of manifested blessing, though not of course the earth exclusively. Without doubt then Christ will ask, and Jehovah will give the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. But that day of asking and having them, and consequently of judgment on the quick (Psa. 2:8, 6), is in contrast with what is true now (John 17), when He asks not for the world as then but for ourselves while He is on high. It is the true Isaac thus imprinting a heavenly character on souls on the earth; giving them not merely that their destination should be heavenly by and by, but withal, even now, a heavenly stamp from and with Himself while they are here as consciously belonging to Him there.

The time too was come for this wondrous display of faith. The Lord Jesus had gone down to the depths of atonement. He had also been utterly rejected by the Jews, and God had now rejected them and the earth's direct blessing as such for the time; for this depends on their reception, which shall be to the world as life from the dead. Hence it is not on the earth which cast out the Righteous One, but in heaven that righteousness is seen now, where God has glorified the Holy One whom man despised and refused; and those who receive Him meanwhile are made God's righteousness in Him. Thus the actual grace of God is richer than any promises, for God never limited Himself to a promise. Could He indeed allow such a thought as that He, or His giving in grace, was exhaustible?

The grand fact for us, in the face of the devil who led the world to put Jesus to death, is that God has raised Him up from the dead after suffering for our sins, and set Him in heavenly glory, while He calls out from the world not only individuals to be blessed with Christ, but forms them by His Spirit into His assembly, one body, the body of Christ, whilst He is there and we are here. And, if you really have the Spirit of Christ now, that is your relationship. You are a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, spite of your thoughts or of that which men have told you. And, as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. If you believe in Him, be not afraid of confessing Him, nor doubt your blessedness, nor be ashamed of Him or it any way. What a sorrow to have to press this truth when the church should be living in the full joy of it! How sad that we have now to recall God's children to that which His grace gave them, to what is their own, but alas forgotten! God decides (it is not ours to choose) our relationship in Christ. I have heard one say, thinking it lowly too, “I dare not ask to be a son of God, I am content to be His servant.” Alas! it is real unbelief, not humility. For this does not mean measuring ourselves by ourselves or others, but seeing that Christ has suffered all, that God might bless accordingly, and bring us into relationships according to the work of redemption and the glory of Him who wrought it, in the fulfillment of the divine counsels for magnifying Him.

Is Christ, then, the “Heavenly” One now? “As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” If there are heavenly ones, who are they? Not the angels. The good angels are not taken out of their position, and the bad angels are yet to be dealt with judicially. Grace acts to the full; and the last whom nature could suppose chosen are those to whom God vouchsafes the richest blessing. Such is the position of the Christian and the church, however little we may have done for His name. Our deliverance and our relationship are questions of Him and His work; not of those who reap the blessing through the grace of God. I do not say that you may not know your heavenly place individually, or with all saints, or your responsibility in both respects as God's temple. I do say you must seek to lay hold of your relationship before you can manifest the affection and the ways suitable to it. Who could expect the conduct of a son save from a child that knew his father?

It is precisely the same principle in the sphere of Christ and the church. The man, not the woman, determines her position and dignity according to his own. He was, He will be, on earth; but now He is in heaven, and so alone we know Him: yea, had we known Him otherwise, so only now. The relationship is established, and for us too in this blessed way, through the Christ who has baptized us into one body by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The cross made it possible, having cleared away sin by the judgment of it once for all; not by forbearance, though there was a time when God did forbear as to it, but now in righteousness, for grace reigns through righteousness, sin having been judged, so judged as it never will be in hell, and as it never can be again. Faith bows to God, and receives through and with Christ this heavenly portion; believing on the Lord Jesus, we are united to Him. On high the suffering Man was given to the church, Head over all things. He must go through death first; for, “except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” The word of God makes it perfectly certain that the Lord Jesus, only after redemption, became at the right hand of God the Head of His body, now in process of forming by the Spirit on earth. There was no such state of things when He was on the earth. In no respect was He our Head until He took His place on high; nor could the body be so much as begun till Christ was there as Head, to whom the Holy Ghost could unite us. For it is neither an awakened conscience nor even faith which unites, but the Spirit given to us over and above as believers. I repeat, that I believe as an individual; and this is of all moment, and of the greatest value for the soul of each. If conscience be unsettled, there cannot be the right flow of divine affection; and it was part of Gail's way and wisdom to leave no questions before we are united to Christ by the Spirit.

We must distinguish between the new birth and the baptism of the Spirit. As sinners we are quickened; as saints we have the Spirit given to us, whether as individuals or for union. Suppose a woman, the most obscure you could find, whose only name was of ill repute; but one of the noblest of the land, of the most exalted character and position, was pleased to make her the object of his love, and, more than that to give her his own name as his bride, what then? In an instant all is changed; no matter what she may have been before, all now depends on the new relationship, both for others, and especially for herself. No unbelief of believers puts that blessing off until we get to heaven; but, according to God's word (and this alone is binding), it is true of us here, though the practical power, enjoyment, and testimony is lost now if we believe it not. We are of Christ's body now. There is no such doctrine as becoming members of His body in heaven. Because it is a question of Christ and His work made known by the Spirit sent down, there is nothing too good for

the church in the mind of God, who is glorifying Him and blessing us in Him. It is here too that we are called to suffer with Him. All saints had to suffer, and Christians especially, not only for righteousness but for Christ; and this people do not like.

Unbelief likes the safe middle way of good common sense; it is afraid of extremes because it slights Christ. It courts ease and honor now, and hopes to have forgiveness and acceptance above. This is not Christianity, but the revival of a semi-Judaism, which destroys the true relationship and testimony of the church. The truth may sometimes be presented crudely and with looseness, and Satan would thus make it ridiculous to the natural man and its form repulsive to a spiritual mind. This is to be deplored and should be owned, not justified by him who feels for God's glory. But we cannot pare down the truth, or make it palatable to the world or to the Christians who seek to walk with the world. Everything that is according to God must flow from faith; the faith of the saint (I say not of the soul in coming to God) is formed by its object, even Christ, now in glory, to whom the person is united and by whom he is more and more changed into His image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, from glory to glory. Doubtless, till a man's soul has bowed to God in the sense of his own sinfulness, and has found redemption by the blood of Jesus, it is folly and wrong to talk of other and heavenly privileges. But, when all need of conscience before God is settled by faith, the Spirit seals the believer, who is made one with Christ in heaven.

It will be seen from Scripture, in fact, that without faith there is no union; but faith in itself never unites. There is no such idea as a person united to Christ in believing; but, when he believes, he is made one with Christ by the Holy Ghost, who has now condescended to take the place of serving the counsels of the Father for the glory of His beloved Son. As the Son became servant in doing God's will here below, so now the Spirit glorifies Christ in communion with the Father's mind and love. And this could only be when Christ went on high, after His finished work, and sent the Comforter to be in and with us forever.

One result we see beautifully depicted here is the spirit of faith in which the servant acts, and this showing itself in prayer according to the mind of God. “And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O Jehovah God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink; and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master. And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.” Does not the case illustrate vividly “praying in the Holy Ghost “? It is prayer, not merely for this or that, but in the current of what is for the Son's glory and in the Father's purpose to bestow. It seems to be the liveliest anticipation in the Old Testament of asking the Father in Christ's name, by having whatever we thus ask. I speak of the spirit of the thing.

Is it then a casual circumstance that such passages should be found here? What a contrast with Jacob's vow in Gen. 28, or his cry of distress in Gen. 32! Indeed, it is not too much to say that there is not another chapter in Genesis where there is so much about prayer as here; and why? Is it not because now, during the call of the bride, the walking by faith is exemplified by Him who dwells and works in the Christian? Assuredly God looks for no less habits of dependence in those who bear the name of Christ. Of course at every time from the beginning of God's ways with man, all prayed who had faith; and we see it admirably in Abraham and others. But I appeal to every discerning mind whether we do not find such a type in this respect here, as we find nowhere else in the book.

There is another feature too; the Holy Ghost has come down in a way that never was made good before. As surely as the Son descended personally to the earth to take flesh, so the Holy Ghost came to abide in and with us now. He had come down to abide in the Son; He sealed, and without; blood, Him who was the Holy One of God. But how could we, sinners as we were, have His Spirit in us? How could we be the vessels of the Holy Spirit of God? Only in the power the perfect and perfecting sacrifice of Christ. After that, not before, the Holy Ghost came down to dwell in those who had been most wretched sinners; and He can dwell in us forever now, by virtue of the blood that cleanses us from all sin. Has this no voice to us, beloved brethren? A most solemn thing it is for all Christians. We need and should cultivate that spirit of faith and prayer which keeps us practically in the presence of God where flesh is judged, knowing that He hears us, and that we have the petitions we desire of Him.

But this is not the only thing here. The same servant, who represents the power of the Spirit acting in man now, shows also the wonderful faithfulness in which God not only guides him, but controls for him all circumstances: just as at the beginning of the chapter, it was not merely as Jehovah-God Abraham acknowledged Him, but as “the God of heaven and the God of the earth.” And so yet more should the Christian feel now, according to the infinite largeness of the revelations of His glory as the God and rather of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, in Eph. 4, He shows Himself to be above all and through all, as well as in us all. It is not only that we are brought into the utmost nearness by grace; but, despised as we may be and cast out for Christ's sake, we are, and should know that we are, as children in that intimacy which enables us to speak to Him who moves all things. Just as the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold (vers. 22, 30), so to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (Compare Eph. 4:7-16.)

Again, the heart of the servant instantly turns to worship. “And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord. And he said, Blessed be the Jehovah God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth; I being in the way, Jehovah led me to the house of my master's brethren.” It was, no doubt, homage rather than worship in the proper Christian sense; that is, it was individual, not the praise of God's children or assembly. Still it is the figure of worship. Did it ever strike you that there is more about such homage or worship in this chapter than in all the other chapters of Genesis put together? Why should it be so? Can one doubt that it is because now God has made the way for true worshippers? According to truth, and according to love, God has now revealed Himself in Christ the Son. He is no longer groped after, if haply He may be found; but the God and Father of Christ has brought us to Himself, His Father and ours, His God and ours, having not only come down to us in Him here below, but brought us in

Him, dead and risen and ascended, to be before Himself without a spot. How could we then but worship Him?

And so, as surely as souls enter into the place of the Christian and the church, worship in spirit and in truth flows forth. God is revealed in His grace, redemption is wrought, the veil is rent, and we are brought now as sons, and have God dwelling in us. The Spirit of God could not but lead the children of God to worship. The First Epistle to the Corinthians accordingly speaks to them of singing with the spirit, though we know what their state was; and in Ephesians and Colossians we hear of “speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” “singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” This supposes a relationship which cannot but thus breathe itself out to God in praise and thanksgiving. How different from occupation with self, important as this alas 1 may be in its place and season. There is a right time for all things, and for general humiliation too; and a dangerous thing it is for a Christian not to judge himself and take a humbling review of his ways sometimes. But, whatever in us may call for self-judgment, let us never defraud our God and Father of His worship. Let us neither mar nor stint the praises of God and the Lamb. Therefore we find, “let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.”

In our narrative, in full unison as far as the type could reach, we have the sense of God and His blessing filling the heart of Eliezer; and so the man bows his head and worships continually as God displays His grace. (Compare vers. 48, 52.)

Notice again the way in which the calling of the bride links itself with the coming of the Lord. The question is put to Rebekah, “Wilt thou go with this man?” Nature might plead to keep her a few days, at least ten. But she who had only heard and believed the report has her heart made up, like the Christian toward Christ; “whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not,” &c. Brother, mother, house, family, country, speak in vain. And the servant was true to his errand of love, to bring home the bride. It is the very pattern of the Spirit working in the new man and making Christ the all-absorbing object. “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” The servant is undistracted—has but “one thing” to do. “Hinder me not,” he says, “seeing Jehovah hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.” Do any speak of “resignation” to depart? Is it only in His heart to bring us home? His love truly known makes a true love; as here, the simple answer of Rebekah is, “I will go.” The Spirit and the bride say but one thing: Come—come, Lord Jesus. Can you say this, beloved brethren? He is coming: wilt thou go? Isaac comes to meet her, and she who had left all behind is “gone out” to meet the bridegroom, veiling herself as not for others, but only for him. As the moment draws near, she realizes it increasingly in spirit.

May God Himself, by His own Spirit, fix upon us the truth of what Christ is to us! Unbelief is always trying to be what it is not; as believers, we never can exaggerate what grace has given us in Him: so blessed with Christ is every saint of God now, though as yet we have but the word and Spirit of God, and the flesh despises and resists both.

Search God's word and see how far your position consorts with the truth we have before us. A main object in the Epistles of the New Testament is to reveal that which this type shadows in the call of the bride who crosses the desert under the conduct of Eliezer for the bridegroom in Canaan, the church espoused to Christ.

All that people boast of value and esteem among men, all you may have thought in your system good and helpful, you will find in the light of God's word to be really but a hindrance to manifesting Christ -Christ our life. If an object on earth occupies you, it is clearly foreign to the Holy Ghost who is glorifying Christ. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” May you prove that your true business is now to bear testimony to Him as an earth-rejected, heavenly, and returning Christ! I leave this, which is God's truth, not the word of man, to work in your souls. Prove all you have heard about it; hold fast what is good.

On no occasion is the Christian free to forget his proper relationship, and it is as true of the assembly as of the individual. Is it so with you in both respects? If you know what it is to be heavenly in your affections and ways, you will not tolerate an earthly-minded denomination, and indeed a denomination as such, denies the body and bride of Christ as a present reality here below, which demands entire devotedness to Christ and continual waiting for His coming, not of the world, as He is not. A denomination is a voluntary society, or a system framed by worldly authority; neither of which can, in the nature of things, express, or even contemplate, the one body of Christ. If we are His, we are so by the Holy Ghost who made us one, as the objects of His love and for His glory, at the same time separating us from the world which crucified Him. “Believest thou this?” May our God bless His own truth for Christ's sake!

Chapter 10

Christ Leading Into Relationship With the Father

John 13:36, 38; 14:1, 11

It is well to remember, and to have fresh upon the mind continually, that our God has said that His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor our ways His ways. It is important, not only because it prepares the soul to receive what His may present to it, but because it enables the soul greatly also to put aside all its own reasoning. I come into the presence of the living God with the full conviction upon my soul, for He has settled and announced, that His thoughts are not my thoughts, nor my ways His ways. Individually I am prepared, so to speak, to receive from Him whatever He may present, on the other hand to set aside all the difficulties and reasonings that may spring up out of this mind which He says is not like His mind.

If I look at the question of what it is, which through grace, He says, brings the sinner into the place of being able to say “My God,” if I think of the truth connected with that, I see an instance of this. That in which I was ruined is brought to light. Man by nature is never prepared for the cross of Christ, never prepared for the truth of God. “We are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Man is antagonistic to thoughts in which God is first; he refuses to believe that God is a Reconciler. When He comes to show that pre-eminence He has in having been first, it comes out in a way which sets man in utter defiance. “For he hath made him sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Man is lost sight of there.

There is another point in which I see this more strongly still, not in the position of a son being secured to me, but in the giving of privilege consequent on it.

“Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father,” (Gal. 4:6.) To my mind this is a great deal more difficult for the mind of man in anywise to get hold of simply and fully. There is no such difficulty in forgiveness. One can understand a creature going to God, and His providing something on which ground He could receive a sinner. The mind can understand it in measure. I may kick against it vigorously, for it puts one right into the dust. God has chosen, according to His character, according to His own ways, to do the things.

If I take the second thing, it is, “He has sent forth the Spirit of his Son” into the hearts of those who, He tells me, are sons. In the preceding chapter it is “Jesus Christ evidently set forth crucified.” Hence, it is “He hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Well now what is this? What am I to understand by it? When I come to look at the subject, I find I have to be taught the A, B, C, by God, and to be simply a receiver, upon the plain ground that it is the Son of God communicating His secret thoughts.

The only begotten Son of the Father! What kind of a relationship is His? All my thoughts of a father and a son are, so to speak, set aside. I understand “like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear him;” I understand this as I stoop down to my child. But here is the only-begotten Son. I cannot talk of Him being inferior in that relationship—One toward whom the relationship named would be expressed as it is in the relationship of a father toward his babe down

here. I see I am brought into the relationship in which I am to call His Abba my Abba, and the very abode which by right and title belongs to Him is the very place, to which He is guiding me, and to which I shall shortly be brought, Adam and Eve could not understand it. The Father set forth His Son as the One in whom was all His delight, the One who was the perfect expression of everything in which His heart could rejoice, John shows me this. I see this in it: sonship, the only-begotten Son, the perfect expression of the Father, and I see that God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into my heart. I am to call His Father Abba. It is entirely new ground. It is not creature ground. It is ground I could not be set upon if He could not quicken me with the eternal life which He had with the Father before the world was.

It is very important to note it as one of the grand failures of believers now; we constantly begin with items connected with privileges, items that touch ourselves. When scripture presents privilege, it presents it in Himself, all perfect, and the work wrought out in Him in every way, and the relationship which He had with the Father, before the world was. We are in the relationship. This involves all the rest, and the burden and weight of all hangs on Himself.

Now in the Gospel of John, chapter 13, He just sets Himself as recognizing that the door had closed on Israel. He sets Himself with His disciples, the doors being shut. He knew that His hour was come. In love He is content to gird Himself. The great point brought out there is the consciousness which He had of being the object of the counsels of the Father. He knew all things were given into His hand. “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hand, and that he was come from God, and went to God, he riseth from supper and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself.” Perfect, every action!

No one could have taken His life away. He came forth from God, and He went to God. He deliberately set Himself to bring out truth connected with this doctrine, as the outflow of what was in His own mind.

First of all is the cleansing; then the coming out of a traitor present, which He knew. But there was no check in the glow of His thoughts, or of His love, in the purpose of His heart. There was weakness too on the part of the disciples. John was easily influenced, though he lay in the bosom of Jesus. Peter was uncommonly full of himself, full of thoughts of his competency to stand on Jewish ground.

The Lord brings out a little picture of all that was in man, as known to Himself, when He was about to bring out these thoughts of the Father's love, when He was about to show the relationships of sons with Abba. It comes out the more touchingly because He pronounces the most complete sentence on Peter—a good man, but full of what he meant to do. The Lord puts it all entirely aside. “Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?” the Lord says to him. No wonder! He was offering Himself, He was not only ready to wash their feet. He had spoken of what He was about to suffer. “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.” (Ver. 31.) He had that upon His soul at the time, and Peter puts in, “Well, I am the man that will lay down my life for you;” He cannot but express incredulity, ignoring all. “Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice.”

Then, instantly, the Lord Jesus goes on, “Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.” What He had in His bosom at that time with regard to Peter, John, and the rest, could not be repressed. It was filled with the love the Father bore to those poor disciples, love that could not be taken aback and could not be stopped. Could the flow of what was in His mind be stopped by the rude impediment of a man saying, “I will lay down my life for you?” The man did not know what he was about, the Lord understood it all. Not a bit of light have you there, Peter: all you can do is to deny me. “Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now.” As to Peter, and those thoughts of Christ, the state of his soul could not take Christ's thoughts in. He did not like anything of the sort. The Lord goes on “Let not your heart be troubled.” Everything is failing here, and the kingdom is going;

Israel is denying. I have taken you up on another ground altogether. You are associated in my heart with the Father; and this is the ground on which I am acting.

I may just remark here what to my own soul is somewhat peculiar. I find all the thoughts of the heart of the only-begotten Son of the Father toward this. He was going to give' them the stamp of sonship. His heart was flowing towards them. And He could pass on to that which was included in the love. He could show them that, if we are loved by the Father as sons, we are to be in the house of the Father. Which of those two things is greater? Surely the first. If I can say that the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is my Father, what can I want more? The gyves and the fetters of Egypt may be scarcely off my hands, I weary and footsore, going through the land; but the assurance of Abba's love will keep my soul above all circumstances of the way. We shall get into our true state when we get into the Father's house. If we could be there without the love of the Father beaming out upon us, it would be nothing. It would be nothing to be there as any chosen gem out of Israel, to see what the peculiarity of the Father's love would be, and not to have that love resting upon us. It is my Father's house. I shall come again, Peter. You will swear you do not know Me. I shall come again, and pick you up in the power of that love which will last, not only through your lifetime, but through all the dispensations in all its greatness.

I want to show you the sort of love that was in His heart. Now what was He about to do? If He had listened to them, to Peter, He would have taken another line. No! He had got His clue from fellowship with the Father's love and counsels. He knew what He was about. He saw the whole way from the beginning to the end. He knew all things that should come upon Him. To Peter He makes known here that he would curse and swear he did not know the Lord. When He comes back, He receives him and all to Himself. Such is the One who had the whole thing before His mind, and from whom we have to learn about this sonship, and how the Spirit works in us, crying, Abba, Father, the Spirit of the Son of God, by whom we call Him Abb.

The Lord soon goes on to the doctrine in the second and third verses. “In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you... I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” Man is failing: everything has failed in man. Christ does not fail. And He has a place given Him.' Nor will He fail us in the least. However long it will be before, He will certainly come and bring us home at the appointed time.

There was something much dearer to His heart, one of the first lessons He had to teach them. We do not sufficiently rest upon the grand truth which is presented here of God, that He who thus

came into the world is the revealer of the Father. “Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.” He was here in a simple quiet way, leading them upon the ground that made them confess their ignorance, and gave Him the opportunity of teaching them. “Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also, and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.” The first thing that strikes me is this; His conduct here is just the illustration of His fellowship with the Father, and His competency of apprehending the Father's mind. He knew the Father. Talking to the poor woman at the well of Sychar, He could bring that home to her heart. He stops here, and turns round and back to that which would oblige them to express their ignorance. “Lord, we know not whither thou art going, and how can we know the way?” He just gave His own self as the answer, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. From henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.” I believe, to our own shame, we very often read that down and think very little about Him. It is not here as in Peter, “Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God that liveth and abideth forever.” It was what was directly addressed to them. “Ye who have followed me, who know the sort of person I am, who have seen my ways, who have heard my voice, who have witnessed my character: now everything I want to search you about the Father is presented in me.” It is like a child learning the character of the father perhaps in the little things of the nursery or the schoolroom, and showing the knowledge it has got. Let a mother not restrain a child, the child learns those ways. Let a father in the fear of God wisely restrain his child, and show love: when it is put into other circumstances, it has got its heart formed its affections trained, and, if you brought before it something of a different character, the child would not admit it. On the ground it knew circumstances? No! that is not my father. You brought me a lawyer's letter—no, that is not my father. I know my father well. Very severe he is at times, but full of patience. But I know that is not my father.

Now the Lord had been with them in all the Jewish circumstances. He had been with them at Jerusalem. They had seen His character, His ways. “I want to bring my father before you,” He is saying. Now do you know me? Oh! I do believe that the children of God at the present time have a little word to look at there in connection with themselves, whether or not they have taken the character presented by the blessed Lord, that flowed forth from Him; as He said He was the way, and the truth, and the life, as the true expression of the Father. “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also, and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him.” Perfect self-possession on the part of the Lord! What a complete purpose of His heart to vindicate the Father's marvelous grace in presenting in such a way a man as the expression of Himself!

He had sent that One to manifest Himself to them. Teaching enough there, if their hearts had been open to receive it! Whenever we come to know Abba, we are to read Him. We are to think of Him as Himself the revelation of His Father. They had seen Him, the perfect Son of the Father, walking among them, caring for them, keeping this ever before His mind—the revealing of the Father to their hearts. But they did not understand, and they gave Him another occasion for instruction. “Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me He

doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake." I should suppose the "works" here are not what people take them for, but rather His whole bearing at the present time. "Whatever you see me do, that is of the Father." What knowledge have you of me? "I am the way." He showed it at the time of His own humiliation. He came upon the ground on which Israel was to show the fullness of the perfection that was in Him. He even turned to wipe the tear from the widow. He turned to feed the multitude. He ever kept His eye on the glory of God.

What has been the revelation to us in connection with the Father, and what followed afterward on the revelation of that blessed Son of God's love in His ways to His disciples in respect of this? The whole question of sin has been settled by Him who knew no sin; and "because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying, Abba, Father." Has this led you into the Father's heart? Has it led you into the truth of what it is to be a son of His by adoption? "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." The blessed Son gone there is just the One through whom that truth is told out, still of all that love of Abba, of all this purpose of Abba. God shows us Him in the very highest glory, and tells us that our place is there with Him.

Now is there in your souls that love, the consciousness of that character of love, that is presented in the Lord Jesus Christ? I do believe it is an important thing to keep separate the fruits of the relationship and the security of the relationship. Am I a son? "Children of God by Christ Jesus." What is the grand token of sonship now? Why that the only begotten Son is upon the throne—is there as man, the rock that was smitten; and because we are sons, God hath sent forth His Spirit into our hearts crying Abba, Father. If there were not a second believer in the world, but I have the Spirit of the Son of God, I am as much a son as if I were in the Father's house. And how is the love of Abba set upon me? In His Christ. I may walk carelessly and get into sorrow because of it, but the relationship never varies, and it is a relationship established by the presence of that blessed One upon the throne of God. He is gathering many sons unto glory, and I am a son, individually. Well, how is my heart?" How far does that fullness, that circle of love which goes forth because of the Father's delight in that only-begotten Son, engross my heart? I am a son of God, and I have nothing to do with any world, or any place that does not know these sons of God. Has He put me into the place of being a son, a son adopted, one who knows the certainty by the Spirit indwelling, knows Abba by the light that shone upon the Son here in humiliation, by His having given me the Spirit of adoption? Can I, beloved friends, take a place before you and say, if you look at my life nearly enough, you will see I am carrying out that P Can you say, "Well, I know I am a son, and I have taken that place distinctly; if you know me well enough, you will know that I am practically a son?"

Brethren and sisters in the Lord, I ask you individually, do you take that place? You will find it will not do to have any neutral ground. You cannot stand upon earth and water. You must have this very ground, clear and defined—that you know you are, and that you are practically, sons of God. All the tide flowing in will wash away what is not thus secured by the Lord Jesus Christ. Can you say, "There was a Son down here, personally a Son: I am here to carry out His mind?" You will find that it cuts off a thousand things that you would do comfortably if you were only trying to be a good man here on earth, when you try to carry out His mind. He knew what He was about. He had no mind but that of a son of God down here.

Independently of Him, we could not say to His Father what He could say directly to His Father. It is made good to us in Himself. He is Son of God, heir of God. We are sons of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. It comes in thus—the place connected with the privilege. It is exceedingly important to bring in the place, for it detects the character of what we are carrying with us as we go along. What burden am I carrying with me now if Is it anything that will amalgamate with the in-heritance? Anything that will be a pleasant retrospect from the glory? Shall I look back and say, “Well, there I was, toiling and laboring. It was what came upon Him, the same in character. I did suffer with Him, and now I am reigning here. How pleasant it looks from the Father's house!” Or will it be this rather, “But, indeed, He did drag me up through the dying embers, like Lot in Sodom, and thus is my whole course all gone, practically wasted. It vexed me as I went along. I am positively angry when I think about myself.”

Today you have been acting as a son or a daughter, or you have not. You have been carrying out that mind that was in Christ Jesus, or you have not. He had objects that He loved. His heart brooded over those poor objects He had taken up. His heart was bearing in gentle patience all their stupidity; yet there was not a single thing in connection with the course of the Lord that was not of the Father. No one could put a finger on anything in that course, and say, “there was a bit of worldliness.”

Now it is a time of great profession, and therefore for complete separation. If you get back to the Gospels, it was a time when all was going to the sieve. Scribes and Pharisees and Herodians were there; one spiritual mind in the scene, that One was the touchstone of everything in that time. The separation took place: other ground was found for placing what He counted dear upon. What do you think of the present hour? Much more will a spiritual mind feel at such a moment that the crisis has come, and that there is no longer any time for shilly-shallying. Every principle is called into question at the present time. All the influences of the world are active. The power of Satan is at work, driving the vortex round; and people not knowing where they are drifting to.

“I am a son of God, I have the Father's heart open to me. The one thing on which the Son knows my mind is set is carrying out His mind down here.” “Well,” He says, “they will feel my mind some way or other,” “Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn my hand upon the little ones.” (Zech. 13:7.) Whatever the state of things, the Father's hand will be turned upon the little ones. They must walk now in the comfort of it, if they are to find it in that day. Are you a son of God? Does He look down upon you with the affections of that; heart beaming upon you as a son? Yes, blessed be God! All your steps down here are the marks of your feet as you go along through this scene here below: are they the stoppings of the Father's children?

The relationship is all secured. It is not a question of whether I shall get into the Father's house, it is not a question of whether He will bring me there, conduct me up as Lot from Sodom, but am I walking as a son?

Are you, individually, walking in such a way that the Father's heart can find its satisfaction in? that the Son of God can look down upon you as those to whom the looking to Him for guidance is habitual? Behold, it is practice; it is the carrying out of God's mind in all the detail of your path down here.

Chapter 11

Christ Tempted and Sympathizing

Some months since a neutral brother questioned the word “disappearance” in the above tract (p. 8 of the London ed., p. 10 in those of Manchester and of Glasgow.) Now an anonymous person calls it “blasphemy,” as if what was said imports that evil was in Christ's body some time or another!! He reasons that “disappearance from” means that the evil was in. It can only, in my opinion, be imagined to do so by an evil eye; for the sentence speaks of the moment of the immaculate conception. But if the evil, which was in the virgin's nature, “completely disappeared,” as far as the Babe was concerned, by that miraculous action of the Holy Spirit, the most perverse will cannot make the sentence say or mean that evil ever was in Christ's body. I am grieved to think that any one called a brother should like to make it so appear: why, God will manifest. If simple souls prefer for to “from,” the author has no objection. But the meaning of “from” as there used is self-evidently (not from having been in, but) from entering, the express contrary of implying that evil had been in a body which only then began to exist: as no doubt every intelligent, as well as every simple reader has understood till now. The desired misconstruction contradicts the distinct object and the uniform doctrine of the tract. It is for others to estimate the source, character, and aim of such an attack. The reader is requested to read the tract and judge for himself.

W.K.

Chapter 12

The Christian Hope Consistent With Events Revealed in Prophecy: Part 1

It is beyond controversy that the Lord Jesus set His disciples in the position of waiting for His return in glory, and that He attached the utmost value to the constancy their love in expecting Him habitually as their sure and proximate hope. “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.” (Luke 12:35, 36.)

Precisely the same principle reappears in what the Holy Ghost gave by the apostle from first to last. Thus in his earliest epistle: “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. 4:15 - 17.) Take a middle communication: “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.” (1 Cor. 15:51, 52.) Take a later. “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” (Phil. 3:20, 21.) Take one of his latest: “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” (Titus 2:11 - 13.)

Nor is it otherwise with the last surviving apostle who closes the canon of scriptures: “Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” (Rev. 3:11.) “I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.... He which testifieth those things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev. 22:16, 17, 20.) Accordingly as Christ's coming they knew not how soon was the hope laid down uniformly in the Now Testament, so even skepticism owns that it was universally believed by the early Christians.

But time passed on, and faith became feeble, and hope deferred made the heart sick, and the taunts of incredulity, which looks not beyond appearances began to tell on souls that ceased to hold fast the grace and truth of Christ and thus gravitated toward the world out of which they had been called, not more surely to serve God than to wait for His Son from heaven; so in modern times many have been driven from this position by an improper use of the Lord's delay. They have been frightened by the adversary. They have shrunk from the world's unbelieving contempt

founded on a very short and imperfect acquaintance with the word of God. Infidelity indeed is always superficial; and the children of God do not well to be thus moved. It matters not who the adversary may be, they should never yield the position regarding His word, nor allow themselves to be or seem ashamed of waiting for the Lord Jesus, which the New Testament shows was to have been given to and taken by the church of God, and that too, we must observe, in its brightest days, when the power of the Holy Ghost was ungrieved and the apostles who were the authoritative communicators of the mind of God still remained. It is under these circumstances we find the Christians of old habitually expecting the Son of God from heaven. Time passed on; the delay seemed long; and many a believer, judging from appearances which seemed to contradict their hope, gave up their constancy of expectation, giving way to their own reasonings and the influences around them. This is always unwise; it is worse, it is a sin, because it virtually arraigns God Himself, who maintains His authority now by His word. The day is coming when He will assert and vindicate it in power, when it will be no question of believing only, but those who dispute His authority and disobey His word will be judged. But now we are put to the test in a moral way by subjection to the written word of God.

At present I am undertaking to show that the simplest view is the truest, and that the lowly faithful cleaving to the words of the Lord Jesus will stand the severest test. In point of fact it is so constantly in divine things. For the church of God was never meant to be a school, still less to be confined to such as are of the highest form. The church forgets its commission when it affects to be a philosophical clique of disciples who flatter themselves that they at least are wise and intelligent. According to the mind of God it was intended to embrace every child of God walking as such. It was meant not merely to have them but to have them together—to have them as one; and in fact this miserable departure from the mind of God practically has given an immense impulse to unbelieving thoughts which slight and judge the word of God in respect to the ground, manner, measure and matter of our hope: for what indeed has been spared? Our subject, however, is the compatibility of the Christian hope with the revelation of events according to prophecy; and I must show that no events predicted by the Lord, or the holy apostles and prophets, in the slightest degree set aside that hope, for the two things are perfectly consistent. I shall show further that these predicted events do not even modify the hope, but that the hope governs them; the true outlook for the soul being Christ's coming and receiving us to Himself, not my death but His return. The prophetic intimations of events only fall into their proper place where that hope is kept firm.

The Jewish believers had long been accustomed to prophecy. We can understand this. They were an earthly people; and prophecy speaks of the earth, without opening heaven. He that came down from heaven as God, and went up again, not merely as God but as man, He it is who not only had the heavens opening on Him but by grace opened heaven for us. We belong to the opened heavens, because we belong to Christ who is there, on the footing of His work and not of His person only. For He came down in love and is gone up in righteousness, and this righteousness a justifying righteousness which gives us the very same title as Himself. Where this is understood, the difference between the Christian hope and prophecy is seen. Heaven is characteristically the place belonging to the Christian, as earth was to Israel. God promised the best place here below to them, as well as every conceivable blessing, suited to such a people. He promised to make them the most exalted nation on earth, not only blessed but a blessing. No faults of Israel can annul that promise in the long run. Certainly it is not yet fulfilled. As always, there is first the trial or

responsibility of the creature, followed by sovereign grace on God's part. In Israel's past history, we have had the creature tried; the future will behold God's mercy (Rom. 11) accomplishing everything according to His word, and giving freely according to divine goodness.

On the other hand it is impossible for the earth to be a place of real joy and blessing except through Jesus and His redemption. For Israel were sinners like others, and if they are to be blessed, they must be saved, and there is no salvation but by Him who died and rose for us. But then there is more. The cross of the Lord Jesus is the fullest proof of Israel's iniquity and rebellion against God. Hence meanwhile God acts on it to open, by Him who is now gone into His presence on high, a new and living way into the holiest. This and more than this God had not promised to Israel or any other nation. He had never given away heavenly glory to any. He was free to bestow it on whom He would, and He now does give it to Christ and the church. Not that one doubts that the Old Testament saints looked for a heavenly city; and I am sure that they will have it. If they looked for a better country, they will be there. But heaven is no small place. It cannot be measured by so many miles like the earth. Heaven is immense, and there will be ample verge and various scenes for the display of God's glory. The saints of Old Testament and of New Testament will be there. There is room enough and to spare for all. In the New Testament it is we find God bringing out all the elements of truth contained in the Old, but withal He brings out far more. He had secrets, things never divulged in the course of the earlier dispensation; but now they are. And the reason is manifest. Till the Son of God actually came, it would not have been suitable to the glory of God to have revealed what was to be specially between Him and His Son. The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven loves to bring out what the disciples could not bear before His resurrection. But now that redemption is accomplished, all is fully out, and very particularly that broad and deep and essential distinction which will now be set out, as God enables me, between the prophecy of events and the heavenly hope which the Holy Ghost has given us—a hope which was announced by Jesus, but which was to be explained with needed fullness by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven when the disciples could bear it. The great difference is that, as prophecy treats of the earth, so also it deals with times and seasons, with peoples and nations, with tribes and tongues, whereas the heavenly hope is independent of all that. Are these tribes and peoples and tongues on high? Is it any question there in the presence of God of days and weeks and times and years? The difference between earth and heaven is thus easily seen. The Christian hope, as it is let into our hearts from heaven, so is it as completely different from any prospect connected with the earth as the light of heaven is from a lamp, which, however useful in the darkness of the world, is as nothing compared with the light of day.

Nor is the figure of the lamp compared with daylight a mere idea of mine, but expressly furnished in the word itself. The Apostle Peter points out the selfsame distinction by this very comparison. (2 Peter 1)

In writing to Christians, who were once Jews and who were therefore familiar with prophecy, he tells them that they did well to take heed to the prophetic word. Their being Christians did not set aside what they had from God before. The Old Testament is in no way or degree, either as a whole or in part, blotted out by the New, but on the contrary shines more brightly and is understood incomparably better, when by the Holy Spirit the New is apprehended. Force is thus given to the Old, which enables the Christian to comprehend beyond the Jew. Take again the professing Christian that contends for Jewish forms, as a priest, sacrifice, or sanctuary now. Does

he understand them? Not in the least. So if you have ever talked with an intelligent Jew, say a Rabbi, on the Old Testament, you will have seen how utterly dark he is regarding his own scriptures; and the more intelligent he is, the more palpable his ignorance of all beyond letter or tradition; because the fact of his general intelligence proves that his state proceeds from want not of natural capacity but of divine light. No matter what his activity of mind or stores of reading may be, they only disclose the exceeding barrenness of the land. On the other hand the Old Testament is lighted up with a brilliancy unmistakably divine, and its meaning is unfolded in its depth and fullness, when one enters into the true place of the church of God through knowing Christ Himself. And never is the church discerned apart from Christ; and if He be not seen as Head, in vain men essay to preach up the church; for though Christ may be truly known and enjoyed by the soul without seeing the church, you cannot in any case apprehend the church of God without seeing His headship of it. Thus Romanists and Catholics of all sorts are apt to talk much about the church; but they use it as a shroud, as a dense covering from sight of the glory of the Lord Jesus. There you have utter darkness; and yet the church is of all things the most put forward in pretension. When the place of Christ and the church is really known, we begin to understand the Old Testament better, and every part becomes to us full of light instead of the cloud it once seemed. But those that are under its forms (christened I may say) do not understand the Old Testament, but only such as know Christ and our relationship to Him as Lord and Savior, Priest, and Head.

So it is in regard to the Christian hope also. When the heart is filled with it, one understands prophecy a great deal better than those who have only prophecy before them. The Christians that had been Jews were first slow to enter at all into the heavenly hope; and, when they were beginning to get a little better knowledge, the confusion of the two exposed them to the danger of letting prophecy slip without taking in the Christian hope. Such too is the state in which many Christians are at the present day. They understand neither; they have not got hold of the Christian hope, and they do not pretend to understand prophecy: perhaps indeed they think it cannot be understood at all. Probably the same persons would think it presumptuous to know their sins forgiven: seeing that they do not understand the gospel, it is hard to expect them to understand what is outside the soul. One could scarcely look for a soul to enter into the revelations of God in His word about other subjects so remote if they had not submitted to God's righteousness for their own souls. Once Christ is thus received, we begin to find what a key He is to unlock all the rest.

We see then that Peter, in writing to those Christian Jews, contrasts the heavenly hope with prophecy; the difference between them, which really involves and settles the compatibility of the two things, depends on this very distinction. Thus he says, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy” (or the prophetic word confirmed), “whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light,” really a lamp, “that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts.” Here prophecy is compared to the lamp that shines in a squalid place; the heavenly hope to daylight with above all the person of Christ as the day star, for that He is thus referred to cannot, in my judgment, be questioned. You will observe it is not “till the day come,” “till the arrival of the day of the Lord é' or the like. It is “till the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts.” It is the heart getting hold of the heavenly hope; it is no more than a question of the heart. It is not the day arising as the sun of righteousness upon the world. It is the heart now having Christ as its constant hope, and so in the spirit and light of the day before it shines on the earth by and by. The apostle

says that the lamp of prophecy is excellent until one has a better light, not the earthly lamp brighter, but a different kind of light, even that of day, and above all connected with the person of Christ, the day-star arising in the heart.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 13

The Christian Hope Consistent With Events Revealed in Prophecy: Part 2

This contrast of the apostle gives us exactly the nature of the Christian hope, because it is not merely a great change anticipated for mankind and creation; still less is it the illusion of the world being made better. It is not evil judged, or righteousness triumphant, however great and excellent. We do expect both; but they belong to prophecy, not their hope. Prophecy shows Babylon is to be destroyed and Antichrist judged. It shows the Roman empire by and by reorganized, with a head over it, when the west gets weary of little powers, and wants to have a chief opposed to the great leader of the east. Alas! all are only for destruction. If these things take place (and I am persuaded that prophecy shows they will, and that events already transpiring are leading on to them), they have nothing to do with the Christian hope. In looking into prophecy, we find ourselves on the ground of measured times and seasons; but these have nothing to do with our waiting for Christ from heaven. What has His coming to receive us to Himself above to do with judgments? What has our entrance into the Father's house to do directly with changes on earth? When the Lord comes to translate the saints to those mansions, He does not rectify the earth, He takes Christians away to heaven; but this does not alter the face of the earth. Undoubtedly a vast change will come in due time, and we may see the order of events a little later on. But I now speak of the essential difference between the two; and I affirm that the Christian hope is essentially bound up with heaven, while prophecy is occupied with earthly judgment and subsequent blessing; for evil, being that which prevails on the earth, must be judged to bring in a better state. Man as such has no title to go up to heaven. It is a matter of pure grace; and it belongs to Christ to show us that grace, and a part of His grace is for Him to come and present us in the Father's house. We have no claim to be there. It is the Son of God who according to the efficacy of redemption and in His own love will take us away from the world to be with Himself. This is the heavenly hope.

But there is a great deal more than this in scripture, and it will be shown that the attempt to bring in the earthly events of prophecy before Christ comes for the rapture of the saints is a mere misapprehension of persons who, in my judgment, are but imperfectly acquainted with the word of God. More mature and profound study of the word only confirms the impression of new-born and spiritual souls that we should be constantly waiting for Christ. No doubt there are divine revelations about what is coming to pass in the world, and serious and radical changes they are; but they never interfere with the Christian's expectation of Christ from day to day. Quite distinct from them stands that heavenly hope, which they are not allowed in any part of the New Testament to overlay or even modify.

Let us look at a few scriptures; and, as our first instance, at Luke 12 There not only is the disciple put in the place of waiting for Christ, but the greatest possible stress is laid on this that there should arise nothing to prevent his constantly looking for the Lord to meet him in the air. In verses 35 and 36 we read, “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and

knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.” There is no hindrance here for the disciple, no revealed delay on the part of the Master. His return was to be an immediate hope. Indeed the thought of any interposed delay is what the Lord is here arming the heart against most sedulously. Not only does He insist on the time being unknown as a motive for always expecting Him, but also that the state of the heart should be such that nothing should hinder an immediate response to Christ when He comes again.

Turn we now to the Gospel of John. Here the Lord presents His coming as a question of His own love to have His own with Himself above, and not in the least as referring to men on the earth, or dependent on signs, changes, and events that must previously take place. In chapter 14 the Lord says “In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” It is clear that this is totally independent of any movements here below. It is the heavenly hope, and this in its greatest completeness, not placed in connection with any earthly circumstances whatever. We have nothing of its order in relation to other things, but simply its character. It is just a question of the love of the Son and of the Father. He was not to be like the Jewish Messiah an object of sight; He was going to be invisible. He had been here a man before their eyes; but He was going away, and as God was an object of faith, so should He be: in truth He was God, even as the Father and the Spirit. He tells them not to let His departure distress them, for He was going to do better for them than could possibly be if He remained here. To have abode as they on earth, or even to have established the kingdom as returning to it, would have been in connection with His Messiahship; but His going to heaven was based on redemption as well as on His Sonship. The one links with the Son of David, the other with His divine glory; the one is connected with earth, the other with the Father's house -no doubt that house in which the Savior is gone to prepare mansions for us in heaven; but heaven is not so contracted as some think; and all heaven is not the Father's house, which is where the Father shows His special love to the Son. Of it Jesus says that there “are many mansions,” not merely one for the Father and the Son, but ample room for His risen saints. “I go,” He says, “to prepare a place for you;” because it was for those who were altogether strangers to such companionship above, a totally new thing for a Jew as such to expect. The constant expectation of the people was power and blessing coming down to earth, not at all the hope of being taken from earth to heaven, to enjoy glory in communion with the glorified Son of Man.

Here be it observed that in my opinion those called premillennialists have often brought a great stigma on the truth, by representing the earth as the future scene of our blessedness. Indeed such an idea is not peculiar to premillennialists; many theologians, such as Dr. Chalmers for example, had the same poverty of thought. A renovated earth for the risen saints was the idea from some of the early Fathers down to our day: which to my mind is not only unscriptural but exceedingly low. The earth, no matter how blessed, will never be the meet abode for the risen and glorified. The heavens are high above the earth, not only in locality but in character; and it is in heavenly places that we are blessed, it is there we know our portion in Christ even now. It is not therefore the earth, however transmuted or metamorphosed it may be, that is to form the sphere of our glory and home with Christ. I admit there will be a blessed change in that day on the earth; but this will be for Israel and the nations or Gentiles; whereas we by becoming Christians have ceased to be either Jews or Gentiles. We have acquired our character from Christ, and have a blessing suited to Him

on high. Until souls have a knowledge of this, they do not understand Christianity. The Christian is not merely a blessed man; for blessed then will be the Jews, and blessed even still the Gentiles. But the Christian is one taken out of all that belongs to him naturally and is put already by the power of the Spirit in a supernatural place. He knows it now by faith. It will be visible to all when the Lord comes. Accordingly, the Lord Jesus, who knew so well the Father's house, announces that He is coming for us and will bring us into the place He is preparing for us now: He will have us with Himself and as Himself.

This then is the Christian's heavenly hope. It is entirely independent of a revealed date or announced delay. The Lord never fixed nor disclosed it in His word; He made it entirely dependent on His grace to those He loves; as the Father has placed times and seasons in His own authority. On this the church has to depend; on this every Christian was meant to confide as he waits for Christ. The Christian knows Him whom he believes, that He may delay, and that His delay is salvation for those who otherwise must perish everlastingly. Though it may be keeping himself for a little out of His rest and glory with Christ, the Christian can delight that others also by the delay are going to be blessed of Christ. This is the definitely assigned reason for the delay which has nothing whatever to do with the judgments, &c, in the world of which prophecy treats. What have the seals, trumpets or vials to do with our joining Christ for heavenly glory? This last has no doubt to do with the secret counsels of the Father who is gathering out whom He pleases to make heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, but this has nothing to do with earthly revolutions.

If we look at the other Gospels we find many notable events predicted. We learn that the Jews, now scattered, are to be gathered once more; that their present misery is not all, for that they must pass through still deeper tribulation, but afterward be delivered and blessed by the Lord Jesus according to the promises made to the fathers. The apostles in the rest of the New Testament confirm this fully. Thus the epistle to the Romans, the grandest expose of fundamental Christian doctrine, most carefully shows that, however God may by the gospel meet sinners in indiscriminate grace, He has in no way forgotten His promises to His ancient people, His present heavenly purpose does not turn aside his intention of bringing the earth into the liberty of glory. The groaning creation shall yet rejoice under the second Man, when the day is come for the manifestation of the sons of God. Nor did the apostle withhold from men the solemn fact that God has appointed a day in which He is going to judge (not the dead only, as at the end of all, but the habitable earth in righteousness by the man He has appointed, even Jesus risen from among the dead. Preliminary judgments too must take place and mighty operations in. warning and testimony, which more or less fully are predicted in the prophetic word.

But here again I come to the very important question;-are these or any other public events revealed as occurring before the Lord comes to receive His heavenly saints? are they to take place at the same time? or do they occur after?

In dealing with these questions let us refer for a few moments to the Epistles to the Thessalonians, which are allowed to have been the first Paul wrote. They were written to young Christians that knew but little and that consequently were in no small danger of mistakes. In fact both epistles were written to correct misapprehension or error. What we find corrected in the first epistle was in regard to the dead saints; what was dealt with in the second touched rather the living saints. When the first epistle was written, the Thessalonian saints were so filled with the constant expectancy of

the Lord's return for them that they were quite taken by surprise when some of their brethren fell asleep.' Could anything show more vividly how the early church were looking out day by day for Christ? They thought their deceased brethren must lose much at that blessed moment because they had fallen asleep before Christ came. Such is the evident meaning of their agitation. Others may try from their mistake in this detail to get rid of the truth; they held rightly in the main but many who speak flippantly of the Thessalonians are in a more dangerous case habitually than ever were the Thessalonian believers. The latter had imbibed the thought somehow that the Christians were not to die before Jesus came. Now the Lord had never said so, nor had the Holy Spirit through the apostle ever taught so. It was an entirely human inference. Now no inference is a matter of faith. It depends of course on our soundness in deducing consequences from premises, under which too a flaw may lurk. It is very important for us to remember that in divine things we should look for the direct testimony of God's word, at all events for a revealed principle to guide us. In this case the Thessalonians, having trusted their own minds, could not understand that any Christians should die before Christ's coming. So when this befell some of their number, they were grieved beyond measure. The apostle writes to disabuse their minds of error on this point. (1 Thess. 4:13, 14.) “I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus [have fallen asleep through Jesus] will God bring with him.”

How strikingly different is the kind of comfort men habitually administer now! The thought they present to the bereaved (throughout Christendom) almost always is that their friends are gone to heaven. Nobody denies this in the case of deceased believers. They depart to be with Christ. They are not consigned to some place of detention in obscurity and seclusion from the Lord; they are imprisoned in no subterranean abode far from that heaven to which even here they belonged. Absent from the body they are at home with the Savior, which is far better. If it were only a poor robber before his death converted on the cross, he was that very day with Christ: such and so great and so immediate the efficacy of His blood. Is Paradise a garden of gloom, not of delights? Not even the earthly paradise of Adam in itself had a cloud; and is not the Paradise of God far brighter than where the first man was tempted by the devil? Error on this head I refer to, not only because it is pernicious but as showing how quickly the early church departed from the truth, for the notion here combated was, so far as the early Fathers speak, all but universal, and to this day the Greek and other ancient bodies are under similar illusions. They conceive that departed Christians are waiting in darkness till the resurrection, and therefore offer prayers on their behalf. They do not pray to them like the still more deluded Romanists; but they think their spirits are detained in that place of need till Christ comes.

It is plain however from the word of God that the deceased saints are with Christ, on the one hand, and on the other that, though with Him, their own state is imperfect till their bodies are raised. They only can enjoy the fullness of the glory God intends for them with Christ, and this not only in spirit but in body. There may be meanwhile all that the soul can take in, but it is not perfection till soul and body together share Christ in glory. Perfection will be when we are outwardly and inwardly and completely like Christ. So say the Scriptures, and they are always right. According to this was the comfort the apostle here gives the Thessalonian brethren. He points to the reunion at the coming of the Lord. How all is brought about we learn in the verses which follow(15-17). “For this we say unto you in the word of the Lord, that we the living that remain unto the coming of the Lord

shall in nowise prevent"-it is here an old English word for precede— “those that have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with archangel's voice, and with trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we the living that remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” If there be difference, the saints that may have fallen asleep come under the energy of the Lord's glory rather before the rest. But the truth is that in a moment both are to be caught up together. The Thessalonians were therefore troubling themselves without reason. They need not sorrow as the rest. It is right to feel grief for things as they are; and a miserable thing to treat sorrow, shame, death, sin, with indifference: the Lord when here sorrowed, as none else, never as those who have no hope. The truth brings in the Lord's coming and our resurrection to the richest comfort of the soul, instead of letting it harden and accustom itself to the consequences of the fall as inevitable. The second Man is looked to, instead of resignation to the miseries of the first.

On the face of it what can be clearer than that the moderns mistake in thinking that death is the Lord's coming to the Christian? Do you wonder that any should say so? It was only this morning I was reading the book of a Divinity Professor, and a believer too, which treated thus of the Lord's coming at death. Certainly it finds no countenance in scripture. What sort of doctrine is that? His presence will be deliverance from death for those that look for Him. It is the express comfort against death and grief about it. At death we each go to be with Christ; at His coming He will take us all to be with Himself. Such erroneous teaching ought to be met firmly; and, if any do not know better than to teach such things, it would be well if Christians did not listen, at least on such a theme. The worst is that it infects almost everything else unless it be the immutable truth of the Godhead and of Christ's person. They are only corrupting God's testimony by perverting the scriptures on the great province of our hope and prophecy too. The coming of the Lord Jesus is just the converse of the Christian's going to Him. The latter is but individual departure, the former is the glad moment when He will communicate His own joy to all that are His. The confounding of these two things is not only mischievous to the soul, but it also obscures the glory of the Lord Jesus. The Lord's coming is thus really in contrast with death; the consolation which grace vouchsafes in the sorrows we taste, the ultimate and only complete triumph of Christ over death in all its forms as far as the Christian is concerned. “Wherefore,” he says, “comfort one another with these words.”

In the next chapter the apostle enlarges on the day of the Lord. “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they,” that is, men generally on the earth not Christians, “shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” In the presence of the Lord, chapter iv., we saw only the saints concerned; but in the day of the Lord (chap, 5) we have the world involved. There is therefore an evident difference between them, though the presence of the Lord may go on in the day of the Lord and so include it. He will come to receive His own, taking them away from the earth to be with Himself on high; but the day of the Lord is His advent in judgment of man's pride and indifference, delusion and positive rebellion here below. When they shall say, peace and safety, sudden destruction soon follows. Accordingly nothing is said about taking up to heaven in chapter 5; nor is anything said about destruction in chapter 4. Who can fail to observe the propriety of all this? For it is simply a question of the testimony of scripture. Cannot the Lord come to take

His own on high without showing Himself at that moment except to those for whom He comes? He who on the score of difficulty cavils against this takes a dangerous path. For no one denies that shortly after the Lord will display the saints with Himself. That will be His day, a time of bitter anguish, because it will be His dealing with the earth and man apostate here below. But the coming of the Lord to translate His own to heaven is a different order of things. I do not speak now of “the coming of the Son of Man” because this, being the express relation in which He judges, necessarily modifies His coming. When He is seen coming or present as Son of Man, it is in reference to the earth. But I do not go tonight beyond the broad features which most need.

In the second epistle there is quite another point of view. The Thessalonians had been meanwhile agitated by certain persons who told them that their then persecutions or other trials, for they seem to have been passing through sore tribulation, were the beginning of the day of the Lord—that it was not impending only, as is commonly said, but actually come. On this account they were greatly troubled and shaken, and Paul writes this fresh epistle to banish their fears and settle them in confidence of the hope once more. “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming (or presence, for this is the meaning of the word) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled.” Assuredly it was the excitement not of hope but of anxiety and terror. It is no picture of sanguine people in haste looking for Christ, but of souls alarmed by a false apprehension that the day of the Lord had actually set in. Do you object to my going in this farther than the English version warrants? That version represents the errorists to have said (and this too pretending every authority for it, even to a letter from the apostle) “that the day of Christ is at hand.” It is now pretty generally known that the true text and proper translation of the last clause is “that the day of the Lord is present.” I am old enough to remember the time when scarcely a single person in the world seemed to be aware of this; and now, I am thankful to say, there are only a few prejudiced men to dispute it. It can scarcely be doubted that the present revisers will alter the version here, and alter it for the better too. I was agreeably surprised to see an American divine among the first who bowed to the truth in this passage; and now nobody who can pretend to be well informed of the grounds for a sound judgment on it makes any question about it, unless it be a few individuals committed in earlier days to a strong prejudgment against it. The right reading too, I must add, as conceded now on all sides is not Χριστο■ but Κυρ■ου, not “of Christ” but “of the Lord.” This being read, the true translation would be “as that the day of the Lord is present.”

Further no person can give a correct or intelligible meaning to the words as they stand in our version, at least without contradicting other scriptures. All existing interpretations founded on the common rendering betray the greatest possible perplexity or worse. Some years ago glancing over Professor Jowett's book on these epistles I could not but feel that every remark on the whole or on details displayed gross darkness. If he wrote with an unbelieving eye, without even using aright what knowledge of the language he possessed, it fares little better with men truer to inspiration. The false version had blinded all to its true sense.

Some of the interpreters too conceived the thought that the “letter as from us” referred to Paul's first epistle; but it is not so. A spurious letter is meant (not the apostle's at all), which taught that the day of the Lord was actually arrived—that day of trial and anguish and darkness, “that day” of divine dealing and destruction on earth. The rumor accordingly filled them with great uneasiness. They thought that the day of Jehovah or of judgment on the earth, for this is the idea, had already

come. What does the apostle do? He recalls them to the Christian hope, saying “we beseech you, brethren, by (or, for the sake of) the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of the Lord has set in (or, is present).” Observe what a light this casts on the subject before us. He urges them by their bright hope not to be alarmed by the false alarm grounded on a pretension to prophetical authority. The day of the Lord belongs to prophecy; the Lord's coming to gather us together is the proper Christian hope. He urges them by this hope, about which they had been instructed in the previous epistle, not to be alarmed by the novel object of terror the enemy was foisting in.

Then the apostle gives no little information. He assures them that the day cannot come unless there be first the falling away, or apostasy, and the man of sin be revealed. He does not say these things must occur before Christ comes, but beyond doubt before the day. They are prophetic events and cannot transpire until certain revealed antecedents have run their course, but there is no epoch set for the coming of the Lord, which is designedly unrevealed so as to preserve the saints in the constant attitude of waiting for Lord. Certain signal changes among men and new dealings of God are notified in the prophetic word, but not the Lord's coming to receive us, that the Christian might and in order that he should be always expecting. We know that upon earth there may be many a revolution that will dash the fond anticipations of men; but our hope is certain, even One who has passed through death and will shortly come again for us, whose love and truth we can trust as thoroughly as His power. Our hope has nothing to do with the changeful history of mankind or the nations; it is bound up with the divine purpose of God in Christ for the heavens and the earth. Still we know there are to be such events. The revelation of these events however in no way interferes with the Christian hope, but on the contrary the Christian hope puts them off, so to speak; that is to say, it governs them, not they it. Hence the apostle says “that day shall not come unless there come (not “a” but) the falling away first.” He refers to the awful state of apostasy from all revelation when Christianity will be no longer publicly owned, when the Jews themselves shall once more return to idols and the worship of man as their Messiah and Jehovah, when not a nation on earth shall uphold the law or profess the truth of God.

What is more, I am persuaded that the dissolving process even now rapidly goes on, and that the yielding of some and the anxiety manifested by others of the various powers to get rid of our connection with Christianity is in the hands of the enemy a means for bringing about this apostasy. Not that their indifference to the authority of God in His truth will harm the church of God; whose happiness or hopes ought always to have been above the nations of the earth, centering only in Christ. Miserably has the full blessing long been blighted, and their testimony marred and ruined by mixing up with the world. Still if a nation once adopted the profession of Christianity, it is a serious thing when political motives, with a background of infidelity, induce the desire to abandon it. For no doubt the standard of the cross was once raised by those who would now blot out the public recognition of it. Before many years elapse there will be no such thing as an oath or any other sign in human affairs, which brings in God. Everything that would serve as a witness to what God says, requires, gives, or is to judge, will be put away. The great object the devil has in view, no matter what men who despise prophecy may think, is the apostasy, or open abandonment of all confession of Christ and the true God. Nor is this all. Besides the apostasy there will be the man of sin. In contrast with the man of righteousness, who is gone up to heaven, the man of sin will set

himself up on earth, exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sits down in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. He will take the place of being God, not merely in the world but in His temple, not simply in earthly things but in what is peculiarly divine.

And even now among the most enlightened or at least pretentious and energetic nations of the earth, there are many, some of them professional divines, who believe that the day of Christianity is past, that the gospel is old and effete, on the point of waning away, as the first covenant was when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written. They believe that there was once the law, then the gospel; that both are now about to be numbered in the past, though not without influence on the future; still that as systems, the one as the other is bygone, the one about to give place to another and more glorious state, not by God's becoming man, but by man's becoming God. They believe that man as such is the fullest manifestation of God and that there is no being higher or better than the race. This they confess as the true advent and the real coming to reign and judge; when these rights are conceded, they imagine the results will be auspicious and bright beyond all conception for humanity. Germany (and I mention Germany because of its successful stride into power) is the great mover in all this glorification of man: France in a gross but petty way has been working to a similar issue; but the truth is that it will be exhibited throughout the west, not excepting the lands in which we dwell.

These dismal horrors are approaching. Some perhaps yet expect the gospel to prevail. O slow to believe the prophets! Who told them that the gospel ever was intended to convert the world? Rather was it sent to take man out of the world. We ought to have the most perfect confidence that the world will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea. But it will be brought about by divine power, by the Lord Jesus Himself. It will not be the fruit of man's efforts, but to the praise of the Savior in person. He alone who once suffered will deal effectually with the proud and God-defying lawlessness of which scripture we have seen, speaks, more than anything ever yet known; for the corruption of the best is always the worst. Judaism perverted was bad enough: but corrupted Christianity is incomparably worse. “The mystery of iniquity,” he goes on to say, “doth already work; only there is one who now letteth (or hindereth), until he be taken out of the way.” It is the Holy Spirit, who will not always control as now, but allow evil to take its course. This will be the removal of the hindrance spoken of here. “And then shall that lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness (or appearance) of his coming.”

The personal manifestation of the Lord's presence will effect this. As He will come to receive His own, so He will burst forth in visible judgment of the world. Not a word drops about the epiphany of His coming when He takes His own to heaven. It is not only His coming, but the appearing of it, when He deals with the lawless one. He comes to take His own first; after this He manifests His coming and destroys the lawless one.

Thus the Christian hope retains its unbroken and un-obscured power as the immediate object before the believer. There is nothing else to intercept the view, no previous events revealed which interpose between the heart or eye and the coming of the Lord. The Lord intended to keep the saints always looking for Him thus. How could the early church have waited for Him otherwise? Do you join with the infidel Gibbon in saying that the early church was wrong? Indeed it was what the

apostles taught and wrote, who were as right as the moderns are wrong. Will you for your tradition make void God's inspired word? Clearly the only way to keep the church constantly expecting Christ was to reveal no events as coming between. Thus the sanctioned practice and the theory of the Christian's habitually looking for Christ are not only intelligible but in perfect harmony with the word of God, whose wisdom shines the more we examine and understand it. There was no mistake in apostolic teaching or in its legitimate fruits. The Thessalonians were in danger from confounding the events of prophecy with the hope; the moderns have fallen into the pit whence apostolic vigilance extricated our earlier brethren. If there are revealed events which must take place before Christ comes, then clearly we could not with intelligence be constantly expecting Him. If the inspired apostles were right in setting Christians to be ever looking out for Christ, those are wrong now who have slipped away from that hope. But God is recalling His saints to wait for Christ as of old, and they are thus waiting. Indeed I fully believe that the cry is going forth, “Behold the bridegroom! go ye out to meet him.”

Do you still affirm that there were necessary delays? It is not a little remarkable how our Lord's parables are so shaped as never to reveal anything really inconsistent with expecting Him always. As far as the parable teaches (and this is the point), it might be the same persons that went out first, then slept, finally on awaking went out again to meet Him, and went in to the marriage. Not that the Spirit said that He was necessarily coming in their lifetime. We can now see how room was left for His tarrying in fact. But the truth was so put that those Christians then, as at every time since, should be expecting Christ; and this because the Christian hope is independent of earthly events. Earthly events are distinctly predicted; but they are never said to be before the Lord's coming to remove us to the Father's house. When the Lord takes up His earthly people, He begins to deal with the earth, and then predicted changes have their place. There will be the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom to all nations during that interval. Doubtless there will be an immense work and its fruit after the Lord has removed to heaven those waiting to join Himself in the air, but those (save the martyrs) quickened during that interval will live in the bright days of the kingdom.

Nevertheless as heaven is higher than the earth, so is our hope incomparably beyond theirs. From ignorance of this and confusion many a Christian was stumbled by those who insisted that the risen saints dwell with · Christ on earth in the millennial reign. For who that has the sense of heavenly glory could give it up for all the blessings of the earth? On the other hand there is no small defect in the faith of such as think that God made the world to be forever as miserable a place as it is now or only a shade better. He has made known to us His purpose to wrest earth and mankind upon it out of the hands of the destroyer. He will assuredly purify it and bring it back to more than pristine beauty, and the race to joy and blessedness, entirely to the praise of Jesus. The man who suffered is the One who is glorified and is about to appear.

Had there been time now to have glanced at the visions of the Revelation, it would have been easy to confirm what is here advanced. But it appears to me wiser not to encumber minds with details. Quite enough has been said to prove the point before us, and a very important point it is. Nor do I doubt that you will find, as you study the New Testament, that a considerable part of scripture falls under one or other of these two heads. As with everything else in the Bible, the moment you possess the real clue to a truth of God, you have that which explains many a point that seemed, previously, obscure or difficult.

Chapter 14

Christian Life in the Spirit

Phil. 2; 3

The whole of this epistle contains very little doctrine (doctrine being just alluded to in chapter 3); but it gives us, in a remarkable manner, the experience of a Christian life in the power of the Holy Ghost. It is full of blessing in that character-the life above seen down here in a man through the power of the Spirit of God. So much is this the case that the very word “sin” is not found in it. When he speaks of justification and righteousness, it is not in contrast with sin, but rather with human and legal righteousness. The flesh was there. At the very time Paul wrote the epistle he had got the thorn in the flesh to prevent it from acting; but we see in him one rising above the flesh and all hindrances, that Christ might be magnified in him. Whether to live or die, he did not know; he would have liked to be gone, but in love to the church he says, Better for you to remain; and so, counting upon Christ and knowing it is better, he knows he will remain. He knows how to abound and how to suffer need; he is pressing towards the mark for the prize-it is the only thing he has to do.

The graciousness of a Christian is in chapter 2, the energy in chapter 3, the absence of care in chapter iv.; but it is all by the power of the Spirit of God. It is well for us to lay it to heart. We are the epistle of Christ known and read of all men-an epistle written not in stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart. We are set as Christians to be a letter of recommendation of Christ before the world. Yet it gives us the fullest and blessedest confidence towards God if we take that ground; for, if we are in the presence of the world for God, Christ is in the presence of God for us. His work has perfectly settled that question, and He is every moment appearing in the presence of God for us.

We are loved as He is loved. In every shape in which we can look at it, all is a fixed settled thing according to the counsels of God in grace; it is in a poor earthen vessel, but our relationship is settled, all that belonged to the old man cleared away, and all that belongs to Christ, the new Man, our positive portion. Not only are our debts paid, but we are to be conformed to the image of His Son, and He has obtained for us the glory which is His own. “The glory which thou hast given me I have given them.” He has given Himself on the cross to meet what we were, and He has obtained for us all that He has. This is the way Christ gives—not as the world. If the world gives, they have it not any longer; but Christ never gives in that way—never gives away, but brings us into all He has. If I light up one candle by another, I lose nothing of the first; and such is the way He gives. I speak of blessed principles. “My peace I give unto thee.... that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” “Thy words thou hast given me I have given them.... that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them.” He became a man on purpose to bring us as men into the same glory as Himself. That relationship we are brought into already. “I go to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God.” If I look at righteousness and holiness, I am as He is; if at the Son, I am before the Father as a son; and, as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall bear the image of the heavenly.

The work that entitles us to this is absolutely and totally finished. The Spirit makes us first feel our need in order to our possessing it, but the work is finished. In order to get our path clear, we must see where He has brought us. I cannot expect anyone to behave as my child, if he is not my child; you must be in the place before you can have the conduct suited to that place, or be under the obligations which belong to it; and it is this last part I desire to look at a little to-night. “You hath He reconciled,” not brought half-way: as to relationship, brought into Christ. That is all. Through the work of the cross He put away our sins, and when He had done it, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. He finished the work which His Father gave Him to do; and in Hebrew the Spirit contrasts Christ's work with that work of the priests which was never finished, so that they never sat down.

We are perfect as pertaining to the conscience. A blunder often made is confounding perfection as to our state with perfection as to our conscience. When once we have understood the work of Christ, we are perfect as regards the conscience. If I look up to God, I can have no thought of His ever imputing sin to me again, or I could not have peace with God; and this is so true that it is said, if this work was not perfectly done, Christ must suffer again. But He cannot drink that dreadful cup again, the very thought of which made Him sweat great drops of blood. If there is any sin still to be put away (I speak now of believers), Christ must suffer again, and this can never be. God has set Him at His right hand as having finished the work:” I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; now, O Father, glorify thou me.” He will deal with His enemies, no doubt, when He rises up in judgment; but, as to believers, He is sitting down because He has no more to do. I am not speaking now, of course, of the daily grace He ministers to them. It is settled, and settled with this double aspect that, the purpose of God being to bring us into the same glory as His Son, the work of Christ not only cleared away our guilt but obtained that glory for us. We have not got it yet; but the work which is our title to it is finished, though we have not yet the glory to which it is our title. We are anointed and sealed with the Spirit, and He is the earnest of our inheritance. We are to the praise of the glory of His grace, but not yet to the praise of His glory, which will be when He comes the second time to bring us into the glory which His work obtained for us when He came the first time. And our life stands between the two—the cross and the glory.

We are here in this world, beloved friends, in the midst of temptations, snares, and difficulties, everything around us tending to draw us away; but the power of God is in us. We know that we are sons of God, though the world knows us not. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; and every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” The practical effect of beholding the glory of God is to change us into the same image.

When Moses came down from the mountain, they were afraid to look in his face, because the law required what they had not to give; but now I see the glory which excels, the glory in Christ, which is infinitely brighter. But the glory in the face of Jesus Christ is the witness that all my sins are put away. That which shone in the face of Moses required what man ought to have been as a child of Adam, but it came to man who was a sinner. It required righteousness, and pronounced a curse if it was not there. Now I see it in the face of Him who bore my sins in His own body on the tree. The Christian sees the Man who died for his sins now in the glory as Man, a witness that the work is done, and a testimony to the place unto which He is bringing us; and, meanwhile, we have the testimony of the Holy Ghost that our souls may be perfectly clear as to this.

That is where the believer is set, resting in entire confidence upon the efficacy of the work of Christ, and, upon the other hand, waiting for God's Son from heaven, -converted for this: “Ye yourselves as men who wait for their Lord.” Standing here is perfect liberty, for where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.

And here we have the proper experience of a Christian as led by the Spirit of God. We have in chapter 3 a Christian as to his walk, Christ having laid hold of him for that; as in 2 Cor. 5: “He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing,” &c. He has wrought us for that, not only cleared our sins. He sees Christ in glory before him (Paul had really seen Him there), and that was what he was going to get. “This one thing I do.... I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” What he was doing was to win Christ. He had not yet obtained Him, or got into the glory; but it was the only thing he was doing in the world: his whole life was that.

In chapter 2, on the other hand, Christ is looked at, not as going up to glory, but as coming down to the cross; and here we see the graciousness of His character. By this our hearts and affections are won, and we are formed into the likeness of this graciousness. And thus we have the two great things that govern the Christian: the glory that is before him, and the grace that has been shown him.

One word as to verses 12, 13: “Not as in my presence only,” &c. Often this “fear and trembling” is used to cast a doubt upon our relations with God. Yet it is not this we have to fear about. But we are in the midst of temptations, everything around us, the power of Satan distracting and turning the heart from Christ; and he presses upon them that, now he is absent, they must take care. He had worked for them when he was with them, he had met the craft of the enemy in wisdom and apostolic power; but he was in prison when he wrote this. He says, “Therefore, now, you must fight for yourselves;” but this is in contrast with his fighting for them; and they were to do it, for it was God that worked in them. The contrast is between (not God and man working, but) Paul and the Philippians. God it was who did work in them, were Paul there; and, if they had lost Paul, God who wrought in them was still there.

But, then, what a solemn thing for us, beloved friends, if we have the sense of this, that we are left down here to make good our path to glory against Satan and all the difficulties of the way! It is enough to make us grave. A false step will throw me into the snares of Satan. I have to be serious; I have the promise of being kept, but I need to be serious.

I have spoken of the finished work, but there is another thing that exercises us: how far can we look at the flesh and say we have done with it? And this is where the practical difficulty comes, if you are in earnest and desiring to walk in fellowship with the Father and the Son. I ought never to walk after the flesh. The existence of the flesh does not give me a bad conscience, but if I allow it to act it does. Whenever I let even an evil thought in, communion is interrupted. It is not that the flesh is gone as a matter of fact; not that there is nothing in us which Satan can tempt, but there is power in us not to let it act. The flesh is not changed. The word is as plain as ever it can be as to what the flesh is. If left to itself, it becomes so bad that God had to destroy the world. Noah, saved out of the old world, gets drunk. The law is given, and the flesh is not subject to it. Christ comes in grace, and the flesh crucifies Him. The Holy Ghost is given, and the flesh lusts against it; and we get the case of one in the third heaven, and the flesh ready to puff him up. The flesh could not be mended, but he gets a thorn in it. But that is no reason why I should ever let it act; it never ought.

Scripture does not speak of our being conformed to Christ here; it says we are to walk as He walked. But the place of conformity to Christ is the glory, and “he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself;” that is to say, he is not pure, he has not attained. The place where I shall be like Christ is in glory. He has obtained it for me; and then, my eye looking upon Him by faith, I am changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.

I find this the great truth which Scripture does give me: not only that Christ died for my sins, but that 1 died with Christ. In the epistle to the Romans, in the first part, you get all the sins dealt with, the great truth of Christ being substituted for us on the cross—bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, He is delivered for our offenses; and, in the subsequent part taken up, is the question, not of sins, but of sin—not the fruit, but the tree, and we are shown not to be in the flesh if the Spirit of Christ is in us.

I do not live by the life of Adam, but by the life of Christ; and this is where the total difference is for the Christian. But it is not only that I have a new life as quickened by Christ, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, nor that He has been crucified for me so that my guilt is removed, but I am crucified with Christ.

In Colossians we read, “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” —therefore dead in this world. This is God's declaration of our state as Christians. In Romans, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed.” “In that he died, he died unto sin.... wherefore reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God (not in Adam, but) through (or in) Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is faith's estimate of it, and this is where you find real deliverance and freedom from the bondage of sin. It is “no condemnation” not to them whose sins Christ bore, but “to them that are in Christ Jesus.” God condemned sin in the flesh: He did not forgive it, He condemned it. If I get the law, it condemns me; but Christ—does He condemn me? No; for He has taken the condemnation for me, and in Him God has condemned sin in the flesh, and I reckon myself dead because it was in death He did so. Christ's death is, as all that He has wrought, available to me; and therefore I reckon myself dead. In 2 Corinthians we get the carrying this out in practice; “Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in your mortal bodies.” And then he speaks of the exercises which God sends for our good, to test this realization in us and make it effectual: “Alway delivered unto death,” &c. We all fail for want of watchfulness, but that is what our life ought to be.

Suppose I have got a man in my house who is always at mischief. I cannot turn him out, but if I lock him up he can do no harm; is not changed, but I am free in the house. If I leave the door open, he is at mischief again; but we are to keep him locked up, this is what we are called to do—what God calls us to do. The world will not have this; it will mend and improve man, cultivate the old man, as if it could produce good fruit, because it does not see how bad it is. The world would dig about it and dung it. That has been tried. God cuts it down and grafts us with Christ. This condemning and cutting down was in the cross of Christ; not, of course, that He had any sin, but as made sin for us; and I know, not only my sins cleared away, but I am crucified with Christ, and my life hid with Him in God.

And this is available for power, if I carry it about in my heart. Supposing we honestly held ourselves dead; can Satan tempt a dead man? But in order for this, it must not be putting one's armor on when the danger is there; but, living with Christ, my heart is full of Him.

Would a woman who had heard that her child was killed or hurt at the other end of the town be thinking of what she saw in the shop-windows as she ran toward him? No; she would have just enough sense to find her way. If your hearts were fixed like that on Christ, nine-tenths of the temptations that come upon you would be gone: you would be thinking of something else, and outward things would only bring out sweetness, as they did with Christ; for we are never tempted above that which we are able.

Saints, if in earnest, have got to realize not only the putting away of their sins, but also the having died with Christ; and this delivers from the power of sin.

We see in chapter iii. a Christian with one object: knowing Christ has laid hold of him for glory, and his heart is running after Christ. I am to have no other object, though I may have many things to do. He is “in all” as the power of life, and He is “all” as the object of that life. He is all and in all. (See Col. 3:12.) This is again summed up in the latter part of Gal. 2: “Not I, but Christ liveth in me;” and then the object: “I live by the faith of the Son of God.” Then there is the sense of His perfect love: “Who loved me and gave himself for me.” The heart is fixed on Him, and follows hard after Him.

There is another thing—the spirit and character in which we walk down here; and this we see in Christ coming down. When I have got this blessed place, Christ my life, holy boldness, yea, to know we are sitting in Him in heavenly places, the place a Christian is called to (a wonderful thing, I grant) is to go out from God and be an epistle of Christ. I joy in God, have got the blessedness of what He is, and go on in communion with Him to show out His character in the world. This is in chapter 2.

Ought I to walk as Christ walked? Every Christian will own that: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” Suppose my soul has tasted this perfect love, and it is well we should recollect it, God's love shed abroad in our hearts, and know, be conscious down here, that we are loved as Jesus was loved; for if I really know God as thus revealed in Christ, what do I believe about Him? What put it into God's heart to send Christ down here? He knew how He would be treated. Did the world? It would not have Him when He came. It was all in His own heart! Perfect love in His heart; the unsuggested origin of every blessing. What character did it take in Christ? Was it staying up in heaven and saying, “You behave well and come up here?” No! we all know that. But He who, in the form of God, in the very same glory, thought it no robbery to be equal with God (mark the contrast with the first Adam), made Himself of no reputation; and what brought this about? Purest love, love coming to serve.

For Christ took the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man. He emptied Himself of all the glory—the very opposite of the first Adam. Divine love came to serve; a new thing for God—the only new thing. And this is what I learn. I know this love, I know that I am made the righteousness of God in Him; so that I stand before Him, and then I come out from Him towards the world to bring out this blessed character. I have learned the love, and now I must come out and show it. “Be ye followers of God as dear children.” You are children: that is all settled. Now you go and give yourself as Christ did, in whom this' love is known—a sacrifice to God, and for us. The spirit of love is always lowliness, because it makes itself a servant. I get the grace that brought Christ down. It is very difficult for us to bow: I know that, beloved friends. He “went to another village.” There was perfect meekness; but it tries men—some more than others; but the moment

perfect lovers seen, it comes and takes the lowest place to serve others. Paul endured all things for the elect's sake, that they might obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

And here I find what is entirely beyond law. Law tells me to love others as myself; grace tells me to give myself up entirely for my neighbor or for anybody. Did not God forgive you? You go and forgive your enemies. Is He kind to the unthankful and the evil? You go and be the same. It tests all the fibers of our hearts, all the pride and vanity and selfishness that are in us. You like doing your own will.

“He humbled himself and became obedient to death;” He goes so low down that He could go no lower; “even to the death of the cross.” But, then, “God hath highly exalted him.” He was the first grand example of “he that humbleth himself shall he exalted.”

Blessed be His name! He will never give up His service: it is the very thing He shows us, and in which He would that our hearts should see the perfection of His grace. It is what He is doing in John 13 He had been their servant down here, but now they might think that there was an end of His service. No. He says, I cannot stop with you, but I must have you with me: “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” He does a slave's work; and this is what He does now. We pick up dirt as we go—there is no excuse for it; but then is Christ up there, the Advocate with the Father. And, even in the time of glory, “He will gird himself and come forth and serve them;” He will be there to minister the blessing Himself. Our hearts want to learn the perfections of that love in which He came always down, down, till He could come no lower.

Are we willing to walk in that path? No one would deny we ought; but are we disposed to do it? Would our hearts he glad of the power of that grace which, holding the flesh as dead, can say, Here I am in the power of that love to walk as everybody's servant? We are to esteem others better than ourselves. If my heart is full of Christ, I judge myself for everything not like Christ: I judge the evil in myself because I see the blessedness in Christ. But what do I see in my brother? I see Christ in him. The effect of being full of Christ is to make me think little of self and much of my brother: there is no real difficulty about it if one is.

“Do all things without murmuring,” &c. If you take every single part of this passage, you will find it a statement of what Christ was here. He was blameless and harmless, the Son of God, without rebuke in the midst of this evil world; He was the light of the world, and He was the word of life.

If I reckon the flesh dead, only the life of Christ comes out; if only this came out, we should be a very wonderfully blessed kind of people! To him that hath shall more be given. If I yield myself to God as one alive from the dead, I have got fruit here unto holiness, as well as fullness of blessing hereafter.

I would ask you, beloved friends, do you purpose to be Christians? Are you willing to yield yourselves to God as not having one bit of will of your own? There is power in Christ, not to say “I am pure,” but, always having my eye on Him, to purify myself.

Chapter 15

Difference Between Christianity and the Future Kingdom

Psa. 14 and Isa. 59, which the Apostle Paul quotes as proofs of sin in the Jews, both end with deliverance in Jerusalem by power. In Rom. 3 the sin is met by present justification through the blood of Jesus. What a testimony to the difference between Christianity and the future kingdom of Jehovah!

Chapter 16

Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison: Part 1

(1 Peter 3:18 - 20)

It may interest and I trust also profit the reader, if we not only examine this scripture but review the questions raised on it for ages. Here many a Christian finds perplexity, rejecting what does not fall in with the analogy of faith, yet unwilling to doubt what seems intimated by the letter of the word. He is ready to suspect himself of failure in spiritual intelligence and to question whether there might not be some unconscious insubjection of heart and mind to the perfect revelation of God, The chief at least of the speculations in which men of reputation have indulged in ancient and modern times will claim a notice, in the hope of satisfying the believer that human thoughts are ever worthless and that divine writ is clothed by the Spirit with self-evidencing light and power for all who have their hearts opened to the Lord and are self-judged in His sight. It will be seen too that the most exact criticism in the details of the clauses confirms the general scope derived from the context as a whole, and that grammatical precision points with equal force in the same direction. Thus from every point of view the truth comes out with a fullness of proofs proportioned to the closeness of our investigation, once we have the right object and aim of the passage clearly ascertained and held firmly before our eyes.

I. The true text is ■τι κα■ Χριστ■ς ■παξ περ■ ■μαρτι■ν ■παθε, δ■καιος ■π■ρ ■δ■κων, ■να ■μ■ς προσαγ■γη τ■ θε■, θανατωθε■ς μ■ν σαρκ■ ζωοποιηθε■ς δ■ πνε■ματι, ■ν ■ κα■ το■ς ■ν φυλακ■ πνε■μασι πορευθε■ς ■κ■ρυξεν, ■πειθ■σασ■ ποτε ■τε ■πεξεδ■χετο ■ το■ θεο■ μακροθυμ■α ■ν ■μ■ραις N■ε κατασκευαζομ■νης κιβωτο■, ε■ς ■ν ■λ■γοι, το■τ' ■στιν ■κτ■ ψυχα■, διεσ■θησαν δ■ ■δατος. “Because Christ also once suffered for sins, just for unjust, that he might bring us to God, put to death in flesh but made alive in [the] Spirit, in which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison, disobedient on a time when the long-suffering of God was waiting in [the] days of Noah while an ark was being prepared, in which few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.”

The connection and scope is evident. The apostle is exhorting the believers to a patient life of suffering so as to fill with shame those who vented their spite on their good behavior in Christ. Who could gainsay that it was better, did the will of God so will, to suffer while doing well than doing ill; and this because Christ also suffered (but He suffered once, once for all) for sins? This should be enough: we should suffer not for sins, but only for righteousness or for Christ's name sake. It was His to suffer for us, this once and forever, just for unjust persons (for such were we), that He might bring us to God. It is ours to suffer at times especially, but in principle always while in this present evil world. The κα■ connects Christ and us as suffering, but the contrast is as striking as it is morally suggestive. To understand with some περ■ ■μαρτι■ν as a point of comparison between Him and us under such a junction is to miss the reasoning utterly, not to speak of failure in reverence towards the Savior in that work which stands far above all comparison. This ought to have been too plain to need further reproof from δ■καιος ■π■ρ ■δ■κων, where His solitary and unapproachable place is set out. It was His alone thus to bring us near to God. The participles that

follow tell us how this was done: “Put to death in flesh but made alive in [the] Spirit.”

But here a very important question arises. The article is certainly to be eliminated: what is the bearing of its absence on the meaning? If the articles were inserted, τ■ σαρκ■, and τ■πν., these would be the contrast of the two parts of our Lord's being as man, the outer and the inner; were it τ■ν a. and το πν., it would be the utterly false thought that His Spirit as man was the object of quickening. The anarthrous form points to the character of the acts specified; but so far is it from denying the agency of the Holy Ghost in the quickening spoken of, that the presence of the article would be more consistent with Christ's Spirit as a man. No doubt, when it is intended to present the Holy Spirit objectively or extrinsically, the article is required (and, as far as I can mark the usages, the prep. ■ν or ■π■); it is excluded where the manner of His action is meant. On the other hand, wherever the spirit either of Christ as man or of any other is to be expressed, the article is indispensable, as may be seen in Matt. 5:3; 26:41; 27:50; Mark 14:38; Luke 10:21; John 11:33; 13:21; 19:30; Acts 19:21; 20:22 Cor. 5:3, 5, &c. Again, the following cases without the article clearly mean the Holy Spirit, but as characterizing the action rather than specifying the person, though He must ever be a person: Matt. 22:43; John 3:5; 4:23, 24; Rom. 8:1, 4, 9, 13; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:2, 15, 16, 18, 25; Eph. 2:22; 3:5; 5:18; 6:18; Col. 1:8; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Peter 4:6; Rev. 1:10; 4:2: 17:3; 21:10. The attentive reader of these instances will see that the turning-point is not the presence or absence of a preposition, as some scholars have thought. Words after a preposition follow the ordinary rules. Only, with prepositions capable of usage with a statement of manner, as κατ■, ■κ, ■ν, the anarthrous form is of course more common. Thus ■ν πμε■ματι would mean in the power of the Spirit, the manner of being, or of being carried, built, justified, of blessing, preaching, or whatever else may be in question.

Hence the meaning here seems to be that Christ was put to death in respect of flesh, but quickened or made alive in respect of Spirit, in the power of which He went and preached to the spirits in prison. The ■ν ■ falls in with the Holy Spirit still more as that wherein Christ acted in testimony. It is not said that He went to the prison and there preached to the spirits; but that in the power of the Spirit He went and preached to the spirits that are there. For that το■ς ■ν φυλακ■ πνε■μασιν can signify “that are in prison” as naturally at least as that were there is certain: only the necessity of the context could really justify the latter sense. But if the context favor “that are,” it is the simple unforced bearing of the phrase. And that it does favor it is to me plain from ■πειθ■σασ■ ποτε ■τε κ.τ.λ. which points to an antecedent time of guilt, the ground of their being now imprisoned.

It may be doubted then whether quickened “by the Spirit” best gives the meaning of the apostolic statement: for that would most naturally suppose the Spirit as an exterior agent. Still the anarthrous construction, as is certain from the numerous places cited, does not at all exclude the Holy Spirit: only it speaks of the manner of the quickening, not of the personal agent. But the thought of His power is conveyed by the phrase that follows ■ν ■, wherein Christ is said to have gone and preached, &c. Thereby it is pointedly contradistinguished from πορευθε■ς in verse 22, which is not qualified by ■ν ■ or ■ν πνε■ματι, but left in its strict sense of a personal change of locality to heaven. Thus it is excessively rash to say that the rendering of the English version here is wrong either grammatically or theologically, though it is more correct to cleave as closely as our language permits to the Greek style of expressing “Spirit” as the character rather than agent of the quickening of Christ, though agent too He was beyond doubt.

Bishop Middleton wrote with great force on the insertion of the article, but he was not equally successful in accounting for its omission. Prepositions he treated as exceptions to rule, and anarthrous cases like σαρκ■, πνε■ματι, as practically adverbial. Hence in our passage, he held the apostle to mean that “Christ was dead carnally but alive spiritually;” as indeed he thought would flow from τ■ πν. if the article had been authentic. (Doctrine of the Greek Art. p. 430, Rose's Ed., 1855.) The only difference is, he thought, that by retaining the article we destroy the form of the antithesis between a. and πν. But instances already given show how imperfect this able treatise is in requiring either the article or a preposition to accompany πν. in the genitive or dative in order to mean the Spirit of God. Rom. 8:13 to which he himself refers refutes his position; and here Dean Alford, who is so strong against “by the Spirit” in 1 Peter 3:18, translates the same word exactly in the way condemned: “but if by the Spirit ye slay the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” So, on Gal. 5:5, A. expressly remarks on πνε■ματι “not' mente' [Fritz.] nor 'spiritually,' Middleton, al., but by the [Holy] Spirit, [reff.] as opposed to σ.” the very rendering he afterward treats as wrong grammatically and theologically. Again, on ver. 16 he particularly observes that πν without the article may and does here mean “by the Spirit” [i.e. of God]. His reason, probably after Winer or the like, is invalid; for it is not because it is a sort of proper name, but because it is employed characteristically. There is no need to multiply proofs against the comments on πν in 1 Peter 3:18—proofs equally at least against Middleton. Consequently Hammond, Pearson, Barrow, &c, the divines who denied the applicability of the passage to Christ's descent to hades, were not so far mistaken as thinks Dr. E. H Browne, the present Bishop of Ely. They contend that the true meaning of the text is that our Lord by the Spirit in Noah preached to the antediluvians, who are now for their disobedience imprisoned in hell.

“This interpretation of the passage,” says the Bishop, “depends on the accuracy of the English version. That version reads in the eighteenth verse ‘quickened by the Spirit.' It is to be noted however that all the versions except one (the Ethiopic) seem to have understood it 'quickened in spirit:' and it is scarcely possible, upon any correct principles of interpretation, to give any other translation to the words. If therefore we follow the original, in preference to the English version, we must read the passage thus: ‘Christ suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quick in His Spirit; by which (or in which) He went and preached (or proclaimed) to the spirits in safe keeping,' &c.” (An Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, &c, 1868, pp. 94, 95.)

I confess to surprise at such a rendering as “quick in His Spirit” of ζωοποιηθε■ς τ■ πνε■ματι. For, first, though there is an occasional looseness in the LXX, it is certain that the New Testament strictly and exclusively employs ζωογον■ω for keeping alive, ζωοποι■ω for making alive. Secondly, is it not singular to reason from a non-authentic word as the original? And the Bishop of Ely (see note p. 94) knows that the best critics reject the article before πν. If absent, it is impossible for πν to mean “in His Spirit.”

Besides, the resulting theology is as strange as the grammar; for he proceeds, “There is, it will be observed, a marked antithesis between ‘flesh' and 'spirit.' In Christ's Flesh or Body, He was put to death. Men were ‘able to kill the body,' but they could not kill His soul. He was therefore alive in His Soul, and in or by that He went to the souls who were in safe custody (■ν φυλακ■); His Body was dead, but His Spirit or Soul went to their spirits or souls. This is the natural interpretation of the

passage; and if it ended here, it would contain no difficulty, and its sense would never have been doubted. It would have contained a simple assertion of our Lord's descent to the spirits of the dead." To my mind such a sense must seem far below scripture. For what a poor inference that men could not kill Christ's soul! Why they could not kill the soul of the least of His saints, nay, nor of the most wretched of His enemies. Indeed "kill the soul" in any case is a singular phrase to use of any one, most of all to feel it worth while denying it in the case of our Lord Jesus. How different His language! "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." "He was therefore alive in His soul" is a feeble platitude for the issue of the clause, as surely as it supposes a wrong sense given to ζωοποιηθε■ς, not to speak of the confusion of the soul with the spirit in a way foreign to all exact speech. The interpretation therefore would be in every respect unnatural even if it ended here.

"When we follow, the gulf widens which severs truth from error. "But it is added that He not only went to the spirits in safekeeping, but that He went and preached to them. Hence it has been inferred that, if He preached, they had need of, and He offered to them, repentance. Hence the passage has appeared to savor of false doctrine, and hence its force has been explained away. But the word 'preached,' or 'proclaimed,' by no means necessarily infers that He preached either faith or repentance. Christ had just finished the work of salvation, had made an end of sin, and conquered hell. Even the angels seemed not to be fully enlightened, as to all the work of grace, which God performs for man. It is not likely then, that the souls of the departed patriarchs should have fully understood or known all that Christ had just accomplished for them. They indeed may have known, and no doubt did know, the great truth that redemption was to be wrought for all men by the suffering and death of the Messiah. But before the accomplishment of this great work, neither angels nor devils seem fully to have understood the mystery of it. If this be true, when the blessed Soul of our crucified Redeemer went among the souls of those whom He had just redeemed, what can be more probable than that He should have 'proclaimed' (■κ■ρυξεν) to them that their redemption had been fully effected, that Satan had been conquered, that the great sacrifice had been offered up? If angels joy over one sinner that repenteth; may we not suppose paradise filled with rapture when the Soul of Jesus came among the souls of His redeemed, Himself the herald (κ■ρνξ) of His own victory?"

It is certain, however, that the preaching of which the apostle here speaks was addressed neither to angels nor to devils nor yet to patriarchs, but expressly to those who did not hearken to it in the days of the divine longsuffering just before the deluge. The text itself therefore dissolves the airy fabric we have just seen; and proves that the preaching was addressed, like all other proclamations of the truth, to faith, but, as in this world constantly, met with unbelief and insubjection of heart in those who heard. Indeed in p. 96 Dr. B. confesses that the proof-text is not favorable to the point they would make it prove. "The only (?) difficulty, in this interpretation of this difficult passage, is in the fact that the preaching is specially said to have been addressed to those who had once been disobedient in the days of Noah. That many, who died in the flood, may yet have been saved from final damnation, seems highly probable, and has been the opinion of many learned divines. The flood was a great temporal judgment, and it follows not that 'all who perished in the flood are to perish everlastingly in the lake of fire.' But the real difficulty consists in the fact, that the proclamation of the finishing of the great work of salvation is represented by Peter as

having been addressed to those antediluvian penitents (?), and no mention is made of the penitents of later ages, who are equally interested in the tidings."

The really important thing for all to weigh is that this difficulty is created by the interpretation that Christ went in His soul and preached to the spirits in the separate state. The text itself speaks of His preaching to such as had been once disobedient in Noah's days. The only unforced inference is that these are in prison because of their disobedience of old, not that being in prison they obeyed Christ's preaching in hades. Nor is there the smallest hint that, having perished in that great temporal judgment, they were alleviated by any subsequent preaching of our Lord, but rather that they are kept waiting for a still more tremendous, because an eternal, judgment before the great white throne. They despised Noah the preacher of righteousness, but not without impunity, for the flood took them all away; but worse remains than the flood brought in upon the world of the ungodly. They are kept for judgment like such angels as sinned.

(To be continued)

Chapter 17

Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison: Part 2

(1 Peter 3:18.)

(Continued.)

“It must be confessed,” continues Dr. B., “that this is a knot which cannot easily be untied. Yet should not this induce us to reject the literal and grammatical interpretation of the passage, and to fall back upon those forced glosses which have been coined in order to avoid, instead of fairly meeting and endeavoring to solve,” the acknowledged difficulty. To my conviction there is nothing to untie, where one cleaves to the strict language of the apostle and the real bearing of his argument. For he is exposing indirectly the Jewish unbelief which would have nothing but a Messiah visibly reigning in power and glory to the exaltation of the chosen people and the confusion of their enemies. The faith of the believing Christian Jews in Him, dead, risen, and gone to heaven, exposed them to the derision of their brethren after the flesh, who felt not their sins and cared not for the grace of God displayed in redemption by the blood of Jesus. He was preached, not present but rendering testimony by virtue of His Spirit. Hence the importance of pointing to His testimony by Noah, a testimony to man as such, like the gospel of Christ, for it was before the days of Israel or even Abraham, and the most striking epoch and even period of preaching to men in all the Old Testament.

This is entirely confirmed by Gen. 6:3, where Jehovah said,” My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” Then the ark was preparing, the space of God's long-suffering; and “the waters of Noah came,” and man was destroyed from the face of the earth. And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man; for the days of the gospel are preeminently of testimony, as were those before the deluge, during which Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. But he was not a believer only, but a preacher of righteousness, more emphatically than we find it said of any other in Old Testament times. The preaching was in the power of the Spirit, and hence attributed to the Spirit of Christ, who is ever the active person in the Godhead, as is well-known in each visitation of man before the incarnation, preparing both the way and mind for it. Compare “the Spirit of Christ” which was in the prophets of old. (Ch. 1: 11.)

This then would encourage the believing Jews, as it might well admonish their despisers. It is a question of preaching to the world still in the Holy Spirit, not yet of the public reign and government of the Lord. So Christ wrought by the Spirit then; and so He does now. As the flood came on those heedless of the preaching of old, so it will be when He comes in judgment, for He is ready to judge the quick and dead. And if they taunt the believers with being so few compared with the masses that believe not, let them not forget that but eight souls were then saved through water; which figure now saves, baptism, on one side of it death, on the other resurrection, Christ having passed actually for us, as we also in spirit by faith having a good conscience before God through Him who is not only risen but at the right hand of God in heaven, where the highest and mightiest of

creatures are subjected to Christ, who is therefore as full of assured security for His own as of irremediable ruin for all who slight the warning.

In this tracing of the links of the apostolic thought and word, I am greatly mistaken if the least strain is put on any part; as I believe the true text and the exact version have been already given. It is not so with those who have flattered themselves that they adhere most closely to the words of the apostle and their plain sense.

Thus when Bishop Middleton considers the true meaning to “be dead carnally, but alive spiritually,” almost every word is misrepresented; for, to bear such a translation, the sentence should have been θαν■ν μ■ν σαρκικ■ς ζ■ν δ■ πνευματικ■ς, though I should call such a statement absurd and heterodox. I deny that we must or can render θανατωθε■ς μ■ν σαρκι ξωοποιηθεις <50 πνε■ματι in any such fashion. Bishop Browne is as wrong in adopting such a. thought in the note to p. 911 as he is in giving “quick in His Spirit” in the text of p. 95, or in expounding it as Christ alive in His soul, in or by which He went to the souls ■ν ϕ. All this in my judgment is as loose in grammar, as in philosophy if they allude to this; as faulty also in theology, as it has not the least coherence with the context or scope of the apostle's reasoning.

If Peter too had meant to say that the soul of our Lord went to these other souls, he must have taken a most circuitous and unexampled mode of expressing it in employing the phrase ■ν ■, referring to πνενματι just before. The statement, if not the interpretation, would be most unnatural. Taken as it stands for Christ's going and preaching in virtue of the Spirit by Noah to the rebellious antediluvians, it is in my judgment fully justified, were this necessary, by the Pauline phrase, κα■ ■λθ■ν ε■ηγγελ■σατο ε■ρ■νη ■μ■ν το■ς μακρ■ν κα■ ε■ρ■νην το■ς ■γγυς. The latter is even a stronger instance; for there is no explanatory reference to πνε■ματι ■ν ■. Further, it is not a natural interpretation to take τοπις ■ν ϕ. πν. as those who were, but who are, in prison, because of ■πειθ■σασ■ν ποτε ■τε κ. τ. λ. following, which very simply attributes their being in custody to their disobedience of old. There is no need nor just ground for joining ποτ■ with πορευθε■ς ■κ■ρ. but with ■πειθ. which marks off their unbelief at the preaching from the time when they were in prison. “We are thus shown, as plainly as words can, that we are reading of Christ preaching not in person but by virtue of the Spirit to those suffering the consequences of having been disobedient in the days of Noah.

Again, be it observed, the moral aim of this supposed preaching in the unseen world is as unsatisfactory as we have seen the grammar to be irregular and the doctrine strange. For it supposes a preaching confessedly without either faith or repentance as its end; and it selects, in what seems the most arbitrary way, out of all the departed souls those spirits imprisoned because of their heedlessness, when the long-suffering of God was awaiting in the days of Noah. To single out such willful sinners, as the objects to whom Christ in the under-world proclaimed His triumph and their fully effected redemption, seems to me a statement as foreign to scripture as-can be conceived, and equally ill adapted to impress their danger on such as now despise the preached word.

Bishop Horsley's Sermon on the passage, which is so warmly commended both in Bishop Middleton's Treatise and in Bishop Browne's Exposition, appears to my mind little worthy of confidence. Thus he affirms strongly that the English translation of ξ. δ■ πν., though “a true proposition, is certainly not the sense of the apostle's words. It is of great importance to remark,

though it may seem a grammatical nicety, that the prepositions, in either branch of this clause, have been supplied by the translators and are not in the original. The words ‘flesh’ and ‘spirit,' in the original, stand without any preposition, in that case which, in the Greek language., without any preposition, is the case either of the cause or instrument by which—of the time when—of the place where—of the part in which—of the manner how—or of the respect in which, according to the exigence of the context; and to any one who will consider the original with critical accuracy it will be obvious, from the per-feet antithesis of these two clauses concerning flesh and spirit, that if the word ‘spirit' denote the active cause by which Christ was restored to life, which must be supposed by them who understand the word of the Holy Ghost, the word 'flesh' must equally denote the active cause by which He was put to death, which therefore must have been the flesh of His own body—an interpretation too manifestly absurd to be admitted. But if the word ‘flesh’ denote, as it most evidently does, the part in which death took effect upon Him, ‘spirit' must denote the part in which life was preserved in Him, that is, His own soul; and the word ‘quickened' is often applied to signify, not the resuscitation of life extinguished, but the preservation and continuance of life subsisting. (?) The exact rendering therefore of the apostle's words would be, ‘Being put to death in the flesh, but quick in the spirit,' that is, surviving in His soul the stroke of death which His body had sustained, ‘by which’ or rather ‘in which,' that is, in which surviving soul, 'he went and preached to the souls of men in prison or in safe keeping.'“

I have given this long extract which clearly puts this able divine's objections to the Authorized Version. Now, without committing myself to the defense of what is not quite correct, I have no hesitation in asserting that Horsley, by his own mistaken view, has diverged incomparably farther from the truth. We need not go beyond the bishop himself and the passage in debate where he gives a difference of shade to the two participles which are quite as much contrasted with each other as their complementary datives. According to his own principle therefore as the first means “put to death,” the other should be “made alive,” even if its uniform usage by inspired writers did not force one to the same conclusion. Why then did not H. carry out fairly and fully his own reasoning? Because it would have involved him in the result that Christ was not only put to death in the flesh but made alive in His own soul or spirit. The good bishop of course shrank from so portentous an inference, and was therefore driven to modify the antithesis, not in πνε■ματι but in an unnatural and unfounded interpretation put on ξωοποιηθε■ς, which even Dean A. explodes, insisting justly on “brought to life,” instead of preserved alive.

The truth is that Horsley did not himself seize the exact force of σαρκ■ and πνε■ματι, still less the difference produced by ■ν in the beginning of verse 20. Christ was put to death in (i.e. in respect to) flesh, as a living man here below; He was made alive in (i.e. in respect to) Spirit, as one henceforth living in the life of resurrection, characterized by the Spirit as the other by flesh, though of course not a spirit only but with a spiritual body. It is not His own spirit as man, which is far worse than the English Version here both grammatically and theologically. Grammatically it would demand τ■ πν., which is a reading unknown to the best copies and scouted by all competent critics; but, even if grammatically and” diplomatically legitimate, it would land us in the frightful heresy that Christ died not merely in flesh but in spirit, and had to be quickened in that of man which dies not even in the lost. Only the materialist conceives that spirit, if he allows of spirit, can die.

Further, if ζ. δ■ πν. refers to the resurrection of Christ, it is harshness itself and out of all reason to suppose Him back again in the separate state, in the verse following, where Horsley takes ■ν ■ to mean in which surviving soul He went and preached to the souls of men in prison. But understand it, as I believe ■ν means we should, that Christ also went iv πνε■ματι, not now in character of Spirit, but in virtue of' the Spirit or in His power when He preached through Noah; and all is precise in grammar, correct in doctrine, clear in sense, and consistent with the context. When we are raised by and by, it will be δι■ τ■ ■νοικο■ν α■το■ πνε■μα, because of His Spirit that dwelleth in us. It was not suitable to Christ so to speak of His resurrection. He was when put to death quickened πνε■ματι, denoting the character of His life in resurrection (not merely the agent), ■ν ■ κα■ marking the Spirit's power in which, before He was thus put to death and raised, He went and preached to the spirits in prison, disobedient as they were once when, &c.

Who can wonder therefore that the Anglican divines in the 5th of Queen Elizabeth dropped the reference to this passage of Peter in Article iii. where they had inserted it in the 6th and 7th of King Edward the sixth? Nor need we with Bishop Horsley impute it to undue reliance on the opinion of Augustine (ep. 99 [164], Evodio), who was followed by some others of the fathers in rejecting the superstitious idea of Christ's preaching in Hades. The excellent Leighton at a later day was so far from seeing this to be the plain meaning of the passage, that he does not hesitate to say, “They that dream of the descent of Christ's soul into hell think this place sounds somewhat that way; but, being examined, it proves no way suitable, nor can by the strongest wresting be drawn to fit their purpose.”

On the other hand the figurative explanation of το■ς ■ν φ.πνε■μασιν is quite indefensible and uncalled for. The sense of sinners shut up in a prison of darkness while living on earth, whether in Noah's day or in apostolic times, whether of the Gentiles or of the Jews and Gentiles, must be rejected. Bishop Horsley however is as mistaken on his side when he avers that such passages as Isa. 49:9; 61:1, refer to the liberation of souls from Hades. Equally wrong is his idea that ποτ■ joined with ■πειθ. implies that the imprisoned souls were recovered from that disobedience and before their death had been brought to repentance and faith in the Redeemer to come. Contrariwise the scope is that, having once on a time disobeyed when God's long-suffering was waiting before the deluge, they are in prison. In virtue (or in the power) of the Spirit Christ went and preached to such, by a preacher of righteousness, no doubt; but it is styled His preaching to enhance the solemnity of what was then refused, as it was also in Peter's day. These spirits were in prison as having once been disobedient thus and then; and God will not be mocked now if Christ's preaching in the Spirit be rejected and He be despised in His servants. Where would be the force of the few, that is eight, souls who were saved through water, if the disobedient mass or any of them were saved none the less though outside the ark? It is certainly a suicidal citation which H. makes from the beginning of Rev. 20:13; for we know that the sea will have none to give up at that epoch but the unblessed and unholy, all the righteous dead having already been raised in the first resurrection. Nor is there the least reason from scripture to fancy that souls deceive themselves by false hopes and apprehensions after death, so that some should need above others the preaching of our Lord in Hades. It is nowhere said that thither He went and preached. The spirits are said to be in prison, and this, as having once on a time been disobedient; but it is not said or meant that there Christ went and preached to them.

It is no question then of discrediting clear assertions of holy writ on account of difficulties which may seem to the human mind to arise out of them, but of an interpretation which produces endless confusion, leads inevitably into false doctrine, and has no connection with the passage any more than with the general tenor of revealed truth elsewhere. To put such a notion, based on a bad reading, slighting the exactness of grammar, ignoring the nice distinctions of the phrases, and resulting in the most impotent conclusion spiritually; to put this on the same level “with the doctrines of atonement—of gratuitous redemption—of justification by faith without the works of the law—of sanctification by the influence of the Holy Spirit;” to say that, discrediting Christ's preaching in Hades, we must, on similar grounds, part at once with the hope of resurrection, is more worthy of a bold or weak special pleader than becoming a grave and godly minister of Christ. To urge that its great use is to confute the notion of death as a temporary extinction of the soul or of its sleep between death and resurrection is certainly not to claim much from so wonderful a fact, if a fact: whether scripture does not abundantly confute such dreary and mischievous dogmas of unbelief, without resorting to strange doctrine based on a hasty and superficial interpretation of 1 Peter 3:18 - 20, may safely be left to spiritual men who judge according to the word of God.

(To be continued.') —♦-

Chapter 18

Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison: Part 3

(1 Peter 3:18 - 20.)

(Continued from page 32.)

It is curious to see how an intrepid and strong-minded writer, such as Bishop Horsley unquestionably was, commits himself to untenable statements, once he leaves the lines of the Holy Spirit in scripture. “The apostle's assertion therefore” (says he) “is this that Christ went and preached to souls of men in prison. This invisible mansion of departed spirits, though certainly not a place of penal confinement to the good, is nevertheless in some respects a prison. It is a place of seclusion from the external-a place of unfinished happiness, consisting in rest, security, and hope, more than enjoyment. It is a place which the souls of men never would have entered, had not sin introduced death, and from which there is no exit by any natural means for those who once have entered. The deliverance of the saints from it is to be effected by our Lord's power. It is described in the old Latin language as a place enclosed within an impassable fence; and in the poetical parts of scripture it is represented as secured by gates of brass, which our Lord is to batter down, and barricaded with huge massive iron bars, which He is to cut in sunder. As a place of confinement therefore, though not of punishment, it may well be called a prison. The original word, however, in this text of the apostle imports not of necessity so much as this, but merely a place of safe keeping; for so this passage might be rendered with great exactness. 'He went and preached to the spirits in safe keeping.' And the invisible mansion of departed souls is to the righteous a place of safe keeping where they are preserved under the shadow of God's right hand, as their condition sometimes is described in scripture, till the season shall arrive for their advancement to their future glory; as the souls of the wicked, on the other hand, are reserved, in the other division of the same place, unto the judgment of the great day. Now, if Christ went and preached to souls of men thus in prison or in safe keeping, surely He went to the prison of those souls, or to the place of their custody; and what place that should be but the hell of the Apostle's Creed to which our Lord descended, I have not yet met with the critic that could explain.”

The careful reader will perceive, indeed any one when it is pointed out, the immediate departure from scriptural sense and accuracy. For the apostle does not assert “that Christ went and preached to souls of men in prison.” He speaks not of human souls generally but only of those characterized by disobedience of yore, when Noah the preacher of righteousness prepared an ark to the saving of his house. This makes all the difference possible; for there is no reference whatever to the invisible mansion of departed spirits as a whole, still less to the special place of seclusion for the good. These last are in fact excluded by the language and the thought of the apostle. His argument is against those who, as incredulous Jews were especially apt to do, made light of preaching Christ only present in Spirit, not reigning in power, and of the comparative fewness of those who professed to believe. His refutation of their taunts and proof of their extreme danger are grounded on the Lord's dealing with the men of Noah's day who similarly despised the divine warning, while those only were saved who heeded it. How few the latter, how many the

former!

It is true indeed that “it is a place which the souls of men never would have entered, had not sin been introduced;” but what is this to the purpose? It applies on the side of good as of evil, of heaven as of hell; for sin, which lost living on the earth along with innocence furnished occasion for that infinite grace which gives the believer eternal life and heavenly glory in and with the Son of God, the last Adam. And if the actual condition of the departed be as regards the body incomplete, even so it is not correct to speak of our being at home with the Lord as “a place of unfinished happiness,” though the Lord Himself, the saints with Him, and those on earth are looking onward to the day of His and their manifested glory when the world shall know that the Father sent the Son, and loved us even as He loved Him; when He will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and are on earth, in Him in whom also we have obtained inheritance, being predestinated according to His purpose; when in virtue of the name of Jesus every knee shall bow of beings heavenly, earthly, and infernal, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to God the Father's glory.

Nowhere does scripture speak of “the deliverance of the saints from” this state of things, though surely it is of the Lord's grace and the divine virtue of life in Him, that He will raise their bodies and transform what was erst of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory, according to the working of power whereby He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. This no doubt is the full answer to the cry of the wretched though quickened man (in Rom. 7): “who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?” For it is our resurrection (Rom. 8:11) which will manifest the victory over death through our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is His resurrection which has even now given us life in the Spirit, freeing us from the law of sin and death. “We have for our souls what we shall know at His coming for our mortal bodies. But deliverance from a place of seclusion for our spirits, to be effected by our Lord's power, is a dream wholly opposed to the scriptural representation of the saints' enjoyment with Christ meanwhile. The apostle declares that to depart and be with Him even now and thus is very much better than remaining here, though doubtless there will be more for the body when He comes: for the soul there cannot be. Therefore, while earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, he says that we are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord; that is, rather than abide here in the body absent from the Lord. Yet are we now, not shut up as were believers before redemption, but called to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

Hence it is in vain to urge what the old Latin language describes, since it is quite opposed to the truth; and it is a mistake to cite the poetical parts of scripture which treat of the deliverance of God's people on earth. For “the gates of brass” and “the bars of iron” (Isa. 14:2) certainly refer to Babylon not to the presence of the Lord with whom are the spirits of departed saints. So Psa. 121:5, “Jehovah is thy shade upon thy right hand,” is expressly a prophetic song for Israel in the latter day, and in no way about those deceased; as Isa. 49:2 certainly has no such reference, the context plainly giving the transition from Israel to Christ. It is a distressing misrepresentation then to call His presence a place of confinement, though not of punishment, which “may well be called a prison.” Never does God's word so call it. The converted robber asked to be remembered when Christ comes in His kingdom (i.e. in the resurrection state and the day of glory for the earth), and the Lord gives him, as a nearer comfort and intrinsically the deepest joy, the assurance of being with Him that very day in paradise. It is grievous dishonor to Him and ignorance of scripture to

slight such grace, even to the length of saying that it “may well be called a prison.” Certainly it will never be so called by one who appreciates either the blessedness of Christ's love or the honor the Father is now putting on the Son. The Father's house can only be called “a prison” by the darkest prejudice. It is where Christ is now, and where we shall be when Christ at His coming takes us to be with Him as the expression of His fullest love. The presence of the Lord on high is the very kernel of joy by grace, whether for the separate spirit after death or when we are all changed at His coming.

Feeling apparently that this is rather strong language (though many of the fathers knew no better through their ignorance of eternal life in Christ and of redemption), Bishop Horsley qualifies his defense, and affirms that the original word in the text of the apostle imports not so much as this, but merely a place of safe keeping. Now what are the facts of the usage of φυλακ■? Primarily it means the act of watching; hence (2) the persons that watch or guard (as in Latin and English); (3) the time; the place, not only (4) where those watching are posted, but (5) where others are kept as in ward or prison. Such, with the moral application of taking heed and being on one's guard from keeping in ward, are the chief senses in which the word was employed by the Greeks. The New Testament has it once in the first sense (Luke 2:8), once in the second (Acts 12:10), five times in the third (Matt. 14:25; 24:43, Mark 6:48, Luke 2:8 twice), and forty times in the fifth sense, including not only 1 Peter 3:19, but Rev. 18:2, where it is in the Authorized Version translated “the hold of every foul spirit and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird,” all evidently equivalent to the meaning of “prison,” which is used even of Satan's place of temporary detention. Never elsewhere does the Holy Spirit use it in the more general signification of a mere “place of safe keeping.” Is there any special reason in our text why it should here be so rendered? The assigned ground of custody being the former disobedience of the spirits thus restrained, there ought to be no hesitation in accepting the English Version as fully justified, and rejecting that suggested as unexampled in New Testament usage and at issue with the context.

It is going beyond scripture then to affirm that “Christ went and preached to souls of men thus in prison or safe keeping,” and not at all sure that He went to the prison of those souls or to the place of their custody. It is quite sure that the apostle speaks only of the spirits in prison, disobedient once when the long-suffering of God waited in Noah's days, not to souls of men as a whole in the separate state. It is sure that Christ, in the power of the Spirit, went and preached to the former, but it is nowhere written that He went to the prison or place of custody of any souls whatever and preached there. The building and the ground-work of Bishop Horsley are alike unsubstantial; his handling of scripture careless, and his reasoning unsound. Such passages as Isa. 13:7; 49:9, have only to be examined with ordinary attention in order to satisfy any candid mind that it is a question of the deliverance of captives in this world, be it literal or figurative, and in no way of men after death.

If, as Bishop Browne holds, hades or paradise are two names applying to the same state, it would seem to follow that paradise must apply to the place of departed saints, and hades to their state as separate from the body. For 2 Cor. 12:2, 4, naturally connects paradise, not with heaven merely, but even with the third heaven, where the Lord is (cf. Luke 23:43); and Rev. 2:7 is decisive, that in this very paradise of God will the faithful have their future reward at Christ's coming, when risen from the dead or changed. It is an error therefore to think that it is another place, for the latter scripture certainly identifies the scene of the separate spirits of the saints with that of their future

glorification. They are with the Lord now, as they will be when changed, and thus completely and forever with Him; but now as then in heaven. The ancients who denied this were as wrong as the moderns who popularly hold the soul's passing at once on its final reward with very little thought of the resurrection at Christ's second coming or of the kingdom.

But I may here add that the ancient versions are too loose to render any help worth naming. Without discussing now whether the Peschito does (as Bode and others assert) or does not use scheiul for the grave as well as hades, it is plain that “lived” in spirit is faulty for ζωοποιηθεις, and that to leave out “in [or in the power of] which,” substituting a mere connective particle “and” is far from the truth. “To the souls which were kept” may after a fashion represent το■ς ■ν φ. πν., the addition of “in hades” or “scheiul” being unwarranted. There are other inaccuracies; but let this suffice. Par better here is the Philoxenian Syriac, which is thus rendered by White, “morte affectus quidem carne, vivificatus autem spiritu. In quo et spiritibus, qui in domo custodiae sunt, profectus praedicavit: Qui non obediverant aliquando, quum expectabat longanimitas Dei in diebus Noe” &c. The Arabic (Pol.) and the Vulgate alone give correctly the beginning of the verse, the Erpenian Arabic and the Aethiopic being as loose as the Peschito Syr. The Aeth. adds “holy” to “Spirit;” but it does not follow, as Bishop Middleton seems to think, that the other ancient versions did not understand exactly the same sense, though they very properly did not add the word “holy” so as to define their rendering more than the original text. The Coptic, according to Wilkins, is no better than the rest. This is his version— “mortuus quidem in carne, vivens autem in Spiritu. In hoc Spiritibus [S. sic] qui in carcere abut evangelizavit. Incredulis aliquando,” &c.

In every version and in every edition of the text, accurate or faulty, this at least stands out irrefragably that the spirits in question are nowhere represented as those of men who had already repented when on earth, but on the contrary as disobedient. This we have seen to be very far from the only difficulty in the way of the alleged preaching in hades; but it is at least felt and confessed by the stoutest champions of that interpretation. It is quite erroneous to assume that Peter speaks here of the proclamation of the finishing of the great work of salvation, still more to say that it was addressed to the penitents of antediluvian times, even if there were no question about the penitents of later ages who are equally interested in the tidings. The apostle uses not even ε■αγγελ■ζομαι (which, though expressive of glad tidings, admits of far greater latitude in scripture than the good news of the finished work of salvation) but κηρ■σσω, a word equally applicable to express a public setting forth of righteousness and a warning of the destruction which must fall on the despiser. (Compare 2 Peter 2:5, “Noah a preacher of righteousness,” δικαιοσ■νης κ■ρυκα.") The main difficulty then really is that the text speaks only of impenitent persons; the expounder only of penitents.

Whatever the rapture with which we may suppose paradise filled when the soul of Jesus came among the souls of His redeemed, it is certain that the passage of the apostle says not one word about it; and it would be no small difficulty to produce any other scripture which does reveal it. Here it is a question of the spirits in custody for their former disobedience in the days of Noah, while a very few in contrast with them were saved, used for the present comfort of saints taunted with their paucity by the masses who despised what was preached by the Spirit now as before the flood. Possibly no doubt some who then perished in the waters may not be doomed to perish everlastingly in the lake of fire; just as one at least preserved in the ark may not have been ordained to eternal life. But all this is only profitless speculation; and those who indulge in it lose

sight of the grand and plain lessons of the apostle, whether for the comfort of the faithful or for the warning of unbelievers. Before the kingdom of God is established and displayed in power, the masses have ever been disobedient to the word, and believers a little flock; but be these ever so few, let those not forget the days wherein a world of impious men perished; and this too is not the worst, for their spirits are in ward (which is never said of the righteous), the Lord without doubt reserving them as unjust for judgment day to be punished.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 19

Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison: Part 4

(1 Peter 3:18-20.)

As much misconception exists respecting Calvin's sentiments, I will here state fully what he has written in his early and later works. It is at any rate an error to classify him, as did Dean Alford after Huther, with those who understand the passage of a literal descent of our Lord into hades; for Calvin nowhere commits himself to any such statement, though, as already pointed out, he applied the phrase in the creed to His sufferings on the cross, and he conceived the efficacy of that work sensibly and at once to reach the Old Testament saints. The reader need not for a moment suppose authority is attached to what may be quoted from the great leader of the reformed. The effect, I trust, will be only to prove the incontestable superiority of the divine word; the wise being weak where they depart from it, while it gives light to the simple.

The first allusion in order of time is in the Psychopannychia, published in 1534, when the author was but twenty-five years of age, a tract directed against the materialistic notion of Anabaptists and others, who would have the soul to sleep during its departure from the body before the resurrection. Some zealots were the more disposed to embrace this revolting and utterly unscriptural scheme; because, if true, it would decide against the Popish dreams of limbus patrum and in particular of purgatory. But Calvin's pious sobriety was proof against such a temptation even in the heats of controversy. This is his use of the text, as quoted from the third volume of his Tracts (Translation Soc. Ed. 1851, pp. 428,429)— “Not less evidently does the Apostle Peter show that after death the soul both exists and lives, when he says (1 Peter 3:19) that Christ preached to the spirits in prison, not merely forgiveness or salvation to the spirits of the righteous, but also confusion to the spirits of the wicked. For so I interpret the passage which has puzzled many minds; and I am confident that, under favorable auspices, I will make good my interpretation. For after he had spoken of the humiliation of the cross of Christ, and shown that all the righteous must be conformed to His image, he immediately thereafter, to prevent them from falling into despair, makes mention of the resurrection to teach them how their tribulations were to end. For he states that Christ did not fall under death, but subduing it came forth victorious. He indeed says in words, that He was ‘put to death in the flesh but quickened in the Spirit' (1 Peter 3:18), but just in the same sense in which Paul says that He suffered in the humiliation of the flesh, but was raised by the power of the Spirit. Now, in order that believers might understand that the power belongs to them also, he subjoins that Christ exerted this power in regard to others, and not only towards the living but also towards the dead; and moreover not only towards His servants but also towards unbelievers and the despisers of His grace.

“Let us understand, moreover, that the sentence is defective and wants one of its two members. Many examples of this occur in scripture, especially when as here several sentiments are comprehended in one clause. And let no one wonder that the holy patriarchs who waited for the redemption of Christ are shut up in prison. As they saw the light at a distance, under a cloud and shade (as those who saw the feeble light of dawn or twilight), and had as yet an exhibition of the

divine blessing in which they rested, he gave the name of prison to their expectancy.

“The meaning of the apostle will therefore be that Christ in Spirit preached to those other spirits who were in prison-in other words, that the virtue of the redemption obtained by Christ appeared and was exhibited to the spirits of the dead. Now, there is a want of the other member which related to the pious who acknowledged and received this benefit; but it is complete in regard to unbelievers who received this announcement to their confusion. For when they saw but one redemption, from which they were excluded, what could they do but despair? I hear our opponents muttering, and saying that this is a gloss of my own invention, and that such authority does not bind them. I have no wish to bind them to my authority; I only ask them whether or not the spirits shut up in prison are spirits.”

In this handling of the text there is no great ability in tracing the apostle's scope or in developing the argument of the epistle, though the reasoning may be fair against the fancied sleep of the soul. But it is plain that Calvin then held that the power of the work of Christ when accomplished reached the departed spirits, just and unjust, not that He visited them in person. He confesses that the sentence does not express what he wishes it to comprehend; for the member relative to the pious is wanting, unbelievers only being spoken of, at least completely. The truth is that the only patriarchs in question were those preserved in the ark; yet they are contrasted with the disobedient whose spirits were in prison. The pious Noah and his house therefore are not wanting afterward, but so named as to refute the argument before us.

Not long after Calvin published his “Institutes of the Christian Religion,” in the second book of which (chap. xvi. § 9) we may see, if possible more clearly, how little he agreed with the class to which of late he has been assigned. After a severe but just reproof of those who like Bishop Horsley in modern times wrest Psa. 107:16 and Zech. 9:11 to an imaginary subterraneous limbus, treating such thoughts of Justin M., both the Cyrils, Ambrose, Jerome, Ac, as no better than a fable, he then proceeds:-

“And what need was there that the soul of Christ should descend thither to set them free? I readily own indeed that Christ illumined them by the power of His spirit, enabling them to recognize that the grace, of which they had only had a foretaste, was then displayed to the world. And probably to this may be applied the passage of Peter where he says that Christ went and preached to the spirits in a watch-tower (it is commonly rendered 'in prison'), 1 Peter 3:19. For the context also leads us to the conclusion that the faithful who had died before that time were partakers of the same grace as ourselves; because he dwells on the power of Christ's death in that He penetrated even to the dead, pious souls enjoying an immediate view of that visitation for which they had anxiously waited, whilst on the other hand the reprobate more clearly knew themselves shut out from all salvation. Though Peter does not speak very distinctly, it is not to be received that he absolutely confounds the righteous and the wicked; he only intimates that both alike had the death of Christ made known to them.”

It is a strange notion, adopted by Calvin first (it is to be hoped, without a single intelligent follower), that φυλακ■ here means a watch-tower, whence he supposed the saints to have been awaiting the Messiah. On this no remark is needed in addition to what has been made already, unless it he that the verse itself is as inexorably adverse to it as the general usage of the New Testament. For the spirits spoken of are those of men not only without the least hint of any subsequent obedience,

but expressly said to be kept in ward because of former disobedience. The only reason for charging defect or indefiniteness on the passage is the singular fancy that the apostle meant to include the pious in these spirits without one word to justify it. As to the wicked the language of the apostle is confessed to be “complete.” The reverent reader of scripture will not fail to censure Calvin for adding to God's words, rather than Peter for taking away. In text or context there is no thought of making known Christ's death to believers and unbelievers, but very plainly does the apostle urge the danger of despising Christ's testimony by the Spirit, even before His kingdom came, and this drawn from the days of Noah, to which the Lord elsewhere compares the day when the Son of man shall be revealed. (Luke 17) Before the flood, as now, we see a time of testimony; but an awful blow fell on heedless man then, as there will again shortly from Him who is ready to judge quick and dead. If there is any reference in the context to the believers who died before Christ, it is to those saved in the ark, a figure of the salvation set forth in baptism by virtue of Christ's resurrection, while the spirits in prison were those of the men who perished in the deluge for their unbelief.

But here again we see how far it was from Calvin's mind that our Lord in His disembodied state did actually go to the place of detention of departed spirits and there preach; still farther that He thus preached salvation to those in that state who had refused to obey the voice of God when the judgment of the flood was hanging over them. The plain words of scripture here as elsewhere give no countenance to such strange doctrine, nor is it true that there is any dark enigma in the judgment either of men before the flood or of those the apostle warns here. It is neglect or unbelief of scripture to say that these are cases where the final doom seems at all out of proportion (I will not dwell on the impropriety of saying with the late Dean Alford “infinitely out of proportion") to the lapse which has incurred it. To speak or to think so is to dispute with God and contemn His most solemn revelation. If the antediluvians had a doom more awful than others before them, we have the divine assurance on the one hand of a special testimony to them, and on the other of their excessive corruption and violence. Most justly therefore did the Judge of all the earth send the flood which took them all away, save the man of faith who, warned of God of things not seen as yet and moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Granted that worse remains for all unbelievers than the flood; but not worse for antediluvians as such than for others; and for none so bad as for those who slight God's call to repent and believe since redemption, especially for such as bear, and bear falsely or with indifference, the name of the Lord. Who that beholds the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world can say that the doom of unbelievers is out of proportion to their guilt? He who can deliberately say it seems to me to have no real sense of man's evil or of God's infinite grace.

To allow that unbelievers, who perished at the flood or otherwise, are objects of a preaching of salvation in the disembodied state when Christ died or at other seasons, is to cast off not only the general testimony of Old Testament and New but very specially that dark background of eternal judgment and destruction which the gospel affirms with a precision unknown to the law. To found such a renewal of hope for deceased unbelievers on our text, and to hint at extending it indefinitely, seems to my mind presumption of the most perilous sort.

But there is a third passage from Calvin's writings of a later date which may furnish further matter for reflection as well as comparison with scripture. In his comment on the Epistle, published about

the beginning of 1554, it will be observed for the third time that, far from admitting Christ's personal descent to hades as meant by the text, he seeks to explode any such application. “It has been a threadbare and common opinion that Christ's descent into hell is here stated; but the words mean no such thing. For there is no mention made of the soul of Christ but only that He went by the Spirit. But these are very different things, that Christ's soul went and that Christ preached by the power of His Spirit. Expressly therefore does Peter name the Spirit to take away the notion of what may be called a real presence."

Again, Calvin sets himself against the view advocated chiefly by Socinian commentators, but also by Grotius, Schottgen and others, who take the preaching as that of the apostles, by το■ς ■ν φ. πν. understand either the Jews under law, or the Gentiles under Satan proves, or both together as bound with a common chain of sin, the allusion to Noah's time being no more than a sample or similitude. To this our commentator replies: “I allow indeed that Christ through the apostles went by His Spirit to those who were detained in the flesh; but this explanation is proved false by many considerations. First, Peter says that Christ went to ‘spirits,' by which he means souls separated from their bodies, for living men are nowhere called spirits. Secondly, what Peter repeats in chapter 4 does not admit of allegory. Therefore the words must be understood properly of the dead. Thirdly, it seems most absurd that Peter, speaking of the apostles, as though forgetting himself, should go off to the time of Noah. Certainly such a mode of discourse would be abrupt and unsuitable. This explanation then cannot stand.”

But there is no sparing the notion of many Fathers, now it would seem reviving, that dead unbelievers had a fresh offer of salvation and in fact were saved after the cross. “Moreover their madness who think that unbelievers in the coming of Christ were after His death free from their guilt needs no longer refutation; for it is the certain doctrine of scripture that we do not obtain salvation in Christ save by faith, and therefore for those who have been persistent in unbelief up to death there is no hope left.”

Then he gives his reason for rejecting the notion that prevails among the Greek and Latin Fathers— “Somewhat more probable is their assertion who say that the redemption procured by Christ availed the dead who in Noah's day had long been unbelievers, but repented a short time before they were drowned in the deluge. The idea therefore is that they suffered in the flesh the punishment due to their perverseness, yet that they were saved by Christ's grace from perishing forever. But this conjecture is weak; as besides it is inconsistent with the context, for Peter ascribes salvation only to the family of Noah, and assigns to ruin all who were outside the ark.”

But we must pay more heed to his own conclusion in its most mature form. “I therefore do not doubt but Peter says generally that a manifestation of Christ's grace was made to the godly spirits, and that they were thus endued with the vital power of the Spirit. “Wherefore there is no cause to fear that it will not reach to us. But it may be inquired why he puts in prison the souls of the godly after quitting their bodies. To my mind indeed φυλακ■ means rather a watchtower in which a watch is kept, or the very act of watching. For it is often so taken among the Greeks, and the sense would be excellent that godly souls were intent on the hope of the promised salvation as if they saw it afar off. Nor is it doubtful that the holy fathers in life as well as after death directed their thoughts to this object. But if anyone chooses to retain the word (prison), it will not be unsuitable; for as, while they lived, the law (according to Paul, Gal. 3:23) was a sort of strict custody in which

they were kept, so after death they must have felt the anxious longing for Christ, because the spirit of liberty had not yet been fully given. Therefore their anxious expectation was a kind of prison."

Here for the third and last time in his writings we see how Calvin repudiates the idea of Christ's actual descent into hades. He among the reformed held a view substantially similar to that of Durand among Romanists that Christ's preaching to the spirits was a visitation by the efficacy of His work, not by His presence among them. To call Abraham's bosom or paradise either a watchtower or a prison will not be accepted by sober believers as fair dealing with our Lord's intimation. To be "comforted" is no characteristic of imprisonment. Dean Alford's note on Luke 23 is not only exceptionable throughout, but its conclusion is refuted by 2 Cor. 12 and especially by Rev. 2:7, where beyond controversy paradise is the scene not merely of blessed spirits but of the perfection of glorified humanity in heaven. The effort of Calvin to reconcile the idea of a prison with spirits in heaven (as he at least believed) is vain; and the weakening if not change of the apostle's words is the evident and inevitable consequence. It differs little from the Romish dream of purgatory as stated in the Decrees and the Catechism of the Council of Trent.

It is not correct therefore to say that thus far the apostle's words seem to agree well with the fact itself—with the thread of the argument. "But what follows," even be confesses, "is attended with some difficulty; for he does not mention the faithful here but only the unbelieving, by which the whole of the preceding exposition seems to be overturned."

I do not agree with the ground of objection any more than the thoughts we have next, though believing that there is the strongest ground and that the reasoning given has no real force. "Some have been led by this reason to think that nothing else is said here than that the unbelievers who had formerly opposed and persecuted the godly found the Spirit of Christ a judge, as if Peter consoles the faithful with this argument that Christ even when dead punished them. But their error is disposed by what we shall see in the next chapter that the gospel was preached to the dead, that they might live according to God in the Spirit which peculiarly applies to the faithful. Moreover it is certain that he repeats there what he now says." "Next they do not perceive that Peter meant them especially that as the power of the Spirit of Christ showed itself vivifying in Him and was known as such by the dead, so it will be toward us."

The apostle seems to me correcting unbelieving notions natural to those who looked only for the Messiah reigning gloriously and delivering them from their enemies, and therefore despised the Spirit's action in preaching, and comparatively small results which yet appeared, nay the present sufferings and persecution of Christians. Peter brings in Christ's death but also His resurrection, and points to His dealing of old by the Spirit (not by a personal display in glory) where there was disobedience then as now, but to their spirits as in prison kept for judgment, besides the public fact in this world that far fewer than the Christians were saved in the ark. Further, it is gratuitous assumption to bring in here 1 Peter 4:6 which has to my mind a quite distinct bearing. Calvin's mistake is proved by 2 Peter 2:6, which does expressly treat of the same time and excludes all idea of the faithful by the declaration that God brought a flood on a world of ungodly persons. I believe accordingly that the apostle does certainly not repeat there what he now says, but speaks here of good news having been set before dead persons also, though of course the preaching to them was while they lived, with one or other of these two results, "in order that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, and live according to God in the Spirit." For the Jews

habitually were apt to lose sight of the judgment of the dead in their eagerness to put forward the judgment of the quick as to which the heathen were wholly ignorant.

“Let us see however (continues he) why he mentions only unbelievers; for he seems to say that Christ in Spirit appeared to those who were formerly disobedient. But I distinguish otherwise; that then also the pure servants of God were mixed up with unbelievers and were almost hidden by their multitude. Greek syntax (I confess) is at variance with this meaning; for Peter, if he meant this, ought to have used the genitive absolute. But because it was no new thing for the apostles to put one case instead of another, and we see Peter here heaping together many things confusedly, and no other suitable sense can be elicited, I have no hesitation in thus explaining an intricate passage; so that readers may understand that those called disobedient are different from those to whom the preaching was made. After then he said that Christ manifested Himself to the dead, he immediately adds, “when there were formerly disobedient men; by which he means that the holy fathers sustained no harm from being almost overwhelmed by the multitude of the ungodly.” To the rest of his remarks I make no objection as they seem sound and sensible: but it would not be easy to discover a match for the hardihood of the words just cited and the utter want of self-distrust in thinking and speaking as he does of an inspired man. The Greek construction, he admits, is adverse to the sense he would impose. This is enough for one who believes that the Holy Spirit perfectly guided Peter. Certainly the dative ■πειθ■σασιν is in agreement with the πνε■μασι just before, which demolishes the imaginary distinction of God's servants mixed up with the unbelieving. It is impossible to construe or even conceive the meaning Calvin would insist on without giving up the claim of the Epistle to be divinely inspired. Again, it is as false that the apostles elsewhere put one case instead of another, as that Peter here heaps anything confusedly together. The most suitable sense has been shown to be the strictest according to grammatical considerations. Calvin therefore would have been much wiser if he had hesitated about his own explanation, which in fact brings intricacy into a passage by no means obscure either in syntax or in scope. The Christian reader will want no further reasoning to assure him that the spirits in prison are no other than those of men once disobedient when the Spirit of Christ in Noah preached by him before the deluge. It is egregious to suppose that the Spirit was not only to strive with them, contrary to God's express admonition, after the term of a hundred and twenty years allotted in divine long-suffering, but even to save some or all after Christ died: a strange proof, it must be allowed, that the Lord knows how to deliver godly persons out of temptation and to reserve unjust men unto judgment-day to be punished.

(To be continued.')

Chapter 20

Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison: Part 5

(1 Peter 3:19.)

Having examined the statements of the Reformer most celebrated for his doctrine, we may now turn to the very different views of Bellarmine, the most famous of those who have written on the Romanist side, with the authoritative statements of the Council of Trent in their Decrees and Canons, and yet more fully in their Catechism. To the discussion of our text the Cardinal devotes the entire chapter xiii., book iv., of his third general controversy—that about Christ (Disput. R. Bellarmini Pol. Tom. I, pp. 176 - 178, Col. Agr. 1615). It may strike some as remarkable that the text is not cited by him to prove purgatory, but only the descent of Christ's soul to hell; and the more so as the proofs of purgatory from the New Testament are lamentably defective and manifestly forced. But this able controversalist justly avoided the passage as evidence for purgatory; for nothing would suit Romish ideas less than preaching, least of all Christ's preaching, to souls there. Wholly different is their scheme, which distinguishes purgatory from limbus patrum.

Purgatory according to Tridentine doctrine is a penal fire to satisfy for the remains of sin in the righteous, a place of punishment where justified souls in general suffer for a time before they go to heaven; for, as they teach, souls dying in mortal sin go to hell, while on the other hand martyrs and adults dying immediately after baptism go to heaven. Thus, in the first part, art. v. § iv. - vi. of the Catechism, they distinguish hell into (1) the place where the damned are forever punished, (2) the fire of purgatory where the souls of the pious suffer torture in expiation for a definite time, and (3) the receptacle in which the souls of saints before Christ's advent were received, and, exempt from any pain and sustained by the blessed hope of redemption, dwelt there in peace. It is true that this last statement does not cohere with the language of § 8 that the fathers were tortured in suspense while waiting for glory: but when was error really consistent? Again, in § 10 they confess that Old Testament saints, like those of the New, not only were in limbus as we have seen, that is, in the bosom of Abraham, but also might need the satisfaction of the ire of purgatory for their venial sins, and for whatever remained of the temporal punishment due for mortal sins though forgiven.

It is plain therefore that it is ignorance of their own doctrine or deceit for a Romanist to cite our text for purgatory. Their most authoritative teaching is that the apostle speaks of the place once occupied by the Old Testament saints before Christ came and took them to heaven. Limbus patrum is therefore without a tenant, and useless for any practical purpose now. Purgatory is far otherwise, according to their best instructed doctors; though why it should be styled “purgatory” does not clearly or satisfactorily appear, for there is only the endurance of penalty, and no real purging whatever. How opposed to the truth and grace of God! By Christ all that believe are justified from all things and have life, eternal life, in Him. They are dead with Christ from sin; crucified with Him, yet they live of a new life, not the first Adam life, but Christ living in them, dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Hence sin is not to reign in their mortal body. They are under not law but grace; and, living in the Spirit, they have to walk in the Spirit; but if one sin, we have an advocate with the Father, and the washing of water by the word is made good to us by the

Spirit in answer to Christ's intercession when we are defiled in any way.

But Romanism ignores and destroys the entire groundwork of the gospel, and its privileges as applied now to the believer. They preach as if Christ was such an one as themselves; they reason as if His blood had no more efficacy than a bull's or a goat's; their thoughts of sin are as human as of the Savior and of His work. Of a real communication of life through faith, of a new and spiritual nature which the believer has in receiving Christ, they have no notion; for if they saw either life or redemption as scripture puts them, there could be no place for purgatory. There is a process of cleansing which goes on in the believer while he passes through this defiling world, that the practical state may correspond with the standing, with life in Christ and full remission of sins by His blood. But when the Christian departs from this life, he departs to be with Christ, and there is no need of cleansing more, as only the new and holy life remains, Romanism sets up the veil of Judaism again, undoing laboriously the infinite blessing of a known reconciliation with God founded on atonement, and consequently putting those who bear the Lord's name outside in the court, in darkness, doubt, and uncertainty. It is the unbelief of nature, usurping the place of the gospel, a mere round of rites which flatter the flesh and can never clear the conscience: and no wonder, because the true light which now shines is intercepted and the power of redemption is wholly denied. Hence it is really heathenism clothed with Jewish forms, a return of the Gentiles in Christendom to the weak and beggarly elements to which they desire to be again in bondage. It is the more guilty, because it is a going back to old darkness after God's revelation of Himself as a Savior in Christ, a churlish turning away from the feast of divine love and light where the Father imparts His joy in goodness, saving the worst and to the uttermost, let who will stay without and boast of their own ways to His dishonor.

But enough of the fabulous purgatory: our business is with B.'s explanation of our text. The first exposition noticed is that of Augustine, who applied it to the preaching of Noah by the Spirit of Christ to the men of that day. The chief defect in it is that the prison is held to be the mortal body, instead of seeing that ■ν φ. (“in prison") refers to their subsequent state when alone also they could be properly designated as πνε■μασιν or “spirits.”

The Cardinal apologizes for refuting S. Augustine. No doubt it is awkward to such as start with the Vincentian canon of tradition, “quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus:” and the rather when the Father to be refuted is the greatest light of the Western church. It is pleaded however that A. himself confesses he had not understood the passage and asks for cause to be shown why it should refer to hell (or hades). As if the Father then not only permitted but himself desired it, B. proceeds to his task.

His first argument is the common opinion of the Fathers in opposition; Clement, Alex., Atban. Epiphan., and Cyril, Hilary, Ambrose, Ruffin, and Oec. being all alluded to as inferring hence Christ's descent to the spirits in hell. He also points to the occurrence of an alleged citation of Isaiah to a similar effect in Justin M. and Irenaeus. But we may reserve the views of the early ecclesiastical writers to a later moment when they will come fully before us.

The second objection is that Christ is said to have gone in spirit to preach to spirits. The spirit which is here distinguished against flesh seems as if it could not possibly mean anything else than the soul, says B. Not therefore in His divinity only but in His soul did the Lord go and preach to the spirits. Now this, if it were the real intimation, would have incomparably greater weight for the

Christian than the opinions of the Fathers were they ever so unanimous. But it is precisely what I have shown the best authorities for the critically correct text of the epistle reject. If the article of the vulgarly received text before πνε■ματι possessed any real weight of evidence, the phrase might well if not certainly convey the sense of Christ's spirit as man; but all the copies of value concur in the anarthrous form, which cannot bear the meaning for which B. contends. As the apostle wrote, it is the character of Christ's quickening when He rose from the dead. The Holy Spirit beyond a doubt was the agent; but this is presented in the shape of manner, and therefore the article is absent; whereas it must have been present if the intention had been to present the case as B. imagines. The more carefully the language is examined, the more certain it is that the soul of Christ cannot be here contemplated.

Again, Augustine had good ground to say that ζ. δ■ πν. could not apply to the soul of Christ; and B. tries in vain to answer by citing 1 Sam. 27:9; 2 Sam. 8:2; and Acts 7:19; for this is a confusion of ζωογον■ω or ζωγρ■ω with ζωοποι■ω. It is unfounded therefore to say that Peter meant that Christ's soul could not be slain, but remained alive in His triumphant work over hell. He really says and meant that Christ was brought to life; and all efforts to shake the truth will only confirm it before all competent judges. Our clever theologian is decidedly feeble in questions of a philological kind.

There is no force in the third argument, which is that the expression, “went and preached,” can properly apply to the soul, not to Christ's divinity. It is a question of what is called in 1 Peter 1:11 “the Spirit of Christ,” which certainly wrought in the prophets and among the rest in Noah, who is also formally styled “a preacher of righteousness” in the second epistle. There is no more reason why in this place πορευθε■ς ■κ■ρυζεν should be a literal change of place in Christ personally, than ■λθ■ν ε■ηγγελ■σατο in Eph. 2:17. We are dealing with historical matter equally in both passages; but figure is excluded in neither; and in fact there is the strongest analogy between the figures employed by both. The one illustrates the other. There is a manifestly distinct precision of phrase where a literal going of Christ is intended, as in verse 22 where we read π. ε■ς ο■ρανο■ν. It might have been safely inferred here if the apostle had written π. ε■ς ■δου

It is granted that the fourth argument of the Cardinal lies fairly against a faulty detail in the view of Augustine; for we cannot by “spirits in prison” rightly understand living men. Such a description applies only to persons in their disembodied state. There is no ground however to suppose that the preaching was then and there more than in chapter iv. 6 where we are told that “to dead men also was the gospel preached,” but of course while they were alive, not after they died, as some strangely conceive, without the smallest warrant from the words employed, and contrary to the plain drift of universal scripture on this point elsewhere. It is not correct to suppose, as is often assumed, that Peter speaks here of the same persons as dead whom he had described in the context as the spirits in prison. He contemplates here not the generation that refused righteous warning before the flood, but such of the dead in times past as had the promises presented to them, with the effect of putting all under the responsibility of being judged as men in flesh, while those who heeded the word, being by grace quickened, lived according to God in spirit. The language of the apostle perfectly agrees with his own teaching throughout the epistle, as well as his immediately precedent warning of the Lord's readiness to judge quick and dead, no less than the witness in baptism to His saving grace. The notion of preaching after death is a strange doctrine, out of harmony with the context, and openly, irreconcilably, opposed to scripture in

general. There is therefore no need here to adopt the Augustinian fancy of “dead” meaning dead in trespasses and sins, any more than to explain “the spirits in prison” of souls shut up in flesh and the darkness of ignorance as if in a prison. But that the men were dead when the glad tidings were announced to them is not what the apostle says; still less that it was Christ who preached thus, or that dead men spoken of in such broad terms are the same as those formerly disobedient when the long-suffering of God was awaiting in Noah's day. The exegesis which indulges in such assumptions as these seems justly open to the charge of having no longer any fixed rule. But thanks be to God! scripture refuses everything of the sort, and cannot be broken.

B.'s fifth objection is, that, if the passage be understood of the preaching in the days of Noah, it does not appear to what end that account is inserted here. For how hang together, that Christ was put to death in flesh, but quickened (or as he says remained alive) in spirit, and therefore God formerly preached to men by Noah? But if we understand it of the descent to hell, all is consistent. For Peter, wishing to show that Christ in suffering and death remained alive, proves it as to His soul, because at that time His soul went to hell and preached to the spirits shut up in prison. Now the fact on the contrary is that the reference to Noah's preaching is highly relevant to the purpose in hand. For the apostle is insisting on the certainty of divine government, whatever the long-suffering of God in bearing with men's hostility to His people and opposition to His testimony. His own people are called to walk with a good conscience in grace, suffering for righteousness, and for doing good, not ill. How touching the reason! Christ once suffered for sins: let this suffice. It was His grace to suffer thus to the full, His glory to suffer thus exclusively, just for unjust, in order that He might bring us to God. It is ours to suffer for good, for righteousness: never should it be for faults and sins: this was His work for us when unjust, in which He was put to death in flesh but quickened in Spirit.

The outer life of Jesus closed in suffering for our sins, the days of His flesh wherein He offered up both supplications and entreaties to Him who was able to save Him out of death, with strong crying and tears. His resurrection was no question of external display of power, but characteristically of the Spirit, and hence unseen and unknown by the world. This was of all things most strange to the Jewish mind, which associated with the Messiah the manifestation of an energy overwhelming to all adversaries. Never was such a victory over Satan even in his last stronghold of death as Christ's resurrection; but He was made alive in no such way as instantly to put down the Roman oppressor, and expel the old serpent, and exalt restored Israel, and humble the haughty Gentiles, and deliver all creation. All this and much more must yet be to the praise of the glory of divine grace; but He was quickened in Spirit. Doubtless divine energy of the highest kind wrought here, but it was distinctively in the Spirit; and hence He who was thus raised, though most truly a risen man, capable of eating and drinking, though needing no food, capable of being handled and felt, though equally able to pass through closed doors, to appear in another form, to vanish out of sight and to ascend to heaven, was seen only of chosen witnesses, not as by and by He will be by every eye.

In knowledge this ran so counter to ordinary Jewish expectation that the apostle reminds his readers of that which might help them to juster thoughts of God's ways before the day comes when judgment will silence all gainsayers. It was no new thing for the Spirit of Christ to testify. He, as we have already been told, He who in the prophets had pointed out beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow, preached in Noah's days. The patience of God in

testimony sounded strange to the Jew. Yet there it was in the first book of the law: “My Spirit shall not always strive with man” —the very scripture which it would appear the apostle had before his mind's eye when inspired to write “in which [Spirit] he went and preached to the spirits in prison once disobedient when the longsuffering of God was waiting in Noah's days.” Now also as then it is a season of testimony and long-suffering before the judgment shall be executed at the appearing of Jesus. If the Spirit strove of old, surely it was not less now; if the work of God was wrought in the Spirit, proclaimed and received in the Spirit, not yet in a visible and indisputable power before which all the world must bow, it was just so in the most marked season of testimony before the most marked judgment on all mankind which the ancient oracles attest. Hence the exceeding appositeness of the allusion to Noah's days when the Spirit strove but would not always, for the flood was then at hand which must as it did surprise and take away those who stumbled at the word being disobedient. It was guilty then for the sons of Adam to slight the preaching: how much more so in the seed of Abraham now, who had before them that ancient warning, with an incomparably fuller testimony in the promises fulfilled though not yet manifested before the world!

The attentive student of scripture may thus see the admirable force and pertinence of πωε■ματι ■ν ■ κα■ τ. ■ν ϕ. πν. πορ. ■κ■ρ., especially as connected with the account given in Gen. 6 which the Holy Spirit here interweaves in the instruction for those addressed. There is no such statement as that Christ's Spirit was the subject, recipient, or vehicle of restored life, for this would require the article to convey such a sense; and were the article genuine and such a sense necessarily taught, it is hard to see how one who held to the text thence resulting could deny the monstrous inference that His spirit had previously died—at least, if the case connected had been the direct complement, not the indirect. It is also a manifest oversight to contend, as has been done, that the use of the word πνε■μασιν, connecting ■ν ■ (πνε■ματι) our Lord’s state with the state of those to whom He preached, is a crowning objection to the view here advocated; for it is certain that ζωοποιηθε■ς δ■ πν. describes the resurrection of Christ, not His separate state, and that the anarthrous form of πν. is decisive against the idea of its being His spirit as man, as is supposed in every form of the hypothesis that Christ descended to preach to separate spirits. No such connection then is in the passage: but attention is drawn to the character of Christ's resurrection as of the Spirit, bound up with His testimony and presence now known in Christianity instead of the visible power and glory of the kingdom which Israel looked for. The Spirit is emphatic as giving character to the quickening, not Sis spirit as the subject or vehicle of restored life; and then it is added that in virtue, or in the power, of this, ■ν ■, He went and preached to the spirits in prison once on a time disobedient when the longsuffering of God was waiting in Noah's days, while an ark was in preparation. There was no external demonstration of divine power then, but a testimony of the Spirit, the Spirit of Christ; and all who despised it proved the value of the warning too late in their own destruction; and their spirits are imprisoned till the judgment of the dead declare afresh and forever the awful consequences of despising God's word. So it will assuredly be with all who, preoccupied with Messianic glory according to Jewish feeling, scorn the Spirit of Christ that now warns the world of coming judgment, and mock a presence of Christ which is only known in spirit.

Another point of analogy singled out from the tale of old and applied now is the fewness of those saved as meeting the taunts of those who looked for universal homage to the Messiah reigning and could not understand the hidden glory of One who believed in by a few bears with masses of

unbelief till He comes in judgment.

But one can easily discern why all these analogies between the testimony in Noah and that under Christianity should escape the Cardinal, who finds more congenial aliment in the reveries of imagination as to the descent of Christ to hades than in the solemn and sober realities of a Christian's walk and witness, well nigh forgotten in Christendom. The dark source, whether Popish or Patristic, of Bishop Horsley's reasoning will not have escaped the reader. For he too, like Bellarmine, draws from this strikingly suggestive passage little more than the impotent conclusion that Christ remained alive in His passion and death! proved by His soul's descent and preaching to the spirits below. It is needless to expose the poverty of an interpretation which yields so wretched a harvest as compared with the rich and varied lessons flowing from the passage when understood in itself and in its connection with the Old Testament history alluded to.

Augustine had objected to the deduction of Christ's descent to hades, from this passage, (1) that consequently He would preach only to the unbelievers at the time of the flood; and (2) that, Abraham's bosom being distinct from hades, such a preaching would lead to the notion of converting the damned. Bellarmine (1) retorts with the question why Christ should be said to preach in Noah's days rather than in those of Abraham and other patriarchs or even of all other men, and (2) answers that the preaching of Christ in hell was not to convert infidels but only to announce great joy to pious souls in redemption now completed, Abraham's bosom being viewed as part of hades by Augustine himself like all other fathers. But the reader will have seen that B. is quite wrong and A. much more right as to both points. The text characterizes the imprisoned spirits as having been formerly disobedient without a trace of their subsequent repentance or piety, the announcement of great joy being a pure fiction for which the passage gives no warrant but rather as we read it plain intimations to the contrary. Not a word in scripture intimates that those on whom the flood came were believers but unbelievers, not a hint that they repented at last or that their souls were saved, though their bodies perished, let Jerome teach what he may. Their spirits are said to be in prison, in full contrast with Abraham's bosom or paradise; they are kept there for judgment like angels that sinned of old, with whom indeed the apostle classes them in the second chapter of his second epistle; and no wonder, for he characterizes them as a world of ungodly men. Are these then the pious souls to whom above all others the Lord descended to announce the great joy of His completed redemption? It will be observed by those who weigh God's word, apart from tradition, that not a thought appears in the passage of delivering the spirits from prison, any more than of translating them to heaven. This would be singular on the supposition of such a descent; for it is evident that, were the patristic idea true, it would be more in keeping with Christ's presence there to speak, not of preaching in hades, but of translating the saints thence gloriously as the fruit of His victory over Satan.

“Respondeo, primam objectionem posse retorqueri. Nam etiam non apparet ratio cur dicat Petrus Christum in diebus Noe praedicasse potius quam in diebus Abraham etaliorum patriarch-orum vel etiam aliorum omnium hominum. Dico praeterea, Christum praedicasse in inferno omnibus bonis spiritibus, sed nominatim fuisse expressos illos qui fuerunt in diebus Noe increduli, quia de illis erat majus dubium an essent salvi nec ne, cum puniti fuerint a Deo et submersi aquis diluvii. Indicat ergo his Petrus etiam ex illis ineredulis fuisse aliquos qui etiam in fine poenitentiam egerint, et licet quantum ad corpus perierinf, tamen quantum ad animam salvi faerint(quod etiam Hieronymus docet in quaestionibus Hebraicis in Genes, tractans illud cap. 6. Non permanebit spiritus mens in

homine, &c). Ubi dicit Deum punivisse multos eorum temporaliter aquis diluvii, ne deberet cos punire in gehenna in aeternum. Et hunc etiam sensum videntur facere ilia verba cap. 4: Idea mortuis et praedicatum est evangelium, ut judicentur quidem secundum homines in carne, vivant autem secundum Deum spiritu; id est, ut secundum homines ex-terius judicentur carne, id est, damnati existimentur humano judicio, quia corpora eorum aquis necata fuerunt, tamen vivant spiritu secundum Deum, id est, animae eorum salvae sint apud Deum.

“Ad secundam dico, ipsnm Augustinum postea cognovisse sinum Abrahae fuisse in inferno, ut patet ex tractatu in Psal. 85 et lib. 20 de civ. Dei, ca. 15. que sententia est omnium patrum et totius ecclesiae. Dico igitur.praedicationem Christi in inferno non fuisse ad convertendos infideles, sed fuisse solum ad annun-ciationem gaudii magni piis animabus, quibus annunciavit completam esse redemptionem, ut intelligerent so jam indo liberandas et tempore suo etiam corpora rccepturas. Atque haec de expositione sancti Augustini quam refutavimus, sequuti mentem ejus, non verba.")

The remarks of Bellarmine on Beza's modification of the Augustinian view and on Calvin's ideas do not claim any special notice here, whatever is true in them having been already anticipated, I believe.

Chapter 21

Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison: Part 6

(1 Peter 3:18-20.)

We may now briefly consider the current of thought from days not long subsequent to those of the apostles. We shall see the various but constant aberration from the truth which characterized such as drew from our text an actual preaching of our Lord in the world of spirits. Doubtless it was no question of an isolated or casual misinterpretation of the scripture before us; but this rather sprang from the general ignorance even then pervading Christendom as to the full blessedness of our standing in Christ-ignorance found in the fathers as such, if possible more than in the popular theology of our own day or in the puritanism of the past. Lack of faith could not but expose men to crude guesses because of their uncertainty; especially as here where the first obvious view of the passage is not the sure, sound, and spiritual one which falls in with the contextual aim and the analogy of the faith elsewhere. Indeed our way of regarding any particular portion of revealed truth can scarcely be severed from our state generally; so much so that habitually an intelligent eye can see where we are by the judgment we form as to divine things wholly remote and apparently quite unconnected. Here for instance a soul established in the gospel and therefore feeling solemnly the fixed doom of the lost, as well as the blessedness of the saved now and evermore, is at once delivered from nine-tenths of the speculations about our Lord's preaching to the spirits of saints or sinners after their and His separation from the body. It is ordinarily thus: where we rest not in the grace and truth which came by Jesus, we are in danger from ordinances, fables, reasonings, or from a mixture of them all. Apostolic power and fidelity, Paul's above all, cut up by the root these workings of Satan's malice; but, when the apostles were gone, the evils previously judged found too ready an acceptance and gave birth to results more openly disastrous, and, if this could be, more decidedly opposed to the glory of the Lord.

1. The first I would produce is the allusion of Justin, the ecclesiastical writer, more blessed in his death of martyrdom than in his life of philosophy. It will illustrate the state of things at that time in more ways than one. Κα■ ■π■ τ■ν λ■γων το■ α■το■ ■ερεμ■ου ■ηο■ως τα■τα περι■κοψαν ■μν■σθη ■■ κ■ριος ■ Θε■ς ■π■(? ■γιος) ■σπα■λ τ■ν νεκρ■ν α■το■ τ■ν κεκοιμημ■νων ε■ς γ■ν χ■ματος, κα■ κατ■βη πρ■ς α■το■ς ■ναγγελ■σασθαι α■το■ς τ■ σωτ■ριον α■το■. The common reading is retained in the modern edition of Otto, spite of the conjecture of Sylburg approved by Jebb, Thirlby, &c. But the emendation if correct makes no difference for our object. Here then we have a spurious text attributed to the prophet Jeremiah but evidently founded on the vulgar misapplication of 1 Peter 3:19, 4:6. Man however cannot add to scripture without clashing with revelation. Supposing we draw from the apostle a personal preaching of the Lord in the place of spirits, it is impossible to infer from the words of the New Testament an announcement of His salvation. The apostle where he may be thought to speak of such a descent tells us only of His preaching to imprisoned spirits once disobedient in the days of Noah; where he speaks of glad tidings to dead men, there is no hint of Christ's descent.

2. Irenaeus, the pious bishop of Lyons in the latter part of the second century, cites repeatedly this alleged text, under the name of Isaiah and of Jeremiah, as well as with no name attached to it (Adv. Haer. iii. c. 20, § 4; iv. c. 22, § 1). The notion that the Jews effaced such a verse from the Hebrew is baseless; especially as they have left other testimonies to Christ incomparably clearer and more at issue with their traditions. Even Massuet confesses this to be a knot beyond his power to untie, bound though he was to sustain, had it been possible, the credit of patristic traditions. “Vereor ut Justino primum, ac deinde Irenaeo fucum fecerit apocrypha quaepiam scriptura.” The unbiased reader will have no scruple in affirming what the Benedictine feared—that it is a mere apocryphal gloss, loosely imputed to a prophet, and a little expanding as it goes down; for Irenaeus adds (or at least the barbarous Latin version, which alone here represents his Greek) “ut salvaret eos” or “ad salvandum eos.” That is, He preached in Hades not merely to announce but to save. Irenaeus, strange to say, seems unusually attached to this pseudograph, for he cites it again in his book ¨4. c. 33, § 1. Only in § 12 of the same chapter the Latin translation gives the notable variation, “in terra limi.... uti erigeret,” with the addition named in both, though differently expressed. Lastly in his fifth book too he once more falls back on his prophet but recurs to the earlier form “in terra sepelitionis (so Feuardentius, &c, instead of the Erasmian reading, stipulationis),” though even so with some change, “extrahere eos et salvare eos.” Comment is scarce needed. “When a man quotes so loosely in the same work of no considerable extent, we should not be surprised if he were loose as to scripture and loose as to doctrine.

3. But there is no small descent when we turn next to Hermas, an author probably of the latter half of the same second century, who derived much of his reputation from the singular confusion which led many in early days to regard him as the Christian saluted in Rom. 16:14; for most probably (Muratori, Ant. Ital. med. aevi, 3. 853) he was brother of the Pius who was bishop of Rome after Hyginus died a.d. 157. Here too we have only a Latin version of the “Shepherd,” as even the recent discoveries of Tischendorf do not give us the Greek original beyond the fourth ■ντολ■ (i.e. mandatum or command) of the second book. 1 quote from the third book, and the sixteenth section of the ninth similitude (Cotelerii Patres Apost. I. 118, ed. 1698):

“Quoniam hi Apostoli et doctores, qui praedica-verunt nomen Eilii Dei, cum habentea fidem ejus et potestatem defuncti essent, praedicaverunt his qui ante obierunt, et ipsi dederunt eis illud signum. Descen-derunt igitur in aquam cum illis, et iterum ascen-derunt,” &c. Thus, Hermas is distinctly committed to the absurd doctrine that the apostles preached to the dead and baptized them. This is a further and a desperate step in superstition, and of course without a shred of support from scripture; but it seems to be the not unnatural complement of the notion that the Lord went down after death to preach in Hades to the spirits there. Is it not melancholy to think that such a production as this, immeasurably inferior in every point of view to Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, though doubted by some and even declared apocryphal by certain synods, was extensively read in the public Christian assemblies, and was evidently incorporated with the scriptures in the Sinai MS, as Clement of Rome's epistles were in the Alexandrian copy?

4. Can we go down lower? Alas! not only so, but at the next step. Clement of Alexandria appears, under the reign of Severus and Caracalla, a speculative eclectic though a Christian presbyter. In the second book of his “Miscellanies” (Στρωμ. 379, ed. Sylburg, 1629) he quotes “the Shepherd” and applies the baptism carried on by the apostle after death, not (as Hermas appears to mean) only to the godly before redemption, but to heathen philosophers or moral men as well. In the sixth

book (637 et seqq.) he recurs to a similar strain and yet more openly treats it as certain that our Lord descended to Hades for no other reason than to preach the gospel, and this that they might believe and be saved; that such as lived up-lightly, Jews or Greeks, even though imprisoned in Hades, on hearing His voice either in person or through the apostle were presently brought to conversion and faith; that there is the same dispensation below as on earth for souls to manifest their repentance or their unbelief. Thus the awful consequences of living and dying impenitent in this world are explained away by this Clementine notion of a further offer of salvation by Christ and the apostles after death, and this evidently to keep up the illusion of salvation for philosophers and moral men among the heathen.

5. None will wonder that the famous Origen outran his master, and that the philosopher Celsus provoked him into deplorable statements. Thus in the second book in reply (Opera I. 419, ed. De la Rue) he does not hesitate to say that the Lord in the separate state held converse with souls similarly separate from the body, converting to Himself of them such as would or such as He saw more suited for reasons known to Him. Again, in his fourth homily on Luke (I. 937), he says that John B. descended to hell and there preached the Lord's advent; and he seems to imply a similar work of Paul in his comment on Rom. 11:13 (4:35).

6. Cyril of Alexandria writes, if possible, more unguardedly in his homilies— “Hades spoiled of spirits;” yea of Christ (Hom. 6) “immediately spoiling all Hades, and opening the doors which admit of no escape to the spirits of those fallen asleep; and the devil then deserted and alone rose after the third day.”

7. In the same spirit wrote the author of a discourse on the ascension, falsely imputed to Chrysostom who really censures such thoughts as old wives' fables in his homily on Matt. 11:3, as Augustine classed the dream among heresies—the 79th in his list. I say nothing of the question raised by Gregory of Nazianzum (whether Christ saves in Hades all without exception or only such as believe, Orat. xii.), or of such romance-writers as Anastasius, who introduces Plato appearing to one asleep who used to abuse his doctrine, and pretending that he was one of the first to believe on Christ when He preached in Hades. Even a Roman Synod condemned one, a man of mark who taught thus in the year 745. Tertullian among the early Latins and Gregory of Nyssa are far enough from Romish doctrine either as to limbus patrum or as to purgatory; for they, like many others of the ancients, held all the saints before and after Christ to be waiting in Abraham's bosom, a region not heavenly yet higher than hell or hades, till the resurrection at Christ's coming. Let this suffice just now.

I feel it neither needful nor profitable to pursue the long dreary walk through the medieval desert, though even then souls were not wanting like our own Bede and Thomas Aquinas, with a long interval between, who adhered to the substantial truth in the Apostle's words as against the more prevalent superstition which had overgrown them.

Chapter 22

Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison: Part 7

(1 Peter 3:18-20.)

Coming down to the Reformation times, it may be of interest to mention that Luther naturally did not refrain from giving his mind on a scripture which had occupied so many and been perverted by not a few.

Dr. John Brown in his Expository Discourses on 1 Peter (i. 2-22), cites with mild censure some alleged remarks of the leading Reformer, as not meriting the eulogium he bestows on the “well-weighed words of the candid and learned Joachim Camerarius." If Luther really wrote that the apostle seems moved by horrible suffering so as to speak like a fanatic words which cannot up to this day be understood by us, he spoke with as little sense as reverence. Even of a fellow Christian or of an ordinary minister of the gospel, one ought thoroughly to understand that he is in error before pronouncing that he talks like a fanatic or almost so. But to confess that the words were not understood ought, to say the least, to have shielded an apostle from any censure: indeed to have made it impossible and thrown the blame on those who confessedly understood not the voice of inspiration. But I have searched in vain both his Latin (Tomm. i., iv., Jenae, 1556-8, folio), and his German (ten vols. folio, Altenburg, 1561-4) writings, without finding anything like the passage cited. What I do see in both Latin and German differs widely, and, if the citation be authentic, would go to prove very great inconsistency.

In the exposition of Peter's epistles given in the second volume of the great German collection he calls the passage (1 Peter 3:19-22) a “wonderful text,” but speaks with considerable hesitation. He will not resist those who infer from it that the Lord descended to Hades and preached to the spirits imprisoned there; but he seems disposed to think the meaning is rather that Christ risen and gone to heaven preaches to sinners spiritually while His servants preach the word to their ears-to sinners as unbelieving as those in the days of Noah, and thus embracing sinners of all times. He objects however to the change of a man's state before God after death. This is the substance of a rather diffuse comment in pages 451, 452.

The passage in the German writings, vol. 8 p. 660, answers to what appears in the Latin edition, vol. 4, pp. 638, 639: “Et Petrus hunc descensum videtur explicare cum dicit, &c. His Petrus clare dicit, non solum apparuisse Christum defunctis Patribus et Patriarchis, quorum sine dubio Christus aliquos cum resurgeret secum ad vitam aeternam excitavit, sed etiam aliquibus qui tempore Noao non crediderunt ac expectavcrunt patientiam Dei, hoc est, qui sperarunt Deum non sic duriter grassaturum in universam carnem, praedicasse, ut agnoscerent sibi per Christi sacrifieium peccata condouata esse.”

Hence it is evident that there is little harmony between the earlier and the later doctrine of Luther on this point, and that the later view does not seem to be an advance in truth, but rather approximates to what was taught afterward by the well-known Romanist divines, Suarez, Estius, &c, as well as by his own followers. The earlier view is what we find substantially taken up

afterward by the Socinian party or such as too often seem swayed by their reasoning, as Grotius, Schöttgen, &c.

Francowitz (or Flacius Illyricus), famous for his hand in the “Centuriae Magdeburgenses” and other works which furthered the Reformation, held that our Lord descended to Hades to announce only the condemnation of the lost. It is plain however that, though less objectionable on exegetic grounds than that which supposes a declaration of deliverance to believers there (for Peter speaks only of spirits in prison once disobedient), this scheme is open to the defect equally fatal to both views, that the passage in debate speaks neither of believers nor of unbelievers as a whole in the separate state, but only of such as rejected the divine testimony in Noah's days. Not that there is any force in Wiesinger's or Alford's reasoning that such a “concio damnatoria” would jar in the midst of a passage intended to convey consolation and encouragement by the blessed consequences of Christ's sufferings. For, as we have seen, the context here as elsewhere consists really of as distinct and solemn warning to unbelief as of rich and solid comfort to faith. On the face of it the governing object is to meet those who might be over much tried and cast down under their sufferings for righteousness' sake. Hence the apostle brings in the Messiah not glorious but suffering once for sins, Just for unjust, that He might bring us to God: put to death in respect of flesh and quickened in respect of Spirit. Instead of even then restoring the kingdom to Israel there was only the testimony of His Spirit while He is exalted (not on earth or in Jerusalem, but) on high at God's right hand, angels and authorities and powers being subjected to Him, but not yet His enemies made a footstool for His feet. On the contrary there goes on here below His testimony by the Spirit; just as of old He went in the Spirit and preached when the antediluvians obeyed the word as the mass do now, and still fewer were those saved in the ark than the comparatively few baptized, who had now found that acceptance which is the demand of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is the long-suffering of God now as then, and the Lord will come to judge the quick as the deluge befell the despisers then, eternal judgment awaiting all the wicked by and by.

We have already seen Calvin was as little consistent as Luther. Thus in his Commentary on the first Epistle he maintains that Peter speaks of the manifestation of Christ's grace to godly spirits, and this expressly in the spirit that he might take away the notion of a real descent of Christ into Hades to preach, contrary to the representation of Dr. Huther followed by Alford, who twice over classes him with the advocates of a literal preaching there. On the other hand, in his Institutions, Calvin (like Erasmus a little before him, following Athanasius among the Greek fathers and Ambrose among the Latin) lays down that the preaching had for its objects both the good and the evil, the one for salvation and the other for damnation. But such an inference, while it may be reasoned out or imagined, none can gravely pretend to elicit from the words of the apostle as the revealed mind of the Spirit. But early or late, in this at least Luther and Calvin agree with Augustine (who was no less wavering and uncertain as to our text than themselves), that preaching the gospel for faith and repentance to spirits after death comes altogether too late, and is repugnant to the uniform tenor of scripture in its plainest, brightest, and most earnest appeals to the souls of men. It is a notion subversive of the first principles of truth, not to say of morality. Let me add that a fresh offer of salvation in the invisible world is not more contradictory to and contradicted by the awful warnings to unbelievers which accompany the gospel than destructive of one of the main lessons in the passage before us. For Peter is refuting the fond security of such as taunt the

paucity of the household of faith in comparison with the multitudes of those who slighted the Christian and the suffering Christ, their foundation before God: and this by the instance of the days of Noah when the world perished save the few who found a divinely given and ordered shelter in the ark.

It would scarcely be for edification to pursue minutely the history of opinion to our own days, involving too as it would a frequent repetition of hardly anything more than old views and arguments under new names. Dr. J. Brown's exposition is perhaps the fullest contribution among moderns on the epistle, and therefore it may seem to claim examination; but there is extremely little to notice in the way of fresh thought, and his own judgment of the passage seems to my mind defective.

Commenting on the Authorized Version he says (168, 169), “the words flesh and spirit are plainly opposed to one another. The prepositions in and by are not in the original. The opposed words [σαρκ■πνε■ματι] are in the same case; they stand plainly in the same relation respectively to the words rendered 'put to death' and 'quickened' [θανατωθε■ς, ζωοποι-ηθε■ς], and that relation should have been expressed in English by the same particle. If you give the rendering, ‘put to death in the flesh,' you must give the corresponding rendering, ‘quickened in the spirit,' which would bring out the sense, either 'quickened in His human spirit or soul,' a statement to which it is difficult to attach a distinct meaning; for the soul is not mortal; Christ's spirit did not die; and to continue alive is not the moaning of the original word; or “quickened in His divine nature,” a statement obviously absurd and false, as implying that He who is the life, the living One, can be quickened, either in the sense of restored from a state of death, or endowed with a larger measure of vitality. On the other hand, if you adopt the rendering of our translators in the second clause,' quickened by the Spirit,' then you must render in accordance with it the first clause, 'put to death by the flesh.' If by the Spirit you understand the divine nature of our Lord, by the flesh you must understand the human nature, which makes the expression an absurdity. On the other hand, if you understand by the Spirit the Holy Ghost, then by flesh you must understand ‘mankind,' put to death by men, but restored to life by God the Spirit. This interpretation, though giving a consistent and true sense, the sense so forcibly expressed in Peter's words to the Jews, ‘whom ye crucified; whom God raised from the dead,' is forbidden by the usage of the language. Then there can be no doubt that there does appear something very material in introducing our Lord in what is plainly a result of His atoning sufferings, as having in the Spirit, by which He was quickened after He had been put to death, gone many centuries before, in the antediluvian age, to preach to an ungodly world; and there is just as little doubt that the only meaning that the words will bear, without violence being done them, is, that it was when He had been put to death in the flesh, and quickened in the Spirit or by the Spirit, whatever that may mean, He went and preached; and that 'the spirits,' whoever they be, were ‘in prison,' whatever that may mean, when He preached to them.”

This is no unfair specimen of what one cannot but characterize as daubing with un-tempered mortar. It is but a balancing of probabilities or rather of improbabilities, and recalls the passage of Isaiah, who tells us of the judicial sleep poured out on Israel, so that the whole vision became to them like the words of a sealed book, which, if delivered to the learned man with the request to read it, elicits the reply, I cannot, for it is sealed; or, if delivered with the same request to the unlearned, he excuses himself as unable because of want of learning.

Chapter 23

Christ Preaching to the Spirits in Prison: Part 8

(1 Peter 3:18-20.)

It is confessed by Dr. J. B. that the sense brought out is self-consistent and not incompatible with any of the facts or doctrines of revelation. He only complains of the mode of interpretation as liable to objections. 1 shall show however that, far from being really insurmountable, every one of these objections is destitute of weight. Flesh and spirit are opposed; though in the same case, it does not follow that they must have the same preposition supplied in English. This would not be necessary if the same Greek preposition (which is far stronger or more precise) accompanied each of the two opposed terms. Thus, in Rom. 4:25, two clauses stand in antithesis with one another; whence many have been allured to argue, like our author here, for a necessarily similar force of δι■ with each accusative. But this is an error. For the former clause means that our Lord Jesus was delivered because of our offenses; the second, that He was raised again on account of the justifying of us (that is, in order to it): for justifying cannot be severed from faith, as the very next verse shows. (Rom. 5:1.) Indeed the notion of justification before faith would introduce nothing but confusion and false doctrine, not to speak of the evil in practice which naturally results. The Authorized Version however has not rendered ill in giving “for” with both clauses, the English preposition “for” being as ambiguous as the corresponding Greek here.

Here similarly there is no necessity to vary the English by supplying in the flesh and by the Spirit, but, if there were, it was open to the translators to have done so. The relation of the dative is not so contracted or consequently so uniform as to demand the exactly same form of representing it. Besides we have to take into account the idiom of the English tongue, which does not by any means conform always to the Greek. The reader is already aware that “in” or “in respect of” may be given equally in both the clauses; but the translators might legitimately enough have given “in” and “by” as they have done. Hence the rendering which develops the objection is invalid. “In His human spirit,” if it were ever so proper in itself, would require the article ™ (as in the common text). But as the best MSS expunge it, so the sense resulting from its presence would have been really an insurmountable objection, as it is impossible to apply “quicken” to the spirit of Christ, any more than to His divine nature. But, as we have seen, if one translates the latter term “by the Spirit,” it is not correct to assume that we must translate the former “by the flesh.” The alleged necessity 18 just the mistake which falsifies the reasoning of many interpreters and has mystified more readers.

Strictness of parallelism is to my mind more common in the limited scope of human thought than in the word of God, who habitually, I believe, while thus comparing or contrasting, gives a further and varying side of truth in the fullness of divine wisdom. Hence the mere technicality of the schools is sure to err in interpreting scripture. It does not follow therefore that where we see two datives balanced against each other they must both be expressions, of element, agency, or instrument, though it may be wise to avoid a greater precision in the rendering than the inspired original itself carries. At the same time such a difference is not advocated in the present instance; but, as the authorized translators rightly enough elsewhere represent δι■ twice by an English “for,” so “in” or

“in respect of” will be found to suit both here. Consequently there is no such difficulty connected with the version or with the interpretation already given as to weaken it, still less, as some easily frightened have supposed, to convince us that it is untenable. Nor does it become the believer to hesitate because the plain meaning of scripture seems to favor a view opposed to his prejudice, though he would do well to examine closely what is really at issue with known truth. For no lie is of the truth: all that is true must be consistent. Only we must beware of confounding our limited apprehensions with the truth in all its breadth and depth.

But let us follow the reasoning a little more. If we hold the rendering “in” on both sides, there can be no doubt that “put to death” in flesh yields a simple and excellent sense. But what of “quickened in the Spirit?” Is not this equally good and as clear as the other? Strange to say, the true and plain antithesis seems to have quite escaped Dr. B., who allows us only the alternatives of “in His spirit” (which would be quite wrong as we have often shown), or “in His divine nature,” which is an impossible version and if possible obviously absurd and false, as is admitted. But why not “in the Spirit” as presenting the manner of Christ's resurrection, characterized by the Spirit in contrast with the violent close of His life in flesh, in both cases the article being excluded by presenting each as a question of principle rather than of fact? On the other hand “put to death by the flesh” is intolerable, either as the human nature of our Lord or as mankind; but there is no need to understand either if we take “by the Spirit” to mean the Holy Ghost, which to my mind is assuredly the truth, only presented in character rather than as an objective personal agent, which is quite common in Greek, though not so easily expressed in our tongue or caught by the English reader.

Nor can I for one see anything unnatural, but rather great force and beauty, in pointing out that it was in virtue of the Spirit who thus wrought in His resurrection that Christ preached by Noah in the antediluvian world; for it was of the utmost importance for the Jews, who ever craved the visible in their thoughts of the Messiah and His kingdom, to learn that it is now as of old a question of a testimony in the Spirit to be believed or slighted, and surely to be followed by judgment, as then so now. Hence too the preference to the Spirit's mind of presenting their past example as “spirits in prison” rather than as men living in flesh, which however He does also involve in their antecedent moral condition in the world when “once” or heretofore disobedient.

Such an allusion here to Gen. 6:3 appears to my mind most apt and impressive, identifying Christ with Jehovah, as is often done in these epistles. It was natural in writing to Christians of the circumcision, and comforting them, in their sufferings and the contempt of their testimony, by the evidence given to the substantial sameness of its reception from the flood till the Lord returns in glory. This passage has in no way for its immediate object a description of the results of the Lord's atoning sufferings, bright as is the witness given to them, but rather to comfort the saints in their sufferings, apt to repine as Jews might at their trials ever since they believed in the Lord Jesus. The apostle explains to them the government of God in what He permits of sorrow to His own. Faithfulness does bring present blessing; but even if suffering come for righteousness' sake, is not the saint now blessed? It is better, if God will it so, to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing; because Christ also once suffered for sins, just for unjust, that He might bring us to God. Such is the way His suffering for our sins is introduced, not a harsh interpolation of His having in the Spirit that raised Him preached of old to the impenitent antediluvians put into a statement of His atonement, but undeniable encouragement to downcast saints to go on suffering for righteousness, since it was His once for all to suffer for sins: with this, not they, but He only has to

do, and it is done with-a work despised by sneering Jews who felt not their sins nor their need of grace like His. But if put to death in flesh, He was quickened in the Spirit, in whose power He had already gone and preached to the imprisoned spirits, first disobedient when the long-suffering of God waited out in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight, souls were saved through the water. They must not wonder then if few were saved now; for this has ever been a favorite taunt of unbelief, as an absent Messiah who left His own suffering would be to an incredulous Jew. So far the analogy with the times before and at the deluge is plain. So is the use of the allusion that follows; for as men were there waited on in long-suffering, it is no otherwise now; and as they are kept for a worse judgment, so will it be with such as despise the gospel. On the other hand baptism is to the believer the sign of salvation by the death and resurrection of Christ; for as He died atoningly, so we when baptized are buried with Him in those waters of death; and as He rose, we through His resurrection have what a good conscience demands, even acceptance before God by His work who is gone into heaven and is on God's right hand, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him, which, though in-visible, is far beyond the throne of David on earth and the subjection of Gentile foes, as the Jews looked for.

And what is Dr. B.'s explanation? Truly the notable one, that “a consequence of our Lord's penal, vicarious, expiatory suffering, was that He (!) became spiritually alive (!!) and powerful in a sense, and to a degree, in which He was not previously; and in which, but for these sufferings, He never could have become full of life to be communicated to dead souls, mighty to save. He was there spiritually quickened.” No wonder that Dr. B. has few to follow him in his view, though it is no worse than most others. But to be “quickened” is not to be a “quickening Spirit,” though both be true of our Lord. Neither does John 5:26 speak of the Lord in resurrection but as a man here below, the servant of His Father's glory; nor does Matt. 28:18 speak of one either quickened or quickening, but invested with authority only as Son of man in heaven and on earth. And if this be violent as to Christ, not less so is the notion that by “the spirits in prison” are meant “spiritually captive men.” A strange phrase indeed, as the author allows; stranger still if possible, though Dr. B. sees nothing perplexing in the statement, “that they were aforetime disobedient in the days of Noah;” as if it meant that Christ preached to spiritually captive men who were hard to be convinced in former times, especially in Noah's day. But this is to pervert, not to expound. If Dr. B. had been a scholar and had examined the passage, he must have seen that the absence of the article before ■πειθησασι arises from the disobedience being viewed as the ground why the spirits were in prison. There is no hint of an aggregate, some part of which had been disobedient in former times. In short the view is mistaken altogether; for, instead of employing “spirits in prison” as a phrase characteristic of men in all ages, Peter speaks there of a special class, disembodied and in custody or prison because they had been once on a time disobedient in the days of Noah: not a word about their being after Christ's resurrection turned to the wisdom of the just and delivered. These steps of departure from the text emboldened Dr. B. to go farther still and contrast the multitudes that heard and knew the joyful sound with the few saved in Noah's day. “Still is he going and preaching to the 'spirits in prison;' and though all have not obeyed, yet many already have obeyed, many are obeying, many more will yet obey;” and this is a comment on 1 Peter 3:19, 20, where one prime aim is to comfort the Christian Jews subject to the taunts of their enemies on their own fewness, as compared with the masses who reject the truth of the Gospel! The saved are few alas! now as in Noah's day. There is analogy, not contrast.

But this is not all. “This view of the subject has this additional advantage, that it preserves the connection of the passage both grammatical and logical.” We have seen enough of the grammar: let us see as to the “logic.” “The words of the apostle, thus explained, plainly bear on his great practical object. 'Be not afraid, be not ashamed of suffering in a good cause, in a right spirit.' No damage comes from well-doing, or from suffering in well-doing. Christ in suffering, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, suffered for well-doing.” “For well-doing!” does the author say? Happily little logic suffices to test this view of the context; for the scripture says here, in the most pointed terms of contradiction, that Christ suffered once for sins, not for well-doing.

Chapter 24

Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison: Part 9

(1 Peter 3:18-20.)

Dr. Bartle's book ("The scriptural doctrine of Hades") may be briefly noticed so far as it alludes to our text, which he pronounces most extraordinary, because, after all that has been written by ancients and moderns, and notwithstanding the learning and erudition expended on it, the passage is still involved in much obscurity. He himself proposes a solution, which, he tells us, differs entirely from the expositions of any of those who have hitherto written on the subject. (Page 63.) Now one of the tests of a true or a false explanation is whether the light shines thereby or the darkness abides. If any scripture is still involved in obscurity, there is the strongest presumption that its meaning is as yet unknown. Whether Dr. B.'s view be well founded remains to be shown. His denial that the paradise (to which the converted robber went with our Lord on the day of the crucifixion) is in heaven, seems rather an unhappy beginning. (Page 67.) Dr. B. reasons that the robber spoke to Jesus as supreme God, that the words “with me” are to be understood as referring exclusively to His divine character, and that therefore the meaning of the promise is, not that the spirit of the condemned malefactor was with the Spirit of Christ in heaven, but that he was with Jesus only as the Omnipresent God, according to Psa. 139:7-12. His frightful doctrine is, that, while the penitent thief quitted the earth in a forgiven state, and was therefore among the blessed, Christ, being a Substitute after the cross as well as on it, had still to suffer in the other world that measure of punishment, allotted by divine justice to sinful man. It denies the work finished by the offering up of His body. This is heresy. It separates the natures of Christ, no less than Christ and the robber in paradise. Touch His work or His person, and our best privileges are irremediably shaken. In this Dr. B. seems to touch both.

But, as to the passage itself, Dr. B. tells us that those who regard it as a statement of Christ's preaching by His Spirit in Noah seem to forget that He is represented to have effected it in His own person. (Page 90.) This however is not the fact. He is declared to have done it by the Spirit; as the Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, is declared by the same apostle in the same Epistle to have testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

Further, it has been already shown that the use of the preposition (■ν ■) is not immaterial, and that the anarthrous form (πν.) is perfectly correct. The quickening and the preaching therefore are not absolutely analogous, as he argues. It is not true that Christ is said by the apostle to have done anything whatever during His disembodied state; but, even if a personal action of Christ were here intended, it would seem most natural to place it after His resurrection, not during His disembodiment, for there can be no just doubt that “quickened by the Spirit” refers to resurrection. But Dr. B. himself owns that Christ's preaching to the spirits in the prison of hades involves very grave difficulties, arising from its apparent inconsistency with numerous declarations of the word of God. He maintains from Luke 16 the impossibility of an alterable condition in the next world for the departed righteous or wicked; and so far he is quite right. A great gulf is fixed, and there is no passing it from either side.

What then does Dr. B, propose? An amended translation. “Because Christ also once suffered for sins, a Just for unjust persons, in order that He might bring us to God, being put to death indeed in the body, but enlivened in the Spirit, in which Spirit He also went and cried aloud in prison, among those spirits who formerly believed not,” &c. (Page 89.) It is first to be observed that ζωοποιηθε■ς: means not “enlivened,” but “quickened,” as has been already shown with precision. Secondly, “cried aloud” is an impossible rendering of ■κ■ρνξεν. The passage quoted from the Hecuba of Euripides (145) proves nothing of the sort. To invoke is not to “cry aloud” as a sufferer. In the very few classical instances where the word bears the peculiar meaning of invocation, κ. has an object which determines the sense, whereas here it is without one. But its New Testament meaning is to preach or publish; and the reason alleged for a variation here (that it is the only place in which it refers to one who was in a state of suffering) is a mere and unfounded assumption. There is no more real ground to deny an active subject here than anywhere else in the New Testament. It is not true that the apostle was in this clause concerned with the voluntary sufferings of Christ, any more than with the desire of the Savior to be delivered from those sufferings; for this slights the value of the conjunction “also” (■ν ■ κα■). The apostle states it as a distinct fact, and connects it with the Spirit's power by which He was quickened.

The attempt also to gather support from the supposed derivation of κηρ■σσω from the Chaldaic ■■■■■■ proves rather the contrary, for Dan. 5:29 in no way supports the notion of crying out in suffering. Nor is it true that the word ■κ■ρνξεν should be followed by an objective case if the apostle had been desirous of impressing on our minds the definite notion of publishing the gospel; for if Mark 16:15 expresses the gospel, Mark 1:38 leaves it out, and yet who can doubt the meaning? So Mark 3:14, nay, even chapter 16:20—the very context to which Dr. B. appeals for the contrary. The rest of the New Testament would still more fully disprove the notion, but what we have referred to is surely enough.

But, again, it is to corrupt scripture, not to translate it, if one represent Peter as saying that He “cried aloud in prison among those spirits who formerly believed not.” It has been already pointed out in an earlier part of this paper, that the apostle says nothing about preaching in prison, but that Christ by (or in the power of) the Spirit preached to the spirits that are there, which is a wholly different proposition. For this leaves it to be decided by the context if not by other scriptures whether the preaching was there, or only the persons preached to were because they heeded not the preaching, as indeed the next clause of the verse lets us know is the truth. The Greek does not intimate that Christ cried aloud (oven if the word could bear this meaning) in prison; it tells us of the imprisoned spirits as those contemplated in Christ's κ■ρνξιω by the Spirit. To bear the desired meaning, ■ν φυλακ■ must have been put with ■κ■ρυξεν, instead of being entrenched in its present position apart, as it is most firmly. Further, it is equally an error to suppose that the original text can possibly mean “among those spirits, &c.” Were the words ■ν φ. Μετ■ τ■ν πνευμ■των, κ.τ.λ., there would be something answering to what is set out in his English: as it is, there is not even a distant resemblance. Again, the Greek does not say “who formerly believed not;” for this would require the article, the absence of which indicates that their former disobedience in Noah's day was the ground, occasion, or circumstance, antecedent to their being in prison.

Our readers will therefore gather that of all expositions Dr. B.'s is perhaps the least satisfactory, and, of all translations known to me, certainly the moat inexact. Many have failed in one phrase or another; Dr. B. in all that is of consequence to the right understanding of the passage, though clear

enough in rejecting most of the counter-interpretations. For (1) it is impossible to sustain that “the spirits in prison” mean the blessed on high; (2) it is contrary to the tenor of scripture to allow of a preaching to the lost in hell; (3) it is a paltry view that no more is meant than the Gentiles in bondage to idolatry till they heard the gospel; (4) the notion of purgatory being intended here is quite untenable and inconsistent, for it is not Romish doctrine to have Christ preaching to souls there (at least for prospective grace), but to have masses now said and paid for on their behalf.

All who look into the passage must in fairness concede that the singling out of the spirits of the antediluvians (who perished for their rebellious indifference to Noah, preacher of righteousness as he was) for Christ to preach to them in person after His death is not only without the smallest support from general scripture teaching or any passage anywhere, but wears every appearance of caprice, being not only without moral motives but opposed to the most solemn considerations derivable from God's word. On the view that Peter means Christ's preaching by the Spirit in Noah to the men of his day, one can readily understand that those who were about to be visited by an unexampled destruction should have had a special warning; and that all this should be turned by the apostle to the present or future profit of those who hoar the gospel that is now preached. For Jews especially were disposed to slight anything short of open signs and displays of power, little thinking that, while not reigning as David's Son over Israel and their land, now too He in Spirit is preaching before He comes personally in judgment of the habitable earth, and that all who have despised His admonitions and fallen in such solemn dealings await what is still more awful at the close, that eternal judgment when the dead small and great shall stand before the throne and be judged according to their works by Him who, unseen and gone into heaven, is at God's right hand, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him, and Himself ready to judge the quick and the dead.

Chapter 25

Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison: Part 10

(1 Peter 3:18 - 21.)

There is another work to be noticed before I bring this paper to a close, because it seeks to yoke our text with the general bearing of the unholy scheme of universalism. Not that there is anything intrinsically which calls for a notice, but that the work bears witness to the prevalence of infidel thought now put forth without a blush by professing ministers of Christ and spread far and wide by those regarded as respectable publishers. The usual guarantees of orthodoxy fast vanish away.

"That even as to the saints, the intermediate state between death and the resurrection will be one of progression I firmly believe, and on that point I shall have something more to say in my next sermon. But what of those who die in either utter ignorance of the truth as it is in Jesus or in conscious rejection of it? If ultimately all things are to be reconciled to God; if the kingdom of Christ is to eventuate in the restoration of all things, then it is evident in regard to those who are not saved from sin and brought to God in this life, there must be some provision for their rectification and restoration in an after state of existence. Let it be admitted that holy scripture does most clearly and distinctly teach that all things in heaven and earth are to be gathered up again into one in Christ, and that by Him everything is to be brought into subjection to God, that in His name everything is to bend and every tongue to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father; let this be admitted, and I do not see how the inference can be escaped, that, even though there were no specific revelation on the point, there must be some provision hereafter for the reconciliation and restoration of those who in this life have not been reconciled and restored:" (Pages 135, 136.)

It need surprise none that in his next sermon Mr. S. has not one word to prove the alleged progression of saints in the intermediate state. "The life then (says he) of the sainted dead, we may believe, is one of blessed hope and holy expectation; and if, as before said, if be one also of nearer communion with God and Christ, we may believe it to be a life of progress and development," &c. (Page 150.) But supposing we believe nothing of the sort without scripture, what has he to say? Nothing. The idea of growth then is wholly unwarranted by revelation, and contrary to every instinct of the believer, who weighs the force of what scripture does say of our sojourn here below as the place of growth, exercise, and testimony. I turn however to what is of even graver concern, the perversion of the scriptures which speak of reconciling and restoring all things, to draw a similar conclusion as to the impenitent and unbelieving in the teeth of the plainest and most solemn warnings of God. Every believer must feel the utter fallacy of such arguments.

Then, on the one hand, Col. 1 distinguishes between "you hath he reconciled" and reconciling of all things. But even so they are only the things on the earth and the things in the heavens; not a word about the things infernal, not to speak of persons who are nowhere before us in this reconciliation of all things. It is a question of the universe; not of men, but contradistinguished from the saints who are already and expressly said to be reconciled, whereas the reconciliation of all things is of course future.

On the other hand, when the Spirit of God treats the subjection of every creature to the Lord, infernal beings are just as distinctly added to those heavenly and earthly (Phil. 2), because the point there is the compulsory bowing of every knee and the confession of every tongue. Reconciliation is carefully avoided here; for judgment is just as certainly a means God the Father will use to enforce the honor of His Son on the unbelieving (John 5), as the gift of eternal life bows the heart of the believer now before His glory and His love.

Eph. 1 quite confirms this evident and important truth. For though we are there shown the mystery of God's will, according to the good pleasure which He purposed in Himself for the administration of the fullness of the times, to gather up together (or, head up) all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth; we see, first, that infernal things are quite left out of this blessed gathering under His headship; and, secondly, that the saints, or the church, do not form a part of all things, in heaven or earth, but are associated with Christ in His inheritance over them all. Compare not only verse 11 but also 22, and indeed scripture in general. It is the universe distinguished from those who reign with Christ over it all.

Thus the awful revelation of the unending punishment of the ungodly and unbelieving remains intact and unqualified; and the mischievous and wicked folly is exposed of such as would distort the disclosures of the regeneration of creation, or “restitution of all things” into a spurious hope for the final recovery of the lost. Not a hint of such expectations appears in scripture. The alleged passages refer to the inheritance or to the judgment, not to the heirs or to salvation. To the deliverance of the groaning creation of which Paul speaks in Rom. 8, the prophets bear witness, not one, not a single shred of the New Testament, to the reconciliation and restoration of those who in this life have not been reconciled and restored. With this falls all possibility of such inference.

But Mr. S. thinks that there is a sort of direct intimation in the passage before us, wherein Peter tells us how Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison. His short paraphrase however is quite wrong; and he only adds to the number of those he characterizes as trying to make the text mean almost anything but what it does mean, if taken in the simple literality of its words. I utterly deny for reasons already given that it means or speaks of a preaching to spirits in another state of existence. A superficial glance might infer so, not a careful or exact examination of what is said.

“Suffering death (says Mr. S., p. 138) as far as the flesh was concerned, his body being put to death upon the cross, but continuing to live in respect of his spirit, which did not die, but passed from the body on its dying, and descended into hell, that is, hades, the place of disembodied spirits, ‘in which also,' says the apostle, that is, in his spirit, ‘He went and preached to the spirits in prison.'“

Now this paraphrase is manifestly and hopelessly inaccurate. “Continuing to live” is a false rendering of ζωυποιηθε■ς, which is the less excusable as the Authorized Version in every hand gives the only correct translation. Again, “in respect of His Spirit” is ignorance or neglect of the true text, which has no article in the Greek; if “His Spirit” were meant, the idiom would require it. As it is, the Holy Spirit is intended, though this rather as a characteristic state than drawing attention to the person who so wrought in power. Compare Timothy 3:16, where, as here, it is hard in our language to avoid the article; but it is the Spirit that is meant, certainly not His spirit. Lastly, the interpretation of the clause is false; for as a whole it points to our Lord's resurrection, not to His

spirit's passing from the body on His dying, to say nothing of foisting in here a descent into hell or hades, of which the passage says not a word, but “in which also” (that is, Spirit) He went and preached to the spirits in prison. That is, Christ in Spirit went and preached to them. Not a word intimates that the disembodied spirit of Christ went there; not a word that He went and preached in the prison, disembodied or not; not a word that, when preached to, they were spirits in prison. There would be precise phrases in the Greek tongue for expressing any of these ideas, which the paraphrase assumes; as they are not employed, the only fair and sound inference is that they were not meant, and that the paraphrase departs from the simple literality of the words, which I am quite content to take as they are, refusing every sense save that which flows from their precise grammatical import.

Nor is it allowable to Mr. S. to cite the late Dean Alford for what these words mean, for he expressly declares that they do not mean “universal restitution” (Mr. S.'s hypothesis), any more than the Romanist dream of purgatory. “It is not purgatory, it is not universal restitution; but it is one which throws blessed light on one of the darkest enigmas of the divine justice: the cases where the final doom seems infinitely out of proportion to the lapse which incurred it.” Did the Dean realize his own thought? In my opinion he did not; for the real difficulty to speculating benevolence is not God's visiting the antediluvian rejecters of Noah's preaching in the destruction of the deluge, but the everlasting punishment of all unbelievers. There is no darkening of divine justice in the former, any more than a ray of light cast on the latter in this passage. It is implied indeed that besides perishing by the deluge their spirits are kept shut up for the day of judgment; but I can hardly imagine that this is the “blessed light” Dean A. cherished in His lively and poetical mind. It is certain at least that he explicitly denies that the word means that universal restitution which Mr. S. would draw from them: what he himself inferred is left, purposely or not, in the utmost vagueness. So it is apt to be where we have not consciously the known truth of God. He even throws out the hint, of which Mr. S. does not fail to avail himself, consistently enough on the scheme of universalism; most inconsistently on Dean A.'s, if indeed he had anything definite before his mind. “And as we cannot say to what other cases this κ■ρυγμα may have applied, so it would be presumption in us to limit its occurrence or its efficacy. The reason of mentioning here these sinners, above other sinners, appears to be, their connection with the type of baptism which follows. If so, who shall say that the blessed act was confined to them?” (Com. in loco.) To me the real presumption seems the fancy of an efficacy which the context disproves, and the hinting at an enlargement of its occurrence without the smallest evidence. Undoubtedly that the Spirit of Christ preached to those spirits in prison was a “blessed act.” All we know of the result for those preached to is that they were “disobedient,” and suffered its consequences in being kept” shut up (as Dean Alford says) “in the place of the departed awaiting the final judgment:” a description which in no way suits the departed saints, who are with Christ in Paradise and come not into judgment. One may boldly say that the “blessed act” Dean A. fancies of our Lord's preaching in hades to the disembodied unbelievers of Noah's day not only was not repeated to any other class but has no warrant from scripture in the case reasoned on. It never once was a fact.

It is useless after these remarks to quote all the argument of Mr. S. in which he enlarges for his own purposes the words thus rashly flung out by the late Dean of Canterbury. But the reader will learn how things grow worse and worse in this line from his conclusion (p. 139): “Yet it is these notable sinners who are especially mentioned as having been preached to by Christ on his

descent into hades. If to these, then surely to all, may we believe, was the announcement made," &c.

Nor am I disposed to give the least weight to the reasoning Mr. S. reproduces from Professor Plumptre's sermon. It is absurd to argue, as he and some of the Fathers do, from Eph. 4:9, 10. Not a word connects the spirits of the departed with the lower parts of the earth. Nor is it the reverence of believers to God and His word to quit revelation for analogy and human reasons, whatever one may use for stopping the mouth of an infidel, if we can.

Once committed to the uncertain guesses of the mind, how can one avoid being tossed as waves and carried about by every wind of teaching? "May we not be permitted to indulge the thought (says Mr. S., p. 142) that as the Lord Jesus in his spirit went, in the interval between his death and resurrection and preached to the spirits in prison, so possibly this may form part of the blessed occupation of the saints in hades? They rest, indeed, we are told, from their labors, so far as weariness is connected with them, and yet their works do follow them. May it not be that the work in which they delighted here, that of winning souls, shall follow them there? If, it has been well observed [in Professor Plumptre's sermon, if the future is to be the development and continuation of the present, if we are not to pass from a life of ever varying relations with our fellow-men, each bringing with it opportunities for self-discipline and for serving God to an absolute isolation, may we not so get one step further and believe, as some did in the earliest ages of the church, and as others have thought of late, that those whose joy it has been in life to be fellow-workers with Christ, in leading many to righteousness, may continue to be fellow-workers there, and so share the life of angels in their work of services as in their ministries of praise? The manifestations of God's righteous judgment and of His changeless love may thus, using men and angels as His instruments, help to renew throughout His universe all who are capable of renewal!"

Thus sadly is it our lot to see in these last days a fallen but no longer slumbering Christendom, that the anile fables of early legend-mongers find ready acceptance among those who turn away their ears from the truth. The Holy Spirit has prepared us for these and all other aberrations. For as surely as the wise virgins have obeyed the midnight cry, "Behold, the bridegroom: go forth to meet him," the foolish are going hither and thither to buy that "unction from the Holy One," the lack of which no religious truth, no sentimental activity, can disguise from consciences still unpurged, from hearts which have never found rest in Christ the Lord. As we wait for new heavens and a new earth, may we be diligent to be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless, and account the long suffering of our Lord's salvation! Whether it be the Epistles of Peter or of Paul, the untaught and ill-established wrest them, as also the other scriptures, to their own destruction.

Chapter 26

Queries and Answers on Church Matters

Q. 1. Have a few brothers, who stay at the weekly meeting for consultation, usually after the prayer meeting, power to act for the “assembly,” say in the matter of putting away, without distinctly calling a meeting of the “assembly?” And if a brother feels he cannot concur in a judgment thus arrived at, is he wrong in saying so at the Lord's table, in the event of such judgment being read there?

J. K.

A. I am aware that, when assemblies are small, and more rarely in larger ones, there is apt to be a want of due care in apprising the saints of a meeting for considering a case of discipline which seems to call for putting away. This ought not to be.

But if a “few brothers” remain at the close of a meeting of the assembly (either on Lord's day, or during the week), and if they be of one mind, the case might be so far clear (especially as many could be there if they pleased) as to warrant their bringing it at once before the assembly at the breaking of bread. Only, if they knew of an honest difference of judgment (for one does not take account of party men, relatives, &c.) among brethren, they ought to seek the Lord about it together; for discussion at such a time is most undesirable, as haste is always. They ought therefore in such a case to call a meeting, or at least announce at a general meeting (not at a reading or other meeting in a private house) that the saints are requested to stay for consideration of a case of discipline.

If there has been irregularity in this respect, a brother might rightly say so, taking care of the facts first, and of his own spirit in the way it is named to the saints, so as to avoid the hateful appearance of factious opposition, or of other uncomely conduct. But undoubtedly a formal judgment ought to be arrived at by the assembly, not by a few for it; and therefore it is still open even at the last moment to call for arrest of action if the case be not quite clear. The few may come to a sound judgment and be used of God to awaken all to the gravity of the case and the will of the Lord about it; but due means should be used that the assembly should hear before judgment is pronounced, so as to satisfy all, and give occasion for correcting those mistakes which are very possible in such a world as this. In a perfectly plain case to hear the facts is enough; and judgment might follow at once. Technical delay of judgment under such circumstances is unworthy of the church, though it may suit the world and the lawyers.

Queries and Answers on Church Matters

Q. 2. Is it requisite that the assembly as such should agree to the proposal of names for communion? or is it enough that they be proposed by two or three having the confidence of the rest? A. B.

A. There is no small danger for some of attaching too much importance to the mere proposal for communion. This really involves no more than the judgment of the individuals who propose: if they

propose rashly, it is enough that the assembly refuse to receive those they propose—a wholesome but painful lesson for all concerned. The great point of importance is, not the proposal by a few individuals (which really and properly has nothing to do with the assembly; for in principle any brother is at liberty to propose whom he thinks fit), but the action of the assembly, who are all responsible, when a name is proposed, to satisfy themselves directly or through such visitors as they confide in, that the Lord has received those they accept after proposal. It is egregious to suppose that the assembly should propose as well as receive people; and to lay overmuch stress on the individuals who propose (however desirable that they be godly, and respected by all for spiritual competency) shows latent ministerialism. Exclusion and restoration answer, not to proposal, but to reception, and are all, save proposal, the act of the assembly, which in each case is bound to carry out what it believes to be the Lord's will in His word.

The grand thing is the assembly's acceptance or rejection of those proposed. To make too much of the proposers is to make too little of the assembly. If individuals propose carelessly, they should feel it as their fault. If the assembly receive carelessly, it is the assembly's fault (and it is vain to shift it thence on individuals); for to receive is their responsibility, not that of the proposers.

Queries and Answers on Church Matters

Q. 3. What Are the Grounds of Admission? What of Exclusion? and What Is Meant by the Unity of the Body?

H. D.

A. I know no ground of admission but the membership of Christ's body. Of course it is implied that the applicant affords no just occasion for exception either doctrinally or morally. Were there known evil in doctrine or practice, the clearest profession of the truth would only produce the deeper distrust. But a Christian, apart from such reasons, inconsistent with the godly confession of the Lord's name, is thoroughly admissible as such, hardly needs to be known. To demand ecclesiastical intelligence in the persons applying is not only without and against scripture, but a proof of lack of intelligence in those who seek for it in such circumstances. We ought not to look for spiritual understanding as to the church in those outside. Press for the confession of Christ, or the knowledge of redemption. All we could hope to find beyond the gospel is mere notions, till a soul is in the place which grace assigns it, till walking in communion. Those who are on church ground ought themselves to be intelligent as well as gracious; and if they are, they will assuredly help to smooth away difficulties for the ignorant, not increase them in the present snares and difficulties of Christendom, in a way the apostles did not when all was at the beginning clear and plain. If it be pleaded that such souls may still go backwards and forwards through ignorance of the evils of the world-church, denominationalism, &c.; the answer is that it is our duty, as far as we can, to instruct them within, not to create artificial and unwarranted barriers, or to keep them dangling without on one excuse or another which there is not honesty to avow, because it would be the avowal of sectarianism. But this largeness of heart, this yearning according to Christ over all that are His, this refusal to allow human rules expressed or understood to stand in the way of receiving in the Lord's name those He has called by grace, is as far as possible from the indifferentism which makes light of fundamental heterodoxy or defies the holy obligatory discipline of God's assembly.

There can hardly be too much care, both for the Lord's sake and His assembly', not to say for the souls themselves, in ascertaining on the most trustworthy evidence that those who come forward are members of Christ, not merely quickened but possessed of the Spirit, so as to join in Christian worship and every other godly function. Acts 11:17.

To require more, not to accredit and act on that, is in my judgment a slight of the name of the Lord, and neither right nor wise. Honest ignorance we are bound to bear with, while seeking to teach the truth more perfectly; but we are yet more solemnly bound to purge out and keep from all that denies and dishonors Christ whether openly or by neutrality.

This suffices also as to grounds of exclusion, the principle and even details of which faith can find in the word of God. Originally all the church owned itself and acted as one. Those who so own and act now are seeking to walk in the unity of the body. For they take their stand for united action on the great truth that “there is one body and one Spirit,” seeing also that the Lord has provided a resource even for the present state of His saints scattered by inadequate or false, by loose or narrow, grounds of union. They accept the unity produced by the Spirit who baptizes all Christians into one body; and if they cannot convince all others that this is the only divine ground of church unity, they can at least act on it by grace themselves. Hence they seek diligently in the measure of their faith to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, while they would also maintain scriptural discipline among those who gather thus to the Lord's name. This is set aside by the Protestant theory of co-ordinate systems, though by none so distinctly as the Congregationalists; for they go so far as to make each congregation independent of every other on principle, whatever they may concede to courtesy—a fatal abuse of churches to deny the whole principle and practice of the church on earth.

Chapter 27

Scripture Query and Answer: Citation of Jeremiah or Zechariah?

Q. Matt. 27:9.—Why does Matthew here quote the prophecy as Jeremiah, when it is really Zechariah?

A Christian Friend.

A. The difficulty is due to the Jewish manner of citation, felt by many friends of inspiration and often pressed by adversaries. But it is remarkable that R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, in his determined assault on Matthew's credit, finds no objection to the use of Jeremiah's name instead of Zechariah's in this place. Yet it is almost incredible that he could have overlooked so obvious a peculiarity if he had regarded it as a fault, as he does object to Matthew's application of this prophecy to the Messiah, but not to his method of citing which to us westerns is apt to look strange. Hence the just inference appears to be that this learned Jew knew that such a form of citation was even more characteristically Jewish (and therefore appropriate in Matthew) than the more simple and precise mention of the particular prophet in question.

The true point then is the principle on which the inspired writer thus cited. The imputation that he did not know the very palpable fact that the passage used was in Zechariah is even on human grounds absurd; for the evangelist abounds in the most profound and accurate use of the Old Testament throughout, and hence cannot fairly lie open to the charge of such a blunder as would be unworthy of an intelligent Sunday scholar.

Now it appears from a great Rabbinical authority (T. Bava Bathra, fol. 14, 2) that Jeremiah stood as a beginning and title to the later prophets, Joshua to the earlier, as contradistinguished from the law and the Chetubim. Hence a citation from the later prophets (or what we should call the prophets) might well be made under the name of Jeremiah, no matter which was quoted in particular; especially as it appears from Sepher Hagilgulim (according to Surenhusius) that it was a common saying among the Jews that the spirit of Jeremiah was in Zechariah. It is a familiar fact attested by our Lord in the New Testament that the Old Testament was divided into the law, the psalms, and the prophets, which latter we have seen subdivided in the manner already described.

So the best copies of Mark 1:2 read (not in the prophets, but) “in the prophet Isaiah,” though two passages are cited, the latter of which only is Isaiah's, the former from Malachi. This may show how differently from us the Jews quoted. But ignorance or error is out of the question: they really attach to translators and copyists who tried to amend the true reading in some Greek copies and ancient versions of both these scriptures. It is the best wisdom and the simplest faith to accept scripture in its most accurate form in spite of difficulties, which the Spirit of God wilt enable us to solve if for His glory. But were the difficulties more and greater, could we not trust Him?

Chapter 28

Cleansing and Deliverance

As regards perfection, which is often a difficulty, the ground has been taken that, while the flesh never changes, which is perfectly true so far, yet supposing we sin, by referring to the blood of Christ, inasmuch as it cleanses, we are constantly thus perfectly clear. But this does not at all meet the point. Blood has to cleanse because we are not clean. What is wanted is not so much cleansing as power.

Now Christ's blood, though the ground of all blessing, connects itself directly with the conscience, with imputation, not with power; and to bring in the blood at once raises the question of the state of my conscience and the consciousness that I am unclean. They tell me there is power sufficient to put you in relationship with God, and then that you are there pure. Now, it requires earnest and honest attention to make the difference between deliverance from the power of sin and purity. Because, till we are delivered through a just sense of redemption, the sense of the presence of sin and of want of perfect purity connects itself with conscience and acceptance with God. Take Christians in general; and you will find they have a kind of feeling, though they would not like to say it, that they must sin. And quite true it is that, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; and, in fact, in many things we all offend.

But you will notice in 1 John 1, when it comes to sinning, the apostle puts this in the past tense, “If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us.” Speaking of sin, it is the present tense, “we have no sin,” but of sinning in the past tense, “we have not sinned,” not “if we say we are not sinning;” and there is no such consequence to be drawn as that we must sin. “My grace,” said Christ, “is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness;” and “God is faithful not to suffer us to be tempted above that we are able.” “I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me.”

Nor does the existence of the flesh give a bad conscience: else I should never have a good one, because the flesh is always there. Neither is it a question with me whether God can impute a sin to me as a believer, for Christ has borne them all; nor is it a question of past sins or future sins, inasmuch as for Christians now Christ never bore any but future sins, though past sins are necessarily what affect the conscience. But the question is, whether that kind of power comes in by which I am brought into a condition where sin is not operative. I never could say that it must operate, For God is faithful not to suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; and, if I bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, only His life will work in me. So that, if an idle thought is in my mind, I cannot excuse myself. Grace still acts in the advocacy of Christ; but I never can excuse myself for having ever allowed the flesh to act. Had I been faithful in closeness to Christ, the flesh would not have acted. Had I been occupied with Him, the evil would not have found place in my mind.

Here is a mother; she is told that her child has been run over at the railway; she is off directly. Does she think of the things in the street as she passes? Not she; on she runs. All those things which might have been an attraction to her if she had been unoccupied—a fine dress hung out, or

a pretty picture—they none of them arrest her attention now: she does not see them. And so ninety-nine out of a hundred temptations never would be such to you, if Christ were in your mind. If we were full of Him, there would be no room for the idle thoughts with which Satan seeks to distract us by the world around us, if he cannot occupy us with them as an object.

And if we do fail, this is no question of putting away sin, and of blood; but it is a question of water, when Christ is an advocate pleading for us to restore our souls. In John 13 He did not put blood into the basin, but water. Now, if my feet did not pick up the dirt—and they ought not to do it—then I should not need that action in John 13; but they do, and the Spirit of God brings the water of the word to my conscience, and this is the value of the passage. I have defiled my feet, and then I get water and not blood. Water, as a figure, signifies always the application of the word by the power of the Holy Ghost. Christ has entitled us to heaven, but for our restoration He works in us by the word when it is needed, though it ought not to be.

The existence of the flesh does not stop communion, but the allowance of it does. In 1 John 1 fellowship or communion is the same word; and it is stopped by an idle thought: for the moment it is totally interrupted. God evidently cannot have communion with such.

But, further, in connection with this, Christ dying for our sins is quite distinct from our dying with Christ; it is a different thing entirely. We are called upon to recognize this and live in the power of it. If we are dead with Christ, then “reckon yourselves” so; only I add that this is not finding out that I have died at a particular moment, and am brought by faith into this state (though every truth is learned by faith), but the truth learned here is that I died in Christ's death. It is my Christian profession. Being baptized unto Christ, I am baptized unto His death, and, when the apostle bears about in His body the dying of the Lord Jesus, it is clearly not his own dying, but, as it states, the dying of Jesus. The thing I say is, Christ was the One who bore my sins, and so I get pardon; but I find no pardon for the evil nature. “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.” But, when God did that, what happened? Christ died; then I am dead. If it had been myself personally under law, I should have had condemnation as well as death; but being crucified with Christ, condemnation is gone, and the death has come. If I apply it practically, and honestly say I am dead, how can Satan tempt a dead man? And how can you say a dead man has lusts and a bad will? It is not true. Yet this doctrine of purity in yourselves attained by faith, and that without the self-knowledge gained by exercise of heart under law as taught in Rom. 7, is very rife around us; and it is winning honest and sincere persons, through the craving for a deliverance they have not got.

It is stated that there is a purifying that makes us now like Christ here. But this is unscriptural. It is asked “Did you not when converted desire to be conformed to Christ?” But this is misleading people's souls; for I desire it now too. But what is taught in scripture is that, “when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.” This is a very different story. If I am already purified, I do not want to purify myself. The conformity to Christ proposed in scripture is in glory. He was absolutely without sin here; if I say I have none, I deceive myself. I ought to walk as He walked, not allowing sin to stir in me; but it is there in the flesh.

The effect of the whole thought is to lower the standard of the Christian altogether. I want to be like Christ in glory, and I shall be; and, meanwhile, though the flesh is here, this in itself would not interrupt my communion; and I recognize fully that as a Christian I ought, not grieving the Holy Spirit of God, to live constantly in the unclouded sense of God's favor.

I dare say there may be Christians here who never have really comprehended what it is to be dead and risen with Christ. They cannot, as to their own souls, take this up. It is what the scripture calls being perfect; that is, not merely being forgiven the sins of the first Adam but having our place in the Second, and that in the power of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. “We shall be actually perfect when like Him in glory; never before, because this is our standard. But, if I have realized that I am in Him dead and risen with Him, as He is, so am I in this world—first, as to judgment, and then as to the power of life and state before God, recognizing the deadness of the old man for faith through Christ's death on the cross.

But the view I have referred to supposes that a person can by faith slip into a state of purity; just as by faith he knows his justification. Now, such are deceiving themselves, and that for this reason; you do not know yourselves yet, and you must. I repeat, what I have said elsewhere, that you do not get out of Rom. 7 in some shape, till you have got into it, and know not merely guilt, not merely that you have an evil flesh, but, what is harder to learn and more thoroughly humbling, that you have no power.

Suppose a person owed money, and I tell him it is all paid. If he believes I am a man of my word, no experience is needed; he is at ease and very glad to hear it. But suppose I say, You are dead to sin. This is not the payment of a debt, it is an absolute statement of your condition. The man might say, “What is the good of telling me that? why, I was in a passion this morning.” His experience contradicts me. Nor can you get out of the difficulty until you have come to the personal consciousness, the self-knowledge, which finds out that you cannot get the victory over sin. It is a terrible thing to see; but it is learning this, that I have no power, and not merely that I am guilty. “To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not;” and until you are brought to the conscience of “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?” —I cannot succeed; sin is too strong for me, you are not brought to the point, where alone you get the deliverance. I may or may not have the knowledge of forgiveness. This modifies the form, but not the substance, of the experience. It is always essentially under law, that is, a claim upon us to be in a given state. But you say, “I must try.” “Very well,” I say, “Try away, try away.” Why? Because then he will learn that he cannot, and presently he will say, not, “How shall I do better?” but, “Who shall deliver me?” He is then in such a condition that another must take him out of it. He finds he is not only ungodly, but without strength; he has learned what he is, not merely what he has done; and then he finds Christ there in power, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes him free from the law of sin and death. This is not a question of non-imputation nor of cleansing, but of making free. Then I find it settled in seeing the truth and ground of it in the cross of Christ, and not in my personal obtaining of purity at a given moment.

Another thing I would just add. I ask, Are you content to have died then, and not to have the least atom of will of your own, nor wish, nor desire? Is there nothing in your heart that you would like to hold back against God? This tests us. Have we so learned what the principle of will is, or do we want to keep a little bit of it? Our state ought always to be one of unhindered communion in the

power of the Holy Ghost, without a cloud upon our spirits. But this is not really the state of things, and so it is power we want.

Chapter 29

Coming of the Lord Prominent in All Epistles of the NT

There is not an epistle in the New Testament in which the coming of the Lord Jesus is not made the prominent object of the faith and hope of believers, for which they were to wait, and which characterizes distinctively those who should partake of His Salvation. Now the expectation of it is put out of view and depreciated" as much as possible

Chapter 30

Correspondence: Matthew 27:5

Judas' Casting Down the Money in the Temple (To the Editor of the Bible Treasury.)

Dear Mr. Editor,

Allow me to draw your attention to Matt. 27:5. The word employed is να■ς, not ■ερ■ν. What brought Judas in there? We can hardly suppose him to have been a priest. If not, his association and connection with the priests must have been very intimate to have him admitted there where only priests might come. There must have been an arranging of the wickedness sought to be accomplished which gave this intimacy and access to a place appropriated to the priests. I do not find να■ς used for the general buildings of the temple. It may be found in a dictionary on account of this passage; but though I have no opportunity of consulting books where I write this, I do not think such a use of να■ς is warranted. Can you throw any light upon it? The importance to me is as throwing light on the dealings between Judas Iscariot and the priests.

J. N. D.

Chapter 31

Correspondence: Character and Action of Laodicea

Dear Brother,—The character and action of Laodicea presses upon us on all sides. Our Lord tells us to watch. I feel it my duty to inform your readers who are interested in the distribution of tracts on the continent, that a mutilated version of “Daniel Mann” has been printed, and is sold at Paris (No. 409 of the “Publications Populaires") under the title of “un condamné à mort.” The names of the author, translator, and printer are suppressed, and the tract is sold for one penny, or less than half the price of the true verbatim translation, which is to be had from W. B. Horner, Manchester, as well as Beroud and Kaufmann, Geneva; and N. Caucanas, Alais, France. The translator of this mutilated edition has taken care to leave aside every passage which is calculated to reach the consciences of those who, to use a vulgar expression, endeavor to make the best of both worlds; and, in presenting his halfhearted gospel, deliberately takes his place amongst those who cry, “Peace, peace, when there is no peace,” who are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Those who have the real welfare of souls at heart must resent with a feeling of profound indignation and sorrow such a shameful distortion of another's work, turning the edge of the truth of God and playing into the hands of the enemy. All thought of the believer's union with a risen Christ, and of the holy walk of faith which flows from it, as well as of the two resurrections, has been carefully banished from this pseudo-French version, and some passages have been so handled as to be made to say the opposite of what was meant in the original. The entire matter of the tract is reduced more than one half. Pages 36 and 52 of the English tract (new edition, revised) have been left aside altogether.

Yours affectionately in the Lord, W. J. L.

Chapter 32

Councils, Congress, and Social Science: Part 1

The Ecumenical Council of Rome, and the late assumption of infallibility by the Pope, as the great ecclesiastical head of Christendom, and the vicar of Christ on earth, mark perhaps the highest point of pretension to which the civilized world has yet reached. Prophecy however shows a greater than this, when “the Antichrist sits in the temple of God, declaring that he is God” —whom the Lord shall destroy with the spirit of His mouth, and with the brightness of His coming. Upon this graduated scale (though much lower) is also marked the favorite scheme of modern ecclesiastics for a united Christendom by the fusion of its eastern and western churches, and the union of Patriarch, Pope, and Primate. Connected with this movement, the Pan-anglican Council of Protestantism held its session; and “the Eirenicon” of Dr. Pusey (like the dove sent forth out of Noah's ark) was let loose to see whether the waters of division were abated. The Evangelical Alliance still lends its hand as a connecting link with what is yet lower, and is almost become the next door neighbor to the Great Social Science Congress, with all its off-shoots and its monster meetings.

The International of Europe, and of America (which is the herculean progeny of these days), has a character of its own, and must be added to this catalog, in order to see the mighty machinery of all kinds which is so variously acting upon general society to produce the last formations, out of which the long expected universal prosperity is to spring!

In effect, and as the fruit of this wide-spread “knowledge of good and evil” by human attainment, the world's progress and the consolidation of its political and social systems are boldly affirmed as existing facts by the accepted organs of the times; and repeated as such in the familiar intercourse of daily life. All are thus encouraged to build with certainty, upon “the good time coming;” and as men -congratulate each other upon this hope, their only inquiry is, as to its near approach. It must seem strange, in such a state of eager expectation of the lest that can happen from these councils and congresses, to raise the question whether they are not the proof that man has long ago left the good behind him! and stranger still perhaps to have these flattering hopes dimmed by the conclusion of such an ancient as Solomon— “lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.” The issue is obviously an important and a grave one, which is thus raised between the wisest of men, and the wiser men of the nineteenth century! Has man by some disaster or other, lapsed from an original position and state, as “upright before God,” and irrecoverably forfeited that place? Is he thus in his own person a witness of what he has departed from? or, of “the uprightness” to which he fondly hopes he is advancing? Are all his “many inventions” proofs of what he has lost, and to be viewed as but so many clever expedients, by which he successfully meets the inconvenience, and reduces the misery, that attaches to his present condition? Is not man a creature, who has become fruitful in discoveries in order to mitigate his own wretchedness, and to relieve himself from the pressure of circumstances, which, had he not broken loose from God, could not have existed at all? “God made man upright;” but that he departed from this state, and sought out many inventions, is the real solution of most modern problems.

Adam's fall was no justification of Cain's “going out from the presence of the Lord,” and becoming an inventor of expedients, against the effects of his own independence, as “a fugitive and a vagabond.” Man had lost his uprightness—the image in which God had created him; but the Lord had not on that account forsaken the earth, or His creatures. “Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.” The book of Proverbs tells us that the delights of God “were with the sons of men,” rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth.

Indeed the great proof that God did not leave man to himself and to the devil is historically given in the various books of Moses and the Chronicles, when a perfect system of political economy was introduced, and established by Jehovah in relation with the people of Israel. “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself,” and “ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation,” are the recorded facts of the way by which God delivered His people from the house of bondage, and established them under His protection, and in His favor.

Having called them out of Egypt, He took the whole charge of them upon Himself, and chose for them the land of Canaan, “a good land and a large, flowing with milk and honey,” the mountain of God's own inheritance, the place which, the Lord made for Himself to dwell in, the sanctuary which His own hands had established. They were His people, and He was their God; accordingly He called Moses up (where man never was before) and appointed him as their lawgiver and commander, charging him with ordinances, and statutes, and precepts, that Israel might be different in all other respects from the nations of the earth. They were thus separated by laws and ordinances from the rest of mankind, so that God might dwell among them, and walk with them, on their journey to the land which He had prepared. Nor were they only to be morally and politically different to all the nations of the earth, but by instruction as a religious people they were taught how the God of Israel was to be approached and worshipped. Moses was therefore established as a mediator, and Aaron consecrated as a great high priest, “to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” Their intercourse was based thus on the full recognition of who and what God was in His holiness; and what they were as in the flesh: still God could and did meet the people at the door of the tabernacle which He had erected, and talked with their mediator and them. Besides these personal relations, thus established on sacrifice, mediation, and priesthood, that man might “be upright before God” in conscience, on the footing of redemption, by the blood of another; they were cut off from all their own inventions— “if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone, for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.” Another of these early lessons was at their Exodus, “stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” And Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. As to the tabernacle itself, Moses was admonished of God; “for see,” saith He, “that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.” Their education, day by day, was to own that their sufficiency was of God, who dwelt in their midst by the visible cloud, and the pillar of fire by night. Pharaoh and his captains and chariots at the Red Sea, Israel in the wilderness and the manna and the rock that followed them, Jordan, and the final possession of the land of Canaan, alike show that the right hand of the Lord triumphed gloriously. Their future was to be as bright as their past, uprightness of heart consisted then in their obedience; and prosperity was pledged to this uprightness by Him who was in their midst: “if ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them,” your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall

reach unto the sowing time, and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. Moreover as to conflict (if conflict came) it would only prove their God fought for them: “five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight, and your enemies shall fall before you.”

Besides these relations to their Jehovah, and to one another, and even to their enemies, there were intimacies which the Lord desired personally to cultivate with His people; and these were established by “the feasts of the Lord or holy convocations,” which were to be proclaimed in their seasons. “The first-fruits of all the increase” which God had given His people were to be brought to the Lord, even the hin of wine, and the oil, and the fine flour, for His delights were with His people, and He would share in all the good that He had given them. Nothing had been overlooked by Him that could contribute to their prosperity and blessing; even the land was to enjoy her sabbaths every seventh year, and the trumpet of jubilee on the fiftieth year proclaimed liberty through all the land unto the inhabitants thereof, “and ye shall return every man to his family, and to his possession.” These scriptures, and the whole of the Mosaic economy, show the desire of Jehovah to establish relations with His people, and prove how He cultivated in every possible way the acquaintance of the people with Himself. God had come down to man upon the earth to bless him in his basket and in his store, to take away all diseases from him, and to establish Israel in such outward prosperity and glory as His people, that all the nations of the world might acknowledge there was none other God than He.

This intercourse, which also contemplated man in all his capabilities as a moral and social being with his neighbor, was maintained by statutes and laws, which directed him how to behave to his fellow in the smallest matters. “If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.” Legislation on the one hand, or limitation in obedience on the other, was equally out of the question; and he was “upright” before God, who allowed no will of his own to compromise himself in thorough compliance. Inventions were also out of place, and their inventors were troublers in those days. When God dwelt with men upon the earth, everything was by divine pattern, and executed in complete submission. If a man were required “to devise cunning works, or to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones to set them, and in carving of timber to work in all manner of workmanship,” it was Jehovah's care, and He provided such a one. “The Lord spake to Moses, See, I have called by name Bezaleel, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.” Moreover, “in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee,” the tabernacle, the ark, and the mercy-seat, &c. Beyond all that was merely moral, political, and social, in the circle where man lived with his fellow, the same loving hand led the Israelite as a worshipper, into the nobler exercises of his soul, with God Himself. Moses, Aaron, and his sons; Bezaleel, and Aholiab; had all fulfilled their parts, in “the tabernacle of witness,” in the wilderness, and in due time gave place to another' order of intercourse with Joshua, and the “ark of the covenant of the Lord of the whole earth,” on their way over Jordan, into the rest which God had prepared for Himself, and His beloved people in Canaan. Here also in the days of Solomon, when Jerusalem the city of the great king was to have its gorgeous temple as the dwelling-place of Jehovah, all was by divine pattern, and when finished, the glory took possession of it (as it did with Moses and the tabernacle) so that the priests could not enter, and the Lord was at home, and in

rest with His people whom He loved. Kingship in David and the throne of Israel in the reign of Solomon (the bright center, and light to all the surrounding countries) were added by God to all He had previously showered upon this favored people, and man was at his highest and best.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 33

Councils, Congress, and Social Science: Part 2

(Continued from page 96.,)

It is a sorry thing to ask, What has become of this grand social system, this nation and its economy, this throne and its Solomon, the city and its prosperity, the temple and its glory, or the feasts of the Lord and the worshippers? It is a yet sadder lesson to learn, that the best and happiest that Jehovah in His infinite wisdom and grace could establish for men (where man is) has become an historical fact, and is behind him! Acquiescence in these ways and judgments of God ought to lead men to repent and turn to the present testimony which He now gives to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the new foundation on which His actings for His own glory and for man's blessing rest. To attempt to reconstruct a social system in this world, where it has already been established and failed through the incompetency of the people of God, is but sparks of man's own kindling! Solomon, in the consciousness of his endowments and resources, asked “What can the man do, that cometh after the king?” A yet weightier question occurs, in the face of what we are considering: What can any congress, or council, or confederation of men accomplish, after the illustrious names by whom God introduced His system of moral and political government, and social order, in the midst of His people Israel?

The prophet Habakkuk gives the counterpart of Solomon's proverb to us, and also the secret of man's present relation to God (in the gospel), when He says, “behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.” Independence and self-will destroy uprightness in the soul, and lead to many inventions; whereas confession and self-judgment bring into a closer walk with God in the path which He opens to the faith of His people. Another prophesied in the days when the heart of Israel was lifted up, and they sought out inventions, “woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen because they are strong; but they look not to the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord.” Now the Egyptians are men, and not God, and their horses flesh and not spirit. “When the Lord shall stretch out His hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down together.” The force and application of these quotations are obvious upon the supposed advancement of men by social science; and the progress of the world into light and blessing, by means of the fourth beast of Daniel and its ten horns, with the mouth that spoke great things. Do the modern leaders of this movement in the old and new world expect to do better than those men who were so eminently endowed by God, and with whom He wrought in counsel, and where He once dwelt? “Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.” (Deut. 33:29.)

Have they any one like Moses, who was with the Lord forty days and forty nights, and did neither eat bread nor drink water? Who but him has ever been entrusted with two tables of testimony—the skin of whose face shone so bright that the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him, the witness from God (and the link with God) upon the formation of Jehovah's delights with His

people? Who but Aaron in his garments of glory and beauty, ever was authorized to enter within the veil into the holiest where God was upon the mercy-seat, to obtain by sacrifice and priesthood the remission of Israel's sins, year by year, on the great day of atonement? The same God, who brought in the light of His majesty and truth to the people in the face of Moses, provided for their failures through Aaron the great high priest, in order that the intercourse thus formed with Himself might be unbroken, even by their sins. But besides Moses with the tables on the mount, and Aaron in the sanctuary with the sweet incense and the blood, “king Solomon made a brazen scaffold of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, in temple times, and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands towards heaven. He stood before the altar of the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee in the heaven nor in the earth; which keepest covenant and showest mercy unto thy servants that walk before thee with all their hearts.”

Mediation, priesthood, and kingship, were thus established between Jehovah and His beloved people, and became the channels through which this intimacy, and their social happiness were maintained. In the midst of all this kingdom glory, and closeness of communion with God, the greatest man was the lowliest. Though lifted up and magnified exceedingly, eclipsing all else as he sat upon the throne of Israel, he would not exalt himself, nor rest in the exaltation bestowed upon him; but bless and praise the God of his father David, who had fulfilled His promises. The Lord had done His best in outward prosperity and blessing for the king and the nation, by leading them into rest, and peace, and glory with Himself, in His own city Jerusalem; and there He rejoiced over them with joy and gladness! Solomon with the people are at their height as they ascribe all this blessing (come down to man, where man is) through the covenant which was made with the patriarchs and with David. “And on the three-and-twentieth day of the seventh month, he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the Lord had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people.” All bids fair to abide, when thus committed to the hands of the wisest and best of men; who, in the deepening sense of human insignificance, thus brought into contact with the majesty and faithfulness of Jehovah, asked, “but will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee: how much less this house which I have built!” In short, a theocracy was established, in the wisdom and goodness of God, which embraced the moral and social condition of mankind, both in their relations with their fellow men and with the Creator. We have seen how this form of government and worship was set up, and sought to be carried out in unbroken social intercourse, between God and His people in Immanuel's land; as a witness that He had neither left the earth, nor men in it, to their own inventions. “Three times in a year, shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty.”

Such was His identification with His people, and His own delight to dwell in their midst—to fill all hearts with gladness, and all hands with plenty. This throne and its king, this temple and its priests, this city and its rulers, the land and its inhabitants, are no more. Costly and perfect institutions, with their costlier services, and their codes of laws, political and religious, have likewise passed away. A theocracy, and an economy suited to it, are behind men; the mournful records that even such helps and encouragements as were introduced could not permanently lift man above himself. On the contrary, all these magnificent and remedial measures were dragged down to the low level

upon which they found him and sought his deliverance and welfare. The psalmist of Israel affirms this. “They tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies;” when He heard this, He was wroth and greatly abhorred Israel, and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand; He gave His people also unto the sword, and was wroth with his inheritance.” The ministry of all the prophets followed, by which they were besought to “forsake their inventions,” and the broken cisterns they had hewn which could hold no water, and to repent of their back-slidings in “uprightness of heart,” that God might forgive their iniquities. He likewise openly punished them, and drove them away out of His presence into Babylon; and brought them back in His mercy by the decree of Cyrus under Ezra and Nehemiah. Long time suffered He their transgressions, reasoning and saying, “Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will only revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint: from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores.” The highest authoritative power under law, by Moses and a ministration of angels, had only proved the people incompetent to hold the blessing; for they brought themselves under its curses, and forfeited their relations to God, by their iniquity, so that He was compelled to be their Judge. The wisest and most able administration, by which this nation was to have been elevated above all the nations of the earth, collapsed, and only finds its record in the statute book of Deuteronomy, and the early chronicles of David and his greater son. The problem of human advancement, and a nation's progress as well as the world's prospects by moral means, has been long since brought out and solved, as we have seen. Moreover, that people are made a hissing and a byword before the eyes of the Gentiles to this day. The very best, the brightest, and the fairest that could be done for man, reached their perfection and concentrated themselves in blessing upon Solomon and the throne, as God's center of earthly prosperity and of unity between Himself and His creatures. At that same moment the responsibility of this illustrious king began, into whose hands all was entrusted, and, like Adam in the paradise of Eden, almost as soon forfeited. Does God repeat this problem—much less ask the learned, the wise, and the scientific to take it in hand in modern days? Will their present systems compare with His past and future? He has postponed this kind of social intercourse with men till the millennium is introduced, when other and heavenly agencies will be employed (at the coming of the Lord, and the outpouring of the Spirit upon Israel) by which His people shall be all righteous, and brought into final blessing in the land under their Messiah through the blood of the new covenant. The pioneers and guides of public opinion may well stop to consider what has been already done, and vanished away like a tale that is told. If they propose far less, and even compromise, yea sacrifice, the rights of God, that they may find their task easier, will He on that account surrender them? If men shut Him out of their schemes, will He consent to be shut out? If they say “let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us, he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision.” Who so fit as the wisest among men, and the central man in all that magnificent system, established between God and His people for His own and their delights, to declare, “lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions?” Who so competent as the sweet psalmist of Israel prophetically to say, “be wise now therefore O ye kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling, kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little?” “Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” “Ichabod” is indelibly written over the departed glory from the temple and the city of the great king, and Immanuel's land, which were once the bright witnesses of the yet brighter

intimacy formed and tenderly cultivated between the Lord and His beloved people.

The writings of the Old Testament (which contain these records in full) would be merely historical, did they not likewise hold out to the faith of the nation a bright future, when He who scattered them into the four corners of the earth shall gather them together again; “for this is as the waters of Noah unto me.” “For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee;” and this is God's order of blessing for the earth. If the wise men and rulers of the nations refuse to take warning from the history of God's favored people, but think themselves wiser than He—and the Gentiles better than the Jews—if they thus encourage one another—let them listen to the prophet Daniel, as to what is before them. “The fourth beast shall he the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall arise after them.... and he shall speak great words against the most High.... and think to change times and laws.... But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.” (Dan. 7:23 - 28.)

J, E. B.

Chapter 34

The Counsels of God in Grace and Glory: Part 1

(Eph. 1:1-7.)

Part 1.

There are two ways in which we may look at man in relation to God: first, in responsibility; second, in the counsels of God.

It is important to know the full value of the work of Christ, and our present relationship. All duties and right affections flow from relationships; the Christian lives in those new relationships into which God has brought him. We find in this chapter our relationship to the Father as children (the individual relationship has the first place in Ephesians); then comes in the unfolding of the unity of the body of Christ.

God put man originally in a certain relationship with Himself in innocence; that relationship—the claim of it—must subsist. You cannot destroy God's title by human sin, but on man's side the relationship is gone and broken. Wickedness on one side does not destroy claim on the other.

As to the history of God's ways and dealings, man's responsibility has closed at the cross; it is not a time of probation now, though the individual is proved. In the same cross Christ perfectly glorified God Himself. We find the two things quite distinct: responsibility; and the intentions of God before any responsibility was in question. This epistle takes up the side of these counsels.

In Philippians we are looked at as running the race through the wilderness with our eye fixed on the glory. In Ephesians we are seen as brought completely to God, and sent out into the world to show God's character. In Romans you see the responsibility side simply, the sinfulness of man, what man is without law and “under law, and the justification of a sinner. The counsels of God are only just touched on in the verse, “For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” Man is proved to be a sinner, the blood of Christ is that which cleanses us. There we get responsibility, as also justification-not in Ephesians: God has no need to justify the new creation.

In 2 Tim. 1:9 we see that what was before the world began is now made manifest. We have the same thing in Titus 1. This thought of God is very distinct.

In Genesis we begin with the responsible man. All depended on man's responsibility; but nothing could be more complete than his fall. He distrusted God and believed Satan. Distrust of God is the essence of all sin. There is no way back to innocence. We may get divine righteousness, and may be made partakers of His holiness: but we shall never have innocence again. Christ was “the seed of the woman.” All God's thoughts and counsels and plans were around the second Adam. Promises there were, and prophecies clearer and clearer; but what God was actually doing up to the cross was trying man on his responsibility.

Before the flood testimony was given; but there were no particular dealings of God. Then the world became so bad that God had to bring in the flood. When God begins again with Noah, he got drunk. The world subsequently went into idolatry.

Adam was the head of a fallen race, Abraham was the head and father of all that believe. When God had scattered the people of Babel, from among them He takes a people for Himself; then, having chosen Abraham, He gives him promises. The apostle in Galatians shows how the promises to Abraham could be neither disannulled nor added to. The law came in by the bye. There was not a question of righteousness to Abraham-no “if.” The law was the perfect measure of what man ought to be. Before ever Moses came down from the mount, the Israelites had made the golden calf. At last God says, “I have yet one Son,” one thing more that I can do. The husbandmen cast Him out of the vineyard and slew Him. Then the history of responsibility (not individual responsibility) was closed. Sin had been fully brought out. Man was lawless, then; when the law came, there was the transgression of the law; and when the blessed Lord in wondrous love and grace came into the world and went about doing good, they could not stand God's presence. “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?” Stephen gives us the summary—prophets slain, the Just one killed, the law broken, the Holy Ghost resisted. “We will not have this man to reign over us.” Christ interceded for them on the cross, “They know not what they do,” and the Holy Ghost in answer to this says by Peter, “I wot that through ignorance ye did it.”

The history of Adam, the moral history, is closed; that is what we are. In all this we have God's history of man's responsibility. I find in the cross that I am in a condition which God must reject. Christ has come to be made sin, and a work has been done according to God's holy and righteous nature. If I look up to God now, I find no sin in His presence; I go there by the work of Christ, and God cannot see the sins. Not only has Christ died for my sins, but I have died with Him, I have done with the nature. First, I find the putting away of sins, and along with that I have died with Christ. Christ did much more than this at the cross. Sin was in the world, evil was rampant, Satan reigning, God's glory in the dust, the earth full of violence (whatever the signs of wisdom). It was not merely a question of my sins; but God was compromised in a sense. Christ then was Jehovah's lot.

Suppose God had cut off Adam and Eve, there would have been righteousness, but no love. Suppose He had spared every one, there would have been no righteousness. If I look at the cross, there is righteousness against sin-never such displayed before. And there I learn the perfect love of God. At the cross I see God perfectly glorified in a Man, His own blessed Son, but still a Man. There is a Man in the glory of God. Not only is there one man out of paradise, but another Man is in paradise. The work, by virtue of which He is sitting there, can never lose its value. Now the counsels of God can be brought out. If sin is cleared away, why should I be in the same glory as the Son of God? We do not get the one without the other; but nothing can be the result of that work on the cross less than the glory. There are two things: not merely are my sins cleared away, but I stand in the light as God is in the light, as He is. This we are in Christ; and we are to be “conformed to the image of His Son.” Now we are brought as Christ and like Christ. He is the “firstborn among many brethren.” “Tell my brethren that I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God.” This is your present place. “Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.” But, says the Lord, “you need not wait till then: to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

Oh! how the things of this world are dimmed by this that we are loved as Christ is loved. What a blessed place this is! Christ has taken all on Him as man, that we may be forever with Him. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places [a remarkable expression, in the best place, in contrast to Judaism] in Christ Jesus.” There is not one possible blessing into which Christ has entered as man that we are not brought into. Christ never gives away; He brings us into enjoyment with Himself: “not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” This is perfect love. Have you ever thought of God's thought about you, that you are “to be conformed to the image of His Son?” “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.” This cannot fail. The Lord presses on our hearts that He brings us into association with Himself. “Then are the children free.” He “hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” God gives us His own nature, “holy and blameless before him in love.” He puts us in this place answering perfectly to His nature, and with a nature to enjoy it. We are in Christ—this is God's thought. I get the place of a son with the Father. Servants would not do for Him; He takes us as sons. We are “accepted in the beloved:” “in Christ” would not do here. “I was daily his delight.” In this One, who was always God's eternal delight, we are accepted. Have you the thought of God's heart? Is the thought you have that you are loved as Christ is loved? Are you able to see God's heart as He has revealed it? Where shall I get what is in God's heart? Is it in my heart? If the angels want to know what love is, it is in us they see it. Is this the way you think of God? We soon find out what poor creatures we are. Quite true; but can you say, There is where God has set me? This is the very thing that makes us see our own utter nothingness. The reasonings of the Holy Ghost are always downward from God to us; the reasonings of conscience are always upward from us to God. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” The Holy Ghost reasons downward: is this the way we reason? If you are naughty, do you feel you are a naughty child? You cannot be a naughty child, sad as this may be, unless you are a child. If I am a child of God, I am bound to live like one. He expects children's affections, children's duties. Have you given up the first Adam entirely, and found your place in the second Adam, “accepted in the beloved?”

Chapter 35

The Counsels of God in Grace and Glory: Part 2

(Eph. 1:7 - 14.) Part 2

I may remark that it is our positive place before God that lets us into the counsels of God. There is no real knowledge of these counsels except as we stand in our place before God. Knowledge that puffs up is always defective and sterile; it is a statue, not life. There is nothing really connected with it in the mind, when it puffs up. There is a certain place for the believer before God; into this the heart has to get. We are made partakers of the divine nature. Then all these thoughts and counsels of God come to be precious, not as knowledge, but as belonging to the glory of Christ. “I.....beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness.” Where our own souls are before God, according to God, of course there is fellowship and communion with God. Activity, of course, even right activity, tends to bring self in. Take Paul: there was danger of his being puffed up; and the Lord sent a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him. When he came down from the third heaven into the ordinary activities of life, there was danger. The thorn was a hindrance to him in his ministry, that the power of Christ might be made manifest in him. The moment he finds what it was, he says, “I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” Christ chooses things that are weak that no flesh may glory in His presence.

Taking the general principle, if I enter into the knowledge of divine things, it must be along with God. Love is never puffed up; love likes to serve. I am thus blameless that I may have communion. We cannot have practically a more important truth than that all real divine knowledge is found by being in the presence of God; and whenever we are in the presence of God, there must be lowliness of heart and mind and spirit. God's presence is always a holy thing. There is no true knowledge, and no true communion unless the soul is in that state before Him. There is no more dangerous thing than a certain apprehension of divine things without the soul learning them with God, as we see in Balaam and in Heb. 6. Where you get all the wondrous things of Christianity poured on the mind and natural heart. This is dangerous even if there is life, and fatal if there is not. The revelation of the counsels of God is founded on knowledge of our place with God. The eye cannot bear light from God except so far as we are right with God. Having brought us into the blessed consciousness of this place, where we are at home with God, now He can unfold His counsels as to Christ Himself. Having brought us there in grace, He can trust our hearts with all His plans. There is no real divine knowledge of the counsels of God except so far as we are personally with Him. “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” He reveals to Abraham what He is going to do not with Abraham, but with Lot.

All flows from the soul being consciously in the place where it is set, in Christ. He can then trust us with the knowledge of His will: He can trust the sons of the family with the family affairs.

Christ was a true real man in this world: was He occupied with the interests of His family, or the interests of man? He was subject to His parents. There was in Him perfect obedience, perfect confidence, and—what is so hard for us—perfect waiting. He gave Himself for our sins; He says

“Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” This is not merely an outward thing. “Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Christ was a dying sacrifice; the Christian is to be a living sacrifice, this is to be the whole life of the Christian. We are set at liberty by the power of the life of Christ, and the Holy Ghost is in us, and then we yield ourselves to God. We cannot yield ourselves of ourselves; but the moment we are risen with Christ from the dead, we have the power of the Holy Ghost. Suppose a child is exceedingly anxious to go and see something, if his father desires him to go, there is an instance of perfect liberty and obedience also at the same time. It is a “law of liberty” to us; the new man having the mind of God, its delight is to do the will of God. We do not belong to anything in this world, but only to God. I have no duty that does not belong to a man who has died and is alive again. Blessed path of liberty it is, but a path of liberty to one who has no object but Christ! This is the Christian's place, entirely separated to God. If I am my own, I am a poor lost sinner (Christ never called Himself His own); we are bought with a price, and we belong to God. When in that case, He can open out to us all His wisdom and prudence; “we have the mind of Christ.”

Thus I first get Christ's own place; and this is exceedingly blessed, because it puts us into our place. Our calling is what we are towards God. Remember you do not get dispensed glory, until, as a first thing, you get to God. Christ offers Himself up to God; you have a life to God down here, and then a death to God, before you have the glory. Our relationship to God Himself comes before any acquaintance with the dispensed counsels of God. Responsibility and the counsels of God are distinct. I was a poor sinner: but I find, through the work of Christ, that all that was against me is gone. God's counsels and plans have nothing to do with man's responsibility. When man had come to the point of positive hatred against God, in killing Christ, then the counsels of God were brought out, the mystery hidden in God. All this plan and counsel of God were before ever the world was. Christ in His rejection does the work which is the foundation of everlasting righteousness. Everything that concerned the person of Christ was revealed before, but not the counsels of God. You may find the ascension, resurrection, gifts—all that concerns the person of Christ, but nothing of union with Him, of being members of His body, joint-heirs with Him: all these counsels were hidden. I was a poor sinner, I must have my responsibility met; but this does not say that I should be in the same glory as the Son of God. Not merely has He cleansed our sins, but He has glorified God. Man goes into the glory of God because Man (He was more than man of course) has perfectly glorified God. We are loved as Christ is loved: the world will know it when He appears. Ah! if we only saw where the Christian is placed! It is a terrible thing to see all this rest on the surface. Are you conscious that the Father loves you as He loves Jesus?

The “fullness of times” is spoken of here, not eternity; in eternity we find God all in all. “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ.” This is the thought and purpose of God that everything He has created He will bring under Christ's moral power as Man. He created all things, we read in Colossians. He is going to reconcile the state of things: we are reconciled. The place of the Christian is—absolutely reconciled to God in a world that is not reconciled at all. Everything in heaven and earth will be reconciled. If you want to go as Christians through the world, you must go as absolutely reconciled to God among things not reconciled. You have nothing to do with “things under the earth” here: in Philippians they bow at the name of Jesus. The scene He created He will perfectly restore. His first title is Creator; His second is Son—He is the heir of all things.

Actual creation is always referred to the Son and Spirit—God of course. Man is to be set over it all, set at the head of everything in the fullness of times. As we get into Christ's place in our calling, we get into Christ's place in our inheritance. Whatever He created as God, He inherits as man.

“By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified;” the work is complete and finished for His friends, and He is waiting till His enemies be made His footstool. When that comes, He leaves the Father's throne and takes His own. He who created all things is Son and heir of all things, and He inherits them as man. We are joint-heirs with Him. In the thoughts of God, His Son having become a man, we have become completely associated with Christ. He went alone through the earth, but the moment redemption was completed, He says, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren.” How thorough is this association! Christ became a man, and in perfect love He brings us to everything He has as man. If He takes everything in heaven and earth, we are joint-heirs with Him (as Eve was with Adam), members of His body. When Mary Magdalene comes to the grave, He says, “Tell my brethren that I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, to my God and your God.”

God's heart is set upon me. It is the fixedness of heart on an object, but besides that I have the confidence that He never takes His eye off me. We get divine love in the nature of God, and, besides that, love set on an object. “Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” My inheritance is in Christ, because God has associated me with the Lord Jesus. See the way the apostle dwells on this word “in!”

If I have the love of Christ in my heart, can I look on a world that is under Satan's power, and not be a man of sorrows? We have joy through Christ, if you take that side. If a holy being is in a world of sin he must suffer; if a loving person is in a world of misery, he must suffer.

It is not that the glory is the highest thing, for it concerns self. At the transfiguration Moses and Elijah were in the same glory as Christ; but, more than that, a bright cloud overshadowed them—Jehovah was in the cloud; and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son.” When they went into the cloud, the disciples were frightened. The cloud was, so to speak, the Father's house.

This chapter invariably refers to God, His calling, His inheritance.

“That we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ” —hoped before He appears. The world will get a portion under Him, but we a portion with Him. While we must be born of God, there is in the proper sense of the word no glad tidings in telling a man that he must be born again. The thing that is revealed is, that the grace of God which brings salvation has appeared; there is remission of sins and full salvation. Have you never been in God's presence? Were you fit to be there? The veil is rent: we are just as much in God's presence as if we were in heaven; we shall see it more clearly then. I have everlasting life, I have divine righteousness, because I am in Christ. I am brought into God's presence, and I am not there without being fit through the work on the cross. We have not got anything of the inheritance as yet, but we are sealed with the Holy Ghost. The blood of Christ having cleansed me from all sin, the Holy Ghost can take His place because I am clean. “Know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost?” What if the apostle were to write this to you? Being born again, I have life; when sealed, I have God dwelling in me. The Holy Ghost can take His place as a witness that in God's sight I am

as white as snow. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, God dwelleth in him and he in God.” Oh! beloved, what a place the Christian is in! If you confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God is dwelling in you. How are you treating the divine guest? “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed.”

It is not merely quickening, which was from the beginning; but when there is life, the Holy Ghost becomes the seal. I do not want an earnest of God's love. He loved me so perfectly that He gave His Son for me. His is a love proved in the death of Christ, and known in present consciousness. The Holy Ghost is the earnest of the inheritance. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Do not you be looking into your heart to find if He is there. Imagine a child inquiring if he is a child! Look if you are walking up to that. “We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Do you believe in the truth that “Jesus is the Son of God?” “By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” But “they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again.”

The apostle's prayer here is to “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,” that the saint might know what He has wrought, and will for them.

Do you believe that He has put you in the same place with God as He is in Himself? We are in Him, we shall be with Him and like Him, and He gives us the knowledge of it now.

Have your hearts gone back, when accepted, to look at this model? Have your hearts burned within you as you have seen Him, and talked with Him, and have you said “His path is mine?” Has it possessed your souls? This is a matter of daily diligence and conflict. The time will soon come when we shall say, of all that has not been Christ in our lives and ways, “That was all lost.”

Chapter 36

On the Covering of the Holy Vessels

(Num. 4)

The character of the thing that was carried had a different effect in the display of its covering, according to the nature of what was covered. If I think of the ark, I shall have a certain character of display; if I think of the table, it will be another; and of the candlestick, another. When Israel set forth, the ark was, first, covered with the veil, that is, Christ Himself with the veil of His humanity; then came the badgers' skin, and, outside, the cloth of blue. That is the order: Christ's perfect humanity over the ark; then badgers' skins to protect it; and outside that the cloth of blue. The heavenly man comes out, the special character.

The badgers' skin was inside in this case, because Christ kept His perfection absolutely free of all evil, and so the heavenly came out manifestly. In us it is morally to be realized in the power of the Spirit of God.

There was of course no evil in Christ to come out, but as man here, the perfect (One). He uses, for instance, the word to baffle Satan—in that is the badgers' skin—just as I ought to keep Satan off through grace. Thus we need the badgers' skins outside in going through the wilderness.

Then came the table of show-bread, with a cloth of blue on it first, then the dishes, bread, &c, all covered with a scarlet cloth, and badgers' skins outside; the table itself—the gold or the divine part—covered with the blue, the heavenly; then the cloth of scarlet covers the twelve loaves. Scarlet is royalty, and twelve is connected, we were seeing, with administration on earth. The badgers' skins are outside, because it is a display in a human instrument.

The show-bread is the manifestation of the thing in man, but divine righteousness was under it, the gold. The scarlet will meet the result of that—royalty, though not seen yet; or, rather, scarlet is perhaps human glory, purple being proper royalty.

Next the candlestick was to be covered entirely with a cloth of blue, then with badgers' skins, and put on a bar. Here there is no scarlet; because it was the manifestation of the Spirit, and there is no royalty to come out in this.

There is on the golden altar a cloth of blue and badgers' skins outside, in the same way as the candlestick; that is, purely the heavenly character, the result of intercession, with the badgers' skins as protection.

On the brazen altar they spread a purple cloth and badgers' skins. The altar met the claim of earthly righteousness. Christ met our failure on it; but there is nothing heavenly in it. This was to meet us on earth. The purple, royalty, is with the altar.

Chapter 37

Daniel Mann

Vinton, Iowa, U.S. of America, Dec. 28th, 1872.

Beloved Brothers, I notice, in your last number of “The Bible Treasury,” that excuse seems to be sought for the abridged French version of “Daniel Mann” even at the expense of truthfulness.

Last summer I received a copy of “L'Eglise Liber” containing an extract of the narrative. I was glad to see it, because it indicated more light among the religious systems of France than in those of the fields I am now laboring in, where the word of God, simply as such, finds little else beside total indifference if not haughty contempt. But, being where I am, I was not aware of any other use having been made of the narrative until I saw the warning given in your Magazine and in the “Messager Evangelique.” I could not therefore have expressed either approval or disapproval of it. Not yet having seen the tract I cannot speak save from what others who have read it say: from this I feel compelled in sorrow to repeat the warning already given. When God, in infinite grace, has furnished such a testimony of His mercy and power, I, having been called to pass through it, to see and hear it all, and in whoso heart it still lives in all its solemnity, feel ready to warn every one against meddling with it. And when I see people daring enough to strip the truth of its edge, I must conclude their spiritual condition is fearfully low.

Oh! dear brother, how all this makes one long for that day when the blessed Son of God shall be manifested, when men's eyes will no more be on “the generality of French readers,” self, popularity, &c, but on Him who is the way, the truth, the life! Could we all realize better the solemnity of “the judgment-seat of Christ” I dare say we would rather be burned alive than not savor Christ in all our ways. Your's most affectionately in our Lord, Paul J. Loizeaux.

Chapter 38

Daniel Mann Correspondence

“Daniel Mann."

From letters it appears that the author of the tract has expressed his approval of the abridged French form, though it was not asked or given before the thing was done.

Chapter 39

David Dancing Before the Ark

(2 Sam. 6:12 - 23.)

This was a great day to David's heart; there was none like it. The day when he conquered Goliath was but a little thing compared with the entrance of the ark. Others danced in his honor then; he dances in honor of Jehovah now. This was just the secret of the joy.

But Michal understood it not. It was but vexation to her; for she thought of herself, and was offended with David and even insulted him, as far as petty pride could injure what was incomparably above itself. But David was just so much the more exalted before God as he honored and sanctified the Lord God of Hosts in his heart; and it is impossible to sanctify Him in the heart without its being manifest in the ways. It was so manifest in David and the power of it was so great that Saul's daughter was ashamed even of her own husband. And she reaped the due reward of her own foolishness and sin.

But as for David on the other hand nothing can be more lovely than his appreciation of God's glory. This was what was at the root of the matter. The ark was the most glorious display of God. It is the type of the manifestation of God in Christ, not merely in meeting us but in glorifying Himself. It was upon the ark that the blood was sprinkled perfectly—before it and upon it. It was the ark that contained the testimonies of stone written by the hand of God, which alone found a resting-place in Jesus Christ the Lord. Everybody else dishonored these testimonies of God: Jesus magnified them and made them honorable; Jesus turned them all to the glory of God. All was met in the ark of the covenant. This accordingly was what so distinguished David. We never find even Solomon with all his wisdom paying such heed to the ark of God. We find him occupied before the great altar: this had more appearance before men. People saw the altar; they had their senses moved by it; they knew that it met their need, and there most are apt to stop. But David saw what lay far within; for he looked upon what was unseen. David felt much more for God than for himself.

At the same time there is no way in which we are really so blest us when we can forget ourselves in the glory of God; and this was what distinguished king David. He had been somewhat troubled before when a man, Uzzah, was smitten for putting forth his hand to the ark and taking hold of it, after the oxen shook it, as if God's ark needed man's hand to hold it up.

God bore with the Philistines when they knew no better than to put the ark on a new cart: in fact it was their way of honoring it. And so with the kine that had conducted the ark long before from the land of the Philistines. God did not make so much of the mistakes of the Philistines: they did their best; they did not know the mind of God. But not so with Israel who had a knowledge of God that they did not possess. “Why bring they oxen to carry God's ark? It ought to have been carried by the redeemed servants of the Lord. They alone were called to identify themselves with the ark. It was their honor to be the servants of the ark of Jehovah. But Israel at this time were by no means up to the mark of the word of God. Hence with good enough intention they put the ark on oxen, and when one of them stumbled, Uzzah put forth his hand to sustain the ark. But the Lord put forth

His hand against the presumptuous man who had deemed that the ark of God needed human power to hold it up. He that made heaven and earth could surely hold up His own ark from falling. Uzzah forgot this; and he shows us therefore the folly of our attempting to do God's work out of our own heads or thoughts. Never do we glorify God, we are never even safe, when we are not walking in obedience.

The judgment of God on Uzzah made a great impression on David. He was afraid of Jehovah; he called the place Perez-uzzah, because Jehovah had made a breach upon Uzzah; he was not in communion with God about it; he let in his own thoughts and feelings, which were wrong because they doubted God instead of censuring man. He ought to have taken God's side and have said that Uzzah was justly smitten. What greater wrong is there than to find fault with God? There is no good in us; all our good is in upholding the Lord, in listening to His voice and simply carrying out His will.

Chapter 40

Hints on the Day of Atonement

(Lev. 16)

Aaron appears with a bullock for himself and for his house, and then with an offering for the people. Israel, strictly speaking, were represented by the goats. In the sacrifice for Aaron and his house together are the two parts of a sacrifice. When they are together, it is Christ taking our place. When Aaron is taken alone, there is no sacrifice for him. He shall put on the linen garments, and wash in water, and so put them on. He was to have a bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. The ram was always for consecration, or in case of desecration, which was the opposite of consecration.

The sin-offering is taken as a whole, the greater in-eluding the less; but the detail is wanted. The first idea is meeting God in His absolute holiness. It is Christ “made sin,” and we the righteousness of God according to that. As there is a danger of stopping short at the scape-goat, so there is the other danger too. Some do not use the scape-goat enough, others use it too much. Some preach more in connection with the necessity to go into the presence of God than of getting oneself the value of the scape goat. Preaching the scape-goat shows sins put away; preaching the bullock brings us to God.

There is a difference between presenting sins in the light of the law that way, and bowing souls by grace. I never come to God till I get the second part. One hears, “I am here in the world forgiven, and I am very glad of it;” you will sometimes, but not often, hear people say, “I am before God as white as snow in His presence.” Too often they take other ground altogether and say, “If I am to be saved, I am; and if I am to be damned, I am,” and so evade the real question; whether they honestly thought they were lost. If you really felt in your present state that you were going to be damned, you would not take it so quietly. The fact is, it is all dogma, and not conscience. Supposing I put the question and say, “Which are you now, saved or lost?” there is no “if” in that.

It is all substitution. I can say to all, “The blood is on the mercyseat,” but not “your sins are put away,” because I do not know that they are. And coming to detail, I can not only say, “come and welcome,” but, “God beseeches you to come, for the blood is on the mercyseat.” The scape-goat goes a step farther; for if the man does come, it says this, that “it is impossible for God ever to tell you about your sins again, for they are put all away.” I do preach this as truth generally; but scripture never says Christ has borne ',the sins of everybody’: you have lost certainty the moment you make that assertion.

I always say “our sins,” which scripture does say, and then they will take it for themselves. “Our sins” is strictly for believers. Paul is there (1 Cor. 15) preaching the gospel from his own point, as his experience. The word “our” 13 on purpose used vaguely there.

The meaning of Azazel is the scape-goat; it is the goat that carries away. There is no limit here. There is an atonement for the holy place, because of the un-cleanness of the children of Israel, and so on. And there was to be no man in the tabernacle while the high priest went in with the

blood to the mercyseat. It is done all alone: the people were all looked at as having defiled the place.

First the place is cleansed as to all that referred to God who had been dishonored. This must be set right first, and Christ has by death perfectly done it. He has “passed through the heavens,” He descended and ascended that He might fill all things. This goes farther, but it refers to the going through.

God dwelleth in light that no man can approach unto. That is God's nature, it is true; but the heavens are all the things we look at as something under God. It is light inaccessible in itself; neither man nor angel can get there. “Above all heavens” is as in Ezekiel, where we see the cherubim and their surroundings; then the vault which expresses the heavens; and God at the top of all. He “humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth.”

And here, it is a question of defilement, not of guilt; it was unbearable to God; and no man goes in while he is then occupied, nor till he comes out. He first goes in with a censer full of burning coals off the altar; “and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense cover the mercyseat that he die not.” And Christ first goes in, in the grace of His person, which is before all the offerings; that is, when you take Himself before He begins any other part He goes in with sweet incense. It is all before the Lord; and this gives Himself as a person absolutely perfect, the person before the work. But when we take Aaron and his house, we must have the bullock: those who are connected with him need that; and then the blood of the bullock is taken and sprinkled on all the unclean places, all alone, until he comes out. But after having the incense in the most holy place, he sprinkles with his finger the blood on the mercyseat and before it. There are two ceremonies, one with the blood of the bullock, and one with the blood of the goat, consecutively; and then, in verse 18, the two are taken together.

“That he die not” is always connected with what is absolutely necessary. If it had been possible for a moment that. Christ had not been an absolutely sweet savor, then that must have been the result.

“The altar that is before the Lord,” verse 18, is the brazen altar, for it is described in this way. After the blood is sprinkled on the mercyseat, then atonement is made for the holy place, and then for the tabernacle of the congregation; then “he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it.” On the mercyseat God Himself was met. In fact that made it a mercyseat, for it was a throne of judgment but for that, but now it is a throne of government for, instead of a throne of judgment against.

After he has made atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation (which would include, I suppose, what was in it), then he is to go out to “the altar that is before the Lord.” The golden altar was put “before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercyseat that is over the testimony where I will meet with thee.” God met Moses for Himself there before the mercyseat, and He met Moses for the people at the door of the tabernacle, and therefore the blood of the red heifer was sprinkled outside in Num. 19 But the brazen altar was “before the Lord;” in Ex. 29:42 you have the words so used, and in verse 43, “there I will meet with the children of Israel.” In Num. 7:89 when Moses went into the tabernacle, he heard the voice of one speaking to him from off the mercyseat. This makes two meeting places clearly. The people had nothing to do with going

inside. Moses went in and spoke with God, and put a veil on to come out and speak to the people. Moses went into the holiest of all whenever he liked, but he put his veil oft' to do so. Individually he went in and had no veil, and came out and put the veil on; but whether the glory on him died away in the wilderness is not said. The object of the Spirit of God was to give this character of the law, which is afterward contrasted with the gospel; and the veil is upon Israel still; but when it shall turn to the Lord the veil shall be taken away. It was only when Nadab and Abihu sinned, that Aaron was prevented from going into the holiest of all; and this chapter is the exceptional time once in the year with blood.

In reading verses 6 and 11, “which is for himself” and “make an atonement for himself and for his house;” it is for himself along with his sons, not alone.

In verse 20 “to reconcile” is the same word as “to make atonement for.” It is the act of the application of the blood here; it is the same idea as in Colossians “to reconcile all things unto himself.” The word “atonement” is brought clearly out in what is done in this chapter. “Make reconciliation for the sins of the people,” in Heb. 2, should be “make propitiation” for them; but in Rom. 5, where the word “atonement” is used, it ought to be reconciliation. “Blotted out” is used of transgressions and means to wipe them out.

Then Aaron was to bring the live goat and lay both his hands upon its head and confess all the transgressions of the people over it, and send it away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness, to a land not inhabited. That is the other part of sin-offering, substitution evidently just as in the blood on the mercyseat, God was met in His nature and character; so, in the scape goat, you have substitution for transgressions. Substitution does not include everything, not the full glorifying of God, I mean.

If substitution were for the whole world, it would save the whole world. Propitiation was dealing with God's nature and character. There are two things: blood brought to God in respect of God's character, and a scape-goat for the people's sake. One constantly sees two things in this way, a double figure for a whole. There is the wilderness and Canaan; there is Moses and Aaron; and these two are one Christ; God's nature is met and the sins put away. The first goat is called “Jehovah's lot,” the people's sins are confessed over the second; as Christ confesses the sins of His people on His own head as His own, and can call them “mine iniquities.”

I see what God is in blood on the mercyseat; but the moment you have substitution, and individual acts of transgression, you have a scape-goat.

Atonement occurs but once in the New Testament and there it should be (Rom. 5) reconciliation; and expiation occurs but once in the Bible (Num. 35:33), and that is in the margin, “no expiation for the land:” so we may drop that word. Propitiation is towards God. There is the holy and righteous character of God to be met; and that is propitiation. God is not changed by it; but being righteous and holy, this is responded to that His love might go out according to righteousness and holiness, and mercy and righteousness be consistent. Atonement is more when the blood is applied. Blood was sprinkled upon the altar, because sin was there, blood of atonement. It is the actual putting away of sin by the sprinkling of the blood. The idea is, a thing is in a state in which it cannot have to say to God, as here there are “the iniquities of the children of Israel among whom I dwell;” and that condition must be dealt with, you must have the blood where the sin has been, you must have

it for God to be in relationship with such. The blood is brought in, and the thing sprinkled, and so the thing is put right. Here reconciliation is the same word.

In the two goats are the two aspects of what Christ did. The twofold view is most interesting; as in Christ the Apostle and High Priest, like Moses and Aaron. Atonement signifies life given and accepted as sacrifice for life forfeited; remission is the deliverance of those who appeal from the sentence of death, and thence it is the forgiveness of the sins that caused their condemnation.

“Atonement” is the greatest blunder in Rom. 5:11. We are said to be “reconciled” in verse 10. Then verse 11 speaks of “our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation,” not the atonement, which has nothing to do with our sins on our side; atonement is for God.

When I think of propitiation, I think more of the person propitiated and what is duo to him; reconciliation deals with circumstances too. It has nothing to do with our nature in the Old Testament. We have a nature that always likes to break the law; but we see what that is. When I say I have a nature that cannot be subject, I say, Here is a pretty business; and this all comes out in the New Testament. The remedy is that Christ has died, and whatever Christ did is mine, and I am dead.

Atonement is for guilt. When I look in the Old Testament, I see guilt and not a nature; that is the thing, and I do get the blood put upon the mercy-seat where God Himself sits, and when I know what His nature is I get the fact that here God's nature is met.

But nature, my nature, is not known under law to be dealt with. So, if David says, “Create in me a clean heart,” would he have spoken thus, if he had known that his heart in the flesh could not be made clean? Again, if Naaman was clean altogether, it is a figure for now. But then there was no flesh lusting against the Spirit, nor even the two natures contrary one to the other. With the new nature, I have the privilege of knowing that the old is dead. I have the new man and the old; but the old is condemned in death. “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh;” and I die daily, I am crucified with Christ.

The atonement is another thing; in it God's nature is met, and this is the point. I have nothing about man's nature; God's nature has been dishonored by sin, and He is there sitting with things before Him which He will not stand. This is the fact, and therefore I put the blood under His eye; that is, Christ has done it, and God says, “When I see the blood, I will pass over;” but sin is all taken in the lump, so to speak here. When we find nature and conflict with nature, it is a question of the Holy Ghost. This applies to nature only in the way that it applies to sin at large.

Sending to a land not inhabited means out of sight, remembrance, and everything. “To make an atonement with him” in verse 10 is said of the scape-goat. By the seven times sprinkling constant communion was secured, as well as God's nature met by the blood upon it. God was looked at as a holy God, if not understood.

Then, when Aaron comes back, he lays aside his linen garments, and takes his ordinary ones again; so Christ will come back from heaven in garments of glory and beauty.

It shows the absolute defilement of sins. The touch of the carcass of the sin-offering defiled; so, if a man walked over a grave, he was unclean, or if a man died in a tent, it was unclean; indeed it was very hard to avoid being unclean.

The scripture that made this question, whether Christ was a sin-bearer all His life, quite clear to me was, “he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” He must be proved all His life to know no sin, and then He can be made sin. To bear them in life makes atonement without blood, but “without shedding of blood is no remission.” Why should the Lord be saved from “that hour” if it had been going on all His life? And there is another thing if followed up; it takes a person back and unites him to Christ before He died, which is false. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit,”

Chapter 41

Dr. Bonar on Christ's Work: Correction, Part 1

Dear Mr. Editor,

Dr. Bonar's book was sent to me, I know not by whom, with some passages marked. I send you the notes I made in reading it, for that is all that which follows pretends to be, though reviewing the work. The importance of the doctrine in question will justify my taking it up.

“The altar is the only place of expiation, and it is death that is the wages of sin.” (Page 37.) “Justified by His blood is the apostolic declaration; and, as the result of this, saved from wrath through Him. Here we rest.... It is at and by the cross that God justifies the ungodly. By His stripes we are healed, and the symbol of the brazen serpent visibly declares this truth. It was the serpent when uplifted that healed the deadly bite.” (Page 38.) “Reconciled to God by the death of His Son, is another of the many testimonies to the value and efficacy of the cross.... The peace was made by the blood of the cross.... What can be more explicit than these three passages, which announce justification by the blood, reconciliation by the death, and peace by the blood of the cross?” (Page 39.) “This sweet savor came from the brazen altar, or altar of burnt-offering. It was the sweet odor of that sacrifice that ascended to God and that encompassed the worshipper, so that he was covered all over with this sacrificial fragrance, presenting him perfect before God, and making his own conscience feel that he was accepted as such, and treated as such.” (Page 40.) “In so far, then, as substitution is concerned we have to do with the cross alone.” (Page 41.) “The justifying fact—the death of Him whose name is Jehovah our righteousness.” (Page 79.) Compare also page 219.

Thus speaks Dr. Bonar, and justly and well as far as it goes. But who would have thought that these are the statements of a book, one main object of which is to prove that it is not so, but that Christ was a sin-bearer all His life, and our presentation perfect before God depended upon His sin-bearing all His life, and that He only finished that work upon the cross? “They who own the doctrine of Christ suffering for sin, the just for the unjust, will listen to those bitter cries (those uttered during His life), as to the very voice of the Substitute, and learn from them the completeness of the work of satisfaction, for the accomplishment of which He took our flesh, and lived our life, and died our death upon the tree. But the completeness of the substitution comes out more fully at the cross.... Then the work was done, 'It is finished.'” (Page 36.)

Now it is quite true that in the previous quotations, except the last and more important one from p. 79, Dr. B. is resisting justification by resurrection (an idea I never heard of till I saw it in this book, and which has no sense if speaking of the value of the thing in itself). But in his zeal against this imaginary enemy, he has, I hope with his true and better feelings of faith, declared that by the cross, and blood, and death of Christ only, we are justified and reconciled. The rest of his substitutory work is then only studied theology, not personal faith.

As to argument, Dr. B. so mixes up one truth with another, is guilty of such excessive carelessness, and exhibits such incapacity for seeing, not only what another says, but the force of

what he says himself, and, I am afraid I must say, such ignorance of scripture on the subject, that it is difficult to deal with his reasonings. Christ's bearing our sins and our dying with Christ are confounded together; law and Christ's suffering life; accounting righteous or guilty is substitution; the actual transfer of guilt turns out to be only something available for everybody. But into these I will enter.

I regret to have to notice his book in such a way, for he pleads real and full atonement, and the need of it as against rationalists, and assurance of salvation, if not in the clearest way, yet so honestly and fully that I should regret sincerely anything that might weaken his arguments as to this. But he has so lowered the gospel, so hidden God's love in “courts of law,” though not denying it, so confounds propitiation and substitution, and so totally does away the real value of the latter by his missing altogether and falsifying its true character, that I feel it well to take it up and review his book. He has accepted, I see, the force of ■ν■νεγκ: so we may hope for acceptance of other truths; but he has not learned to be more careful in other statements. Let us see if a review of them may lead him on here too.

That Luther may have taken up imputing legal righteousness, as others did, may be all true. But though he admits doubts and distress come from law, that he never knew real deliverance from it his famous treatise on Galatians clearly proves, as other parts of his life and his death. But Dr. Bonar's “Luther's Rock, the righteousness of God,” is an unhappy blunder. He carefully excluded the word from his translation of the New Testament. He always puts, “the righteousness available before God,” Die Gerechtigkeit die vor Gott gilt: an unwarrantable and mischievous change, which destroys the whole nature and character of the scriptural statement. Luther was an eminent instrument of God in His work: we have all to be thankful for it. But the word of God is above all price.

Dr. B.'s style is full of effort, and tedious by repetition, and turgid, sometimes descending very low in the effort, as when he says, “Possessed of this preciousness (imputed still ours), we go into the heavenly market and buy what we need without stint. We get everything upon the credit of His name.... In His name we carry on all our transactions with God.” But my business is with doctrine, not with words. And it seems to me that the whole tone of the book falsifies, even where there is truth mixed up, the entire presentation of the gospel in scripture.

Besides making of substitution a false and inefficacious unreality, the bringing the questions into God's courts of law is an idea wholly foreign to the scriptures. That law has been established by faith—that Christ has magnified it and made it honorable—is most true; but scripture does not describe the gospel as bringing men into courts of law. There is a solemn bringing in of unrepentant sinners into a court of judgment hereafter (yea, all shall give an account of themselves), and there is a reconciling of persons now: Dr. B. speaks of neither. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. This is the very opposite of bringing them into courts of law. As such He was rejected, and the full sinfulness of man brought out. But it was mercy, not law, brought it” out, the rejection of One come not to judge but to save. With Israel some such figure might be used, He was in the way with them as an adverse party; but then the result was in government on earth and judgment. The nation was set aside (as it will be till it has paid the last farthing—and even then its restoration is sovereign grace), that the apostolic embassy of the gospel might go forth, still beseeching to be reconciled to

God, and grace reign through righteousness. He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. God is revealed as reconciling the world, or as beseeching men to be reconciled, He having been made sin for us, not bringing them into His courts of law.

The notion that He of whom it is said, “who knew no sin,” is God as such, and that He was made sin in incarnation, which is Dr. Bonar's interpretation, is too monstrous and too offensive as well as absurd to need reply. God has made God, who as God did not know sin, to become sin by being a man: can any Christian taught of God receive such a thought? God does know sin perfectly: to apply it to His not knowing it in conscience is blasphemy; to affirm it of One who was in the likeness of sinful flesh is of vital importance. “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” In Him is no sin. -Is God's making God become sin (vicariously of course I admit) any better? The Lord declares He comes to do God's will and that His law is in His heart. It was the Lamb, the spot less Lamb, the victim that was made sin. Nor does scripture speak of God or the Father making the Word become flesh. Jehovah prepared a body. Then He says, Lo I come, in the same willing and blessed love. It is an interpretation which outrages all spiritual intelligence. I should call it blasphemous, but that I am sure Dr. Bonar has no such intention. He is blind to the force of what he says; but it falsifies the whole force of God's coming into the world in grace, making Himself of no reputation (■λ■νωσεν ■αυτ■ν), when the Word made flesh dwelt among us full of grace and truth. This for Dr. Bonar is only Christ, the law, and we, when willing to go too, brought into courts of law to judge about the case! Besides, if this took place in the life of Christ, why have ambassadors? If it referred to Christ's death and His then going away, it required others to announce it. The whole force of the passage in every aspect is set aside by this ruinous idea. It is miserable doctrine: and Dr. Bonar's mind does not rest on the reconciliation of the sinner (I may say not at all even in result; for it is only available to him: he is not reconciled). “Law and love must be reconciled.” (Page 4.) “The reconciliation God has accomplished;” and as man's consent is required, the reconciliation God has accomplished must be effected before that. Man did not consent to this way of reconciliation when accomplished, save in rejecting and crucifying Christ. “God has done it all and He has done it effectually and irreversibly.....He has done it by removing the whole case into His own courts of law.... God comes into court bringing man and man's whole case along with Him, that, upon righteous principles and in a legal way, the case may be settled at once in favor of man and in favor of God.” Now this not only gives a representation of this matter of which there is no trace in scripture, and falsifies the character of the gospel, but it is alike absurd and misleading. Who is judge of the court? Nor is this all. Man is brought into court; but, in reconciling law and love, no individual man at all is reconciled. It is the reconciliation, not of a sinner, but of law and love. Perhaps no man may accept it.

“The consent of parties to the acceptance of the basis is required in court.” (Page 6.) Now where was this reconciliation of law and love on the cross? Man was only accomplishing his sin there, yet there law and love were reconciled. When the whole thing is settled, man's consent is asked—to what? To a reconciliation already accomplished? God, we were told in page 5, has done it all; and He has done it effectually and irreversibly. Done what? “Reconciled law and love.” (Page 4.) But here there is no substitution, or any one reconciled: God has done it all before man has accepted anything. It is an accomplished thing, all done, finished, and yet no man reconciled; so that it is no reconciliation of persons at all. What was the principle of the work? “Transference of guilt, from

one who could not bear the penalty without being eternally lost, to One who could bear it" (page 17), and again the transference of the wrath from the sinner to the representative (page 21); and so often. Now whose guilt was transferred? the wrath resting on what sinners was transferred to the representative?

Substitution is never spoken of in this vague way in scripture. All through, Dr. B, confounds propitiation and substitution. Substitution is one taking really the place of another; reconciling law and love has nothing to do with substitution. Was anything substituted for law or for love? Clearly not. They were both maintained and glorified. Were then everybody's sins transferred to Christ? If so, all are saved, or His having borne the wrath due to them is ineffectual and reversible. The whole argument of the book shows Dr. Bonar has confounded substitution which does suppose transference of guilt and crime from the guilty to another, a substitution of one person for another, as when a debt is paid (the illustration Dr. B. gives); while propitiation is to God ward. But one pas-sago will suffice to show this confusion. "God has introduced the principle of substitution into His courts.... presenting a divine surety as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed." Here they are clearly treated as one and the same thing.

Now on the great day of atonement there was the Lord's lot and the people's lot. The blood of the Lord's lot was put on the mercy-seat. God's righteousness and love, and majesty and truth, all that He is, were perfectly glorified. Besides this, there was the scape-goat, both goats representing Christ in the same great sacrifice; but the high priest represented the people, and their sins were confessed on the head of the goat, and carried away, never to be found. Now here there was representation, transfer, substitution, and the work was effectual for those represented. In scripture all is simple and clear; and, though in the mere shadow only for the year, yet it was effectual and irreversible. Substitution is simple and intelligible; the sins were confessed on the head of the goat, the people's sins, and they were gone. But in Dr. Bonar's substitution the man may not consent, many also (we know) do not. Were their sins transferred to the Substitute and the wrath borne effectually and irreversibly, and yet they reject Christ and die in their sins? Dr. Bonar's substitution is no substitution at all, for nobody's sins were really borne, and no people really represented. Christ is a propitiation for the whole world; but this is the Lord's lot, the blood, in which God has been perfectly glorified in all He is, presented to God and accepted of Him. Now, says the Lord, is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; and if God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him. And so it was and is.

Propitiation is presenting to a holy God what the righteousness and holiness of that God necessarily claim, while infinite love has provided, and infinite love has offered, the spotless sacrifice.

Substitution is for people whom the substitute represents; it is one man or person substituted for another, and taking actually the consequences of the conduct or position of him whom he represents. I speak merely of the meaning of substitution, not of the value of the Substitute, as Dr. B. says. The propitiation refers to the holy righteous nature and glory of God (and Dr. Bonar cannot too earnestly insist on its necessity); substitution, to those whose place Christ has taken. He was substituted for them and took the consequence in sovereign grace; and they are saved. He cannot charge as a judge the sins which He has Himself borne and expiated on those for

whom He Himself has already borne them.

But not only does Dr. Bonar confound these two great scripture truths, but a third with them, namely, our dying with Christ, which scripture applies to quite another purpose (see page 42). Probably Dr. Bonar has never learned to make the difference between sin and sins (so clear in the Epistle to the Romans, on which indeed its whole structure depends); one referring to actual guilt, what we have done; the other to our lost estate, what we are.

But at any rate, “The transference of our guilt to the divine Substitute, and the transference of that Substitute's righteousness or perfection to us, must stand or fall together.” (Page 29.) When then a man's guilt has been transferred to Christ, he becomes the righteousness of God. Yet the man may after all not consent and dies in his sins, though the righteousness of God is transferred to him. If it be said, man was represented in Christ, and He consented—consented to the transfer, then our consent is immaterial; and we are not brought into court, and saved all with no consent at all.

But now see the frail and inconsistent statement of Dr. Bonar. “The one man's offense rests upon all men to condemnation, so the one man's righteousness, as the counteraction or removal of this condemnation, is available and efficacious unto justification of life.” Now he has changed the passage.

“Rests upon” in the first clause is exactly the same expression in Greek as is “available” in the second. And why this? And still more, if transference of guilt involves transference of righteousness, how is it only “available?” If it be said, yes; but the substitution is not efficacious unless it be accepted"; then there was no real transference of guilt. If it is transferred and gone, and if He has suffered, it is irreversible. The truth is, it is a denial of real substitution, and substitution is confounded with propitiation. The whole teaching is confusion and darkness; for Dr. B. tells us that substitution is the transference of the penalty from him who had incurred it to one who had not. How is this available for any, if the penalty have not been transferred? If it have, why not effectual for all by a judicial process, a legal title?

But I will follow some of the details of Dr. Bonar on the subject, and we shall see the inconceivable carelessness as to scripture, and how little he seems to weigh anything he says. I can only account for it by excessive confidence in his own thoughts. Victory over our great enemy was not by substitution. The perfect work of Christ and His death gave Him a title to annul the power of Satan; but it was not as substituted for any one.

In all the other examples we shall find there is personal appropriation, not an available means in the air. The Lord accepted Abel and his offering. The typical victim was set between a known person and God. It was 'Abel's substitute,' but not something in the air available to some one who might accept it, in which case transference of penalty is an absurdity, as then the one to whom the penalty is due is relieved by its being transferred. Noah and Abraham are in the same case: only in Abraham's we have an example of the carelessness I speak of. There was no “consumption of Abraham's sacrifice by the divine fire” but quite a different thing, a burning lamp and a smoking furnace passed between the pieces—a well-known form of covenant engagement in Israel, and the covenant was of the land to Israel. If Dr. B. would seek excuse from a confusion with the sacrifice of Isaac, it is in vain. There we read, “Behold the fire and the wood, but where,” &c. In the

passover those in the house were preserved. Dr. B.'s account of the sacrifices I cannot go into in detail: it would carry me too far; but there is the same inaccuracy. Remark only that, as to the burnt-offering, all is confusion. It is the perfection of the substitute presented in the room of our imperfections. A substitute for whom? If it was penalty transferred, whose penalty?

But what is more important, blood was shed, atonement was made. It is not merely that He loved God instead of us. That is not atonement by blood. No doubt the Substitute was perfect, but it was where He was made sin, glorifying God there. Imperfection is a strange word. The mind of the flesh is enmity against God. But why the perfection of the substitute only when Christ's bloodshedding is prefigured? For whom was He a substitute? In the meat-offering, save in the case of the extreme poor, there was no atonement. Nor is there a statement of God's feeding on it; in the peace-offering there is (Lev. 3:2), The meat-offering is much more the perfection of the substitute: in the burnt-offering there was a victim with blood-shedding.

In the sin and trespass-offerings we are told that sin-offerings were for unconscious sins—sins of ignorance; trespass-offerings, for conscious and willful sins. This is a mistake. All the trespass-offerings in chapter 5 are sins of ignorance unless verse 1. The only cases not of ignorance are wrongs done to a neigh-hour, when, besides the offering, be was to restore it and a fifth part more. All this shows how careless and superficial all the statements are.

As to the explanation of the drink-offering, I confess it is beyond me. Dr. B. connects it with the Lord's blood being drink indeed, why I know not; and my reader may remark how in all this the perfection" of the substitute is put for substitution? or what was the drink-offering a substitution? or how was it transferred penalty?

And now note the effect in the presentation of the gospel. It is not that precious blood is on the mercy seat, that God hath set Him forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. It is this principle of substitution. "And as He [God] acts on it in receiving us; so does He invite us to act in coming to Him." That is, the guilt of him who is invited has been transferred to the substitute, and so righteousness transferred to those guilty, so that it is not a sinner that is invited as such. Who can tell that to an unbelieving sinner in order to his coming to God? I must tell it evidently to every sinner, and every sinner is certainly saved, and righteousness is transferred to him. Christ was raised, according to Dr. Bonar, because that sinner had been justified by the cross; for so Dr. B. translates the passage. "It is this truth the gospel embodies, and it is this that we preach." The belief of this gospel is eternal life; and yet it is only available. I repeat my question; was the guilt really transferred or not? Was Christ a substitute for every sinner to whom Dr. Bonar preaches, so that all his guilt was transferred to Christ? If so, he has already none; nay more, Christ's righteousness is transferred to him before I invite him, and it is effectual and irreversible.

In speaking of chapter iii. I feel the need of care not to offend when the solemn, deeply solemn subject, of the sufferings of the blessed Lord is before us. It is unpleasant to speak of the folly and contradictions of man's thoughts when what ought to move our inmost soul occupies us. But mischief and contradiction are there, the deep sense of wrath and of the curse is lost and trifled with, and man's rejection turned into God's forsaking and wrath, It is a medley which on such a subject offends—I am afraid I must say, disgusts. Sufferings in which we are called to follow Christ, and take a part, are confounded with that in which He was really a substitute, the perfection of Christ's obedience confounded with the part of bearing sin, because the being made sin took

place in that in which the perfection of His obedience was accomplished.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 42

Dr. Bonar on Christ's Work: Correction, Part 2

I have already noticed the contradictions which flow from Dr. B.'s reasoning against the dream of his own mind that some make the act of resurrection to have worth for justifying. Then he insists earnestly that the blood, the cross, death alone does, assuring us (41) that “so far as substitution is concerned we have to do with the cross only;” and this in a chapter which is written to prove that He entered our world as the substitute, that “His vicarious life began in the manger.... His sin-bearing had begun (pp. 26, 27), that He was circumcised and baptized as a substitute (pp. 29, 30); He was always the sinless One bearing our sins” (p. 32); that the Psalms in their confessions of sins are the distinctest proof of His work us the substitute, that is, during His life; that God's wrath and anger were then upon Him (p. 34), yet that the completeness of the substitution comes out more fully at the cross. There the whole burden pressed upon Him, and the wrath of God took hold upon Him (p. 34); yet He does not speak of the cross when He says, I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted, or when He says, Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, Thy terrors have cut me off (p. 32).

I have discussed all these Psalms fully elsewhere, and only state Dr. Bonar's self-contradictions here. But when a person says that Christ was a substitute and shed His blood when He was circumcised, it is difficult (when we think of the wrath of God against our sin, which made the blessed Savior sweat great drops of blood in only thinking of it beforehand and then drinking the cup we had filled for Him with our sins) to hinder oneself from expressing one's feelings at the cold and idle trifling. But we must speak of the general principle. Dr. B. makes His sufferings from man His being a substitute for us in bearing God's wrath. “For what can this poverty mean, this rejection by man, this outcast condition, but that the sin-bearing had begun?” (Page 27.) Now Christ's outcast place we may partake of with Him. If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him. His disciples were not of the world as He was not of the world. “If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you.”

But what has all this to do with substitution? Was He born in a manger that we might be spared it? He was circumcised as the substitute, and this was “inexplicable” save on the supposition that even in infancy He was the vicarious One, not indeed bearing sin in the full sense and manner in which He bore it on the cross (for without death sin-bearing could not be consummated) but still bearing it in measure according to the condition of His gears (p. 29)! Only think: it leads to doubt whether Dr. B. has any serious idea of what sin deserves, or what the wrath and the curse really is, and that the wages of sin is death. Bearing sin in measure according to the condition of His years! But His sufferings from man are always distinguished from His drinking the cup. See Psa. 20; 21 Those bring wrath on man (if not repented of and blotted out); this is atonement and brings salvation. In Psa. 22 He appeals from man's violence and wrong to God, and there finds forsaking in the words He used, where He alone could express them; but then the result is all un-mingled blessing because it was atonement, deeper at first but extending waves till it reached the whole earth, and the seed to be born there. We are called on to suffer with Him, we read of filling up what was behind of the sufferings of Christ. Was atonement to be made-filled up-by any other? Circumcision in particular is not, in the Christian application of it, substitution; on the contrary, it is

the putting off the body of the flesh, being dead to sin by Christ, not His bearing sin for us.

But the whole principle of a sin-bearing life is false. It is sin-bearing to no purpose; for without shedding of blood is no remission. He came to give His life a ransom for many; His taking it was not the ransom. Dr. Bonar now admits that ■ν■νεγκε refers to the cross. Where is ■π■νεγκε used as to sins in His lifetime? He through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. But here we have the man, the spotless victim, offering Himself, not becoming it in incarnation: that was no offering Himself by the eternal Spirit. It is for bloodshedding to purify.

He offered Himself (Heb. 9:14), and so verse 28 where it is expressly said to be (■παξ) once. So 1 Peter 3:18, “For Christ once (■παξ) suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh.” So Heb. 10:10, “By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all,” and so He perfected the sanctified by one offering. (Page 14.)

It is certain, that till after Gethsemane, the blessed Lord had not taken the cup to drink, for then He prays that if possible He might not drink it. The trouble of soul then so deeply felt, and in a measure in John 12, demonstrates not (as Dr. B. would allege) sin-bearing then, but exactly the contrary, anticipation of a coming hour of death, and being made a curse. In Gethsemane it is plain, but equally so in John 12. The coming up of the Greeks bringing before His blessed mind the title of Son of man brings into it at once the death needed in order that He should take it. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name.” Is it not evident that it was a specific hour-the hour of His death which was before Him, when He must die that the corn of wheat might not remain alone?

Dr. B. tells us Christ bore our iniquities up to, and on, the cross; for the former, having given up ■ν■ωεγκε, he quotes nothing. There is nothing to quote. His only proof is making the contradiction of sinners the same thing as the wrath of God, and the miserable contemptible use of circumcision and the like. He quotes Isa. 53, giving a new translation of some expressions, which seem to me unfounded, whoever is their author. Thus, verse 11, “he shall look upon,” &c, seems to me quite unwarranted, and ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ to be justly translated, He shall see of the travail of His soul-that is, of the fruit of it. The words ■■■ and ■■ are simply this. Nor do I believe that “answerable” is the sense of ■■■■ in verse 7. The English translation is right in both. The latter is an effort to bring Christ as answerable for sin during His life, but an unjustifiable one. His bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows is applied to His healing-has nothing to do with righteousness. It shows He felt in His soul the burden of the sorrow He removed; and this is a most precious truth, as He groaned at the tomb of Lazarus when seeing the power of death on all around. But this is not bearing sin. Nor did He become sick to take away our sickness.

As I am on translations, I will add, that raised again “because of” our justification, is an evil mistake-evil as to doctrine, for it shuts out faith from justifying, and falsifies chapter v. 1. Men (why not all?) would be justified before believing at all, consequently not by faith. Further, it is not the force of the Greek. Had it been, because we were justified, it would most assuredly have been δι■τ■ διαιωθ■ναι, which only comes in chapter v. 1. “Having been justified by faith,” when faith is there. Δικαιωσις is the active doing of a thing, not the thing done, the noun derived from the

second person of the passive perfect. The English translation is right. You may say “on account of our justifying.” Our justifying was the why of the act. Then, faith coming in, it is realized, and we are justified. Scripture does not know justification without faith, which this false translation asserts. But the whole doctrine of a sin-bearing life, from His birth up, is as false as it is mischievous.

There was an hour, the drinking of a cup, from which the blessed Lord sought if possible to be free, to be saved, the thought of which He went through in the deepest agony because it was sin-bearing, being made sin. Did this apply to His whole life? There He came in the divine freeness of His love. “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” But divine willingness, and human agony are not the same thing. Did He pray if possible to be spared being a man? He did that which He suffered at the cross. It is false in every aspect and feature of it.

Dr. Bonar tells us He was born the Savior. Of course He was. But this does not tell us that He was bearing Bin all His life. He came to deliver His people from their sins: what He went through to that end, and when, is not touched by that. He manifested the Father, and God in love to man in His life, a perfect man amongst them. He stood as man made sin before God on the cross, though a divine person, or He could not have done it. He may be said to be the substitute of His people personally at any time, but the substitute was when He bore their sins. He was God's Lamb always, but not the victim slain till the cross. How was redemption wrought? We have redemption through His blood. How is He set forth to be a propitiation? Through faith in His blood. What purges the conscience? The blood of Christ, who, mark, through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. That was clearly when He was a man. The question is not whether His obedience was perfect, even unto death, the last test of it; nor if we are made righteous by it; but whether He was bearing sin all His life, yet no wrath upon Him, no propitiation, no redemption, no remission obtained. All these are by blood-shedding. The testament had no force while the testator lived. The putting away of sin was by the sacrifice of Himself. He was once offered to bear the sins of many. What does this mean if He were the sin-bearer all His life? Indeed, the whole of Heb. 9 is to show the place this blood-shedding and bearing of sin once for all holds in the counsels of God, and makes the doctrine of a sin-bearing life worse than absurd. There was a sacrifice for sins which gives us boldness to enter into the holiest. A sin-bearing where there is no sacrifice is a sin-bearing which brings no remission to man, or glory to God.

The truth is, Christ never says, “My God” before the cross (always My Father), not even in Gethsemane. On the cross, in the hour of drinking the cup, He says, “My God;” after it (because now as man He is going to glory in righteousness, and has brought us there with Him), “my God and my Father,” for He is re-entered into the full enjoyment of sonship again, and has brought us there: surely never so the object of God's love as when drinking the cup, for He could say, “therefore doth my Father love me,” a word that belongs only to a divine person, but in His own soul tasting all its bitterness undiminished by any consolation, or it would not have been absolute and complete, yet showing His perfectness as to the state of His own heart in the words “my God.”

I have gone thus into the great general truth of where sin-bearing was. But I must show the carelessness and vagueness which baffles all hope of getting any serious doctrine from Dr. Bonar. His very theme in chapter 3 is “His vicariousness is co-extensive with the sins and wants of those whom He represents, and covers all the different periods, as well as the various circumstances, of their lives.” Now what is, I beseech my reader, vicariousness as to wants? Suffering being tempted

in all things that He might be able to succor the tempted; that is blessedly true. But this is not transfer, that the other might escape. Supply for wants I can understand, but vicariousness as to wants is beyond me altogether; yet it is the real inlet into all the error. Substitution was said to be the transference of penalty, guilt, wrath, from one who could not bear the penalty to One who could. How does this apply to “wants"?

I will not dwell upon it, but John's baptism was so far from being a symbol of Christ's death that, so far as it would be received, Christ would not be put to death at all, but received by faith. Hence (Acts 19) those who had received it had to be baptized over again.

Resurrection does not justify us. Assuredly not. No man is justified till he believes; and Christ's blood-shedding, and death, and drinking the cup, is the sole meritorious cause. But we are accepted in the Beloved, our place and standing before God is in a risen Christ. If we are in Him at all, there is no other but a risen One; but we are in Him before God.

It is not the whole truth, that being justified by faith we have peace with God; but there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Probably Dr. Bonar has confounded this blessed truth, being ignorant of it, with being justified by resurrection. Of course some one may have said so, but it is the first time I ever heard of such a thought. Dr. B.'s interpretation of δι■ δικα■ωσιν I have already spoken of, and do not hesitate to say it is unsound interpretation, and false doctrine leading to fatal errors. For we are then, clearly, justified without any faith at all.

There is another most mischievous statement (p. 11), “Without law sin is nothing.” “Until the law,” says the apostle, “sin was in the world.” And again, “they that have sinned without law.” “Sin by the commandment became exceeding sinful:” which it could not do, if it were not there already. “When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” “Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.” I know men have (for this grave Presbyterian error, which contradicts all Paul's teaching) the passage in the English translation, “Sin is the transgression of the law;” but this is merely a false translation founded on a doctrinal theory. The word ■νομ■α is never so translated elsewhere, and transgression of law is παρ■βασις ν■μου. Not only so, but the same word abverbially ■■μως is translated sinning “without law” (Rom. 2:12) in contrast with sinning under law.

I need not return to Isa. 53 which is dwelt on in chapter 4. The sufferings referred to (p. 47) we are clearly called on to undergo with Christ. If they called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more they of His household! if they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also. Paul was the off-scouring of all things. There was no transfer, but the same enmity. If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him. His whole statement is mere blindness and delusion. The “scenes before the cross were while He was on His way to it” and during what He calls “his hour,” which till then He declared was not yet come. Now it was. Before that He had disposed of every heart as Emmanuel; so that His disciples lacked nothing. Now all was changed: He was reckoned among the transgressors. (Luke 23:35-37.) But though then taking, so to speak, the cup into His hand, which His Father had given Him to drink, we are simply certain from His own lips that He was not yet drinking it, for He prays it might pass without His doing so. But this was their hour, and the power of darkness.

The statement in page 581 hold to be highly objectionable; for after showing from scripture that He sits down consequent on offering a sacrifice for sins, Dr. B. says, “the first note of that gospel was sounded in the manger, the last from the throne above. How much is contained between?” Thus the sacrifice in its proper importance and place is dropped, coming in as an incident among many things, showing the system adopted, confounding God come in Christ to a world of sinners, and the man gone up on high in virtue of redemption accomplished. I know not to whom Dr. B. alludes as having done with the cross. They are not Christians. It is the eternal center, as to acts, of all moral glory. This is true, which from Dr. B.'s words he seems not to apprehend, that there is a difference between coming to the cross, as on this side of it, so to speak, and knowing it as meeting our wants, our sins, the way we must come; and looking at it when we have passed into God's presence through the veil, and are at peace in the holiest, looking at it on God's side, so to speak, and seeing bow God is glorified in it. For this last we must have peace by it. Indeed neither has its real place with Dr. B. The first is merely a judicial decree in a court of law, the second is not in his system at all.

I turn to chapter v. That grace reigns through righteousness is most sure, and that God is just in forgiving. But it is not righteousness that reigns; that will be in the age to come. Nor has Dr. Bonar any authority in scripture for the statements with which he begins. It is never said that God saves a sinner by righteousness. It falsifies the gospel, though God is righteous in saving him, and the believer is made the righteousness of God in Christ. The statements are unscriptural and mischievously so.

We have further the absurdity of the system in page 71; “The transference is complete and eternal from the moment that we receive the divine testimony to the righteousness of the Son of God; all the guilt that was on us passes over to Him, and all His righteousness passes over to us.” Was ever such utter nonsense? When I believe, my guilt passes over to Him—now in glory! It is astonishing that such a sentence did not awaken Dr. Bonar to the falseness of his whole system. My guilt transferred to Christ now in glory! One is led sometimes really to doubt whether he can know the truth at all. These are blunders which seem impossible for one who does, for whom this is the reality of faith. It shows what his substitution means. Further, the righteousness of the Son of God is language unknown to scripture, wholly foreign to it. That Christ is of God made unto us righteousness, I bless God for with my whole soul, and that we are made the righteousness of God in Him. But nothing of the statement of Dr. Bonar is in scripture, and the quotations of Deuteronomy and the Psalms have nothing to do with the matter. Let the reader consult them.

Dr, B. reads, Christ is the end (or fulfilling) of the law for righteousness, which is wholly unwarranted. Τ■λος? is the end rather as concluding, or the object, just as “end” in the English, but it is not fulfilling. Will Dr. B. give a passage in scripture where τ■λος? is so used? I notice these things because they belong to a great system of doctrine. Thus in this chapter we read, “Jehovah is satisfied, more than satisfied, with Christ's fulfilling the law which man had broken.” (Page 80.) Why then need Christ die, if Jehovah is more than satisfied? Righteousness comes by the law, and Christ is dead in vain. And it is expressly said in the life of the God-man. And no to that this was before the cross; it is transferred to me, so that I am partaker of, or identified with, this law-fulfilling-have perfectly fulfilled the law: all the law sentences against us are canceled. (Page 81.) What then did Christ die for?

The statement in chapter 6 is a positive falsifying of scripture. This everlasting righteousness (law-fulfilling) comes to us by believing, the fruit of which is peace with God. (Page 82.) Now the antecedent to this in scripture is exclusively, “He was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification.” “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” It is Dr. Bonar's scheme, but not scripture.

As to 2 Peter 1:1, we obtain like precious faith by the righteousness of God, not righteousness by faith. Obtaining precious faith by righteousness is, as Paul says, “after that faith came.” That is, God has been faithful to His promises and given us Christ. At any rate, faith coming by righteousness has nothing to do with righteousness coming by faith. Dr. Bonar's note is all a mistake. The Epistles of Peter are addressed to Jews-to the sojourners of the dispersion. The faith, like precious faith with Peter and those in Canaan, the dispersed believing Jews had received through the righteousness of God. It was not indeed Messiah Jewishly they had got, but precious faith. Still it was their God and Savior Jesus Christ.

But in this chapter we come to a point on which we must rest a moment. “The scriptural meaning of imputing,” we are told, “is that the things that He did not do were laid to His charge, and He was treated as if He had done them all; so the things that He did are put to our account, and we are treated by God as if we had done them all.” Now, where the principle of substitution enters, this is an important truth; but “imputed” is never so used in scripture. And Dr. B.'s quotations are a new proof that he really has no capacity to seize a statement of others, or to know what he means by his own. Look what a vague account he gives of Gen. 15:6. It was imputed to him for righteousness, that is, his faith, as the apostle himself explains it. Now what is there here that another had done which was put to his account? The statement is that his own faith was imputed to him for righteousness.

Gen. 31:15. Are we not counted of Him as strangers? Nothing done by another is put to account. They were treated or reckoned as such, just the meaning of the word. We are reckoned righteous: whether by something put to our account is another question. In the cited passage it was certainly not so.

Lev. 7:18. Not a word of transfer or putting another's work to account. In a certain case he got no credit for his offering.

Num. 18:27. Something reckoned or considered as having a certain value.

2 Sam. 19 It is holding him guilty for what he had done that he would deprecate, no transfer of anything.

Psa. 32:2. Nothing is put to account. The man is blessed whom the Lord does not reckon guilty. It is not said why.

Rom. 4:3, 5, we have had. The explanation of the construction put on the Greek is all nonsense. Counting him into righteousness (of “bringing him into” there is not a word) is worthy of all the rest. The English is quite right.

Rom. 4:6. “Imputeth righteousness” is just reckoning himself righteous.

Rom. 4:8 is just a proof that it does not mean what Dr. B. says. The Lord does not impute the sin, that is, reckon the man guilty of it. It is his own doing which is not imputed, not somebody else's doing which is.

It is useless to comment on the others. In none of them is there a hint of something done by another put to the account of him who did not do it. They are negatives; so that it is simply not reckoning to a man what he has done himself, or faith is reckoned as righteousness—the man's faith. The whole statement is a mere delusion, as the citations prove. Will Dr. Bonar only give us a passage in which justifying is by a righteousness legally transferred? A man's being righteous is his standing in the sight of God, not a quantum of righteousness transferred to his credit. Indeed the Greek word for this is different.

It is ■λλογε■ται, not λογ■ζεται.

But the legal system taints every thought and apprehension of Dr. Bonar. The purpose of God before the foundation of the world, to conform us to the image of His Son, is lost. It is merely an infinite legal claim. God recognizes the claims of righteousness. (Page 100.) It is an exchange of judicial demands. (Page 101.) We can plead in our dealings with God the meritoriousness of an infinitely perfect life, the payment effected by an infinitely per-feet death. (Page 101.) So, from Bunyan, defending thee with the merits of His blood, and covering thee with His infinite righteousness from the wrath of God and the curse of the law. (Page 104.) The assumption of all our legal responsibilities by a divine substitution is that which brings deliverance, &c. (Page 105.) The second Man came as the righteous One to undo by His righteousness all that the first man as the unrighteous one had done by his unrighteousness.... yet such is the power of sin that it took thirty three years of righteousness to undo what one act of unrighteousness had done. (Page 105.) So God can accept Him, and the law recognize Him as entitled to blessing.

Can anything be more unlike scripture? The love of God, God commending His love to us, by Christ's dying while we were yet sinners, God so loving the world, all the activity of God's love, His seeking and saving what was lost, God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, the Father on the prodigal's neck, when in his rags a great way off, with no best robe upon him: all is lost. I admit, as fully, as earnestly as any can, the need of propitiation and substitution; but all true gospel, the grace of God that brings salvation, is lost in this unscriptural unchristian system. Law accepts where it is satisfied.

All Christ's sympathy, suffering to succor the tempted as merciful and faithful High Priest, is lost. No such thought is found in Dr. Bonar. It is the triumph of evil, or substitution. Righteousness did “retire from the scene” and is seen only now in Christ's sitting at the right hand of God. (See pages 98, 99.)

There are four reasons given in Heb. 2 for Christ's taking our nature, and suffering: God's glory (ver. 10), the destruction of Satan's power (ver. 14), to make propitiation for the sins of the people (ver. 17), to be able to succor them that are tempted. Not one enters into Dr. Bonar's gospel. Christ comes to meet the claims of the law; and that is all.

Faith is nothing but our consenting to be saved by another, Dr. B. tells us. (Page 109.) This is utterly wrong. Faith is setting to our seal that God is true in His testimony, and practically the reception of Christ, by the word, through the power of the Holy Ghost. ““When it pleased God,”

says Paul, “to reveal his Son in me.” Page 111 shows that there is no real apprehension of what faith is. It is “human and cannot satisfy.” “God's pardoning, and justifying, and accepting, must be connected with the cross alone.” (Pages 118, 119.) Yet, just now it took thirty-three years to do it. Of an infused resurrection righteousness I know nothing, save as practical fruit of righteousness by Jesus Christ our life; but of being accepted in the Beloved I do, and that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And this connects our acceptance with death to sin, and deliverance from it by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which Christ's bearing our sins does not. This difference between the teaching of Romans to chapter v. 11, and from thence to the end of chapter viii., Dr. Bonar is wholly ignorant of.

What it is to be not in the flesh but in Christ, of the law's having power over a man as long as he lives, but that we are delivered from it, having died with Christ, the difference between Christ's dying for our sins, and our having died with Him, of His meeting our responsibilities by bearing our sins on the cross, and our being in Him and accepted in Him, now He is risen and glorified, inseparable from His being in us, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, sin in the flesh being condemned—of all this Dr. B. is wholly ignorant. Legal claims satisfied is all he knows; and of course he condemns and mistakes what he is ignorant of. It is striking to see (p. 121) how he speaks of Christ dying for us, and Christ being in us, but leaves out, as a thing totally unknown to him, our being in Him, And note again how in all this part (pp. 119 - 121) the whole of his statement of a sin-bearing life is utterly subverted, “All comes from the one work of the cross.” “It is death throughout.” This is not true of the meat-offering, but it sets aside all Dr. B.'s theory. Dr. B.'s anger against others has betrayed him into sad statements.

To deny that a risen Christ is our life may be fit for legalism, and a denial of all real spiritual life; but if there be a real gift of life, in whom and whence is it? This is terrible, our being in Christ left out, and Christ denied to be our life. And Dr. Bonar forgets the verse even as to justification, that, though justification is not by life in us, yet it characterizes justification, as it is written, by one offense towards all to condemnation, so by one righteousness [or act of righteousness] towards all to justification of life.”

The truth is the whole doctrine of acceptance in Christ forms no part of Dr. Bonar's scheme. But that our whole position and partaking of life too depends on resurrection, though surely the whole foundation is Christ's death (which is indeed what I must insist upon), is clear, and it is the real point in question. Dr. B., though inconsistently talking of its being solely death, bases it on Christ's previous life, as meeting legal claims. Scripture declares that, unless the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone, and that it is in Christ risen that we have our place before God, knowing by the Comforter that we are in Him (and therefore there is no possible condemnation for us), that He is gone to our Father as to His Father, to our God as to His God. So Paul would not know Christ after the flesh, though life had.

The cross made the great turning-point and separation. In the law God put up a barrier round the mount of fire—was hidden behind the veil; there was no entrance into the holiest, the way not made manifest. As I have sometimes said, God did not come out, and man could not go in. Now God has come out in grace to man, and man has gone in righteousness to God, we are in Him there sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. He is our life, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me—the risen Christ, or One not risen? Christ alive

in the days of His flesh abode alone. “If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above,” where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” “When Christ who is our life shall appear.” Here it is distinctively a risen Christ. Our life is Christ who is risen; we have been quickened together with Him, and raised up together.

Save in the vague words, brother, and sister, and mother, Christ never calls His disciples brethren until after His resurrection. Nor is being quickened by the Son the same thing as being raised with Him: for here He is looked at as a man, and we have part spiritually in resurrection with Him. Whence it is said in Col. 2, “having forgiven you all trespasses.” He bore our sins in coming down, and put them away, and then we are raised with Him. He has put us in the same place with Himself—His Father and our Father, His God and our God. Till redemption was accomplished, the corn of wheat abode alone. Dr. Bonar's system is not Christianity in grace to the sinner, God in Christ seeking the lost, and on the sinner's neck when the prodigal had not the best robe on; and the whole of Paul and John's teaching as to our place and life and acceptance in Christ he is wholly ignorant of. God, for him, is a righteous judge, and if we come by a legal satisfaction into court, He is satisfied because the law is. The Lord keep me from such a gospel, and such a gospel from the world.

Even when he speaks, as he must in quoting scripture, of being in Christ, it is an exchange of persons. It is a judicial verdict or sentence given in our favor. God seeks for us, and when at last He discovers us in our hiding-place, it is not me He finds, but Christ. We are partakers in law of all the results and fruits of His work, no identity with Christ literal or physical. (Pages 79, 80.) Jehovah is satisfied. Is this the gospel of the grace of God? God sought sinners. Is it not as if we found our way into Christ by our own consent, and then God found, discovered, us hidden there? And are we not really members of Christ, of His flesh, and of His bones? Are we not really living in Him, and He in us?

My conclusion is, that it is a deplorable heart-saddening book, almost leading one to doubt whether the author knows Christ and the gospel at all, and giving the certainty that the blessed gospel we have in scripture he certainly knows nothing about, at any rate not the gospel of the grace of God revealed in scripture. Such is my answer to whoever sent me the book.

J. N. D.

Chapter 43

Thoughts on Ephesians 4

The first part of this chapter gives ecclesiastical, the second individual, godliness. In the previous chapter this connects itself with it, that we have not counsels of God simply, but the realization and verification of those counsels in Christ dwelling in the heart by faith.

First of all we see the thought in God before the foundation of the world, but now it has been brought out. God has brought these eternal counsels into actual realization, and that leads, of course, to actual walk. God has brought out now (as soon as ever Christ had laid the foundation for it by the cross) “one body and one Spirit.”

Though the vocation looks back at the counsels of God, it is brought into actuality in this world. It is a sorrow to the heart, and it ought to be a much deeper sorrow to us, comparing these thoughts of God and their realization. This is the revelation of God's thought in full blessedness, but we see how little in any sense saints have acted up to the mind of God.

This Epistle first gives us the thought of God without reference to how far it has been accomplished or not, the mind of God as it is; though in chapter 3 we have the actual realization of this in the power of the Spirit of God. Then comes the question of how far this is acted out. While Paul was there in the world, a continual struggle was going on; they were Judaizing—dragging down, but the standard was never lowered. You will never find that God lowers the standard, whatever the failure. He never can lower the standard; He may have and has long patience, but He cannot take a lower standard. There are two standards of judgment: one is what God set up at the first; the other is, are they prepared for Christ's coming? There must be the going back to what He gave at the first. Malachi takes the Israelites back to Horeb; “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel.” Surely He will accomplish His promises, but He never lowers the standard. There may be a degree of light possessed, or not possessed; He deals with this in grace, where there is light, more is given; but the standard is not lowered.

Paul unfolds the vocation, and then calls on us to walk worthy of it, in the first part of chapter 4. The necessary effect of being brought so close to God as we are is lowliness and meekness; how can it be otherwise? The greatness of the grace makes nothing of self. This is not easy. In Christ's life you see it plainly enough, in Philippians also. Then the effect of lowliness and meekness is to manifest the unity of the Spirit. “With lowliness and meekness,” that is what we ought to be: then the effect to others will be long-suffering; others may not be lowly and meek. Practically this brings God in and self is gone. The power of love walking with God brings in long-suffering to others. “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” As servants of Christ, and self being gone, we are looking at others. “Yea, and if I be offered [poured as a libation] upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.”

The mere fact of there being Jews and Gentiles in the church, and the constant tendency among the Jews to think little of the Gentiles, made this needed, “endeavoring to keep the unity of the

Spirit," not the unity of the body—God keeps that. Then it comes to be jealousy for Christ's glory. What comes from the Spirit is always one; why are we not all agreed? Because our own minds work; if we had only what we have learned from the scripture, we should be all the same. The body is one that cannot be kept by our endeavors. All this is the practical realization of what is in the purposes of God. If a man has the Spirit of Christ, he is a member of Christ. Jesus was the Christ on earth, but He was a Christ rejected: "Messiah shall be cut off, and shall have nothing." Then a much larger scheme and purpose of God comes out. He that was the Messiah goes down to the lower parts of the earth"; the Creator goes below creation, and now He is above all creatures. Having done that, He delivers persons from Satan and makes them vessels of His power for building up those that are delivered. When "he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." You do not find miracles, tongues, signs of power here, but that which, as immutable and faithful Head, He gives for accomplishing His purpose.

If you take the state of things here, through the unfaithfulness of those to whom service was committed, "the wolf catcheth the sheep and scattereth them," but he cannot touch the power of the Head. You may have everything upset, but everything works together for good; you never can touch that. If one was to think of the saints, but for this, he would break his heart.

"I stand in doubt of you." "I have confidence in you through the Lord." You cannot touch the power and faithfulness of the Head, nor confidence in the Head; though there is disorder all around.

"For the perfecting of the saints" —that is the object. The specific object of ministry is the perfecting of the saints. This never fails; and it is done in various ways. The Corinthians had all sorts of gifts, but they failed in walk. We find various differences among the saints. Individual perfecting is the direct object of Christ—that each individual should grow up to the standard of Christ. Then comes the increase of the body. The first object is, that my heart or your heart is to be up to the measure of Christ; consequent on that comes the increase of the body. It is wonderful if you take the sphere and scope there is here. Christ goes to the lower parts of the earth, then above all heavens; from thence comes ministry.

We now get what the truth is in Jesus. If we have learned Him ourselves, we get this putting off the old man, and putting on the new. This is stated as a fact in Colossians: "Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man." The truth as it is in Jesus is the having put off the old man, and having put on the new.

There are two great elements of the Christian life: one is this putting off the old man and putting on the new; the other, that the Holy Ghost dwells in us. "Be ye therefore imitators of God as dear children." Supposing this done, God's conduct is the rule and measure of mine. "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." We are in the now creation, we have Christ. What is Christ? The manifestation of God. The truth of my state and condition, the truth in Christ is that I have put off the old man, and put on the new. Christ is our life: it is a new creation—created after God "in righteousness and true holiness," not as innocent Adam. In Col. 3 it is expressed in another way, "the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" —that was not Adam's case at all. God is known. I have got now the divine nature fully revealed in Christ, in a man. We are created now after God; we have the knowledge of what God is, not of what man ought to be. If as a poor sinner I am brought to God, I know His love the very first instant; I know the righteousness and love of God. There is growth, of course. I have Christ instead of Adam. I

have put off the old man, as nothing worth, and have put on the new. We have to contend with the old as an enemy. I own nothing but Christ for my life. The knowledge of good and evil has come in, and I cannot take any standard of it (now Christ has revealed Him) but God Himself.

God has made Himself known as Almighty, as Jehovah, and as Father. As Almighty, He said “Walk before me and he thou perfect;” as Jehovah, “Thou shalt be perfect with Jehovah thy God;” as Father, “Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

The second great principle is, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” The precious blood of Christ having been sprinkled upon us, the Holy Ghost dwells in us: this is of immense value to us. The new nature cannot reveal anything, the new nature has no power. What we see in Christ (there was power in Him of course) is dependence and obedience; these are the great leading traits of the new man. The Spirit of God reveals the things of Christ, encourages me, shows me His faithfulness, His love, and He is power in me. God is dwelling in me in power, giving me liberty, power, sonship, but at the same time the sense of God's presence. “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?” If He is grieved, the effect is that power is gone, and the conscience is bad; the Spirit then becomes a rebuker.

If the queen were in the house with a right-minded man, every one and thing would bow to her.

How our hearts cultivate things that are not of Christ! Whatever is not fit for His presence is not fit for my heart. How often things are allowed in the heart which make the heart unwilling (not at the bottom, of course) to let Christ back! It is to me a most striking expression of what the Christian is that he has put off the old man, and put on the new, and that, having the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, he is not to grieve the Holy Spirit. “Be ye imitators of God as dear children.” Grace has put us in the place distinctly; and this is the way we are to walk. He takes the two essential names of God (He has many attributes), love and light; both are that in which we have to say to God. However could I imitate God? you may say. But what do you think of Christ? Is He not God? and God just where we want Him? “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” Do you look at Christ and see what that light is. Christ is the pattern and model. If you wake up from the sleeping state of soul (sleep is for the time as bad as death), Christ will give you light. “Walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savor.” Christ gave Himself up entirely: the law never asked that; the law only said, “love your neighbor as yourself.” In a world of sin and sorrow there is another principle, the giving up of self for others; and I get another principle of Christ's love, it was “to God.” As a creature, if I love an unworthy object, my love is unworthy. Divine love does not want a worthy object. “For us,” “to God!” —if we reached that, we should get the right thing for Christians, the giving up of self and for a worthy object. What a picture of the Christian, the old man gone, the new man put on, the Holy Ghost in us, and Christ the pattern! Surely it is a blessed privilege and a truth. Christ's love went on as a divine source when everybody was against Him. Oh! what a calling, beloved brethren. If we are only babes in Christ, we may be consistent with what we have got. Where a person does walk in that way with God, the soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness in a dry and thirsty land.

If we let Christ practically out of our hearts, it costs a deal to bring Him back again.

Chapter 44

Thoughts on the Epistles to the Seven Churches Viewed Practically: Part 1

There are three lights in which we may examine the epistles to the seven churches; namely, literal, prophetical, and practical.

Viewed literally, we learn what was the condition of these seven assemblies in the days of John the evangelist, and the special features which characterized each of them. The Nicolaitans had troubled both the assembly at Ephesus and that at Pergamos. Those falsely called Jews, that is, God's people on earth, but here declared by the Spirit to be of the synagogue of Satan, were met with at Smyrna and at Philadelphia. Persecution had raged at Pergamos, during which Antipas, Christ's faithful martyr, had sealed his testimony with his blood; and the devil by similar means was about to try the faithful in Smyrna. Doctrinal evil had gained a footing in the assembly in Pergamos, and was rampant in that in Thyatira; whilst deadness had crept over the assembly in Sardis, and lukewarmness characterized that in Laodicea. How soon had the light begun to burn dim, and how great was the triumph of the enemy, even before the last of the apostles had been removed from the earth! In Thyatira the bulk of the assembly, the angel in-eluded, had been seduced by the teaching of one called (symbolically one may believe) Jezebel; in Sardis a few only had kept their garments undefiled; and in Laodicea it was a question to which their subsequent conduct would furnish the answer whether any in that assembly had spiritual life in their soul.

Viewed prophetically, we trace in these epistles all outline, and the only one we have, of the church's history from the close of the apostolic age to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the air for His saints. For, though we do meet in them with notices of things which will happen after that epoch (chap. 2:26, 27; 3:3, 10), yet the history of such events must be sought for elsewhere; the epistles really closing with the time when (the saints having been caught up) Christendom will be left like a house without a tenant, a body without a soul, to be spewed out of Christ's mouth as a worthless, nauseous thing. Thus, what these epistles viewed prophetically are to the church, namely, the outline of its history to the close of its earthly sojourn, the parables of the kingdom are to the kingdom of God or of heaven, namely, the prophetic outline of the history of the kingdom during the absence on high of the King. But, whereas in the parables we learn what was to be from man's failure in, as well as God's thoughts about, the kingdom; in these epistles, whilst we behold the failure of that which has been entrusted to men, we learn also what the faithful are to do in the different conditions of failure which are portrayed, and hence their practical utility in a twofold way is brought out to us.

For prophecy it must be remembered, if rightly used, is most practical. Peter tells us of the practical value of the Old Testament predictions about the kingdom (2 Peter 1:19 - 21), and the Lord Himself has illustrated in the prophetic parable of the servants (Matt. 24:45 - 51) the danger to any teacher, who fails to remember what scripture tells us of His return. Again in the discourse with His disciples about the future of Jerusalem (Luke 21), by acquainting them with circumstances attending the city's downfall by the Romans, and His return in power, the disciples

alive at either epoch would know how to act in the first case, and how to feel as the predicted signs shall come to pass, and which must herald His approach. (Ver. 8 - 28.)

But, besides this use of prophecy, we may view these seven epistles in another, a practical light, as affording instruction and profit for God's saints throughout the whole period between John's day and the Lord's return in the air. For, though addressed each one to the angel of the local assembly designated in the letter, the whole seven were to be made acquainted with the message sent to each. (Chap, 1:11.) Thus, whilst each assembly was acknowledged to be distinct from the other six, it was to be concerned with the letters written by the Lord's commands to the rest. Distinct assemblies indeed they were, each one responsible to Him, yet all parts of the one assembly on earth of which He is the living and glorified Head. So the address to be sent to each was to be communicated to them all. Nor were they to be confined to themselves in their day. People in Greece and Syria, as well as in Egypt and Italy, were to take heed to the things here declared, as we learn from the one exhortation common to them all, which applies as much to us as it did to every listener and reader in John's day, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

Chapter 45

Thoughts on the Epistles to the Seven Churches Viewed Practically: Part 2

(Continued from page 222.)

To get then the full meaning of these epistles we must view them in all these lights, just as we view the rainbow as a whole if we want to have a clear conception of what it is like, though we can, if we wish it, direct our attention to any one of the seven different colors which the bow contains, if we desire to examine them separately. Did we then only study these epistles prophetically, we should not see the force of the personal allusions they contain, nor learn how soon corruption had pervaded the most of them, and whilst perhaps attempting to fix their application so viewed to the day in which we live, we should be in danger of passing over the first three as not applicable to the time in which our lot is cast. Again, if we regarded them only in their literal aspect, the references to the coming of the Lord (chap. 2:25, 3:3, 9, 10) would be difficult of explanation, whilst the order in which they are addressed, and the evident fact that the last four churches are regarded as in some degree synchronizing (that is, continuing together till the Lord come) would be a problem incapable of solution. The exhortation “To him that hath an ear,” &c, and the promise in each epistle addressed to the overcomer, witness of their individual and practical application, whilst the remembrance that they are to be viewed as well both literally and prophetically explains the reason of allusions to things then existing, as well as of the order in which these seven epistles are arranged. Accepting, then, the prophetical hearing of these epistles, so often pointed out, as correct, the object of the present paper is to view them practically in accordance with the exhortation quoted above, to “hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” For though addressed by the Lord to the angels, the Spirit by these epistles speaks to the churches.

The first things which meet us are the description of the One from whom the letters were sent, as well as the designation of those to whom they are addressed. The epistles of Peter, James, and Jude and those of Paul and John for the most part, bear on their title pages the name or description of the inspired writer. A man, a servant of God, and an apostle of Christ, addresses his fellows, brethren in the faith. But these seven epistles bear no such designation, though written by the apostle John; for he is here seen only as the amanuensis of one greater than himself, even the Son of man, the Lord Jesus Christ. These are epistles from Him, whom John had known upon earth, and the only epistles in the New Testament thus characterized. Paul and the rest wrote under the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost, and their writings form part of the canon of scripture (2 Peter 3:16), the epistles being termed prophetic writings (Rom. 16:26, Greek); but here we have the Son of man, risen from the dead, addressing the angels of the seven churches, “These things saith he,” &c, being the formula met with in them all. And, as the sacred penmen described themselves in their epistles as servants of God, apostles of Christ, or simply as the elder (2 and 3 John), so does the Lord Jesus, in the beginning of each address appropriately designate Himself, using either terms which express His relation to the churches (chap. 2:1, 12, 18; 3:1), or terms personally descriptive of Himself. (Chap. 2:8; 3:7, 14.)

As we mark this feature, a characteristic met with in no other epistle of divine authority, namely, that the Lord Jesus here speaks directly, so must we acknowledge that the designation of the one to whom each is addressed is peculiar likewise, for the angel of the church is a term unknown elsewhere in the whole inspired volume. With epistles general, particular, and personal, we are familiar. These also are personal, but are addressed to one characterized by his work in the assembly, not by his official name. To the bishops and deacons at Philippi, as well as to all saints there, did Paul write from his prison in Rome. (Phil. 1:1.) The twelve tribes are addressed by James, the strangers of the dispersion were specially cared for by Peter, whilst the saints and faithful in Christ were taught by Paul and John and Jude. But in these seven epistles we have the angel always addressed, as responsible for what went on in the assembly. Elders, bishops, or deacons, are not once mentioned in them; and the term apostle is only introduced when speaking of those who had falsely arrogated to themselves that distinctive appellation. (Chap. 2:2) Remembering the prophetical bearing of these epistles we can understand this; for the Lord's care for “His people is here displayed, in view of a time when apostles, and those appointed to any office by them, would cease to exist upon earth. Ministry never will cease as long as the church is on earth, nor surely will the supply foil of those fitted to perform the services allotted in apostolic days to elders and deacons. Hence the Lord here writes to those called angels, the mystical representatives of the assemblies, and, as we learn from the epistles themselves, those, whether an individual or individuals, whom the Lord held responsible for the condition of that assembly with which the angel was locally connected.

Looking through these epistles we meet with nothing of church order, nor have we any fresh doctrinal revelation. The circumstances and form in which they were written would preclude both. For, as the church is built on the foundation of apostles and prophets, when church order has to be treated of, an apostle is selected to be the mouth-piece of the Holy Ghost by virtue of his apostolate. And since to Paul, not to John, was it given to fulfill the word of God (Col. 1:25), it is from the former's writings alone that we learn anything about church order. Again, had fresh doctrinal revelations been made in these epistles, since they were written after the decease of Paul, Peter, James, and others of the apostles and prophets, it would have proved that all the truth needful for the edifying of the body had not been communicated in their day, in which case Paul could not have declared all the counsel of God (Acts 20:27), nor could Peter surely have written in the terms he did. (2 Peter 1:3.) In fact these epistles endorse the language of both Peter and Paul, as they call on those by them addressed to be faithful to the truth already received, not to expect anything more. (Chap. 2:25; 3:3.) Faithfulness in the time of declension and persecution is what the Lord here enjoins, and individual faithfulness He desires, if the majority around them have got wrong. And this is to be attained by keeping fast hold of what they have, or returning to that from which they have departed; whereas the reverse of faithfulness would be indicated by refusing to conform, whether in doctrine or practice, to that which had once been accepted amongst them. But though we meet not with rules for church order, we learn that when apostles, and elders, and deacons appointed by them, should cease to exist upon earth, there would be always in the different assemblies those, whom the Lord would hold responsible to care for the due order and welfare of His saints: a solemn fact surely. And though none can now lay claim to be obeyed on the ground of appointment to office, there were, there are, and there will be, those who should care for the local assemblies throughout the world, this responsibility never terminating till the Lord's rejection of Christendom by spewing it out of His mouth.

Of the eagle eye of an apostle, which could discern evil in the bud, and warn the saints against dangers by ordinary observers undetected, the church was soon to be bereft. Deprived of their personal superintendence the assemblies were not left to themselves; there was, and there is, One who walks in their midst. He did this in the days of John the apostle; He does so still. The Holy Ghost dwells in God's habitation on earth to direct and further the work among men, and the Son of man walks in the midst of the assemblies fully cognizant of all that goes on. How deeply interested must He be in the affairs of the church to walk in the midst of the golden candlesticks! How solemn for us to remember that it is the Son of man who thus walks! Golden candlesticks, or lamp-stands, He owns them to be the recognized vessels for the diffusion of light from God in the midst of the darkness around, though there was much in them of which He disapproved. But, as the church is the pillar find ground of the truth, so local assemblies are the divinely appointed vessels, from which in their different places the light should radiate. And the angels are called by the Lord Himself stars, to give light and to rule in the night-season the lampstands, the stars indicating the position and service of each, whilst both speak of the absence of the sun, and by consequence announce that the day has not yet dawned on this benighted, weary, sin-defiled world.

As a rule no promises are made to the angels; but Smyrna and Philadelphia are exceptions to this. To the representatives of these two assemblies promises are made. In the case of Smyrna it is the crown of life if faithful unto death; a mark of approval to be bestowed on those who endure temptation. (Rev. 2:10; James 1:12.) In the case of Philadelphia the promise speaks of homage to be paid by those who have disowned them, and preservation from the hour of trial about to come upon all the world to try them that dwell on the earth. Another feature in common have these two letters, being the only ones in which no failure of the angel had to be noticed. In the rest the Lord finds something, in the most a great deal, to blame: in these there was only that which needed encouragement. How intimately then is He acquainted with all that goes on in the different assemblies, as He warns and rebukes those who have failed, or encourages (for they were men in the flesh) those, who in spite of active persecution, or conscious weakness, were through grace holding on their way!

The fact of failure being noticed as the chronic state of most of the assemblies witnesses of the change that had crept over that which had been set up by the Lord Jesus on earth. But the fact that He shows it up, without at once rejecting that which bore His name down here, speaks to us of the long-suffering goodness and love of Him with whom we have to do. At first in all the freshness of spiritual youth, and by the Holy Ghost acting in and through Peter, the thin end of the wedge of corruption, inserted by the malice of the enemy, was effectually driven out (Acts 5); and, even as late as the time alluded to in Rev. 2:2 the angel at Ephesus had unmasked the hollow pretensions of those calling themselves apostles, and had proved them liars. But now failure had manifested itself very generally, till it had become the characteristic feature of the assemblies in which it had gained a footing. Of this the Lord speaks, to warn if they would be warned, and so be wise in time.

Reading these letters as descriptive of assemblies then established, we see how different conditions spiritually might co-exist. We learn too how varied can be the attempts of the enemy to corrupt assemblies with the view of effacing the testimony for God and for Christ from the world, as well as the Lord's discrimination evidenced in His dealings with each of them. To this let us now turn.

In His message to the angel of the assembly in Ephesus the Lord has to notice symptoms of decline, such as by ordinary eyes would not be observed. His position in relation to the seven stars, and His place in the seven golden candlesticks, tell of His concern with all that went on. The former He held in His right hand, and amongst the latter He walked. To all that there was of value in His eyes He gave full credit (ver. 2, 3) and there was a great deal. Works, labor, patience, refusal to bear with those who were evil, and the detection of false apostles-these tell us of the manifestations of the divine life which had been witnessed in that assembly. Endurance too unwearied, and that for Christ's sake, He speaks of. And, as real disciples of the Master, they hated the works of the Nicolaitanes. What then was wrong with them? What fault could be found with them? Men probably discerned none, but He who walked in the midst of the golden candlesticks puts His finger on the blot, and characterizes it in terms which might sound strange to others. “I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore, whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.” Restoration to the former condition, and not anything new, was that which He asked of the angel. The activity of the assembly could not deceive the Son of man, nor could a continuance in their present course satisfy Him; so He bids the angel to remember whence he had fallen, and to repent. If not, the opportunity for testimony would be taken away from them, the lamp be removed out of its place. One may have to own, in rending this epistle, how far one has come short in estimating aright the evil of which the Lord complains, but we have it here written for our instruction. For whilst the angel is addressed, the responsibility of individuals is clearly set forth in the promise given to the overcomer, a promise just suited to the circumstances of the case. Vigor of spiritual life had characterized them once. He desired that it should do so again, and promises to the overcomer (i.e., the one who should exhibit it afresh), forever and ever to enjoy it by eating of the tree of life which would surely continually sustain it. This was the Lord's way of lifting souls out of their declining spiritual condition. To the overcomer He offers nothing for the present, for the principle of the walk of faith is to look forward to what will be enjoyed; but not in the circumstances in which we at present are. This acted on the worthies of old, and must act on those who would be overcomers. So the Lord speaks of “the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

This way of dealing with souls demands further consideration. What might have been passed over as a light matter was in His eyes a very grievous one. By leaving his first love the angel had fallen. “Remember from whence thou art fallen,” the Lord said to him. Every word here is important. He had fallen, and how great was the fall! This he was to call to remembrance, and repent and do the first works. If not, the Lord would visit them governmentally. Then to help souls in that condition He points them on to the future, and tells them what, if overcomers, He will give them. To point out only what is wrong will not help people to get right. The Lord here aimed at two things, the opening of the eye to see what needed correction, and the acting on the heart to make them overcomers. The former is done by pointing out the failure, the latter by occupying souls with His grace.

Turning to the epistle to the angel in Smyrna we learn that the Lord is fully acquainted with His people's condition. In the letters to the angels of the assemblies in Ephesus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea He commences with the words, “I know thy works.” In the epistles to the angels of the assemblies in Smyrna and in Pergamos these words should be omitted. The activity of the assembly in Ephesus we have seen that He knew: with the condition of that in Smyrna we learn that He was well acquainted. Tribulation and poverty had characterized them,

tribulation would still be their lot. No change for the better does the Lord hold out, but their eyes are directed to another quarter, one beyond the horizon of this world. Death might await them for His sake, but the crown of life would be theirs, and whosoever overcame (i.e., by not loving his life) should not be hurt of the second death. Death is not the Christian's hope; but if called for Christ's sake to enter it, they were not to fear, for it was the First and the Last who thus addressed them, who became dead, and lived. Poor, despised, persecuted, and perhaps slain here, then to be decked with the crown of life forever and ever. Rich indeed would they be, distinguished in eternity for this, that life on earth had been esteemed as nothing in comparison with faithfulness to Him, who became dead and lived. How graciously does He minister to His suffering people as He reminds them of His path, and foretells for them their future!

But not only does He speak of the condition. He notices also the position, as He tells the angel of the assembly at Pergamos, “I know where thou dwellest, where Satan's seat is.” But, as the condition of the assembly in Smyrna was not to be altered, so neither was the position of that in Pergamos to be changed. How often are souls tempted to think, ‘If only my condition was improved, or my position amended, I should do better.' The Lord however wants us to glorify Him in the condition in which we are, and to be faithful in the position in which His providence has placed us, both of which He knows, as we learn from these two epistles. And here a fresh point comes out. Whilst personal soundness in the faith is essential, that can be no excuse for the allowance of evil within the assembly. Personally the angel was sound. “Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in the days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.” This was commendation, both of what had been done, and of what was still done, The Lord's faith had not been denied in the days of persecution, His name the angel still held fast. But, through carelessness it may have been, holders of false doctrine were suffered among them, which led to immorality of walk, a connection, as of cause and effect, much closer than many, it may be, are apt to imagine. What might seem of little moment to the angel was a grievous matter in the eyes of Christ, and the orthodoxy of the angel could not shield him from blame, if such people were allowed to continue unchecked.

Is the teaching we here got commonly understood and accepted in our day? To be sound himself was not sufficient; he ought to have allowed no compromise with evil. Personal soundness, whilst allowing evil to be rife amongst them, was a state of matters with which the Lord could not rest satisfied; so the sharp two-edged sword out of His mouth (chap. i. 16), by and by to be used in judgment against the nations (chap. 19:15), must be wielded by Him against the evildoers, unless the angel repented. The effect of repentance would be the expulsion of the evil from amongst them. This is what the Lord desired, thus owning what God had set up on earth, the assembly qualified to deal with the evil. Authority to act they had, and, if they had exercised it, they would have found they had the power also; but failing to act themselves, the Lord must fight against the corrupters with the sword of His mouth. What a place then the assembly occupies, and what responsibility rests on it, as the witness for Christ, and the maintainer of His glory and truth upon earth! And observe, He did not tell the angel at Pergamos to assemble a general council, or even a provincial synod, before taking action in this matter.

A betters of the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication, had a footing in this assembly, as well as those who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. The former we meet with here for the

first time, the latter had been mentioned in the epistle to the angel at Ephesus. There the angel had been of one mind with the Lord about their deeds, here the angel permitted the presence of those who held their doctrines. What attempts of the enemy to corrupt God's people do these charges against the angel attest! To destroy God's people Israel by drawing them into idolatry and its concomitant ways of uncleanness, had been Balaam's wicked device communicated to Balak. Here in Pergamos a similar plan was being pursued; but the Lord unmasked it. To eat things sacrificed to idols might seem to some a small matter. Believers at Corinth had been deceived in this way, till the apostle showed clearly what such conduct and association implied. Here the evil appears to have run to greater lengths, for the natural fruits of it had been developed. To meet this twofold evil the Lord then addresses the overcomer, and promises to give to him to cat of the hidden manna, and a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it.

The unfaithful were seeking to satisfy themselves on earth from unhallowed sources, the overcomers shall be fed in heaven by Christ Himself. The hidden manna, Christ, now on high, of which the golden pot of manna laid up in the sanctuary was typical, shall be their portion forever to feed on, who overcome the seduction of error akin to what Balaam introduced amongst Israel. Thus a portion, better than Israel on earth enjoyed, they shall have forever; even the hidden manna, the gift of Christ Himself. “With this the Lord couples the white stone, the mark of acquittal or approval, on which shall be written a new name, a secret of delight between the giver and receiver. What could Satan offer to compare with these blessings, all future, it is true, but the assured portion of each one who would stem the tide of such evils as were corrupting the assembly at Pergamos? To eat of things which God abhorred, and to give the rein to their fleshly lusts, were the snares by which Satan was at Pergamos ruining souls. To eat of that which is precious to God, and to have the sure token of Christ's approval forever, are what the Lord here offers to the overcomer. What desires for their everlasting welfare does the Lord's ministry here disclose!

In the assembly at Thyatira things were worse, and the faithful were accounted by the majority as familiar with the depths of Satan. All right thoughts of order were subverted. The doctrines of Balaam were bearing fruit; and what was worse, one who styled herself a prophetess, but is here called by the Lord Jezebel (a name indicative of her purpose as akin to that of Ahab's queen, who used her power and influence to corrupt God's saints), was in the height of her career, seduced His servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. Nor did she stand alone in her wickedness. She had followers, called her children, who disseminated the corruption which she had introduced. Her influence and the extent of the corruption were seen in the fact of the angel being led away, as well as the majority of those who professed to be Christians. The Lord's estimate of matters appears from His address to the angel. Works, charity, service, faith, patience, all these He saw and owned; but the suffering Jezebel to teach was a very grievous thing. Hence, whilst He said to the angel at Pergamos, “I have a few things against thee,” here He says, “I have against thee,” for thus we should read the passage, omitting “a few things.” The omission is significant, as is that of any command to the angel to repent, a feature this epistle has in common only with those to the angels at Smyrna and Philadelphia, but for a very different reason.

The door of repentance was not indeed closed, as verse 22 bears witness, but the angel had become a vessel unfit for the master's use. (2 Tim. 2:20, 21.) What then was to be done? Were

godly souls to acquiesce in the evil because it was general and widespread? Was constituted authority, as men speak, to be obeyed, and leaders followed, if they walked in a path which the Lord abhorred? Clearly not. What, then, were the faithful to do? The Lord tells them Himself. “That which ye have already, hold fast till I come.” Ceasing to address the angel He speaks direct to those still faithful, “the rest.” “Unto you I say, the rest who are in Thyatira,” for so it should be read. The sheep deserted by those who ought to have cared for them, the great Shepherd manifests afresh His care for the flock, and acts as the Bishop of their souls. In this way the proper action of individuals is indicated even when the leaders are perverted; and if it be but a remnant, “the rest,” they must be steadfast and hold fast what they have till the Lord come, for till then, as is elsewhere taught (1 Tim. 6:14), the servants are not relieved from their responsibility.

Their proper position pointed out, the Lord gives promises to them if they overcome, for nothing short of that will satisfy His heart. Characterizing things in the assembly at Thyatira by a true name, that one word Jezebel must have struck the faithful as shedding a full light on the real character of the evil from which they stood aloof. Who, that had a spark of right feeling about God's honor and His truth, could become a partaker of the sins and ways of one whom the Lord thus designates? The depths of Satan their enemies in the church accused “the rest” of being acquainted with; the teachings of a Jezebel, the Lord declared their enemies had listened to and imbibed. For the faithful it was as the day of small things, disowned and evil spoken of by those who professed to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ; for the majority at Thyatira had been perverted, and only a remnant remained steadfast. But by and by the Lord will publicly vindicate His own, and make all see who those are who could remain faithful and steadfast in the midst of such widespread corruption and such successful seduction. What no person on earth could offer, and what none but He can give; He here tells them shall be theirs. “He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall shepherd them with a rod of iron: as vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces, even as I received of my Father.” The difference of walking by faith or by sight is here very plainly illustrated. Worldly power might be brought in to corrupt the church and ensnare many; but power over the nations in government shall be the future portion of those faithful to Christ, to be received direct from His hand. For “I will give,” are His words in each of the first four epistles as well as in the last. (Chap. 2:7, 10, 17, 26, 28; 3:21.) But in this, the fourth epistle the Lord appears as the giver in a very solemn way. To His own will He give power over the nations, but to every one of them in Thyatira He will give according to their works. Jezebel, her children, the angel, and all seduced by her, as well as “the rest” must then have to do with Him. The power He received from His Father He will give of to His people, and He will not, He tells them, begin-"His reign until they are with Him. Of this the promise of the gift of the morning star assures them. But, just as the mention of the name of Jezebel must have thrown the light of divine illumination on the real character of things in Thyatira, so the mention of the morning star must have reminded them that the darkness of night still enwraps this world.

A question may here arise. Does this epistle sanction the continuance of God's people in that which is wrong, for there is no hint for them to leave the assembly? Other scriptures point out what the action of God's people should be with reference to evil in doctrine and practice (1 Cor. 5; Titus 3:10 John.) Here however we have the whole local assembly addressed, from which according to God's thoughts we can never get free, as long as we are in the place where it exists. For the

assembly at Thyatira comprehended every soul in that city which professed to be a disciple of Christ. To separate from the church there would have been to un-Christianize themselves, which they could not do, though separation from evil is a positive Christian duty. This those termed by the Lord “the rest” had clearly done. They were apart from the evil, and because they kept aloof from participation in it, they received this token of His approval, whilst enduring the odium of those from whose ways and doctrines they dissented. A new church they did not attempt to form, nor could they, for there was but one in the place, however many might have been the houses in which the members of it met. To have attempted to form one would have manifested their want of intelligence about the church of God. To have acquiesced in the evil, because there was but one church which God owned, would have indicated ignorance as to the nature of God, and of that which should characterize His children.

(To be continued.')

Chapter 46

Thoughts on the Epistles to the Seven Churches Viewed Practically: Part 3

(Continued from page 240.)

Another state of things in John's day the epistle to the angel of the assembly at Sardis discloses. The blinding influence of a Jezebel on the church, and the extent to which it could lead to departure from the faith, Thyatira exhibited, whilst the danger of resting in profession Sardis exemplified. How often have souls taken comfort to themselves from their connection with some body, as men speak, in their public profession of Christianity! To make a profession of Christianity, where it is real, is right—Christians should openly show themselves as such. The candle is not meant to be put under a bed or a bushel, but to give light. Our light ought to shine. But mere profession is not life, and man's estimate of us is not always in accord with Christ's; for, whilst man can see the actions, the Lord reads the heart. So He tells the angel “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead.” A correct estimate He had formed, and here expresses what it was. How startling probably this must have been to some, yet how gracious, telling the angel what He discerned whilst there was time to repent, instead of waiting to manifest it when the day of grace should be past. All that men could see, He saw and noticed; but, what man perceived not, He beheld. As the Son of God possessing judicial power He addressed the angel at Thyatira, as having the seven spirits of God and the seven stars He speaks to the angel at Sardis, and exhorts him to be watchful, lest the slumber of spiritual death should only be broken in upon by the execution of divine judgment. (Chap. 3:3.) “Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are about to die,” was the work to which the angel should address himself; for the Lord adds, “I have not found thy works perfect [or complete] before my God.”

As man then He here comes before us, just as afterward in the epistle to the angel at Philadelphia He speaks in the same strain— “My God.” Here the mention of such a term would serve as a reminder that the Lord has known what is man's responsibility in connection with God. There the saints would be encouraged by the remembrance, that He, who addressed them, had learned what it was to be in the place of dependence upon earth. But, if He could speak of Himself as a man, all power and resources for men belonged to Him. He has the seven stars and the seven Spirits of God. The stars should shine in the darkness, and rule in the night, whilst all that the angel wanted for this the Lord could supply, for the seven Spirits of God are His as well as the seven stars. Thus presenting Himself He could tell what was lacking, and point out the remedy. This is of immense importance to us, whether viewed collectively or individually. The remedy was within their reach. No development of truth was required, nor was any further revelation vouchsafed. “Remember therefore how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast, and repent.” The remembrance of what they had received and heard would open their eyes to the condition of deadness, which insensibly perhaps had crept over them; to bold fast would remind them of the standard they had once accepted, and then repentance, self-judgment with the action corresponding to it, would openly follow. How simple then was the remedy, and bow blessed

though humbling the result!

Have we not at times need to be reminded of this, the divine way of dealing with souls? Is there not often a restlessness when first the consciousness of deadness comes home to us, and the thought rises up, that activity in some way or other should be aimed at and fostered? Yet here the Lord speaks not of fresh activity in works, but of repentance; for the state of the heart is that at which He looks, and this His people are to remember. The works of Sardis were not complete, because what they had received and heard had been forgotten. To this He recalls them, and obedience or the opposite to the admonition would be the test of the reality of their profession. Instructive then is the admonition, nor less so is the order in which it is conveyed. Repentance was to follow the remembrance of what had been received and heard, for the grace bestowed, and the truths taught, being remembered, their present state would be discerned, and this would lead them by grace to repentance. Thus does the Lord affirm the sufficiency of what had been once enjoyed and revealed, to recover their souls from the deadness into which they had fallen. But how graciously does He enter into their condition as He points them to the means by which to get out of it.

Then, before passing on to give promises to the overcomers, He notices those who had remained faithful amid such general unfaithfulness. “But thou hast a few names in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white for they are worthy.” Did the angel know who these were? The Lord certainly did, an evidence that truly He is the Shepherd. In the epistle to the angel of the church at Pergamos, and again to that at Thyatira, He had noticed classes (chap. 2:14, 15, 24); here He speaks of individuals, a few names. When He entered the fold of Israel as the Shepherd, He called His own sheep by name; here after His resurrection and ascension we learn that He knows by name each one, who on earth is faithful to Him. How comforting to His people to remember this! Little known, as probably these few were, and less thought of, where spiritual slumber prevailed so generally, the Lord tells the angel, and through him us, how He regards such, and of what in His eyes they are worthy. Thus the defilement connected with mere profession is marked. For apart from any connection with the evil deeds of the Nicolaitans, or the uncleanness resulting from the doctrines of Balaam and the seductions of Jezebel, garments could and had been defiled, where a mere orthodox profession prevailed. But not only should those be in white who had kept their garments undefiled, but all who would now overcome should thus be clothed. Their names too (here individuality is again to be noticed) He will not blot out of the book of life, the register of all who profess to be Christians, but will confess them before His Father and before His angels. How suited was this promise to the condition of things in that assembly! The assembly at Sardis had a name as professors before men, the overcomers amongst them should have their names confessed by Christ openly before God.

In the assembly at Philadelphia both doctrine and practice had been cherished. “Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.” Here we see what faithfulness can effect. A little strength they had, their capability for service was not great; but the absence of greater power was not allowed to be a plea for deadness, such as was in Sardis nor for the sufferance of a false teacher like Jezebel at Thyatira. Such being their state, the Lord introduces Himself, not as One clothed with judicial power as in the letters to the angels at Pergamos and Thyatira, but as the Holy One and the True, who possesses the key of David to open and to shut. To what He is those at Philadelphia had in measure been conformed. So faithful in the maintenance of doctrine, and

exhibiting the fruits of it in their ways, the door of opportunity for service He here tells them that He will keep open for them, and no man shall shut it. Through grace having been faithful, God's ways in government they should prove. “What a man soweth that shall he also reap,” announces to us the unfailing principle of God's government. These had been faithful in their measure: so opportunity for further service should be secured to them. How often do believers prove the unfailing principles of God's government by suffering consequences, perhaps enduring, of some wrong action in past times! Here the converse, less often proved, is illustrated for our instruction by the keeping open the door for further service, for and by the Lord, which no man should shut.

The opportunity then to do service for Christ is something to be prized. The knowledge of forgiveness is not the end of man's salvation, for “we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.” Into this the Philadelphian Christians entered, and showed that they understood of what use, as alive in Christ, they were to be upon earth, and hence were to experience, as here expressed in a threefold way, the rich grace of Christ; in the door being kept open by Him, in His vindication of their title to be God's people before those who would deny it, and in their being kept by Christ out of the hour of tribulation, which shall come upon all the habitable world to try them that dwell upon the earth.

This last promise, based as it is on their having kept the word of Christ's patience, shows that saints in early days not only were taught about the hope of the church, but really held it fast. Paul's wish for the assembly at. Thessalonica (2 Thess. 3:5) was fulfilled in that of Philadelphia. (Ver. 10.) Commended then as they were so highly by the Lord, and enriched with such promises, might they relax their efforts, and abate their zeal? Man's evil heart led by Satan might say, Yes; the Lord however warns them against such a delusion. He could and did commend them; but, knowing man's heart and Satan's artifices, He adds the significant admonition; “I come quickly, hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown.” Then He ends the letter to the angel by acquainting him with the future position of the overcomer. “He that overcometh [for their service was still unfinished], 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, the new Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and my new name.”

Possessed of little strength, but faithful to Christ's word and name, their service He does indeed prize, and their faithfulness He will reward. Pillars in the temple of His God they shall be, monuments of divine workmanship for all to behold, ever remaining where God dwells. And though disowned as God's people on earth, Christ will display them as God's, with the mark of heavenly citizenship written upon them, as well as His new name written by Himself in token that they belong to Him. What delight in the faithfulness of His people does the Lord take, since He will mark those who exhibit it as belonging to God and to Himself!

In the epistle to the angel of the assembly in Laodicea we have as dark a picture as that of the assembly at Philadelphia was bright. All in Philadelphia were faithful; of none in Laodicea could the Lord speak with approval, though He was fully acquainted with their works. At Philadelphia the saints were in some measure conformed to what He is, holy and true; what He is stood out in direct contrast to the assembly at Laodicea. “These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God,” is the Lord's description of Himself, reminding the

angel of His life of faithfulness as a man upon earth, and that He is the Head of a new race. The assembly at Laodicea had forgotten the one, and ignored the other. Lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, is the estimate He had formed of them, for indifference to Christ characterized them. What that is in His sight His rebuke shows us. “I would thou wert either cold or hot;” for something positive is better than indifference allied with profession. The assembly took the ground of Christianity before the world, but imagined they could get on without Christ, being rich as they said, having grown rich, and wanting nothing. Self-contained, as they thought, they had need of nothing, thereby belying their whole profession, for why should we profess Christianity, if we can get on without Christ? For the world to go on without Him seems intelligible enough, but for those, who outwardly bear His name, to blind their eyes to their true interests seems almost incredible; and so far had these gone, that the only place the Lord could occupy was one outside of them, standing at the door and knocking, if perchance any would open to Him, in whom is all fullness for His people.

The angel at Laodicea knew not the real condition of the assembly, and in this all there seem to have agreed with him. Unanimity there was amongst them. None there by their life protested against the fatal security in which they had enwrapped themselves, nor was the estimate of their state challenged, it would appear, by one uneasy soul. In this condition of matters, which had existed we learn not for how long, the Lord interposes. Sight, clothing, riches, all these they wanted; but all these He could give them. Apart from Him they had nothing, but from Him they could buy everything. To warn them of their danger, the Lord tells the angel what must take place if he did not repent; “I will spue thee out of my mouth;” but at the same time tells him what should be done to avert such dreadful and irreversible consequences. “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and eye salve to anoint [as we should here read] thine eyes that thou mayest see.” Gracious was all this both to warn and to counsel, but the Lord did not stop there; for explaining that the severity of His address was the effect of true love in Him (ver. 19), He acquainted them with His attitude and action, standing at the door and knocking, willing to bless even an individual, if only one would open to Him. What pains does He take to arouse souls.

When Israel rejected the Lord Jehovah, God declared His intention of returning to His place till they should acknowledge their offense, and seek His face, adding, “in their affliction they will seek me early.” (Hos. 5:15.) Reaping the fruit of their ways, they would be brought to seek Him, from whom they had departed. None could charge God with injustice in thus dealing with them, for they had clearly deserved it. Indeed the opportunity to repent being afforded them witnesses of His grace to Israel. But the Lord acts in Laodicea in a different manner; seeking to impress them with this, that, however in-different they had been to Him, He was not indifferent to their welfare. He wanted their hearts, He wanted to be with them if they would allow Him, and to have thorn with Him, if this could righteously be effected. His attitude, standing at the door, told of their indifference, but told also of His long-suffering towards them. His action, knocking fit the door, spoke of His desire to be with them. To have yielded to their entreaty would have been gracious, but to be the Entreater, and (may we not with reverence add).... importunate entreaties, was wonderfully gracious. This is the position He there took up, and immediate blessing was to be enjoyed by anyone who would yield to His entreaty.

“If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.” How significant is the little word “if” here; for the previous conduct of souls at Laodicea, for which the Lord rebukes them, afforded no ground for the conclusion that anyone would open the door. But what a way to gain hearts, if they could be gained! What a manner of overcoming indifference to Christ have we here set before us! To sup with Christ is surely a blessing to be highly prized. But what He puts in the foreground is His entrance to sup with anyone who would admit Him. For, by telling of His longing after them, and His desiring intercourse with any who would hearken and open to Him, He would, if there was life in any one soul in Laodicea, gain its confidence, and effectually dispel its indifference. In the Epistles to the first five churches we have no promise made to be fulfilled on earth; in that to Philadelphia there is a promise to be fulfilled as they are being caught up from earth; but in this last a promise is made to be enjoyed whilst here below, the presence of Christ in familiar blessed intercourse, He supping with anyone who would open the door, and such an one with Him. Add to this the promise here made to the overcomer of being with Christ on His throne; and we have set out before us a divine plan for attracting hearts to Christ, namely, by telling them of His desires after them, and wishes for them.

“What response there was to this appeal, or indeed to any of His directions in these Epistles, we do not learn, for the object surely was, not to be enabled to record results, but to portray what Christ was in John's day, and what He is still. His presence among the golden candlesticks is declared, and His ministry, by which He would act upon souls in the different circumstances with which they were surrounded, has been recorded for our instruction by the Holy Ghost. Thus the Lord's way of dealing with saints we are here made acquainted with, as well as His earnest desire and unwearied service for the true welfare of all who are called by His name. But, if we cannot learn the effect of this ministry on the souls addressed by the Spirit when John penned the letters, any placed now in similar circumstances, or whose spiritual condition corresponds to that of these described, may show by their own example how such ministry on Christ's part can effect the object desired. So “Wisdom may afresh be justified of her children.”

Chapter 47

Correspondence Rev. 7 (to the Editor of the Bible Treasury.)

Dear Mr. Editor, An interesting question arises out of Rev. 7 Let me clear the way a little before I put the question. I take for granted that the church has been taken up; I take for granted that chapter vii. is not a continuance of the historic sequence in Revelation, but rather an episode between the sixth and the seventh seal, in which God, in His loving kindness, lifts, as it were, the veil a little, to let us know that, when the sore judgments are about to Come, His own amongst both Israel and Gentile nations are safe. How could it be otherwise? “In the time of trouble, He shall hide me in His pavilion, in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me.”

Israel and the Gentiles are the next point to clear up. I take then for granted that in verses 4 - 8 the twelve tribes mean the twelve tribes—Israel literal. I can neither understand those who say that they mean the “Israel of God” (meaning thereby the Christian church), nor can I feel that there is any weight in the references which they give in support of this opinion. I think that they are given under a misapprehension of Matt. 25:31 - 46, supposing this to be the last judgment; from not being aware that there will be a “new Jerusalem” earthly, and a “new Jerusalem” heavenly; and lastly, (which I mention last to attract notice, as I believe it to be the secret of the misinterpretation of the whole book of Revelation from chapter iv. 1, to xxii. 21,) that the church is in heaven when chapter vii. comes before us. I do not think that the expression “Israel of God” (see Alford, in loco) is ever used for the Gentile Christian church. Gal. 6:16, is adduced in proof of it. I will not now occupy your space in discussing the point further, than to say, that, even granting for a moment that this expression in Gal. 6 does mean the Christian church (which I do not admit), we cannot take one isolated expression against the weight of the universal testimony of Old and New Testaments against it. These say that Zion is Zion, Jerusalem is Jerusalem, and Israel, Israel.

But however this may be, in Rev. 7, it strikes me as impossible, for the plainest reasons, to use it in any such sense, as, in that case, verse 9, would be a mere needless repetition of chapter 20:4 - 8. Chapter 20:4 - 8, is Israel literal; chapter 10:9, the Gentiles; chapter 10:11, the church, as we have it always in this book represented by the twenty-four elders.

I take then for granted, first, that the church has been taken up; second, that verses 4 - 8 are the expression of God's providential care of the elect of Israel; third, verses 4 - 9, the same care of Gentiles (other than the risen saints) brought to the Lord by the ministry of restored and converted Israel(?) under the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in larger measure than on the day of Pentecost. I say, assuming these three several points—(though I do not see my way clear in the third except that chapter 10:9 are Gentiles,) I say, assuming these several points, does not all the above indicate that the time between the raising and taking up of the saints and the destruction of Antichrist and her host, must be larger than we (I at least) have generally supposed it to be? This chapter vii. is, in historic sequence, previous to chapter xix. Chapter 19 makes way for the millennium. Matt. 25:31 - 46 is the judgment of the nations (other than apostate Christendom) as to having received or rejected the testimony of Israel in behalf of the Lord Jesus.

I would ask then, when does the mission of converted Israelites to the Gentiles take place, and for how long carried on? I beg particularly to say, that I do not put this question as of any doctrinal importance, and think that every dear saint may be quite ignorant of the matter—or, having crossed his mind, he may not have come to any conclusion about it—or, having come to one, it may be contrary to one's own; I say this the rather, because I think it of very great importance that we should not make brethren offenders for any details of the kind, however interesting they may be. Yet still, at the same time, as a clear understanding of this matter would tend to clear up several points mentioned in that wonderful and blessed book, the Apocalypse, I should be glad of information on the subject. After the church has been taken up, and when Antichrist appears, I believe that the two tribes (previously restored but in unbelief, the temple built and city inhabited) will receive Him as Messiah, at the beginning of “the week,” that is, seven years. He will, in the course of the week, set up idolatry in the temple. The Jews spurning this, He will turn against them; the slaughter of Zachariah will take place to prevent their entire destruction, Messiah appears, delivers them, and destroys the host of Antichrist, consigning the leader to the lake of fire. During their seven years, I believe there will be Gentile believers and a Jewish godly remnant, many of whom will be martyred. I believe that, after Antichrist is consigned to the lake of fire, Israel, converted, will be the instrument of conversion to the nations. But when will “the great multitude which no man could number of all nations, kindred, peoples, end tongues “be brought to the Lord? The solution of this will clear up other matters to my mind, which I do not at present see clearly.

X. Y.

Erratum

Page 136, column 1, line 8, for “not” read “went.”

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Erratum

In No. 197, p. 151, col. 1, for “Abram's” read “Adam's paradise.”

Chapter 49

Notes on Ezekiel: Introduction

Of the prophet on whose book we enter we know few circumstances, none save the scanty personal particulars which he gives in the course of his prophecies, bound up with them and expressive of their character. We are told that he was a priest, son of Buzi; also of his wife and her sudden death, a sign to Israel; and of his residence at Tel-abib by the Chebar in the land of the Chaldeans. He speaks of Daniel his contemporary, in his own day famous for righteousness, even as Noah and Job.

But there are no writings in the Bible more characteristic, and none more used in furnishing imagery for the last book of the New Testament, the widest and deepest of all prophecies. Ezekiel and Jeremiah with Daniel are the prophets of the time of the captivity, not certainly without points of contact and the surest elements of sympathy, but as diverse in their tone and style and objects as they were in outward lot, and in the circumstances which God employed to give form to their predictions. It was the place of Jeremiah to be left with the poor in the land, and afterward to be taken away with those who faithlessly fled to Egypt for a security they might have enjoyed in submission to their Babylonish master where they were and so he wept and groaned with the beloved but unworthy remnant to the last. It was for Daniel to be carried captive in the third year of Jehoiakim when Nebuchadnezzar verified the solemn warning to Hezekiah; though in Babylon God did not leave Himself without witness and showed where wisdom and His secret alone lay, even when He had raised up the Gentile empires and made His people Lo-ammi. Ezekiel was one of those carried into captivity in the subsequent reign of Jehoiakin, son of Jehoiakim, when the king of Babylon swept away all the better sort from the land and our prophet among the rest. There remained but one step lower, the calamitous reign of Zedekiah, that the anger of Jehovah might cast them all out from His presence because of manifold provocation and incurable rebellion. In view of this time, though also leaping over the times of the Gentiles of which Daniel treats, and dwelling richly on Israel's restoration at last, Ezekiel prophesied among the captives in Chaldea.

The holy energy, indignant zeal for God, and the moral authority of the prophet in reproving Israel, are strikingly apparent. Borne along, as in the majestic chariot of Jehovah's glory which he describes with the resistless might of its wheels below and wings above as the Spirit led, be nowhere flatters the people, but even in the captivity administers the sternest rebuke of the sins, not yet repented of, which had brought Israel so low. The roll spread before him and eaten by him was written within and without, lamentations and mourning and woe; and the prophet was to tell the rebellious people all Jehovah's words with his forehead made as an adamant, harder than flint. He, and he only save Daniel, it will be observed, has the title “Son of man,” excepting of course the Master but lowliest of servants, whose it was to appropriate every title of shame, suffering, and rejection, till the day come when they too shall be manifested with Him in glory.

Those who occupy themselves with the outer framework of the truth have not failed to notice the strong sense of clean and unclean, of Levitical sanctity, of temple imagery, of feasts and priests and sacrifices, so natural to one of the sacerdotal family. Of course these features are obvious and

indisputable; but far from a rigid imitation of the Pentateuch we shall find that God asserts His title to modify, omit, or add in that day, when his fellow-prophet Jeremiah explicitly declares (Jer. 31:31 - 34) that Jehovah will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, “not according to the covenant 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 a husband unto them, saith Jehovah! But this shall be the covenant that I make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith Jehovah, 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 Jehovah: for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity and will remember their sins no more.” No doubt this is true of the Christian meanwhile, for the blood of the new covenant is already shed and ours by faith; but it will be applied to Israel and Judah as such through divine mercy in that day, as the verses of Jeremiah which follow (35 - 40) most clearly show.

In vain then do Rabbins reason on the unchangeableness of the law given by Moses: their own prophets refute them. And so the famous D. Kimchi owns in his comment on our prophet, as Albo and Nachmanides acknowledge also against the absolute claim of immutability. Indeed Albo expressly refutes the use Maimonides makes of Deut. 12:22 to the contrary, showing that the real bearing of Moses' warning is to restrain the Israelites from arbitrarily or in self-will presuming to add to or take from the law. In no way did Moses mean to deny the authority to do so by a prophet, especially in view of the vast change to be introduced by the presence of a reigning Messiah and the new covenant. Ezekiel predicts some strikingly characteristic changes when Israel are restored and the theocracy is once more in force, the details of which will appear as we pass through the book.

Some have complained of our prophet's obscurity. But there is really no just ground, though the complaint is as old at least as Jerome, who designates the book “a labyrinth of the mysteries of God.” The supposed darkness is owing to two things in particular. First, how could such a subject as depicting the divine government be simple? This, if done at all, must embrace immense height, depth, and breadth; and if symbol be used, it must require a compass entirely unexampled for the ordinary demands of the creature. Secondly, the mass of men in Christendom since Origen have adopted his vicious system of “spiritual alchemy,” as Hooker terms it, which seeks to change the Jewish hopes into the predictions of proper Christian blessings. No wonder such men find a cloudy mistiness overhanging his pictures. Apply his visions aright, and they will in general be found remarkably explicit and full of force. It is absurd to suppose that details so minute and so circumstantial are mere literary drapery.

The structure of the book is evident. The first half consists of prophecies in strict chronological order before the final destruction of Jerusalem, when Zedekiah brought on himself the just punishment of his rebellion and perjury. (Chaps, 1 - 24). Ezekiel shows under magnificent symbols followed up by the plainest charges of sin the hopelessness of every effort to shake off the Babylonish yoke, which Zedekiah was essaying through Egypt. But no: it was Jehovah who was judging Jerusalem, He who dwelt between the cherubim though he might employ Nebuchadnezzar. Morally it could not be otherwise. The doom of the people, city, temple, king, and people are all shown in this first half. The second opens with a kind of parenthetic transition in

which he denounces seven objects of judgments among the nations surrounding or near the land, neglecting the time when these burdens were delivered, and grouping them in moral unity (chaps, 25 - 32); after which the prophet recurs distinctly to Israel, opens the individual ground on which God henceforth would deal with them (chap, 33), denounces first the guilty shepherds or princes (chap, 34) and then the hatred of mount Seir (chap, 35), next pledges first the moral (chap, 36) and then the corporate (chap, 37) restoration of all Israel, the overthrow of Gog and all his hosts (chaps, 38, 39), and finally the return of the glory of God, with the re-established sanctuary, ritual, and priesthood in the land, now indeed holy, as well as the re-arrangement of the twelve-tribed nationality under the prince; for the name of the city from that day shall be Jehovah-shammah. (Chaps, 40 - 48) Whether in judgment or in peaceful blessing, it is the day of Jehovah for the earth, not at all the foreshewn blessedness of Christianity as the allegorists teach. Such doctrine, whether patristic or puritan, is misleading and a delusion. These extremes meet in the common error which robs Christ and the church of that answer to His heavenly glory which it is the Holy Spirit's function to make good now here below, and which shall be enjoyed yet more, yea perfectly, when the Lord shall have come, changing our bodies into His likeness, and causing us to appear with Him in the heavenly glory of that day.

It is mere ignorance and malicious unbelief to call this Judaizing. For it is no question of the sort when we speak of the future prospects of Israel according to the prophets. Judaizing really means the mingling of Jewish elements with the gospel, and imposing them on Christians now. But the very point of the truth insisted on is, that Christians, caught up and glorified with Christ, will then have disappeared from the earth. Consequently it is the age to come, and another calling, when Israel shall be grafted into their own olive-tree. Hence, to look for the literal accomplishment of their visions is simply faith in the prophets, not Judaizing but rather a main safeguard against it; for we are thus kept the more from mingling their hopes with ours because we expect them to be fulfilled to Israel. The return from Babylon in no way met the closing prophecies; but this proves not the imperfection of Ezekiel's foreshadowing, but that his glorious anticipations are still to be fulfilled. The “all Israel” yet remains to be fulfilled when the Redeemer comes to Zion. Ezek. 20:33 is perfectly consistent with this; for Jeremiah and all the prophets teach the cutting off of apostates and rebels. Henderson therefore was not justified in saying that the discrepancies between the ancient temple and that described by Ezekiel are non-essential. They prove on the contrary that we must either give up the inspiration of the prophet or maintain that he predicts a return yet future with a new temple, and modified ritual, a fresh distribution of the land among the twelve tribes restored and blessed after their last enemies have been destroyed by divine judgments. No one supposes that he ceased to be a man when he became a prophet; but we are bound to believe that he was inspired so that his writings should give us God's word.

Chapter 50

Notes on Ezekiel 1-3

The circumstances in which Ezekiel was called to prophesy were new and strange. It was not in Judah nor in Israel, but among the captives by the river Chebar. Hence Jehovah was pleased to accompany His word to him with peculiarly vivid marks. To him only in the Old Testament is it said that the heavens were opened, and he saw visions of God. (Ver. 1.) But the opening of the heavens was in judgment of Israel's iniquity, not yet to express the Father's delight in the Son on earth, still less for the Christian to behold the Son of man in heaven.

Nor is the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity without special reason. There had been ample space for those left behind in the land to repent of their vain hopes as well as of their rebelliousness and their idolatry. They had had the warning of their brethren removed from the land: had they laid it to heart? Zedekiah “did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of Jehovah. And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God; but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the Jehovah God of Israel. Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much, after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of Jehovah which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Jehovah God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, till there was no remedy.”

It was in view of a final and yet more completely desolating stroke that Ezekiel was raised up to bear testimony. “On the fifth of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, the word of Jehovah came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of Jehovah was there upon him. And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire enfolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.” (Ver. 2 - 5.)

Had this been all, it had been much to rebuke the Jewish pride which counted God so bound to their race and land, that they never weighed His threat of the change in progress for Israel till it came. Alas! they realize it not till, this day, but, refusing to hear of His judgment of their sins, they would fain cheat themselves into the delusion that their dispersion is a mission to teach the Gentiles that God is the God of Israel rather than that He has for thousands of years refused to be called their God because of their idolatry crowned by the rejection of the Messiah and the gospel. A fresh storm-cloud of divine indignation was about to burst on Judea out of the north, that is, from Babylon.

But there is much more. “Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.” (Ver. 5.) there could be any doubt

left on the mind of him who reads this account, chapter 10. distinctly shows that the living creatures are the cherubim. They are here, not two like the figures made out of the ends of the pure and beaten gold which formed the mercy-seat where God sat as on a throne, but four in relation (I presume) to the creature. The God of Israel, who dwelt between the cherubim on the ark, was in the midst of His people and approached by blood according to divine righteousness, which was guarded by the witness of His judicial authority. Ezekiel was given to behold His judgments in providence from without. He would judge His guilty people by Babylon as His instrument. Here therefore it is fire (ver. 5) which characterizes the display of His destructive judgment as the God of heaven.

It would be almost an endless genealogy, and certainly to little edification, if one set out in detail the strange misconception of these symbols which have prevailed among men both Jews and Christians. In the former this is not surprising; for the unbelief which wrought the evils which the prophet denounced still works the same stiff-necked opposition to the truth. “This generation” is not passed away, nor will it till all that is predicted be fulfilled. But Christians are far less excusable. Having the true light they ought to see; but they only see aright, as the eye is single. If Christ's glory had been before them, not the church's (that is, their own), they would have made room for His relation to others as well as to themselves. They need not deny the old, because they believe the new. Had the national judgment of Israel been seen at the beginning of the prophecy, and their restoration at the end, the ancient fathers and the modern divines could not have dreamed of interpreting the four cherubim as the evangelists, or as a description of Christ's redemption work, or of God's glory in the church, or as the four seasons of the year or the four quarters of the globe, or the four cardinal virtues or the four passions of the soul, or the four faculties of the mind, or whatever other conjectures men have indulged in. A more plausible but very imperfect view is that of Calvin who takes them as angels, and four in relation to the various questions of the world, each with four heads, angelic virtue being thus proved to reside in all, and God shown to work not only in man and other animals but throughout inanimate things. He takes it therefore as a vision of God's empire administered by angels everywhere, all creatures being so impelled as if joined with the angels and as if the angels comprehended within themselves all elements in all parts of the world.

As to the four cherubs then, they were composite figures. “And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings” were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.” (Ver. 6 - 9.) The likeness of a man was theirs, though each had four faces and four wings (ver. 6); but the feet were straight, the sole like that of a calf's foot, and the face of an ox answering to that of a cherub. (Ver. 7; compare also chap. 10: 14.) Activity, aptness in doing, seems represented by the hands of a man; swiftness of execution from above in the wings, without a moment's deviation from the object in hand, and with four sides so as to move in all directions. The intimation of verse 10 I take to be that in front the face of a man was seen, and that of an eagle behind, with a lion's face to the right and an ox's or steer's to the left. These compose the symbolical supports of the throne, being the heads of the creatures preserved in the ark from the flood; man setting forth intelligence, the lion strength, the ox patience or stability, and the eagle

rapidity of execution, the attributes of God or the qualities of His judgments. “As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. And they went every one straightforward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.” (Ver. 10 - 14.) They went forward and returned like a flash of lightning.

Nor do we hear only of wings, but of wheels also. “Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went. As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.” (Ver. 15 - 21.) It is the exact reverse of circumstances left to blind chance. Contrariwise, whatever the revolutions or changes among men, all is wittingly guided where it might be least expected. The instruments of the providential government, below the firmament or expanse, were completely in accord with what was above: and over this was the likeness of a throne; and above all the likeness of a man exercising executory judgment, though with the unfailing pledge of mercy to an evil world.

Thus the throne of God was no longer in Israel, but the God of heaven was pleased and about to use the Gentiles to do His will in punishing guilty Jerusalem. It is His throne from heaven, not yet His throne in heaven, as in Rev. 4 where we have no wheels, but six wings to each. The living creatures there are accordingly not cherubim only but seraphim, crying Holy, holy, holy, and the whole creation is taken up under His dispensational titles, save what is distinctively millennial. Hence they are not the mere basis of God's throne in judging the Jew, providentially through the Gentile, but associated and identified with the throne of Him who judges all according to His nature. The world comes under His dealings, though above all apostate Jews and Gentiles, all “that dwell on the earth.” The living creatures are in the circle of the throne and in its midst, no longer under it as in Ezekiel.

Hence we may easily understand that by the cherubim is set forth God's judicial executive, to whomsoever entrusted and in whatever circumstances displayed. There is a difference between that which was seen after man's fall, and when God called for the mercy-seat. So the sight vouchsafed to Ezekiel on earth was not the same as John beheld when in the Spirit he passed through the door opened in heaven. But in all there is the common principle, while each is modified exactly by divine wisdom according to the case and aim before Him, which we can learn only by

the Spirit from His word which has for its object His various glory in Christ.

The Supreme who directed all was revealed in the appearance of a man and so in relation to men. His attributes here made known are governmental, and applied by instruments on earth according to a providence which overlooks nothing. There is no finer refutation of heathen darkness or of Jewish narrowness than this symbolical representation of the divine ways with Israel as seen in Chaldea. Yet is it all positive truth with the simple effect of manifesting the glory of God as He was then pleased to deal, and as He will when He undertakes the renewed blessing of repentant Israel to the joy of all the earth. How vain in that day will Israel feel to have been their unbelief throughout the day of grace when they rejected Jehovah-Messiah because He became man in accomplishment of Isa. 7, and in accordance with His appearance here who, unseen of the world but announced to deaf and blind Israel, lets the believer know that He guided the springs of every movement here below to His glory at the time when He ceased to own what He once designated “the throne of Jehovah” in Zion. Ear from governing in and by Israel, His judgment is seen to be directed against them by the Gentile as His servant, however unconsciously.

The new attitude is remarkably exemplified in another way by the title God gives to the prophet, fallen on his face, in chapter 2, and thenceforward. For when the voice spoke from the likeness of the glory of Jehovah, the words were, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. So was Daniel styled once (chap. 8: 17), but Ezekiel more than a hundred times. It is the title Jesus appropriated as the rejected Messiah who should suffer, be exalted, and return in glory as the Son of man. His servants have the same title, as identified with the glory of God who now declares Himself outside Israel and even judging them by the Gentiles.

Strengthened by the Spirit, the prophet receives his mission to the children of Israel, though, yea because, they had rejected God— “to rebellious Gentiles, Goyim [for such they really were in truth, no better than heathen morally and much worse in guilt], that have rebelled against me; they and their fathers have transgressed against me unto this very day. And the children are hard of face and stiff of heart. I send thee to them, and thou shalt say to them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear (for they are a rebellious house), shall yet know that a prophet hath been among them.” (Ver. 3 - 5.)

Therefore the prophet was commanded (ver. 6, 7) not to fear them, or their words, or their looks, however rebellious they might be, but the rather to speak Jehovah's words to them whether they might hear or forbear, for they were rebellious (or most rebellious).

Further, Ezekiel is cautioned himself not to be rebellious like them, but to open his mouth and eat what God gives him. (Ver. 8.) Thereon a hand was extended, and in it a roll of a book, which He spread before the prophet, written on the face and on the back, fully and flowing over; and there was written in it lamentations, mourning and woe. (Ver. 9,10.) Such was the character of his earlier testimony. We shall see how grace triumphs to God's glory in the end.

In chapter 3 this is followed up. The eaten roll proves sweet as honey. The prophet was sent to Israel, with the certainty that they would not hear, impudent and hard-hearted as they were, but confronted by the prophet with a forehead of adamant. (Ver. 1 - 9.) Receiving God's word in his heart, he was to go with a Thus saith Jehovah. (Ver. 10, 11.) Then the Spirit took him up with the noise of the glory accompanying, and after seven days among the captives at Tel-abib, the word

came that Jehovah made him a watchman to Israel with the most solemn charge and responsibility to be faithful at his peril. It was no longer a question of the nation but of individual fidelity. (Ver. 12 - 21.) The chapter closes with a final command, when he sees the glory again on the plain as before by the Chebar. He was to be a prisoner in his house, with his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth, for they were rebellious. But God would also open his mouth with a solemn call to hear; but they were rebellious.

Notes on Ezekiel 4-7

Following up the call in the close of the last chapter (ver. 22-27), the Lord directs the prophet to set forth the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans: “Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and portray upon it the city, even Jerusalem: and lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about. Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.” (Ver. 1-3.) A still more remarkable command is next given. “Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon if thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year. Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it. And, behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou hast ended the days of thy siege.” (Ver. 4-8.)

It is well known that this has given rise to much debate and difference of judgment. First, the reading of most MSS. of the Septuagint misled the early fathers, who read the more common Greek version, as we see for instance in Theodoret; and the same error appears in the Vulgate, though Jerome well knew that there is no doubt as to the Hebrew, followed by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. Next the reckoning even of Jerome is from the ruin of the revolted house of Israel in the reign of Pekah, when the king of Assyria carried off the ten tribes to the east. But I do not doubt that their view is sounder who count the three hundred and ninety years of Israel from Jeroboam, to whom Ahijah announced from Jehovah the gift of the ten tribes rent out of the hand of Solomon, and that the forty years of Judah point to the reign of Solomon himself, which really determined the ruin even of that most favored portion of the people, little as man might see under the wealth and wisdom of the king the results of the idolatry then practiced. “They have forsaken me,” was the message of the prophet in that day, “and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon; and have not walked in my ways to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father.” Thus the seed of David were to be for this afflicted, as they have been, but not forever. But if a brighter day awaits them, a long night of darkness first, and the coldest hour before the dawn; for they have added to their idolatry the still graver wickedness of rejecting their Messiah and of opposing the gospel that goes out to the Gentiles, so that wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. It seems no real obstacle to this that the house of Israel as a distinctive title of the ten tribes were carried off long before the termination of the period; because it is after the habitual manner of Ezekiel, however he may distinguish here as elsewhere, to embrace the whole nation under that name. Judah did not use for God's glory the

long and peaceful and prosperous reign of him who in the midst of unexampled benefits turned away his heart after other gods; and the sentence of Lo-ammi was only executed when that portion of the elect nation which clave to the house of David, and even the last king who reigned of that house, by their treachery to Jehovah justified the backsliding tribes who had long before been swept away from the land.

How solemn is the testimony God renders to man viewed in his responsibility to walk according to the light given! It is not only that he departs farther and farther from God, but that he breaks down from the first; while every fresh means of recall but serves to prove his thorough alienation in heart and will. Thus no flesh can glory in His presence. May we glory in the Lord! Not the first man, but the Second has glorified God. Justly therefore has God glorified the Son of man in Himself, and this straightway after the cross.

Here it is another question. The prophet must set forth in his own person the degradation as well as the judgment impending because of the iniquity of the people. Hence another sign follows. “Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof. And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it. Thou shalt drink water also by measure, the sixth part of an hin: from time to time shalt thou drink. And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung which cometh out of man, in their sight. And Jehovah said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them. Then said I, Ah Lord Jehovah! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came abominable flesh into my mouth. Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith. Moreover be said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment; that they may want bread and water, and be astonied one with another, and consume away for their iniquity.” (Ver. 9-17.) In his measure Ezekiel is to taste the condition of Israel under the righteous dealings of God, not because he was personally out of divine favor, but on the contrary because he was near enough to God to enter into the reality of their wretchedness, though only the Son of man could in grace go down into its depths and take it up perfectly and suffer to the full, yea far beyond all that ever was or can be their portion. Jesus in His zeal for God and love for His people alone could bear the burden, whether in government or in atonement; but for both the glory of His person fitted Him without abating one jot of what was due to God, and with the deepest results of blessing, as for us now, so for the godly Jew in the latter day. Never did He shield Himself, as Ezekiel does here, from an adequate taste of the ruin-state of Israel; never did He deprecate save, if possible, that cup of unutterable woe which it was His alone to drink, but drink it He did to the dregs that grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Chapter 5 adds fresh particulars of unsparing and destructive judgment; for the preceding chapter had not gone beyond the Chaldean siege of Jerusalem with its attendant though most distressing miseries.

“And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, a barber's razor be taken to thee, and cause it to pass upon thy head and upon thy beard, and take to thee weighing balances, and divide the hair. Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them. Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts. Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.” (Ver. 1 -4.) The application is certain and immediate, being furnished in the following words of the prophet: “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her. And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them.” (Ver. 5, 6.)

The form in which the God of Israel communicated the dismal lot and unsparing destruction about to fall on the Jews is the more impressive, because both in the manner in which the prophet was ordered to bake his bread and to shave off his hair, there was a departure from ceremonial in a way which could not be justified otherwise than by the authority of God Himself or the moral exigencies of His people. Here no doubt it could be, though assuredly Ezekiel as a priest would feel all deeply. The converse of this one has in the vision of Simon Peter where we see the deeply rooted prejudices of the Jew though in a trance, but overruled of God who would save from among the Gentiles and bring about communion with such of Israel as believed. In our prophecy it is not grace going out to meet and welcome and bless the heathen by proclaiming to them the only Savior, but judgment falling on Jerusalem and this persistently and without relenting-a strange tale for Israel to hear and believe. For inverses hitherto had been but temporary chastenings, and pity's stream kept ever flowing down its accustomed bed, and the mass of Israelites fondly hoped that so it must be, and that God at least was bound to them, though well they knew how often and habitually the people dishonored Him. Let them see and hear from the abased prophet what was very soon to be fearfully realized according to his message from Jehovah. It was the high and central position of Israel, of Jerusalem above all, among the peoples and lands round about which made their rebellion and idolatry so grievous, so impossible to be overlooked or spared more.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that are round about you, and you have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations. And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thy abominations. Therefore the fathers shall eat their sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers: and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds. Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity. A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.” (Ver. 7-12.)

We clearly see then the divine dealing. A third was to perish by plague and famine inside the besieged city; a third to fall by the sword round about Jerusalem; and the remaining third to be scattered to all the winds with a sword drawn after them by God. Here too we see how those of Jerusalem under the circumstances represent “all the house of Israel,” no account being taken in this place of the ten tribes already arrived to the East. The defilement of Jehovah's sanctuary by heathen abominations brought in by kings and priests and people made Jerusalem intolerable.

“Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I Jehovah have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them. Moreover I will make thee waste, and a reproach among the nations that are round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by.” (Ver. 13, 14.) Their judgment should be in the sight of those nations who had beheld their infidelity to the true God, their God. “So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment unto the nations that are round about thee, when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I Jehovah have spoken it.” (Ver. 15.) The heathen themselves were astonished; for they had no notion of a national deity so dealing with the people who professed that worship. “When I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famine, which shall be for their destruction, and which I will send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread: so will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I Jehovah have spoken it.” (Ver. 16, 17.)

Chapter 6 shows that God takes account of all the scenes of their idolatrous evil throughout the land, though we have seen Jerusalem to have a bad pre-eminence. Hence Ezekiel is here commanded to look toward “the mountains of Israel.” “And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord Jehovah: Thus saith the Lord Jehovah to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and 1 will destroy your high places. And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. And I will lay the dead carcases of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.” (Ver. 1 - 7.) Thus Jehovah would wake up the sword to destroy Israel throughout the land, who had abandoned Him for heathen gods which could not shield from, but assuredly expose to, destruction. Devotees, and altars, and images should all perish, idolaters before their idols, and their bones upon their altars: so complete the discomfiture, and so evident its ground.

Nevertheless will Jehovah in judgment remember mercy. “Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries. And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations. And they shall know that I am Jehovah,

and that I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them." (Ver. 8 - 10.) But in verse 9 it would seem that the true meaning is, "when I shall have broken their whorish heart which had departed from me, and their eyes," &c. The verb has not a passive but the reflexive sense of "breaking for myself." What probably led to the rendering preferred" in the Authorized Version was the difficulty of such a phrase with the "eyes." This is sought to be softened by the Jewish version of Mr. Leeser, who translates it, "even with their eyes." But this can hardly stand. Heart and eyes are broken together in repentance before God.

Here again Ezekiel is called to mark with characteristic action the sure divine judgment of Israel's abominations. The very land should become more waste and desolate than the desert in all their dwelling places. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! for they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence. He that is afar off shall die of the pestilence; and he that is near shall fall by the sword; and he that remaineth and is besieged shall die by the famine: thus will I accomplish my fury upon them. Then shall ye know that I am Jehovah, when their slain men shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savor to all their idols. So will I stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate, yea, more desolate than the wilderness toward Diblath, in all their habitations: and they shall know that I am Jehovah." (Ver. 11 - 14.)

Chapter 7 closes this preliminary strain, or cluster of strains, of coming woe. It is marked by comprehensiveness indeed; but instead of vagueness there is every mark of rapidity in the short, strange, abrupt style in which the Spirit proclaims with frequent and emphatic repetitions an end to the land of Israel as that which was just at hand. "And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto the land of Israel; An end, the end, is come upon the four corners of the land. Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come. An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come. The mourning is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come, the day of trouble is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains. Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah that smiteth." (Ver. 1 - 9.)

Next we see that not only do "the four corners of the land" come under the distinct and decisive dealing of Jehovah, but in this case the results are complete and overwhelming. There is no recovery possible as far as man can see or say. "Behold the day, behold, it is come: the morning is gone forth; the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded. Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness: none of them shall remain, nor of their multitude, nor of any of theirs: neither shall there be wailing for them." (Ver. 10, 11.) The ordinary ways and feelings of men disappear. (Ver. 12.) Wrath is on all the multitude. The special hopes of an Israelite are broken, for the jubilee too

vanishes, and with it all prospect of recovery. (Ver. 13.) How could idols help him? The sound of the trumpet which calls on man, which to a Jew should be the assurance of God's hearing and appearing on their behalf as usual, is wholly unavailing; for Jehovah's wrath is upon all the multitude. (Ver. 14.) They are thus seen shut up within concentric circles of devouring ruin. (Ver. 15 - 18.) God's prophet announces, terrible to think, stroke upon stroke, from God against His people, enfeebled before by the sense of guilt. In the day of their calamity they are forced to feel that their gods are vanity, nothing but “silver and gold,” and “they shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be as uncleanness.” “Their silver and gold” (adds the prophet most impressively) “shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of Jehovah; they shall not satisfy their souls nor fill their bowels, because it was the stumbling block of their iniquity.”

But had not God one place chosen to be His dwelling place and rest? Alas 1 their worst evil manifested itself against Him there. Their glory was their shame. “As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty: but they made the images of their abominations and of their detestable things therein: therefore have I set it far from them. And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall pollute it. My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute my secret place: for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it.” (Ver. 20 - 22.)

Lastly the prophet is bid to make the chains, symbolic of the slavery in store for those not cut off, and this too that the vilest of Gentiles should take possession of their houses, destruction coming, and peace sought in vain, but mishap on mishap, and rumor upon rumor, and no vision from the prophet, but the law perishing from the priest and counsel from the ciders. The king mourning, the prince clothed with the perplexity of grief, and the hands of the people of the land shaking: such is the picture (ver. 23 - 27) of appalling trouble, and fulfilled to the letter, as we know. “Because of their way will I do unto them, and according to their judgments will I judge them; and they shall know that I am Jehovah.” Such is the conclusion of the solemn preliminary warning.

Chapter 52

Notes on Ezekiel 8-9

It is evident that chapters 8-9. really form the parts, according to the chapters, of one connected vision. First, the excessive idolatry of Judah in Jerusalem is set forth, beginning with the house of God; secondly, destruction is ordered of God for all left in the city, save a marked remnant of those that sighed and cried for all the abominations done there, a destruction expressly beginning at Jehovah's sanctuary; thirdly, the part played by the cherubim and other agents of divine judgment, ere the glory of Jehovah slowly takes each step of departure; and fourthly, the denunciation of woes on the princes and the people yet left, with assurance to the righteous of a sanctuary in Jehovah Himself where there was no other in the heathen lands of their dispersion, and of final mercy in gathering them back while all else must perish, the glory retiring from the city to the Mount of Olives. From chapter 12 to 19 inclusive are various connected circumstances and expositions of His ways on God's part.

“And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell there upon me. Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire; from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the color of amber. And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the imago of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.” (Ver. 1-3.)

The year is the next after that of the first vision: compare chapter 1:2. The reckoning is from the captivity of Jehoiachin. The prophet here had a fresh dealing of God while the elders of Judah sat before him. It was in the Spirit, not in bodily presence, that he was conveyed to Jerusalem, “in the vision of God” where he beheld at the door of the inner gate looking northward (that is, to Chaldea), the seat or pedestal of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy. “And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there according to the vision that I saw in the plain. Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and, behold, northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry. He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary?” We are not told distinctly what the name of the idol was, whether Baal or Ash-toreth. Compare 2 Kings 21, 2 Chron. 33 It was certainly an idol which defied the God of Israel and courted the homage of all who entered the temple. So bent was Judah on affronting Jehovah and compel ling morally the accomplishment of His threat to abandon His house. And here is the force of the vision of His glory in this connection: Jehovah had not yet definitively left, and is pleased to justify His solemn procedure with His people.

“But turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations. And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall. Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig

now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door. And he said unto me, Go in, and, behold, the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about." It is a scene of still more intimate and debasing idolatry, a reproduction of the degradations of Egypt; and bowing down to these, not the dregs but the rulers of the people! "And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand: and a thick cloud of incense went up." God had of old appointed seventy judges; and one of their most momentous functions was to deal with idol-worship. Here as many are found, caught we may say, in the very act of priestly devotion to the representation of serpents and abominable beasts (or cattle) and all dung-gods. Shaphan was the scribe who read the book of the law to the tender-hearted Josiah: what an ominous change in Judah that now Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan stood in the midst of the seventy idolatrous elders!

Nor was this all. "Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, Jehovah seeth us not; Jehovah hath forsaken the earth." They had ceased even to hold the truth in unrighteousness, bad as this may be; they had sunk into the lower depth of denying the necessary attributes of God, into Jewish apostasy, saying, "Jehovah seeth us not, Jehovah hath forsaken the earth."

"He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of Jehovah's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz." Here it is not Syrian nor Egyptian idolatries, but Phoenician, and of the most grossly demoralizing character. It was apparently what the Greeks adopted under the fable of Adonis and Aphrodite.

But there remains worse behind, because both of the place and of the persons engaged in the adoration of the sun, the great object of Sabian and subsequently Persian idolatry. "Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of Jehovah's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of Jehovah, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of Jehovah, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east." The prophet particularly notes their number answering to the courses of priesthood and the high priest, with their backs toward Jehovah's temple, and their faces toward the east.

There is no sufficient reason, in my opinion, to depart from the ordinary rendering of verse 17, and to change ■■■■■■■■ from "branch" into song; nor need we heed the Rabbinical notion that the text is to be reckoned among the Tikkun Sopherim, the original reading being supposed to mean "to my [instead of 'their'] nose." The LXX seem to have so read, at least they render it α■το■ ■ς μυκτηρ■ζοντες, "they are as scorners." But the Hebrew MSS support the common text which makes an excellent and consistent sense. "Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare,

neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them." Punishment to the uttermost must befall the Jews without mercy: Jehovah Himself must sec to it.

Chapter 9 gives us the divine preparations and plan for executing judgment on all, save the reserved remnant, in Jerusalem. "And he called also in my ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from, the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side." The judgment is still from the north; the angelic executioners stand beside the brazen altar, the expression of divine requirement and judgment on the earth. The glory quits its wonted seat. Jerusalem is devoted to the vengeance of Jehovah. "Jehovah said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity; slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house." (Ver. 4 - 6.) Grief is the fruit of communion with God in a day of evil. Those who felt such holy sorrow are expressly and conclusively exempt from the destroyers. All others must perish, old and young, maids, little ones, women; but not any one on whom is the mark. "And begin at my sanctuary." Compare 1 Peter 4. What is nearest to the Lord has the deepest responsibility.

But not content with beginning at the ancient men who were before the house, the word to the avengers was, "Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city. And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord God! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?" No room was left for intercession to prevail. "Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverse-ness: for they say, Jehovah hath forsaken the earth, and Jehovah seeth not. And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head." (Ver. 9, 10.)

The awful scene is made more impressive still by the report of the task completed. "And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me." (Ver. 11.)

Chapter 53

Notes on Ezekiel 10-11

The vision which follows completes the picture of judgment begun in chapters 8, 9. While it recalls that which the prophet first beheld among the captives at Chebar, it has certain modifications which one might expect from the fact that, as he sat with the elders of Judah before him, he was brought by the Spirit in the visions of God to Jerusalem, now in its day of visitation for its uncleanness of flesh and spirit, beginning with the sanctuary but taking cognizance of the city throughout, those only excepted who sighed and cried for all the abominations done in the midst. If it was a solemn sight for the captive prophet to see the glory of God in a heathen land, it was no less significant to see it arrayed in vengeance against the city whereon His eyes and His heart are perpetually.

“Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne. And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city. And he went in my sight. Now the cherubim stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court.” (Ver. 1 - 3.) Thus from Him who is not even named, but who fills the throne above, came the command intimating consuming judgment for the city; and he who was commissioned to mark the righteous for exemption is now told to fill his hand with coals of fire from between the cherubim and to scatter them over Jerusalem. The cloud of Jehovah's presence was there; but it afforded no shelter, no direction now to the people who had abandoned all care for His will and preferred a calf or a dung-god to the Eternal of Israel. How changed from the day when Jehovah went before them, or filled the sanctuary!

“Then the glory of Jehovah went up from the cherub over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of Jehovah's glory. And the sound of the cherubim's wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh.” (Ver. 4, 5.) The glory was departing, not coming to dwell there. Jehovah is leaving the seat which He was pleased to choose—not forever indeed, for He has chosen it forever. But meanwhile He is morally driven away by the iniquities and apostacy of His own people. The prophecy of Ezekiel is as explicit that He will return and dwell there, never more to quit His home as long as the earth lasts, for His people will then enjoy the rest of God under Messiah and the new covenant. But as David was forced to say in his last words that his house was not so with God, in like manner does our prophet here tell in mysterious symbols the rupture of the ties between God and Israel through the solemn signs of their judgment. In every way did He make it conspicuous to the prophet, if peradventure they might hear and live, arrested by the strange sights and sounds he was given to recount from the Lord. Whatever He might do at other times, it was unmistakably Jehovah who directed the sweeping destruction of His own city and sanctuary. Thus the faith of the believer would be strengthened by the dealings which cleared the ground of every tree which He had not planted.

Next we have the execution of the command in the vision, that all might be rendered the more impressive and sure to such as flattered themselves that, whatever the sharp lessons and chastenings of Jehovah, it could not be that He would disown Israel, and that, whatever the temporary successes of the foe, the land and the city and the temple must prove an unfailing bulwark against permanent advantage over the chosen people. So readily does man forget the immutable principles of God's moral being and turn to his own ease and honor what God could only do for the maintenance of truth and righteousness to His own glory. “And it came to pass, that when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubim; then he went in, and stood beside the wheels. And one cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubim unto the fire that was between the cherubim, and took thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was clothed with linen: who took it, and went out. And there appeared in the cherubim the form of a man's hand under their wings. And when I looked, behold, the four wheels by the cherubim, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: and the appearance of the wheels was as the color of a beryl stone. And as for their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it; they turned not as they went. And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about, even the wheels that they four had. As for the wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel. And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. And the cherubim were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar. And when the cherubim went, the wheels went by them: and when the cherubim lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also turned not from beside them. When they stood, these stood; and when they were lifted up, these lifted up themselves also: for the spirit of the living creature was in them.” (Ver. 6 - 17.) It is plain that, if the glory seen by the river Chebar returned, so emphatically identified in verses 15, 20, 22, it was but passingly and for the sad task both of sealing the judgment and of marking the abandonment of Israel as under the law and now apostate from God. The symbol of divine government in providence was there, but it took not its seat in the holiest. It stood at the threshold, and the court was full of the brightness of Jehovah's glory, but there was no entrance within. It was a judicial visitation, in obedience to His behests who from above controlled every movement. Wrath was gone out against Jerusalem. He it was who directed all, not the dumb idols which carried away the Gentiles, having mouths but they speak not, having eyes and hands and ears but they hear not nor see nor handle, as vain as those who trust in them against God in the heavens who hath done whatsoever He hath pleased.

There are some features of difference from the earliest manifestation. Not that there is any severance of the wheels from the cherubic figures, or the least divergence from common action, or in the end of their complicated movements. All pervading intelligence is yet more asserted of the whole body, backs, hands, wings, wheels. “As for the wheels it was called in my hearing, Galgal” [wheel, or roll, roll]. In verse 18 we see a move of the gravest significance: “Then the glory of Jehovah departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of Jehovah's house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. This is the living creature that I

saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubim. Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings. And the likeness of their faces was the same faces which I saw by the river of Chebar, their appearances and themselves: they went every one straight forward." (Ver. 18 - 22.) There might be a lingering over the east gate, but the glory was departing.

This is entirely confirmed by chapter 11 which completes this portion of the prophecy. In the vision of Jehovah Ezekiel is given to behold the excessive and scoffing presumption of the leaders in Jerusalem who counseled the king Zedekiah to his and their ruin in flat contradiction of Jehovah's message by Jeremiah, whose style and imagery they seem to have adopted to suit their own purpose.

"Moreover the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of Jehovah's house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. Then said he unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city: which say, It is not near; let us build houses: this city is the caldron, and we be the flesh. Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man. And the Spirit of Jehovah fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith Jehovah; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them. Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they are the flesh, and this city is the caldron: but I will bring you forth out of the midst of it, Ye have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will bring you out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you. Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. This city shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; but I will judge you in the border of Israel: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah: for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that are round about you." (Ver. 1 - 12.)

There appears no sufficient reason in the similarity of the number twenty-five for identifying the scoffers here described with the sun-worshippers between the porch and the altar of chapter viii. Here the leaders at least were princes of the people, not of the sanctuary or of the priests. As the previous scene set forth the religious apostacy, so this the audacity and infidelity of their civil chiefs, though in the door of the gate of Jehovah's house. They were the evil counselors who thwarted His word through the prophet to Zedekiah. Jeremiah exhorted the Jews in Jerusalem to submission under the king of Babylon, and the captives to build houses and plant gardens and raise up families in their exile, praying for the peace of the city, till the seventy years were accomplished and a remnant should return to Jerusalem. The false prophets predicted smooth things both at home and abroad, in every way fomenting rebellion under the color of patriotism and pretending Jehovah's name while encouraging to insubjection under His humbling hand.

Verse 3 is somewhat obscure and has given occasion to much difference of version and interpretation in detail, while the general truth seems plain enough. In the Septuagint it is taken interrogatively: "Have not the houses been newly built?" So nearly the Vulgate. Gesenius and Ewald follow in somewhat similar style: "Is it not near, the building of houses?" Rosenmuller, De

Wette, and Young, on the contrary, take it thus: “It is not near to build houses;” that is, the time of peace for such work is far off, meaning that they were resolved to resist the Chaldeans to the last, spite of the prophet's warning. Luther and Diodati are substantially like the Authorized Bible; and so too the modern translation of Leeser as well as of Henderson.

Certain it is that they set themselves against the true prophets and even turned the figure of Jeremiah into derision by making it a phrase favorable to their own policy. Therefore the marked emphasis with which Ezekiel was called on to prophesy against them, the Spirit of Jehovah being said to fall upon him, with a renewed charge to speak in Jehovah's name, for their secrets were out in His light. And Jehovah after recounting their murderous doings retorts on them their proverb; only it was their slain that were the flesh and the city the caldron, while they themselves are told to get out, but not to escape, as they expected. Jehovah would bring on them the dreaded sword, and this outside the city to which they were so closely cleaving, for they should be delivered into the hand of strangers for judgment. Nay, Jehovah solemnly declares that He would judge them on the boundary of Israel, and they should know that He is Jehovah. Thus the city should not be to them for a caldron, nor they flesh in its midst, but judged by Jehovah at the borders, then forced to feel in whose statutes they had not walked, and whose judgments they had not executed, but rather acting according to those of the nations around.

Thereon, as Ezekiel prophesied, Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died (ver. 13, 14), which drew out the prophet into sorrow and intercession for the remnant. For the captive loved the men, scornful though they might be, who dwelt in Jerusalem. On this the word of Jehovah impresses on him that his brethren emphatically, the men of his relationship, “yea the whole house of Israel,” were objects of contempt to the haughty inhabitants of Jerusalem who assumed the most self-complacent airs because they were still in the city of solemnities, as against their brethren in captivity. (Ver. 15.) “Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord Jehovah.” (Ver. 16 - 21.)

In a day of sin and ruin it is ever thus. Those who boast in antiquity and order and succession and rule as a lineal and exclusive possession are but ripening for divine judgment; while the most decried and despised are such as have the truth and blessing in circumstances of humiliation and weakness, as Jehovah here promised to be a little sanctuary to the scattered Jews in the countries whither they came; and that they should be gathered from the peoples and have the land given them; and this too with one heart and a new spirit, the heart of stone being supplanted by one of flesh in order to obedient ways and true recognition of and by God, while the obdurate idolaters should meet with the due reward of their deeds.

“Then did the cherubim lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of Jehovah went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.” (Ver. 22, 23.) Then there is a farther removal of the divine glory, not from the temple only but from Jerusalem. It went up from the midst of the city and stood on mount Olivet. “Then the Spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me. Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that Jehovah had showed me.” (Ver. 24, 25.) It reminds one of Matt. 28 where the risen Jesus is seen on a mountain of Galilee, giving His great commission to the disciples as to all the nations, without saying a word about His ascension to heaven. It is Jerusalem left aside indeed, a remnant sent out by the Lord resuming His Galilean place in resurrection, the beautiful pledge of His return spite of present rejection. The curtain drops over the Shechinah when it reaches Olivet, till we hear of its reappearance in the last chapters for the latter day. Compare also Zech. 14:4 with Acts 1:9 - 12.

The prophet brought back in Spirit, though all the while in his own home with the elders before him in bodily presence, declares the awful scenes he was given to behold: what consolation for the captives!

Notes on Ezekiel 12

After the introductory cluster of visions the prophet was given to impress on the people the certainty of the approaching and more complete downfall of all their hopes for the present; for to fond and vain expectations clung not only the haughty remnant in the land but even many of the captives on the Chebar.

“And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, who have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not; for they are a rebellions house. Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee articles for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house. Then shalt thou bring forth thine articles by day in their sight, as articles for removing: and thou shalt go forth at even in their sight, as they that go forth into captivity. Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby. In their sight shalt thou bear it upon thy shoulders, and carry it forth in the twilight: thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the ground: for I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel.” (Ver. 1 - 6.) It was a symbolical representation that the land should be swept once more with the besom of destruction, instead of the speedy return and deliverance for which the mass of the Jews looked spite of every divine assurance to the contrary.

Hence we see that Jehovah in a lively way would here fix on the conscience of the captives the folly of indulging in such dreams. For alas! they were rebellious, yea, the rebellious house. Moses had reproached them in his song as a perverse and crooked and very froward generation, children in whom was no faith; and David in the ascension psalm (68.) had characterized them as “the rebellious.” If Ezekiel hears and has to repeat the divine sentence to the same effect, it is no new thing, but rather the manifestation, when judgment was in course of execution, that the old evil was rampant, which neither the fresh vigor of youth had extirpated, nor their national prime and power. It was no mere rising, or bright spot, but an active, deep, and old plague of leprosy. “And I did so as I was commanded: I brought forth my articles by day, as articles for captivity, and in the even I digged through the wall with mine hand; I brought it forth in the twilight, and I bare it upon my shoulder in their sight.” (Ver. 7.)

The next message explains all plainly and fully. “And in the morning came the word of Jehovah unto me, saying, Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, What doest thou? Say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; This burden concerneth the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel that are among them. Say, I am your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: they shall remove and go into captivity. And the prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth: they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face, that he see not the ground with his eyes. My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there. And I will scatter toward every wind all that are about him to help him, and all his bands; and I will draw out

the sword after them. And they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries. But I will leave a few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come; and they shall know that I am Jehovah." (Ver. 8 - 16.) It is assumed that an action, so strange on the prophet's part as preparing for departure by day and taking it muffled in the darkness of night, would arouse the Jews; and here was the answer he must give. The prince in Jerusalem, Zedekiah, and all the house of Israel there, were intended by this "burden" or "oracle." And very strikingly were both this prediction and Jeremiah's fulfilled to the letter. Josephus says that the king fancying a contradiction made up his mind to believe neither. Certain it is that Zedekiah did not escape the Chaldeans, but was delivered into the hands of the Babylonian king, and spoke to him mouth to mouth, and his eyes beheld his eyes; equally certain that after being taken in a snare he was brought to Babylon, and yet did not see it though he died there. The covering of the prophet's face so that he should not see the ground was but a shadow of the stern reality. How solemn and humiliating for Jehovah's people to know that He is Jehovah by His desolating and dispersing judgments! Yet even this would He turn to account, leaving a few from this judgment to declare all their abominations among the heathen; for who could so gravely bear witness against idolatry as those that had thus suffered through yielding to the snare?

Next, Ezekiel was to be a representative man to the people of the land in partaking of bread and water with every token of alarm. "And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with carefulness; and say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the land of Israel; They shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment, that her land may be desolate from all that is therein, because of the violence of all them that dwell therein. And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah." (Ver. 17 - 20.)

The chapter closes with messages which rebuke the incredulity of the people in the prophetic word, so common as to become proverbial. "And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth? Tell them therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah; I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision. For there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel. For I am Jehovah: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord Jehovah. Again the word of Jehovah came to me saying, Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off. Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, There shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord Jehovah." (Ver. 21 - 28.) God would give in that day such an earnest of all that is coming that people could not for shame put all off to the end of days. "In your days, O rebellious house, I will say the word, and it shall be performed, saith the Lord Jehovah." What a testimony to man's dislike of God in that be so readily swallows the enemy's bait that the time of fulfillment is far off! He does not like God's interference, whose kingdom in any full sense is intolerable. But what says the prophet Ezekiel? "None of my words shall be longer

deferred: for I will speak a word, and it shall be performed, saith the Lord Jehovah.”

Chapter 55

Notes on Ezekiel 13

The next chapter takes up the pretenders to the mind of Jehovah in Israel, the men and women who prophesied without divine warrant, instruments of the enemy and adversaries of His will to the ruin of His people. This was one of the most painful trials to the spirit then, as now to us in the church are false brethren and false prophets, whose aim is self, and whose means are flattering on one side, and on the other an overbearing style suited to those whom they wish to influence, ever seeking the depreciation and injury of such as maintain the truth in the Lord's name. Compare 2 Cor. 11.

“And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of Jehovah; Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of Jehovah. They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying Jehovah saith: and Jehovah hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word. Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, Jehovah saith it; albeit I have not spoken? (Ver. 1-7.) To be a prophet out of one's own heart is to ensure judgment from God, who, however gracious and merciful, must needs be jealous of His majesty and truth, thus utterly misrepresented and profaned. What could be the end for themselves and such as followed them but destruction? They were like foxes in the ruins, full of craft and mischief. No wonder that there was no going up into the breaches nor making up a fence round the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of Jehovah; like those who desired at a later day to make a fair show in the flesh, and constrained the Gentiles to be circumcised, only lest themselves should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. Such persons feared not Jehovah nor had His secret but only falsehood and divination, seeing that they said “Jehovah saith” when they were not sent by Him, and yet they made men hope for the fulfillment of the word. Hence the solemn appeal by Ezekiel: “have ye not seen a false vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination? and ye say. Jehovah saith, when I have not spoken.”

Then follows the divine denunciation. “Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord Jehovah. Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower: and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it. Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it? Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower

in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it. So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. Thus will I accomplish my wrath upon the wall, and upon them that have daubed it with un-tempered mortar, and will say unto you, The wall is no more, neither they that daubed it; to wit, the prophets of Israel which prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and which see visions of peace for her, and there is no peace, saith the Lord Jehovah." (Ver. 8 - 16.) What an awful thing it is when the enemies of God morally compel Him to be their enemy! Longsuffering and plenteous in mercy He is slow to wrath; but when patience continued longer would ruin His saints and compromise His own honor, war is proclaimed against those who thus hypocritically undermine His glory and thwart His holy will as to His people; and the anger of Jehovah is according to His majesty. He is against the prophets of vanity, and His hand upon them. "In the secret council of my people shall they not be, and in the register of the house of Israel shall they not be written, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel." Their names should be blotted out as having forfeited their rights, a public dealing on the earth and not a question of eternal judgment, though it is equally clear that their portion then will be everlasting destruction. To make it a deprivation of church membership here and of communion of saints in heaven is to lose all just sense of the passage. Further, the character of sin is remembered in the punishment. Did the fake prophets soothe the national feeling of the Jews by promising a speedy return from exile? They themselves should never see the land from which they were, or were to be, expelled by the foe; and they should thus learn who and what was their Jehovah God with whose name they had trifled. He will not have His people led away to their ruin with impunity to the seducers, least of all hear the holy name of peace perverted to selfish mischief; as when a wall of defense is built, but only daubed with mortar that will not hold. What is it but a sham? It shall fall, is the word to builders. "An overflowing shower cometh, and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall, and a storm of wind shall rend." So the prophets elsewhere set forth the future and last troubles of Israel, as in Psa. 83., Isa. 28; 29, Ezek. 38:22, Rev. 8; 16. To such a judgment Jehovah pledges Himself, so that every refuge of lies shall be rased and the misleaders and misled be destroyed with the awful conviction that it is God who is thus judging the false prophets and their vision of peaceless peace.

And not men only, but women too took their sad part in the moral havoc of Israel. Therefore the word of Jehovah: "Likewise, thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people, which prophesy out of their own heart; and prophesy thou against them, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive that come unto you? And will ye pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear your lies?" (Ver. 17 - 19.) The influence of women has been great in this world for evil and for good; and as God has deigned to vouchsafe to some of them His best gifts, so we need not be surprised that Satan should employ those he can for ill. The particular form of evil here noticed is their pandering to the ears of their victims and thus catching souls in their toils for the most paltry objects in this life, morally slaying such as should not die and keeping alive such as should not live.

It is thus indeed that error ever acts. False doctrine emboldens the bad and seeks to alarm the good. So the world orders its religion. There may be curses and warnings, but they are powerless because explained away. Yet the rehearsal of them gives an appearance of hating iniquity and loving righteousness; and thus man walks in a vain show till in hell he lifts up his eyes, being in torments. On the other hand, grace is unpalatable to the world and seems a worse than heathenish tolerance of sin. Hence believers, who through love of ease and position go on with the world, never get the food their souls require as born of God, and thus pine in starvation and misery, abstaining in measure from the world's enjoyments and destitute of their proper Christian comfort, putting off avowedly till they reach heaven that communion of saints and worship of their God and Father which ought to characterize them on the earth.

“"Wherefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I am against your pillows, wherewith ye there hunt the souls to make them fly, and I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, even the souls that ye hunt to make them fly. Your kerchiefs also will I tear, and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.” ("Ver. 20, 21.) It is in vain to oppose God: strange that men or women should hope for success in such warfare! The truth is that will blinds by the enemy's wiles, and they realize not that it is with God they are contending till the struggle ends in their own everlasting confusion, and in the exposure of their devices before such as they hoped to make their victims. “Because ye sadden with falsehood the heart of the righteous whom I have not saddened, and strengthen the hands of the wicked that he should not return from his wicked way that I should save his life.” ("Ver. 22.) God declares that the end of this their destruction fully is come, and withal deliverance to His people whom they had expected to delude. “Therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine divinations: for I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.” (Ver. 23.) Such is the constant knell of judgment on the enemies of Israel within and without. For sinners going on in their sins to know Jehovah is their doom under His mighty hand.

Chapter 56

Notes on Ezekiel 14

The visit of the elders to the prophet becomes the occasion of a fresh revelation, though not in the form of a vision. As God was not deceived by their attitude of waiting to hear His word, so must not the prophet be moved from the stern and solemn duty imposed on him.

“Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face and cometh to the prophet; I Jehovah will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols; that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.” (Ver. 1 - 5.) The holy seed had defiled themselves, and their guides were more worthy of censure than any misled by their example. Whatever their appearance or pretension, they had “set up their idols in their heart.” It was no question of outward force or influence. The elders liked these abominations; they ran after idols with secret greediness, and they gratified their lust after false gods by placing the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face, in bold, open, deliberate rebellion against Jehovah. To come, then, under such circumstances, and professedly inquire into the mind of Jehovah, was but the shamelessness of the unjust. “Should I be inquired of at all by them?” To insult God by worshipping idols, and yet thus to come before His prophet, was too gross and obdurate, instead of any hopeful sign of repentance. The word for such is that Jehovah would answer him that comes according to the multitude of his idols. He is mighty and despises not any; but He will be no party to His own dishonor; and His judgments He makes salutary to those that fear Him. How else could He answer the rebellious elders but in a way to make His majesty felt? They sought an answer in curiosity; He would prove the worthlessness of their many idols, “that I may catch the house of Israel by their heart because they have become all of them estranged from me by their idols.” Elders and people they were gone from God who would deal with their heart—above them wherein they dealt proudly.

Then comes a still more explicit message to the house of Israel in verses 6 - 11, that they should repent and turn from their idols: otherwise Jehovah should answer such inquirers by Himself, and this by cutting them off, whether a deceived prophet or such as might seek to them. “Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations. For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to inquire of him concerning me: I Jehovah will answer him by myself: and I will set my face against that man, “and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I Jehovah have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him,

and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh unto him; that the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord Jehovah." (Ver. 6 - 11.) Thus does God act judicially, showing Himself froward to a froward people, and sending those who lie to such as love a lie; that both may be punished together, and Israel may learn the needed lesson, and be His people as He their God.

In verse 12 begins another word of Jehovah to Ezekiel. "Son of man, if a land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it: though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their-righteousness, saith the Lord Jehovah.

"If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts: though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.

"Or if I bring a sword upon that land and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it: though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves.

"Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast: though Noah, Daniel and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." (Ver. 13 - 20.)

The prophet hears the awful sentence that, when the last excess of evil brings any one of God's strokes of judgment on a land, the three saints, whose intercession appears at critical points of the divine history of man, could not avail to deliver save their own souls by their righteousness (for it is a question here of government in this world, not of grace for eternal life). If famine were inflicted, if wild beasts, if a sword, if a pestilence, not even Noah nor Daniel nor Job should save son or daughter beyond themselves. But what should it be when all four sore plagues are sent by God on Jerusalem? Who could screen the guilty people? "For thus saith the Lord Jehovah, How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast? Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings: and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it. And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings: and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord Jehovah." (Ver. 21 - 23.)

Thus, whatever the love the prophet bore the people, whatever the sorrow with which he contemplated blow after blow that fell on them, be is brought at length heartily to acquiesce in the dealings of Jehovah, however sorely He judged; who never causes a needless tear, and causes mercy to rejoice over judgment.

Chapter 57

Notes on Ezekiel 15

The next message from Jehovah assumes a sort of parabolic form, the application of which is rendered certain by the closing verses of this brief chapter.

“And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work? Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned?” (Ver. 1 - 5.)

There is doubtless a real and intended distinction between the different trees as employed symbolically in scripture. Three may be here briefly compared, and all of them trees valued for their fruit; the fig tree, the olive, and the vine. The fig tree is the only one which is applied exclusively to Israel; so much so, that one can scarcely fail to see in it the peculiar representative of that nation as distinguished from the Gentiles. Compare especially Matt. 24 with Luke 21; where we have in the first the fig tree alone, in the second, where Gentiles are introduced in accordance with the bearing of the Gospel, “the fig tree and all the trees.”

The olive, we may see in Rom. 11, embraces first the Jews as the natural branches of the tree of promise and testimony on earth growing out of the stock of Abraham; then, on their cutting off because of unbelief, the Gentiles grafted in contrary to nature as now; and lastly, through pure mercy, though in accordance with the promises, Israel to be grafted in again on their repentance, when the Gentile is cut off, and grace restores the chosen nation forever to their own olive tree.

The vine is more diversified in its application, taking in first Israel, who became empty, then the Lord with the disciples as the branches of Him the only true vine, and lastly the vine of the earth when Christendom abandons the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, and at the end of the age divine judgment falls unsparingly.

The vine is of no value if it be not fruitful. Other trees, if they never bear or when they cease bearing, may be excellent for purposes of art or utility. But not so with the vine: if there be not fruit, it is only good to be burnt. And if useless before the fire touches it, what when both ends are devoured and the middle is burnt?

Just so, says the Spirit of God is it with the inhabitants of Jerusalem. As barren of fruit Godward, they are devoted as fuel for the fires of divine judgment. If the Jews failed to represent the one true God, if they falsified the testimony committed to their charge, if they were traitors to His name, what could Jehovah do but consume as enemies those who of all men had the gravest responsibility to obey His law? To wink at their moral turpitude and their abominable idolatry could not become the all-seeing God who was pleased to dwell there only among all the nations of the earth; and the time was not yet come to lay, in the death and resurrection of Christ, the foundation of a new creation which should neither fall nor pass away. The living God must therefore deal with

His people according to the ground taken in covenant between Him and them; and hence the action here announced by the prophet. “Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I set my face against them. And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord Jehovah.” (Ver. 6 - 8.)

How energetic is the assurance! Not only would Jehovah give the inhabitants of Jerusalem like the vine for fuel, but he would “set His face against them.” And what does not this portend to such as know His name and His necessary hatred of evil! As if it were not definite enough that Jehovah thus proclaims His settled antagonism, it is added that they shall go out from the fire, and the fire shall devour them. So indeed it was with the guilty city of the Great King. If the fire was left here, it was but to encounter the fire there. Escape there was none; for no real repentance followed, nor was God mocked. And He who had of old judged mankind as a whole, or in the narrowest circle of their guilt, must deal with yet more nicety of care in the case of His own elect people in their capital. Had they hearkened to Him and walked in His ways, He would have both subdued their enemies and satisfied themselves with all good things; but they would not hearken to Jehovah and chose them strange gods of the heathen. Thus Jehovah must either acquiesce in His own dishonor if He sustained Jerusalem in spite of its apostasy, or compel them to know that He is Jehovah when He set His face against them. Sorrowful alternative! As the first could not be, the latter was the only course merited by their iniquities—the only road open till Messiah came and, bearing their judgment, made it righteous for the mercies of God to begin afresh on grounds of sovereign grace. As things were then, the prophet could but announce “I will make the land desolate, because they have trespassed a trespass, saith the Lord Jehovah.”

Chapter 58

Notes on Ezekiel 16

If in the preceding chapter the symbol of the fruitless vine destined only for the fire set forth the negative side of Jerusalem's condition with its sure consequences, Its positive iniquity is vividly represented in the allegory of our chapter. “Again the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.” (Ver. 1, 2.)

As the chosen people were intended and bound to supplant the nations which the land spewed out because of their abominations, no figure can he conceived more cutting than that which represents the origin and nativity of Jerusalem to be of Canaan, with the Amorites for a father and the Hittite a mother. (Ver. 3.) It is of course moral, not historical: so Isaiah branded the rulers as “of Sodom,” and the people as “of Gomorrah.” Prom the earliest days we see how the two races specified by Ezekiel stood in the eyes of the fathers. (Gen. 15:16; 27:46.)

But scripture itself shows us that a base birth cannot bind to evil where God is drawn and leant on in the least. How was it here? A, wretched outcast void of the commonest care or pity, exposed in the field on the day when she was born. (Ver. 4, 5.) Then Jehovah passed by, and saw her polluted with her blood and said to her in her blood, Live; and this most emphatically. (Ver. 6) Under His fostering culture she grow up to womanhood, dressed and decked with the most splendid ornaments; and Jehovah entered into covenant with her and look her as His own. And she who was made thus cleansed and beautiful and adorned, prospered into a kingdom with a fame that went abroad on account of the splendor which Jehovah put on her. (Ver. 7 - 14.)

And what was the return? “But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown.” It is a sorrowful picture, and not more sad than true. The beauty of Jerusalem was for every passer by. (Ver. 15, 16.) “And of thy garments thou didst take and make for thyself high places with divers colors [or patches, as the expression of the prophet may mean, in contempt of the hangings the Jewish ladies wove for heathen gods and goddesses, Astarte in particular]. The idolatrous uncleanness of Jerusalem was beyond anything that had been or was to be. And it was marked by this, that all the countless favors of her divine husband (for such her Maker was to her) she squandered on the filthy idols of the heathen.

“Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them, and tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them. My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee, thou hast even sot it before them for a sweet savor: and thus it was, saith the Lord Jehovah. Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, that thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them?” (Ver. 17 - 21.) There was this added to His aggrieved heart, that with all her abominations and her lewdness Jerusalem remembered not the days of her youth when she was naked and bare, polluted with her blood.

Jehovah then details the excessive impurity to which Jerusalem turned with unbridled lust, not only in admitting every uncleanness of idolatry that passed by, but in going and courting idolatrous intercourse with the strangers on every side and to the most distant Gentiles, to the shame even of their Philistine neighbours who were content with their own gods. (Ver. 23 - 29.)

It is a solemn yet certain truth that, when God's people depart from Him, they are apt to go farther astray than all others. Without the guardianship of Him whom they have slighted, they become especial sport of Satan and the most desired victim of his wiles, in order to compass by them the more effectually the dishonor of the living God, and if possible make a hopeless estrangement on His part. What a riddle is the moral history of the world and of man to all who see not the conflict between God and His enemy! Then Jerusalem was in question, now it is the Church; but it is ever the opposition of the devil to the Son of God, and universally in the especial arena, for the time being, of His glory.

“How weak [or, withered] is thine heart, saith the Lord, Jehovah, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman; in that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou scornest hire; but as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband! They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom. And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms; and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.” (Ver. 30-34.) This indeed was a tremendous aggravation of Jerusalem's guilt. They had nothing to gain; so blessed had they been of Jehovah. Others in their blind craving after goods they saw elsewhere might impute them to the gods of the hills or of the valleys, and so add idol to idol; but Jerusalem was inexcusable because she had nothing to desire from any one nation around, great or small, far or near. It was therefore lusting after false gods for mere lust; it was sinning her worst for the love of it, leaving the vilest strumpets excused comparatively with herself.

Jehovah thus summons the harlot Jerusalem to hear His sentence on their mad and insatiable wantonness. “Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of Jehovah: thus saith the Lord Jehovah; because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. And I will judge thee as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy. And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare. They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgment upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more. So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will he no more angry. Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these things; behold, therefore I also

will recompense thy way upon thine head, saith the Lord Jehovah: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations." (Ver. 35 - 43)

As to "filthiness" in verse 36, it seems more than doubtful that such a version of ■■■■■■■ can be sustained.

It means copper or brass, and hence money or wealth, and appears to be an allusion to the unnatural way of Jerusalem in squandering all she had on her objects of idolatry. Such at any rate is the judgment of some of the best translators from the oldest of all, the Seventy, down to Mr. Isaac Leeser, the latest Jewish translator. It is supposed that the "filthiness" of the Authorized Version was derived from the idea of the poisonous incrustation of brass or copper; but this seems far-fetched and only justifiable if the context pointed to so figurative a notice and was incompatible with the more obvious sense. But this last I think even more appropriate and striking. God then threatens His guilty city with exposure before all her lovers and haters, and with such judgments as befit adultery, even abasement, desolation, stoning, cutting in pieces, and burning, till His fury ceases and His jealousy turns away, and she should not practice this wickedness with, or in addition to, all her abominations.

Then the prophet represents (ver. 44) Jehovah giving the proverb that suits such iniquity—as the mother, her daughter—re-applying the moral relationship of Jerusalem, not to the father of the faithful or other heirs of promise, but to the flagitious races of Canaan. "Thou art thy mother's daughter, that loatheth her husband and her children; and thou art the sister of thy sisters, which loatheth their husbands and their children: your mother was an Hittite, and your father an Amorite. And thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters. Yet hast thou not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but, as if that were a very little thing, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways. As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good. Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done. Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters, bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters." (Ver. 45 - 52.) Jerusalem had exceeded not only Samaria her elder sister, but her younger sister Sodom. Jerusalem knew enough to judge them, but rushed with yet greater eagerness into greater abominations. Those when they knew God had not glorified Him as God, but thankless and vain gave Him up, and were themselves given up to false gods, and to vile affections, and to a reprobate mind. Yet even they were excusable compared with Jerusalem. "Be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters." How complete the change and profound the humiliation when the Jew feels and honestly confesses the truth as here pronounced by Jehovah! And so assuredly he yet will.

Alas! that repentance awaits a later day; but it will surely come, and Jerusalem long faithless will have her heart bowed before the incomparable faithfulness of Jehovah revealing Himself to her in

Jesus whom she slew. That will be at the end of this age, when the predicted reversal of captivity is accomplished by grace. “And I will bring back again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, and the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them, in order that thou mayest bear thine own shame and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done when thou art a comfort to them. And thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate; and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate; and thou and thy daughters shall return to thy former estate. And thy sister Sodom was not a report in thy mouth in the day of thy pride, before thy wickedness was revealed, as at the time of the reproach of the daughters of Aram [or Syria] and all round about her, the daughters of the Philistines that taunted thee round about.” (Ver. 53 - 57.) It is a poor view of the prophecy to lower it to the restoration of the, Jews under Cyrus and to that participation in their fate which the races beyond the Dead Sea contiguous to Palestine then experienced. A greater and worse captivity was to follow under the fourth empire; but the reversal of their captivity awaits the bright day which will banish all sorrow from the earth for those who humble themselves before the returning and reigning Nazarene.

This is made still clearer by what follows. “Thou hast borne thyself, thy lewdness, and thy abominations, saith Jehovah. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah, I also will act toward thee as thou hast acted, who hast despised the oath, breaking the covenant. Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah: that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord Jehovah.” (Ver. 58 - 63.) It is the final restoration of Jerusalem under the new covenant, expressly here as elsewhere designated an everlasting covenant and so in contrast with that of Sinai, under which restoration from guilt, above all from such unparalleled guilt, had been impossible. How painful to find wrong doctrine like that of Fairbairn and Havernick who confound the two covenants, maintaining their substantial sameness, however different in form; still more to see that the modern error is but the inheritance from the greatest expositor of the Reformation, as his came down from the Fathers! It is fundamental ignorance of grace thus to confound it with law; and the mention of Samaria and Sodom especially ought to have afforded a distinct guard against the error. For it is of the deepest interest to see that the most guilty of the cities before the law and after it are assured of restoration at the same time and on the same ground as Jerusalem. She will have them for sisters in that day, she who would not take up the name of one at least on her lips in the day of her pride and sin. But grace, God's grace, changes all for man, and changes man for all.

Notes on Ezekiel 17

We have here another of our prophet's most graphic illustrations of the actual position of things among the people of God, of the ruin impending because of the impiety of the king and this too in the oath of Jehovah with the Gentile chief, and finally of the kingdom of Messiah which, the lowest in its first presentation, is exalted of God in due time over all the earth. Thus, though we may trace no slight connection between the latter part and such predictions as those of Isa. 11; 53; Daniel 34, 35, 44, 45; Mic. 5; the prophecy has its own very distinct characteristics, as each of these prophecies also.

“And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, put forth a riddle and speak a parable unto the house of Israel; and say, Thus hath said the Lord Jehovah, The great eagle, great of wings, long of pinion, which was rich in many colors, came unto Lebanon and took the highest branch of the cedar; he cropped the topmost of its young twigs, and brought it to the land of traffic; he set it in a city of merchants. And he took of the seed of the land, and put it in a field of seed; he placed it by great waters, he set it as a willow. And it sprouted, and became a spreading vine of low stature, the tendrils of which should turn towards him, and its roots be under him: so it became a vine and brought forth branches and sent out shoots.” (Ver. 1-6.)

The great eagle is none other than the king of Baby-Ion whom God in sovereign wisdom made head of the Gentile imperial system, after Israel's proved moral ruin and rebellion against Jehovah, Indeed another prophet had already employed a similar figure of Nebuchadnezzar. (Jer. 48:40; 49:22.) But here it is wrought into a complete allegory, for the cedar on Lebanon denotes royalty in Israel vested in the house of David, which was now for its sins in servitude to the head of the Gentiles. Jehoiakim is the king of Judah who is here described as the broken-off topmost bough, whom Nebuchadnezzar took away with himself to Babylon, then the most famous city of antiquity not only for grandeur but for commerce. (Isa. 13:19; 43:14.) Nor this only; for the conqueror set over Jerusalem another king, but from the seed of the land, not a stranger lord, but from the house of David, Mattaniah, uncle (“brother") of the exiled king, under the new name given by his Gentile master.

There Zedekiah might have flourished under the fealty due to the Babylonish king of kings. But the sole conditions under which God would have secured pence and a measure of prosperity was subjection to the Gentile empire, recognizing it as God's discipline of His people because of their incurable disobedience and of their kings. Zedekiah was as a willow, yet placed beside great waters. His safety lay in acquiescing as a faithful vassal of Nebuchadnezzar, humbling himself under the mighty hand of God; or according to the figure employed, a spreading vine of low stature, with branches, turned towards him who planted it, and its roots under him. Thus the vine might have produced not only branches and roots, but fruit.

Alas! it was not so, spite of ample prophetic warning and entreaty. The new king, as the people of old looked to Egypt for help—to the Egyptians who were, men, not God, and their horses flesh, not spirit; as of old to lust after the good things of Egypt—so now to get clear of the yoke of Babylon

strove always, high or low, to the dishonor of God. So the prophet teaches us here. “And there was another great eagle with great wings and much plumage; and, behold, this vine did bend its roots toward him and shot forth its tendrils toward him, that he might water it from the terraces of its plantation. It was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth blanches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine. Say thou, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Shall it prosper? shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof. Yea, behold, being planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither, when the east wind toucheth it? it shall wither in the furrows where it grew.” (Ver. 8 - 10.) Here the second great eagle is the king of Egypt, who sought the empire of the world and contended for it with Nebuchadnezzar. But God rules, and gave it to the king of Babylon. It was but providence as yet. The kingdom in the first Adam's hands had come to nothing. Israel, Judah, David's house, had utterly failed and only lived to bring fresh obloquy on His name of Jehovah who had chosen thorn. The day was not yet come for the Second man, the last Adam, true son of David and of man. Hence God provisionally left this universal supremacy in the hands of the basest of men for the deepest lesson to those who preferred their ways to the living God; and the birthplace of exaltation against the true God and of false gods became the scourge and prison of Israel in the persons of David's house and the people still left in their low state. But they, above all Zedekiah, whom most of all it became to know the will of God, sought the help of Egypt in the fond hope of gaining independence of Babylon. To turn thus toward Pharaoh was rejection of Jehovah, not merely of Nebuchadnezzar, and would entail their own destruction with no great effort on the part of their Chaldean master. A touch of that “east wind” would suffice to wither up the fruitless vine, to dry it up utterly in the beds or terraces where it grew.

“Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto mc, saying, Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these things mean? tell them, behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him into Babylon; and hath taken of the king's seed, and made a covenant with him, and hath taken an oath of him: he hath also taken the mighty of the land: that the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, but that by keeping of his covenant it might stand. But he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things, or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die. Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company make for him in the war, by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons: seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not escape. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: As I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head. And I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me. And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward all winds: and ye shall know that I Jehovah have spoken it.” (Ver. 11 - 21.)

Here the case stands out in the light, the enigma is solved, and the parable has its interpretation appended to it by the Spirit. Jehovah arraigns the son of David then on the throne of perfidy against Himself as well as Nebuchadnezzar. He had violated his covenant with the Chaldeans, and this when sealed with the name of Jehovah. And had it come to this that the heathen Nebuchadnezzar's son had more respect for the oath of Jehovah than David's son, the king of Judah? Such conduct on the part of Zedekiah therefore in every point of view made it impossible for God to shield the guilty king and people more; and the less because they bore His name. “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” Judgment must begin at the house of God; for there they say they see, and therefore their sin remains. God will be sanctified in all that come nigh Him; and if sin be always sin, it is least excusable where His word is known and His name held up before men. Justly therefore was Zedekiah to be taken in the net of divine retribution, and to die disappointed in the help he trusted to have from Pharaoh and his great army in the hour of its greatest straits. His prisoner in Babylon, whose covenant he had broken: so bitterly was Jehovah's oath recompensed on his own head, when He pleaded with him for his trespass, and slew his fugitives, and scattered to every quarter those who remained, and thus proved the reality of His own outraged name.

But the chapter does not close without a far different prospect. “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent: in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. And all the trees of the field shall know that I Jehovah have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I Jehovah have spoken and have done it.” (Ver. 22 - 24.)

It is Messiah in His kingdom, not suffering on earth nor coming from heaven, but the rightfully reigning king of Israel, and hence later on designated as David, the true Beloved under whose scepter the whole people will be once more re-united, never again to be divided by folly, never more to fall by idolatrous sin or any other.

This is in no way the mystery of the kingdom that we know now, in no way the day of rejection in grace for Him or His, but of power—judicial yet withal beneficent on earth. It is not the calling out of souls from the world to a glorified Christ on high, but the land and all the earth blessed under the reign of Him, who sets the sanctuary of Jehovah in the midst of Israel for evermore. Without denying that Zerubbabel might be a speedy but passing pledge of the great King and mighty reign of peace and blessing here foreshadowed, I cannot but regard it as a paltry answer and end to so glorious a promise. But ill as one may think of the Grotian interpretation, that of the ancients and moderns seems to me even more injurious and remote from the truth, whereby Israel's hopes are blotted out from God's mercy, and the church is lowered to an usurpation of their promises and earthly blessing and glory, instead of being maintained in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings now, as she looks for heavenly joy and glory in His love at His coming.

Chapter 60

Notes on Ezekiel 18-19

These two chapters conclude the portion of the prophecy which follows up the introductory vision of the glory of God departing from Jerusalem after His providential use of Nebuchadnezzar. It consists of a moral judgment which proves the need of an external judgment, wherein they should know that He who speaks and acts is Jehovah.

“The word of Jehovah came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth it shall die. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, and hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither have lifted up his eyes to the house of Israel,” &c. (Ver. 1 - 6.)

This is much to be weighed. At the captivity God acts on the murmuring of His people and ends any further governmental dealings on the ground of Ex. 34:6, 7. Henceforth He would take them on their own terms; and as they complained of the hardship of suffering for the delinquencies of their fathers, He would now give them their own deserts. It is evident that a sinner must suffer for sin; and if he challenge the justice of paying the penalty of a parent's evil, he cannot deny that he ought to be punished for his own. All were God's, alike the souls of fathers and of sons; and the sinner must die. There was no relief or escape on any such pretext.

The first case is a man himself just and doing judgment and justice, in relation to God, and to his neighbor, not only in refusing impurity and unrighteousness, but also in loving care of the distressed, refusing selfish advantage, abstaining from iniquity, and maintaining equity between man and man, withal, walking in the divine statutes: such an one shall surely live. (Ver. 5 - 9.)

But what if his son should be a housebreaker, a bloodshedder, or the like, should he live? “If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things, and that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbor's wife, hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall be then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.” (Ver. 10 - 13.). Such is the second.

Suppose a third case—a son warned by the wicked ways of his father. “Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, that hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbor's wife, neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, that hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgment's, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the

iniquity of his father, he shall surely live." (Ver. 14 - 17.)

These are then briefly discussed and compared in versos 18 - 20. "As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity. Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." The wicked father must perish; the son warned by it shall live. There is thus the way clear for the maxim— "the soul that sinneth, it shall die;" neither the son suffering for his father's wrong nor the father for his son's, but each reaping as he had sown.

But new cases come before us in the following verses. Supposing the wicked to turn from all his sins, or the righteous from his righteousness, what then? Each must bear his own burden, of the Spirit reaping the blessed and suited results, of the flesh corresponding corruption. "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord Jehovah: and not that he should turn from his ways, and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die." (Ver. 21 - 24.)

The mouth of Israel is closed. Their murmurs were but cavils. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? "Yet ye say, The way of Jehovah is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of Jehovah is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?" (Ver. 25 - 29.) It is apt ever to be thus. Those who arraign the ways of the Lord in mercy or judgment have never seen themselves in His light. How humbling for Israel or any that God should deign to justify His own dealings, or to bring home the conviction of our own sinfulness! "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord Jehovah. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." (Ver. 30 - 32.) It is a call to conscience, not the call of grace wherein God promises that He will give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them, the truth of which will be self-loathing, true repentance, and fitness for future blessing. (Chap, 36) The comparison of the two chapters of the same prophet is highly and strikingly instructive, the misuse of ours as common as it is miserably opposed to the gospel. The Spirit is here

overwhelming them with the conviction of their sin-fullness. The day is still future when God will plant Israel in their land, and bless them, born again, with every good thing on earth.

Chapter 19 is a lamentation for the princes, as the previous one demonstrated the peopled state, the soul's condition in all.

“Moreover take thou up a lamentation for the princes of Israel, and say, What is thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions. And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men. The nations also heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt.” (Ver. 1 - 4.) Such was the end of Jehoahaz or Shallum, son of Josiah, unrighteous son of a righteous father, who died in Egypt whither Pharaoh-nechoh carried him prisoner.

But it fared no better with others from others; for God was forgotten, and evil ways ended as evilly. “Now when she saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps and made him a young lion. And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey and devoured men. And he knew their desolate places, and he laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fullness thereof, by the noise of his roaring. Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him; he was taken in their pit. And they put him in ward in chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon: they brought him into holds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel.” (Ver. 5-9.) Jehoiachin felt the chains of Nebuchadnezzar, as did Zedekiah with greater pain and ignominy for indeed his guilt was great and bold against Jehovah. Hence the prophet could but bewail. “Thy mother is like a vine in thy blood, planted by the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches by reason of many waters. And she had strong rods for the scepters of them that bare rule, and her stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches. But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the cast wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them. And now she is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground. And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod to be a scepter to rule. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.” (Ver. 10 - 14.) It was not by weakness the chosen people or their princes fell; it was not by reason of strength that Egypt or Babylon prevailed. They turned from Jehovah to sin and must, as they do, serve the basest of the Gentiles in sorrow. The scepter centers in Shiloh, who will return in power, as surely as He was crucified in weakness.

Notes on Ezekiel 20:1-44

The new division opens with a full and solemn exposure of Israel's sin, not merely in the light of Jehovah's present estimate but of His ways with them in the past and in the future. Indeed we never adequately judge our actual condition unless we are thus subject to the mind and purpose of God; for as we must weigh where He placed us at the first, so He would have us look onward to His end if we would be wise according to Him, and thus the better feel how our state answers to either.

“And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth day of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of Jehovah and sat before me.” (Ver. 1.) It was a serious reckoning this which the prophet employed, but if humiliating to the people meanwhile (and this was no evil), it kept before faith the sure intervention of divine mercy when the chastening by Gentile hands had been told out in full score. Appearances bade fair for those who presented themselves from among the elders of Israel. They came to inquire of Jehovah; was not this faith? They sat before Ezekiel: was not this the reverent humility that honors Him in His servant?

“And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Are ye come to inquire of me? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will not be inquired of by you. Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge them? cause them to know the abominations of their fathers.” (Ver. 2 - 4.) He who searches the reins and the heart saw that there was no exercise of conscience before Him; and why answer where there is only hollowness and hypocrisy? It was beneath Him to allow such trifling any more. “As I live, I will not let myself be inquired of longer by you.” At the same time He is pleased to justify His ways; and if the prophet would plead for them (or take them to task), he is directed to set their fathers' abominations before them. God thus goes to the fountain-head of the mischief, and the people must judge the evil not merely in its effects but in its spring.

The prophet then was to say to them, “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto them, saying, I am Jehovah your God; in the day that I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands: then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God. But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.” (Ver. 5-9.) With what impressive reiteration Jehovah reminds His people of His oath, swearing, as He could by no greater, by Himself, and thus wishing to show more abundantly the immutability of His counsel! It is expressly of Israel that

the apostle declares the gifts and calling of God are not subject to change of mind. For this very reason He judges and must judge their ways: else He would be compelled to sanction or excuse sin. As this never can be, He deals with the unfaithfulness of Israel, and this noticing it from the outset. Even then, spite of expostulations directed to each one, the abominations of their eyes and following of Egypt's idols drew out His anger, so that it became a question of letting it all out against them in that land. But mercy prevailed against judgment, and regard for His own name before the heathen.

“I therefore brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am Jehovah that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out.” (Ver. 10 - 14.) When out of Egypt, Israel was no better than when in it, yea, their evil became more evident and less excusable. For they were in the solitudes of the wilderness with Jehovah, yet they sought false gods; they had his statutes and ordinances, yet they walked not accordingly but despised them; they had His sabbaths as a sign between Him and them, yet profaned them greatly. So that Jehovah was again provoked to destroy Israel in the desert as before in Egypt: His own name, against which they sinned so proudly and perseveringly, was their shelter and defense. “Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands; because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols.” (Ver. 15, 16.)

“Nevertheless mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness. But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols; I am Jehovah your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am Jehovah your God. Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness. Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand, and wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted in the face of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth.” (Ver. 17 - 22.) Jehovah was moved with compassion, but He must assert His authority, the right-ness of His judgments, and the special value of His sabbaths, as between Him and them. In vain! The children in the wilderness were as bad as their fathers who fell; and nothing but His own care for the name they profaned stood between Israel and destruction. But now the hand that was lifted up to the seed of Jacob's house for purposes of mercy and goodness was lifted up to them in the wilderness, before they even entered the land of Canaan, that He would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries. Compare Lev. 26 and Deut. 28; 32 On the other hand when it became a question of carrying out the long-suspended threat, Amos is explicit that

the captivity and dispersion of the people befell them because of their idolatrous rebellion against Jehovah in the wilderness. “Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacles of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith Jehovah, whose name is The God of hosts.” (Amos 5:25 - 27.)

Some have found difficulty in verse 25, and this from time immemorial amongst writers on the Bible as well as readers of it. But the solution is due to the simple principle that God in His government chastens His guilty people retributively and calls the scourges His own, even when the instruments may he wholly foreign to His mind and heart. Nay it is true even of the Holy One of God, of Christ Himself, who, when given up to utter rejection and suffering from man, is in this said to be smitten of God. (Psa. 69; Zech. 13) It is a great and serious mistake that the statutes which were not good, and ordinances by which they could not live, mean God's own in which they were bound to walk obediently. This would be indeed to make scripture hopelessly obscure, and God the author of evil. Not so: whatever be the issue for the sinner, the apostle is most energetic, in proving the misery even of a converted soul in his efforts after good and against his own evil under law, to vindicate that which in itself is holy, just and good. Assuredly then the Jewish prophet and the Apostle Paul do not contradict each other, but those who apply the expression “statutes that were not good” misunderstand the matter in hand. The true reference is to the bitter bondage of His people to the corrupt and destructive regulations of the heathen, even to the demoralization of their households, and the most cruel devotion of their first-born to Moloch, “horrid king.” Thus if they polluted God's name and sabbaths He polluted them in their gifts: so great was the degradation of Israel in departing from the true God. Verse 26 leaves no doubt on my mind as to the real force of verse 25. “Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me. For when I had brought them into the land, for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation to their offering: there also they made their sweet savor, and poured out there their drink offerings. Then I said unto them, What is the high place whereunto ye go? And the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day.” (Ver. 27 - 29.) Bad as their idolatry was before in Egypt or in the desert, it was more culpable in them and more insulting to God in Canaan. False worship too perpetuates itself, but the truth stands only by grace. (Ver. 29.)

“Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit ye whoredom after their abominations? For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will not be inquired of by you. And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone. As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: and I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of

Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols. For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things." Thus their persevering and heinous sin in always most unnaturally dishonoring Jehovah, like fathers, like children, is pressed on their consciences, as the ground why He could not be inquired of through His prophet. (Ver. 30, 31.) But God would take care that they should not carry out all the apostate iniquity of their hearts. They should not be as the heathen after all, they should not succeed in throwing off the yoke of Jehovah to serve wood and stone. They had all the guilt of it in their minds, but God would not forget His own honor, and they should pay the penalty. "[As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you." Is this only in the way of judgments? Of judgments without doubt, but with the view' and end of purging Israel. He will have His people separate from the Gentiles, whatever may seem the natural course of events, and whatever the desires not only of the Gentiles but of Israel. In the result, Jehovah only shall be exalted; and this when men least expect it. As surely as summer follows winter in the earth, so light shall succeed the darkness of man's day. For this are the ancient people kept of God spite of themselves and the enemy. For, let Satan reign as he may, God is above him and will rule openly as He does in secret providence.

But it is in verse 35 that we see one of the momentous and distinctive intimations of this new word of Jehovah. It is not a question of the temple or Jerusalem or the last reigning branch of her boughs out of which Are went and devoured her fruit, so that there is no more on her a strong branch for a scepter to rule, till Shiloh come. Here it is the people as a whole, Israel at least rather than the Jews; and of the deepest interest is the intimation of their special future. With them (not with the remnant in the land and city) will God rehearse the history of the chosen nation. After gathering them out from the people and the countries wherein they are still scattered, and this not by quiet, moral, or evangelic means, but with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, and with outpoured fury. He will bring them into the wilderness of the people, and plead or hold judgment over them face to face, as of old when He so dealt with their fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt. And there He caused them to pass in review, as a shepherd the sheep under the rod, and so brings into the bond of the covenant. It is sovereign grace, but reigning through righteousness. Hence the rebels are severed from the Israel of God, and transgressors against Jehovah (for even the Israelites are not confounded with sinners of the Gentiles) are no longer to be with His people. Out of the country of their sojourn He will cause them to go forth, but into the land of Israel shall not one enter. How strikingly in contrast with the destiny of the remnant of Judah, who are to suffer for their specific sins in the land! There they refused the Christ of God who came in the Father's name; there will they receive the Antichrist who is to come in his own name. Compare Zech. 11:16, 17; 13:8, 9; also Dan. 12, 1 for the remnant, and 2 for the body of the people among the Gentiles, as I understand each of these verses.

It was useless then for the Israelites as they were to think their worship acceptable to God. For the sin of witchcraft is rebellion, and idolatry stubbornness. If therefore they would not hearken to Jehovah, better be in the openness of their evil than keeping up a show utterly offensive to Him: gifts from men in such an idolatrous state only profane His name. But His purpose shall stand. “For on my holy mountain, on the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things.” Who can allege with any semblance of a consistent interpretation that this word of promise in our prophet has been fulfilled or yet begun to be? The people and land of Israel will then be holy in the full force of the expression. Then, not before, will Jehovah be vindicated through Israel before the eyes of the nations. The gospel which has gone forth since the death and resurrection of Christ is in contrast with it; for there all are alike treated as sinners and lost, and those who believe not only find indiscriminate mercy, but are brought into one new man wherein is neither Jew nor Gentile. “In that day,” of which the prophet speaks, the distinction will reappear, and Israel, delivered from all their idols and every high place, will worship Jehovah their God on the mountain of His holiness, on the mountain of the height of Israel.

“I will accept you with your sweet savor, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall bring you info the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah.” They will then be accepted and know Jehovah, the promises to the fathers be accomplished, not only in us who now believe and go to heaven at Christ's coming, but in the children of Israel on the earth, who shall then indeed repent, only so really because of His mercy who acts freely above the evil of the creatures for His own sake: if He did not, to be a sinner were to be ruined without remedy or hope.

Chapter 62

Notes on Ezekiel 20:45 and Ezekiel 21

What appears in our ordinary Bibles as the end of chapter 20 (ver. 45-49) goes rather with chapter 21 in the Hebrew and in some ancient versions. It is the conquest of Judea under the image of a forest on fire. The prophet is directed to set his face and prophesy about the south, which is expressed in three forms with great emphasis. “Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face toward the south, and drop [thy word] toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field. And say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of Jehovah; thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree.” Judgment was going forth against all, the vigorous or withered. “The flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burnt therein. And all flesh shall see that I Jehovah have kindled it: it shall not be quenched.” The completeness of the judgment would prove the hand of Jehovah. “Then said I, Ah! Lord Jehovah! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?” The word was plain enough; but man finds difficulties in understanding what he does not like.

The next communication however is much more distinct and complete. “And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop [thy word] toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel, and say to the land of Israel, Thus saith Jehovah; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of its sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.” Here figures are dropped and plain language spoken. The slaughter would be indiscriminate, not chastening but vengeance. It is no longer a conflagration, but the sword. “Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of its sheath against all flesh from the south to the north; that all flesh may know that I Jehovah have drawn forth my sword out of its sheath: it shall not return any more.” Sentence was gone forth irrevocably against Judea. “Sigh therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of thy loins; and with bitterness sigh before their eyes.” All were to take heed. It was no light matter nor affectation on Ezekiel's part. God meant it to be felt deeply-by the prophet first that others also might fear. “And it shall be, when they say unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou? that thou shalt answer, For the tidings; because it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water: behold it cometh and shall be brought to pass, saith the Lord Jehovah.” The certainty of judgment, though only a national one, was intended to fill the heart of the prophet with anguish to the uttermost.

“Again the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith Jehovah; Say, A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished; it is sharpened to make a sore slaughter, it is furbished that it may glitter: should we then make mirth? it contemneth the rod of my son, as every tree. And he hath given it to be furbished that it may be handled: this sword is sharpened, and it is furbished, to give it into the hand of the slayer. Cry and howl, son of man, for it shall be upon my people, it shall be upon all the princes of Israel: terrors by reason of the sword shall be upon my people: smite therefore upon thy thigh. Because it is a trial, and what if the sword contemn even the rod? it shall be no more, saith the Lord Jehovah.” Then comes the direction:

“Thou therefore, son of man, prophesy and smite thine hands together, and let the sword be doubled the third time, the sword of the slain: it is the sword of the great men that are slain, which entereth into their privy chambers. I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that their heart may faint, and their ruins be multiplied. Ah! it is made bright, it is wrapped up for the slaughter. Go thee one way or other, either on the right hand or on the left, whithersoever thy face is set. I will also smite my hands together, and I will cause my fury to rest: I Jehovah have said it.” They are now spoken of as great men, not figuratively as trees, dry or green. Jehovah would smite His hands together and cause His fury to rest.

Then, with a strikingly vivid picture of the Chaldean and his auguries, we have a fresh message of that which drew out His anger against Jerusalem. “The word of Jehovah came unto me again, saying, Also, thou son of man, appoint thee two ways, that the sword of the king of Babylon may come: both twain shall come forth out of one land: and choose thou a place, choose it at the head of the way to the city. Appoint a way, that the sword may come to Rabbath of the Ammonites, and to Judah in Jerusalem the defensed. [Neither king nor people had confidence in Jehovah.] For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver. At his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem, to appoint captains, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to appoint battering rams against the gates, to cast a mount, and to build a fort. And it shall be unto them as a false divination in their sight, to them that have sworn oaths: but he will call to remembrance the iniquity, that they may be taken. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are discovered, so that in all your doings your sins do appear; because, I say, that ye are come to remembrance, ye shall be taken with the hand.” (Ver. 18 - 24.) The king of Jerusalem would be more false even to Jehovah than the idolatrous king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar had counted upon his respect for the oath of Jehovah; but he had none.

Hence Zedekiah is called a profane prince of Israel whose day is come when iniquity shall have an end. “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.” (Ver. 26, 27.) Messiah shall come and reign: subversion and only subversion till then. His is the right.

The chapter closes with a message concerning the Ammonites. “And thou, son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach; even say thou, The sword, the sword is drawn: for the slaughter it is furbished, to consume because of the glittering: while they see vanity unto thee, while they divine a lie unto thee, to bring thee upon the necks of them that are slain, of the wicked, whose day is come, when their iniquity shall have an end. Shall I cause it to return into its sheath? I will judge thee in the place where thou wast created, in the land of thy nativity. And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee, I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men, and skilful to destroy. Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; thou shalt be no more remembered: for I Jehovah have spoken it.” (Ver. 28 - 32.) It was not a question of one only but of both. Jerusalem was the prime object of destructive vengeance, yet the Ammonites should not escape but fall in their turn. The rejection of God's government by law would issue in the utter blotting out of Israel; but grace would take up the matter and reserve for God in mercy to

restore what was hopeless as long as the promises were tied to conditions, for the people had broken all instead of fulfilling any. They were to be carried captive, and the kingdom overturned till Messiah come; but the Ammonites should be judged in their own land. Yet is it a mistake to deny either their captivity or their restoration another day. (Compare Jer. 49:6.)

Notes on Ezekiel 22

Next follows a withering exposure of Jerusalem, violence and corruption, idolatry in particular, being charged home. Therefore did Jehovah put the city to shame, a mockery to men far and near. “Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city? yea, thou shalt show her all her abominations. Then say thou, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, the city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself. Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou hast shed; and hast defiled thyself in thine idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and art come even unto thy years; therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the heathen, and a mocking to all countries. Those that be near, and those that be far from thee, shall mock thee, which art infamous and much vexed.” (Ver. 1 - 5.) Nay the dignitaries of law, who governed, set the example of iniquity in every form, degree and relation. Who can wonder that the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles when the Jews violated Godward as well as manward each command of the law which stood in their way? This is detailed in sufficiently humiliating terms in verses 7 - 12, closing with what is alike the cause and the consequence of all their other wickedness: Jews even had forgotten Jehovah.

“Therefore, behold, I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee. Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I Jehovah have spoken it, and will do it. And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee. And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the heathen, and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah.” (Ver. 13 - 16.) Such is the expression of divine displeasure. Stout of heart and hand as they might seem, where would it all be in the day of Jehovah's dealing, whose word would as surely stand as the Jews would be scattered among the countries, that there if not in Jerusalem they might come to an end of their impurity, conscious of and confessing to others their inward pollution and knowing Jehovah as never before.

In the next section of the chapter is a denunciation, if possible, more tremendous. If the chapter before was the prophecy of the sword, this is no less of the furnace. “And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I Jehovah have poured out my fury upon you.” (Ver. 17 - 22.) Whatever may be the bloody horrors associated with the sword, the fire of divine indignation cannot but portend yet worse even for this world; and the prophecy of course goes no farther. But it was doing because of Jerusalem's sins, not the

Gentiles' merely because of their power. Faith seizes this and bows before Him.

The closing verses drop these images and speak out in the plainest terms. “And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, say unto her, thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things; they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed them with un-tempered morter, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, when Jehovah hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none.” (Ver. 23 - 30.) Guilty and being given up to judgment, Jerusalem resembled land without man's culture or God's natural supplies, a mere waste therefore morally. The conspiring prophets in its midst were like ravening and roaring lions; the priests not only perverted the law but profaned the sanctuary; the princes were no better than rapacious and bloodthirsty wolves, and this for unjust gain. Thus there was no distinction for the better, whether one looked higher or lower. The prophets glossed over men's sins and presumptuously claimed Jehovah's word for their misleading lies; while the people of the land, not preserved from evil in their lowliness, practiced all sorts of violence and rapine. Not a man did Jehovah find to build up the wall or stand in the gap before Him on behalf of the land; alas! there was none. “Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord Jehovah.-” (Ver. 31.)

Notes on Ezekiel 23

The prophet still continues the exposure of Israel's sin, especially of Jerusalem's. The holy city is here compared with Samaria, as two sisters of a common parent-the Jewish people; sisters too in their idolatrous iniquity. The evil is traced up to its earliest exhibition. The idols which beguiled them in Egypt exposed them at last to Assyria and to Babylon. In Egypt they manifested their lewdness, and their old age was according to the sins of their youth. Their symbolic names are here given as Aholah the elder, and Aholibah, her sister; the former meaning “her own tent,” the latter, “my tent is in her.” The reader will not fail to observe the striking appropriateness of these symbolic names. The worship of Samaria was of self-will, at best an imitation, but really independence of Jehovah. But in Jerusalem the divine service was ordered of Jehovah as His own appointment; nevertheless not one only but both were His. “They were mine, and they begat sons and daughters.” Jeroboam's usurpation did not destroy the title of Jehovah but rather drew out the special ministry of Elijah and Elisha as well as of others in God's grace, if peradventure they might be warned. The elder Aholah, or Samaria, speedily showed the old evil unremoved. (Vers. 5, 8.) The worship of the calves led to worse and brought finally judgment, through those who last of all allured her from Jehovah, and the Assyrian executed judgment on Samaria. (Vers. 9, 10.)

Was Jerusalem admonished? Did the sight of Aholah act for good upon Aholibah? On the contrary, “she was more corrupt in her inordinate love than she.” The younger and more favored sister followed the elder and was even grosser in the indulgence of her idolatry.” (Ver. 11.) Nay, on the sons of Assyria she doted. “Then I saw that she was defiled, that they both took one way.” Not content with Assyria, she desired after the Chaldeans and their idolatrous worship. And the sons of Babylon defiled her; but if she was defiled by them, her mind was alienated from them. So it ever is where the favor and the will of God are not. Evil nearness is quickly followed by mutual disgust. But alas! there is worse. “My mind, saith Jehovah, was alienated from her, as my mind was alienated from her sister.” Jerusalem was given over to a reprobate mind. (Vers. 19, 20.) From verse 22 the Lord Jehovah threatens Jerusalem— “Therefore, O Aholibah, thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I will raise up thy lovers against thee, from whom thy mind is alienated, and I will bring them against thee on every side; the Babylonians, and all the Chaldeans, Pekod, and Shoa, and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them: all of them desirable young men, captains and rulers, great lords and renowned, all of them riding upon horses. And they shall come against thee with chariots, wagons, and wheels, and with an assembly of people, which shall set against thee buckler and shield and helmet round about: and I will set judgment before them, and they shall judge thee according to their judgments. And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire. They shall also strip thee out of thy clothes, and take away thy fair jewels. Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom brought from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor remember Egypt any more. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I will deliver thee into the hand of them whom thou hatest, into the hand of them from

whom thy mind is alienated: and they shall deal with thee hatefully, and shall take away all thy labor, and shall leave thee naked and bare: and the nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be discovered, both thy lewdness and thy whoredoms. I will do these things unto thee, because thou hast gone a whoring after the heathen, and because thou art polluted with their idols. Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister; therefore will I give her cup into thine hand." (Ver. 22 - 31.) Those with whom she sinned should be her chastisers and they should deal in fury, punishing her without mercy, and with every mark of ignominy. The adulterous people should, according to the symbol, lose their nose and their ears, should have their sons and daughters taken away: fire and sword should do the work of destruction. Does a licentious woman pride herself on her dress and her jewels? Of all should Jerusalem be stripped, but not in vain. This wickedness should cease, and Egypt should be looked to no more. Judah should suffer no less than the rebellious ten tribes.

From verse 32 there is a taking up of the cup named in verse 31, and this figure is applied with all fullness to express the judicial dealings of Jehovah with Jerusalem.

"Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Thou shalt drink of thy sister's cup, deep and large: thou shalt be laughed to scorn and had in derision; it containeth much. Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy sister Samaria. Thou shalt even drink it and suck it out, and thou shalt break the shreds thereof, and pluck off thine own breasts: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and whoredoms." (Ver. 32 - 35.)

Thus the judgment of favored Judah should even exceed that of Samaria, as indeed her guilt was greater. The dregs should be drained, the shreds should be ground with their teeth, and their guilty breasts torn. From verse 36 to the end there is a comparison which closes the account of the two sisters. They were both licentious, both bloody. They carried their idolatrous adultery to such an extent as to burn their children to Moloch, and on that day to pollute Jehovah's sanctuary and desecrate His sabbaths. "Lo! thus have they done in the midst of mine house." No means were untried to entice those without to the dishonor of Jehovah, iniquitously misapplying to them Jehovah's incense and Jehovah's oil. And as Jerusalem had sought strangers from afar, so she deigned to court the most vulgar drunkards from the desert. Thoroughly profligate were those two women, Aholah and Aholibah. Not God only, but righteous men should judge them with the judgment of adulteresses, and the judgment of those who shed blood, for such they really were. (Ver. 45.)

Their judgment however should not slumber. The adulterous woman must be stoned till she died. "For thus saith the Lord Jehovah; I will bring up a company upon them, and will give them to be removed and spoiled. And the company shall stone them with stones, and dispatch them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses with fire. Thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness. And they shall recompense your lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols: and ye shall know that I am the Lord Jehovah." (Ver. 46 - 40.)

Notes on Ezekiel 24

The new message of Jehovah has great peculiarity in it in this respect that the prophet is directed to note expressly the day, not as usually for a date of the communication but also as the precise beginning of the accomplishment of the prediction, the form of expressing it being as before from Jehoiachin's captivity. A higher power must have made known the siege commenced that very day.

“Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day. And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it: gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, the thigh and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones. Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, and make it boil well; and let them seethe the bones of it therein. Wherefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it. For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust; that it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood on the top of a rock, that it should not be covered.” (Ver. 1-8.) Thus the caldron filled with the pieces of flesh and best bones, all boiled well, partly with the rest of the bones, is the awful figure which Jehovah afterward explains in allusion to their own fond boast (chap, 11) of security in Jerusalem. For as the flesh never trusts God for eternal life or an absolute remission of sins, so mere religiousness is apt to presume on the indefeasibility of God's promises without the slightest heed to His will or glory and to the evident dishonor of His name and word. But they deceive their souls, as the Jews did here, on whom should fall indiscriminate judgment. “Let no lot be cast upon it.” None should go un-punished. As the evil of Jerusalem even to blood (so much the greater offense in Israel, as they knew how God maintained the sacredness of life in man, His image, a truth which the Gentiles soon forgot and lost) was deeply ingrained and unblushingly committed, without care to conceal it, So would Jehovah deal in His retribution.

In verses 9-14 we see that Jerusalem should be taken and destroyed after no superficial sort; and this is described in continuance of the former allegory. For now Jehovah lets it be known that not only should the bones he burnt, but the city itself under the emblem of the caldron set no longer with water but empty on the coals, that its copper might glow, and its filthiness be smelt in its midst, and its scum be consumed. “With frauds it wearied itself; and the greatness of its scum goeth not off from it: into the fire its scum! In thy unclean-ness is incest: because I cleansed thee and thou wouldst not be cleansed, thou shalt not be cleansed from thy uncleanness any more till I have caused my fury to rest on thee. I Jehovah have spoken: it cometh to pass, I will do it; I will not go back, nor have pity, nor repent: according to thy ways and according to thy doings shall they judge thee, saith the Lord Jehovah.” Disciplinary measures had long failed, proper government according to His law was despised. Let the haughtiest and most cruel of earthly marauders come

and execute the divine decree now fixed.

The prophet is next called to fear himself a stroke from God of the most intimate kind, if by any means the captives at the Chebar could be forced to feel the seriousness of the crisis and of that rebellious denial of the true God which had brought judgment on the Jews. “And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men. So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.” (Ver. 15-18.)

Nor did this sudden domestic affliction, with absolutely no token of mourning on Ezekiel's part, pass unheeded. “And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us, that thou doest so? Then I answered them, The word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword. And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men. And your tires shall be upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another.” (Ver. 19-23.) The fresh oracular act is expounded; and the people are informed that God would teach them of their unexampled trouble which should leave no room for tears or ordinary mourning. So sweeping a destruction was begun, Jehovah Himself profaning the sanctuary by judgment as they had by their transgressions and abominations, that nothing would remain for them but pining away in their iniquities and groaning one to another. What a picture of despair when the sorrow lies too deep for tears, and an overwhelming sense of guilt compels men to abandon hope!

It is not right to speak of the sacred writers introducing their own names into their productions. Do those who so talk really believe that they were inspired in the true and full meaning of the term? If so, it was God who led and authorized them to do so, as the prophet here. “Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign: according to all that he hath done shall ye do: and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord Jehovah. Also, thou son of man, shall it not be in that day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters, that he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee, to cause thee to hear it with thine ears? In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am Jehovah.” (Ver. 24-27.)

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Notes on Ezekiel 25

We have now a message from Jehovah which, while connected with the foregoing denunciation of Israel and especially of Jerusalem, forms a natural transition to foreign nations that successively fall under divine judgment. (Chaps, 26-32) Ammon and Moab had an unhappy and humiliating origin which gave them a sort of spurious relation to Israel; Edom, if nobler after the flesh, was no nearer spiritually, yea, rather the bitterest of foes; and the Philistines, without any such connection, had the peculiar lot of hanging on the south-western skirts of the land, though Gentiles and the most cruel of the oppressors of Israel, till put down by David. Against all these the prophet has here a word from the Lord.

“And the word of Jehovah came again unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against the sons of Ammon, and prophesy against them; and say unto the sons of Ammon, Hear the word of the Lord Jehovah; Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because thou saidst, Aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity; behold, therefore, I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession, and they shall set their villages in thee, and make their dwellings in thee: they shall eat thy fruit, and they shall drink thy milk. And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the sons of Ammon a couchingplace for flocks: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because thou hast clapped thine hands, and stamped with the feet, and rejoiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel; behold, therefore I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen; and I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries: I will destroy thee; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah.” (Ver. 1-7.) The main question is as to the sons of the east, which some (Jews and Christians) regard as the Chaldeans. But Theodoret seems to me more right who views them as the Ishmaelites, who should, on the great overthrow of the actual state by Nebuchadnezzar, pitch their tents, and tend their flocks and herds, and in short pass their nomad life in the land of those who triumphed at the desecration of Jehovah's sanctuary and the desolation of Israel's land, and the captivity of Judah. Perhaps it may have been the former thought which influenced our translators in giving “palaces” where encampments or villages would seem correct. It was a greater blow thus to become a possession of the wandering Bedouins than simply to have fallen under the towers and strength and skill of the Babylonians. The sons of Ammon have been destroyed, for man irreparably, and spite of any passing history of Greeks or Romans.

But they are not alone. Moab was no less hostile. Their mountain fastnesses, their proud fortifications, should prove vain when God's time came; and it was soon coming. “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because that Moab and Seir do say, Behold the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen; therefore, behold, I will open the side of Moab from the cities, from his cities which are on his frontiers, the glory of the country, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim, unto the men of the east with the sons of Ammon, and will give them in possession, that the sons of Ammon may not be remembered among the nations. And I will execute judgments upon Moab; and they shall know that I am Jehovah.” (Ver. 8 - 11.) How true it is that God resists the proud; and we have

heard of Moab's pride, which He the more resented because they ventured to say, as they would have fain believed, that “the house of Judah is like to all the heathen.” But not so either in their privileges or in their punishment, though, alas! too like in their sins. This however was not what Moab disliked, but the mercy God had shown them and their call to be at the head of nations as the witness of Jehovah; and therefore did He execute judgments in Moab that they might know Him. The God of Israel governs the nations.

Seir had been coupled with Moab; but Edom's implacable hatred must have a distinct place also. “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them; therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword. And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord Jehovah.” (Ver. 12 - 14.) Should not Edom have been grieved for his brother? Bather did he seize their ruin by the Gentile stranger to avenge himself for his old grudge. But God was not mocked then any more than now, and in this case inflicts His vengeance on Edom by the hand of His people Israel; “and they shall execute upon Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury, and they shall know my vengeance” [not simply “that I am Jehovah"] “saith the Lord Jehovah.”

Had the stranger come from Crete and settled within the land of Palestine to the hazarding and oppression of Israel? Did they rise up to avenge their old enmity if they could not in their old grandeur? God was not unmindful. “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because the Philistines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy it for the old hatred; therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethim, and destroy the remnant of the sea coast. And I will execute great vengeance upon them with furious rebukes; and they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall lay my vengeance upon them.” (Ver. 15 - 17.) Here the menace of divine judgments is intensely strong. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God when He avenges His people on their foes.

Notes on Ezekiel 26

Another city in the west has an exceptional importance, the renowned city of Tire, which drew down upon itself Jehovah's displeasure and judgment. It is a lesson the more serious because Tire does not appear to have been animated by a spirit of hostility pure and simple against Israel. It was rather commercial greed which saw an opportunity of advantage in the disasters of the chosen people. This enticed the city into an antagonism to Israel which Jehovah resented. For His chastening of His people is no warrant for the selfish covetousness which would profit by their troubles or downfall. This then is here noticed by the prophet.

“And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste: therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah: and it shall become a spoil to the nations. And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain by the sword; and they shall know that I am Jehovah.” (Ver. 1 - 6.) Did Tire say that Jerusalem was broken, I shall be replenished now that she is laid waste? the Lord Jehovah replies, “I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee.” For doom is pronounced—her very dust to be scraped from her, herself to be like the top of a rock for spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, her daughters in the field (that is, I suppose, the colonies planted by her) to be slain by the sword. Thus should they know that it was Jehovah.

“For thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee. And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers. By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach. With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground. And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harp shall be no more heard. And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord Jehovah have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah.” (Ver. 7 - 14.) The great imperial power of the world should put an end to the outshoots of Tire and invest that mart of nations with all the appliances of siege investment,

and break down its walls and towers with his axes and engines of war, and his success is ensured, and the slaughter of the Tyrians, and the spoil of their wealth and merchandise. It may be that they (ver. 12) goes beyond Nebuchadnezzar and takes in Alexander the Great whose vengeance was still more complete and by whom the stones and timber and dust of Tire were laid in the midst of the water. Certainly there was no more recovery after that.

Further, the moral effect was immense among the nations. This is described in the concluding verses. “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah to Tyrus; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee? then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee. And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it! Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure.” (Ver. 15-18.) The trading powers would especially feel the utter ruin of a city so renowned and strong in the sea. The isles accordingly are specified as troubled at Tire's departure. For many of the wealthy fled, as the rest remained to be destroyed.

“For thus saith the Lord Jehovah; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, the great waters shall cover thee; when I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living; I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord Jehovah.” (Ver. 19 - 21.) The destruction of Tire was to be complete. Whatever was the importance of its position, (and its past success seemed to invite the rebuilding of such a commercial center,) all hope would be vain on man's part, for the Lord says, “I will make thee terrors, and thou shalt be no more. Though thou be sought for, thou shalt never be found again, saith the Lord Jehovah.” Thus should perish the splendor of a city whose fame spread far and wide amidst all lands, gathering wealth from, and spreading it to, alike the seas and lands of the Gentiles. Such should be the doom of those who meddle with Israel even in their desolation, for their own lust of gain.

Chapter 68

Notes on Ezekiel 27

We have next an animated and striking picture of the commerce of Tire. “And the word of Jehovah came again unto me, saying, Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus; and say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty.” (Ver. 1-3.) This lamentation soon passes into an allegory. Tire is addressed personally. Her position is set forth graphically as well as her self-complacency. From verse 4 the allegory of a ship is before us and this very strikingly in keeping with the peculiar character of Tire. “Thy borders are in the heart of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. They have made all thy ship boards of fir trees of Senir [the south of Anti-libanus]; they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee. Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars,” &c. So the description follows, benches of ivory out of the isles of Chittim, embroidered fine linen or cotton from Egypt for sails, blue and purple covering from the isles or coasts of Elishah-such were the adornments of the vessel. From verse 8-11, we have the crew, the pilots, and the traders, the marines and the guards. “The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy marines: thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots. The ancients of Gebal and the wise men thereof were in thee thy caulkers: all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise. They of Persia and of Lud and of Phut were in thine army, thy men of war: they hanged the shield and helmet in thee; they set forth thy comeliness. The men of Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadim were in thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about; they have made thy beauty perfect.” (Ver. 8-11.) Thus those near at hand are supposed to be sailors and pilots, with mercenaries from Persia on the east, Lud and Phut on the west. Tire laid all under contribution and loved to gather the most remote under her banner.

From verse 12 we enter upon her foreign trade, beginning with Tarshish itself and ending with its ships in verse 25. In these early days, Tarshish seems to have given its name to vessels that sailed anywhere, at any rate, on long voyages, pretty much like our own term “East Indiamen.” “Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs.” In verse 13 we have quite a different class of merchandise. “Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy merchants: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market.” Here we stretch to the far east from the west. Then in verse 14 we have north Armenia. “They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen and mules.” Then we come down to the south. “The men of Dedan were thy merchants; many isles were the merchandise of thine hand: they brought thee for a present horns of ivory and ebony.” Next we come to Syria (if this be the reading, for fifteen MSS read Edom) which traded with Tire with emeralds (or carbuncles), purple embroidery, fine linen (or cotton) and coral and ruby.

Then we have the connection of Tire with Judah and the land of Israel. “They were thy merchants, they traded in the market wheat of Minnith and Pannag, and honey and oil and balm.” Damascus seems to have bought Tyrian wares and to have given in return wine of Helbon (or Aleppo) and white wool.

Verse 19 appears to put together peculiarly Dan, and Javan, from “Usal” (translated in our Authorized Version, “going to and fro.") It seems contrary to analogy that the copulative should begin the verse. Some therefore instead of translating it, “Dan also,” say, “Dedan and Javan.” Others decide for Aden. As it would seem that some places in Arabia are here meant, so perhaps the second Dedan. Arabia and all the princes of Kedar traded in lambs and rams and he-goats. Again, merchants of Sheba and Raamah traded with Tire, furnishing the markets with the best spices and with all precious stones and gold. Next we find the Mesopotamian traders. From these eastern sources, they had the most showy articles, purple, and damask, and embroidery, wound up with the ships of Tarshish, the great means of conveyance for the ancient world. Instead of the singular expression in our version, “The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market,” there is good authority for understanding “The ships of Tarshish were thy walls, thy trade.” A similar expression has been used popularly of our own country.

But no fullness from without, no glory even in the heart of the seas could resist the word of Jehovah. The day of Tire was come. “Thy rowers brought thee into great waters; the east wind broke thee in the heart by of the seas.” From verse 26 just quoted begins the prophet's description of the ruin of Tire. We return to the previous allegory. Tire is a ship that founders at sea. Nebuchadnezzar is the east wind that upset her. “Thy riches and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy caulkers, and the occupiers [or barterers] of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war [or warriors] that are in thee, even with all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall in the heart of the seas in the day of thy fall.” (Ver. 27.)

Slowly had Tire risen to this immense and concentrated trade; how quickly all fell to ruin when Nebuchadnezzar struck the first blow and irretrievably when Alexander the Great struck the last. “The suburbs shall shake at the sound of the cry of thy pilots. And all that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land: and shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes; and they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing. And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, saying, What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the heart of the sea? When thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth, with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise. In the time when thou shalt be broken by the seas in the midst of the waters, thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall. All the inhabitants of the isles shall be astonished at thee, and their kings shall be sore afraid, they shall be troubled in their countenance. The merchants among the people shall hiss at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shall be any more.” (Ver. 28 - 36.) This bitter and widespread mourning may remind the reader of the Revelation of another city, far more corrupt as being the corruption of what was incomparably more excellent in New Testament times, whose judgment still lingers, but will surely come, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Notes on Ezekiel 28

This, the third chapter of the series, closes the burden of Tire, adding a brief denunciation against Zidon, its mother city, but generally inferior in power and splendor to the daughter, not more than twenty miles apart. Each had its distinctive points: as the first brought out the short-lived pleasure of the great city of ancient commerce at Jerusalem's fall, and the second its all-concentrating traffic suddenly come to naught amidst the general consternation of men, so here “the prince of Tyrus” comes into relief, and the irremediable downfall of his pride.

“The word of Jehovah came again unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God. Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel: there is no secret that they can hide from thee: with thy wisdom and with thy understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: by thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches.” (Ver. 1 - 5.) It would appear that Ithobalus, as Josephus calls him (c. Ap. 21), or Ithbal the second, according to the Phoenician annals, ruled in the time of the prophet: probably he may have given occasion to this stirring and severe, yet withal, sublime sketch. It is the typical prince of the world in that day; and many of the expressions are borrowed for the after predictions of the Antichrist or man of sin yet to come. The prince was the head and center and personification of that pride and wealth found in Tire as a whole. Nor is there any character of pride baser, more blinding, more corrupting. It lives in selfishness, appeals to it, and is exalted by it in its grossest form. No wonder that the New Testament brands covetousness as idolatry, and characterizes the love of money as a root of all evil. The haughtiest station marked this prince. Did he say he was God, and sit in His seat (or throne) in the heart of the seas? He was man, not God, and must soon leave it, however impiously he set his heart as that of God. It is common to all who amass wealth to give themselves credit for wisdom. So did the prince: wiser than Daniel, he discerned what was hidden from others. Alas! what folly and poverty. Was he rich toward God? nay, he had amassed riches, and gold and silver had crowded into his exchequer. This was the aim of his wisdom, this its triumph, for it was his own doing. Self, not God, was in all his thoughts.

Had the prince of Tire then only thus perverted all he knew from his proximity to Israel? God would teach him that his responsibility was according to what should have been his profit, not pride, his doom only the more stern and sure and speedy. “Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; behold, therefore, I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no god, in the hand of him that slayeth thee. Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah.” (Ver. 6 - 10.) If he aspired to be God in pretension, he should feel what it is to be man in

weakness when the sword of the terrible stranger should defile his brightness, and he should die the deaths of such as are slain in the heart of the seas, for it should prove then no impregnable shelter but his most ignominious grave. He should die the deaths of the uncircumcised, of men farthest from God.

There is more difficulty as to verses 11 - 19. Is it the same personage, or a different one? I am disposed to think it the same historically, but with a deeper reference to Satan's fall incorporated into it; and this may be one reason why the Spirit of God changes “prince” into “king.” The picture is beyond comparison more elaborate than the former sketch, yet not without links that connect both together. “Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.” (Ver. 11 - 14.) Creature beauty and conferred if not acquired advantage to the uttermost, inwardly as well as outwardly, were there; the highest and most delightful position in nature; the variegated lights of Him who is light in His own nature were there, though of course not in the fullness of grace or glory; the suited expression of joy and gladness was not wanting from the first. “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.” (Ver. Id.) There was intelligence in judicial action and protection in him by God's ordinance; and this too in no distant sphere but where God displayed His authority; there was familiarity with His searching judgments. Nor was there a gradual slip or yielding to temptation from without: “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” (Ver. 15.)

Now we return to that which we have seen in the previous description of the prince. “By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.” (Ver. 16 - 19.) Can it be doubted however that in this denunciation God had before Him the fall and ruin of His arch-enemy? The want of seeing such allusions, past or future, above all of seeing Christ in the prophecies, often exposes souls little established in the truth to charge God's word foolishly. They conceive oriental exaggerations, where such as know the truth find the deepest ground for thankfulness of heart for God's grace in thus binding all His revelations in one harmonious whole.

The concluding section is the prophecy against Zidon. “Again the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it. And say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be

sanctified in her. For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am Jehovah. And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despise them; and they shall know that I am the Lord Jehovah." (Ver. 20 - 24.) God is now known in and by His grace in Christ Jesus our Lord. As before the gospel it was by His judgments, so will it be again when the acceptable year of Jehovah opens with the day of vengeance of our God. And how solemn the difference of the lines measured out to Zidon and Israel! The Zidonians should know He is Jehovah by the judgments by which He would be sanctified in their city; Israel should know Him Jehovah their God when He has gathered them in from the nations where they are still scattered and is sanctified in them in the sight of the Gentiles. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them roundabout them; and they shall know that I am Jehovah their God." (Ver. 25, 26.)

Notes on Ezekiel 29

The next series consists of four chapters directed against Egypt, as the last three against Tire with its prince and king. The evil denounced is no longer commercial pride, but confident nature, and this especially in political wisdom. We shall see how God brings to naught the power which is thus characterized and set itself up in haughty independence of Him; for we have here the judgment of the nations, Israel included, before Babylon acquired its imperial supremacy.

“In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt: Speak and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales. And I will leave thee thrown into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers; thou shalt fall upon the open fields; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven.” (Ver. 1 - 5.)

Thus should God deal with the self-confidence of Egypt, whose king is compared to the sea monster that crouches in the midst of the Nile's branches. When its hour came, abasing destruction should fall not on it only but on all the fish that should cling to it for protection. The blow was to be fatal, and birds and beasts of prey should feast on it.

“And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am Jehovah, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand.'' (Vers. 6, 7.) The chosen people had repaired to Egypt for succor before now: what had been the issue? In vain the alliance of Israel with a nation who avowedly trusted in themselves, not in the Lord, save indeed to the sore wounding of Israel when Egypt was broken.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of thee. And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste; and they shall know that I am Jehovah: because he hath said, The river is mine, and I have made it. Behold, therefore I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syrene even unto the border of Ethiopia. No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years. And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.” (Ver. 8 - 12.) Egypt should be not only smitten, but most of all in what was its chief boast, its river. That granary of the world, and garden of the earth, should become a wilderness for forty years, and the Egyptians be scattered exiles: so great chastening should Nebuchadnezzar inflict.

But how evident the mouth and the hand of God! It was a measured sentence, and not more surely should the woe come than its worst should terminate according to His word. “Yet thus saith the Lord Jehovah, At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered: and I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their inhabitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations. And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel, which bringeth their iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them: but they shall know that lam the Lord Jehovah.” (Ver. 13 - 16.) How wonderful, and how punctually fulfilled! yet no wit of man could have forecast it in any of its parts. It was the reversal of its own experiences, and no other nation had a similar destiny or sentence. The more we ponder the word, the more we know its real history: not the prophecy from the history—no man ever yet learned truly thus—but the history from the prophecy, for God alone sees and speaks without error or change; and our best wisdom is to learn of Him, honoring His word: let who will prefer the sight of their eyes or the hearing of men with their ears. Dull as Israel were, they should thus know that He was Jehovah. Egypt though restored rose to dominion no more, became a kingdom but the basest, and no more an object of confidence to Israel.

The rest of the chapter connects with the beginning of it a prophecy wholly distinct in time but kindred in subject. “And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it: therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labor wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord Jehovah.” (Ver. 17 - 20.) It naturally follows the burden of Tire, for it represents Jehovah as balancing the vast expedition of Nebuchadnezzar on that hardly won city whoso wealth in great part escaped his grasp with the conquest of Egypt, a rich booty to the conqueror and his greedy and before this disappointed host. No wonder the land of Egypt was to be long waste, though not forever.

“In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am Jehovah.” (Ver. 21.) We have no account that so it was. But we need none. So Jehovah spoke; and so we are sure it was: Israel revived, and Ezekiel delivered His message in their midst, and they then knew who He is that would have them aware of what was coming before it came.

Notes on Ezekiel 30

The first of the two prophetic strains of our chapter is a good example of that which characterizes the word of prophecy, the binding up of present or impending disasters with the great day when God will interfere in power and judge (not first the dead but) the quick. There was the direct government of God then in Israel, which dealt also with the nations that meddled with His people, as there will be by and by an incomparably better display of it when the Lord comes to reign over the earth. Meanwhile we have only the course of providence regulating sovereignly and unseen, while the Jews are for the time abandoned for their apostasy and also now their rejection of the Messiah.

“The word of Jehovah came again unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus, saith the Lord Jehovah; Howl ye, Alas for the day! For the day is near, even the day of Jehovah is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen. And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down. Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.” (Ver. l - 5.) The intervention of Jehovah in the downfall of Egypt identifies itself in principle with the day of Jehovah which closes this age and expands over that which is to come. Not only should the African races fall, but the sons of the land of the covenant, which seems to point to such Jews as had gone to live there from the distresses of home.

“Thus saith Jehovah; they also that uphold Egypt shall fall; and the pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord Jehovah. And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted.

And they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have set a fire in Egypt, and when all her helpers shall be destroyed. In that day shall messengers go forth from me in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great pain shall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt; for, 10, it cometh.” (Ver. 6 - 9.) Not only should the country renowned for its wisdom among the ancients but their allies or supports: from Migdol to Syene they shall fall in her, is the apparent force. Were other lands desolate? So should the Egyptians be in the midst of the general waste; no oasis in the desert, but desert all alike. Even remoter such, apt to think itself secure, should be terrified, and not without reason: great pain should be on them. It was coming!

“Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon. He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land: and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain. And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I Jehovah have spoken it.” (Ver. 10 - 12.) Here the instrument of divine vengeance is named distinctly: not as if God had the smallest sympathy with the terrible of the nations and their unsheathed swords, nor with the

wicked into whose hand the country was sold, nor with the strangers that wasted it. But the hour to judge its proud wickedness was at hand; and the worst was the suited executioner to do the dread office.

“Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt. And I will make Pathros desolate, and will set fire in Zoan, and will execute judgments in No. And I will pour my fury upon Sin, the strength of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of No. And I will set fire in Egypt: Sin shall have great pain, and No shall be rent asunder, and Noph shall have distresses daily. The young men of Aven and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword: and these cities shall go into captivity. At Tehaphnehes also the day shall be darkened, when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt: and the pomp of her strength shall cease in her: as for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity. Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt: and they shall know that I am Jehovah.” (Ver. 13 - 19.) It is with the god of Egypt, as at first so now at last God's main controversy lies. This was before Him when the destroyer went through the land and smote the firstborn on the night of passover; it is before Him here when He adds that there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt. Fear should be in Egypt, desolation in Pathros, fire in Zoan, judgments in No (Thebes or Diospolis), fury on Sin (Pelusium), Hamon No cut off, daily distresses in Noph (the ancient Memphis). They all should be laid low and put to shame and pain. Upper, and Middle, as well as Lower, Egypt. The youths of cities famous for idol temples, Aven or On (Heliopolis), and Pibeseth or Pasht (Bubastis), should perish by the sword, and the women go into captivity. Tehaphnehes (Daphnis), the seat of royal authority and strength, should be shrouded in darkness, and her daughters go into captivity. What a picture of utter overthrow, the word and work alike testifying to Jehovah!

As the former message bears on the land and people and cities of Egypt, so the latter which follows on the king. “And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first month, in the seventh day of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, 10, it shall not be bound up to be healed, to put a roller to bind it, to make it strong to hold the sword.” (Vers. 20, 21.) Had Pharaoh Necho pushed onward the power and conquests of Egypt? So much the more humiliating the reverses which should break the power of Egypt thenceforward. In vain did they hope for healing or recovery: Jehovah had put Pharaoh down beyond remedy. And this is pursued with greater detail in the next verses (22 - 26): “therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, the strong, and that which was broken; and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand. And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and put my sword in his hand: but I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he shall groan before him with the groanings of a deadly wounded man. But I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; and they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out upon the land of Egypt. And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them among the countries; and they shall know that I am Jehovah. (Ver. 22 - 26.) It was not only foreign mercenaries that should be scattered among the nations, but the Egyptians themselves: so thorough the rent and complete the demoralization and overwhelming the ruin caused by the king of Babylon. If it was Nebuchadnezzar, no less was it Jehovah's sword

stretched by him over the kingdom of the south. Painfully did the men of Egypt learn in their dispersion, and know that it was Jehovah's doing.

Notes on Ezekiel 31

The prophet next gives us in striking figures the ruin of Egypt. The awful warning of the downfall of the Assyrian, the greatest of earth's monarchs in that day, is applied to Pharaoh's kingdom, like individuals, illustrates the principle of which scripture makes such frequent use: that the Lord abases the proud as He exalts the lowly.

“And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, in the first day of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Whom art thou like in thy greatness? Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him.” (Ver. 1 - 9.) After all, Assyria was beyond the powers hitherto known for magnificence, but as a kingdom, not as an imperial system. Egypt, disposed as it might be to take an imperial place, must fall after the same example. Political wisdom might be proud, but it could no more secure that object of ambition than force of numbers or extent of territory. God controls and governs, not only in what pertains to His things but in those of man. As the cedar of Lebanon among the trees, for tallness, size, and extent of shade, as well as beauty, so had the Assyrian been among the nations. God had grudged nothing that could adorn or aggrandize Nineveh or the people of whom it was the capital, yea, gave it to exercise enormous outreaching power and influence over countries round about, so as to be envied by all.

But the Assyrian coveted for himself the glory of a king of kings; and this lifting up of his heart in his height brought his doom upon him. “Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness. And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him. Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches: to the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are

all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; In the day when he went down to the grave I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the flocks thereof, and the great waters were stayed; and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth. They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen." (Ver. 10 - 17.) Tremendous was the overthrow from such towering grandeur to the utmost degradation and impotence: a lesson for all that might aspire beyond their measure, a call to mourn and quake.

Had Egypt profited morally? On the contrary did not Egypt hasten to follow in the same steps? And if Pharaoh emulated the Assyrian's glory and affected as much or more, should he not justly know the same annihilation? "Whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth: thou shalt He in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord Jehovah." (Ver. 18.) To the nether parts of the earth must Egypt go with the rest. The power and the policy of nature can give no exemption. In God alone is continuance, and He will display it in His people on earth, as in heaven, when they have bowed to learn themselves as well as Him. Till then, Israel's circumcision is made uncircumcision, and they are even more guilty than the Gentiles they despise.

Chapter 73

“Be Ye Steadfast, Immoveable.” (1 Cor. 15:58.)

If our hearts are not close to Christ, we are apt to get weary in the way.

All is a vain show around us; but that which is inside abides, and is true, being the life of Christ. All else goes! When the heart gets hold of this fact, it becomes (as to things around) like one taken into a house to work for the day, who performs the duties well, but passes through, instead of living in the circumstances. To Israel the cloud came down, and they stayed; it lifted up, and on they went. It was all the same to them. Why? Because had they stayed when the cloud went on, they would not have had the Lord. One may be daily at the desk for fifty years, yet with Christ the desk is only the circumstance; it is the doing God's will, making manifest the savor of Christ, which is the simple and great thing. Whether I go or you go—I stay or you stay, may that one word be realized in each of us— “steadfast, immoveable!” In whatever sphere, as matter of providence, we may be found, let the divine life be manifested—Christ manifested. This abides, all else changes, but the life remains and abides forever, ay, forever.

Not a single thing in which we have served Christ shall be forgotten. Lazy alas! we all are in service, but all shall come out that is real, and what is real is Christ in us, and this only. The appearance now may be very little—not much even in a religious view, but what is real will abide. Our hearts clinging closely to Christ, we shall sustain one another in the body of Christ. The love of Christ shall hold the whole together, Christ being everything, and we content to be nothing, helping one another, praying one for the other. I ask not the prayers of the saints, I reckon on them. The Lord keep us going on in simplicity, fulfilling as the hireling our day, till Christ shall come; and then “shall every man have praise of God” — praise of God! Be that our object, and may God knit all our hearts together thoroughly and eternally.

J.N. D.

Chapter 74

Review: A Scriptural Examination of Certain Articles in Religious Creeds. By John G. Marshall, Halifax (Nova Scotia): printed by William Macnab, 11, Prince Street; 1872

Mr. M. need not have hesitated for a moment as to the source of the so-called creed of “Brethren's” views. It was drawn up by one outside in the most hostile spirit: some of the alleged doctrines being contradicted by the widely published writings of their leading men, and the few which are true being set in a very different light.

1-If Mr. M. desires to know what is held as to the church of God, he can find it fully in tracts or volumes devoted to the statement of that subject. It is the Christian assembly, viewed both as God's habitation and as Christ's body, though hypocrites or self-deceived might enter it; and it is now in a broken anomalous state through ancient corruption and modern denominationalism.

2. -” Brethren” do not and never did pretend to re-constitute that church. On the contrary they blame others for assuming to restore it, and most of all, such as indulge in the highest claims as Irvingites, &c. They avowedly own true members of Christ in and even outside all orthodox sects; but for themselves, while confessedly a mere and feeble remnant, they take their stand on the old foundation not merely for Christianity but for gathering together, worship, ministry, and discipline—in short for all church work, as well as for individual exercise of gift.

3. -” Brethren” believe with all protestants that the old historic bodies are opposed to God's word and Spirit, and have lost all rightful claims to be accounted of God's church save for judgment; but without charging the orthodox sects of protestantism with apostasy, infidelity, or socinianism, however much individuals may be tainted with their evils, they do hold that the principle of sects is at issue with God's word and Spirit, and therefore off the true ground of His church as being sects.

4. -No denomination even professes to own the personal presence of the Spirit sent down at Pentecost, as in the early church; and consequently there is no such thing in modern Christendom as the assembly waiting on God and open to the sovereign action of the Spirit in its midst. But “Brethren” fully believe that the Holy Spirit blesses the word read and preached, and may guide much that is said and done by all their brethren in public as well as private. For themselves, however, they have faith in God's assembly, according to His word and Spirit, and repudiate as unscriptural and sectarian the notion of any but the “one body” as a present church principle of action.

5. -Mr. M. had better search and see whether the apostle does not guide “Brethren” in affirming that the in Rom. 6, Gal. 5 (latter part), 2 Cor. 3, 1 Tim. 1:9, and many other places of the New Testament. It is untrue that in any of these scriptures the question is about justification. Not so; it is a question of walk, or a rule of life. The apostle is most explicit, and had to guard the truth against attacks similar to those now leveled at “Brethren.” We are under grace, not law; and Christ revealed in all the word of God is the true and full guide of the life He has given us, not the law

which was given by Moses, excellent as it is, but excellent as a rule of death and condemnation, not of Christian walk or worship. Matt. 5 does not contradict the apostle, nor do “Brethren” anything here but seek subjection to the Lord personally or through His servant. For they hold that the Lord did not destroy the law or the prophets but fulfill; and they neither break one of the least commandments nor teach men so, but contrariwise do and teach them by the grace of God. In every way “Brethren” hold that Christianity establishes law. For first there never was such honor put on its sanction as when the Lord suffered death on the cross; and this is the point in the end of Rom. 3, where faith is shown to act thus; secondly, in Rom. 8:4, we learn that the practical result is as real as the doctrine of the cross to faith, for the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in those that walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, as all Christians are called to do. Yet that righteous requirement of the law is thus fulfilled, by our being under not the law but grace, nor yet by the law's death (as the Authorized Version has it, following a bad reading in the received text) but by our death to it. Being born of God, we love; otherwise we have not seen or known Him. But if we love God and our neighbor, we fulfill the law, for love is the fulfilling of the law, and for us there is none other. Sir. M.'s controversy is therefore with the Apostle Paul; and no Christians really value the sermon on the Mount more than “Brethren,” if so much. Indeed it is strange and humbling that godly men should feel otherwise; for the word of God is plain, and so are the facts before every eye.

6. -” Brethren” do not go so far as Mr. J. Wesley, who, if 1 am not greatly mistaken, ventured to call Christ's imputed righteousness through law-keeping “imputed nonsense.” This I do not believe, but on the contrary, that the imputation of righteousness (in opposition to inherent righteousness) is a precious truth of God. Only scripture teaches that Christ, not His keeping of the law, is our righteousness, and that we are made it in Him risen and glorified, not that He made it for us before He died for our sins. Hence the doctrine of Paul, as different from Harvey on the one side as from Wesley on the other, is God's righteousness revealed to faith in the gospel, divine righteousness in justifying the believer in Jesus according to all the efficacy and glorious effects of redemption. Mr. M. thinks that “Brethren” very properly reject the notion of imputing Christ's active righteousness, but that they are wrong in supposing the Lord requires no righteousness on their part. Here he quite mistakes; for “Brethren” insist on the necessity of practical righteousness in believers, but they justly teach that our standing before God for justification is Christ, not their own work. Does Mr. M. not know this? If he does, he cannot deny that “Brethren” are sound on this great head of Christian truth; if he does not, he must be ignorant even of the elements of the gospel. It is fake and bad to say, as he does, that no righteousness or holiness of the Christian could be required, if all in Christ is now and for over imputed to him by God. For scripture asserts both against Mr. M. “The very learned divine,” of whom he speaks as if he were an authority in doctrine, knows next to nothing of the place the resurrection of Christ holds in Paul's writings as bearing on the believer now. It is not merely a proof of the accomplishment of His work, but marks the character of the acceptance of the believer and of the new life given to him in Christ.

7. -It is false that “Brethren” say nothing of the practical holiness to which the believer is called after justification: none insist on so high a standard as they do according to scripture. All Mr. M.'s citations, therefore, are in blank ignorance of what “Brethren” hold and say. But Christ only is our righteousness before God. This is quite consistent with being called to manifest the fruit of righteousness, which is by Jesus Christ, before men. Mr. M. does not in the least understand Gal.

5:5, which in no way denies that we are now justified by faith, but proves that we have to wait, not for righteousness, but for the hope of righteousness (that is, for glory by-and-by). “Brethren” are not responsible for the wicked Antinomian-ism which Wesley censured; but Mr. M. is not justified in imputing to them what they uniformly condemn. He acquits “Brethren” of denying that Christ during His life suffered actually and really for and with His people.

8. -As to the Spirit, Mr. M. needs to learn. Luke 11 directs the disciples to ask for the Spirit to be given before the Pentecostal gift; what about afterward? To be quickened of the Spirit is not to have Him given. Whether the poet who sings of the Spirit quitting the believer knows better than “Brethren,” who teach that when given He abides for over, ought to be no question for him who receives the Lord's word in John 14. The utter confusion of Mr. M.'s mind as to John 20 and Acts 2 is indescribable: no “Brethren” hold what he imagines. He should inquire before he judges.

9. -So far as to the church, Mr. M. is too uninformed to understand the question; for no one doubts that Abraham and all other Old Testament believers were as much saints and of God's household as Christians. He has no right thoughts as to the body of Christ, the church. By the “prophets” in Eph. 2 is not meant Old Testament prophets, but those of the New, who therefore follow the apostles. Compare also Eph. 3 “now unto his holy apostles and prophets.” Further, the true sense is “every family” in verse 14, not “the whole,” so that the argument tells in the opposite direction. No one doubts about all being in the kingdom by Him, or in heaven; but all this is distinct from the relationship of Christ's body as scripture teaches it. The “learned theologian,” who says that saints and angels make but one family, cannot have weighed the Greek here, or the Bible throughout its invariable testimony. The Apostle Paul says “family;” but he has π■σα π■τρια, every family, leaving room for many, certainly not one only. Heb. 11:40, too, distinguishes instead of confounding “us” and “them.”

10. -Mr. M. admires the zeal of “Brethren” for the Lord's day, as distinct from the Jewish sabbath. Few are so candid as our friend here.

11. -Mr. M. does not understand what “Brethren” hold as to the distinction of gifts (as evangelists, pastors, and teachers) from local charges (as elders and deacons). They do say that for a congregation to choose a pastor is unscriptural; and Mr. M. cannot produce even the appearance of a text for it. They thoroughly own that apostles, or apostolic delegates, legitimately chose elders. 2 Tim. 2:2 he docs not understand any better than “Brethren's” tracts; for the text speaks, not of appointment or ordination, but of committing to other faithful men the truth we have ourselves learned. This “Brethren” seek to do daily.

12. -There, is no ground to suppose that the prayer given to the disciples was used formally after the descent of the Spirit. It was given expressly for closet use individually before they could ask the Father in the name of Christ. This last character of prayer has well nigh dropt out of the church, if we may judge by printed prayers; and I believe the extemporaneous prayers of dissenters are no better in this respect. They do not express, one more than another, the proper desires of God's children in the enjoyment of their real relationship, “as He is, in this world'.” Nor can he wonder who considers how “calves of gold,” the work and arrangements of men, have so long interfered with the place of Him who is sent down from heaven to act in the church, while we are waiting for the Lord's return.

Correspondence.

Dear Mr. Editor,

In your number for March there is a question from J. N. D. as to να■ν and ■ερ■ν, together with your answer. I do not think the matter of the least importance. Whatever was the fact, the chief priests and elders and Judas were wicked enough to do anything to accomplish the death of our blessed Lord; but seeing that the scribes and Pharisees would not go into the judgment hall, “lest they should be defiled,” (John 18:28) when they were, at the same time, crying out for the blood of Jesus, and seeing that they would not put the money, which Judas returned, into the treasury, “because it was the price of blood,” and would therefore defile it, it is hardly likely that they would admit Judas himself into the temple, να■ν, when they would not admit his money into the treasury. Surely blood was upon him, as well as on his money.

I should suppose therefore, that he came to the gate of the temple, and cast down the money to the priests inside—the more so, as it does not say that he went in; it says, “he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, see Matt. 27:3. ■ο■δας.... μεταμεληθε■ς ■στρεψεν τ■ τρι■κοντα ■ργ■ρια.... κα■ ■ιψας τ■ ■ργ■ρια ■ν τ■ να■, ■νεχ■ρησεν, &c, Casting the money down ■ν τ■ να■—not; going in—and I further come to this conclusion from the contemptuous answer of the chief priests and elders τ■ πρ■ς ■μ■ς; σ■ ■ψη.

I believe that they were wicked enough to have allowed Judas to come into the temple, να■ν, to have secured the death of Jesus, just as they said “we have no king but Caesar;” but, having accomplished their purpose, they had done with their “defiled” tool, and would hardly have allowed him to come in then—on the contrary, dismiss him with the contemptuous words, “what is that to us? see thou to that.” So that I think that we have the text, and the probabilities against his going in. X. Y.

Chapter 75

Scripture Queries and Answers

1.

Q. 1 Cor. 5—Was discipline in Bible days settled by the elders and then communicated to the assembly for it to act upon the judgment so rendered to it? Is this gone now?

W.

A. That elders took an active and leading part in discipline, as in the general care and government of each local assembly, seems to me unquestionable according to scripture. It is sometimes forgotten or unknown that nine-tenth of cases of discipline need not and should not come before the assembly, but only such matters of scandal and wickedness, whether of doctrine or practice, as call for extreme measures as in public rebuke or, as the last resort, in excision. In this final act the assembly has the responsibility, though there may have been many efforts on the part of chief men among the brethren to avoid its necessity. In flagrant wickedness, as where a man called a brother is a fornicator, drunkard, or the like, the clear duty is to put away; and the assembly acts as soon as the sorrowful facts are known with clearness and certainty. The ruined state of things has not set this aside. It is a responsibility resting on the saints in the Lord's name. If they do not, they are essaying to keep the feast with leavened bread; they practically deny that they themselves are unleavened. Those who have the Spirit ought not to doubt that they have His power, even as the Lord's authority, to put away the evil doer; and this duty is none the less because he sometimes seeks to escape so solemn an exclusion by a tardy profession of repentance. But such a plea should have no influence in staying this action of the assembly, which is bound to prove itself clear in the matter, and not merely to seek the restoration of the offender. Their first duty is to the Lord, elders or none, chiefs or none; so it always was, and so it should be where we have only here and there men who have the qualifications, not the formal title. It would ill become any man to arrogate a higher place than when apostolic order prevailed. It is a duty to help and guide the assembly. No man is called to judge for it a case which comes before it, though it is happy when faithful men of grace and wisdom can settle cases of minor moment so as to spare the need of an appeal to the assembly—an appeal only right in the gravest matters or in such as all other means have failed to remedy. Otherwise the assembly, instead of preserving its place as God's temple, is in danger of becoming the engine of caprice, terror, or tyranny, for fleshly individuals who drag things and persons there without warrant from God's word.

2.

Q. 1 Cor. 11—What is discerning or distinguishing the (Lord's) body? If there is more than apprehending the unity of the body the church, would you kindly state what it is? R. B. W.

Λ. “Discerning the body” has no reference to apprehending the church's unity of nature, but means exclusively distinguishing between any ordinary meal and that supper which brings before us the body of Christ given for us. It is the memorial of His death in it, which the Apostle here urges, not our union with Him. Not to discern the (Lord's) body is to treat this supper as a common thing. It is

profanation, not intelligence about the church's unity.

3.

Q. What place does a standing lecture hold in the ministry of an assembly? J. S. B.

A. Apparently the querist raises no doubt as to the propriety of a lecture. He asks only about a standing or regular lecture. But this clearly depends on God's supply of the requisite gift and the adaptation of its exercise in the circumstances, for which the servant is himself responsible to the Lord. “In the ministry of the assembly” strikes one as ambiguous if not confused; for such an exercise of gift is and must be individual, though if wholesome those who compose the assembly and others would do well to profit by it. But it has nothing to do with the assembly as such; and “the ministry of an assembly” I do not understand, for it may be taught, comforted, or edified, but it does not minister of course. If there be however one or more, who can happily discourse on the immense field of God's truth for the good of saints, and who resides permanently in a place, I know not why they should cease their work or others not hear, though all be of grace and bondage be out of place here as everywhere. It is good besides for both speakers and hearers not to be circumscribed; for all things are ours, and the best teaching is not all, and it will be the more appreciated in general after a variety of other food.

4.

Q. Would you kindly solve the following in the “B. T.?” I have no difficulty with Matt. 13 and the parable of the leaven there as showing the spread of inward evil; but in the kingdom of heaven in Luke 13:20 we read “The kingdom of God is like leaven.” Now John 3 tells us only these born again enter the kingdom of God and Rom. 14:17 tells us “The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Can righteousness, peace, and, joy in the Holy Ghost be like the spread of inward exit? Scripture can never contradict itself.

Yours,

A sincere enquirer.

A. Comparison of the Gospels shows that “the kingdom of heaven” in Matthew answers to “the kingdom of God” in Mark and Luke, not absolutely but in general, For the truth is that the latter is a phrase of larger import and capable of moral application, wherever the former is never so employed. Hence, Matthew uses besides his characteristic formula, “Kingdom of God” occasionally, and this, where “kingdom of heaven” could not have been. Thus, when Christ cast out demons, as He did, it was plain that the kingdom of God was come to them; whereas the kingdom of heaven could not come in any just sense (whether in mystery as now, or in manifestation as by-and-by) till Jesus cast out and suffering on the cross took the place of exalted Son of man in heaven. Hence “the kingdom of heaven” all through Matthew is said or supposed to be at hand, not come; and in that sense of a great dispensational change Mark and Luke announce the kingdom of God at hand. Again, the apostle in Rom. 14, as elsewhere, gives “kingdom of God” a moral force, because righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit are the immutable characters of His kingdom, now individually or collectively, as evermore when the earth shall he so governed.

But John treats of “the kingdom of God” only in the sense of what is intrinsic and divine, not of that dispensational state which the other evangelists show to be then at hand where tares and other evil might be as well as wheat.

On the other hand, the leaven in the parables seems to mean the spread of doctrinal profession, assimilating more after a natural sort within a defined range, rather than the import here of wickedness; so I think from the words used and the context.

Chapter 76

Hints on the Feasts of Jehovah

The feasts of Jehovah are given fully in Lev. 23, and again the chief ones in Deut. 16

There are two different ways of viewing the seven feasts. We may take the Sabbath day by itself, and then begin again, reckon the Passover and unleavened bread as two feasts, or we may reckon the Sabbath day first, without separating those two.

The idea of these feasts is the gathering of the people round Jehovah for some cause or other, a “holy convocation.”

The first is the Sabbath; and it will be so when the true rest comes: God will have all His people round about Him.

Then follows the Passover, with the unleavened bread, together but still distinct; that is, along with the sacrifice of Christ you have sin taken away practically. Really, in verse 5, the Passover stands by itself. First there is a certain definite act, and then seasons.

The Sabbath is the grand rest of all the people, but still it comes in as a holy convocation.

Then the Passover, the lamb slain, and its body eaten. After this, next, we come to the first-fruits. It is not said exactly when this was to be—when the corn was ripe of course—but on the morrow after the Sabbath it was to be waved. This is Christ's resurrection; and here notably is no sin-offering.

Then they were to count fifty days, seven Sabbaths complete, and to offer a new, meat-offering unto the Lord, “two wave loaves baken with leaven,” for now we have, in fact, the church offered to God, but with leaven in the offering, so that it could not be burnt upon the altar for a sweet savor.

The two loaves are an adequate witness, as I take it. The point here is the church; a witness which is presented, an offering to God with leaven, but then along with and because of this one kid of the goats for a sin-offering. We find no such thing with the first-fruits which represented Christ. Here the leaven is met by the sin-offering. The selfsame day they proclaim a holy convocation.

In verse 22 is a gracious provision: when they reaped their harvest, they were to leave the gleanings for the poor. It is the heavenly calling (but not properly the church), because there are others who are called. This is Daniel's heavenly calling, which does not form properly the loaves of God. There are others, those who are killed by the beast; and if God did not take them up to heaven, where would they be? So the Epistle to the Hebrews applies to Christians, but may run over to others also.

These things were to be done in Israel, although we get all the good of them.

Pentecost happens in the space between the Passover and verse 24. For the blowing of the Trumpets we leap to the seventh month, and then comes the first day of that holy month as the next appointed time.

First the Trumpets are blown and gather Israel; and then, on the tenth day of the same month, Israel enters into the day of Atonement. Not that we do not enter into it long before, but here it is for them. You have had the beginning of Israel again, so to speak, in the Trumpets and Atonement made, and then follows the feast of Tabernacles, from the fifteenth day of the month seven days unto Jehovah. The first day is a holy convocation, and the eighth day a holy convocation, that is, an additional day. When the feast of tabernacles on earth is come, we shall get the heavenly things too. It is a “solemn assembly” when God has a complete thing; that is an expression applied here only to the Tabernacles; it is once used in a peculiar manner of the passover.

It comes after the harvest and after the vintage, that is, after God's separative judgment, and vengeance-judgment or the treading the “winepress of the wrath of God.” Then they shall take boughs of goodly trees, and dwell in booths seven days, bearing witness that they had been strangers but now are fully back in the land. That is for Israel to do. We come in between the Passover and the day of Atonement.

Why should the leaven be introduced at Pentecost? Because we are there. There is all the value of Christ and of His sacrifice too.

There are only three feasts mentioned in Deuteronomy; because then all the males were to be congregated before God.

The tone and spirit of these things is given in verse 7: “and thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, and thou shalt turn in the morning and go unto thy tents.” And He tells them the way in which they are to do it in detail and here calls it a “solemn assembly.” In verse 3 the unleavened bread is called “bread of affliction,” holiness in affliction, when you come to it by the sacrifice of Christ; in 1 Cor. 5 it is called the “unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” It takes the character of self-judgment, and sorrow before God, and therefore, in that state, I have no fellowship with others; so I turn in the morning and go to my tent. You find bitter herbs as well in Ex. 12.

It is quite different when you come to Pentecost: “seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee; begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn, and thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand.” Here I have the Holy Ghost and I am a free offerer and come up with my gift, and “according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee” —it is in the measure of my spirituality I can come with this offering; “and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow that is among you.” You must have grace going out to the poor and the needy, and then come with a freewill offering according as God has blessed you.

The feast of Tabernacles go farther: after “thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine, thou shalt rejoice in thy feast.” Son, daughter, manservant, maidservant, stranger, fatherless, and widow, seven days keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God; “because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.” It is not now, rejoice according to the measure, but He will bless you in everything, and so you are to rejoice and all with you. In the booths they were to say they were strangers in the wilderness, but

now they have got all God's promises.

We are in Pentecost, not merely on Passover ground; but we come when we have got in a certain sense into the land and according as the Lord hath blessed us; and still in another sense I may say I am sitting in heavenly places in Christ, and so I can “surely rejoice.” It is joy all the week long-seven days. It is real rejoicing, all the time.

Mark another thing connected with Pentecost which struck me; as long as we are here, “thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.” In Tabernacles, I do not remember that I was a bondman in Egypt; but here I am obliged to be watchful and obey, and remember that I was a regular slave of sin and of everything else. And you do not here see the Passover character: the holiness is not “bread of affliction” to me, nor am I eating “bitter herbs.” All that has its place and must be; I must come in in that way, and so I turn to go to my tent. I am a redeemed person (that is all holy and true), but I go off by myself to my tent. It recalls what I was saying about the difference of relationships, between living in a place; and saying, Thank God, I have got in and am saved. I must keep the Passover, or I cannot keep Tabernacles, nor yet Pentecost; but I do not call holiness “bread of affliction” now.

We might turn perhaps to chapter 26 for a little. “And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it and dwellest therein,” (there we are, in a certain sense, in spirit), “that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth which thou shalt bring of thy land, that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there, and thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and shalt say unto him, I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country” —here I am in heavenly places—which the Lord “sware unto our fathers for to give to us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God, and thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father,” (not I am—it was an old thing that was passed by and could not come back) “and he went down into Egypt, and was evil entreated, and the Lord brought us forth, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey; and now behold I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And” —when he has recognized the Lord, he can go and enjoy all the rest— “thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee.”

Then you have the character of holiness in it. “Thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless and to the widow, according to all thy commandments, which thou hast commanded me. I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them: I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead.” To eat in his mourning was profaning himself. And then follows, not “bless me,” but “bless thy people Israel and the land which thou hast given us.”

I connect this neither with Pentecost nor with Tabernacles; for this is alone. It is the first of the first-fruits. It is not connected with the feast of weeks; but until they had offered the first of the first-fruits, they could not have anything according to God. We may say it is just the same spirit as our joy and remembrance at the Lord's table.

Chapter 77

Fragment: Baptism

BAPTISM. The paper from Heckmondwike is merely a reproduction of the Campbellite heresy, which confounds water-baptism (important in its place) with the baptism of the spirit, and even with justification by faith. Of course the writer overlooks the difference between an institution which applies according to the Lord's intention initiatorily with a moral point which is always binding. But the paper is too unintelligent and excitable in its extravagant vehemence to injure any but the writer or such as are already far astray. Not even the simplest will be misled, if they look to the Lord and bow to His word. Exaggeration defeats itself; especially when it makes a form vital, to the ruin of all who so err.

Fragment: Greek

The reading seems by no means certainly ■ν τ■ να■ though supported by the main body of uncials and cursives, Itala, Vulg. Syrr. &c.; but ε■ς τ■ν να■ν has the grave testimony of ■, B, L, a few good cursives and versions, with some of the early Greek fathers. If this last be not a change to evade the difficulty, it would less than the former imply that Judas entered the house or sanctuary. He may have only thrown the money into it. But if he himself went in, does it teach us more than the desperation of the betrayer, now feeling the bitterest remorse as he thought of his condemned master, with the surest forebodings of divine wrath? In such a state one can understand Satan pushing a man blindly to dare aught else, conscious that the worst had been done irreparably. Possibly no doubt the priests may have connived at the entrance of the chief instrument of their wickedness where he ought not; but beyond controversy we see elsewhere (John 19:28), how punctilious in ceremonials were those that took Jesus. I incline to think therefore that the point is the recklessness of one impelled by Satan, now that his part was over, with a maddened conscience, rather than the fruit of Judas' intimacy with the plotting priests.

Chapter 79

Fragment: the Cross

The cross. Whether we think of God's glory or of Christ's, or of the practical effect on our hearts, it is the cross that is efficacious as a sacrifice for sin. It glorifies God, infinitely honors Christ, and perfectly blesses man in love and righteousness. Jesus was God manifest in flesh, as to person supremely glorious in dignity and so enabled to do the work of redemption; but never as to work and service was He so glorious as on the cross.

Chapter 80

Fragment: the Heavens Opened

When the heavens opened in Matt. 3, Christ was the object of God the Father; when they were seen opened in Acts 7, He in heaven was the object to the saint on earth, and so is it now.

Chapter 81

Fragments: 2 Corinthians 4:12

2 Cor. 4:12. Death wrought in Paul in such a sort that the flesh did not stir. He was so truly dead that Christ only lived in him. That left the life of Jesus on Paul's part to act with regard to the Corinthians.

Chapter 82

Fragments: Age of the Messiah

There is the age of the law, and the age to come, that is, the age of the Messiah. The Jews believed there would be much more grace in the last, and in a sense they were right. (At present, all is in suspense as to the ages: we are heavenly.) Those who blasphemed against the Spirit, even under the Messiah, should not be pardoned. They owned that Christ cast out demons; they owned the acts of power; thus they sinned with deliberate knowledge. If they had said that it was imposture, there might have been pardon for them.

Chapter 83

Fragments: Deuteronomy 31:25 and Acts 20:17, 29

Compare Deut. 31:25, and Acts 20:17, 29, &C. the Analogy Is Very Remarkable

Chapter 84

Fragments Gathered up: Death for the Believer

I have (says the apostle) “a desire to depart and be with Christ.” Death to the believer is not a parting but a meeting, if our center and supreme affections are with Christ. Death is not a sorrowful parting but a joyful meeting; for it does not become us to sorrow as those without hope. For why? They that sleep in Jesus go to Jesus, and God brings them with Him. If indeed he values earthly things more than Christ's presence, then sorrow will accompany his death. But it is the proper distinction of Christianity to have neutralized the power of death. For the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but the believer is dead to both in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a parting not in but with feebleness and helplessness, we know whither, that is, to Christ; so that whither we go we know, and the way we know. It has not yet been manifested (i.e. to sight) what we shall be; but we know that, if He is manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Chapter 85

Fragments Gathered up: Joel 2

We find in Joel 2 an instance of that which is usual in prophetic teaching—some event which should act on the conscience of the people, taken up by the Spirit of prophecy, no doubt to awaken their conscience at the very time of the event, but far more with the purpose of using it as a picture of some event in the last days of much greater moment. The judgment of God, already deserved by the people and suspended by His long suffering over their heads, awaits the hour in which this long suffering will have no more effect, will become thenceforward useless, and in which the counsels of His wisdom shall have arrived at their development. The Spirit of God warns the people of this judgment; but He describes for future days the instruments of God's vengeance when He shall actually execute the judgment. Thus chapter 1 of Joel takes up the ravages of these insects, which, it seems, had caused a frightful scarcity, to act on the consciences of the people at the time of the prophecy; but from the beginning of chapter 2 the prophecy throws itself into the future, and introduces a people, who in their turn will ravage the land of Israel in the last days.

Chapter 86

Fragments Gathered up: Judgment Proving State

Our judgments prove our own state as much and more than that of which we judge. They may be just, or unjust; they may be just and not charitable, or the true righteousness of God and zeal for Him in contrast with false charity.

Chapter 87

Fragments Gathered up: Psalm 40

In Psa. 40 Christ identifies Himself, though distinguishing the remnant with Israel. “Praise,” He says, “unto our God.” The effect of this is, that many see it, fear, and trust in Jehovah. It acts on the remnant in the latter day, and leads them to trust in Jehovah. They can trust for deliverance too; many will. His preaching righteousness to the great congregation gathered a little flock. His deliverance as the suffering One will be blessed to many. “Who hath begotten me all these?” says Zion in that day. This may take in the ten tribes too: still, as a principle, a multitude will be there. It was not so at Christ's first coming. He was to be a despised and rejected One in His own history and trial.

Chapter 88

Fragments Gathered up: Psalm 68

In Psa. 68 Adonai's word went forth. The glad tidings were chanted by Israel's daughters in a great company. Kings fled apace. What a sudden and complete deliverance! The quietest home-stayer divided the spoil; for it was the Lord's doing. Then Israel came out in all her beauty, though they had been lying in poverty and wretchedness. In all the strivings and pretensions of the nations, this is God's will.

But whence all this deliverance? The Lord had ascended on high, received gifts, as man, and for men; yea, even for rebellious Israel, who were now in question, that Jehovah might dwell among them. This brings out praise to the God of their salvation.

Chapter 89

Fragments Gathered up: Psalm 72

In Psa. 72 the expression “Prayer shall be made continually for him,” shows simply that the blessing enjoyed through the Son of David, raises the desire and request for His glory and continuance in power. While literally spoken of Solomon, I think it would point out Christ reigning as a true man upon earth.

Chapter 90

Fragments Gathered up: Psalm 77

Psa. 77 We do know God's own nature and character in relation to us by faith, and can reckon on it as to all He does as faithful and unchangeable; but we cannot know and judge His ways in themselves.

Chapter 91

Fragments Gathered up: Redemption

Redemption, with conditional blessing after it, only ends in the loss of the blessing, just as Creation did. It is the same thing or worse. It depends on us to secure the blessing, and now as fallen beings, instead of innocent and free. Grace alone can keep us; and so it will be with Israel.

Chapter 92

Fragments Gathered up: Time of the Gentiles

Is there not a time of the Gentiles which is to be fulfilled, when blindness will depart from Israel? And is there not then in Deut. 30, an explicit promise of their restoration? But is it expressly stated the Apostle Paul left it a conditional assertion, that the Gentiles would be cutoff, that God would plead against all nations? Is not the apostasy of the Gentile profession as plainly stated as possible and its consequences? Men may say that this applied to Popery; but it is called “the vine of the earth,” a figure well known in scripture as importing the dispensation of the church generally. And the unclean spirits who are to gather the kings of the earth do not gather them against the Lamb by the instrumentality of Popery only, but of the love of power and atheism too. Popery is at most but one of these principles which are to be the means of bringing men to judgment.

Chapter 93

Fragments: Heretic

You will never find a heretic who is a sincere man. A heretic is a man who teaches an error as an affair of sect. If two parties are made in the church without quitting it, there is schism, as we see generally at Corinth. Heresy in scripture is a party without.

Chapter 94

Fragments: Hindrance to Obedience

What is it hinders Christians from obeying? At bottom, the world.

Chapter 95

Fragments: Justification

Up to the end of Rom. 4 justification goes no farther than remission. There are in this epistle four things which justify: God, grace, blood, and faith; but up to that the positive side of justification is still wanting.

Fragments: Morally Dead

2 Cor. 1:9; 4:10. The apostle held himself as morally dead. Hence, when death presented itself, he was more than conqueror. It could only bring him to Christ.

Fragments: Romans 5:19

Rom. 5:19. The proof of righteousness is that, on the accomplishment of His work, God has exalted Christ to His right hand. Christ has done the thing in which righteousness is accomplished.

Chapter 98

Fragments: Security of Salvation

Can you lose your salvation? Yes, if it depended on me.

Chapter 99

Fragments: Sufferings for Christ

2 Cor. 4:11. When Paul passed through sufferings destined to break down the flesh, he endured sufferings for Christ. In a sense it is perfection. With us alas! discipline often mixes with it.

Chapter 100

Fragments: Sure of Salvation

There is no true sanctification for me, if I am not perfectly sure of my salvation.

Chapter 101

Fragments: the Flesh

The flesh may be bold or fearful, and may be both in the same man. Moses killed the Egyptian; and later he says, “I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue.”

Chapter 102

Hints on Genesis 1-3

Genesis does not begin with any counsels, nor even with the existence of God, though both are given in the New Testament.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth:” that is the opening of the creation. There is nothing of counsels, but you are before the world, and so get more in the New Testament too. Time begins with the responsible earth, the creation of that in which the first Adam was placed; but there is nothing of the plans of God here. Promises and ways come afterward, and the existence of God is assumed very naturally: His counsels are not brought out. This is not unimportant to notice; the whole plan of God is not here at all. There is the sphere first created in which the man was to be put, and the broad fact that God created everything; but, even so, we do not get everything, for the angels are not here. Yet we know from Job that “the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy,” when this took place.

The subject is really the responsible man, though you must have the earth where the man was and the dust to take and make him out of. And when we come to know the truth, this is really important. The whole of our glory belongs to God's counsels. We had the two things in the cross: Christ made sin for us, which looked back on the responsible Adam, the first; and also the foundation for bringing out God's counsels laid in the Second man. The first part only as to responsibility is here, promises come after. Even of creation it is only in respect of man, and not of angels. We see how different a sphere grace is from the creation, in that God takes up the first creature of the revelation here and goes down through his sin below any creature, for it is unto death, and then takes him up far above all creatures in His Son, and so makes a totally new and different thing altogether.

What a petty thing all the Darwinian theory of progress is! The author of it goes through all the lowest things up to the highest; God takes man and puts him (in the person of His Son) down lower than all. This is far more wonderful.

The first fact is, God created the heavens and the earth, that is, the universe. About what then happened nothing is said.

In verse 2 we get the earth in a state of chaos.

In verse 16 “the stars also” come in by the bye; for God had created them when He made the heavens. Afterward the earth “was without form and void, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep” —that is, the formative agency of God.

The word “created” is right, that is, originally (though used of “great whales” and also said of “man,” when it is progressive formation). But in verse 2 the action is only where the darkness was, on the face of the deep.

This mention of the darkness sweeps away a whole range of geological infidelity, because they say light began here. But you find ichthyosauri had eyes, and they were created long before. All

that is said is that darkness was upon the face of the deep, and not that there was no light; the contrary rather is implied. Where the ichthyosauri were, there must be light: and they are found in strata, which, if you take them for anything at all, would show that thousands of years had passed since they lived. If you get a thing with eyes, it is fair to suppose there was light for it. The deep was chaos, an unformed state of things. And this was subsequent to a state of light. I have no difficulty about the light. As for geology, it is not the object of scripture to teach it.

It is not that God formed the heavens and the earth in a chaotic state; but we here find the earth so, “without form and void.” It is not said how long elapsed; however I do not at all believe the dates that are given, though we need not allude to this here.

The scriptures do not tell me about these early animals. Why want the Bible to tell me about fish that eat other fish? There they are; and I can go and see the fossil, if I want it. As for death too, it may have existed long before among these animals; there is nothing to intimate that it did not. If it be urged, as the general thought, that death came on animals because of sin, the answer is that so it did in this present state of the world.

Geologists pretend that a given sandbank must have taken so many thousand years to form, and so on. Without believing them, one can let them take any length of time they like, and still the word of God is sufficient for the believer. There is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and then, all that scene of them being there left out, this earth is without form and void.

Who could tell what God ought to create?

The passage in Isa. 14:18, “he created it not in vain” (chaotic) is conclusive that the earth was not created chaotic at first.

The earth got into the state of chaos—it may be by what destroyed the animals; but we know nothing about it: what I do know by faith is that God created everything.

Then follows a detailed account of this earth, as we have it: God makes a place to put man in.

Not a word is heard that beasts wore created immortal. Rather, I suppose, animals were made to be destroyed, because Peter says they were made to be taken and destroyed. Yet the expression, “beasts that perish” is merely a fact stated; and Peter may possibly only refer to the present state of animals.

But it seems to me a much more laborious thought that God created all sorts of dead animals lodged in strata and stone and elsewhere, though I do not care to take up the question myself.

As a general fact there is an order from the positions relatively of these animals, shells, fishes, &c. There is a proof of order in these, though I have no interest in it myself one way or another. Clearly, too, scripture leaves a gap, and that gap is ample for any such purpose. We find God creates things “good.”

There had been pitch darkness; and then it is not that the evening and the morning make a day, for they would not. But after the darkness, which did not count, we get the light, and then the evening and the morning make the day. The pitch darkness did not count for time. God creates light; that is day, and He calls it day: then came the evening and the morning with the light again.

In Israel it is clear they counted any part as a whole; if a king reigned as from December 30, they would count in a whole year, and the king that had reigned through that year had that year too, and this creates many difficulties in the chronologies. You must count the day first and then get the evening and the morning to complete the day. The morning is the coming back of dawn. It comes from the revolving of the earth now; but when God said, Light be, it came at once, and that is day, not morning, that is broad day, it lights all up; and it is said, “He called it day.” Light was; the sun is not mentioned here, though I have no doubt it was created long before. But as to the earth there was light before the sun was set to give light by day. This is revealed. Think now, if I had been making a book, should I ever have thought of making a difficulty like this on purpose?

They say by light there is no gold or silver or lead in the sun, but plenty of iron and other things. When observing a total eclipse, they were astonished to see like little red mountains round the sun; by enlarging the spectrum they lessened the light as the sun shines, and then they saw all this without an eclipse.

If the question be asked whether God created everything in the earth in maturity, such as the coal measures, I answer that, if God had said it, I should have believed it directly, in spite of all the geologist in the world.

Observe, in verse 20, “and fowls that may fly” should be “and let fowl fly.” It is not that the water brought them forth.

The firmament is the expanse. God made a heaven, so to speak, to this earth.

Were they six days of twenty-four hours each? I believe so myself, having no scripture reason against it.

Now we get after the sixth day's work in verse 25, “and God saw that it was good;” and what is important for us to notice is that the creation of that day is finished like the others (except the first two), “and God saw that it was good.” He has done with creation, as creation, and now begins counsels in the most solemn way: “Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness, and let them have dominion,” &c. But the creation as the sphere and scene is quite complete, and then God makes man in His own image and sets him over it all. But you have it in the most formal manner: the subject creation is completed, and then the lord of it is brought forward in this way. I get, over fish, and fowl, and beast, and everything that is created, something in God's counsels that is lord over all. Man stands quite alone; all is finished; and then he has dominion over it.

“Image” is different to “likeness.” In the image he stands as the representative of God. If I say, image of Jupiter, it is not likeness merely, but the image stands there to represent him. And so did man. He was there the center of all the affections of the whole world, and he ought to have stood so. You never have an angel set over anything so, but here man is the central object of all and he represented God too. He was not righteous and holy, but sinless and innocent. Righteous supposes a judicial estimate of right and wrong, but man had not that at all until he had eaten the forbidden fruit. And there was nothing evil in him.

Likeness is moral. Man was made like God morally; he was made upright.

There is a figure here in a man and woman before the fall; for the apostle uses it so. But Eve came out as a distinct thing.

It is well to notice that God takes counsel: “let us,” &c. If you make the distinction of the persons of the Godhead, I am not aware that creation is personally attributed to any but Christ and the Spirit. Every operation is the direct work of the Spirit, not that He is an independent Spirit, but God. The three are united in scripture. The Son was working and He says “the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works,” and again, “if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils.” But you do not find stated in scripture that the Father created; it says, God; and this is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is so far important to see that we have the divine agency. The particular operation of miracles was by the Spirit; “if I by the Spirit cast out;” by “his Spirit garnished the heavens;” and when Christ was raised. He was “quickened by the Spirit.” I can allow nothing therefore that attempts to lower our thoughts of the Son and of the Spirit.

Holiness supposes good and evil, and the hating the evil and the loving the good; innocence does not know of evil. In righteousness I get judicial authority about it, but holiness is the nature repelling or delighting in. Righteousness is the judgment formed either in mind or in act.

So God created man in His own image. Verse 27 states the fact, though they were created afterward. The animals were there, and now God says, I am going to have something higher, and man stood there representing God in the earth, made with no evil in him. He still has that character, though it is all in ruin. 1 Cor. 11:7 says he is the image and glory of God. James 3:9 speaks of men made after God's likeness.

Then God gives the seeds to man and the green herbs to animals. “We shall see in chapter 2 that man's responsibility rested entirely on the forbidden fruit, the eating of which was evil only because God had forbidden it.

“To every beast of the earth I have given every green herb for meat.” This would imply that animals were not carnivorous. There is a difference between cattle and beasts; but in that statement the cattle are left out; the “beasts” are what we call wild beasts. It is perfectly competent to God to have restricted them for the time, or to have changed them.

Chapter 2. It is striking to notice that, except in setting the seventh day apart, you never get holiness mentioned in Genesis, nor do you get it anywhere until redemption is accomplished. And you never get God dwelling with man until then. He visits Adam and Abraham, and no more; but the moment we find redemption, holiness and a dwellingplace for God are spoken of. God created them in innocence, but there is no habitation for Him on earth then. Immediately after redemption, He says, “make me a habitation,” and He did dwell among them. So, the moment the people were redeemed, He says, “be holy.”

Here we have a day set apart to God, which I confess I attach importance to, and to what the day meant also. In connection with the question, I believe the sabbath day is an essential part of man's nature and of his rest in God. I remember outside a town in Germany, when looking at some crows flying, I said, “Well, there is a creature that has nothing to say to God, and to it one day is the same as another.” But the fact that man has something to say to God proves that he must have a day set apart from the remainder. It was God's rest here, and man was to have part in it. According to the commandment everything men had was to enjoy that day.

Man ought to have enjoyed it before Ex. 16, but did not, because the first thing he did was to sin. The point of this is, that it is the rest of the first creation; and, now that sin has entered in, you

cannot have a rest to the first creation. “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” How can a holy God have rest in the midst of sin and misery? What kind of rest can God have here? That is Christ's answer. God could have destroyed them as sinners; but if not, He must work.

If revealed to Adam, he did not enter into it. There are signs of it from Adam to Moses in a way, but no sign that man really kept it. Man had fallen away from God, and all was wrong. There is nothing to show that he did not know of it.

It is referred to in Hebrews: “As I have sworn in my wrath if they shall enter into my rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” Then he quotes this passage and says after “there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God;” and you get this too, that our Lord says “the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.” But then He takes it up there in this way: that He, Christ, was the head of it and so was not bound by it.

Christ was dead and gone into the grave on the sabbath: this indicates a great deal.

The sabbath is given in Exodus on the ground of creation, but in Deuteronomy because they were brought out of Egypt. Exodus is a typical book, and Deuteronomy consists of direction for what they were to do in the laud. Exodus applies only to the wilderness in its latter half.

Then there is a very important thing—God was resting, and man does not enter into it; but still there is a rest. The next point is, God sanctified it. He set it apart from all the rest of time. The reason was God had rested, and, sin having come in, man could not rest in sin.

Now we come to “Jehovah God.” Some have made a great talk about the difference between God and Jehovah, His nature as such, and His relationship with Israel. He was specifically revealed to the Jews by that name, because it is a term of relationship, and it was important for the Jews to know that their national God was the eternal true God, and no God beside Him, Jehovah Elohim.

First in creation you have God, Elohim, made this, and that, and the other. Now we find Him having to say morally to a particular part of His creation; and the moment we come to relative things, we get Jehovah, as in chapter ii. 4. The whole chapter becomes relative now. Read verses 4 - 7. There is the history of the character of man, in his great moral elements. Man not made like the beasts of the field, but formed out of the dust of the ground; and when He has done that (and there one sees what death simply is, “dust thou art,” and death is going back to it), then I get something that is not dust, something directly from God, and this makes all the difference.

The beasts were formed out of the earth, and the man is formed into shape first, and then God says “I am going to connect this with myself,” and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life. By “connect” I do not mean that the man might not fall away from God in will, for he could; but the breath of life which made him a living soul was directly from God. He was capable of dying, but still he had the breath of life, which was a distinct thing.

“A living soul” means anything that lives by blood and breath. I say this because it says, “whereinsoever was the breath of life, died;” all animals were living souls. Man was, and the animal was; but the essential difference was that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living soul. This might be separated from his body, and the body return to the dust. That is what is referred to in “for we also are his offspring.” As I said to an Annihilationist, Do you mean to call a pig God's offspring? Neither would he have died if he had

not eaten of the forbidden fruit. His body is formed first without life, and the way he gets life is by God's breathing into his nostrils the breath of life; he receives it as a creature, but direct from God. Adam was not made as other animals were.

“This mortal,” or “mortal body,” leaves the soul by implication immortal. “Mortal” is always used of the body, and it is clear that death does not touch the soul, for you have the wicked man in Hades after death. I am quite satisfied that it is true to say “immortal soul.” The opposite thought is founded on the words, “who only hath immortality,” spoken of God, of course (that is, who only hath it in Himself), but this does not mean that He cannot communicate it. So the angels are only immortal by God's making them so; and we the same. If I were immortal in spite of God, then I am to do as I like without fear of death. In the rich man and Lazarus is a perfectly clear case; the one goes to torment, the other to Abraham's bosom after death.

But they say “these are only figures.” “Yes,” I reply, “but figures of what?” I am not going to Abraham's bosom, but I am to Christ. I asked them this, “Could God give eternal life to a dog?” “Yes.” But would the dog be answerable for what he had been doing while he was a dog? and if he would not be, Christ had not to die for him, and so they destroy atonement. Put it in another way; if I am a mere brute, only a clever brute, until I get Christ as my life, my responsibility is gone.

Well, man was put in his place of responsibility not to eat the forbidden fruit, a thing in which there was no evil, save that it was forbidden.

And you get a striking thing here, one which has been a question even with heathens, and it is also a ground of discussion between Calvinists and Arminians: the tree of life, which is free gift; and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which is responsibility. Man has been trying to undo this in himself and never can. Man did take the responsibility-tree and was lost. Then the promise came to Abraham to show that grace was really the thing after all—the tree of life; and then came the law, the other tree. People have made the life dependent upon the responsibility-tree, which is utter folly. But we find in Christ the two united; for He is the man who charges Himself with our responsibility, as He is Himself the life. If I have Christ for my life, with whom also I have died, I can bring the two together. But if taken out of Christ, it is impossible to unite the two things, any more than they were one in the garden.

If Adam had eaten of the tree of life, he would have been an immortal sinner. As he was, we have got the responsibility man, not the man of God's counsels; but to faith the first or responsibility man is set aside for Christ the Second man. We have Christ as our life, and are bound to live in that life, and not in the old man. When it comes to a question of responsibility and judgment, I say I am not in the old man, but in Christ. And in my actual condition I say, Christ is in me, and I am to manifest Him as my life. God took the man and put him in the garden to dress and keep it, gave him one commandment, and then said, It is not good that the man should be alone. So He gives him a wife, and also puts him in the place of authority, which is shown by bringing everything to Adam to be named. Giving a name is an act of authority all through scripture. And Adam says of his wife, “This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman.” There we get the institution of marriage, but, above all, Christ and the church. We see dominion, which is entirely in Adam, not in the woman. Dominion belongs to Christ; but, being rejected and accomplishing redemption, He is exalted on high, and instead of dominion he gets the church, which He associates with Himself now, as well as when He is in the dominion. This is the place of the

church, which is neither the Lord nor the subject creature, but is associated with the Lord over the creation. God's plans are here in imagery. Adam was “the figure of him that is to come.” (Rom. 5:14.) He was head over all things to Eve, who was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. We have in this relationship two states, the actual responsibility as created (which Christ was in a certain sense) and then what was historically true, the image of Him that was to come. Christ gave up everything, leaving father and mother (that is, Israel, if you take it as a figure). How often we hear it said that Christ was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh! But really it is when He is in glory, we are made bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh; the other is never said in scripture. Then we have the responsible man set up, but still a figure of Him that is to come.

We are all taken out of Christ in a sense, we are all quickened together with Christ when He has gone down into death, and we are set aside in the place He has taken; just as the deep sleep fell upon Adam, and the rib is taken and made a woman and is brought to him.

But observe in chapter 3 that the point is not knowledge of good and knowledge of evil, which is a mere blunder. The question of the tree was not conscience: there was not the tree of knowledge of right and wrong. If it had not been forbidden, he was just as free to eat as anything else. Thus we acquired the knowledge of good and evil, and hence conscience. You see it as early as anything in a child. It slaps its mother, say: and you hold up your finger—it understands very well that it has done wrong. God says, “the man is become as one of us;” that is, he has got intrinsically the knowledge of good and evil. If a boy at school steals one of his companions' marbles, he hides it, for he knows he has done wrong. It is no question of commandments here.

Adam was enjoying good in the garden, although the knowledge of good would not have been so full. I quite admit my knowledge may be corrupted; still I do a thing because it is right. I may think I am doing a very good thing to put my father in the Ganges at a certain time of life, because then he will go to Buddha or some one; but it is only the difference of good and evil I know; it is not knowledge of good and knowledge of evil. The thing for Adam was not an intrinsic knowledge of good and evil, which was not required, but only a question of obedience. Man got a conscience by the: fall, and he never got a conscience till it was a defiled one. But it may get hardened or seared.

Observe in the account of the fall that, before a lust comes in, there is another principle shown, which is that Adam, as Eve, lost confidence in God. The devil suggested that God kept something back from her because it would make her like God. “God doth know” —this is the reason you “may not eat this” — “you will be as God knowing good and evil.” At this suggestion that the Lord had kept back the very best thing, Eve lost her confidence. But mark, when Christ comes into the world, I see Him walking through the world where all the evil is, to show to man that, no matter how defiled it all is, we can have the fullest confidence in God. He comes to win back man's heart to God. There He was reconciling man to God. Were you a woman ever such a sinner who could not show your face to a fellow creature, come to Him and God will receive you. But this loss of confidence is just the same in all of us. If I trusted God to make me happy always, 1 should always do God's will. Suppose 1 do not trust Him to make me happy, then I must turn to myself. This is just what we see: men do not trust God to make them happy, and so they try to make themselves happy.

Chapter 103

Hints on Genesis 3

We were speaking of the beautiful character of Christ's coming into the world in humiliation, God coming to win back man's heart to Himself. This goes beyond the chapter, but it is produced in souls at times before forgiveness is known. When there is a clear gospel, forgiveness comes out first, but many are like the poor woman that was a sinner who had her heart towards God or Christ, though she did not know forgiveness yet. There was faith in His person. She was attracted by the grace in Him, and broken down about her sinfulness. So many a pious soul now does not know forgiveness.

It is all a mistake to confound trust with faith, though, no doubt, faith produces confidence, You can hardly separate the two things, but there is this in faith: “he that believeth his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.” In Luke 7 it was a living word. But when I have the Spirit of adoption, I am a son. Christ revealed the Father: “I have manifested thy name;” “I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it.” The moment the Son was there, the Father's name could be revealed; but it was not until the gift of the Holy Ghost that they had the Spirit of adoption. But in Christ here below God was coming into the midst of sinners in love and winning back their confidence; and one sees in the poor woman that was a sinner a heart trusting Him, though His work was not completed.

The temptation was “ye shall be as God,” not gods, “knowing good and evil.” Eve takes, eats, and gives to her husband, who eats: thus their eyes were opened. The counterpart is seen (Phil. 2,), and intended as such, in Jesus, “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore also God hath highly exalted him.” That is, Christ in taking the place of second Adam went exactly opposite to the first one. Adam was in the form of man, and set up to be as God; Christ is not only a man but God, and did not set up like Adam to take what did not belong to Him, for He was God, but, having laid all aside, He became obedient unto death, the death of the cross. He goes down all the way till He comes right down to death, yea, death of the cross—the exact contrast of what Adam did. You see the progress in Eve. When confidence is lost, the woman saw that the tree was good for food: lust comes in. It was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise. Accordingly she eats, and then Adam. He was not deceived: the woman Eve was, and so was in the transgression.

The devil came hiding himself in that serpent, using it as an instrument of mischief.

“Dust” means utter and entire humiliation, as “lick the dust;” “Arise ye that dwell in the dust,” and so on. It is constantly used in this way. In Dan. 12 it is the same, “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth.” In the text it is used to express the judgment that shall be upon the power of Satan.

It is curious in the olden times that they used to eat serpents to get wise. And it is wonderful how wide-spread was the idea of wisdom in the serpent. Esculapius had a serpent in his temple. A serpent with his tail in his mouth was the image of eternity, the whole circle was in that. The Agatho-demon, or good demon, in Egypt was a winged serpent. They found represented in Mexico (though I do not know how far you can trust pictures) a woman under a tree and the serpent offering the woman an apple. It was found as a picture. There was a great collection of such things; but it is all dispersed now There were traces of similar things among the Druids, but evidently the Druids came from Persia.

Fallen, they knew good and evil, and that they were naked; they are under the shame of sin; and then we learn how utterly powerless all human means are to hide sin. The moment they hear the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, all the fig leaves are simply nothing. They were, used to cover themselves from one another; but the moment God was there, they say that they are naked. Afterward God made them coats of skins; it was a very different thing when God did it.

We do not know in what words the command was given; it is merely told us generally. It was pressed upon Eve's mind that she was to have nothing to say to it; she does not give exactly the words of God, “in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” It was probably her own impression, not the exact words of God—just the main effect produced on her mind.

It is well to remark that, before ever God turned Adam out, he had got away from God: I do not mean his heart merely, but he had a bad conscience; he went and hid himself in the trees of the garden, and that is the first of it. But the great question, besides what had been done, is “Where art thou?” This is a far wider question than that to Cain— “What hast thou done?”

There is no history of man in innocence. The first thing we find in the history of man is the fall. Children were begotten after the fall, and all else follows. The fall comes in first both historically and morally; and so it has always been. The first thing Noah does is to get drunk. The children of Israel made a golden calf even before they had really got the law, though they had just promised obedience. It was the same thing with the priests Nadab and Abihu: they offered strange fire the very first day; and then Aaron was forbidden to go into the most holy place in the garments of glory and beauty. Was not all this serious? It is not a question of the “first day" exactly, but of their first act noted in scripture. And it is just as true of the church. Peter says “the time is come that judgment should begin at the house of God:” Paul that “all were seeking their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's;” and then John says “even now are there many antichrists; whereby Ave know it is the last time.” All the apostles tell us so, though they stemmed the torrent while there. So Jude says, “of these Enoch prophesied, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment,” &c. There they are, he says; more morally there perhaps than historically.

We see then that man departed from God before ever God turned him out; that is, his conscience drove him away from God, and in the end God drives him out. How God detects everything! “I was afraid because I was naked".... “Who told thee thou wast naked?” Now it comes to what he has done; the first point was, “Where art thou?” To Cain it was, “What hast thou done?”

As a matter of doctrine, I was led distinctly to notice this in the epistle to the Romans; there first it is “all have sinned;” then “by one man sin entered.” Thus it is our condition: “what we have done is

proof and fruit of it. Adam cannot be with God at all. Such is his condition; and then God asks, What have you done?

It was God looking for man, perhaps I should hardly say in grace; it was God coming in. Of course God knew everything; but, speaking as to His manner of dealing, He is expecting Adam to have intercourse with Him. God could go and walk there, and, according to the principles of His position, expect that Adam would receive Him as his benefactor. It is, “What has come of you?” so to speak. If one expects. a person to be there, one says, “Where are you?” This brings out of Adam what the real state of the cases was; and when God asks, “how did that come about?” Adam does a base thing, for he says, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” It is “whom Thou gavest.” If You had not given me the woman, I should not have done it! as much as to say, “You may settle with the woman.” And God says “Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife and hast eaten:” this is what He condemns Adam for. And whenever we make an excuse, this in fact is what we are condemned for. Adam listened to the woman instead of to God. People say, “I was tempted,” and this is true; but why did you yield to the temptation? It was not a lie, in the outward sense of a falsehood; but he had followed the woman instead of God.

Then what the woman said was true, “The serpent beguiled me and I did eat.” When the woman of Samaria said “I have no husband” it was true, but the object of it was to conceal the truth for all that. It was legally true but ethically false, true in fact but truth told to conceal the truth all the while.

It is important to remark here that all the judgment stated is in this world simply. There is none of the truth that comes out afterward, when life and incorruptibility are brought to light. Men try to spin this out into what is more (and there is an immense deal more to a spiritual mind): but the actual judgment is in this world. Thus the serpent is not here cast into the lake of fire: God says, “because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust thou shalt eat all the days of thy life.” There is nothing about the final judgment of Satan, “and I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” You may see something more there, figuratively and mysteriously prophetical; but that is no present thing; the actual judgment on the serpent is in the former verse.

Another thing to notice here is that there is no promise to man. As regards a great deal of the Arminian system, which is largely infidelity, all of it is cut up by the roots. There is no promise to man. The promise is a future judgment pronounced on Satan which has an application to Adam; for it is clear he was not the seed of the woman. Then on the woman it is merely the sorrows of childbirth, and she is made, not simply a companion, but subject, to her husband.

All depends whether this distinction is made: it is no question of restoring the first man. The promise brings in another man instead of the first. And it was not even by the seed of the man, by any descendant of man as man, though He is the Son of man, but it was the woman it came in by; as we read in Galatians “made of a woman,” and “under the law” too—the two things, one applicable to man, and the other special to some.

What is here is this: God cast out the man; yet Adam fled away from God before he was turned out. But when God turned him out, this was judicial, and God put cherubim there and a flaming

sword turning every way to keep the way of the tree of life. That is, Adam was not only going to dust but could not get at life again; it would have been horrible if he could. He was an outcast from God altogether, and this is everlasting misery. Once partaking of the tree of life would have immortalized.

But it is no question here of judgment being everlasting. It is separation from God. “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also, and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” What was to happen to his soul there is not a word about. The question of the inner man is quite untouched. When God drove him out, the soul did not die; neither was it dust to go back to dust, for soul was not made of dust. But to be driven out was eternal misery, though one must have a spiritual mind in a sense to know really that it is infinite misery to be shut out from God.

As to original sin, it is well to say what we mean by it, as men's thoughts differ widely. We read that “by one man's disobedience sin entered into the world:” there we find that the sin of Adam put him in this position. There are two things in what is commonly called original sin. It does not consist in following Adam, but that I am alienated from God, and also that I have an evil nature. The two go together, just as reconciliation and anew nature go together. My heart is renewed from and to God.

The first is that man departed from God. I have sometimes said, when they have talked about God damning a man for eating an apple, that it is not God shutting man out for an apple, but that man shut out God for an apple. His heart was separated from God, and then he got lusts and self-will instead of subjection. Then follows the judicial part, “Where art thou?” —where? that is, as to my state, not what? a question of my deeds, though men are judged according to their works. When there is spiritual intelligence in me, the first thing that strikes my conscience is my deeds. Ordinary evangelization takes up what man has done; but this alone never sets one clear with God. A soul still has to learn another thing, and that is where he is; that is, that in me, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. But the preacher who dwells on this does not reach the consciences of people. If I take the “What hast thou done?” and the “Where art thou?” then I have all. From this point of view men as men are alike bad, and the prodigal son was as great a sinner when he just crossed his father's threshold, as when he was eating the swine's husks, because he had from the first turned his back upon his father. Nor is the work done in a soul, until it finds out how bad it is in itself, the tree bad, the root bad, itself away from God. My works refer on to the day of judgment; but by what I am I have lost all.

Both are perfectly true of every man. It is works rather in Adam's breaking the law, and still more distinctly in Cain, in whom it is sin against a neighbor or a brother. Adam sins against God. Cain's terrible act brings the inquiry “What hast thou done?” but the what or where we are is a great deal deeper in the testimony of the thing than what we have done.

Nothing is more important than to have these two clear before the mind. “I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” This is not what I have done. “By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by sin:” this too is not what we have done; but “we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God” this is what' we have done, that is sins. The right translation of Rom. 5:13 is, “for that all have sinned,” not “in whom.”

The judgment in Gen. 3 was upon Satan, though it was there for Adam to lay hold of. There was no promise to the fallen Adam, no promises to man in sin, any more than innocent. Evil came in by the devil; with man, by temptation. God was over it; this is the reason why He suffered evil and the fall, by reason of a greater good to come in. My answer to him who asks it is, “why, you foolish man, if you had not been a sinner, you would not have had Christ at all.” And this is a true answer too, because it was in God's counsels to introduce and reveal Christ in glory ultimately.

God created not merely stones but moral beings, beings with responsibility; and if responsibility be a fact, there is liability to good and evil, as it means having to answer to Him. To a man in the state described in Heb. 6 there is no restorability: the passage says so. So there is no restorability to angels, because they fell when they were in the good itself. Jude tells us of angels who kept not their first estate.

So Ezek. 28 is commonly, and, I have no doubt justly, applied to the fall of Satan from verse 11. It is not the same as the prince of Tyrus who is judged historically in the beginning of the chapter. “Thou sealest up the sun, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God: every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” Then in verse 17, “thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness,” and so on. Under the figure of the king of Tyro clearly, but under figure, we see this, which goes far beyond the idea of a mere king of Tire and, I doubt not, is Satan. The prince of Tire who was there was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar. On the other hand I see no foundation for the king of Tire representing Adam. Satan “was a murderer and abode not in the truth,” so that he is a fallen being. The meaning of the word “covereth” refers to a cherub and gives the idea of protection, I suppose. There is power and beauty in the creature. These precious stones are here in creation, as again in grace in the priesthood, and yet again in glory in the new Jerusalem. All this diversified beauty from God was upon him, and the light shines from the creature as from the precious stones. We have no detail, for God was not teaching men about Satan. He abode not in the truth, he was not kept in dependence by God's power; and angels fell with him, because it says “the devil and his angels.” Where Adam sinned in the presence of good, it was only natural goodness received from God; he was not in the glory of God in the upper creation.

But other angels fell apart from the devil. For scripture says, they are “reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day;“ whereas Satan roves all about the world now, and others with him, so that they are not in chains under darkness. Jude says, those that “kept not their first estate but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day; even as Sodom and Gomorrah ant. 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.” They, doing evil, are set forth for an example, their condition now being an abiding testimony to their judgment. “In like manner” refers to giving themselves over as the cities did. “The sons of God,” in Gen. 6:2, were angels, just

as in Job “the sons of God” presented themselves before God.

All is confusion everywhere except what grace has done whether it be angels or anybody else; no creature stands when left to itself, and so as to angels we read of “the elect angels.” The good angels are looking on, and therefore a woman is to have her head covered. All creatures have a sphere of responsibility—I do not mean Satan of course, but moral creatures. Verse 24 is to be taken literally: why not? The infidel would refuse it and improve man. You do get relief in a way afterward: so Lamech named his son Noah, and said, “This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which Jehovah hath cursed.” It does not say the curse was taken away; but there was a comfort concerning it. There was a certain testimony to the state of things. The curse is not gone; but it was mitigated in its effect. On the other hand, in chapter iv., Cain was cursed from the earth. He got an additional curse: “The earth shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength.” In the garden Adam did not toil to get food: he ate the seed, and the animals ate the grass; but when driven out, he had to toil to get things to eat— “in the sweat of his face.” Then after the flood seed-time and harvest are secured, agriculture in a way is blessed: not the curse gone, but man comforted, so that I should think it is less work to get things out of the earth now than it was before the flood. It would seem that the end of chapter viii. implies a change; for there is a promise that, though there might be toil and difficulty, “yet neither will I again smite [that is, in the flood] any more everything living as I have done, while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.” He gives sufficient for agriculture, but the seasons remain. In Israel it was not the labor removed, but the amount of blessing on the labor increased. Adam had to dress and keep the garden, and he might well enjoy it.

In the millennium the labor will continue; but they shall not plant and another eat the fruit, and so on. Still the works of their hands go on. The labor does not cease, nor will it be in sorrow that they eat. The earth shall yield her increase, but men must toil to get it. Scripture shows that some part of the earth will be barren, as marshes shall be given to salt. The actual judgment goes no farther than death in this world, and no farther than the body— this mortal body. “Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.” The question of the soul is utterly untouched. Those who oppose the truth as to this identify eternal life with immortality; but when we have eternal life in Christ, we do not cease to be mortal. The whole thing is really a stupid blunder.

I consider that Eve is called “living” there, as being Adam's faith, though you may not lay it down as a dogma. It is remarkable, coming in just after the curse and after the judgment on Satan too. After death has come in, she is called the mother of all living, not of the dying. But it was no object of God to tell us whether Adam was saved or not.

The cherubim are connected with a judicial throne and judicial power, and so always judicial. I speak of it practically so—what judges a thing right as well as what judges a thing wrong. The cherub is always God's judicial authority and power. There were cherubim on the vail in Ex. 26, as over the ark and elsewhere. On the vail it is the symbol of judicial power, so in Ezekiel when He sees them. So it is on the tabernacle: only on the mercy-seat it is judgment for us. It is not merely a throne judging what is wrong, though this is true, but a judgment on my behalf according to what the blood of atonement is. Law takes up man on responsibility; and this is met for me by Another at the mercy-seat. The difference between them and seraphim appears to be that cherubim are

judgment according to the responsibility of man-judgment from God of course; and the seraphim have to do more immediately with God's nature. The only place they are expressly mentioned is Isa. 6, and there they cry, “Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts.” The only other being that is called a “cherub” is the fiery serpent in the wilderness.

There are two elements of judging with God. The first thing is, Have I maintained that which was set up to be? and the other is the Lord's coming when I shall be in God's presence, Can I then stand in the glory of God? can I abide this test then? In Isaiah, we have first in chapter v. “What could I have done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?” that is, as a vineyard, what has it borne? And then, in chapter vi., Jehovah is seen high and lifted up, and how could a man stand in His presence? “These things spake Esaias when he saw his glory and spake of him.” John 12

In the book of Rev. 4, the four living creatures are seen full of eyes before and behind, crying, “Holy, holy, holy,” having the cherubic and the seraphic characteristics too. It is extremely instructive. “And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal, and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind.” So stood the seraphim. “And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle:” this is cherubic. “And the four living creatures had each of them six wings about him, and they were full of eyes within, and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come:” this is seraphic again. Farther on we find the judgment of the beast and of the false prophet, and then God coming out in His holiness at the end. In Israel we have the cherubim all through; and, when Nebuchadnezzar comes, the judgment on man according to his responsibility. The only thing in which we see the holiness and righteousness of God in itself is the altar outside in brass, and inside the blood put on the golden altar. Thus we have the two obligations (or measures, rather) of righteousness. Israel meets God on the ground of what man ought to be outside at the brazen altar; and then when the blood is upon the mercy-seat, the golden mercy-seat of God, there is the righteousness of God as it is in itself. “The Son of man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.” The two attitudes of righteousness in the cherubim are at the gate of Eden, and then upon the mercy-seat. At Eden they bar the way against Adam in judicial righteousness; whereas God was sitting on the mercy-seat, and, though He was not approachable because the vail was there, yet He dealt with man; and, if righteous, He accepted man there; and when the blood was on the mercy-seat, there was that which met the character of God. Therewith God Himself was satisfied, for this was Jehovah's lot. There is more known now, because the vail is rent. Christ's work not only took away my sins, but glorified God in His judicial character. It is His righteousness to justify the believers.

In the garden it was the exclusion of man, but in the cross we find not only the sins borne, but much more; for there is such a work of Christ as glorifies God, as well as puts away our sins. There is Jehovah's lot in full. Towards the poor thief on the cross the Lord will not wait for the kingdom to be set up in grace in the world, but there is a positive going to God where He is. And we have more than sin put away, we have also that which lays the ground for the accomplishment of God's counsels in bringing us in His Son into His presence. This is no part of responsibility; it is nothing of me—putting me into the glory, but the fruit of God's counsels accomplished in Christ. Christ does meet my responsibility by dying; but there is a great deal more than that. His delight was with the sons of men, and He is going to have them in the glory with Himself. Christ glorifies

God; and the answer to that is, that He goes into the glory, and this as our forerunner.

It is only in the kingdom, I take it, that the cherubim pass on into any connection with the church. We get inside the heavenly city; what is judicial would be outside. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, that is, they dwell in their own glory; but the nations of them that are saved walk in the light of it. “We inside, we have the glory of God lightening us, and they outside walk in the light of the city itself. Christ is glorified in His saints, but they who are outside will never see it as we see it inside. So, in the transfiguration, the disciples fear when they see Moses and Elias enter into the cloud. Luke 9:34.

To understand better Psa. 99 which speaks of sitting between the cherubim, let us look at the Psalm from 93 to 100. They are descriptive of the bringing in of the First-begotten into the world. It is a most beautiful series, from the commencement in Psa. 93 to the accomplishment in Psa. 100 Psa. 93 gives the thesis. In the rejection of Christ there was judgment in Pilate, and righteousness in Christ. Taking the world as such, we find the One righteous man absolutely on one side, and judgment in the place of authority on the other; but when Christ comes to reign (ver. 15), judgment returns to righteousness, and they go together. Then it is asked “Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?” There is the cry of the remnant then. In Psa. 95 is the summons to them to return while it is still called “to-day.” In Psa. 96 the heathen are summoned. In Psa. 97 He is coming. In Psa. 98 He is come. He hath showed His righteousness, He hath remembered His mercy. In Psa. 99, having come and made known His salvation, He sits between the cherubim, taking His place in Jerusalem. Then Psa. 100 summons the nations to come up and worship in peace. Moses being the lawgiver and Samuel the first prophet, the Psalmist takes the originators of things in Israel to call upon the name of the Lord.

Notice the psalms also that go before. Psa. 90 opens with “Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.” Israel goes back to Jehovah having been their care-taker all through. In Psa. 91 “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” “Most High” was first stated to Abraham, it is God's millennial name. So what the psalm says is really that, if you dwell in the secret of Abraham's God, you shall have all Abraham's blessing. It is a beautiful conversation, so to speak, in the psalm.

Chapter 104

Hints on Genesis 3-4

In Prov. 8 it is the wisdom of the counsels of God. “Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; when there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water, before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth, while as yet he had not made the earth nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world; when he prepared the heavens I was there, when he set a compass upon the face of the depth, when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the foundations of the deep, when he gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment, when he appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by him as one brought up with him,” as his own beloved nurseling, “and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.” Wisdom personifies Christ there. In Luke the heavenly host say, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in man:” the proof of this was that His Son became a man. We could not have a part in counsels until redemption was wrought; but when it was, we are brought in. Now in Proverbs we see Him always rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth before the earth was made; and so when He comes, He does not take up angels but sons of men.

But in Genesis it is not what wisdom was before the foundation of the world, but the foundation of the world, and man put in his responsibility. In Prov. 8 His delight was not in creation itself and (therefore we have “habitable"); it was in the men themselves. But we have no counsels brought out until Christ died. In the first seven chapters are good and evil, corruption and violence; and then in chapter 8 God's wisdom in His counsels. And in the former chapters you have, too, the divine mind expressed in the relationships that God has formed; it is, “my son, hear my voice,” and so on. It is remarkable it is nearly always Jehovah in Proverbs, while you do not find Jehovah in Ecclesiastes at all.

When fallen, Adam got Christ for the tree of life. So Augustine exclaims, “Oh, happy fault!” that Adam sinned. God never would have been known as He is if it had not been for sin. There would have been no need for grace, redemption, righteousness, that is, as to man. But now, all that God is has been displayed and this in the cross, righteousness of God against sin, the holiness of God, and the love of God. These would not have come out at all, if man had not sinned; and they are the things that the angels desire to look into.

“Prudence” in Eph. 1 is wisdom in putting it all together.

God does not shut the man out until He has covered his nakedness—sovereign grace at the very beginning. It is the intimation that God covers him in mercy.

I have no doubt that death had come in, because it is “skins,” and animals must have been killed; how, it is not said, but this is the case with many things, because it is not the object of revelation. They had made themselves aprons of fig leaves, and still were conscious that they were naked as

ever, for they hid themselves in spite of it. But God clothed them, and then they were not naked at all. It was grace coming in, but only of course the sin thereby covered. And I think there was faith too, because it comes immediately after Adam calling his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living.

But we read, “lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life;” because God would not let him take of it and live forever: that would have given him life in sin. Man might have attempted to countervail the whole thing and to set up the old man thoroughly. Thus the turning out of the garden was more than judgment; it was mercy when we come to think of it. It could not be allowed that man should not die in spite of God. So it was judgment, but mercy at the same time in another way. There would have been no possibility of a flood to destroy or of anything else to put an end to man's wickedness.

Now came Cain and Abel. (Chap, 4) The question is early raised, whether a man can worship God without Christ. Cain was a wicked person; but, as appearance went, he was doing what was right in paying what he owed God. But really it was bringing the sign of the curse; it was going to God as if nothing had happened; it was the most perfect hardness of heart, because, if I come to God at all, why have I such toil and labor? why give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul, except I am away from God and something has happened? The whole thing tells its own story. Man has been driven out, and he cannot come to God on the same footing, as if he had not been put away. When, in the garden, there was any feeling of God, he goes and hides himself; but now, when outside, he goes hardened to God. “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” But how did he know that this was right? He knew of these slain beasts for skins, and he may have had more for aught we know. “By which Abel obtained witness that be was righteous,” was by sacrifice as well as by faith. Both are in the verse, “God testifying of his gifts;” but sacrifice is the least thing referred to.

The man is pronounced righteous. In Hebrews the point is not God giving a thing to us, but faith carries Christ in hand figuratively, and God says “you are righteous.” What is the value and character of my righteousness? I say, Christ. Abel is pronounced righteous: but the measure and character of his righteousness is Christ.

Cain came as the expression of horrible hardness of heart; to him and to his offering God had not respect. So Cain was wroth, and Jehovah says, “Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?”

Should it be “sin” or “sin-offering” lieth at the door? I am disposed to think it a sin-offering: only that the sin-offering is never mentioned historically until we come to Leviticus under Moses. It is in this kind of way, “If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and unto thee shall the desire of thy younger brother be, and thou shalt rule over him; but if you fail to do well, there is a remedy, and therefore you ought not to be wroth.” “Lieth at the door” means crouching. It is not the expression, “It is at your door,” as we say; and therefore I was inclined to take it, “If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?” ("and if thou doest not well,” there is a remedy)—in parenthesis— “and unto thee shall be his desire and thou shalt rule over him.” I have no quarrel with the other, because sin did lie at his door.

“And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? and he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done?” It is not only now the testimony of sin against us, to say what have we done as sinners. But we bear from God, “Where is Christ?” The Holy Ghost is come and convinces the world of sin, but more than this. He comes and says to the whole world, on God's part, “Where is my Son?” Then there is haughtiness too in Cain's reply, “Ami my brother's keeper?” as though why should God ask? Besides this and more, another important principle comes out—the practically self-righteous man rejecting Christ is then turned out; he leaves the presence of the Lord, and dwells in the land of Nod, that is, “vagabond,” where his son is called Enoch, and he builds a city calling it Enoch, too, after his son. Thus he stretches himself in the world, and gives a family name to the town, and the history shows us artisans and arts, and sciences all in the train. He goes out from God and settles himself in the place of judgment, to do his best with it, in open defiance of God. God neglects nothing, and Cain cannot get out of the reach of His hand, of course; but in his own will he was entirely outside. Cain sets to work to make the earth as comfortable as he can without God; Adam did not want all that in paradise.

As to lake dwellings, and caves with stones, hatchets, and many similar things, we have to remember that in New Guinea people are doing the same thing now: how would London like to do so? In Switzerland and Italy they have been finding, covered with bog, and in the lakes, a hundred villages and all kinds of remains—what the people were eating, and what clothes they wore, as round the Lake of Geneva and elsewhere. And they have learned the natural history of those times. There was a stone in a hole that they could not make out, and at last found it was what they wove with. Occasionally they have discovered a thing that came from Phenicia which was civilized at the very time these villages appear to have flourished. In North America, lying under some magnificent trees seven hundred years old, was a piece of native copper or a square cradle put ready to be carried away, with other distinct marks of an earlier civilization than the present.

Civilization does die away in places; but I know of no case of light from God going away and bringing in barbarism.

It was God's providential government when Satan made the Chaldeans go and take Job's goods. If we refer to the sentence on Cain, there was no direct government at all in that, it did not kill him. Man is now left to himself until we come to the second world. God protects him, putting a mark on him lest any finding him should kill him. This I believe to be a figure of the Jews unto this day.

Cain is “I have gotten,” Abel is “vanity,” because he went to nothing. Eve fancied she had gotten this man from the Lord—that this was the promise, while it was only from nature, Cain means “gotten,” Seth means “appointed,” and Abel means “the dying man.” Eve thinks she has the man that can inherit the blessing. It was not so, as we well know. If you take flesh, the Jews were the men from the Lord, and it only resulted in their killing the Lord; first that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual.

Chapter 4:23 may be taken historically and it is true; but typically it refers to the Jews at the end. There is self-will in it every way. Typically it is the remnant of Israel in the last day; but we must not dogmatize about that. Cain is a figure of Israel having killed Christ, and made a vagabond on the earth. At the end the remnant of Israel will own, like Lamech, they have killed this man to their wounding. In the historical sense he kills somebody and says, “I have been touched and I will be

avenged.” If one disputes, I do not. A man once took me to task about a parable and said, “What proof do you give me of its meaning so-and-so?” My answer was, It is like honey which is given you, and you ask me to prove that it is sweet! If you cannot taste, I cannot prove it.

Seth is the man appointed instead of both Abel and Cain. God hath appointed, in contrast with J have gotten, as Eve said of Cain. So now, Seth from God.

Calling “on the name of the Lord” (ver. 25) was dependence; but Cain's family would not own the Lord at all, the appointed man and his family would. In short it is the same dreadful truth as to Cain there as in 2 Thess. 2 Only it will be final by and by. And what is noticeable is that Cain was settling himself in that place without God; it was not so much resistance as independence.

After Seth, the appointed man, comes in, they began to own Jehovah specifically. This is the meaning of “then began men to call on the name of Jehovah.”

As to the discrepancy between the Hebrew and the Septuagint as to the years in chapter 5 I say nothing, save that there is a curious fact in this, that in each of these lives the Septuagint adds a hundred years. Thus “Adam lived 230 years and begat,” instead of 130. This so adds fourteen hundred years to the time of the world, the Samaritan Pentateuch more still. It is not a casual mistake, but done on purpose, for it is to each, and it is only carried down to the point where, if they had gone one more, they would have pushed it over the flood. But there it stops. In Matthew the genealogy is a copy of Jewish records. I do not doubt myself, though it has been disputed since the second century, that Luke is Mary's genealogy. Luke takes it back up to man, but Matthew from David and Abraham, because his reference is to promises. In the Talmud they have got Mary the daughter of Eli.

Then we get afterward the length of years pretty much the same, except Enoch, where stands the important fact that heaven is brought in for anybody that has faith to look at it. God had men for heaven in the midst of all the confusion; as with Elijah, He had seven thousand left that had not bowed the knee to Baal.

Enoch is figure of those caught up, Noah of the remnant of the Jews that go through the tribulation. In Noah the world is comforted, the figure of the millennium.

As to any consecutive meaning in these names, certain people have made something out of them, but I think nothing of this and the like spinning of webs out of the imagination. “We must look for scriptural warrant, at least for the principle; and this is lacking here.

Chapter 105

Hints on Genesis 6-9

We are coming to the world we have been reading about destroyed by the flood. Hitherto it has been the old world with a wonderful series of principles in it, which is the character of Genesis, especially at the beginning Man is seen in his original responsibility (but with a number of figures in it) before God began to deal with him. It is a distinct principle of condition that there were no specific dealings, no government, no law, no nations, no promises, no covenant. There was the revelation or prediction of the Seed of the woman; there was Enoch with a prophecy; but no dealings of God. No miracles were stated.

Afterward we find government put into the hands of man; then the law; and last Christ Himself.

God's prolonging man's life at that time acted instead of writing the word; we see God's wisdom in it so. At the flood we get life shortened by half; and by half again, when the earth was divided and portioned out to the people. It would not do, in the way the world is now, for men to live 900 years.

(1) “the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.” Then comes (2) “when they knew God, they glorified him not as God.” These are two distinct things. They did not heed creation; and they gave God up when known. But Enoch walked with God, or “pleased God,” as in the New Testament it is said. It never so says of Adam, because he walked away from God and did not please Him.

In Gen. 6:3 the Spirit is said to strive with man in the testimony God had given by Noah; He preached by Noah to the spirits, now in prison, of men drowned at the flood.

God gave man 120 years to repent. It was no question of age. Man never got 120 years as a fixed portion, though life was thus long in Moses' time.

Enoch's prophecy was preserved but we know not how. It exists in tradition; but only in scripture have we it given us as it really was. It is preserved in books, and was well known in the second century; indeed they talk about Job borrowing from it. Bruce brought three copies of a book of Enoch from Abyssinia; of course this was an apocryphal book. There is a regular system in it by which the Lord judges, and so on. I have no doubt the book was written just after the destruction of Jerusalem, and against Christians. The writer sees the “tower of the flock,” as he calls it, destroyed; and he could see no farther. He was a Jew writing in favor of the Jews, and talks about perverse men, who were Christians. It has reference to the history of times before the flood; and it has a kind of vision which Noah relates to his posterity, or an angel tells him things. He makes the flood come to the earth because it got a tilt. Enoch's prophecy was preserved traditionally find incorrectly. It is a testimony to show how really the coming judgment was looked for. Bruising the serpent's head is given in a way as coming to destroy the power of Satan.

In chapter 6:11 are the two general characters seen in man; the earth was corrupt before God, and filled with violence. So it will be at the end: Babylon is corruption, and the beast is violence. So with ourselves, we find plenty of the corruption, and of the violence too.

But “Noah found grace in the eyes of Jehovah,” that is, divine favor rested on him; personally righteous doubtless, but all through grace of course. Moses says, “If I have found grace in thy sight;” it is a common expression. In the next chapter God says of Noah, “Thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.” But the earth was completely filled with violence. Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually; if sin comes in, it is sure to ripen up.

God changes His mind, but only as to creation (ver. 6) or the like—never when there is a purpose. It is, if the thing totally changes, that God judges differently about it. So it was now, and therefore God would destroy man. It is not as if some change took place in God, but the aspect of His mind is changed towards an object that has itself changed.

“All in whose nostrils is the breath of life” included man and beast; all go together in that kind of language. Then at the right time God takes Noah with his family, and all enter the ark, “and Jehovah shut him in.”

As to the number “forty,” it seems to me to have the sense of endurance in it. Forty stripes save one is thirty nine; for they need a three-thonged rod, so that they could Only give thirty nine by the law, not to exceed forty. It is a length of duration and trial in that way, testing and patience and endurance. So Moses in his three periods of life. Again, Ezekiel lay forty days on his right side for Judah as a sign, a day for a year according to the years of Judah's iniquity. (Ezek. 4) Jonah's proclamation was. yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown; for, though they did come under the penalty, they were tried. Elijah had been forty days apart, as Israel of old in the wilderness forty years. Here it was till the ark floated.

As to the “two of every sort” in chapter 7 and “seven clean” in verses 2, 3, the first were male and female to keep them alive; when they were clean beasts, he took fourteen. I have no doubt the “clean” were what were customarily given for sacrifices. Who would offer a ravenous wild beast in sacrifice to God, but sheep or oxen? This difference of a provision for the race and for sacrifice is bound up with the different use respectively of God (Elohim) and of the Lord (Jehovah).

The fountains of the great deep were all broken up and the windows of heaven opened, that is, above and below, all together broken up: in what way we cannot tell, but they were. Then we hear of a raven, an unclean thing, which could fly about in this world without difficulty, whilst the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot.

Tisri was the first month, that is, part of September and October. The fourteenth day of Abib was the end of March, as Abib began in the middle of our March and went on to the middle of our April. It was five months that the waters prevailed; and after the end of the 150 days the waters abated, and the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, the waters being two months and a half in running off.

I believe the flood was all over the earth, wherever man was. There is no mistake. People have called the universality in question, using general terms, as if it only covered the inhabited earth. But scripture says, “the mountains were covered,” “and the tops of the mountains were seen,” and so on; this looks like universality. You must let in a miracle in any case: and so it is all one after all. Suppose Mount Ararat, fifteen or sixteen thousand feet high in northern Armenia, was covered, well, if the waters were not all round, and away too, they would have run off and covered

somewhere else; there must have been a miracle anyhow. The universality of the flood, absolute universality, seems to me to be positively meant and intended, because of destroying the world that then was. God puts an end to the whole system of the world. It was as complete a judgment of the earth and all that was on it on the part of God as it will be presently by fire. Everything in the whole order and system of the world that had life perished, “the earth standing out of the water and in the water, whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:” so Peter tells us, and anything that enfeebled it, I should not admit for a moment: all mere physical things are consequent upon it.

Either reject the word of God or else Mount Ararat was covered. As to universal destruction, everything in the world was put an end to. The world that then was is distinct from the world that now is; and this is of immense moral import to us. God says He will never do it again, but the next time it will be by fire. We see from chapter 8:20, that offerings were usual, as they had been from Abel; and it was an act of faith. These were sweet savor offerings; the burnt-offering involves sin, but not so exactly sins. It is not a guilty conscience which brings a burnt-offering as such. Christ comes and offers Himself a sacrifice for sin, gives Himself up to absolute obedience to glorify God; and, the blood being shed, atonement is made; but the burnt-offering is the perfectness of His obedience in suffering everything for God's glory. Sin-offerings were not a sweet savor. The burnt-offering was the glorifying God in that place, taking up the righteousness of God against sin. In the sacrifice of sin-offering, I see positive sins laid upon it.

It is not exactly thanksgiving here, which would be more the character of a peace-offering. It was offering to God a full acknowledgment of Himself, as the basis of renewal after judgment. This is how Noah offered. Through the eternal Spirit Christ offered Himself without spot to God, to be a sacrifice. Many want to make out that He bore our sins up to the cross; but when He offered Himself He was a spotless One, and the Lord laid our sins upon Him. In the two goats on the day of atonement of Jehovah's lot, the bringing up was in order to the slaying; but the slaying followed; and when once it was slain, the blood could be taken in. So I find, after the gift of Himself, He is made sin, or the sins are laid upon Him. Besides the meeting of our responsibility, God was dishonored about sin, and Christ stands in that place of dishonor for God's glory, not merely to put away my sins.

Now it is this that gives the great character to Noah's act. He did not come with a sin-offering as that would have been going to God for his sins, but with a burnt-offering, and Jehovah smelled a sweet savor. Of course there was no possible ground for any blessing except upon the footing of the sacrifice of Christ. Now we have, what we find in the case of Moses, the general coming in of sacrifice in its result as a ground of blessing. In chapter 6 “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of His heart was only evil continually, and it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth and it grieved him at his heart.” Now in chapter 8 when Noah offers, Jehovah smelled a sweet savor, and Jehovah said in The Bible treasury.

His heart “I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done.” The moment the sacrifice has come in, God says, as it were, “If I am to smite the people and to curse them, I must always be cursing them!” Now therefore He goes on to the ground of sacrifice,

because (this is the point) man is so bad. Before, the evil was before God bringing His judgment. Now it is before Him, and through sacrifice, a reason for not cursing the ground any more.

It was so in the case of Moses and the people. “Jehovah said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold it is a stiff-necked people, now therefore let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them and that I may consume them.” (Ex. 32:9, 10.) And then in Ex. 34:9, Moses pleads, “If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Jehovah, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us, for it is a stiff-necked people.” And we know, I know, that sin in me is the ground of my being lost; and yet sin in me is the very ground of my going to God to keep me now that sacrifice has come in. It shows a wonderful character of grace, its overflowing fullness, to give, as the ground of God's being with us, what was the ground of judgment: that is, when once sacrifice has come in.

What is often said of Noah's carpentry is man's imagination. Yet if he had plenty to do, he had plenty of time. But let us bear in mind that, as to preparing the ark, it is not necessary to suppose that he and his sons did it all by themselves. Such things are not much if no doctrine be founded upon them.

In chapter 9 it is said to Noah, “and the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea.” This was not said to Adam.

In Noah it was more power than what is called natural authority, as in Adam. After the ruin of Israel; in Nebuchadnezzar it is another kind of thing, rule wheresoever the children of men dwell; another sort of authority (nothing about animals and fishes and birds there); he had dominion where his empire reached, though he never made it all good, any more than Solomon did.

Then it is found that, God having saved the sons with Noah, men of the second race were brought into blessing. But the life of man slain by a beast, “at the hand of every beast will I require it.” We thus see that God maintains His title to life, even a beast's life. They must come and offer the blood to God. Man had no flesh to eat before He gives it to man. We all know that many are seeking to do away with capital punishment; but what do they care about God? The whole order of God is broken up now. Even a beast killing should die. Verse 6 gives the reason, “in the image of God made he man;” so that it is always true up to the end. Men only think of what fits men; but we have nothing to do with that.

Even Christians who take a very prominent part in the advocacy of the abolition of slavery go along with the world.

Man's life was going to be shortened and the whole system was changed. I am very glad that the appointment is there, so that it is not Jewish.

“In the image of God made he man.” It was despising God's image to kill man. Again, a man was free if he caught a fox to eat it then, not a Jew after the law was given.

It does not necessarily follow that clean and unclean were known, though there is some distinction by Noah in taking in the animals into the ark. There were those or some that were reckoned clean and some reckoned unclean. Cattle and beasts of the field are distinguished to Adam, and you find Abel a keeper of sheep. When Leviticus comes, it limits the offerings to sheep, goats, bullocks, and so on. It may have been instinct in man in a way at first, and that God put His positive sanction

on it when He gave the law.

And now He establishes His covenant, and His bow is set in the cloud, the token of the covenant. That, I take it, is the reason that the rainbow is round about the throne in Rev. 4. It is the covenant with creation seen there as of old in Genesis. Only it is “like unto an emerald.” The presence of the bow in Revelation means God's covenant with creation is remembered that there should not be a flood again. The bow is given to be for a token of the covenant, rather than that it was created then. God might, of course, have put plenty of clouds above the earth without a rainbow. He says, “I do set my bow.”

The moral point at the end of chapter 9 is that the blessing given him is abused to destroy all his competency to govern. Noah gets drunk: this is not exercising authority. Afterward, comes in the wickedness of Ham; “and then blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.”

He cursed Ham in Canaan, that is, in his family: everything went by families now. Shem was the root of God's family, with the name of Jehovah even then attached to it, whose lot it would be to judge the races of Canaan and to take their place.

In verse 27, the “he” is Japheth, who “shall dwell in the tents of Shem,” and Canaan shall be Japheth's servant as well as Shem's.

The family of Japheth pushed out far and wide, and did dwell in the tents of Shem.

As to the color, especially black, I do not pretend to account for it in mankind. The Egyptians were not black; they are always painted in the hieroglyphics red. Their pictures in Nubia are seen with prisoners all black. What Livingstone found in Africa was that, if there was a wet country along with heat, there the people got black. The Portuguese are black in certain hollow islands. As to what people have stated about races, I have no hesitation in saying that there is nothing solid about it whatever.

Chapter 106

Hints on Genesis 10-14

We have had in a certain sense the whole history of the new world as regards Noah and his sons, the altar, his drunkenness, and so on. In chapters 10, 11, you get a statement all by itself, before you come to God's dealings with the world as now commenced afresh.

We have first the history of Noah's generations.

In verse 21 Japheth is stated to be elder son. In verse 5 you have “by these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands, every one after his tongue, after their families in their nations.” There you get nations, which is an immense thing. Then the sons of Ham who stretched from the Euphrates to the Nile and got hold of Canaan somehow.

Chapter 10 is no history, but a survey of the whole earth. There were no tongues or nations at all till Babel; if you try to put this chapter into time, you will go all astray.

Then in Ham you have another principle, and that is a royal conquering power. “Cush begat Nimrod,” who began to be a mighty one in the earth, with beasts first and then with man. He was a mighty hunter, wherefore it is said, “Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord, and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech, and Accad and Calneh in the land of Shinar.” Then Asshur goes out and builds Nineveh. These are the first great monarchies.

“Before the Lord” means just that he was very great; as Moses was fair or beautiful “to God,” and in Hebrews “exceeding” fair. So, too, in Jonah 3, “Nineveh was an exceeding great city,” is a city great of God, in margin and literally.

Then we learn how the dispersion came.

I suppose Eber (ver. 21) is mentioned because the Hebrews came of him. There is another fact in verse 25: in the days of Peleg the earth was divided, and at that moment man's life went down to just half, at one bound. You see it in the next chapter. Eber lived four hundred and sixty-four years, and Peleg lived two hundred and thirty-nine. Here, so far then, we have the history of the world; the world settled and it is all regulated in its general principles, with all the races still going on; then in chapter 11 it goes back to the races, “and the whole earth was of one language and of one speech.” And they set to work to build a city and a tower, that they might make a name; not out of the reach of another flood, as some say, for this is the greatest nonsense possible. It was to be a great central temple to their own name. Babel was in principle apostasy, for it was a name for themselves instead of God. It is man uniting for himself. They say, Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad. They wanted to concentrate themselves there so that they should be all one. And this is just the great idea of the present day. But then the Lord comes down and confuses them, and they are all scattered.

This is followed by the specific generations of Shem until you come down to Abram and a totally distinct line of things. We have had the generations of Noah, a genealogical history, and the generations of Shem are a specific thing besides. In it you find the shortening of life we spoke of,

when the earth was divided.

They went to the east and got a name, they were the direct descendants of Eber. God did not call them Hebrews; it was the other nations. Some take it from Arba in Hebrew, for the word means to come over, because Abraham came over the river.

Languages do blend, though kept apart, and I do not doubt providentially too. We cannot say much about it in England; for we have two or three languages together, Latin, and German, and so on.

Then we go on to Terah. Abram comes first, not because he was oldest, but because he was the important one. All that we have got thus far; we have it is the whole world parceled out into nations, and this comes from the judgment of Babel because man would not be scattered. And you hear nothing of Noah in all this: his power is gone, though he was alive all the time; he lived to Abram's time if you take the Hebrew computation. Shem lived to Isaac's time, who was twenty-eight when he died. Noah died a few years (twelve) before Abram's time.

We have had how the world was settled, and, after Noah has gone from the scene, the nations divided, and the fact of God's judgment confounding their language. The languages we know come, I believe, from Sanskrit or Zend. Latin and Greek, they say, were sister languages, and not mother and daughter (and they call them now Aryan), and all the languages of Europe except the Basque, and so all the northern languages of India. Then there is the Shemitic and that class of languages, the Turanian, the North American languages having been Shemitic made up since. Scythian or Assyrian they cannot read yet.

They have made out the Shemitic and Arian, but not the Turanian. Such are the great roots of what has covered the world.

There was nothing to hinder Moses from speaking Hebrew; the Jews all spoke it among themselves. It is a very child's tongue, not an elaborately formed language at all. Besides God may have made him know it perfectly. They have found an inscription put up by Mesha, king of Moab, the sheepmaster, in an old Phoenician character. The Samaritans still keep nearly the same. When the Jews came back from Babylon, they had only the present Hebrew characters.

Thus the old world is done with, and certain great principles shown, and then the new world is set up, being split up into these nations; and with that the beginning of what will be the beasts, that is, in Babel. Empire was set up in Nebuchadnezzar, but the germ of it is here. And we have the sphere in which God's plans and purposes come out.

Then as soon as we have the world parceled out into nations, peoples, tribes, and tongues, God's providence doing it, the first thing He does is to tell a man to leave it all. “Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will show thee.” (Gen. 12)

Providence is never the guide of faith. God may guide us by providences, and He overrules us and so on; and I may be forced to use a circumstance, or it may come and stop me because I am like a horse or mule that must be held in by bit or bridle; but providence is never the guide of faith. In the case of Moses, was there ever anything more providential than that Pharaoh's daughter should come and take him up, just as he was exposed in the river, to be brought up as her own son? But

this is not the guidance of faith. I may be controlled by circumstances; God may use them so, He will lead the blind by a way that they know not, that is, not seeing.

But the principle here is, that He calls one out—Abram. The first dealing of God, when He had put the framework of the world to work in, is calling one out to work by. And there is another principle; when He does call him out, Abram is the father of the faithful. As we had a bad race in Adam, we have a race of God now. The Jews were the fleshly seed of Abram, but Abram is the head of God's people at large. There is another thing, and that is what all hangs upon: election, calling, and promise belong to this family, and to nothing else. God takes Abram out: this is election. He calls him, and the God of glory reveals Himself to him, giving him the promises. It is not church ground here, but it is grace, election, calling, and promise. These are the first three things.

Election means choosing. And the calling is of those whom He has chosen; it is the making good their election. In “many are called but few are chosen,” the two are in opposition, not as here.

Then Abram is to go out by faith; the necessary consequence when he is called. There is trust in God, believing His word; and so we get upon a new footing altogether.

It is not the old world with just a testimony of Enoch, but God positively dealing in the new world. As the apostle reasons, the first thing after the world is settled is grace, then law after; but now we get into the direct dealings of God, which is an immensely important thing. There was no dealing of God before, except the flood, and this finishes that state. There was a revelation of important principles, sacrifice and so on, but no dealings.

Abram did not go out at first, or rather he went out but did not go in; he left his country and kindred, but not his father's house. “And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan, and they came unto Haran and dwelt there.” Stephen says in the Acts, “after the death of his father,” whilst chapter 12:4, says, “So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him, and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran, and Abram, and Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran, and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came.” In Josh. 24:14, 15, you find the occasion on which God called Abram out—the worship of other gods. All this world had gone into idolatry, and the nations into which God had separated it.

The God of glory had revealed Himself to him, and it becomes quite a new scene. It is all on the earth of course: you get nothing of heaven here.

I believe Abram went afterward to heaven, but here it is, “I will make of thee a great nation,” (not you shall go to heaven) “and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

In 2 Peter 1:3 it is by glory and virtue (it is the dative of the instrument there, not to). He says there is the glory, and you must have the courage to cut your way through to it. In Abram's case the God of glory appears to him; but what He calls Abram by is the land. In the second Epistle of Peter the principle is the same exactly. Only as we have Christ in the glory above to whom we are called, so

Abram was called to go and possess the land. Clearly the force of the word “virtue” there is courage.

As soon as Abram had got to the place that God had called him to, he was obliged to look higher still, or did so however. Our calling and our race are identical; but with Abram, he went forth to go into the land of Canaan and came there, while God did not give him so much as to set his foot on. And so it was he had to look for something else: not that he ever gave up the land.

The city for which Abram looked stood very much as tire glory in Peter practically, but his calling was to the land. Abram found he had to look for something else by being in the land where he had no city, no possession, and he had even to buy a grave in it—that was all. He had a tent, and he had an altar there, but no more. In that sense it is the picture of the life of faith. God says, “I will make of thee a great nation, and thou shalt be a blessing.” He puts him as a center of blessing: “blessed is he that blesseth thee and cursed is he that curseth thee;” and then you get the thing that is insisted on in Galatians, (chap. 3): “in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed,” though we have nothing about the seed here stated; the great nation is the fleshly seed. Abram is the root of the tree of promise.

There is no promise to Abram and his seed as to our blessing, but there was to be a seed like the stars for multitude, but that is not “one.” What you get in chap. 22 is, “because thou hast done this thing,” when Isaac was offered up, “and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.” The promise was given to Abram and confirmed to Christ the seed: it was never given to Abram and the seed, but confirmed to the seed. The offering up of Isaac was the occasion, for then the promise was given in resurrection, and it is confirmed to the seed. You do get Abram and his seed when you come to the land. In Gal. 3 change the order of the words, “Now to Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed,” and he says, “if it be a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulled or addeth thereto,” &c. He insists that you cannot have the law along with Christ: “now to Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed,” which is Christ, and the promise which was confirmed before of God to Christ, the law which was 430 years after cannot annul. When God has confirmed it, you cannot disannul it, nor can you add to it. You must take the promises as they come: this is true of man's covenant, much more of God's.

Another thing is, that the promise was absolutely without condition; the law brought them under conditions, there were two parties to it; but there are not two to this covenant—it is an absolute promise without any condition whatever. “So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him,” and so on. “And the Canaanite was then in the land, and the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land, and there builded he an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him.” There I get another thing: not only God appeared to him and called him, but God reveals Himself to him in the place of promise, and this makes worship. He is in the place promised, though he had not got it yet; and there he builds an altar. Then he goes about to a mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Hai on the east, and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord. There we have Abram's history as the child of faith and as the father of the faithful. The rest of the

chapter is his failure as the child of faith and what comes of it. “And Abram journeyed going on still towards the south, and there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there.” He has not consulted the Lord; but he tells Sarai to say that she is his sister—a kind of picture of the way in which the church has denied her Lord. I think I have found that the woman represents a condition, and a man rather the action in the condition or conduct if you please.

The church is Christ's wife, and has denied its real place and gone into Pharaoh's house. But you will find another thing: the Lord delivers Abram and judges Pharaoh.

“And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south, and Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold, and he went on his journeying from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai, unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first, and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.” Down in Egypt we have no altar, and no calling on the name of the Lord: God takes care of him and watches over him, but Abram is no worshipper there, nor until he gets back.

He goes down to Egypt, forced, as people say, by circumstances, not in the place of dependence or communion: it is the character of the position. You find the same thing in Jacob,' only he came back to Shechem.

Where you get “all the families of the earth,” it applies to us, though that will be really made good in the millennium in another way. Gal. 3:8 says, “The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying In thee shall all nations be blessed: so then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham,” and thus we come in.

The promise in somewhat different terms is given to Isaac and Jacob; but in Abram is the root of the olive tree, and therefore all the great general principles are found. In Isaac the reason is, “because Abraham obeyed my voice,” whilst in Jacob we see God's dealings with Israel, that is, as to mere general principles. And so about Isaac you have very little given except that he is heir of all his father has, and he is brought up and takes a wife. In the case of Jacob after Sarah's death, it is an earthly picture; there is no resurrection glory or the like.

Now you see Abram had been snared a little in going down into Egypt. It looks like providence and provision. But when he gets back, we come to another principle: a person that had been walking with Abram, not by his own faith, but by Abram's, is before us, and that kind of thing cannot go on forever; that is Lot. And they could not dwell together in the land; so Abram gives up everything. Lot chooses the world; he is a believer, but he “sees the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as thou comest unto Zoar: then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan.” There Lot goes and settles, and loses everything he has, because he was a believer. But in Abram's case, the moment Lot has left him, God says to him, “Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever, and I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth,” and so on. It is very striking and definite.

Abram did slip a little into what was not the life of faith in the famine, but Lot went quite astray, and he vexed his righteous soul from day to day. Yet it was no thanks to him that his soul was vexed; if he had not gone there, he would not have vexed it. And he is no witness either. They tell him presently “This fellow came in to sojourn, and must needs be a judge.” He had no business to be a judge in Sodom; and he calls them his brethren. “I pray you, my brethren, do not so wickedly.” His whole place was wrong.

Then again, “Abram removed his tent and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord.” There he is living the life of faith, sojourning, and building his altar where he goes.

Next, we see in Abraham power over the world. Lot has been taken prisoner. The four kings beat the five, and Lot was carried off. Abram arms his servants, comes upon them, gets the victory and Lot's things back. But he will not take from a thread to a shoe latchet; he will have nothing to say to it at all. And then we get Melchizedek, and a millennial picture. You have the heir of faith beating his enemies entirely, and then, looking at it as the accomplishment of victory, Melchizedek comes forth to meet him, and says, “Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand.” It is the final triumph in that way, looked at typically, with Christ as Melchizedek, coming out to bless upward and bless downward: just what Christ will be in that day. Thus viewed, Abram represents Israel, I have no doubt, in that day; but Christ will come with the armies of heaven. The history of Lot comes in here, by the way, just showing that the believer, if in the world (or with it I mean), has no power against it.

Melchizedek's priesthood is special; but we have had an altar before. There is no establishment of a family priesthood yet. Abram as the head was the natural person in the family to be priest, and they were all living in families; whoever was head would offer. Abel was not the head of a family, but he offered, as Noah did; and Melchizedek also.

Here we have immense principles: a person justified by faith, called out from the world, having no altar while in Egypt, and, when back in the land, no possession but only a tent, and with that an altar—great principles of the life of faith; and in chapter 14 a typical expression of what has yet to come on earth, a royal priest at once in Melchizedek.

Chapter 107

Hints on Genesis 15-21

In chapter 15 we find Israel. There is the sacrifice in full first, and then the covenant of Jehovah with Abram, and the communication of special features in Israel's history, the Canaanitish nations to be judged, and limits of the land, besides the prophecy of the deliverance from Egypt. “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterward shall they come out with great substance; and thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, thou shalt be buried in a good old age; but in the fourth generation they shall come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.”

We may notice that all that comes out to Abram after Lot is separated is, I will give thee the land, and thy seed shall be innumerable. Next, in chapter 15, after Lot takes the world, and Abram gives up everything, he then gets the promise a great deal clearer. Abram, having refused the world, brings in God, saying, “I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.” He had in God the two things he would not take from the world. “I am thy reward,” says God; and then Abram says, “What wilt thou give me?” Whatever you think of the request, still the Lord allowed and bore with it, answering him most graciously; just as Peter was the occasion for the Lord to bring out blessed revelations, though Peter was not very brilliant in some respects.

“And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” There you find the great principle of God's ways, stepping in chapter 15 right into Israel's position by faith and death. Abram has no heir. God says His seed shall be as the stars of heaven; it is a numerous seed; and the land again, but more follows. And he gets it all by faith, and by faith righteousness too. It will be seen, if one go through all the uses of πιστε■ω carefully that with the dative in the New Testament it is belief in a person, and ε■ς or ■ν gives the ground of confidence.

Faith is counted to Abram for righteousness; it is the general broad fact that it is imputed or reckoned.

But the ministration of imputed righteousness is a monstrous proposition. If you take it as the value of something imputed, it is the value of faith—just the way Roman Catholics take it, If not so, you must take it that God has counted righteousness because of it, which is the principle; but if you try to make it so much made up and impute you must make it faith that is imputed. Abel. 3 counted righteous according to the value of his gift. Romanists say that faith is counted for righteousness, but charity is greater still.

There was practice of course, but there was no righteousness revealed in the Old Testament. It was prophesied of, but is now revealed in the gospel. All that is stated in the end of Rom. 3 is “the forbearance of God;” and if you ask why He did forbear with these persons' faults, I can tell now because it is all revealed.

Again now there is another character that they had not, and that is “accepted in the Beloved;” and more, as we may learn in the Epistle to the Ephesians, &c.

This is the first time faith is mentioned, though I do not doubt it was there, as Hebrews tells us; but it is the first time it is brought out. And then, too, I find death—God binding Himself by death. We know by Jeremiah, and other means, that death was used to ratify a covenant. So here God binds Himself by bringing in death, but the power of death passes, in a sense, on Abram; it is when a deep sleep comes upon him that he gets the blessing. I see a peculiar character here, because God comes in us by a smoking furnace and a burning lamp. That is, it is light that lights, and also a furnace that burns and consumes the dross, just as we talk of a fiery furnace. Now will God take His place? He tells Abram about his seed, and signifies that He will lead them by a lamp and purify them by fire.

Abram came under a deep sleep, and a horror of great darkness fell upon him. That is, he came under the power of death as to his own condition; it was not actual death of course, but the shadow of it—the type. So we must die with Him. Death must pass upon any flesh for it to inherit the promises.

It says here, “In the fourth generation they shall come hither again,” while in Ex. 12:40 they sojourned in Egypt 430 years; yet Galatians says the law in the wilderness was 430 years after the promise.

But Exodus does not say in Egypt only, but their sojourning was 430 years; the Samaritan Pentateuch, and others, give in Canaan and in Egypt. From the promise to their going down into Egypt was exactly half the time. The words in verse 13, “shall afflict them four hundred years,” is a general statement in this place. Egypt is the great thing. And the “come hither again” is to the land clearly.

Verse 12 may illustrate “Always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus.” Practically it is the same thing—though here it is the general principle, and more like Rom. 6 It is death passed upon him. Flesh, as such, I mean, could not inherit a promise; nor even will Israel in the millennium, except through death and resurrection.

The fowls, in coming down, came to defile it, if possible—that is, the activity of life. It is a mystical scene. Abram keeps it all pure and clean. The broad fact is to keep the sacrifice untouched, the foundation of everything. It was the valley of the shadow of death Abram had to go through.

We have had the seed promised in a general way; and now Abram wants to get it according to his own will in the flesh, and he takes Hagar. (Chap, 16) Ishmael is “he that is born after the flesh,” which is really of the law, an attempt to get the heir on legal ground and take the promises. It was an attempt to get the heir by the flesh, which all came to misery and confusion. Hagar gets turned out, that is, the old covenant.

But when Abram was ninety-nine years old, and there was no hope of seed naturally—his body was now dead—God reveals Himself by His name to him, “I am the Almighty God.” He had never given His name to him before, but now He gives it, taking up in it the character of the dispensation, and then brings in Christ later on. God had reserved Himself, so to speak. We have not Christ in this scene, but the one who is the figure of Christ comes afterward. God Almighty, El-Shaddai, is

the name by which God appeared to the patriarch, the first of His three names—Almighty, Jehovah, and Father, We were speaking of them before.

Chapter 16 is a kind of parenthesis. Abram has got a promise, and tries now to make it good independently of God. But when Abram is set aside, his body now dead at ninety-nine years old, God reveals Himself, and says, I am going to give you a numerous seed, and you must circumcise them, and so on. That is, now that you are viewed as dead, I can do something with you.

God's name is Almighty; but He waits until Abram was virtually dead, and then He has him circumcised, which was the seal of the covenant he had got. Then he gets the promise of the seed, personal seed, really Christ. “And I will bless her [Sarah], and give thee a son also of her.” Abraham falls on his face and laughs, “and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety-nine years old, bear?”

Abraham's was the laughter of joy, I believe; but Sarah is as ashamed of his laughing because it was unbelief. · And the getting a promise of a seed of his own makes Abraham think of Ishmael, that he might live before God.

Then Jehovah comes with the two angels. (Chap, 18) The world must be judged where Lot is, and where in fact the fleshly seed is. The promise of the seed is renewed; Abraham has intercourse with the Lord, hearing the promise of the seed come into this world to be heir of the world: so the apostle says. Then in what follows is the confirmation of the promise, God visiting Abraham and the promise as immediate—of Isaac—of his appearing; and an immediate promise, that God will return at the time of year. Then Abraham is in full communion at the top of the mountain, while the others, the angels, go down to judge the world.

We have the world and Israel in Sodom and Lot, while Abraham looks down upon it all. He is in intercourse with God, but God is there talking with Abraham about what He is going to do with the world. Abraham is called the friend of God; and here it is seen. I talk about my business and what has to be done with my friend, but not of what I am going to do for him until it is all arranged. God does not tell Abraham what He is going to do with Abraham. But the person who has the seed promised completely and immediately coming is in full intercourse with God about what He is going to do with other people.

Then it is beautiful to see the Lord does not judge until it has all got so bad that there were not even ten righteous persons there. If there had been ten, God would have spared the cities. Abraham goes on interceding until this is shown out.

The Lord was there incognito, as we say, until the tent scene is over and the angels are gone, and then it is all open.

While in the tent, Abraham addresses Him with full deference, but the Lord does not come out with this secret until He gets alone with him. Read chapter 18:1-5: Abraham says, My lord, not My lords; he has perfect consciousness that One is superior, and his faith evidently sees through it all. In verses 10, 14, it is “I will return,” in verse 17, “Shall I hide?” and so on. “And the men turned their faces from thence and went toward Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before the Lord,” (Ver. 22.) He sends these two angels and we find them at Sodom directly afterward. Then Abraham calls Him “the Judge of all the earth.” He addresses Him as Adonay (in verses 3, 27, 30, 31, 32), but it is

Jehovah. It may be the administrating power; but Abraham sees who the administrator is. I believe myself that all the appearances in the Old Testament are the Son's.

If Abraham goes as far as he dares, God judges the whole thing, but spares the righteous. He was in the church's place, as Lot in the Jew's place, saved so as by fire. So Noah was in the Jew's place, but Enoch is the church's place in the earlier history.

In what follows we see the origin of the people of the land whom the Israelites were not allowed to destroy—Moab and Ammon.

It is striking here to notice the incapacity for anything definite in unbelief. The very place where Abraham was talking with Jehovah, Lot had looked at as most barren and desolate; but when he sees the cities of the plain burning, he would like to go to the mountain, the place of faith, though first he says he cannot go there. When in the world, you are afraid of God's judgment there; and so Lot, till at length he slips off to the mountain, the place of faith, obliged to get there at last.

In chapter 21 Abraham is seen planting a grove (a kind of boundary of the land, as I suppose), and there we hear of “the everlasting God,” because God was there, the One that secures the land forever to His people. Jehovah is the everlasting God; and when He gives a promise, He is sure to make it good at the end. I believe the everlasting gospel is the Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, that is, the declaration that the Lord shall destroy with power when He comes in judgment. It is the announcement that the hour of His judgment is come, the unchanging good news right from the beginning and onward. Prom the first Christ was to bruise the serpent's head. The Christian has the special relationship, union, as associated with Him who is going to bruise the serpent's head, being thus identified with the King of the kingdom.

As we come to a break now, it may be well to run over the chief great principles of what has been before us. Genesis is an important book in this way, that it contains the principles from which all start; a great deal of instruction as to ways and life and so on comes afterward; but here the framework of the thing. First, there is creation itself; this seems very simple, but in a way it is not, for it is only by faith we know it. None of the heathen knew it, and infidelity now is going back to their darkness, for infidelity is but modern heathenism. In John's Gospel we go before nil that even, for we can say, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him,” and so on.

As soon as the fact of creation is set out in chapter 1, you see the world as the sphere in which God is going to put man, and in which all moral relationships are to be brought out; and first stands the responsible man; then his naming the animals; then his wife given. (Chap, 2) There is thus the creation of this world and of what is in it, creatures and so on, and man as a center and lord of it in God's image, the world fashioned for the purpose, and the rest of God which man never entered into; then follow the relationships in which God set man, to Himself, to the inferior creatures, and to his wife (in which the church is typified). Next man's responsibility is tried by temptation, and we see his utter failure, but the judgment on Satan the serpent, with a promise to the Seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head. (Chap, 3) But the first man is driven out from God, and then he becomes the head of a fallen race, though Eve hopes to get the promise in the flesh—thought she had gotten a man from Jehovah. Then man completes sin by killing his brother, and the world is set up without God; but God gives another and an appointed seed, Seth (when

men called on the name of Jehovah), in lieu of the slayer and the slain. Christ was slain: the world slew Him; but He is coming again in glory; this is what all that typifies. (Chap, 4) Then comes the genealogy of the race of Seth, and one walks with God who is transformed and taken away to heaven. (Chap, 5) Then comes the total corruption and wickedness of man up to the flood, with Noah preserved through it, man and animals too. (Chap. 6-8) This closes the history of the first world. Then Noah founds the relationships of the new world upon sacrifice; but he fails himself entirely; and, having given the prophecy of the world's establishment in his three sons, his history closes. God gives a promise not to bring in a flood any more, but there is no great principle in this that I know of. Government was set up to restrain, but this fails, and it closes Noah's history. (Chap, 9)

Then we see the settling out of the world in nations, from the three sons of Noah. (Chap, 10) There is the world in nations and families, and this happening by the judgment of God upon their setting themselves up to be independent of God at Babel, making themselves a Shem or name. Then we see Abram brought in by Shem’s genealogy, which is merely a peg to hang it on as it were. (Chap, 11) But he is an elect one, called out, and the promise given to him to be the head of God's race in the earth. Then he, having followed the calling of God, is in the place of promise, a stranger and a worshipper; through pressure of circumstances he gets out of that place, loses his worship, gets into the power of the world, but is delivered out of it. (Chap, 21) We have then his entire abnegation as to the world and full revelation of the sphere of promise, or subject of promise. (Chap, 13) Then we see Abram's victory over the world and the revelation of Melchizedek as priest, defeating the victorious kings. (Chap, 14) Thus millennial blessedness is brought in, and this closes that part of the history because you have got the royal priest blessing Israel, and God the possessor of heaven and earth. The broad abstract principles finish with chapter 14.

Then in chapter 15 we see righteousness connected with faith for the first time, and also the promise of the seed, a covenant founded on death, with details of the land. Then in chapter 16 we see a fleshly attempt to have the seed in the flesh. But in chapter 17 grace acts. God reveals Himself by His dispensational name to Abram, giving him promise of the seed and the seal of circumcision on it. “A father of many nations have I made thee.” Confirmation is given, followed by Abraham on high in communion with God, and when the world is to be judged, he is a prophet interceding inside with God. Peter's comment on this is, “the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.” This is down below. So we have Enoch the heavenly man, and Noah the earthly remnant; now we have Abraham the heavenly man, and Lot the earthly remnant. This is a second witness.

Now in chapter 20, though I have a little more difficulty in my own mind about it, Abraham is seen failing in respect of those that were strictly the vessel of promise to Abimelech who was within the land. The Philistines have always that character inside the land, those who were professedly within. It is failure before those who are outwardly in the place of promise, the denial of the truth of the church of God. Abraham says, “she is my sister, and not my wife.” It is only in David's time that the Philistines are rightly dealt with—put down ultimately.

As Lot, by going to Zoar, saves himself in a little city, being afraid to go to the place of faith; so we have in chapter 20 a rebuke put upon Abraham in respect of Sarah, the vessel of promise. The world knows very well that the church ought to be for the Lord.

In the next chapter (21) the son of promise is born, and legalism, or the legal covenant, with the child of flesh is cast out, that is, Hagar and Ishmael; now Abimelech or the Philistine, who is in the place of promise, the son being born, becomes subservient to Abraham. The borders of the land are given. Abraham figuratively takes possession of the land of promise, and worships. He plants a grove too, the only time he ever does so. He was only in a tent before; now he plants a grove, which was Abraham's act, but had specific reference to the seed and taking possession of the land.

After chapter 14, the place of the break really, because there we get to the millennium, then come the details in connection with Abraham's conduct and the promise of the Seed.

Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac at mount Moriah begins a new service.

Chapter 108

Hints on Genesis 22-50

CHAPTER 22 gives us Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac at mount Moriah, and thereupon the promise confirmed to the One Seed, not to the numerous seed, but the promise of blessing to all nations in chapter 12 confirmed to the Seed; and this after death and resurrection, which gives us a completely new principle.

Abraham has given up the promises according to life here, and taken them in resurrection, “accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure.” (Heb. 11) All was taken up in resurrection, founded upon sacrifice to God.

Then in chapter 23 just as the old vessel of promise dies, Sarah is not the church now in any sense, but the Jews; the vessel dies, that is, Israel is really set aside.

Isaac being the heir of everything, Abraham sends down what represents the Holy Ghost—Eliezer—to get a wife for his risen son. Isaac is on no account to go back to the old land; he represents the risen Christ.

So Abraham sends down his chief servant to get a wife out of the place of his own family for the heir of promise. Eliezer confers gifts on her and brings her out, all things being given to the son and heir. Abraham sends his other son away, but Isaac's wife is brought into the place of the vessel of promise, Sarah's tent.

That is all the history of Isaac. (Chap, 24)

The Jews were the vessel of promise, and now the church has become so.

When we come to Isaac old and blind, the history leans really on Jacob. We have done with all the first great principles of faith, and the risen one, Isaac, and we find the Jewish history in Jacob. It is the history of Christ in a way all through, but the history of the heir in connection with the earthly promises; whereas Isaac was figurative of the heavenly ones. Jacob gets a wife in Padan-aram the house of Bethuel his mother's father, but Abraham tells Eliezer, “Beware thou, that thou bring not my son thither again.”

Then we get Jacob, who is a poor sample anyhow, but who values the promise, though for the earth, while Esau does not, but forfeits his birthright. It is by grace Jacob comes in because he had no title, Esau had title but in the election of grace the elder was to serve the younger. In point of fact it comes about by the profanity of Esau, while Jacob does value it though the means by which he got it were evil.

That is a great lesson. We now have to do with the means. God secures the result, and all we have to say to is the right means. Isaac could have crossed his bands, or in many a way have acted under God's control, just as Jacob did afterward with his own grandchildren, without his going and listening to his mother and deceiving. Then we have the renewal of the promise to Isaac; at the same time he is forbidden to go down into Egypt. He has never anything to say to the

world in his Isaac character. He is not to go into it himself, but his wife is to come out of it. Alas! he follows his father's example and denies his wife, not in Egypt, but in the place of the Philistines. It was his failing in the place of promise. I think you get Isaac upon lower ground altogether: he digs up again the wells his father first dug which the Philistines had stopped, and then surrenders them. You get decay, besides denying his wife; but when he comes into the place which God had given as a limit, to Beersheba—there they have to own him when he is within his limits. Before it was a contention with the spirit of the world where he was, and he has to yield.

Now we get Esau and Jacob, and Jacob gets the blessing as he got the birthright, still by deceit. As we saw before, Jacob does go down to get his wife himself. I have no doubt that Leah represents the Gentiles and Rachel the Jews. And we are down upon the earth, we find Jacob looking for blessing here, and be promises tithes. (Chap, 28:22.) And God does take care of him, but this is not enough. He goes acting with duplicity towards man. It is worse than earthly ground indeed here, though God still takes care of him.

If Jacob at all represents the Lord here, it is not in his conduct. He loves Rachel who represents the Jews, but he gets Leah instead of Rachel, and is there paid in his own coin. At the present time Gentiles are being blessed instead of Jews. God blesses Leah; but then you must mark all the wretched course of the low state of faith. Laban cheats him and he cheats Laban. There was faith in a sense, but faith going through a thoroughly carnal way to get the blessing. Then Jacob runs away. God does take care of him, and brings him back to the land, as He will bring back Israel. After he had been a slave twenty-one years, He brings him back with his children. You get Mizpah or Jegar-sahadutha or Galeed, and much instruction in it all, for the Lord takes care of the believer; but where he walks in this low carnal way he is chastened through and through; twenty-one years a slave-cheat, and 13 cheated; he believed and got to be believed; but his means were carnal, and it was discipline in every possible way because he walked carnally. Then Esau is coming, and poor Jacob again lies, sends all the troops before him, flocks and so on; God sends two hosts of angels to meet him; but how little of real faith! He sees God's hand and says, “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant: for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.”

You see the arrangements; you see all the weakness of this carnal system, though he did trust God in the main. It was all a low kind of life. God does not allow Esau to touch him, yet he says, I cannot overdrive the cattle a day or they will all die, “let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant, and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me, and the children be able to endure until I come unto my lord to Seir.” Yet he had not the most distant idea of going to Seir. Then having sent away the cattle he remains behind. (Chap, 32:23-24.) “Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the break of day.” God, who would not allow anybody to touch him, takes him in hand Himself, wrestles with him, gives him grace to overcome, but will not reveal Himself, and makes Jacob halt all his life. It is all discipline, though there is blessing. Jacob gets blessing because he believed in the promise.

It is very hard in Jacob's story not to get into detail. You get a great deal more experience in one who is walking badly than in one who is walking well; you have not a bit of all this in Abraham. But it always is so: in ups and downs a great deal more of what you call experience, if not walking well. The other's life is much simpler. All was given. All in a word in Enoch's case, “He walked with God,

and he was not, for God took him." Mark the difference again between Abraham and this: Abraham is up on high interceding with God for others, and Jacob down at the brook wrestling for himself. Jacob was a prince with God and prevailed; but it was God wrestling with him and would not reveal Himself. Abraham interceded for others, and wrestles for nothing for himself: whereas Jacob has to contend for himself to get the blessing. He did get the blessing, for there was power through grace. Then another thing: he goes and builds an altar, making another blunder, buys a piece of land, and so on. Abraham bought a sepulcher: that was all. Jacob settles in the place; then these wicked people propose to marry and go on together. The altar he built he called El-elohe-Israel, God the God of Israel, with difference from his former altar. God had given him strength to prevail, but He did not reveal Himself to him: there was power given in the conflict, but no revelation of God. And then come all the affairs of Dinah and Simeon and so on, all bad together; whereon God says to him, Do you go up to Bethel: this was where he started from.

God says, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there, and make there an altar unto God that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother." The moment God says so, out comes what Jacob knew all the time he had never done with: there was a quantity of idols in the house, and now he thinks of it; it is not that he did not know of it, for he did, but there is no real putting away of idols until we get into the presence of God. Observe, when the idols are buried, the first thing God did was to tell him His name. He did not before, but now that is the first thing: "God appeared unto him" and said unto him, "I am God Almighty," the name He had given Himself to Abraham. And then, though the intercourse was short and there was no intercession for others, God went up from him just as He did from Abraham. You do not get here as much bright blessing, but God does reveal Himself now and talks with Jacob and does not wrestle with him. This brings us back to the history of Israel. Jacob goes through humbling discipline, and at last God is revealed to him; then in Rachel's dying who represents Israel (she had borne Joseph, figure of Christ) we have Benjamin, that is, Christ going to the right hand of God. Rachel called him Benoni, son of my afflictions; but his father called him Benjamin the son of my right hand. "When this man was born, then Israel (Rachel) was cut off, but his father takes him as son of the right hand of God. But Israel is ended in that character entirely.

Next, the world is seen set up in power before ever God's people are (that is, Esau): no want of kings and dukes there. That closes the history of Jacob really.

Now we have the history of Joseph, that is, in the main. His brothers, Jacob's sods, were a good-for-nothing set as ever were; and Joseph with all his dreams, and interpreting, gives us "the wisdom of God," but himself a despised one. Soon after we get him manifested as "the power of God." He is a distinct figure of Christ, rejected by his brethren, sold to the Gentiles; shows himself there, the patient godly one, and having the wisdom of God, while he is the delight of his father too; and then he is exalted to the right hand of power.

It is a well-known history. Everything in the world (Egypt) is ruled by him, and in that character he receives back his repentant brethren, and puts them into the first place in the world; that is, Israel. In the middle of all that, you get Judah going on with wickedness in chapter 38: really it is the genealogy of the Lord Himself in flesh. And that is the whole history until you come to Jacob going down to Egypt, and that type closes (never run one type into another), and there he dwells in the land of Goshen. Still Jacob looks to the land as the place of inheritance to be buried there; and,

remark, Joseph becomes the first-born, the heir; the birthright is his. It is Christ in that character. It is said so in terms in 1 Chronicles that the birthright was Joseph's. In chapter 48. Jacob crosses his hands to put the sons rightly in their place; as in chapter 47 you see how he could bless Pharaoh, though without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. Thus Jacob blesses the king of the earth.

Then you find the blessing of the children of Israel, and I think that of Jacob is a general view of Israel. The blessing of Moses is much more historical. This is general, and down to Dan, with the exception of Zebulon, you get present blessing. The place of strength and power was in Judah; though it goes on after all with failure, Judah was in the place of power and that is judgment in one shape or another; and then in Dan you find the power of evil. Outwardly Dan lost his place and had no place. I suppose the apostasy is connected with it. The Jews had a tradition that Antichrist will be of his tribe.

All is failure in Israel until you come to “I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah.”

Reuben, Simeon, and Levi are corrupt and violent, Judah is connected with God's purposes as to the royal stock; Zebulon, a haven of ships, and Issachar, a strong ass burdened, are linked with prosperity in commerce with the nations, or Gentiles; then Dan is to judge his people. Thus when Israel joins with the Gentiles in that way (Zebulon and Issachar) you get the serpent brought in; and then Gad is overcome but overcomes at last; and then all is power and blessing after that in Ashar and Napthali, in Benjamin and Joseph.

It is the history of the tribes of Israel divided into two parts. All is failure first, and then abundant blessing.

At the end (chap. 1) whatever power and magnificence Joseph had, his heart is in Israel; and he waits for his bones to be taken up when they should go back to the land, for they had buried Jacob in the land, and he passes in faith over the Egyptian bondage and looks on to their return to Canaan.

Chapter 109

Helps and Hindrances to Worship

(1 Cor. 14:15-26.)

We have already seen, first, the necessary condition of those who are called to worship. The Lord Jesus, the Son of God, Himself, expressly lets us know that the Father is seeking worshippers, and that the true worshippers are such as by grace worship the Father in spirit and in truth, that they are not only His children but have the Spirit of adoption given whereby to cry Abba, Father. We have seen, secondly, that God is made known in a two-fold manner as object of worship: first of all, in the relationship of Himself as Father; secondly, according to His moral nature as God. The Father is the nearest and most intimate relationship in which it is possible for Him to be known; but it is also needful to worship Him as God, lest there should be a forgetfulness either of His moral nature or of His divine majesty. We have now to enter into a little more detail of a practical kind in order to deal with the third part of my subject: “helps and hindrances to Worship.”

You have already gathered, I trust, clearly, what can scarcely be called a help, since it is the necessary power for worship. Still it may be well for me to touch again on it to-night, because the hindrance from ignorance as to it or unbelief about it is of the greatest importance. I mean the presence of the Holy Ghost, and it is not merely to touch the question of a so-called gift of the Spirit—for I speak now of His acknowledged presence. Clearly this is a capital truth in the matter now before our minds. It connects itself with the very being, not well-being only, of the church. So the Apostle Paul says in Eph. 4:4: “There is one body and one Spirit.” And none will ever be found to have a just acquaintance with the truth of the Holy Ghost in relation to the Christ and the church who have not been taught of God its nature as Christ's body and God's habitation.

So far from this, all attempt to sever the Holy Ghost from Christians and the church issues in errors of the most dangerous character, though perhaps in different, I might say opposite, directions. Where the Spirit is severed from Christ and the church, it then becomes a question of quakerism or of clericalism. The church is either ignored, or it is practically a matter of clergy as the men who assume exclusive possession, with perhaps even control, of the Holy Spirit of God. The one makes the Spirit to be the universal endowment of man, apart from faith or life eternal, and thus blots out the existence in principle of the church of God in which the Spirit dwells as His temple apart from the world of unrenewed men; the other denies the privileges and responsibilities of God's assembly in effect by the un-scriptural invention of the clergy as the one channel of His public and orderly action, the guide of worship, and of authority in discipline. They are thus, if errors at all (as I am sure they are), serious and destructive. I am not now thinking of the issue of souls, but characterize by the word “destructive,” that which is opposed to the will and glory of the Lord Jesus, which surely ought to be of all things dearest to the children of God.

It is not only then the principle of a clergy (I do not mean ministry or the exercise of a divine gift, for this is of God) which is so grave; but there is another form of error, that is apparently nearer the truth, but I think even more distant still, namely, the idea of the Spirit of God being given to every man without exception. The word of God most explicitly shuts out both these wanderings of men's

minds. Nowhere in scripture is there such a thought as the Spirit given to man as man. Contrariwise He is given properly and exclusively to the believer.

And here it is we see the importance of distinguishing between the new birth and the gift (δωπ■α) of the Spirit. No man receives the Holy Ghost when he is first awakened to God, but as a believer invariably. He is quickened as a sinful man; indeed, if it were not so, he never could be brought out of his wickedness. God deals graciously with him, spite of a rebellious history and all the evil of his nature. Thus is he born again. He repents and believes in Christ; but the Holy Ghost is given to him, never as an unquickened, always as a quickened, soul. Such is the uniform doctrine of the New Testament. “In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.” I do not attach any great importance to the question of the length of time that elapses since they believe; for though only a minute, it is just as real as if it were seven years. It is the believer that receives the Spirit of God. It is the son that receives the Spirit of sonship, that he may have the joy and power of the relationship. But he is already God's son by the faith of Christ; and because he is a son, he receives the Spirit of adoption.

Now this is of great importance in the subject before us, because it is not the simple fact of being quickened on which worship turns, but of the possession of the Spirit. All the children of God that rest on the Lord Jesus in peace, according to God's word—all such have the Holy Ghost. But they may be much hindered by wrong thoughts. The Holy Ghost has thus to do with the soul, when a man has judged himself, and has found in the Lord Jesus and His work all that he wants. He is, therefore, brought by the Spirit to judge himself before God, receiving the Son of God and life in Him.

Such a one submitting to God's righteousness then receives also the Holy Ghost.

But now, as we have seen, comes another, and a very important connection with our subject; the bearing of this on worship. Now I affirm, that according to the doctrine of the New Testament the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven is the active agent and power of all that is for the blessing, and direction, and instruction of the church, and also for the worship of God. It is He who, present in the assembly of God, acts among the children of God, and produces adoration, draws out the hearts in thanksgiving for the mercy that He has shown, and in praise for what the God and Father of Christ is and has revealed to them in His Son. This is worship accordingly. Hence the Holy Ghost cannot be rightly or reverently called a help. He is really the one and only power of carrying on worship in the church of God according to His expressed mind. So we find in the New Testament that worship was invariably conducted, not by a few, still less by only one individual acting for the saints; it was the common joy of the saints of God expressed according to the sovereign and free action of His Spirit in the saints. Hence, therefore, with Christian worship we in due time find the assembly or church of God. Neither can the assembly with propriety be called a help. The one body and one Spirit are the necessary conditions of worship.

These two things, I repeat, are found in order to it: the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; and, again, the Holy Ghost acting not in the individual as an exclusive mouthpiece of praise to God for a congregation, but by whom He will in God's assembly. Still less is there such a thought as man at large—fallen man—invited to draw near and take part in addressing and blessing God, as if capable of worship: a most offensive notion and wholly opposed to all the holiness, grace, and

truth of God. I cannot conceive anything more foreign to the plain facts of the New Testament than the idea that the Holy Ghost was given to man as such. The Holy Ghost was given, to man indeed, but first to Christ who knew no sin, and then only to those that believe in Christ. So far from this, He is only given to man when he takes the place of one dead before God, when he has come to recognize the great truth of Christ dead, the only hope for fallen man. But, then, in no case is the Holy Ghost given to a man as man, but to the man who is born again, when he has called on the name of the Lord as one needing the Savior, and thus confessedly dead before God, lives unto God as one henceforth dead to sin. Therefore it is that, as a matter of fact, until God brought out this great truth, there was no such thing as the gift of the Holy Ghost, which draws out the Christian in worship.

In fact, Christianity only began with the manifestation of these profound truths. In Old Testament times there was no such state of things. Then man was under probation; now there is an end of it, and man is lost or saved as to his soul. Supposing man has been proved guilty of every sin and iniquity, what is the use of trying him any more? Such is the sentence which is now pronounced on man under the gospel. The whole race is declared by God to be in this condition. No one can. or would deny that from the beginning there have been saints, that is, souls that were born of God. But now that the Lord Jesus is brought out as the second Man, the last Adam; following Him there is the gathering out from the world of those who, both in nature and position, are according to the truth in Christ a new creation. They have derived their new character from Christ risen from the dead.

But, further, the Holy Ghost comes down from heaven to act in this new order of things, in this new creation that God has thus produced, founded on Christ the Lord. Therefore the notion of a clergy, an especially consecrated class, distinct from God's children, thoroughly carried out in popery, is utterly false. There one sees the pretensions of man to act as God. On the other hand, we have the opposite error in what is commonly called quakerism, that is, the Holy Ghost given to man as man; and of the two I think quakerism is, if possible, the more revolting. The whole theory is fundamentally evil and erroneous. I am speaking now not of the moral qualities of many Friends but only of the system of quakerism. It is well known that their doctrine on this grave subject is that the Holy Ghost is given to all mankind, to a Jew or a heathen, to an infidel, a Turk, or anybody else. Now I call this of all doctrines professed by Christians the most opposed to the truth of Christianity. Can anything be more offensive? For the teaching of the New Testament as to this is plain: namely, the Spirit is given neither to a man, nor to a caste of men, on the one hand, nor to the race universally on the other; but to those only who stand in Christ. Again, the Spirit, who is the seal and earnest of the individual Christian, baptizes them into one body. Thus may all see that there is one body and one Spirit.

But as for the application of this truth to the matter of worship, let us turn to 1 Cor. 14. It is the just and the fullest statement throughout the New Testament how God intended His will in this respect to be carried on. The apostle writes thus: “What is it then? I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the Spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? for thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.” (Ver. 15-17.)

We see from this and much that follows that hindrances to worship were very early brought in. Hence we can learn that it is not merely the absence or the presence of power that is connected with it. There can be no question of the power that was with the Corinthians. It is a great mistake when we hear people talking about Christians without the power to worship. If they have the Spirit, they have the power. There is another and a serious question to consider, the allowance of fleshly motives that makes the coming together a dishonor to God. But it will not do virtually to reproach the Spirit of God with the blame of it, as all seem to do who sanction the question, Have we got the power? The Holy Ghost is faithful, and has never left the church of God. He is always in and with us; He is present to guide and help the saints. It is no question of power, for the Christian has the Spirit to carry on the worship of God. It is rather the power of unjudged flesh which hinders the Spirit of God, and consequently dishonors the Lord Jesus.

So it was in Corinth. There was the fullest proof in that city that it is no question of power. The Spirit of God wrought among those saints manifestly and mightily. They spake with tongues, we are told; but they were carnal. They were in their ways a spectacle of shame, instead of being a practical testimony to the grace of the Lord Jesus. Is not this a solemn lesson to us? We ought to be jealous for the glory of the Lord, and most watchful against anything that would detract from that witness to Him we are called to give as God's children. Now the Corinthians had forgotten this; and the apostle reproves them, “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” (1 Cor. 14:18, 19.)

These philosophic Corinthians were occupied with the power they had received from God instead of seeking His glory. So the apostle has to take them to task as children. He says, “Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that they will not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? but if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.” (Ver. 20-26)

I refer to this not as if worship were the only matter for the assembly, but to show that it has a real place therein, and because we see clearly both what the will of God is, and the way in which His will was hindered. The will of God was that the church should come together as His assembly to the glory of the Lord, and when they come together the Spirit would act in that assembly by this or that one in their midst, leading one out into prayer, another into thanksgiving, another into prophesying. But all must be under the hand of the Lord. This was the ground taken. The Corinthians overlooked this, because of pre-occupation with powers conferred, and slipped aside. They brought into the assembly what, if it was the power of the Spirit, was His power wrongly used for self-display, not in order or for edification. Thus the very carnality of the Corinthians becomes, in the grace of the Lord, the means of great instruction to us.

The Corinthian church was in painful disorder; and I ask you Have you profited by it? It is a poor sign of repentance, or moral profit, where men only see the faults of others; rather is it the invariable sign of a heart that is not right before God. Where there is an unexercised conscience, there may be an eye keen and sharp enough in detecting other people. But if you desire to walk with the Lord, I ask you Have you learned His will? Where has God laid down, do you ask, the manner and order of the Christian assembly, how He Himself is to be worshipped in it, and how His children are to be edified? I answer, in His word. There can be no doubt what the will of God originally was for the church. Have we deliberately made up our minds not to seek His will for our worship now? Let us consider the undeniable facts, in the plain word of God, as to this.

I am speaking now in no mean city where Christianity abounds: at least one sees representatives of many denominations. But where, I ask you, among them all is faith in God's word and Spirit as to worship? Where do you find the Holy Ghost left to act freely among the assembled saints? Some may object that, if this were so, it would result in all sorts of disorder. What, the word and Spirit among God's saints lead to disorder! Is it not rebellion to refuse subjection to His will? The Corinthians were disorderly because they slighted it, and their correction is God's rule for us. And it is a far greater sin in the face of such scripture to set up a human order subversive of God's, than even to be as disorderly as they were. Where Christians are gathered to the Lord's name, God is there to set crooked things straight. But if they depart from the scriptural regulations of His assembly, in dependence on the Holy Spirit, it is no matter how admirably the substituted order may be conducted, it is a false state of things. No reform can set right what is radically wrong.

Do you question the facts? or misunderstand the case? I am bound then to explain. You object that the present lecture justifies the ways of modern Christendom. Supposing, for instance, you say we look at such a meeting as this: it is not left to the Holy Ghost's sovereign action in the assembly. Granted: no one contends for blotting out preaching of the word or discoursing to saints. We are not assembled now for worship, &c. One who has received from the Lord Jesus is using his gift for the good of Christians. Thus we are not shut up to one mode or, resource of action. Ministry is not the assembly, although gifts may be exercised there, but not there only. The word of God shows both to be divine without confounding them. There were individuals endowed by our Lord with power from on high to expound, exhort, teach, &c.; and they are not only free but bound to do so: they wrong Him and the church, if they do not. But the exercise of ministry on individual responsibility is quite distinct from the assembly where all come together (gifted or not) in dependence on the Spirit. If I have a gift from God, or what is called in the parable of Matt. 25 such or such a “talent,” I ought to go forth as Apollos or any other of old. God's word is plain; the Lord's call is binding. Woe to the man who refuses! The principle is just the same, whatever the measure or nature of the gift from the Lord; it may be for edifying the saints, or for the conversion of souls.

It is on this principle that all individual ministry is exercised, and therefore one should never find fault with any truly gifted for ministering to the church, or with others who labor to disseminate the gospel, using their gifts among souls converted or unconverted. On the contrary, one would desire to see more and more liberty, more and more power, more and more sense both of dignity and of responsibility in those who thus labor in the word.

But besides all this, and if possible more important still, is the assembly of God, their coming together as such in dependence on the Lord's presence and the free action of the Holy Ghost in

their midst carrying them on either in the worship of God or in the edification of one another, perhaps both conjointly. Is this not a part of scripture obligatory on the Christian assembly to the end? Are you prepared to reject God's word as to this for old or new tradition? It is objected indeed that the Epistle to the Corinthians supposes there were tongues and other extraordinary powers. But the absence of tongues, &c, can never nullify God's word for all that abides. Have you given up this Epistle, as God's principle? If you are not acting on this word of His, you are acting on man's, on a mere innovation, in short you are clearly fallen into departure from scripture; and in this at least are not doing the will of God. No wise Christian looks for sign-gifts as things are; but their absence and consequently the non-application of what regulates their action in the assembly cannot efface for faith God's principle and regulation of all that remains.

Along with the fact that there is the one body as well as the one Spirit, there is the responsibility that God's assembly should give itself up to the Lord, in dependence on the Holy Ghost; that the assembly should come together looking to the Lord to work in them by the Holy Ghost. This is all one contends for; and every intelligent Christian must contend for this, or give up his profession of cleaving to apostolic authority and order. God's assembly with His Spirit freely acting in the midst is the essential condition as regards Christian worship. You may say that in the present ruined state of Christendom one can only have it in an imperfect condition. But this is the will of the Lord for all His saints; this is the one scriptural view of God's assembly meeting here below. There were certain outward powers or signs, gifts that have lapsed or been withdrawn from the church. As to this I am far from agreeing with those who, particularly in this part of the country, some years ago, fell into a great delusion by yearning after the revival of miraculous vouchers and tokens. To my conviction, as the church is now, it was an unspiritual thought, and an unholy desire. The children of God would have shown a truer sense of what is due to God by humiliation in sackcloth and ashes, by repentance, and so seeking the path of obedience in the waste, rather than by wistful aspirations after these outward displays of power which once adorned the church as the vessel of Christ's glory. I believe, if there had been a deeper and more just judgment of our fallen estate among the children of God; they would have been kept from this error and been, spared the terrible dishonor of the Lord's name that ensued, not only in wildfire and demon power but in false doctrine as to Christ.

They were right in feeling the Babylonish confusion of Christendom; but they ought to have ceased from all they knew to be contrary to God's word, and they ought, while humbling themselves for their own sin and that of all in setting Him at naught so long, to have praised Him for the presence of the Holy Ghost, and asked grace to act on it without anxiety or hesitation. But no, they were in the same unbelief as others, and prayed for Him to be given afresh, as if He were not sent down to abide forever, and hence they fell into even greater abominations than the rest, as they saw the evil more, and yet set up higher pretensions, with no faith whatever. For nobody doubts what is the Lord's will as to the Christian generally. Instead of doing it and abstaining from all inconsistent with it, they prayed for extraordinary power, and had the audacity to set up apostles, prophets, &c, once more, as a revived system.

Now it ought to be plain to any spiritual mind that such a revival could not be in our present ruin. If the Lord gave the public signs of faith to all, it would sanction the wicked, divided, faithless condition of Christendom; if He gave to you only, it would be a practical denial of all His saints elsewhere. Impossible that the Lord would do either. He continues all the gifts needful for His work

in man and in the church; but He would deny neither the faithful presence of His Spirit on the one side nor the ruin-state of Christendom on the other, as this delusion in effect denied both. He did pledge all that was necessary for perfecting the saints, and He has fulfilled it; He did not pledge Himself either to continue or if possible still less to restore, a series of sign-gifts, and He has done nothing of the sort. It was only a false appearance brought about by the enemy in a very presumptuous sect. Indeed no holy person could conceive the Lord bestowing such gifts indiscriminately any more than to a party.

For, if we test it, where can we conceive the Lord would begin? In Rome? “Oh!” says some good Protestant, “this would never do, give them to Rome!” Yet be assured that there have been not a few who, even in that idolatrous system, have lived and died in the Lord—nay, I believe, been not only pious laymen but priests, and monks, and popes. Yet you will all rightly feel that if the Lord were to vouchsafe the wonderful signs of His spiritual power, throughout that idolatrous system, it would seem His sanction of its iniquity.

Suppose in the next place that He gives powers to all. I do not know how many denominations there may be: still He gives them to all the denominations! “Oh, no,” some zealous Plymouthist would exclaim, “this would never do; it would sanction denominations contrary to His word.” To whom then could they be given? To the Plymouthist so-called? Let me tell you that the “Brethren” in question have just enough to do to be kept themselves aright; and I am perfectly persuaded that, if they could have had these powers given to them exclusively, there would be an intoxicating cup administered, ruinous to the Lord's glory and to their blessing. To my firm conviction nothing could more falsify all that we own to be His mind. We do confess the one body and one Spirit; we do not deny our present ruin-state, but mourn it. I would not, if such a thing could be, have for myself or desire for any saint, what would exalt us to the depreciation of the truth or to the ignoring of others, no less members of Christ than ourselves, but above all what would lower and misrepresent our Lord. There would be the utmost danger, yea, the moral certainty, of their becoming what their worst enemies say they are now. It would directly tend to their denying the Christian name to all other saints, and it would practically deny their testimony to the ruin of that which bears the Lord's name here below. Therefore, as it appears to me, when the Lord saw all going to ruin, He righteously and in wisdom discontinued those external powers.

The Lord Jesus said in Mark 16 that these signs should follow; but He never said how long they were to last. They did follow them that believed; and there is the simple truth of the matter. For their continuance or revival you have no divine warrant.

If you, brethren, believe in the presence of the Spirit of God, it will be no question to your minds but clear and sure that. He acts by whom He will in the assembly, as certainly as by individuals in the way of ministry. It is as important as it is true, that the ministry is a permanent and divine institution; but, then, the same Spirit, who thus works individually, works corporately in the church. Do you doubt the competency, or willingness of the Holy Spirit to maintain order in the assembly? Suppose, for instance, it were only a human company: a gentleman asks a dozen of his friends to his house for dinner, what, I wonder, would be thought, if anyone were to say, “It is a very dangerous thing to have these twelve persons at dinner; I am afraid there must be grave disorder.” You would feel that this would be rather strong language; and if men can feel confident that at a decent table there need be no distrust of propriety, can Christians doubt that the Lord would give

order among God's children meeting in His name? Is God the author of confusion? What is it that accounts for such thoughts? The unbelief of the world, which neither sees nor knows the Holy Spirit, the fear that God's children will be actuated only by fleshly motives on such occasions. The real presence of the Lord in His assembly is not thought of.

No doubt, if Christians came together as so many men, with no Lord to look to, as if God took no concern or control in His own assembly, there might be nothing but disorder. And this is the very tiling I would impress on you who do meet in the Lord's name: we meet not merely with mutual love and courtesy as Christians, we meet as members of Christ who compose God's assembly. Can any conceivable principle clothe with such confidence and solemnity the gathering together of souls on earth? It is no invention or assumption of ours; it is the will of the Lord for all that are His own here below. You, if a Christian, are unfaithful if you do not so meet, nor is it possible according to scripture duly to worship Him otherwise.

But the assembly of God, like the presence of the Spirit, is more rightly perhaps to be viewed as the condition of worship in the hour that is now come, than as a help to it.

A most important help certainly in the worship of God is the Lord's supper. In the early church they were so filled with the Spirit and so enjoyed the fellowship of one another at the Lord's table that they came together for this purpose every day. At that day they first knew that Christ was in the Father, they in Him, and He in them. And no wonder. It was a new and truly divine thing, that holy fellowship; and when they met together, that which expressed this and more than this, the Lord's supper, was always before their hearts. So we are told in Acts 2:46; “And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” This is the picture that is presented by the new-born church of God.

We have a view of the same supper of the Lord still later (Acts 20); and no doubt, as the Spirit of God has given us both, so each is for an important purpose.

From the first statement we gather that it would not be wrong to take the Lord's supper every day if circumstances called for it, simply and holily, as then. In Acts 20 we have the more ordinary state of things; and thence we learn that the habit of the church was to break bread on the first day of the week. We are further told that “Paul preached,” though it is not properly preaching, but discoursing. There we find just what we may see elsewhere, liberty in the gathering together of the church for one who may be so led of the Lord to instruct or exhort the brethren. Assuredly there is nothing that shuts up the assembly from edification by the word, even when met to break bread.

Anyone that denies this seems to me fighting against plain scripture; for I have known persons, in their reaction from going to hear a sermon, allow themselves the thought that, because we come together to break bread, there is no room for the Holy Ghost to teach or exhort by whom He will.

The breaking of bread is and ought to be the standing service for the saints on each Lord's day, but not so as to exclude the action of the Spirit for the joy of faith and help of the saints. Only let all be simple and real, which the Holy Spirit alone can give or keep up.

It is common again to find saints who, if they do not despise, certainly neglect, the Lord's supper. Their fear of ordinances perhaps, or more generally their fondness for preaching, causes them to

swing to the opposite side. Worship is thus well-nigh lost. Such a habit necessarily lowers the place of God's children or church into that of mere hearers. Not that it is not important to receive instruction; but it will be found that, where by grace you take and hold your place as true worshippers, you also receive the profit of the truth a hundred-fold more than when you sink into a mere auditory.

Those who are content to be no more than hearers never come to perfection, to use the apostle's words. They are stunted in their spiritual growth, instead of increasing by the knowledge of God. Nor wonder at this.

For the present aim of grace is forgotten or unknown. The object of God in bringing us to the knowledge of Himself in Christ is to draw out our souls to His praise in worship, and to His glory in service. The Lord's supper is the central feast. For the Christian to abandon this for sermon-hearing is a woeful and disastrous descent, which settles him down to the means and not the end of God, not to speak of immense loss in every way. In short, then, the evangelical idea and practice of merging worship in sermons, besides being an evident departure from the revealed will of God, dishonors the Lord and His death, grieves the Holy Ghost who would glorify Jesus, and injures the children of God beyond calculation.

But we learn from a previous chapter (11) of 1 Corinthians that, as the right use of the Lord's supper is of all consequence in God's worship, so there is danger in various ways to the saints. The Corinthians lacked gravity in this as in other things; and the Lord both resented and corrected the evil. They appear to have mixed up the love-feast or agape with the Lord's supper; and as they allowed nature to come in (probably from old habits as heathens), some were guilty of excess in eating and drinking, while the poor were made to feel their condition. This was in every way most grievous; and the apostle was led of the Lord not only to explain that His hand had been dealing with some in sickness, and others in death or falling asleep, but to separate in future the Lord's supper from any such feast.

Further great principles are laid down of the utmost value for our permanent good. “As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” (Ver. 26 - 32.)

Thus, on the one hand, self-examination is urged on the Christian—never a doubt, but to prove himself, but this with a view to come, not to stay away. On the other hand, if one eat or drink lightly (that is, “unworthily"), he eats and drinks judgment (not “damnation,” as it is most faultily rendered, but judgment) to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. Hence, when the Corinthians failed in self-judgment and treated the Eucharist unworthily, they fell under the Lord's judgment, which, however serious and humbling, was really merciful, for, when judged, they were chastened of Him that they should not be condemned with the world. That is, even this wrong brought not” damnation” but His chastening judgment.

Hence we see that the Lord's supper constantly before us is meant to call forth in the saints this constant habit of self-examination. And we see at once how important is its bearing on the worship of the saints. For if they come carelessly, the Spirit in very faithfulness will testify to it; and they will then, if honest, betake themselves rather to confession than to praise, and thus the proper worship of the assembly will be interfered with and hindered. If due self-examination go on, the conscience is kept good, and the heart can flow out, as the Spirit guides, in praise and thanksgiving unimpeded around the table of the Lord. Thus the instruction of the Lord lets us know what a help there is when the Lord's supper holds its due place, what a hindrance when it is despised or abused.

Let me here notice what is often a difficulty to some persons respecting a hymn-book. We have a book of Psalms in the Old Testament, but none in the New Testament—only the certainty that the Christians in these the earliest days had in use among them such metrical compositions as are styled “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.” Why such a marked difference? They do not see through the cavil of such as harp on the inconsistency of written hymns and of extemporaneous prayers. But the truth is scripture is plain that in the apostolic age such were the facts. They had hymns, &c, to sing, whilst they prayed according to the moment. To have hymns then is quite right, according to God's word. It is an utter error in all who think that hymns were impromptu compositions which the Spirit of God gave on the spot. There is no warrant for any such notion. For example, the Corinthian brethren came each with a psalm. This does not mean the 316 Psalms of David, but a Christian psalm. Hence the fact is that, in all lands and tongues where Christianity is known, the believers are sure to express their Christian joy and thanksgiving in suited hymns, because the New Testament supposes a new state of happiness through the gospel such as must needs find such a vent spontaneously.

For now the saints are shown to be perfectly blessed in Christ, and having the Spirit as a well of water within springing up into everlasting life. They long for Christ to come, or to depart and be with Him. In the Old Testament, on the contrary, there was the fear of death which kept them all their lifetime subject to bondage. It was as to them an unexplored and dark region. Christ's death and resurrection have changed all for us. Whereas for the most part the joy in the book of Psalms is on this side of the grave, and hence in the presence and reign of the Messiah. On the other hand, in the New Testament, the Messiah having come and gone after accomplishing redemption, the church is being called. There is therefore no need of inspiring a book of psalms, for the Christian has the salvation of his soul, and can joy in God fully revealed and known, and hence he makes psalms and spiritual songs for himself. What a help and power to worship is not this?

But there is a remark I may be allowed, and not unnecessary in the use of these compositions. If the Spirit had to provide ready-made a praise-book for Israel, but left it for the Christian heart and mind to do this work according to their measure, there is nothing more needed than self-judgment and dependence on God in using hymns in the assembly. It is really a solemn thing to give out a hymn there, because thereby almost more than in anything else you risk, if wrong, drawing the whole congregation along with you, or you compel them to mark their sense of your error by an ominous silence. Thus it is plain that in giving out a hymn in the assembly, when if a man goes wrong there is or is not spiritual discernment, it becomes much more serious than those conceive who think there is nothing so easy as to spend a little while together in singing a nice hymn. For this the Holy Ghost is required, for He, dwelling in that assembly as God's temple, knows just what

is wanted. But thanks be to God! He is there to guide according to the present mind and will of God. This should lead one to be not morbid but prayerful, to watch earnestly that it be the Lord's guiding and not his own will in any way. On the other hand, if the Spirit guides in a hymn, it is no less serious to slight it through a crotchet or perhaps a feeling against the person who gave it out. How all-important is the presence and action of God's Spirit in the church of God! I commend this not on the ground of common sense, but as the certain will of God to you as His children on the ground of faith. I might much extend this lecture by touching on many other helps and hindrances to worship; but this may suffice for the present.

May you have grace to be faithful in following out the truth as you learn it from God! If any deliberately prefer what man has set up to His will for His church, I must leave them in His hands to whom they must give account. There is no reasoning that can stand before the word of God; and the Spirit will surely strengthen all whose eye is single both to know and to do the Lord's will.

Chapter 110

Letter on Mr. J.P.S.'S Holiness Through Faith

My dear——

The greater part of what is here, even to its terminology, is borrowed from so-called “Brethren,” such as resurrection-life, &c. I do not mean by this, that it is not sincere, or real, for I have no such thought, but that it is what you have known and received for years. You must be aware that the teaching that Rom. 7 is not the Christian state, but that chapter 8 is, has been taught, as I have myself earnestly insisted on it now near fifty years, only I trust with increasing clearness. But what is added to it is not sound teaching, and lowers the standard which scripture presents to us, and tends to put estimate of self instead of thoughts of Christ.

Mr. S. does see liberty before God and from sin which is by faith, though not scriptural on this point either as we shall see; but he compares a Christian state with those who are under the bondage of the law, or Rom. 8, instead of comparing it with Christ glorified or down here; and hence falsifies that state as well as lowering the standard. Being free from the law of sin and death, filled with the Spirit, dead to sin, are to be pressed as the only right state of the Christian.

The question of the justness of the statement of this book does not lie there. It confounds this with a supposed state of purity, which is not the scriptural apprehension of the Christians condition when free.

I find in the very outset a mis-statement which affects the whole book. It is said (p. 12), “If we give rein to our yearnings, asking of God whatsoever things we desire, what would be our first instinctive cry? That we might he holy and pure and conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.” Now while this sounds very well, and the desire after holiness is an essential part of the new man, yet this statement is not scriptural and falsifies the whole truth on the subject.

Conformity to the image of Jesus Christ is in glory. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son that He may be the firstborn among many brethren. We have home the image of the earthly, and we shall bear the image of the heavenly. The only positive object of the Christian is conformity to Christ in glory. And we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

And now mark the difference of the consequence. For Mr. P. S. it is to be holy and pure, &c. For scripture conformity to Christ is in glory, and the consequence is, “He that hath this hope in Mm purifies himself as he is pure.” The standard is Christ in glory, and it is not said pure, but purifies. This is always the scriptural estimate. “Beholding with unveiled face [looking fully into] the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Hence Paul, in his fullest energy, seeks to win Christ, and along with this that he may attain unto the resurrection from among the dead. His object is the prize of the high calling, his calling up above (■νω). No state here is the object of the Christian.

Now this alters the whole character of Christian state and attainment. For this Christ's state down here is never presented as a model of attainment, for He was wholly without sin, and we are not in nature. Scripture says “he that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk as He walked.” Because we ought never to walk after the flesh, though the flesh be there.

No one desires that any should live in sin, or even sin at all. We have no excuse for a single idle thought, for Christ's grace is sufficient for us, and God is faithful not to suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. But in Rom. 6 it is not Christ's walk down here or state which is presented, but His being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and our consequent walking in newness of life. Here Mr. S. makes it the point of his argument (p. 15) that we are not to serve sin. Of course we are not. But his argument here is all fallacious. What is stated is urged as the only normal Christian state. But the ground of the argument is that we (believers) were crucified with Christ: that is, when He was crucified, we were. Now it is of course faith that realizes this through grace, and if we do we are free: but the thing realized is, that we were crucified with Him when He was crucified. And it is so taken as the Christian state that the introduction to Christianity (baptism) is the introduction to that as its proper force; being baptized to Christ is being baptized to His death; and this, not the question of guilt and sins put away (that subject is treated to the end of verse 11 chapter 5.), but our state and our relationship to God by Adam's sin, to which state we have died, and so are clear from it and out of it, Christ having actually died for us to this as well as borne our sins.

Hence also we are dead to law, for law has power over a man as long as he lives, and we have died away from under it in Christ, and are to another—Christ raised from the dead, and this is deliverance, not justification. It is thus we pass from Rom. 7 to 8, the power and means described in chapter 8:2, 3, and the deliverance continued on to verse 11. How much state, and not Christ, is the object of Mr. S.'s mind is evident from pages 16-19.

But all this betrays too a failing apprehension of the existence of the flesh. “The whole nature is body, soul, and spirit, it is a re-adjustment of it,” not Christ my life giving me the consciousness I am to be like Him, as He is. With this comes temptation more fierce than ever. What does this mean? “temptation is not sin, for my Lord was tempted.” (Page 19.) What does he mean by temptation? Satan came and tried Christ in the path of perfect obedience. But what has this to do with purity of heart? All this is exceedingly immature and uncertain, and a strange confusion of the question of purity and assaults by Satan upon us. Nor do I find consistency of doctrine with himself or with scripture. “We receive the purification from all iniquity by faith, and that now, and that is from all iniquity.” (Page 21.) But in page 55, “If he then walks in the light or in Jesus, it shines through and through him, revealing hourly the things contrary to God and holiness, and as they are revealed by the light, they are cleansed by the blood. To walk in the light always leads to the blood of purifying.” Now sanctifying is not used in the passage of Hebrews in the sense he does; but the whole doctrine of that part of the Epistle is different from Mr. S.'s. The statement there is that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins. And when he speaks of receiving the blood as cleansing the fountain, the very source of evil thoughts, murders, &c. (page 55), is not the flesh the fountain of them? Is the flesh cleansed? Why had Paul a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, if the very source of evil was cleansed? Nor is inwardly, in the text, nor is Jesus here spoken of as the light. It is “If we walk in the light, as he [God] is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,' and it is clearly as set in the light,

brought so, that the light shows we are as white as snow. (Page 26.) You see how he takes the low condition of evangelical Christendom as his point of comparison:" If sinning be the inevitable, constant, condition of the Christian." Of course it is not.

Again, I find (in p. 20) the false principle of conformity to Christ here, which, as stated by him, is not in scripture. "He knows no sin," but this book tells me the light always leads to the blood of purifying. Was this true of Christ? If not, there is not conformity to Him as down here. To what He is up there clearly no one is yet conformed. But it is of this scripture speaks: the effect is to make us purify ourselves. Had Christ to do this? So "victory over sin" is not conformity to Christ. (Page 30.) Victory there ought always to be, and indeed I should go a great deal farther. But this vague use of conformity to Christ is really very mischievous. We are called to walk as He walked, never to be what He was. I do not admit that "whatever the Holy Spirit makes us to yearn for, Christ came to give" in this life (p. 31). I yearn for a state, and so did Paul in Phil. 3 and in 2 Cor. 5, which he could not have in this world by any possibility.

The same excessive vagueness and neglect of the force of scripture which we have already found is repeated in page 37, "These things prepared by God are not all postponed to a future scene, but are even now spiritually discerned." Now whatever is prepared is revealed, and may be all spiritually discerned, and this no doubt should act so as to make us live in these things, have our conversation in heaven, not look on the things that are seen but the things that are not seen—as those out of Rom. 7 and alive from the dead. I have no wish, far from it, to weaken this. The flesh never should be allowed to act, even in our thoughts, but be held for dead, and Christ's grace is sufficient for it. But this is not "some things not being postponed to a future state," but the action of all heavenly things on a soul set free by being dead and risen with Christ. (Col. 3) But here the things are above, and the essence of the teaching is that they are above. Our calling is above (■νω), whatever we realize of it here.

Nor does Eph. 3 (p. 41) speak of our love to God required by the law, but of a much more blessed thing. We are rooted and grounded in love—not our love as man to God surely. It is Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, and our knowing Christ's love which passes knowledge (and therefore "as far as I was conscious") so as to be filled up to (ε■ς) all the fullness of God. It is a mischievous thing to make this our love to God according to the requirements of the law, and false interpretation, and shows how this system (not freedom from Rom. 7) lowers the true standard of blessing and holy privilege. If the system only affirmed what is stated in page 43, I should not have a word to say against it. "He simply is placed where he by faith receives from God power to act day by day up to the given measure of light upon his duty. It is the power of overcoming all descended evil that is bestowed." Now scripture is perfectly clear as to this: sin shall not have dominion over us. Christ's grace is sufficient for us. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. All are not in Rom. 7. But this is not the principle on which this freedom is based here. Mr. P. S. talks of conformity to Christ here, of being pure, &c. Now had Christ simply the power of overcoming discerned evil, and is overcoming discerned evil purity? The system is all false. Deliverance from the state of Rom. 7 and being in Rom. 8 and always so is not false, but very important; but the principles on which this is based in the book are quite false.

Perfect (p. 43, 44) in Phil. 3 refers to the recognition of a calling above, having the conversation in heaven and this giving a motive for looking always onward; it knows no standard but resurrection,

and not conformity to Christ here. I might say the perfection Phil. 3 speaks of is the denial of Mr. P. S.'s perfection, for it knows none but likeness to Christ in glory acting on motives now. Here again the standard is lowered, and a state here which is only a passing and imperfect effect of it called perfection. Perfection in Phil. 3 is not the walk. The perfect are exhorted to have this mind, and walk, and conversation. It is our heavenly standing as contrasted with mere forgiveness and morality. Enoch walked with God or pleased Him (this is only the LXX translation of “walking with") and God took him away out of the world. That was what satisfied his heart not his walk, though he had the knowledge that he pleased God, a most true and blessed privilege. Note too here (p. 46) he identifies “sinning and under sense of condemnation” —things essentially different. It is clear that he has no distinct sense of justification and acceptance in Christ, as his reference to the application of blood to purify on each failure also distinctly shows. The doctrine of no more conscience of sins is unknown to him. I admit that knowledge is a poor equivalent for taking Jesus for all and present victory (p. 46), but it is not the question.

We have again false doctrine (in p. 47), “God's Spirit cannot dwell with sin, or even with the love of the world.” Had he said that it is not being filled with the Spirit, I should have heartily agreed. But I ask did the Holy Spirit dwell in Peter, or had He left him when he used dissimulation, or how do I grieve the Spirit if sin and the Spirit cannot be there together? If a man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. Do we cease to be Christ's if anything of worldliness gets into the mind, most sad as it is to see it? I have no desire to weaken the force of the solemn texts he quotes, but to apply them earnestly to conscience; but his use of them is wrong. We are not in the flesh but the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us. It is a state, not a walking up to that state, all important as this is. We have natural men, carnal Christians, and spiritual Christians, in 1 Corinthians. But it is a serious thing to say a man is none of Christ's, because he fails to live up to the power which works in him, though he has no excuse for not doing it, and is judged by the perfect law of liberty.

The body dead because of sin is the practical conclusion the apostle draws as to the Christian state. In 2 Cor. 4 always bearing about the dying is the practical realization of it. But I reckon myself dead by faith. All this is confounded, and false doctrine the consequence.

The use of the Epistle to the Hebrews (p. 51) I believe to be wholly false. Sanctification by blood is not the same thing as sanctification by the Spirit; and here I remark that the use of the symbol of water, of which scripture is full, is wholly ignored in this book. Christ washes the disciples' feet with water, He sanctifies and cleanses the church with the washing of water by the word, the disciples were clean by the word spoken, and out of His pierced side water came as well as blood. Hence in this chapter Mr. S. purifies Christians by blood again if they fail, and as we have seen sinning and a sense of condemnation go together for him; and so of course re-purifying has to be wrought by blood. In the doctrine of the Hebrews, which treats of the blood and work of Christ, it is when He had by Himself purged our sins, that He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. And the worshippers once purged have no more conscience of sins, and by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified. As to water and feet washing this is not so. So if (1 John 2) any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins. Here communion is in question, and this for the time is wholly destroyed by sin. On the other hand, righteousness is not in question before God, because Christ is our righteousness. It is not the sense of condemnation, but horror of sin and judging ourselves, not the

thought of being condemned for it. The whole doctrine of the chapter is error. Further, the passage in 1 John 1 does not speak of a Christian's sinning (chapter ii. does this), but of the Christian position abstractedly, walking in the light as God is in the light, not of our sinning in the light and then being cleansed. Perfect light communion (not surely with God here, but) with one another, and perfect cleansing by blood, is the Christian's place.

And if (p. 57) the body or root of sinning within us be kept in the place of death, as it ought to be, there is no need for cleansing, nor is the conscience bad. The existence of flesh does not make the conscience bad, the allowance of its activity for a moment does. All this is confusion. Bearing about Christ's dying is not cleansing, but prevention, and this ought to be; but it is always bearing about, not a thing jumped into by an act of faith (whereas liberty is by faith, of which hereafter). It is when we fail in this that we have need (not again of blood, but, founded on that) of having our feet washed, or of the ashes of the red heifer in running water.

Further (in p. 59) we have “the remedy applied to the very sources of the spring itself and the waters flow out sweet.” Now this is false doctrine. The flesh is not changed. Keep it dead; all well, but this is not a remedy. Sin in the flesh when we are set free is condemned, not remedied, or the flesh purged. Paul's thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, was not healing a source, but putting down by a constant thorn what remained evil. Paul's mind was thus kept from the evil, but the source remained unhealed. That our value for the blood may hinder from sinning is all true (p. 60); but how cleansing by blood is preventing sinning I am at a loss to conceive. Scripture never so speaks; it does of purifying our hearts by faith. Death only clears from sin. For even water flowed from the side of a dead Christ. And (p. 62) the Holy Spirit as power in life is consequent on the blood of sprinkling. There was no such thought as putting the blood after the anointing too. So (p. 63) sweet water and bitter do not come out of the same fountain; but it is not a mistake at all. Where a man is not set free according to Rom. 8, the desires of the heart are right, but the waters that come out are bitter because the man is not free. Where he is free, and there is power as well as desire, there is no excuse if there be anything but sweet. They that are Christ's have crucified; but then the flesh is to be always reckoned dead, not to be purified. Why reckon it dead if it can be purified? All this, however well meant, is unscriptural error. It is at this point that the system touches Wesleyan perfection, though there be much more light.

To the general statement of the beginning of chapter vi. I have no objection: only cleansing, holiness, is substituted for deliverance. It is deliverance from a power to which I was captive, not cleansing. This falsifies all and shows the confusion into which the writer has been led by mingling his thoughts with scripture.

Further, he will have a heart consciously cleansed, that is, a heart which reflects on its own state. Now a soul really delivered does not think of itself. What characterizes it, when it comes sensibly into God's presence is, that it has not to think of itself, but can think of God and the Lord Jesus. Coming into the light, if the flesh has been allowed to act, forces the soul to think of itself, yet not of conscious holiness, but of the evil allowed, which is not according to the light, to purge it. All this again practically lowers Christian privilege, and fills with self. The mischief arising from taking consciousness, not the word, for a guide is found in p. 71.

There is no such uncertainty in scripture. Having been in the third heaven only awakened pride in the flesh, and called for a messenger of Satan to buffet it—not, remark, to put it down or to cleanse

It when arisen, but to prevent its arising. It was there in the flesh ready to rise. This mistake, I doubt not, was the origin of Wesleyan perfection. The writer seeks to avoid it, but by pleading scripture is speaking generally to consciousness, not searching what it says on the matter. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and these are contrary one to the other.” As regards the incidents (p. 74), it is only uniformly overcoming the world. Against overcoming and uniformly overcoming I have not a word. The second (p. 77) is only victory. On chapter 7 I have no remark save its connection with others as its groundwork. I quite agree that we should not expect to sin again. The illustration cases (chapters 1, 2,) prove nothing but that there is deliverance from captivity to sin by being dead to it, according to Rom. 7, Gal. 2—a point I should earnestly insist on. The third case is professedly deliverance according to Rom. 7, which is not the doctrine of cleansing but of being made free. Nor do the others give further light on the point.

But it is right I should speak of my positive estimate of the truth, and not merely comment on another. There is a deliverance, a liberty wherewith Christ makes us free, which is other than forgiveness and the joy that may accompany it, and which is often felt to be experimentally a mightier change than the first discovery of mercy, and conversion to God. The Epistle to the Romans treats distinctly of these two things. First, propitiation and forgiveness of sins—justification from all the first Adam produces—through Christ's being delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification, and the blessed grace which has thus given us a portion with God, and given us to joy in Him. This closes with chapter 5:11.

Then comes the state of the sinner by one man's disobedience, what we are and where we are, not guilt from what we have done. We are in the flesh. The quickening power of God does not deliver. It works the desire of holiness and shows us the necessity of it; but the flesh works still. To this the law which requires righteousness from us directly applies. The remedy for this is not the same as for guilt and sins, though it be still Christ's death. There it was Christ bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, making propitiation, purging us from them before God. But the remedy for the power of sin in us, our state as in the flesh before God, is taking us out of it, our having been crucified with Christ. We have part in righteousness by having part in death. If we have part in death, we shall not live on. We are, by the Holy Ghost given to us, in Christ, not in the flesh. It is a new state and place, not the forgiveness of the sins of the old; as Israel not only escaped judgment by the blood on their doorposts, when God was a judge, but were wholly out of Egypt at the Red Sea, where God was a deliverer. So we are not only secured from judgment, but out of the flesh, sin, and the world when through the work of Christ we have received the Spirit through faith. We are not only born again but have put off the old man, have been crucified with Christ, are dead; our life is hid with Christ in God. The Christ who has become my life, the new I—which lives to God and to Him only—has died, and I reckon myself dead. It is a mistake to say, when we are emptied of self, we can thus live. It is as alive from the dead that we yield ourselves to God as truly free. The doctrine of this is in Rom. 6; the practical process by which we arrive at it is in chapter 7, a humbling process, as it always is (though it may be modified by the knowledge of forgiveness), under law—the first husband, where a state is required, which we are not in. The flesh is not subject to the law of God nor can be. We discover then our state, what the flesh is—not guilt. “I know that in me, that is, my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;” then through divine teaching that it is not I but sin that dwells in me; but then that it is too strong for me, that I am captive to the law of sin in my members.

This is clearly not the Christian state at all, but a renewed soul under law. It does not say that the flesh is in me, but that I am captive to it, sold under sin. I am there, though it be not I, and cannot get out. But this is my state under the first husband, law. Death dissolves this bond. I have died in Christ, I have been crucified with Him, and power in the life of the risen Christ is now my portion, the flesh reckoned dead, and I alive to God in Christ. Consequently it is not when brought to be empty of self I am filled with the Spirit but when brought to find self or flesh wholly evil and that I cannot get rid of it or get the victory over it. When I have learned that I have no strength as well as that I am ungodly (a point much harder to learn and more humbling), then I find I am delivered, having died in Christ to sin, and the flesh, and the law withal. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, Christ risen, hath made me free from the law of sin and death. I am not a slave or captive but free. What the law could not do, being weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin (a sacrifice for sin), has condemned sin in the flesh—not forgiven it. But when it was condemned, death was; so that, while the condemnation has been carried out in Christ, it is for faith dead since He is, and now the power of life in Him risen is that in which I live, dead to sin and alive to God, not in Adam or flesh at all, but in Christ.

Now being wholly free I can yield myself to God as one alive from the dead. I reckon myself dead as regards the flesh and alive in Christ only. I am not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God, given on cleansing by the blood, dwell in me; and if Christ be in me, the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Thus there is not any reason forever having an evil thought even. Sin has no dominion over me. I am not a debtor to the flesh; and, being set free in the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, I am able (for Christ's power is there) to hold the flesh for dead. There is no reason why one single thought in my mind should come from the flesh, or from anything but the life of Christ which is in me in the power of the Spirit. There is no excuse if such do arise.

There are two elements in this state: having pat off the old man and put on the new which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness; and having the Holy Ghost dwelling in me. Hence God's way of acting is my measure of good, Christ, God manifest in a man, being the expression and model of this. I have perfect liberty in divine favor, loved as Christ was loved, and knowing it; and I may and ought to be occupied with what is revealed in Him, my affections being engaged there, and I filled with the Spirit.

But as this is a state of dependence, diligent seeking of grace alone can keep us thus, and in fact in many things we all offend. But my normal state is not grieving the Spirit, and so in God's presence, being able to think of Him and not of self. No state here is the object of the saint. He is not alive in the world, and he looks, having this life, to be conformed to Christ in glory, and if he thinks of himself at all, it is only to judge himself. But I believe—in complete deliverance from the law of sin which is in our members—that I am called to be filled with the Spirit which would not allow thoughts from the flesh to arise in the mind, nor anything that would soil the conscience, but would make us live in the atmosphere of the divine presence. The practical realizing this is by always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus and thus God helps us by delivering us to death by trial that this may be fully made good. (2 Cor. 4)

I allow therefore no captivity to sin, no dominion of it. This, even when hopeless as to getting the victory, we find to be ours in Christ; and there all has to come from the Spirit, and all is fullness of

joy with God. But this is carried out first by knowing, when hopeless as to victory over the flesh, that we have died in Christ, and then by always bearing about His dying, death still working in us, that the life only of Christ may be manifested.

“So that ye cannot do the things that ye would” is utterly false in Gal. 5 It should be “in order that ye may not do.”

But there is complete deliverance from the whole power of sin, we reckoning ourselves dead, and undistracted enjoyment of divine favor in the relationship in which Christ is. The only normal state of the Christian then is unclouded fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, and the uninterrupted manifestation of the life of Christ in his body, and when in God's presence not having to think of sin in himself, but freedom to think of God and what He is. He is divinely free through and in Christ. But he has no thought of a present state of perfection or of purity (only the Spirit is ungrieved and has not to make him think of himself) for his only owned state is conformity to Christ in glory, God having wrought him for that selfsame thing in virtue of which he purifies himself as He is pure; and if he does think of himself, he has the consciousness of his not being like Christ as he would, but is glad to have to think of Christ only. But purifying himself is not consciousness that he is pure. His conversation is in heaven, his motives there, and hence necessarily, if he thinks of himself, the consciousness of shortcoming, though he be not troubled by any present thought of sin, but is able to think of Christ. A return to think of himself is for him already failure. Yours, J. N. D.

Chapter 111

Imitators of God

Eph. 5:1, 2

There is hardly anything that more shows the tendency of believers (for I speak of them) to miss the best part of their blessings, than the way in which they lose sight of God himself in each one of their blessings.

Undoubtedly the blessing is for man; but how much more sweet, and full, and worthy when we have distinctly before our hearts that it is a blessing, not only from God, but according to Him; that He could not give a blessing short of His own glory, more particularly now that Christ has come and has accomplished redemption! God, I say, could not give a blessing except according to His own fullness and glory. Hence it does not matter what it is, if He forgives, He forgives like none other, if He shows love, it must be according to His own nature, not ours merely. The blessing does come in all reality down to the very smallest need of our souls; but it is the blessing of God which comes from Himself, according to His affections and His majesty.

So too, if we look at the principle or animating spring of service every day, we lose immensely by leaving God out of it. Take for instance this: the great thought of by far the largest part of the children of God is that of doing good. I am now giving the children of God credit for thoughts above self, being in fact persuaded, that he or she cannot be a child of God without thoughts of good towards others. But this is not enough. It never meets the mind of God. It is good as far as it goes; but most assuredly it is much short of that to which the Spirit of God here invites our souls. Certainly it was never thus with Christ. Was there ever one that went about doing good with such entire self-renunciation as the Lord Jesus? But was this all? Had He merely the sense of a miserable world, of men blind here and lame there and wretched everywhere? He felt this as no other heart ever did, but there never was a soul that came under the blessing of the Lord Jesus, even for the least want, weakness, infirmity or suffering of the body, where the Lord Jesus did not go down in spirit under the evil that He removed, and rise up to God in order to turn all to His glory. And we are not only entitled to do so, but we wrong our God and Father where we do not. You will find therefore that one of the great signs of the power of the Spirit of God working is this, that wherever the blessing comes the first effect is, where the Holy Ghost is active, not enjoying the blessing only, but the soul bowing to God and blessing Him. It is not merely man conscious of blessing and occupied with the profession of it. This is real no doubt; but it would be much more real, and with less of self about it, were God Himself the first thought, rather than the blessing that has come to one.

So in early days we find in Eliezer the servant of Abraham, who sets forth to us peculiarly in type the action of the Holy Ghost; he looks up to God in a spirit of dependence before the answer, of praise after it is given. He does not venture haphazard to set about his master's command; and hence he bows down before God before entering the city, and receives the answer on the spot: that man does not take the answer and rejoice, that there is an end of the difficulty and that the blessing is come, but he worships the God who had given him the blessing. And so whenever God

is in the thought, it is He to whom we shall give the first place. If this was the case with Eliezer, how much more was it in the Lord Jesus! We see it all through the life and in the death of Jesus. Just as with the natural man, God is in none of his thoughts; so where the power of the Spirit of God gives grace to reign, God is in all the thoughts, and He is the first thought; and where He is first, by God's grace He will be the last. But in general we are apt to look at ourselves first if not always, occupied with the blessing, and talking about it. Thus the Blesser is so far shrouded, as our own having a part in it is prominent before our souls.

And if we take the fruit of the blessing of God, devotedness to Him, it is not merely that we are called to be the witnesses of God to poor, perishing sinners, and to those that are in sorrow, though this is quite true, but where there is reality about the soul there will be reality about everything, and what gives reality about soul, body, circumstances, everything, is this, that there is simplicity in having to do with God. This was found in Jesus as it was nowhere else. Therefore in this very place where the apostle is exhorting us to be followers of God as dear children, he could not but at once bring in Christ, and walking in love. Why? because people are so wretched and so needy? No, that is perfectly true, but “walk in love as Christ also hath loved us.” This shows us the manner of it. It will be the spring of a measure that can never fail, “as Christ also hath loved us.” Do we stop here? Many do. It is our constant tendency, where, on the contrary, we ought, as it were, only to be carried back on a wave of blessing, which as it came from God also ends in God Himself. Christ “gave himself for us.” It was for us; but it was also “an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” And if there had not been this, as the deeper object and higher character of the work of the Lord Jesus, it would not have been perfection. It would have been human kindness, not the choicest fruit of divine love. As love comes out from God, it always refers back to God. Lovingkindness may be moved by human compassions being drawn out or feelings wrought upon, and you then simply attach the person to yourself; whereas if you attach the person by that act in thanksgiving unto God, the difference in the effect is incalculable.

And this first reference to God is not only found in Christ, and of course in perfection in Him: but we may see the same thing in 2 Cor. 8:5, where the apostle is speaking about the laborers. But we must not leave the best of the blessing to be carried off as a prize by the laborers who serve in the word of God. The weakest saint of His ought to look to Christ that he may be found to be the vessel of the finest affections of God. It behooves us to act up to our proper dignity, and in no way can we do so except as Christ is before us. Gift is nothing as to this; gift or no gift, young Christian or old, we have Christ, and the Spirit of God will surely be with us to make us think of the truth and to fill our hearts with it if we are only desiring it. What does the apostle say with regard to this service of the saints? “This they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God.” They first gave themselves to the Lord: where this is the case, we must not wonder at the result. They “first gave their own selves to the Lord,” &c. With the Lord the object before us, the unseemliness, the forwardness, the hanging back, the manifold ways that show how weak and worthless the flesh is—all these things are corrected and rebuked. Though we are but earthen vessels, yet grace puts the richest treasure there; but the just issue is only as we look steadily to Him who gave it so freely. And the proof of the Spirit's working in us is this, that our ways are comely, and so they please the Lord, that He Himself is the fashioner of our path and conduct, that we are willing to listen and learn, and to bear the judgment of others. No one ought to be above learning; and we prove more the strength of our faith by patience than in any other way.

When we have not the consciousness that we are right before the Lord and that we serve Him, we are apt to be impatient; but if our ways please the Lord, we can afford to bear what others may say, if they be ever so wrong; and we can be thankful, if need be, to be set right ourselves. It is Christ alone who can make or keep us such as He would have us. The Lord grant that we, giving ourselves to the Lord and to His saints by the will of God, may be found walking in love till that day!

Chapter 112

In Christ and Christ in Us

(2 Cor. 12)

Occasionally a chapter like this brings out a complete picture of certain truth as a whole. There were judaizing teachers who were calling in question Paul's apostleship, and he appeals to the Corinthians in a remarkable way in the following chapter to judge themselves. He had been the means of their conversion: If you want to know my apostleship, “examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith.” This is not a precept at all, but a taunt, though a gracious one of course. If Christ is in you, where did you get Him? Through my ministry. He had been obliged to go over the ground of chapter 11, and, having done so, he says, “It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.” I come now not to what I have done for the Lord, but to what the Lord has done for me. What is so remarkable in this chapter is, that it begins with the highest place a Christian can be in, and it ends with the lowest, even actual sin.

Paul, though greatly comforted by the report Titus had brought at the beginning of the epistle, was still a little uneasy about the Corinthians. (Ver. 20, 21.) “We do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.”

In that way we find the highest place the Christian can be in, the third heaven; and the lowest place of actual sin. They are the extremes at both ends in this picture of the Christian condition; but there is also the ordinary condition of the Christian. “I know [not 'knew'] a man in Christ;” he speaks not of himself, though it was himself plainly enough, but of “a man in Christ,” such a one caught “up to the third heaven.” He was caught up in an extraordinary way, and he had an apostolic vision, which strengthened his faith for service; still his place could not be more than “in Christ.” Every man that has the Spirit of Christ is in Christ. “There is therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”

Our place before God is there; we are in Christ before God. We learn the blessed truth, that Christians are in Christ. We find Christ in a man too farther on in the chapter. “In Christ” is put in direct contrast with being in the flesh. We never have the true apprehension of our standing till we find this that we are in Christ. The treasure is in an earthen vessel, but our place before God is simply that, and only that. Therefore the apostle says in Rom. 6!.."when we were in the flesh.” This is describing the condition of a person where he is not in Christ. I could not say “when I was at B.” while I am there; I could say “when I was in England” after I have left it. Do you know in the consciousness of your souls that you are not in the flesh at all? Taking your place and standing before God, it is not your place at all. In the state of your mind, you may be in the flesh, for want of instruction; but if you were really in the flesh, there must be condemnation. “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” Is this my state before God? It is all the opposite to that of being in Christ. If you really believe, if you have the Spirit of Christ, you are not in the flesh at all, but in Christ, who is in the third heavens, or above all heavens. This is a different thing from mere forgiveness. As a child of Adam I am found out of the earthly paradise, and my mind is enmity against God. Christ

comes, accomplishes blessed redemption for the vilest, and brings the believer to God.

A man's being in prison is his condition, not his guilt. Adam was driven from paradise, but this was not his guilt, but the punishment of it; beside that, his will was enmity against God. There is the putting away of all this by Christ. If the sinner feels he is defiled by sin, he is cleansed by Christ; if the believer feels he is guilty, he is forgiven; if men believe Him whom they have offended, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” The work of the Lord Jesus Christ is a perfect answer to God. We get first our need met through the Lord and Savior; but there is another thing, not what we have done, but what we are—our condition and state connected with it, as the tree is connected with the fruit.

We are out of the earthly paradise, and certainly we are not in the heavenly paradise. But the believer is brought out of where he was. There he is looked at as dying in Christ. Washed in His precious blood, and having His Spirit in me, I know then that I died with Him, and I reckon myself dead. “Ye are dead.” How am I alive then? “And your life is hid with Christ in God.” I have a life in Christ which makes me free from the old life; I may be foolish and yield to it—quite true. “What the law could not do.... God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” The tree as contrasted with the fruit has been condemned, but condemned to death: so I have done with it. Then what are you? In Christ, not in Adam. “In the flesh” is a condition I have nothing more to say to, as being in it. God has brought us to Himself in Christ; we are in Christ before God, and there only before God. By virtue of His precious blood, the Holy Ghost takes His abode in us; then I can say, I am in Christ, and Christ is in me. Not only has Christ cleared away the sin, but He has taken me out of the place I was in and put me into a new one. My place before God is only in Christ, and in Christ consequent on His having borne my sins, consequent on Satan's having done His worst, consequent on the cup of wrath having been drunk. The Christ I know is the one who has accomplished the wonderful work of redemption.

This makes one understand what the apostle speaks of here, “a man in Christ.” I will glory in that man, but of myself I will not glory. So we ought always, beloved friends, because it is all of grace. The Christian has died in Christ, he is risen in Christ; and we have been made “to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” By redemption He has taken us out of the condition we were in, and the flesh is a condemned thing. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

Beloved friends, let me ask you, do you know what it is to be in Christ? If not, do not rest till you do. It is harder to understand that we are in Christ than that we are forgiven. A man rejoices when he knows his sins are forgiven; but what gives real depth is knowing that we are out of that condition.

At the Red Sea the Israelites were desired to “stand still and see the salvation of God:” God was not a judge kept outside as before. Just look at the apostle before Agrippa: “would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds” —not “would to God that all that hear me were Christians.” Was this vanity or pride? Far from it; but he was conscious of his place in Christ. It was not a matter of attainment; the apostle would have shrunk from that more than any of us. Could you say, as to the privileges that belong to you, “would to God that.....all that hear me.....were both almost and altogether such as I am?”

Christ being risen has become the Christian's life, who treats the flesh as a thing dead and gone; before God he is in this new condition in Christ.

The Christ who has become my life (I say Christ has become my life, and Christ in that very power in which He rose from the dead), the Christ who is my life, is past the wrath, past the sins, past death, past everything. Where is Christ? Far above all heavens. Looking up, I can say, The Christ who is this perfectness is in the presence of God for me!

See what a difference it is. You cannot impute sin, as a present thing, to a dead man. And such is before God the truth in Christ of the Christian. He is justified and cleared from everything because he is not in the flesh; he is dead. Such is the blessed place into which we are thus brought. How do I get this? By having Christ's life in me, and the blessed One before God for me. This is not all; for in point of fact “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” We have an apostolic vision in this chapter; what effect had it on the flesh? It was “puffed up.” Now Paul, not one has ever been in the third heaven but you! Only see the way the flesh is judged there! Leave the flesh without law, and it is lawless; put it under law, it breaks law; put it in connection with Christ, it crucifies Him; put the Holy Ghost in a man, the flesh lusts against Him; take a man to the third heaven, it is puffed up; and, if there were a fourth heaven, flesh would be more puffed up still. The remedy is—not more grace, but keeping it utterly down.

The new man is obedient and dependent; it is not an independent thing that sets up to act for itself. I am dependent on His grace every instant. The flesh will not be this. Satan tried Christ. “Command that these stones he made bread,” but He remained in dependence and obedience. Satan would have us, if we know these amazing privileges, to get out of dependence into self-will. What is to be done to keep practically dead? “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.” If we are in Christ before God, Christ is in us. We have divine life; we want power to live in obedience and in constant dependence. “The heart is deceitful above all things: who can know it?” God does know it. Paul was in danger here, but the Lord had thought about all that, and He has the remedy all ready— “a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him.” What a comfort it is to us, if we are in earnest, if we seek to serve and to glorify God down here, that the eye of the Lord Jesus is never off us! “He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.” Let us remember the flesh never can be made any better; but Christ is continually thinking of us to do the needed thing. What does He do? He puts down the flesh. How does He deal with us? He makes nothing of us; and this is not at all pleasant.

The Lord took care by this thorn in the flesh that Paul should be a person in some way contemptible. Paul asked three times that it should be taken away. Not at all, the Lord says: I have given it on purpose; I must make nothing of Paul, that Christ may be everything in Paul. Do you say you are in Christ before God, and loved as Christ is loved? Take care, however; you are in a place of temptation; you have to bear “about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.” I reckon myself dead, if I talk of my place before God; I bear about the dying of the Lord Jesus, if I am to manifest the life of Christ in this world. Nature, of course, does not like that; but, if we are to manifest the life of Christ, the flesh must be put down.

Reckon yourselves to be dead, because Christ has died. When you go down to this world, the only possible dealing with the flesh is making nothing of you. This is not power, but it is the way God

deals with us to give power, whether to an apostle or to the giver of a cup of cold water. If you are in Christ, one wants nothing but Christ from you. The thorn is not power in itself, but preparation for power. Suppose Paul despicable in his ministry: well, there never was such a work done before. Then there must be something besides Paul here; Christ must be here. Ah! says Paul, “I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” His strength is made perfect in weakness. He cannot make it perfect in our strength! I am as weak as water—a poor weak thing: God has chosen that no flesh may glory in His presence. Where a person is nothing, “my grace is sufficient.” Where is His strength made perfect? In a person who has no strength at all: then it must be Christ. When I am made nothing of, “I glory in my infirmities.” There is what the Christian is.

God says, I am dead, and loved as Christ is loved. My place is in Christ, and in Christ only. Experience contradicts this. So I have to find out that the flesh is a judged and dead thing. “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live.” If in point of fact the flesh is there, it is a judged thing. If I know that my servant is a rogue, I keep my things all locked up, and so they are safe; not that he is changed, but that the state of things is changed. When the flesh is really distrusted, though it is there, there is not a twentieth part of the danger. The Lord keeps me then; He sends a thorn, if needed, to put me down completely. When the flesh is practically put down and in its place, then Christ's strength is made perfect in weakness, for there can be no doubt that it is His power. Are your hearts content that self should be put down? Are you glad of it? Can you glory in infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon you?

If we seek to live Christ, if we are conscious that our portion is Christ, we shall want more of that kind of putting down of the flesh. We want more depth—all of us—showing us what the flesh is, and what Christ is. The time is coming when we shall see that all the rest was worse than vanity, stunting the life of Christ, instead of mortifying our members on the earth.

The Lord give us so to see Christ that we may now say with the apostle “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord!”

Chapter 113

Is Modern Christianity a Civilized Heathenism?

Remarks on a Book Entitled

I recognize that this writing is calculated to produce serious thoughts; but it is as marking coming judgment. As a judgment of the state of things, the writer is sadly right; but he has not got a step beyond the conventionalities of the Church of England. The testimony of Christianity is in its effects; but of Christianity itself he is wholly ignorant. His highest idea is asceticism, and fine Gothic buildings, when he comes to the positive side.

But if I take the precepts of Christianity, he lives not in them, but in his own natural thoughts. It is just as much a precept of Christianity— “when thou prayest, enter into thy closet and shut to thy door,” and that on the deepest moral ground, as to be separate from the world, not in a chancel with the door open. “The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands.” “They that worship God must worship in spirit and in truth.” It is equally a precept, “when thou fastest, be not of a sad countenance, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast.” All this inward part of Christianity is gone; nay, the opposite is required to win the world to believe.

But there is more. We cannot too fully recognize that the friendship of the world is enmity against God; and he that will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God. We are crucified to the world and the world to us. But Christianity and consequently conscience and heart are both wanting. It is, humanly speaking, a just satire, though it is, say they, “an ill bird that fouls its own nest;” let us hope, the end shows some conscience. But Christianity is not a satire; it is grace. See the difference: “For many walk of whom I told you before, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, who glory in their shame, who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Savior.”

The two great pillars of Christianity are wanting, John 3:3, “Ye must be born again,” and verse 16, “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” There is no new inward life, no love of God.

The man, to use the strong Irish expression, is “to make his soul” by asceticism and praying in agony in a cathedral where anybody that likes may see him. No trace of love in God, no need of another and divinely given life in Christ, no trace of either is found in the book. This is so true, that it is not merely that the world hated Christ, which is most true, because He testified of it that the works thereof were evil—light came in so that all without exception were condemned; but he makes Christ hate the world! I read “I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God, that ye yield your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your intelligent service; and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” In this book the mercies of God are wholly unknown; nonconformity to the world is insisted on by the heathen mind and natural conscience; transformed by the renewing of your mind is wholly ignored. Now nonconformity to the world without the other too is the pharisaism he says the Savior came to

judge. The picture of highest good is being scorned by the world, like Christ. Good in God, or in Christ, never crosses his mind. It is imitation: I know what it is—earnest men may try it, when they have no knowledge of God or redemption, and be driven, under grace, to know they need a Savior. He has no idea but of one lying stretched at the foot of the cross, loving Him with a love all the world can see. God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, then He made Him to be sin for us, he knows not at all. “He took upon Him human flesh that we might know for certain how human creatures ought to live, who died on the cross to win for us the power to imitate His brave contempt,” &c.

But, further, his statement as to heathenism is false. See Rom. 1, where the apostle only touches on the mountain tops of the evil, hiding justly in the dark shade what grew in baleful luxuriance beneath. He denies positively in terms the apostle's statement in Rom. 1:19, 20; and his argument as to a final cause is wholly illogical. We cannot help believing causation; that is, when we see an existing thing expressing a thought, we believe there must be one who has caused it. Consequently we cannot know God, because He exists without a cause. We know that He must he; but what makes us do so shows we cannot know Himself.

I need not say the Christian is not of the world. As such, Christ is all to him; and all he does he is to do positively in the name of Christ. This only is to live; but it is because he is bought with a price, he knows and feels he is Christ's, and Christ is in him in the power of life. The man has never lived with true Christians, any more than he knows a Savior God. It is a sad and solemn picture; but he has known nothing beyond it. The infidel world can attack evil: with that he falls in, putting the right side in a heathen's mouth, ashamed to quote scripture himself. His statements as to this are quite untrue. “The Bible as a primary instructor tells me nothing about God whatever.” “The Bible is of no use without an interpreter.” And what is the result? Miserable labor to get heaven, and, instead of foxhunting and society, he gives species of insects, the number of botanic genera, architecture, music, painting, poetry, which may be consecrated to Him, as stone buildings prove; and we must have good music (as well as distinguish a beetle from a cockroach) and an active life. Redemption, spirituality, and Christ being really all, and the real service of love, are alike unknown to him. Where these are really known, it may rouse careless souls; and that is well. I believe a Christian is to live Christ and nothing else. As to the scene this writer describes and is in, and the correctness of which, as a systematic whole, he assumes as a matter of course, the believer has learned already from scripture (2 Tim. 3) that “in the last days perilous times shall come, men shall be lovers of their own selves.... having the form of godliness, and denying the power of it: from such turn away.”

The writer has with rude hand torn the veil from his own sphere of life, but has substituted nothing which supposes good in God, and labors, through fear of hell, to make peace, if he can at last, with a righteous judge, glad to win heaven by suffering and despising the world like Christ. Mind and natural conscience have judged, as an infidel can, of inconsistency with profession, in conformity to a world which is enmity against God; but there is a total ignorance of God revealed in Christ, of redemption and Christianity. This is for him a “distinct revelation of God's will,” but no revelation of God. It is an Edomite's attack on Jerusalem, not a Jeremiah's sorrow; and he has not faith enough in Christ to know there is something behind and beyond all this. I only hope it may act on the consciences of some to show them the utter incompatibility between Christianity and the world. But it will do this with those who know Christ's love. He would only make despair, monks,

pharisees, and hypocrites. He has no motive but winning heaven by labor, and a piety which shows itself to the world, and would honor God with a Jewish temple, which God has set aside, not with a Christian heart. A member of what he despises and reviles, he is much more infected with infidelity than he is aware of. J.N.D)

Chapter 114

John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 10

“The disciple whom Jesus loved.” I have been just feeling that I can fully enjoy the truth which these words convey. And I would cherish such an experience, and ask the Lord to fix and enlarge it.

It is far from intimating that one is more interested than another in the grace and salvation of God, or loved with a more faithful or enduring love. But it does intimate that there may be a more personal attachment between the Master and some of His disciples than between Him and others. All, I may say, sat at supper with Him, while only one leaned there on His bosom. All continued with Him in His temptations and are to receive the kingdom together, but only three were in the garden or on the holy hill with Him. For there is more personal oneness of thought and feeling in some than in others now of that which, as among ourselves, draws the willing heart along. If I look at a brother whose way savors much of that which I know Jesus must delight in being meek and self-renouncing and unaffectedly humble and withal elevated and unworldly, I may remember John, and see that disciple whom Jesus loved reflected in my brother. But then, how happy is it to remember that John himself was but one of a company whom the same Jesus had chosen and called, and bound to Himself forever! Did John exclude Thomas or Bartholomew? Thomas and Bartholomew, in the great evangelic sense, were as much to Christ as John. The one was not a whit more accepted man than the others.

This is sure and blessed, as well as plain and simple. I may rejoice in it with all certainty. And if I have any love to Him who has called me to such assured and eternal blessedness, will I not rejoice in this, that He has an object in which He can take more delight than, I must well know, I and my way can afford Him?

Thus do I find reasons for enjoying that sentence, again and again repeated, “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” and for delighting also in the thought that such a truth finds its illustration among the saints now, as it did in the midst of the apostles in earlier days.

The love with which we have to do is too perfect to be partial. It does not act irregularly or carelessly. “We are all the objects of it. Thomas is not neglected because John is thus loved. But because this love is real, it is moved in this way by a John. But when I see a John leaning on Jesus, while I myself am at a distance, let me have grace to look still, and to delight in the vision, and to say, “It is good for me to be here.” If I am not in the same experience, still it is blessed to enjoy the thought that another is there. Peter was gladdened by the vision of a glory in Moses and Elias, though it was all beyond him. So is my spirit happy and thankful to entertain the thought of my more heavenly brother pressing the bosom of our common Lord.

(The late) J. G. B.

Chapter 115

Notes on John: Introduction

That the fourth Gospel is characterized by setting forth the Lord Jesus as the Word, the Only Begotten Son, God Himself, on earth, can be questioned by no intelligent Christian. It is not as Messiah, Son of David and of Abraham yet withal the Jehovah of Israel, Emmanuel; nor yet as the Son devoted to the service of God, above all in the gospel; neither is it as the Holy Thing born of the Virgin by the miraculous agency of the Holy Ghost and in this sense too Son of God, that He is presented, as in each of the other inspired accounts respectively. Here His divine nature shines from under the veil of flesh, as He moves here and there, evermore displaying the Father in His person and words and ways; and then, on His going above, giving and sending the Holy Ghost to be with and in His own forever.

Hence it is that He is here declared the giver of eternal life to the believer, who is accordingly entitled in virtue of this new life to become a child of God. For it is no question here of dispensational dealings, nor of testimony to the creature, nor yet of the moral perfections of the man Christ Jesus. All these have their fitting places elsewhere; but here the Spirit of God has in hand a deeper task, the manifestation of the Father in the Son, and this as the Word made flesh and tabernacling here below, with its immense consequences for every soul, and even for God Himself glorified both in the exigencies of His moral being and in the intimate depths of His relationship as Father.

Further, we may take note of the divine wisdom which wrote and gave such a Gospel at a comparatively late date, when the enemy was seeking to corrupt and destroy, not by Pharisaic or Sadducean adversaries, nor by idolatrous Gentiles, but by apostates and antichristian teachers who, under the highest pretensions of knowledge and power, were undermining the truth of Christ's person, on the side both of His proper Deity and of His real humanity, to the ruin of man and to the most thankless and daring dishonor of God. No testimony came in more appropriately than that of John, who, like the writer of the earliest Gospel, was an eye-witness, and even above all others familiar, if one may reverently so say, with the Lord Jesus as man on earth, yet none the less but above all the instrument of attesting His divine glory, the bearing of both on the closing efforts of Satan, even then and thenceforward prevalent (1 John 2:18), being most evident and of supreme importance. The Lord, on the other hand, as ever in His grace, met the efforts of Satan by a fuller assertion of “that which was from the beginning,” for His own glory in the clearing, comfort, and consolidation of the family of God, yea, of the babes. For what greater security than to find themselves the objects of the Father's love, loved as the Son was loved, Himself in them, and they in Him, who on departing assures them of the abiding presence of that other Comforter, the Holy Spirit—a blessedness so great that He declares His own deeply missed absence “expedient” for them in order to secure it?

Consequently along with the reality and manifestation of eternal life in man in Christ the Son, there is the careful, complete, and distinct abolishing of Jewish or any other relationships for man in the flesh with God, while it is shown clearly both in the introduction and at the end of the Gospel that

the dispensations of God are not overlooked, nor Christ's relation to them, His person, divine yet a man, being the pivot on which all turns.

Indeed it was a great oversight of the ancient ecclesiastical writers to regard John as the evangelist who views the Lord or His own in their heavenly connections, ill as the eagle could symbolize any such thing. For the characteristic truth, with a slight exception here and there, is God manifesting Himself in His Son, yet a man on earth, not man in Him the exalted Christ on high, which is the line assigned to the apostle Paul, and among the inspired accounts of the Lord that of Luke and even, in a measure, of Mark. Therefore we may notice that there is no ascension scene (though abundantly supposed) in John any more than in Matthew, though for wholly different reasons. For the first Gospel shows us the Lord in His final presentation, risen indeed but still maintaining His links of relationship with the disciples or Jewish remnant in Galileo, where He gives them their great commission, and assures them of His presence with them till the consummation of the age. The last shows us Him uniting in His person the glory not only of the risen man and Son of God, the last Adam, but also of the Lord God who as the quickening Spirit breathes the breath of a better life in resurrection power into His disciples, and thereon gives a mystical view of the age to come, with the special places of both Peter and John.

It is God on earth therefore that appears in the account of our Lord here, not man glorified in heaven (save for exceptional purposes) as in the writings of the Apostle Paul. Hence in the first chapter, so remarkable for the fullness with which the titles of Christ are brought before us there, we do not read of Him either as priest or as head of the church, relations which are exclusively bound up with His exaltation above and service at the right hand of God. John presents all that is divine in Christ's person and work on earth; and as he gives us the setting aside of the first man in his best shape, so also the absolute need of the divine nature if man is to see or enter the kingdom of God. What is essential and abiding naturally flows from the presence of a divine person revealing Himself here below in grace and truth.

Again, the character of the truth before the Holy Spirit evidently excludes any genealogy such as is found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, who respectively traced our blessed Lord down from Abraham and David, or up to Adam “which was the son of God.” Here John gives no such birth roll; for how trace the line of Him who in the beginning, before a creature existed, was with God and was God? If Mark is devoted to the details of His service, especially His service in the gospel, accompanied by suited powers and signs (for He would arouse man and appeal to unbelievers in the patient goodness of God), he in the wisdom of the same Spirit was led to omit all record of His earthly parentage and early life, and at once enters on His work, only preceded by a brief notice of His herald John the Baptist, in his work; and as the Lord was the perfect Servant, so the perfect account of it says nothing here of a genealogy; for who would ask the pedigree of a servant? Thus, if His service seems to keep it out from Mark, His Deity being the prominent truth renders it unsuitable for the Spirit's purpose by John. It is only from all the four that we receive the truth in its various fullness: only so could even God adequately reveal to us our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Gospels He is given us not merely in view of our need but of the divine love and glory.

Chapter 116

Notes on John 1:1-13

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Word, the expression of the Godhead, has eternal being, distinct personality, and properly Deity, not merely θει■της but θε■της. We see One who was before time began. It is not even the beginning of creation but before then, when the Word was with God before all things were made by Him. Look back as we may before creation, the Word was—not ■γ■νετο, existed, as One that had commenced to be, but was, ■ν, the Word incerate, yea the Creator. Further, He "was with God," not exactly with the Father as such; for scripture never speaks with such correlation. "The Word was with God." Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were there, but the Word was with God, "and the Word was God." He was no creature, but essentially divine, though not He alone divine. Other Persons there were in the Godhead. "He was in the beginning with God;" not at a subsequent date, but "in the beginning," when no creature had commenced its existence. For this truth we are entirely indebted to God. Who could speak of such things but God? It is He who uses John to write, and all He says is worthy of implicit faith. The Word "was in the beginning with God." His personality was eternal, no less than His nature or being. Then as an added and after communication we are told that "all things were made by him, and without him not one thing was made which has been made." The Word was not made, but Himself made all. The Word is the Creator of all that has had a derived being. He created all. No creature received being save through Him.

No scripture gives us such complete information. Even Gen. 1, though it points to states of creation indefinitely anterior to Adam, begins only with John 1:3. "What was before creation is wholly omitted by Moses. John (1:1, 2) shows us what was before creation, as well as creation itself (ver. 3), in the most precise terms.

But there is much more than the power of an eternal Being. For we come now to a thing higher and more intimate: not to what was brought into being through Him, but to what was in Him. He is the true God and eternal life. "In him was life." Believers have life; but it is in the Son, not in them but in Him; "and the life was the light of men." (Ver. 4.) Not angels but men were the object. He does not say life, but light of men. The life was only for those that believe in His name: the light goes far beyond, That which makes manifest is light. But men, in fact, were fallen and at a distance from God; and so it is intimated here. "And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended [that is, apprehended] it not." (Ver. 5.)

Darkness is neither the mother of all as the heathen said, nor a malignant creator the co-eternal opponent of the Lord God of light; it is really the moral condition of man, a negation of the light, differing wholly from the physical reality, inasmuch as it is of itself unaffected by light. Grace only, as we shall see by and by, can deal effectually with the difficulty.

Here it may be noticed that John does not discourse of life absolutely, but life in the Word, which life is affirmed to be the light of men. It is exclusive of other objects; at least the proposition goes not beyond men. So, in Col. 1, Christ is said to be the image of the invisible God, who is here only

revealed to perfection in man and to men. He is the Light of men, and there is no other: for if man has what scripture calls light he has it only in the Word, who is the life. Beyond controversy God is light and in Him is no darkness at all; but He dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen nor can see. Not so with the Word of whom we are reading. “The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” Observe the striking precision of the phrases. It appears in darkness, such is its nature—it shines, not it shone; whereas the abstract form is changed for the historical, when we are told that the darkness apprehended it not.

Thus we have had the Spirit's statement of the Word, in relation first to God, next to creation, lastly to men, with a solemn sentence on their moral state in relation to the light, and not merely to life.

We are next presented with John sent from God to testify of the light. “There was a man sent from God—his name John. This [man] came for a witness that he might witness about the light, that all might believe through him; this was not the light, but that he might witness about the light.” (Ver. 6-8.) God who is love was active in His goodness to draw attention to the light; for deep was man's need. Hence there was a man sent from Him—his name John. He, as we are told elsewhere, was the burning and shining lamp (■ ■χνος); but the Word was the Light (τ■ φ■ς?) concerning which he came for witness. For his mission is here viewed in relation, not to the law or any legal purpose, but to the Light (and hence its scope is far beyond Israel), that he might witness concerning the Light, that all might believe through him. It is a question of personal faith in the Savior, not merely of moral exhortation to the multitude, tax-gatherers, soldiers, or any others, as in the Gospel of Luke. Every scripture is perfect, and perfectly adapted to the divine purpose of glorifying Jesus.

The Light is the object of God's gracious purpose. John is but an instrument and witness; he was not the Light, but that he might witness concerning the light. “The true light was that ['or, he was the true light] which, coming into the world, lighteth every man” in exclusion of Philonism and Platonism, as we have seen before of Manicheanism and eternal matter. The law dealt with those under it, that is, with Israel; the Light on coming into the world, a cardinal point in the teaching of our apostle (1 John 1:1-4; 2:7, 14, &c), casts its light on every man. Coming, or a comer, into the world is used by the Rabbis for birth as man; but for this very reason it would be the merest tautology if viewed in apposition with v. ■■νθρ. “every man." It qualifies the relative, and affirms that as incarnate the true Light lights every man.

The result however in itself, is, and can only be, condemnation by reason of opposition of nature; for as we are told, “He was in the world, and the world was made [or brought into being] through him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him to them he gave authority to become children of God, to those that believe on his name; who were born not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God.” (Ver. 10-13.) What infinite and loving condescension that He, the eternal Word, the true Light, should be in the world—the world which received its being from Him! How dense its ignorance that the world knew Him not, the Creator! But He had one place on earth which He was pleased to own as His own peculiar (τα■δια): there He came; and (ο■ ■■ιοι) His own people (it is not said knew Him not but) received Him not! It was rejection, not ignorance! This prepared the way for the manifestation of a new thing, men from out of the ruined world separated to a new and incomparably nearer relationship with God, to whom, as many as received Him (for it is no question of “every man” here), He gave right or title to enter the place of God's children, to those

that believe on His name. Nor is this a mere external position of honor, into which sovereignty might choose, so as to maintain by adoption family name and grandeur. It is a real communication of life and nature, a living birth-tie. They are τ■κνα θεο■.

John nowhere describes believers as ν■ο■ but as τ■κνα, for his point is life in Christ, rather than the counsels of God by redemption. Paul on the other hand (as in Rom. 8) calls us both υ■ο■ς and τ■κνα θεο■, because he is setting forth, both the high place given us now in contrast with bondage under the law, and also the intimacy of our relationship as children of God. On the other hand it is notable that Jesus is never called τ■κνον (though as Messiah He is styled πα■ς or servant), but ν■■ς." He is the Son, the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, but not τ■κνον as if He were born of God as we are. To me it is the name of nearest but derived relationship. This is quite confirmed by the immediately following statement of John, "who were born... of God." So indeed it will be seen invariably elsewhere, despite the Authorized Version which wrongly represents τ■κνα by "sons" in his first epistle, chapter iii. They believe on His name, on the manifestation of what the Word is. Every creature source is shut out, as well as all previous relationship closed and done with; a new race is brought in. They were men, of course, and cease not to be men as a fact; but they are born afresh spiritually, born of God most truly, partake of the divine nature in this sense, as deriving their new life from God. Natural generation, effort of one's own, effort of others, had no place here. Life, as ever throughout John and Paul, is wholly distinct from simple immortality. It is the possession of that divine character of being, which in the Son never had a beginning, for He was the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us. He is our life; because He lives, we also live, It is true in Him and in us, in Him essentially, in us derivatively through grace, but this not so as to be for a moment independent of Him, but in Him. Still we have the life now; nowhere is it taught that we shall be born of God, only that we have been. Begotten now, as distinct from born, is false, absurd, and without the shadow of scripture to support it.

Chapter 117

Notes on John 1:14 - 18

From the revelation of the Word in His own intrinsic nature, we now turn to His actual manifestation as man here below. The incarnation is brought before us, the full revelation of God to man and in man. “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we have contemplated his glory, glory as of an only begotten with a father), full of grace and truth.” Here it is not what the Word was, but what He became. He was God, He became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. (Ver. 14.)

It was no transient vision, however momentous, as on the holy mount. It was a contemplation of His glory vouchsafed to His witnesses, not of an earthly conqueror, nor Messianic even, but glory as of an only begotten with a father. No sword girds His thigh, no riding to victory, no terrible things in righteousness: the incarnate Word dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Such is He that was from the beginning, and thus was He known. He was the King undoubtedly, but not so portrayed here. He is infinitely more than King, even God, but God on earth, a man dwelling among men, full of grace and truth. So only could God be displayed, unless in judgment which had left no hope but only destroyed to the bitter end at once and unreservedly. For infinitely different purposes had He come, as this passage itself declares in due season, perfectly knowing and feeling the universal evil of man. He dwelt among us full of grace and truth. So He manifests God, who is love. But grace is more; it is love in the midst of evil, rising above it, going down under it, overcoming it with good; and such was Jesus, full of truth withal, for otherwise grace was no more grace, but a base imitation and most ruinous both for God and to man. Not such was Jesus, but full of grace and truth, and in this order too: for grace brings in the truth and enables souls to receive truth and to bear it, themselves as sinners judged by it; He and He only was full of grace and truth. To make it known, to make God Himself thus known, He came; for, as grace is the activity of divine love in the midst of evil, so truth is the revelation of all things as they really are, from God Himself and His ways and counsels down to man, and every thought and feeling as well as word and work of man, yea, of every invisible agency for good or evil throughout all time, yea, throughout all eternity. So He dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

Nor did God fail to render testimony to Him thus. “John witnesseth about him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spoke, he that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me.” (Ver. 15.) Most strikingly is John introduced with his testimony to each or the great divisions of the chapter. Before it was to the abstract revelation of the light. Here it is to his actual presentation to the world, and as it is historical, so we have what John cries, not merely a description as before. He says “this was he of whom I spoke.” The coming of Jesus after John was no derogation from His glory, but for the contrary. No greater prophet had arisen than John the Baptist among those born of women. But Jesus is God. If He was pleased therefore to come after John in time, He was proved incomparably before him in title; nay, He was really before him, but this only because He was divine.

The last verse appears to be a parenthesis, however full of instruction. But the direct line of truth runs, “full of grace and truth; and of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.” (Ver. 16.) An astonishing truth! He is the gift and the giver—full of grace and truth, and of His fullness have all we received. Such is the portion of the least believer. The strongest is only the strongest, because he better appreciates Him. For there is no blessing outside Him and consequently no lack for the soul that possesses Jesus. If the Colossian saints, if any others seek to add any other thing to Jesus, it is a real loss, not gain. It is but to add what detracts from Jesus.

The expression “grace for grace” has perplexed many, but without much reason, for an analogous phrase occurs, even in profane authors not unfrequently, which ought to satisfy any enquirer that it simply means grace upon grace, one succeeding to another without stint or failure—superabundance of grace, and not a mere literal notion of grace in us answering to grace in Him. It will be noticed further, that scripture speaks of grace (or upon) grace, not truth upon truth, which last would be wholly unsuitable, for the truth is one, and cannot be so spoken of. The same apostle wrote even to the babes, not because they did not know the truth, but because they do know it, and that no lie is of the truth. The unction, which they have received from Him, teaches them as to all things, and is true, and is not a lie. But as grace brings the truth, so the truth exercises in grace. How blessed that of His fullness have all we received and grace for grace!

Wholly different was seen at Sinai, for the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (Ver. 17.) Not that the law is sin. Far be the thought. It is holy; and the commandment holy and just and good. But it is altogether impotent to deliver man or to reveal God. It has neither life to give, nor object to make known. It requires from man what he ought to render both to God and to his fellows; but in vain is it required from man already a sinner before the law was given, for sin entered the world through Adam no less surely than the law was given by Moses. Man fell and was lost, none could bring eternal life but Jesus Christ the Lord. And this was wholly unavailable to man without His death in expiation of sin. Here however we have not yet reached the work of Christ, nor the message of grace that goes out to the world grounded on it in the gospel, but His person in the world, and to this the testimony is “grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” There and there only was the divine love superior to man's evil; there and there only was everything revealed and in its due relation to God. Truly Jesus is a divine Savior.

But there is yet more than this. God Himself must be known, not merely fullness of blessing come in Christ or souls be brought into the blessing by redemption. Yet man as such is incapable of knowing God. How is this difficulty to be solved? “No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father—he hath declared [him].” (Ver. 18.) Thus only can God be known as He is, for Christ is the truth—the revealer and revelation of God, as of everything in God's sight. Nowhere does scripture say with rationalists and, I regret to add, with theologians, that God is the truth. Not so: God is the I am, the self-subsisting One; He is love, He is light. But Christ is the truth objectively, as the Spirit is in power, working in man. And Christ has declared God, as One, who as the Son is in the bosom of the Father, not who was as if He had left it, as He left the glory and is now gone back into glory as man. He never left the Father's bosom. It is His constant place, and a peculiar mode of acquaintance with God. Hence we by the Holy Ghost are in grace privileged to know God, even as the Son declared Him, who perfectly, infinitely, enjoyed love in that relationship from everlasting and to everlasting. Into what a circle of divine association does He not introduce us! It is not the Light of men, nor yet the Word acting or

becoming flesh, but the only-begotten Son who is in the Father's bosom declaring God according to His own competency of nature and the fullness of His own intimacy with the Father. Even John Baptist as having his origin in the earth was of the earth and spoke of it. Jesus alone of men could be said to come out of heaven and above all, testifying what He had seen and heard. It was His to declare God, and this in His own proper relationship.

Notes on John 1:19-28

If the verses which precede comprise the divine preface, the section which follows may be viewed as an introduction. The Baptist in answer to the inquiring deputation gives an explicit, though in the first place negative, testimony to the Lord Jesus. Singularly fitted vessel of witness to the Messiah, as was he himself filled by the Spirit from his mother's womb, he was sustained as scarce another had ever been in nothing but the function of making straight the path of Jehovah.

“And this is the witness of John when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites that they might ask him, “Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; and confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, “What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he saith, No. They said therefore to him, Who art thou, that we may give an answer to those that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself? He said I [am the] voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the path of [the] Lord, as said Esaias the prophet. And they were sent from among the Pharisees; and they asked him and said to him, Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them saying, I baptize with water: in the midst of you standeth, whom ye know not, he who cometh after me, of whom I am not worthy to unloose the thong of his sandal. These things took place in Bethany, across the Jordan where John was baptizing.” (Ver. 19 - 28.)

Thus did God take care to rouse a general expectancy of the Messiah in the minds of His people, and to bear them the fullest witness. And never was there a more strictly independent witness than John, born and brought up and kept till the fit moment to testify of the Messiah. For while the minute questions of those sent by the Jews from Jerusalem show how men's minds were then exercised, how they wished to ascertain the real character and aim of the mysterious Israelite, himself of priestly lineage, and thereby as they ought to have known excluded from the Messianic title, there was no vagueness in the reply. John was not the Anointed. This was the main aim of their search; and our Gospel very simply attests the reply.

There is somewhat of difficulty in the next answer. For when asked, “Art thou Elijah?” he says, “I am not.” How is this denial from the lip of John himself to be reconciled with the Lord's own testimony to His servant in Matt. 17:11, 12? “Elias truly shall first come and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.” And they were right. The key appears to lie in Matt. 11:14: “And if ye will receive it,” (says the Lord in vindicating John at a time when, if ever, he seemed to waver in his testimony, for who but One is the Faithful Witness?) “this is Elias which was for to come.” Such a word however needed ears to hear. Like the Lord (Son of man no less than Messiah), his testimony and his lot were to be in unison with an advent in shame and sorrow as well as in power and glory. The Jews naturally cared only for the latter; but, to avail not only for God but for the true wants of man, first must Jesus suffer before He is glorified, and come again in power. So Elijah came to faith (“if ye will receive it") in the Baptist who testified in

humiliation and with results in man's eyes scanty and evanescent. But Elijah will come in a manner consonant with the return of the Lord to deliver Israel and bless the world under His reign. To the Jew who only looked at the external he was not come: to point to the Baptist would have seemed mockery; for if they had no apprehension of God's secrets or His ways, and they saw no beauty in the humble Master, what would it avail to speak of the servant? The disciples, feeble though they might be, enter into the truths hidden from men and are given to see beneath the surface the true style of the servant and of the Master to faith.

Nevertheless John does take his stand of witness to Jesus, to His personal and divine glory; and to this end, when challenged who he was, applies to himself the prophetic oracle in every Gospel attached to him: “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of Jehovah.” Jesus was Jehovah, John no more than a voice in the desolation of the earth, yea, of Israel, to prepare the way before Him.

They further inquire why he baptized, if neither the Messiah, nor Elijah (that is, the immediate precursor of the kingdom in power and glory over the earth, Mal. 4), nor the prophet (that is, according to Deut. 18 which, however, the apostle Peter in Acts 3 as clearly applies to the Lord Jesus, as the Jews seem to have then alienated from the Messiah). This gives John the occasion to render another testimony to Christ's glory; for his answer is, that he baptized with water: but there stood among them, unknown to them, One coming after, whose shoe-latchet he was not worthy to unloose.

It is evident that John's baptism had a serious import in men's minds, since, without a single miracle or other sign, it awakened the question whether the Baptist were the Christ. It intimated the close of the old state of things and a new position, instead of being the familiar practice which traditionaries would make it. On the other hand, scripture is equally plain that it is quite distinct from Christian baptism: so much so, that disciples previously baptized with John's baptism had to be baptized to Christ when they received the full truth of the gospel. (Acts 19) The Reformers and others are singularly unintelligent in denying this difference, which is not only important but plain and certain. Think of Calvin's calling it a foolish mistake, into which some had been led, of supposing that John's baptism was different from ours! The confession of a coming Messiah widely differs from that of His death and resurrection, and this is the root of differences which involve weighty consequences.

Chapter 119

Notes on John 1:29-34

From verse 19 to 28 John the Baptist does not rise beyond what was Jewish and dispensational. The next paragraph brings before us the testimony which he rendered when he saw Jesus approaching. And here we have Christ's work viewed in all the extent of power which might be expected in the Gospel devoted to showing out the glory of His person.

“On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” (Ver. 29.) There was no image more familiar to a Jew's mind than that of the lamb. It was the daily sacrifice of Israel, morning and evening. Besides, the paschal lamb was the essence of the fundamental feast of the year; even as its first institution was co-eval with the departure of the sons of Israel from the house of bondage. We can understand therefore what thoughts and feelings must have crowded on the heart of those who looked for a Savior now, when Jesus was thus attested by His forerunner. “Behold the Lamb (■μν■ς) of God.” In the book of Revelation He is frequently viewed as the Lamb, but there with a pointedly different (■ρν■ον) word, the holy earth-rejected Sufferer in contrast with the ravening wild beasts civil or religious, instruments of Satan's power in the world. Here the idea seems to center in sacrifice. “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.”

John does not say “that will take,” still less “that has taken;” nor do I think the notion tenable that He was then taking sin away. It is, as frequently in John and elsewhere, the abstract form of speech, and the meaning should be understood in its fullest extent.

The testimony looks onward to the effects of the death of Christ as a whole, but these were not to appear all at once. The first great result was the Gospel, the message of remission of sins to every believer. Instead of the sin of the world only being before God, the blood of the Lamb was, and God could therefore meet the world in grace, not in judgment. Not only was love come in Christ's person as during His life, but now the blood was shed whereby God could cleanse the foulest; and the gospel is God's proclamation to every creature of His readiness to receive all, and of His perfectly cleansing all who do receive Christ. In fact only the church receives Him; but the testimony is sent forth to every creature. When Christ comes in His kingdom, there will be a further result; for all creation will then be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and Israel will at length look upon the Messiah whom they pierced in their blind unbelief. The blessing resulting from the sacrifice of Christ will then be far and wide extended, but not complete. Only the new heavens and new earth (and this not in the limited scope of the Jewish prophets, but in the full meaning which the Christian apostles give the words) will behold the ultimate fulfillment, and then indeed it will be seen how truly Jesus was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. For then, and not till then, will sin have disappeared absolutely, and all its consequences. The wicked having been judged and cast forever into the lake of fire, as well as Satan and his angels, righteousness will then be the footing of God's relationship with the world, not sinlessness as at first, or dealings in Christ in view of sin as now.

Observe however that the Baptist does not say the “sins” of the world. What a fatality of error haunts men when they venture to handle the truth of God after a human sort! It is not only in sermons or books that one finds this common and grave blunder. The solemn liturgies of Romanism and Protestantism are alike wrong here. They alter and unconsciously falsify the word of God when directly referring to this scripture. In speaking of believers both the apostles Paul and Peter show that the Lord bore away their sins upon the cross. Without this indeed there could be neither peace secured for the conscience nor a righteous basis for worshipping God, according to the efficacy of the work of Christ. The Christian is exhorted to come boldly into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, which has, at the same time, put his sins away and brought himself nigh; but this is only true of the believer. In total contrast is the state and condition of the unbeliever, of every man in nature. He is far off, in guilt, in darkness, in death. The language of the liturgies confounds all this according indeed to the practice of their worship, for the world is treated as the church, and the church as the world. Were Christ the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world, all men would stand absolved before God, and might well therefore boldly approach and worship; but it is not so. The blood is shed for the sin of the world, so that the evangelist can go forth and preach the gospel and assure all who believe of pardon from God; but all who refuse must die in their sins, and only the more terribly be judged because they refused the message of grace.

But God never forgets the personal dignity of the Lord Jesus here. Hence John the Baptist adds, “He it is of whom I said, After me cometh a man who taketh precedence of [or is preferred before] me, for he was before me. And I knew him not, but that he might be manifested to Israel, therefore came I baptizing with water.” (Ver. 30, 31.) There is no reference here to His Messianic judgment as in other Gospels, which on the other hand are silent as regards such a testimony as this to His glory. Undoubtedly also John did call souls in Israel to repent in view of the kingdom, as at hand; but here the one object is the manifestation of Jesus to Israel. It is the absorbing topic of the Gospel indeed. The previous unacquaintance of the Baptist with Jesus made his testimony so much the more solemn and emphatically of God; and whatever the inward conviction he had as He came for baptism, it did not hinder the external sign nor the witness he bears to His person and His work as he had borne before it.

Hence we read, “And John bore witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, he said to me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on him, he it is that baptizeth with [the] Holy Spirit. And I have seen and borne witness that this is the Son of God.” (Ver. 32-34.)

Such was the suited sign for the Savior. Ravens might have been employed in God's wisdom to feed the famished prophet at another dark day; but not such was the appearance of the Spirit descending from heaven to abide on Jesus. The dove only could be the proper form, emblematic of the spotless purity of Him on whom He came. Yet did He come upon Him as man, but Jesus was man without sin; as truly man as any other, but how different from all before or after! He was the second Man in bright contrast with the first. And He is the last Adam; in vain does unbelief look for a higher development, overlooking Him in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Observe, the Spirit came before His death. If Christ died, He died for others. If He suffered and became a sacrifice, it was not for Himself. Jesus needed no blood in order that He might subsequently be anointed with the holy oil. He was Himself the Holy One of God in that very

nature which in every other case had dishonored God.

But if the Spirit abode on Him as man, this is He that baptizes with the Holy Spirit. None could so baptize but God. It were blasphemy to say otherwise. It is the fullest prerogative of a divine person so to act, and hence John the Baptist utterly disclaimed it, and in every Gospel points to Jesus only as the Baptizer by the Holy Ghost, as he had come baptizing with water. It is the mighty work of Jesus from heaven, as He was the Lamb of God on the cross.

Thus, though the immediate aim of John's mission with baptism attached to it was for the manifestation of Jesus to Israel, he testifies to Him as the Lamb of God in relation to the world, as eternal at whatever time He came (and surely it was the right moment, “the fullness of time,” as the great apostle assures us, Gal. 4:4), not merely as the object of the Holy Ghost's descent to abide on Him, but as baptizing with the Holy Ghost. “And I have seen and borne witness that this is the Son of God.” (Ver. 34.) Such was His personal relationship: not the Son of man who must be lifted up if we are to have eternal life, but the Lamb of God and the Son of God. On the other hand it is not here the Father declared by, or revealing Himself in, His only-begotten Son, but God in view of the broad fact of the world's sin, and Jesus His Lamb to take the sin away. So the baptism of the Holy Ghost is not quickening, but that power of the Spirit which acts on the life already possessed by the believer, separates from all that is of flesh and world, and sets in communion with God's nature and glory as revealed in Christ. He was as man on earth not Only Son of God but always conscious of it; we becoming so by faith in Him are rendered conscious of our relationship through the Holy Ghost given to us. Nevertheless even Him, as the Gospels show, the descent of the Spirit who anointed Him placed in a new position here below. All here is public announcement and reaches the world.

Chapter 120

Notes on John 1:35-45

We have had before us John's testimony reaching out far beyond the Messiah in Israel; we see now the effect of his ministry. “Again, on the morrow, stood John and two of his disciples; and, looking fit Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! and the two disciples heard him speak, and followed Jesus. But Jesus, having turned and beheld them following, saith to them, What seek ye? And they said to him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where abidest thou? He saith to them, Come and see.

They went therefore and saw where he abode, and abode with him that day. It was about the tenth hour.” (Ver. 35 - 39.) It is not the fullest or clearest statement of the truth which most acts on others. Nothing tells so powerfully as the expression of the heart's joy and delight in an object that is worthy. So it was now. “Looking at Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!” The greatest of woman-born acknowledges the Savior with unaffected homage, and his own disciples that heard him speak follow Jesus. “He must increase, but I must decrease.” And so it ought to be. Not John but Jesus is the center: a man but God, for none other could be such without derogation from the divine glory. Jesus maintains that glory, but this as man too. Wonderful truth, and for man how precious and cheering! John was the servant of God's purpose, and his mission was thus best executed when His disciples followed Jesus. The Spirit of God supplants human and earthly motives. How indeed could it be otherwise, if one really believed that He in His person was God on earth? He must be the one exclusive and attractive center for all that know Him; and John's work was to prepare the way before Him. So here his ministry gathers to Jesus, sends from himself to Jesus.

But if in the Gospel of Matthew the Lord has a city if not a home, which we can name, here in that of John it is unnoticed where He dwelt. The disciples heard His voice, came and saw where He dwelt, abode with Him that day; but for others it is unnamed and unknown. We can understand that so it should be with One who was not only God in man on earth, but this wholly rejected of the world. And so divine life effects in those that are His: “Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”

Nor does the work stop there or then. “Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two that heard from John and followed him. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith to him, We have found the Messiah (which interpreted is Christ), and he led him to Jesus. Jesus looking at him said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jonas; thou shalt be called Cephas (which is interpreted Peter).” (Vers. 40, 42.) Deeply interesting are these glimpses at the first introduction to Jesus of those souls who receiving Him found life eternal in Him and were called afterward to be foundations of that now building which would supersede the old, God's habitation in the Spirit. But all here concentrates in the person of Jesus, to whom Simon is brought by his brother, one of the first two whose souls were drawn to Him, however little yet they appreciated His glory. Yet was it a divine work, and Simon's coming was answered with a knowledge of past and present and future that told out who and what He was, who now spoke to man on earth in grace.

Here the same principle re-appears. Jesus, the image of the invisible God, the only perfect manifestation of God, is the acknowledged center beyond all rivalry. He was to die, as this Gospel relates (chap, 11), to gather in one the scattered children of God; as He will by-and-by gather all things in heaven and all things on earth under His headship. (Eph. 1) But then His person could not but be the one center of attraction to every one who saw by faith, as it was entitled to be for every creature. Only He was come not only to declare God and show us the Father in Himself the Son, but to take all on the ground of His death and resurrection, having perfectly glorified God in respect of the sin which had ruined all; and thereon to take His place in heaven, the glorified Head over all things to the church His body on earth, as we know now. On this however, as involving the revelation of God's counsels and of the mystery hidden from ages and from generations, I do not enter, as it would carry us rather to the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, the vessel chosen for disclosing these heavenly wonders.

Our business now is with John who lets us see the Lord on earth, a man but very God, and so drawing to Himself the hearts of all taught of God. Had He not been God, it would have been robbery not only from God but sometimes also from man. But not so: all the fullness dwelt in Him—dwelt in Him bodily. He was therefore from the beginning the divine center for saints on earth as afterward when the exalted Man the center on high, to whom as Head the Spirit united them as members of His body. This last could not be till redemption made it possible according to grace, but on the basis of righteousness. What we see in John attaches to the glory of His divine person; otherwise to bring to Jesus would have been to separate from God, not to Him as it was. But, in truth, He was and is the sole revealed center, as He was and is the only full revealer of God, and this because He is God, though God manifest in flesh and so meeting and winning man to God.

“On the morrow he would go forth into Galilee, and Jesus findeth Philip and saith to him, Follow me. Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter.” (Ver. 44, 45.) It is an immense thing to be delivered by Jesus from the waste of one's own will or from the attachment of the heart to the will of a man stronger than ourselves; an immense thing to know that we have found in Him, not the Messiah merely, but the center of all God's revelations, plans, and counsels, so that we are gathering with Him because we are gathering to Him. All else, whatever the plea or pretension, is but scattering, and therefore labor in vain, or worse.

But we need more and find more in Jesus, who deigns to be not only our center but our “way,” on earth indeed, but not of the world as He is not. For such He is, no less than the Truth and the Life. What a blessing in such a world! It is now a wilderness where is no way. He is the Way. Do we fear where to walk, what step to take? Here are snares to seduce, there dangers to affright. Above them says the voice of Jesus, “Follow me.” None other is safe. The best of His servants may err, as all have. But even were it not so, He says “Follow me.” Christian, hesitate no more. Follow Jesus. You will find a deeper and better fellowship with those that are His; but this by following Him whom they follow. Only look well to it that it be according to the word, not your own thoughts and feelings; for are they better than those of others? Search your motives according to the light where you walk. “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” But singleness is secured by looking to Jesus, not to ourselves or others. We have seen enough of ourselves when we have judged ourselves before God. Let us follow Jesus: to Him only and absolutely, a divine person on earth, it is duo. It is the true dignity of a saint; it is the only security of him who has still to

watch against the sin that is in him; it is the path of genuine humility and of real love. In this shall we be sure of the guidance of the Spirit who is here to glorify Him, taking of His and showing them to us.

Notes on John 1:46-52

He that has found and follows Christ soon seeks and finds others. But they are not always prepared to follow at once. So Philip proves here with the son of Talmai here called, not Bartholomew, but Nathanael. And hence, too, we learn that a man otherwise excellent, may be hindered by not a little prejudice. It is a wholesome lesson neither to be hasty in our expectations nor to be cast down if a good man be slow to listen.

“Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus from Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” (Ver. 46.) Nathanael was not at all prepared for this. Most surely did his heart look for Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote; but that the Christ was Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph, he had yet to learn. He believed in the glory of Messiah's person, as far as the Old Testament had revealed it beforehand: it had never occurred to him how Messiah could be “from Nazareth,” not to speak of “the son of Joseph.” For that village was despicable in the eyes even of a despised Galilean, who doubtless felt the more its miserably low moral repute because of his own practical godliness. Had Philip said “from Bethlehem, the son of David,” no such shock could have been given to the expecting Jew. But in truth, the Lord is here viewed as wholly above all earthly associations, and therefore He could come down to the lowest. For He was the Son of God who came to Nazareth, and only so could be said to be “from Nazareth” any more than “the son of Joseph.”

However this may be, Nathanael does not withhold his expression of hesitation, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” to which Philip answers, “Come and see.” But there was another also to see, and Jesus who saw Nathanael coming to Him, gave him to hear words of grace about himself which might well surprise him in His greeting, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” (Ver. 47.) If the Spirit of prophecy wrought according to Psa. 32, soon was he to know the Spirit of adoption and the liberty wherewith the Son makes free.

“Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.” (Ver. 48.) He is God always and everywhere in this Gospel. Unseen, Jesus had seen Nathanael. He had seen him where evidently he thought himself seen by none, but He who heard the musings of his heart in that spot “under the fig tree” saw him, the irresistible evidence of His own glory, of omniscience and omnipresence. Yet was He who saw him evidently a man in flesh and blood. He could be none other than the promised Messiah—Emmanuel, Jehovah's fellow, “Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” His prejudice instantly vanished away as mist before the sun in its strength. He might not be able to explain the connection with Nazareth, or with Joseph; but a good man would not, none but a bad one could, resist the positive light of One who thus knew all things and told it out in grace to win the heart of Nathanael and of every one who hears His word and fears God since that day to this.

But there is more, I think. Surely the fig tree is not a fact only, or an isolated circumstance, but clothed with the significance usually found in it, at least in scripture. In the great prophecy of our

Lord, the fig tree is employed as the symbol of the nation; and so I cannot doubt it is here, If Nathanael were there musing in his heart before God on the expected Messiah and the hopes of the elect people, as many, indeed all men, were at that time, through the impulse of John the Baptist, nay, even whether He were the Christ or not (Luke 3:15), we may conceive the better with what amazing force the words of Jesus must have appealed to the heart and conscience of the guileless Israelite. This appears to me powerfully confirmed by the character of his own confession. “Nathanael answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” (Ver. 49.) It was a confession precisely of the Messiah according to Psa. 2. He might be Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph; but He could be, He was, none other than “My [Jehovah's] king,” “the Son” (vers. 6, 12), though not yet anointed in Zion, the hill of Jehovah's holiness. Nathanael was prompt and distinct now, as slow and cautious before.

Nor did the Lord check the flow of grace and truth, and Nathanael must borrow vessels not a few, till there was not one more to receive the blessing that would still overflow. “Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” (Vers. 50, 51.) Was Messianic glory the horizon of that which Nathanael’s soul saw and confessed in Jesus? Not “hereafter,” but from the present, from that out, should the disciples see, if earthly power were still delayed, the open heaven, and the homage of its glorious denizens to the rejected Messiah, the Son of man, whom all peoples, nations, and languages should serve, when He should enter on His everlasting dominion which should not pass away, and His kingdom which should not be destroyed. Truly these are greater things, the pledge of which Nathanael saw thenceforth in the attendance of God's angels on Him whom man despised and the nation abhorred to their own shame and ruin, but to the working out of heavenly counsels and an incomparably larger sphere of blessing and glory than in Israel or the land, as the reader may see in Psa. 8, especially if he consult the use made of it in 1 Cor. 15; Eph. 1; and Heb. 2.

Notes on John 2:1-11

The second chapter opens with a striking miracle—the water turned into wine. It is only given here. Jesus is God, the God of creation. He had shown His omniscience to Nathanael, now His omnipotence to others. It was the third day, probably the third since He had first seen Nathanael; but the passage is so significant that one does not feel disposed to question the thought that the Spirit may also have meant figuratively the type of a day yet future when glory will appear, as distinguished from the day of John the Baptist's testimony, and that of the Lord and His disciples.

“And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there: and Jesus also was invited and his disciples to the marriage."(Ver. l, 2) It is the figure of things on earth: there is no picture of the heavens opened here. Hence we find the mother of Jesus brought forward. It was no more than a figure however, for the wine fell short. “And the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.” (Ver.3.) The first Adam always fails, and fails most where most is wanted. But Jesus will meet all wants, though His time is not yet come. Faith however never looks to Him in vain, and Jesus says to her,” What have I to do with thee, woman?” (Ver. 4.) It is a remarkable answer, which Romanist theologians find very difficult to square with their doctrine and practice. He does not say, mother. It is no longer a question of the first Adam: not that there was disrespect, but that Mariolatry is unfounded and sinful. Jesus was here to do the will of God. “His mother saith to the servants, Whatever he shall say to you, do. Now there were there six waterpots of stone lying according to the purification of the Jews, holding each two or three measures.” (Ver. 5,6.) The Jewish system was a witness of defilement; and its ordinances could do no more than sanctify to the purifying of the flesh. This was human: Jesus was here for divine purposes—then in testimony—by and by in power. “Jesus saith to them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith to them, Draw now and carry to the master of the feast. And they carried. But when the master of the feast had tasted the water that had become wine (and he knew not whence it was, but the servants that had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and saith to him, Every man at first setteth forth the good wine, and when they have drunk freely, then the worse; thou hast kept the good wine until now.” (Ver. 7-10.)

So will Jesus do on the richest scale in the day that is coming. He will reverse the sorrowful history of man. The wine will not fail when He reigns. There will be joy for God and man in happy communion together. Jesus will finish all to the glory of God the Father. In that day, too, He will be the bridegroom and the master of the feast, and the joy of that day will find its root not only in the glory of His person, but in the depth of that work of humiliation already wrought in the cross. There will be no secrets then. It will not be the servants only who will know, but all from the least to the greatest. “This beginning of miracles did Jesus at Cana of Galilee, and he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed on him.” (Ver. 11.) Faith grows where real. (2 Thess. 1:3.)

It will be noticed that our Gospel gives us most important particulars, unnoticed by all the others, what took place before His Galilean ministry commenced when John was cast into prison.

Chapter 123

Notes on John 2:12-22

The hour of Jesus is not yet come. The marriage at Cana was but a shadow, not the very image. For the true bridals here below, as well as on high, we must yet wait. The mother of Jesus, of the true man-child, will be there when the feast arrives. What has been is but a testimony, a beginning of signs, to manifest His glory.

“After this he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother and his brethren and his disciples; and there they abode not many days.” (Ver. 12.) It may be noted that Joseph does not appear anywhere since the end of Luke 2 when the Lord was twelve years old. Doubtless he had fallen asleep meanwhile. Mary is again seen with Him. His absolute separation to the will and work of His Father in no way interferes with the earthly relations He had graciously taken. And so will it be with that which He represents.

But the marriage is only part of the display of His glory in the kingdom by-and-by; and of the judgment to be executed, He gives a token in the scene that follows, and this at the first passover noted since that of His childhood. Our evangelist is careful to mention them throughout our Lord's course (6:4; 11:55).

“And the passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And he found in the temple the sellers of oxen and sheep, and doves, and the moneychangers sitting; and having made a scourge of small cords he drove them all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and poured out the change of the money-changers, and overthrew their tables; and to the sellers of the doves he said, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it is written, The zeal of thine house will eat me up.” (Ver. 13-17.)

Not only is this clearing of the temple distinct from that which the synoptic Gospels relate on His last visit to Jerusalem, but it is instructive to remark that, as they only give the last, John gives only the first. It is a striking witness by a significant fact, as we have already seen doctrinally in his introduction, that he begins where they end, not in a barely literal way, but in all the depth of what Jesus says and does. The state of the temple, the selfishness which reigned there, the indifference to the true fear and honor and holiness of God while there was the utmost punctiliousness in a ritual show of their own invention, were characteristic of the ruin state of a people called to the highest earthly privilege by God's favor.

Solomon had acted at the beginning with a vigor which drove out the unworthy high priest in his day; when the kingdom was divided, Hezekiah and Josiah, sons of David, had each sought to vindicate the glory of Jehovah; Nehemiah, alas! under the protection of the Gentiles, had not been lacking, when the returned remnant so quickly manifested that the captivity on the one hand and God's mercy on the other had failed to lead them to repentance. Now the Son gives a sign as solemn for proud religious Jerusalem as the miracle of the water changed into wine was full of bright hope for despised Galilee.

He does act as the Lord with divine rights, yet as the lowly sent One and servant. Nevertheless He does not withhold the testimony to the glory of His person in the very command not to make His Father's house a house of merchandise. He was the Son of God, announced as such, even as Nathanael had already owned Him, judicially dealing not merely on moral grounds, such as might be open to any godly Israelite, but openly as the One who identified Himself with His Father's interests; and this was His house. So too the Spirit of prophecy spoke of the rejected Messiah, as the disciples remembered.

“The Jews therefore answered and said to him, What sign showest thou to us that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple (ναν) and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews therefore said, In forty and six years was this temple built, and thou wilt raise it up in three days? But he spoke of the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from among [the] dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.” (Ver. 18-22.)

The sign that He would give was His own resurrection-power, raising not others merely but His own body, the true temple in which alone God was (for the Word was God), that of which they boasted having but a name without God, soon to be formally pronounced their house (Matt. 23) and given up to destruction. (Matt. 24) It is resurrection that defines Him Son of God in power; and when He was raised, the disciples remembered His saying, and here yet more found the strongest confirmation of their faith in both scripture and His word. It is indeed the fundamental truth both of the gospel and of our distinctive place as Christians. No wonder that the Jews were jealous of it, and that Gentiles mock or evade it. May we ever remember it, and Him who thus gives scripture all its grace.

Chapter 124

Notes on John 2:23-25

We arrive now at a new division of the Gospel introduced by the prefatory verses as to man and his state, which conclude chapter 2. The coming and inquiry of Nicodemus give rise to our Lord's testimony to the necessity of a new birth for the kingdom of God, the cross, eternal life, the love of God, and the world's condemnation, closing with the Baptist's testimony to the glory of His person.

“Now when he was at Jerusalem at the passover, at the feast, many believed on his name, beholding the signs which he did. But Jesus himself did not trust himself to them, inasmuch as he knew all [men], and because he needed not that any should testify of man, for himself knew what was in man.” (Ver. 23 - 25.)

It was at the city of solemnities; it was a feast of Jehovah, nay, the most fundamental of the sacred feasts; and the Messiah was there, the object of faith, working in power, and manifesting His glory in appropriate signs. And many behooved on His name accordingly. It was man doing and feeling his best under circumstances the most favorable. Yet did not Jesus Himself trust Himself to them. Certainly it was from no lack of love or pity in Him; for whoever did or could love as He? And the reason, calmly given, is truly overwhelming:” inasmuch as he knew all men, and because he needed not that any should testify of man, for himself knew what was in man.” What a sentence! from whom! and on what grounds! We do well to weigh it gravely: who is not concerned in it? It is the ordained Judge of quick and dead who thus pronounces. Is it not all over with man?

One great fact, one truth, accounts for it; the total evil, the irremediable evil, of man as such. The ways of the Lord are in the strictest accord with the words of the Spirit by the Apostle Paul: the mind of the flesh (and this is all that is in man) is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, for neither indeed can it be. Hence they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Its doings and its sufferings are selfish and worthless Godward. Its faith as here is no better; for it is not the soul subject to God’s testimony, but mind judging on evidence satisfactory to itself. It is a conclusion that Jesus must be Messiah, not submission to, nor reception of, divine testimony. For in this case the mind sits on the throne of judgment, and pronounces for or against, according to its estimate of reasons favoring or adverse, instead of the soul setting to its seal (in the face of all appearances it may be, yea, the most real difficulties), that God is true. For what ground to expect the love of the Holy One to the vile and rebellious? Christ, received according to God's testimony, Christ, in grace to the lost, dying for the ungodly and the powerless, Christ accounts for, as He displays, all; miracles or signs not in the least. They arrest the eye; they exercise the mind; they may touch and win the affections. But nothing short of God's word judges the man, or reveals what He is in Christ to man thus judged; and this only, as we shall see, is of the Spirit, for He only, not man, has before Him the true object, the Son of God's love given in grace to a ruined and guilty world.

The truth is that our judgments flow from our affections. What we love we easily believe; what makes nothing of us we naturally resist and reject. As long as Jesus seemed to be an ameliorator of humanity, there seemed to be the readiest, warmest, welcome. Man would accredit Jesus if he

thought Jesus accredited man. But how could he receive what makes nothing of himself, what condemns him morally, what keeps before him the solemn warning of eternal judgment and the lake of fire? No, he hates the testimony and the person who is the central object of it, and all connected with it and Him. When broken down before God and made willing to own one's utter and inexcusable sins and sinfulness, it is a wholly different matter; and He who was dreaded and repugnant is turned to as the only hope from God, oven Jesus the Deliverer from the wrath to come. This is indeed conversion, and grace by quickening power alone effects it.

So it is when Christian doctrine is made to suit the world by being emasculated and changed to build up what in truth it judges. Then indeed it is no longer a seed that takes root, and grows and bears fruit, but is a leaven that spreads and may assimilate largely to itself. Such is Christendom, when human will was engaged on its side, and the religion became traditional.

But here it is the holy and awful witness of Jesus to man at his best estate, when no enmity had appeared, but all looked full of bright promise. And, again, we see John beginning where the other Gospels close. It is not Messiah rejected, but Jesus the Son of God, who knows the end from the beginning, treating man as altogether vanity and sin; and this, because God is in none of his thought, but self, without real sorrow or shame about his opposition to God, without any due sense of it or consequently a serious care about it. He gathered from the evidence of the signs before him that none but Messiah could have wrought them; but such an inference did not affect his moral state either with God or with man. He was just as he had been with another object for his busy mind to work on, but his nature unjudged, God no better known, and the enemy with just the same power over him as ever. As yet, it was man and not God; for there is no work of God till the word is received as it is in truth, revealing His grace to man consciously needing it. Here was nothing of the sort, but a simple process of man's own mind and feelings, without a question of his sins or state before God, without the smallest felt need of a Savior. Jesus knew what it was worth and trusted not Himself to man, even when he thus believed on Him. It was human faith, of which we have instances not infrequently in this Gospel as elsewhere, whilst as clearly we have that divinely given faith which has eternal life; this having to do with God, as that, being of man, rises not above its source. “Beware of men,” said He to His apostles at a later day, Himself about to prove in the cross how truly from the first He Himself knew what was in man.

Notes on John 3:1-10

The worthlessness of believing on Christ because of evidence we have seen. But in the crowd of such there might be souls who had the sense of wants awakened which led them to Jesus personally. And in Him was life: not merely all things brought into being through Him, and signs wrought and things done by Jesus, which, if written one by one in books, would be beyond the world's power to contain, but, beyond all, life in the Son for the believer. And such is the fact which is here recorded in detail.

“But there was a man of the Pharisees, his name Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. He came to him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God, for none can do these signs which thou doest, unless God be with him: Jesus answered and said to him, Verily, verily, I say to thee, except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (Vers. 1 - 3.) It was a chief man from among the most orthodox in the chosen people; sufficiently in earnest to seek Jesus for truth and still valuing the world enough to fear its condemnation and scorn. He came by night to Jesus; yet did he take the ground of a persuasion he shared in common with his fellows because of the signs wrought by the Lord. He knew not that a deeper work was going on within, which drew him, not them, to Jesus. He, the teacher of Israel, recognized in Jesus One come a teacher from God, and God with Him: for any others born of woman a signal honor, for Jesus the proof that His true glory was unknown. As yet then Nicodemus was astray as to himself, as to the Jews, and as to Jesus. In short the true God was unknown.

The Lord accordingly stops him at once with the declaration that man, any one, needs to be born from the outset and origin. Not teaching but a new nature, a new source of being spiritually, is wanted in order to see the kingdom of God. No inference, however logical, is faith. It is not even a conviction of conscience. It may be a conclusion fairly drawn from sound premisses, from sensible facts of the weightiest kind before the mind; but neither God is known nor itself yet judged. The new character of life which suits the kingdom of God does not yet exist for the soul. In such a state teaching would but aggravate the danger or expose to fresh evil. The word of God had never penetrated the heart of Nicodemus. He knew not himself utterly defiled, spiritually dead in sins. What he wanted was to be quickened, not to have fresh aliment for the exercise of his mind. And Jesus, instead of commenting on his words, answered his true need, which he too would have sought himself, had he but known it.

If Nicodemus then took for granted his own capacity as he then stood to profit by the truth and serve God and inherit His kingdom, the Lord with incomparable solemnity assures him, that the new birth is indispensable to seeing the kingdom. For God is not teaching or improving human nature. He had already tried it patiently; and the trial would ere long be absolutely complete.

The kingdom of God is in question and not anything in fallen man. It was not yet established or displayed in power over the earth, as it will be at the appearing of Jesus. It was not yet preached to the Gentiles as it was after the cross. But it was come for faith in the person of Christ, the pledge that it will be set up by and by in all its extent, its “earthly” and its “heavenly things.” The kingdom

of God was among them in Christ, who demonstrated its power, the enemies themselves seen or unseen being judges. Why then did not Nicodemus see it? From no defect in the object of faith or in His testimony, by general conviction and confession from no lack of signs attesting the presence and power of God. Alas! the defect is in man, and to man it is incurable; for who can change his nature? In fact, if it were possible, it could avail nothing. “Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” God only can give a new nature, and a nature suited to His kingdom. Without this none can as much as see it.

“Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into the womb of his mother and be born?” (Ver. 4.) We learn hence that the intimation was not birth from above, but again; else the difficulty expressed in reply could have had no place. The truth is, however, that even if the fabled conversion of all old man into youth again could be true, yea, if the strange case suggested by the astonished Pharisee could have been turned by miracle into fact, (as Jonah came forth alive from the great fish that swallowed him,) it would fail to meet the requirements of the kingdom of God, as we shall see expressly in the further explanation of our Lord. For it would be human nature still, let it be renewed in its youth or repeated in its birth ever so far or so often. A clean thing cannot come out of an unclean; and such is man’s nature since the fall. Nor is aught God's way of renewal, but by giving a nature wholly new from its source; for the believer is born of God, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible by the living and abiding word of God.

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say to thee, except one be born of water and of Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (Ver. 5, 6.) Words of incalculable moment to man, of deep blessing where grace gives him ear to hear, and heart to receive and keep. Yet I scarce know a scripture more widely perverted than this has been to baptism, nor one where tradition is more dangerously false, though quod semper, quodubique, quod ah omnibus be as true of this as of any interpretation of scripture that could be named. A double result would follow that not a soul could enter the kingdom of God save such as are baptized; and, secondly, as the context would prove, that, the new nature being identified with eternal life, none of the baptized could perish: a statement which all but the most grossly ignorant and prejudiced must confess to be in both its parts opposed to other and clear scriptures, and to notorious fact.

Christian baptism (and this is what it is traditionally conceived to mean, not that of John or of the disciples) was not instituted, nor did the facts exist which it symbolizes, till the Lord died and rose. How then could Nicodemus by any possibility anticipate them or understand what the Lord gives as the clearing up of his difficulty as to being born anew? Yet the Lord reproaches him as the teacher of Israel with his slowness of intelligence. That is, he should (even as teaching Jews) have known these things, which he could not know if the Lord alluded to an as yet undivulged Christian institution.

The reasoning of Hooker (Works, ii. 262, &a. Keble's ed. 5) as of others before and since is beside the mark, and simply proves inattention to scripture, and superficial acquaintance with the truth. It is not true that “born of water and Spirit” if literally construed means baptism. Never is that rite set out as figuring life, but death, as in Rom. 6, Col. 2, and 1 Peter 3 “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto his death? “It is never the sign of

quickening, but rather of identifying those quickened with the death of Christ, that they in virtue of Him might take the place of men dead to sin but alive to God, and so reckon themselves by grace, for under this we are, not under law. Such is the apostolic doctrine. The words of our Lord do not and cannot teach otherwise, as they must if John 3:5 be applied to baptism. Take water here as figurative of the word which the Spirit uses to quicken, and all 13 clear, consistent and true. “Were it said in the scripture that we are born of the Spirit by means of water we should have some approach to what the Fathers drew from it, and what is necessary to bear the construction put on it in the Anglican and other formularies that apply it to baptism. Their dealing with it seems to me really “licentious,” “deluding” and “dangerous,” at issue with what our Lord says even in verse 5, still more with His omission of “water” in verse 6, most of all if it be possible with the place of baptism everywhere else given in scripture. Baptism may be the formal expression of washing away sins, never of communicating life, which is unequivocally false teaching.

So it is in John 13 and 15, not to speak of chapters iv. and vii. Compare for the figure Eph. 5:26, for the truth couched under it 1 Cor. 4:15, James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:23.

For Christ came by water and blood; He purifies and expiates. (1 John 5) He is the truth, which the word of God applies in the power of the Spirit, judging the old nature and introducing the new. It is the same person, but a life is communicated which one had not before, not of Adam, but of Christ the Second man. He is begotten of God, made a partaker of the divine nature through the greatest and precious promises, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Such is it to be born of water and of Spirit, an incomparably deeper thing than any form of truth however to be prized in its place and for the object the Lord who instituted it had in view. Baptism was formal admission; it was the confession of Christ on the ground of His death and resurrection, not of quickening which was true of all saints before Christ when there was no Christian baptism. If baptism were really the sign and means of quickening, consistency would deny life to the Old Testament saints, or they ought to have been so baptized which they were not. But this is clearly false ground. There is no reason to infer that the twelve were baptized with Christian baptism; they baptized others, but, it would seem, were not themselves; were they not then born again?

Hence too it is important to observe that he who is thus born again is said to be born of the Spirit, omitting water, in verse 6. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” The word (or water emblematically) can do nothing toward quickening without the Spirit, who is the efficient agent in communicating the life of Christ. Water cleanses but of itself it is not capable of quickening; it is death to the flesh. There had been only flesh before; now as believing in Christ the man is born of God (1 John 5); and each nature retains its own characteristic. As flesh never becomes spirit, so spirit never degenerates into flesh. The natures abide distinct; and the practical business of the believer is to hold himself for dead to the one that he may live in the other by the faith of the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him.

Nor was Nicodemus to wonder that he and other Jews (not pagans merely to which they would have assented at once) needed to be born afresh. “Wonder not that I said to thee, Ye must be born anew.” (Ver. 7.) But if sovereign grace met that need, could it, would it, stop there? Certainly not. It would breathe the blessing as widely as the ravages of sin according to the choice of God. “The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest its voice, and knowest not whence it cometh, and where it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit,” (Ver. 8.) Thus “every one” leaves room for

any fallen man, a Gentile no less than a Jew. Whatever might be their distinction after the flesh, the Spirit thus freely flowing can bless those who are most distant, while the nearest is nothing without Him.

It has been already remarked moreover, that in all this was no such special privilege as should have been beyond the ken of an intelligent Jew. Hence when “Nicodemus answered and said to him, How can these things be?” “Jesus answered and said to him, Art thou the teacher of Israel and knowest not these things be?” (Vers. 9,10.) Had he never read the promise to Israel in one prophet? “I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” Had he forgotten the words of another prophet? “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.” (Isa. 44 and Ezek. 36)

There can be no mistake that Israel will require the new birth in order to receive and enjoy aright even the earthly blessings of God's kingdom by and by, and that God will of His grace impart it to them for this end. Nicodemus then need not be surprised at the universal need of the new birth, even for the Jew, proclaimed by the Lord; but as the blessing is not of flesh but of Spirit, grace will not restrain it from any on grounds that give weight to man. The Gentile will not be left out of such rich mercy, indispensable to the kingdom of God, which is of grace, not of law or flesh, as the Jew was apt to assume. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.” Is not this grace and so expressed as to open the door to any of the nations? to sense of need, resourceless need, wherever found? Yet who did, who could, draw it out from the prophets and give the principle its absolute shape, as here to Nicodemus, but the One who spoke? Others inspired of the Spirit were soon to follow; and of them all none more distinctly than the apostle Paul.

Notes on John 3:11

Thus far then Nicodemus as a Jew, as a teacher of Israel, should have known the nature as well as the necessity of the new birth. The ancient prophets were not silent about its application to Israel, even for the days when blessings shall be shed abundantly on them from God according to His promise. Not the heathen only but His people (whatever might be their present self-complacency and the pride which wraps itself up in ignorance) are described as unclean till He sprinkle clean water upon them and put His Spirit within them. Undoubtedly the Lord, as was due to His personal glory, presents the truth with incomparably greater clearness and depth, as well as with an all-embracing comprehensiveness; but what was presented ought not to have been strange to Nicodemus on his own ground. The new thing follows the cross whether in statement or in fact, as we see it implied in chapter 4.

But even here the Lord intimates a knowledge to be communicated as in fact it was first by Himself in person, then by the Holy Ghost through chosen witnesses, transcending that of the prophets and of a character, not measure only, quite different. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our testimony.” (Ver. 11.) It is no vision of things out of the ordinary sphere of him who was inspired to be a prophet, nor message founded on the authority of Him who sent His servant with a “Thus saith Jehovah.” Jesus only, a man among men, could none the less say because He was none the less God, We speak that which We know and bear witness of that which We have seen. He knew what was in man, needing no testimony about man (chap, 2); He knew what was in God, and alone of men could testify of Him without testimony about Him. (Chap, 3) I have known Thee, says Himself to the Father later on in this Gospel (chap. 17:23), but the world knew not the Father; least of all were the Father and the Son known by those who, in persecuting the disciples, thought to do God's service. But, blessed be His name, if none knew the Father but the Son, there were not lacking those to whom the Son reveals Him; and so the Holy Ghost who searches all things, yea the depths of God, reveals what was previously hidden even from prophets and gives to Christians the mind, or intelligence of Christ. For a divine person knows in Himself all things in themselves; not as the prophets from One without and above who gives the commission, vision, and message. These therefore might often speak that which they knew not, and learn on searching that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported by those, that have preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. But Jesus spoke what He knew. Coming from God and being Himself God, He knew the divine nature perfectly and was here a man to reveal it to men. If none had seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father has declared Him; He, alone of woman-born, had this competency, both as Son and as the image of the invisible God, in a sense not only preeminent but exclusive, as the Epistles to the Colossians and the Hebrews formally teach. And this He spoke in ineffable grace, expressing the grace and truth of God and of the Father through the heart of a man to the hearts of men. Of the glory too, familiar to Him with the Father before the world was, He testified. For what was divine love keeping back from those about to share with Him the glory in which both will be

displayed to the world and to behold His glory as none else will see it? In heaven, or in its brightest glory, He was at home, and as He was about to prepare a place in the Father's house for His own, so He bears witness of what He alone had seen to those whom sovereign grace would call and fit to be with Him there.

And what a testimony is this twofold knowledge, to the person of Jesus yet in absolute relation! It is indeed the true God, but withal eternal life. It was not empirical, but intrinsic. As a divine person alone could, He knew both, man and God; and, after He has urged the indispensable need of being born anew, He speaks of God known above in nature and glory, as before it we had His knowledge of what was in man. How blessed to have such a knowledge communicated to us as now in Christ and Christianity! Would not man needy, ignorant, blind, welcome such a boon? Alas! no: not even when grace brings it down and tells all out in the tones of human speech. “And ye receive not our testimony.” It reveals God, it reveals the Father. It leaves no room for receiving glory one of another. It condemns man as he is, self-willed, and not only without heart for God but unwilling to believe what is in His heart for man expressed in every word and way of Jesus. As the Apostle tells us, The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. Nor does the natural man receive them, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Chapter 127

Characteristics of John's Testimony

The unfolding of particular testimony to Sonship, in contrast with the blinding of the Jews, is John's subject all through. Matthew's, as we have seen, is different; as is Luke's, who gives us the Son of man, and what is suited to the display of that truth. But there is such total and profound ignorance in all these infidel writers of the purpose of the author, that they do not understand the scope of a single passage. How should they? It is as if some wise housemaid should clean out a powerful voltaic battery, because dirty wire and plates and useless water were in it.

And I beg the reader to call to mind, that if God was writing a book, He might have such objects. Adequate evidence of the facts proving His mission in Israel among the Jews was given in Matthew's Gospel among themselves, and I suppose (it is hardly to be doubted from the evidence we have) in their own tongue as well as in Greek, before the destruction of Jerusalem. John was employed (when Christianity was now, in one sense, established, and no longer in the cradle of Judaism) to give the great leading truths concerning the person and glory of Jesus, and the presence of the Holy Ghost needed for its building up and consolidation, and the guarding it against the inroads of heretical pravity. Could anything be more suitable, more timely, or more gracious on God's part? He preserves also an apostle himself, that, as external proof, we might have an eyewitness, and one most especially intimate with Jesus—one we may reverently call His bosom friend—to show what really was the true doctrine of Christ when there was danger of departure from it, and need of building up in it; when it was no longer sufficient to believe that Jesus was the Christ in order to be preserved from the machinations of the enemy. And this is what we have in John. He is occupied entirely about the person of Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost operating in the saints, whether to convict the world by, or to build up the church in, the glory of that Christ. Meanwhile, if God chose fitting instruments, the Holy Ghost Himself, as Christ had promised, was the Author and Inspirer of all, whether in Matthew or John, or any other. Now John was just the person fitted for this. The time was the time it was required, the thing done exactly what was called for: just as the general course of Christ's working was recorded by Matthew; but in Matthew hundreds of miracles in a verse or two to introduce the true character of the kingdom of heaven, which was his subject: all his detailed miracles bearing on his subject, as the few John relates do on his; and Luke's in an equally remarkable manner on his—the healing, cleansing, forgiving, and quickening of man lost in sin.

Chapter 128

Joshua and Caleb: Thoughts on the Book of Joshua: Part 1

Thoughts on the Book of Joshua

The book of Joshua is remarkable, mainly, in that the “ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth” is seen passing over before Israel, into Jordan, to prepare a resting place for God and His people. This involved the driving out of the Canaanites by the introduction of “the captain of the Lord's host” with the drawn sword in His hand, before whom Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship. The wars of the Lord follow in quick succession, and the victories of His people—together with the overthrow of the seven nations, and the destruction of their thirty-one kings. The tribes of Israel then took possession of the land of promise, under Joshua and Eleazar the priest, and went up into their inheritance, as distributed to them by lot in Shiloh before the Lord, where the tabernacle of the congregation had been set up. The God who redeemed His people out of Egypt, by the arm of His strength, and dried up the Red Sea from before them till they were all passed over, did the same thing in the depths of Jordan; and swept away the nations of Canaan, in proof that “the God of the whole earth” had risen up out of His place, and was come down to deliver and to establish His people. The song they sang at the Red Sea had come to pass in the promised land; for “the Lord had brought them in, and planted them in the mountain of his inheritance in the sanctuary which his own hands had established.” As regards their enemies too, “sorrow had taken hold of the inhabitants of Palestine, the dukes of Edom were amazed, the mighty men of Moab, trembling had taken hold upon them, and all the inhabitants of Canaan melted away.” It is not until God has done all that is needful for the glory of His name, and connected Himself thus in grace with the blessing of His people, that their new responsibility begins. Will the earthen vessel be true to the treasure, and use what it has received for the honor and praise of the giver? has been always the question, which such love and goodness must create whether with Israel, or with the church of Christ since.

Joshua, the son of Nun, and Eleazar the priest, glorified the God of their fathers, and served their day and generation well, though not without many a misgiving as to the people (with whom they had traveled forty years) and their ways towards Jehovah. Brought into the land of promise, having rest from war, and dwelling in peace, they settled down contented with the measure of blessing which they enjoyed and which satisfied them, but failed to drive out the Canaanites. Joshua, when old and stricken in age, called for the elders and judges and the heads of Israel, and rehearsed before them the faithfulness of the Lord, and sought to rally them anew, and strengthen their confidence in God, as well as to deepen their mistrust of themselves. Behold, he says, “I am going this day the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you. If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people entered into covenant at Shechem, and said unto Joshua, Nay, but we will serve the Lord:” so they departed every man into his inheritance; and Joshua, the servant of the Lord died, being a hundred and ten years old; and Eleazar the priest, the son of Aaron, died, and they were buried, each in the border of his inheritance.

Whatever these two men of God may have been and Were, in their faithfulness to the Lord, as Moses and Aaron were before them; yet collectively the tribes broke down in their covenanted allegiance to Jehovah; so that the book of Judges takes up the history of their decline and fall, when the angel of the Lord descended from Gilgal to Bochim (the place of weeping). What a contrast! and what a lesson! The earlier scriptures (at the calling out of Abraham) give the bright record of the God of glory breaking in upon the darkness, and hiding nothing from His friend of all He was about to do, walking with one patriarch and another, by covenant and by promise, till at the close Joseph buried his father Jacob, and carried him up from Egypt into Canaan, where Isaac and Abraham were laid before him.

So when another relation was formed between the God of Israel and Moses, as the deliverer and mediator of His people, and further revelations were made known to him, and he saw the land from the top of Pisgah; the Lord took him and buried him in a valley over against Beth-peor, but no man knoweth his sepulcher unto this day. The book of Joshua too (where the Lord of hosts rose up as a man of war to shake the earth, and Jordan fled, and the sun and the moon stood still in the heavens when He fought for His people) likewise closes with the burial places where they laid the heirs of promise, each in his inheritance. The seed of a yet coming and glorious resurrection was thus cast into the ground, in hope of that day when they shall all come forth to sit down together, “Ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God.” These all having obtained a good report through faith received not the promises, but saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. It is only as brought thus by divine love into communion with the purposes of the Lord in the final blessing of His people, that either Moses or Joshua, David or the prophets, can stand in the midst of personal and corporate failure as they did, and yet point on the hopes of the godly to a morning without clouds when the Lord Himself shall come, and “He that ruleth over men shall be just, ruling in the fear of God:” for this the nation still waits. Nevertheless Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived him, and which had known all the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel.

Joshua had been called into a remarkable place, as leader and commander of the twelve tribes; and Eleazar into one as distinguished, as the high priest in connection with the ark of the covenant at Jordan, and afterward with the tabernacle at Shiloh. These two offices, established between God and the people, necessarily created a wide opening for the faith and obedience of others to follow, and obtain a good report. It was into one of these vacant places that Caleb stepped as the claimant of Hebron; according to the oath which Moses sware unto him in Kadesh-Barnea, because “he wholly followed the Lord his God.” Caleb, as an heir with the royal tribe of Judah, becomes an example to the co-heirs throughout all the other tribes of Israel to maintain their rights and titles as he did, and to drive out the enemy. He thus becomes as remarkable, in his place, as an heir of promise in taking possession of his inheritance; as Joshua was in leading Israel into the length and breadth of the land of Canaan; or as Eleazar and the priests were who bore the ark of the covenant round the walls of Jericho, as they stood firm in the depths of Jordan till the people had all passed across to Gilgal. However different Joshua, Eleazar, and Caleb were from each other, yet the Lord Himself had trained each up for their respective places into which He led them; and this is a very important fact to realize at any time in reference to the formation of the vessel which God may be about to use.

If we examine this additional point in the light of scripture, as regards each of these servants of the Lord, we shall find much profitable instruction. The first mention of Joshua is when Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim in Ex. 17, and Moses and Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill with the rod of God. It was with this enemy that Joshua fought the first of the Lord's battles and prevailed. “The Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; and Moses built an altar there and called it Jehovah-nissi.” This first lesson in the school of God was followed by another of a very different kind in Ex. 24, when Moses went up, and his minister Joshua, into the mount of God, and the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. This future warrior of the Lord had been taught at Rephidim already that it was only as Aaron and Hur upheld the hands of Moses (in intercession) Israel could prevail over Amalek; and now he accompanies Moses up to the mount to learn who and what the God of Israel is in His holiness, under whose feet was as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as the body of heaven in its clearness! Moses' minister, the future Joshua and savior, is thus called to know God, the Jehovah of Israel; as terrible in His majesty and power at Rephidim against Amalek (with whom He will have war from generation to generation) as He is fearful in praises, doing wonders, and glorious in holiness when revealed to Moses and the nobles of the children of Israel on the top of the mount, where they saw God and did eat and drink. The claims of God in righteousness written upon the tables of stone, and a law and commandments were likewise given out to Moses from the mount Horeb that he might teach them to the people. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. Such were the scenes and occupations in the presence of God in holiness, and under the rod of His hand against Amalek in retributive justice, where Joshua's qualifications for serving Jehovah in Canaan were gathered up.

But another and a very different lesson still awaited him in Ex. 32, when the Lord sent Moses down quickly from the mount upon the matter of the golden calf, which Aaron and the people had set up during their absence. By the intercession of Moses the Lord turned from His fierce anger and repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people. Now when Joshua heard the tumult as they came near, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp; but the more practiced ear and heart of Moses, instructed by the Holy One, could better distinguish between the shout of mastery, the voice of crying, and the noise of them that sing. In effect, the tables, which were the work of God, and the writing which was graven thereon, Moses immediately cast out of his hands and broke; for how could he bring them nearer? The golden calf ground to powder and strawed upon the water which the children of Israel drank, the swords of the sons of Levi by which they consecrated themselves to the Lord and avenged the outrage upon His majesty, are the new and strange lessons which Joshua is learning for himself, and for the glory of God through him in a future day. It was a fine action, and one in unison with the mind of God, when Moses sought to interpose further by atonement and self-sacrifice, so that the sin of the people against God in His holiness, might be blotted out; but a finer one still when he accepted the Lord's rebuke as to its insufficiency. Moses could not make an atonement for their sin (this was a work kept in reserve for a greater than he), but another thing remained open for him to do below for the honor of God and the healing of the people (in withdrawing from the evil) and this thing he did.

The children of Israel stripped themselves likewise of their ornaments by the mount Horeb, that the Lord might know what to do unto them; and Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. The nearness to God in which Moses had been for forty days, led him not merely to act in jealousy for His name where it had been profaned, but also to separate His dwelling place from the abomination of the golden calf. How could He abide there? If Moses broke the tables, he must for the same reason remove the tabernacle. The Lord owned this action, for as Moses entered into the tabernacle the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door where the Lord talked with him face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend. Two great principles had been introduced, as we have seen, and established: the one was intercession, when the hands of Moses were sustained by Aaron and Hur, in the day of conflict with Amalek; and the other was mediation, founded on the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the day when the people worshipped the calf, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of a four-footed beast. These two principles being recognized between God and Moses, became the acknowledged ground of the people's safety and blessing, and have since found their true and proper place in the perfect ministry of Christ, “who ever liveth in the presence of God to make intercession for us.” Moses acting on this new footing turned again into the camp, but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle. Rephidim and Jehovah-nissi, mount Horeb and the God of Israel, the broken tables and the action of the sons of Levi, the cloudy pillar and the tabernacle, and the new meeting place between the Lord and Moses, marked out a path and showed Joshua the spot where he could with confidence plant his feet, and there he abode. The minister, Joshua, is no longer seen in the further and secret intimacies with Moses and the God of Israel at the cleft of the rock, or when Moses came down the second time from the mount with the tables that were put into the ark. Like Elisha afterward, when with his master going the round of Bethel, Jericho, and Jordan, a double portion of Elijah's spirit rested on him; or like Paul in his instructions to Timothy: so Jehovah “the God of the spirits of all flesh” had, by means of Moses, been preparing a man to set over the congregation of the Lord.

It is not till Num. 13, that Joshua comes forth in his own character, and enters upon his own proper business, though privately, and as one of the twelve rulers, in association with Caleb, who were sent by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan and its cities and its inhabitants. After forty days they returned from searching it, and made their report to Moses and Aaron and all Israel. Those who judged after the flesh, and according to sight and sense, declared that the cities were walled up to heaven, and the men were all of great stature, so that they were in their own sight as grasshoppers. Those who saw by faith, and measured every difficulty and danger by the God with whom there are none, affirmed they were able to go up and possess the land at once. The connection between Joshua and Caleb, as regards the land of promise, is as remarkable in the development of the onward ways of God with Israel, as was his relation to Moses (when his minister) in the unfolding of His counsels to that man of God. The tribes to which these two rulers respectively belonged were brought forward into their rightful prominence by the faith and devotedness which distinguished these chiefs, in contrast with the other spies who brought back an evil report. Caleb was of the royal tribe of Judah, out of which Shiloh should spring, and to whom the gathering of the people is prophetically yet to be. Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim, upon whom Jacob laid his right hand and declared his seed should become a multitude of nations. And he blessed the sons of Joseph that day: one by counsel, and one by promise, and by the

blessing of their progenitor Jacob they became united in faith and purpose of heart, now that the appointed time is come for the people to go on their way to their inheritance. Moses consistently changed the name Oshea into Joshua (or Jesus), Savior of the people, in reference to the mind of God and Israel, whilst Caleb, as an heir of promise, bears his own name which means devotedness of heart; and proves it by his readiness to go up and take possession of the whole land. Nor is it without divine significance that “Hebron” is the place now mentioned in connection with the journeyings of their future Savior, and of Caleb the heir— “they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron, where the children of Anak were.” If the unbelief of the ten failed to learn the deep moral lesson which these facts conveyed to the heart of a true Israelite, what would be the yet further appeal which the occupation of Hebron by the giants Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai would make to the faith and feelings of Joshua and Caleb? This Hebron to which their father Abram removed his tent after he had separated himself from Lot, and where the Lord appeared and said, “All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.” Then Abram came and dwelt in the plains of Mamre, which is Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord. Nor was Hebron remarkable only as “the place of society, or friendship and enchantment” to Abram the friend of God, and the father of the faithful, but it was to be remembered too, as the place where Sarah died (who is the mother of promise, and the free woman) and was buried. There, also, Isaac and Ishmael buried Abraham and there Jacob came unto Isaac his father to Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. Machpelah, in Hebron, became thus the sepulcher of all the patriarchs who had died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off and connected them with the Christ of God and His day, and were glad. Descendants of these fathers, not merely in the flesh, but associated with them by the same faith and hope, they were alive, so to speak, before the eyes of Caleb and Joshua; just as Jesus Himself said of Moses and the bush afterward, “Now God is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to him;” and this is what faith affirms, which calls things that are not as though they were. The promised land was thus a living scene to faith in these two spies, as it had been to Moses when he viewed it from the top of Pisgah. The faith which is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, whether in Abraham or in Moses or in the spies, looked at the land, or walked through the length and breadth thereof with the living God, and in the light of His purposes counted the giants but as bread to eat in the time of the coming conflict. Hebron too, though for a moment in possession of the sons of Anak, asked to be remembered by the heirs of promise as the sepulcher of their fathers, who were sleeping there “in hope of the better country, that is, a heavenly.”

Joshua and Caleb who walked thus with God through the land made a good report of it, and carried a cluster of the grapes of Eshcol and brought of the pomegranates and the figs as proofs of what grew there. The action of Caleb was in keeping with this report when he stilled the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it.” His confidence was in the right hand of God's power, which had just destroyed Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea, and would further display itself in driving out the Canaanites on the other side of Jordan, if there was but faith on the part of Israel to follow Him. Instead of this the congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron, and said one to another, “Let us make a captain and return into Egypt.” Then Moses and Aaron fell upon their faces, and Joshua and Caleb rent their clothes, saying, “If the Lord delight in us, he will bring us into this land and give it us, a land which floweth with milk and honey; only rebel not ye against the Lord.”

(To be continued.)

Joshua and Caleb: Thoughts on the Book of Joshua: Part 2

This identification with God and His purposes and ways on the part of Moses and Aaron, and this twofold testimony on the part of Caleb and Joshua to the strength of His arm, and the delight of His heart in His people to bring them into the land, though adequate for faith, were insufficient to quell the rebellion. Separated as these four leaders were from all the congregation, and united in their confession of the one living and true God, He vindicated His witnesses; when the people bade stone them with stones, the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle, and He threatened them with pestilence, and to disinherit them. The intercession of Moses again prevailed against their sin, and they were sentenced to wander forty years in the wilderness and to fall there. Moreover, the evil spies died of the plague and the unbelieving generation was cut off. The confidence and repose of faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which characterized Joshua and Caleb “as spies when they searched the good land, equally distinguished them as pilgrims in the wilderness throughout the forty years of their wanderings. Faith, which has to do with God alone, is not concerned about places and circumstances; it has simply to follow Him where He leads: the consequences are His care. The forty years pilgrimage inflicted upon the evil generation became a school-time for the fuller qualifications of Joshua and Caleb when the set time should come for the crossing over Jordan, and for the settlement of the tribes in their inheritances. Moses and Aaron died in the wilderness, the high priest's garments were transferred and placed upon Eleazar as the successor of Aaron. Moreover, the Lord had given some of His spirit to Joshua, and Moses had laid his hands on him and put some of his honor upon him in the sight of all the congregation of Israel, that they might be obedient to him. Further, Joshua was to stand before Eleazar the priest, who was to ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim and Thummim before the Lord. “At his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in,” and Moses did as the Lord commanded him, and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the high priest, and gave him a charge.

The original leaders of the people did not continue by reason of death; each one died governmentally for his own sin, committed at the waters of Meribah, where they failed to glorify God; and these have now given place to Joshua and Eleazar. Moses and the rod of Jehovah's power stretched out over land and sea in Egypt for the redemption of Israel form the bright record of God's actings in the book of Exodus, as does the rod of priestly grace in Numbers, by which Aaron put away their murmurings. When the wars of the Lord begin on the other side of Jordan, these rods are superseded by the captain of the Lord's host with His drawn sword, and by Joshua and his spear, and now that “the God of the whole earth” passes over before His people to put them into Canaan, Eleazar and the priests come into prominence. The ark of the covenant (in which was laid up the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant—each to come out another day, and be manifested in the person of Christ and His offices in their perfectness,) was to precede the people in their journeyings, and be the one object before their souls. “When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests and

Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place and go after it." The faith of an individual like Caleb is no longer distinguished when confidence and courage mark the whole company of this new-born generation, led forward by the Lord of all the earth in connection with the ark of the covenant, borne by Eleazar the high priest and the Levites, under the leadership of Joshua; so that Jordan itself fled away from before the feet of the priests, when they were dipped in the brim of its waters. The great city Jericho too fell down flat, and its giant walls before the ark after it had compassed the city about seven days. In their onward progress, Jerusalem and its king, Adonizedek, with the other crowned heads were all overcome and hung upon five trees until the going down of the sun. Joshua is as great in his conflicts and victories against the enemies of God, as Moses was distinguished for his patience and meekness amongst the people of God. His jealousy for the Lord, in removing the tabernacle away from the camp, when the idolatry of the golden calf was in question, sanctioned as it was by the glory of the God of Israel, which appeared to him at the tent door, and talked with him, was a day of remarkable moral character and beauty.

Perfect in its season as this act of Moses was, yet Joshua is equally distinguished in the day of Jerusalem's capture by the hosts of Israel. Joshua spake to the Lord, and said, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon," until the people avenge themselves upon their enemies; "and there was no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man, for the Lord fought for Israel." The whole power of the enemy is broken up, after one more battle. "Now when Jabin the king of Hazor heard of these things, he gathered round himself the confederated nations of the north, south, east, and west, and came down like the sand which is upon the sea-shore for multitude against Israel," like the Gog and Magog nations of a yet future day (in Ezekiel). These wars and their victories clear the way for peace. Though in chapter 11 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings, "yet finally he took the whole land according to all that the Lord had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes; and the land rested from war. In chapter xviii., "the whole congregation of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle there," and the land was subdued before them. Now Joshua was old and stricken in years, and he and Eleazar the priest cast lots at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in Shiloh, and distributed to the tribes their inheritances—so they made an end of dividing the country—God had thus overcome the enemy and established His people in the promised land, who were commanded to make no terms with the stragglers, but utterly to drive them out. Moreover God had planted His tabernacle in Shiloh, and surrounded Himself with the thousands and tens of thousands of Israel, the seed of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Joshua lastly exhorts them to cleave unto the Lord, and the people finally bind themselves with an oath to serve the Lord and to obey His voice.

Besides these public and prominent services of Joshua the leader and commander of the people, and Eleazar the high priest who was appointed to ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord, there remain two important histories of personal faith, each perfect in itself which the book of Joshua records: the first is that of Rahab, and the second that of Caleb. In truth we may say the records of Israel would not be complete without these, as not else coming up to the mark of what God is, or giving the examples of the outflowing and overflowing of His goodness and grace, wherever there was faith that could in defiance of every let or hindrance reckon upon this goodness, and cast itself upon the riches of His love! Rahab, who was not one of the people,

but on the contrary an alien and of the accursed race, threw herself upon the boundlessness of this grace, that could not be confined to the limits of Israel but must illustrate itself by overleaping all bounds, and saving a Rahab, even when dwelling in Jericho; yea, the conquests of the people of God in Canaan must give precedence to her. The scarlet line from her window, witness of her faith, and pledge of her identification in heart and soul with the hopes and interests of the Israel of God, was also a token to them and to her of the deliverance for which she waited. The scarlet line had saved the spies, when she let them down from her house by its means, and it was to save her and all her family in the coming hour of Jericho's overthrow—and this is what faith is, whether then or now—from her window, or at the cross. The young men that were hidden by Rahab in the stalks of flax went in at the bidding of Joshua, and fetched her out and all that she had, first as they swore unto her: and then burned the city with fire.

The further history of Rahab, and the dealings of God in grace with her, are as remarkable as the beginning. In chapter vii., “she gets a dwelling-place in Israel, as it is said unto this day,” and in process of time is married to Salmon, one of its princes, and becomes a link in that illustrious genealogy through which the Messiah Himself was introduced to this world. In Matt. 1:5, “in the book of the generation of Jesus Christ,” we read “Salmon begat Booz of Rachab,” nor is this all, for she passes on from this genealogy to take her place in another, and got her record among the celebrities of Heb. 11, of whom the world was not worthy. Another record still awaits her—and a yet further example of her faith remains for the apostle James to publish, where she stands side by side with Abraham, the head of the whole family of faith, and the friend of God. Likewise also he asks, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. The chain is complete and as perfect as the grace of God always makes whatever it takes in hand—whether the pattern be “a Syrian ready to perish” —a Rahab out of Jericho—a thief upon the cross—or a Saul of Tarsus—or one of ourselves in this day of grace and of the coming glory.

In Josh. 14 it is, that we are introduced to Caleb again; and in this chapter he comes before us in the double character of an heir of Judah, when that tribe was settled in its inheritance; and also as the claimant of that Hebron, which had so won his eye and heart in the living associations which it recalled. Distinguished in the early days of faith and promise, when Abraham walked with God and still more so in the light of prophecy, when the king David of Jehovah's appointment should take his crown and kingdom from Hebron, it became the spot of all others which was dear to faith. Joshua's calling and work as leader of Israel was well-nigh finished, and he had become old and stricken in years, and was going the way of all the earth, as he said, when Caleb's path as an heir of promise was only opening itself out. He steps forth from the children of Judah at Gilgal, and makes good his claim by reminding Joshua of what the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning them at Kadesh-barnea. He comes out as young and as fresh at fourscore and five years of age, as he was at forty, when sent with Joshua to spy out the land; and he becomes in his place an example and pattern to every individual in every tribe of the whole heartedness before God which was the source of his unfailing strength and courage. How different would have been the history of Israel, had each heir of promise been as Caleb and driven out the enemies from their inheritance, as he did from Hebron! The language of faith has always the same character of confidence and calmness, whether it be in Caleb's assurance to Joshua that he would drive out the Anakims; or in David's account of himself to Saul, touching the lion and the bear; and his bold

avowal that so it should be with Goliath and the army of the Philistines. “I wholly followed the Lord my God,” reveals the secret of faith's strength, either in first viewing the land and gleaning the grapes of Eshcol, or in wandering with the rebellious people in the wilderness for forty years, or as here in claiming the promise of Hebron from Joshua.

“Now therefore give me this mountain, of which the Lord spake in that day: if so be the Lord shall be with me, then I shall be able to drive the giants out, as the Lord said; and Joshua blessed him.” Here we get a man of the right sort, with a faith in God that does not give way before either giants or mountains, but declares “as yet I am as strong this day as I was forty years ago; in the day that Moses sent me, as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, to go out and to come in.” It is a faith indeed that cannot be measured by days or weeks, or months or years; and even as to Caleb's history it is to be remarked, that we get no notice of his death. The Spirit's mind takes a different turn, and is marking out to us that he neither got old, nor waxed feeble, nor became stricken in years; but wholly followed the Lord God of Israel, and was always young and strong. Such was Caleb the claimant. So Joshua gave to him Kirjath-arba, according to the commandment of the Lord, which city is Hebron; and Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai; and he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir. The faith of the wholehearted Caleb, which followed the Lord fully and knew neither ups nor downs, stamps its character also upon his house and family; and this is very beautiful. He would only give his daughter Achsah to the man of like faith, who could distinguish himself at Kirjath-sepher, as Caleb had done at Kirjath-arba; and Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb took it, and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. Nor is this all; for the faith that wholly follows the Lord God of Israel (who is in these days, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ) is not only consciously blessed in itself, but delights, and can make another as happy as itself, as Caleb did Othniel. Even further, it rejoiced to bestow a blessing upon Achsah, when she lighted off her ass, and, in the character of a claimant, asked her father for the upper and the nether springs.

There is a point of further interest to be noticed respecting Caleb and Hebron, which comes out in the book of Judges and travels on to its completion in the records of Samuel and the Chronicles; for the faith which has to do with God must connect itself with His interests, and all that He does. The personal faith, which made Caleb illustrious as an heir and a claimant, likewise gave its character to his relations and his family. He gathered those round himself like Othniel upon the one and the same principle of confidence in the God of Israel, which had been the secret of Caleb’s unfailing strength and whole heartedness. Upon this pathway it was that he introduced Othniel at Kirjath-sepher, and as was the father, so was the son-in-law; for after the like term of forty years in the school of God, and in the midst of the declension of the tribes, this Othniel became the first of their deliverers, and of their judges. He was (as his name implies) “the hour of God” to them in their distress; for the Lord had sold them into the hand of the king of Mesopotamia for eight years, because they had forgotten Him, and served Baalim and the groves. But when the children of Israel cried unto Him, the Lord raised up a savior for them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel and went out to war. Moreover his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim: so the land had rest forty years, and this rest might have been perpetual, which Othniel had recovered, but for the subsequent idolatry of the tribes; and Othniel died. Deeper corruptions set in, and other deliverers were raised up till, after the times of the judges, came the reign of the kings.

In the end of 1 Sam. 30 the introduction of David and his men, and their faith in God lights up again the darkened page of Israel's royal history, and Hebron is mentioned as among the places where David and his men were wont to haunt, when by Saul's jealousy and persecution he was hunted like a partridge upon the mountains. After the death of Saul and Jonathan by the hands of the Philistines, and David's lamentation over them upon Gilboa, be inquired of the Lord whether he should go up to any of the cities of Judah, and the Lord said to him, Go up; and David said, Whither shall I go up? and he said, Unto Hebron. Caleb the heir in Judah, and the claimant of Hebron, four hundred years before, had given place to Othniel as their judge, and the deliverer of Israel from the oppression of the king of Mesopotamia. As we know, the prophet Samuel took the precedence, when the Aaronic priesthood had been corrupted by the profligacy of Eli's sons. David, the man after God's own heart, had been anointed as king from out of the midst of Jesse's sons: so David and his wives, and the men that were with him went up with their households, and dwelt in the cities of Hebron. The men of Judah thus take up the purposes of God and the blessing pronounced on this tribe by Jacob, and in their turn carry them out by anointing David king over the house of Judah. “The scepter and the law-giver” are thus united; and kingship is now established upon Hebron, the bright answer to the faith of those who, in expectation of the day, gave commandment concerning their bones, and lay buried there in the caves of Machpelah. So David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul became weaker and weaker, and unto David were born sons in Hebron; and the time that he reigned over the house of Judah was seven years and six months. The man to whom God gave testimony, this son of Jesse who should fulfill all His will, schooled as he had been in the sheepfolds of the wilderness, was now to be invested with the entire majesty and royalty of the throne, and as the shepherd of Israel.

Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and said, Behold we are thy bone and thy flesh; and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and shalt be a captain over them. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron, and king David made a covenant with them there before the Lord, and they anointed David king over all Israel; and David went on and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him. One object of the Lord in raising up David is stated in chapter 3: 18, “by the hand of my servant David I will save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines,” and out of the oppression of all their enemies. As the anointed king, his first exploit was to gain Jerusalem out of the hand of the Jebusites; for it was to be the city of the great king; and the appointed earthly center for the manifestation of His kingdom and the glory of the throne of Israel. The inhabitants of Jebus said to him, “thou shalt not came up hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which is the city of David, and said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first, shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zerniah [like another Othniel] went first up, and became chief, and David dwelt in the castle.” Traveling days and the journeyings of the children of Israel are well-nigh accomplished. God had brought them into Immanuel's land, and to the city of Jerusalem, and to Mount Zion: moreover David was there, and in their midst as the anointed king. The tabernacle in the wilderness was about to give place to the temple and the glory; and the next great business of David was to bring up the ark of the covenant from the house of Obed-edom. “And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, and said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it; for because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.” Unless the sense of God and His grace keep the heart in the enjoyment of

His favor as better than life, the knowledge of Him is soon lost, and Israelites become identified with Canaanites, as the book of Judges declares, and reduce themselves to the same level. Baal had his altar in the house of Joash, the father of Gideon; nor could this mighty man of valor do the deeds of one against the hosts of the Midianites, with his three hundred and their lamps and pitchers, till he had thrown down this altar, and first put himself right with God, as a worshipper. The Lord will not give His glory to another. Until Baal and his altar were thrown down by Gideon, there was confusion in Israel; for God and the idol were both there!

Here we may observe, that in the history of the Judges no mention is made of the high priest, or any other priest, or even a Levite, either for counsel or for action in any public way, from the time of Phinehas the son of Eleazar down to Eli. The knowledge of God was lost, and the relations in which He had stood with His people by the ark of the covenant violated and forgotten. When David sought to bring up the ark into the hill of Zion, after its capture by the Philistines, so unacquainted was the sweet psalmist with the ways of God respecting it, that a new cart and the two milch kine did as well for him as the shoulders of the Levites.

Priesthood and the priests, through the breach upon Uzza, come out brightly once more with king David, in the persons of Zadok and Abiathar; and it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings, and David danced before the Lord with all his might, and he was girded with a linen ephod. It is after God is thus owned by David and all Israel, that the Lord makes a covenant with him concerning Solomon, saying, “he shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever; I will be his father, and he shall be my son,” &c. It is along this glorious pathway of God's purposes and counsels, as to the throne and kingdom, the people of Israel, and the land of promise, the temple and Mount Zion, the city of Jerusalem and the yet coming Messiah, that God has ever led the faith and expectations of those whom He called out to walk with Him. Abraham, Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb, Othniel and the judges, David and Solomon, and all that family of faith, looked for a city whose builder and maker is God, and desired a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.

The faith that follows God fully becomes acquainted with Himself and His sufficiency to care for His own glory, and the final blessing of His people, whether in Caleb or Abraham or David. This faith in things unseen and eternal enabled the first of these to look through Hebron, and see a future scepter and Shiloh; or another, through Mount Moriah and the son Isaac, to see a dead and risen Christ; or a third through Mount Zion and a Solomon (after the flesh) to see a glorified Lord at the right hand of God, and a heavenly Jerusalem. These and further revelations from the Father's love concerning His well beloved Son, by the Holy Ghost through the apostles of the New Testament, are the highways and bypaths by which we also are called out into the fellowship with the Father and the Son.

In the epistle to the believing Hebrews, we join them upon the heavenly calling, as the Spirit by Paul guides their faith along this line of their ancestors; only adding this, “but ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly and to the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that

of Abel.” The summing up of this epistle may very properly close these remarks on the ways of God with His people. This cloud of witnesses (some of whom have been noticed) are here brought forward into their new place, in association with our Lord; and though dead yet speak, claiming their heirship and blessing through the Seed of Abraham and of David, which is the Christ of God; and wait for His second coming. Jesus is also presented as the Author and Finisher of faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. By His death and resurrection, He has made the mercies of Jehovah's covenanted grace sure to Abraham and to David, as their Son and Lord, and secured the promises as Son of God, and made them “yea and Amen, to the glory of God by us.” The mystery of the church, as the body and bride of the Lamb—the mystic eve—is now being formed by the Holy Ghost. God is calling out from Jews and Gentiles, the quickened members of the body, into union in life and righteousness with a rejected Christ, hidden in the heavens; for whose shout we wait, to catch us up to meet Him in the air, and to be changed into His likeness. Creation, likewise which groaneth under the bondage of corruption, waits in hope of its deliverance into the liberty of this glory, when the manifestation of the sons of God is come to pass. The last few touches only remain to perfect the mystery of God, and the Lord will rise up from His place and quit the Father's throne to sit as Son of man upon His own throne in His own glory, and the glory of all the holy angels. Israel redeemed, and brought into this scene of blessing, under Christ and the bride (the heavenly Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, having the glory of God), will then understand its own mystery— “that God had provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” How gladly will they sing in that day, “for of him, and to him, and through him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

J. E. B.

Chapter 130

Notes on Luke 18:35-43

The final scene approaches. Jesus is about to enter Jerusalem and to present Himself in the flesh to the Jews for the last time. Our evangelist slowly traces this journey (chap. 9:51; 13:22, 31, 33; 17:11; 18:31; 19:28, 29, 37, 41), with the infinite consequences which flow from that cross which, to human eyes, was His rejection, but which faith knows to be the glorifying of God forever, as well as the only possible ground of salvation for sinners.

Jericho held a remarkable place as the way to Jerusalem from the Jordan, and of old, when it stood in its might, the key of the position. Hence its solemn destruction under Joshua; hence the curse pronounced on him who should dare to rebuild it. But there Elisha, after the translation of Elijah and his own crossing through the miraculously parted river, healed the waters. So here the Lord, drawing towards the close of His long and last journey, after the transfiguration, performs a miracle of mercy on the blind man. It was an especial sign of His Messiah-ship; and rightly therefore, led of God, did the blind man call, on Him as Son of David: so the three synoptic gospels carefully record.

It is to be observed however that not Mark or Luke but Matthew records the fact that two blind men were healed at this time. Further, Mark, who as usual adds details of the most graphic description, lets us know that the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, was thus healed as the Lord was going out of Jericho, Matthew also intimating that it was on leaving, not entering, the place. Luke on the other hand has been generally supposed to say that the miracle was performed on entering Jericho. So all the old English translations, Wiclif, Tyndale, Geneva, Cranmer, the Rhemish, as well as the authorized: so the Latin, Syriac, and other ancient versions, with most moderns.

But it appears to me that the Greek phrase is so constructed as to avoid any such conclusion, and that the genuine unforced meaning is “while he was near to Jericho,” ■ν τ■ ■γγ■ζε■ν ε■ς ■ερι χ■. According to the usage of the New Testament there might have been ground for the objection raised, if Luke had employed the genitive absolute, ■γγ■ζοντος δ■ α■το■, or ■ς■γγισεν (or ■γγιζεν) ε■ς ■. In strict grammatical nicety there is nothing to tie the sense to the entry into Jericho; it means equally well, as far as language is concerned, while the Lord was in the neighborhood.

I cannot doubt that what weighed with translators in general is the fact that chapter 19 opens with the Lord's entering and passing through Jericho. Hence it was assumed that the previously mentioned circumstance must have preceded this in time. And it must be owned that if Luke, as a rule, adhered to the order of occurrence in his account, it would be most natural to translate chapter 18:35 as in the authorized version. But it has been shown throughout our Gospel that he adopts another and. deeper order than the mere sequence of events, and habitually groups the words, works, and ways of our Lord in moral connection, whenever it is needful to this end putting together what may have been far apart in time.

In the present case it seems to have been the mind of the Spirit that all three who dwell on the Galilean ministry of Christ should mark Jericho and the healing of the blind there, as a common starting-point before His last formal appearance in Jerusalem. We can understand therefore why Luke, even if the incident of Zacchaeus occurred after the miracle, should according to his manner postpone his account of it till he had told us of the blind man healed. But there seems to have been a yet stronger reason of similar character in the fact that, if the healing had been introduced after Zacchaeus, when (I have no doubt) it really took place, adherence to the mere chronology of the facts would have spoiled the very impressive order actually adopted, in which we see the tale of Zacchaeus with salvation brought to his house though a chief tax-gatherer, followed at once by the parable of the pounds, which together beautifully set forth the general character and differing objects of the two advents of the Lord, who was about to suffer as the ground of righteousness and salvation for the lost, instead of at once establishing His throne in Zion as others fondly thought. If this were the design of the inspiring Spirit, as I conceive it certainly to be, gathered from the special character traceable throughout its course, it does not seem possible to suggest any other order so admirably calculated to convey it as that which is pursued. Hence the point in verse 35 was to choose a phrase, which, while not breaking the thread of the narrative and of course in words thoroughly consistent with the exact truth, should nevertheless convey the thought of a time or state during which the particular act related took place. This, in my opinion, has been done perfectly in the language of Luke: so much so, that, granting the aim to be as I suppose, no man can desire better words to combine what is intimated or to avoid a false inference for all aware of that design. If on the contrary men, however learned, assume a bare order of fact, this naturally would influence their translation; and so I think we may fairly account for the common mistake.

Accordingly there is no need of resorting to any of the various methods of reconciling Luke's account with Matthew and Mark. We are not driven to the harsh supposition that Luke's blind man was healed before entering Jericho, and that the news of this reached Mark's blind man, Bartimaeus, so that he went through a similar process of appeal on the Lord's exit, as Origen and Augustine supposed in early days, Greswell, &c, in our own time. Nor is it necessary (though undoubtedly quite legitimate, and the fact elsewhere) to suppose that Matthew combined the two instances in one summary. Less reasonable is the view of Euthymius who will have it that all three instances were distinct, and therefore that four blind men were healed at this time near Jericho. Nor is there any substantial ground to argue, as men have done from Calvin to Wordsworth, that the blind man began crying as our Lord approached Jericho but was not healed till another joined him outside, and both received sight as Jesus left the place. Still more violent are the hypotheses of Markland and of Macknight. The truth is that there is nothing in this to reconcile, all being evidently harmonious, when the language of Luke is seen to be such as falls in with the time and place described more precisely by Matthew and Mark. It may be well however to add that Matthew elsewhere names two where Mark and Luke as here speak only of one, as in the case of the demoniacs. (Comp. Matt. 8:28 - 34 with Mark 6:20 and Luke 8:26 - 39.) See also Matt. 9:27 - 31. This was all right, when the fact (as here) warranted it, in one writing especially for Jews, with whom it was a maxim to demand at least two witnesses. The other evangelists were led to dwell only on the one that best suited the design of his own Gospel.

It is striking also to note that as there was a reason why Matthew, and not Mark or Luke, should record pairs which were healed, so there is the strongest indirect evidence in this against the very

poor theory that the omissions of the first evangelist were supplied in measure by the second, and yet more by the third and so on. For it was the earliest who in these instances speaks of the two; which is irreconcilable, on the supplementary theory, with the second and third mentioning but one. The Holy Spirit made them by His power the vessels for setting forth the various fullness of Jesus the Son of God on the earth. Each had his own line given and perfectly carried out, and facts or sayings are recorded by each, whether reported by the others or not, as they bore on his proper object.

“And it came to pass, as he was near unto Jericho, a certain blind man was sitting by the way side begging; and when he heard a crowd passing, he asked what this was. And they told him, Jesus the Nazarene goeth by; and he called aloud, saying, Jesus, Son of David, pity me. And those in advance rebuked him that he should be silent; but he kept crying much more, Son of David, pity me. And Jesus stopped and ordered him to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, What wilt thou that I should do for thee? And he said, Lord, that I receive sight. And Jesus said, Receive sight: thy faith hath healed thee. And at once he received sight, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people saw and gave praise to God.” (Ver. 35 - 43.)

The Lord is still the rejected One, not understood even by His disciples, yet with a heart towards the most lowly and wretched in Israel who cried to Him in faith. The blind man near Jericho was one of them, and seized the moment of His presence, made known to his sightless eyes by the heedless noise of those who seeing saw not. Blindness in part had happened to Israel in good sooth, blindness most of all to such of them as least acknowledged it. Here was one who, near the city of the curse, dared to confess Him to be the Messiah whom the religious chiefs had long desired to destroy and sooner than they hoped were to be allowed it to the full—dared to ask of Him that sign of opening the eyes of the blind peculiar to the Son of David, as even Rabbinical tradition confessed. The story of His gracious power was not lost on the blind man. Now was his opportunity: might it not be the last? He called aloud; and the more rebuked, the more by far he cried. If to others Jesus was but the Nazarene, to him none other than David's Son. “Son of David, pity me.” And never in vain goes forth the appeal of distress to Him. How pleasant in His ears the persistent call on His name! Jesus stops, commands him to be brought, inquires into his want, and gives all he asks. So will He in the day of His power when Israel (the remnant becoming the people) shall be made willing, shall call on Him and find sight, salvation, and every other good thing to the praise and glory of God.

But it was still the day of His humiliation, of Israel's blind and willful unbelief; and Jesus steadily pursues His sorrowful path to the holy city about to perpetrate the most unhallowed deed of this world's sad history.

Notes on Luke 19:1-27

The account of Zacchaeus is one of those peculiar to Luke; and we may readily see how strikingly it furthers the moral aim of the Spirit in this Gospel. Its collocation too may be at once explained on the same principle, supposing as I do that the facts occurred while the Lord was passing through Jericho, whereas the blind man Bartimaeus did not receive sight till He was on His way outside. But it seemed good to the Holy Ghost here, as often similarly elsewhere, to bring the narrative of Zacchaeus into such a position with the parable that follows as to illustrate by them the general character, not only of His first advent but of His second, thereby correcting many a mistaken thought into which men, yea disciples, were apt to slip then and since.

“And he entered and was passing through Jericho; and, behold, a man by name called Zacchaeus, and he was chief tax-gatherer, and he was rich. And he was seeking to see Jesus who he was, and could not for the crowd, because he was little in stature. And he ran on before and got up a sycamore that he might see him, because he was to pass that [way]. And when he came to the place, Jesus looking up saw him and said to him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide in thy house. And making haste he came down and received him joyfully.” (Verses 1-6.)

The Lord had already in parables set forth divine grace to the lost sinner as such, above all in the prodigal son. “We have now the actual history of a publican, a chief tax-gatherer, and a rich man, to whom grace sent salvation that very day. But here it is well to distinguish what is often overlooked. Some allege that Zacchaeus was a man without the fear of God, and unconverted; others compare him with Simeon in the temple. We should not forget that salvation is more than new birth, that it could only then be pronounced by the Messiah, and that it is now in virtue of redemption proclaimed far and wide through faith in His name. It is the primary Christian blessing that a soul needs and receives in a dead and risen Christ; but it should never be confounded with that awakening which accompanies quickening by the Spirit. As the due understanding of this clears up many difficulties created by the confusion prevalent in Christendom, from the days of the fathers till our own time, so it will be found helpful here. The Lord vindicated the grace of God toward one in the worst possible position, the loathing of the proud Pharisee. He who struggled against the many obstructions in the way, who hesitated not to cast off all conceit of dignity and to brave all ridicule in order to see Jesus, heard with astonishment the voice of the good Shepherd call His sheep by name and invite Himself to remain at his house. Certainly He was none other than the Messiah, who could thus tell all things and would thus meet the desire of a heart that dared not hope for such an honor. What a wonder, yet no wonder! He who knew all knew Zacchaeus; He who asked a drink from the Samaritan woman whose life He read asked Himself to the house of a chief tax-gatherer. It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God; so that they who heard said, Who then can be saved? Now He proves what He then answered, that the things which are impossible with men are possible with God; for assuredly He entered the house not to get but to give.

But nothing is so unintelligible to man as God's grace. “And when they saw [it], they all murmured, saying, that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.” (Ver. 7.) How blessed that so He could, and so He would! How hopeless the blank for us if it were not so! It suits His love so to deal with those who have not the smallest claim.

“And Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have by false accusation exacted anything of any man, I restore fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham: for the Son of man came to seek and to save that which is lost.” (Verses 8 - 10.) It is not that the Lord discredited the chief tax-gatherer's account of his feelings and ways. Such was his character, such his habits, in a sorrowful position doubtless, with a delicate if not scrupulous conscience. But why this before One who had already proved that all was known to a heart that could not misjudge? Why talk even of what the Spirit had produced in presence of the salvation-bringing grace of God? The Lord denies not, spite of his occupation, that he too was a son of Abraham; but if He Himself were the Messiah, and at this very time presenting Himself as such for the last time on earth, beginning at Jericho, He was the Son of man in grace and humiliation on the way to death, yea, the death of the cross; the Son of man come to save what is lost. What else was worth speaking of? This day salvation was come to his house.

As this affecting incident maintains the activity of grace according to God's aim in the first advent of the Lord, even while He was testing them for the last time as the Messiah, so the following parable was uttered to dispel the wrong expectations which filled their minds who so soon had forgotten that first He must suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation, and that the introduction of the Lord's world—kingdom must await His second advent. Those who were on the stretch for the immediate Betting up of that kingdom were self-deceived. If He was near Jerusalem, He was near the cross, not the manifestation of His kingdom yet. “But as they were hearing these things, he in addition spoke a parable because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and they thought that the kingdom of God was about to be manifested immediately. He said therefore, A certain high-born man went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. And he called ten of his servants and delivered them ten minas, and said unto them, Trade until I come.” (Verses 11 - 13.) It is obvious that this is quite distinct from a similar parable in the last prophetic discourse on Olivet, and this not less certainly distinct in internal marks, as we shall see throughout. There the lord exercises his rights and gives as he pleases according to his knowledge of the varying capacities of his servants. Here all receive the same at starting, and their respective use of the deposit in business (figuratively) is the main point—the responsibility of the servants in the one, the sovereignty of the master in the other. Equally in contrast is the result in each: the good and faithful bondmen in Matthew alike enter into the joy of their Lord, while in Luke each receives authority according to his labor and its fruit.

Again, there are weighty moral instructions connected with this parable, but distinct from what we find later in Matthew. For here we read that “His citizens hated him and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.” (Ver. 14.) Such was the spirit of the Jews, who not only rejected the Messiah, but, as another has well said, sent a message after Him as it were in the martyrs they slew, refusing Him glorified no less than in humiliation.

“And it came to pass on his return, having received the kingdom, that he commanded his bondsmen to whom he gave the money to be called to him, that he might know what each had gained by trading. And the first came up saying, Lord, thy mina hath produced ten minas. And he said to him, Well [done] thou good bondman, because thou hast been faithful in a very little: have authority over ten cities. And the second came saying, Lord, thy mina hath made five minas. And he said also to him, And thou be over five cities. And the other came, saying, Lord, behold thy mina which I kept laid up in a napkin. For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up what thou layedst not down, and reapest what thou didst not sow. He saith to him, Out of thy mouth I will judge thee, wicked bondman. Thou knewest that I am an austere man, taking up what I laid not down, and reaping what I did not sow. And why gavest thou not my money into a bank, and at my coming I should have received it with interest? And he said to those that stood by, Take from him the mina and give [it] to him that hath ten. And they said to him, Lord, he hath ten minas. I say to you, that to every one that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not even what he hath shall be taken.” (Verses 15 - 26.) Here we have the responsible service of Christians till Jesus returns, with His judgment then of their service meanwhile. It is not that the faithless bondman will not suffer the results of his unbelief, like the elder brother who despised his father and scorned his brother. But our evangelist tells the tale of grace, without describing the awful doom of those who corrupt or turn from it. It is in the earthly accompaniment that we hear of divine vengeance. Thus the picture is made still more complete; for we have also the public execution of judgment on the guilty citizens, the Jews, at His appearing. “But those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.” (Ver. 27.) The judgment of the habitable world is a truth which practically has dropt out of the life, if not the creeds, of Christendom.

Chapter 132

Notes on Luke 19:28-48

Next follows the approach to Jerusalem. The Messiah indeed, but Son of Man, presents Himself according to the prophecies going before even when they are not formally cited, with the fullest parabolic instruction just given that the opposition to Him was deliberately willful and conclusive, for it was not only that His citizens (The Jews) despised Him coming as He did in humiliation for the deepest purposes of divine love, but they “hated” Him and sent a message after Him, saying, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” Awful to hear from His lips, those were His “enemies,” above all others, who would not that He should reign over them. His heavenly glory was at least as repugnant to them as His earthly abasement. They appreciated neither the grace which brought Him down nor the glory to which as man He was exalted. What could He say then but “Bring them hither and slay them before me?” as ever, the moral springs are laid bare in our Gospel, and, if evil, judged.

“And when he had said these things, he went on before, going up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass when he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, toward the mountain called Olivet, he sent two of his disciples, saying, Go away into the village over against you; in which as ye enter ye shall find a colt tied on which not one of man ever sat: loose and bring it. And if any one ask you, Why do ye loose [it]? thus shall ye say to him, Because the Lord hath need of it. And they that were sent, having gone away, found even as he had said to them. And as they were loosing the colt, its owners said to them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, Because the Lord hath need of it. And they brought it to Jesus; and, having cast their garments on the colt, they set Jesus thereon; and, as they went, they strewed their garments in the way.” (Verses 28 - 36.)

The labor of ancients and moderns to find in this remarkable incident a type of the Gentiles obedient to the gospel, as the Lord received and rode on the colt, seems to me far from intelligent. Rather was it very simply the evidence of His divine knowledge and the assertion among the Jews of His claim as Jehovah Messiah, verified by facts and by the proved subjection of human hearts where God was pleased to effect it to the honor of His Son. Hence the minuteness with which the words which passed and the accomplishment of all He said are noted by the Spirit. Doubtless, as in all the Gospels, so here it was in meekness and lowliness He entered; still it was as the king according to the revealed mind of God. It was not yet the day of trouble when Jehovah is to hear His Christ with the saving strength of His right hand; nor was yet the time come for the Jew to glory in the name of Jehovah, but alas I no better than the Gentiles who know not God, these in chariots and those on horses. But One was there who for them and us in all the degradation and selfishness and guilt of the fallen race was willing to bear the uttermost rejection of man, the forsaking of God Himself crowning it, that we might be brought to God owning our sinfulness and resting on the grace which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

But the power of God, which wrought in hearts prepared by grace as a suitable testimony to Jesus at that moment, was still more pointedly marked in what Luke next records, and Luke only as it is characteristic of the Holy Ghost's design in his account. “And as he was drawing near, already at

the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began with rejoicing to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen, saying, Blessed the King that cometh in Jehovah's name: in heaven peace, and glory in [the] highest. And some of the Pharisees from the crowd said unto him, Teacher, rebuke thy disciples. And answering he said, I tell you that, if these shall be silent, the stones will cry out." (Verses 37 - 40.)

It is not merely the crowds or those who went before and followed as in Matthew and Mark; nor is it the cries of the children in the temple, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, as in the first Gospel most appropriately. Here we are told of the whole multitude of the disciples, and hence of words only befitting their lips, though surely given of God with a wisdom reaching far beyond their measure, as is known not seldom among the witnesses of Christ. "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest" looks · to things higher and more immediate than the preceding words cited from Psa. 118 and common to all four evangelists.

It is a striking change even from the announcement of another multitude, near the beginning of this Gospel, who suddenly appeared with the angelic herald of the Savior's birth, and praised God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, in men good pleasure." Such was the suited celebration of the Son now incarnate, that marvelous and mighty fact which introduced God Himself into the most touching relations with humanity, and laid the basis for the manifestation of the Father in the person of Christ, as well as for the accomplishment of the infinite work of redemption, on which hangs the righteous vindication of God, and the gracious deliverance of the elect, and the reconciliation of all things in heaven and on earth to His own everlasting glory. And the heavenly host speak of the grand result as then invisibly enshrined in Him just born, a babe in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger in Bethlehem. God was pleased to manifest His good pleasure in men, not in angels, and so to fill the highest seats with glory to Himself, and earth with peace.

But in fact Jesus was, as the prophets had fully and distinctly foreshown He must be, despised and rejected of men. This postponed in divine wisdom, though it could not frustrate, the purpose of God. Rather did it make room for a new and higher display of what was hidden in God from ages and generations, and now made known in the church to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. However this be, the disciples in their outburst of praise (now that the Lord was rejected and with Him meanwhile peace for the earth gone, and division and a sword the consequence of the struggle between light and darkness) do nevertheless anticipate "peace in heaven and glory in the highest." If the former proclaimed the general purpose of God, the latter the ways of God when the enemy might seem on the point of triumphing. If earth disown and cast out the Savior, if the Jews refuse the Messiah because He is incomparably more than the Son of David and come to bring about incomparably deeper and larger purposes, it is but for a season a transfer of the seat of blessing to heaven for the brightest and fullest accomplishment of all God's will and mind. The kingdom itself became manifestly of heaven thereby, and the exaltation of the rejected Lord is to sit down meanwhile on the right hand of the Majesty on high, Satan being utterly defeated by man in the person of the woman's Seed on the throne of the highest, and the kingdom over the earth will follow the moment that it pleases the Father, who is meanwhile forming a people united to Christ His Son, His body, His bride, to be with Him where He is at His coming. Peace is in heaven, because He was going there victoriously, having made peace by the blood of the cross, Himself our peace now whether we have been Jews or Greeks.

If Pharisees, insensible to His glory, complained of the praises of the disciples, the Lord could not but tell them that they were more obdurate than the stones beneath and around them.

Observe further that instead of the dispensational lesson of the fig tree cursed as in Matthew, and in Mark with yet minuter details for instruction in service, we have the grace of the Lord in His weeping over the guilty and doomed city. “And when he drew near, on seeing the city, he wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things for thy peace: but now they are hid from thine eyes. For days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall make a rampart about thee and compass thee round and keep thee in on every side, and level thee with the ground and thy children in thee, and not leave in thee stone upon stone; because thou knewest not the season of thy visitation.” (Ver. 41 - 44.) Every word of the warning was punctually fulfilled in the siege of Titus; but what grace shone out of that heart surcharged with grief for the people so blindly to their own ruin refusing Himself who wept over them in a love thus truly divine and perfectly human!

It was Matthew's office to bring out the woes He solemnly pronounced over the holy city now so unholy, not their civil destruction but rather the sanctuary once His Father's house, now their house left to them desolate, yet not hopelessly. “For” as He said then, “ye shall not see me till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah.” All that is left out in this part of our Gospel, and the more remarkably, as we find the cleansing of the temple afterward. “And entering into the temple he began to cast out those that sold, saying to them, It is written, And my house shall be a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of robbers.” (Ver. 45, 46.) Without agreeing with Jerome, who saw in the act of our Lord the greatest miracle He ever wrought, one may note profitably how, even at such a moment when irresistible energy accompanied His indignant rebuke of their profanity and cast such unworthy traffic outside the sacred precincts, He employs as ever the written word as His ground and warrant.

In harmony with this we read that “he was teaching by day in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, and did not find what they could do, for all the people hung on him while hearing.” (Ver. 47, 48.) The word of God from His lips especially told on the consciences of men. The religious leaders, having long rejected Him, not only lost all right feeling but were given up to a murderous hatred soon to be satisfied. Such ever proves the world when confronted with the light of God; and withal the perfect love of God in Christ only provoked it the more.

Chapter 133

Notes on Luke 20:1-40

The Lord is now seen in contact with the various classes of officials and religious and political bodies among the Jews, who successively present themselves in the hope of perplexing and inveigling Him, but in effect to their own confusion, Essaying to judge Him, they expose themselves and are judged by the truth from His lips on their own evidence one after another.

“And it came to pass on one of the days as he was teaching in the temple and evangelizing, the priests and the scribes came up with the elders, and said unto him, saying, Tell us by what authority thou doest these things; or who it is that gave thee this authority.” (Ver. 1, 2.)

It is ever apt to be thus in an evil day. Worldly religion assumes the sanction of God for that which exists, its permanence and its future triumph. It was so in Israel; and it is so in Christendom. Prophets then held up the fate of Shiloh to the religious chiefs who reasoned from the promises of guaranteed perpetuity for the temple, its ordinances, its ministers, its devotees, and its system in general; and those who warned like Jeremiah found bitter results in the taunts and persecutions of such as had the world's ear. They denied God's title to tell them the truth. And now a greater than Jeremiah was here; and those who stood on their successional office, and those who claimed special knowledge of the scriptures, and those of leading influence in the counsels and conduct of the people, demanded His right to act as He did and its source. No wonder they felt the solemn testimony of approaching ruin to all that in which they had their importance; but there was no faith, no conscience toward God. They therefore turned away from the consideration of their own ways and responsibility to the question of His title.

The Lord meets them by putting another question. “And answering he said unto them, I also will ask you a [or one] word, and tell me: The baptism of John, was it of heaven or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we should say, Of heaven, he will say, Why believed ye him not? but if we should say, Of men, the whole people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John is a prophet. And they answered that they knew not whence [it was].” (Ver. 3 - 7.)

The wisdom of the Lord's procedure is worthy of all heed. He who alone could have taken His stand on personal dignity and the nearest relationship and the highest mission pleads none of these things. He probes their consciences; and, in their desire to escape from the consequences of answering truly, they are compelled to confess their incapacity both to guide others and even to act aright themselves in a matter of the deepest and most general concern to all Israel of that day. “The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith Jehovah of hosts.” So said Malachi, and so the Lord proved now. “Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways but have been partial in the law.” They could not deny, yet refused to profit by, the moral power of John, who bore witness to Jesus as Messiah and to Israel's need of repentance. To own therefore the baptism of John, a new institution, as of heaven, without the least appearance of traditional sanctity or claim of antiquity or

connection with the priesthood or the temple, was of the most serious import to men who derived all their consequence from the regular course of the law and its ordinances. Besides, it at once decided the question of the Messiah, for John in the strongest and most solemn way declared that Jesus was the Christ. To disown John and his baptism would have been fatal to their credit, for all the people were persuaded that John was a prophet. It was to them a mere question of policy, and hence they shirked answering under cover of a lie. They could not afford to be truthful; they said they knew not whence John's baptism was. They were as void of faith as the heathen. He who read their dark hearts winds up with the reply, “Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.” (Ver. 8.) It was useless to inform unbelief. Long before the Lord had forbidden His disciples to tell any man that He was the Christ; for He was going to suffer on the cross. “When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am [he], and that I do nothing of myself, but even as my Father taught me, I speak these things.” (John 8)

Here we have no special application to the Jews in order to let them know that the most despised men and corrupt women go into the kingdom of God before the heads honored by the peoples. This has its appropriate place in the Gospel of Matthew. But we have the parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen in all three synoptic accounts, each with its own special shades of truth.

“And he began to speak unto the people this parable: a man planted. a vineyard and let it out to husbandmen, and left the country for a long time. And in season he sent unto the husbandmen a slave that they might give him of the fruit of the vineyard; but the husbandmen beat and sent him away empty. And again he sent another slave, and him also they beat and dishonored and sent away empty. And again he sent a third, and they wounded and cast out him also. And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: perhaps on seeing they will reverence him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. And him they cast out of the vineyard and slew: what therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy these husbandmen, and will give the vineyard to others. And when they heard they said, Let it not be. But he looked on them and said, What then is this that is written? A stone which the builders rejected, this has become head of [the] corner. Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall crush him to powder.” (Ver. 9 - 18.)

On the truth common to all it is not needful to speak now. But the reader in comparing may notice the greater fullness of detail in Matthew and Mark than in Luke as to the dealings with Israel; as also the greater minuteness in Mark of the reception the servants and son received. So also observe on the other hand that Mark and Luke speak simply of giving the vineyard to others, Matthew on letting it out to other husbandmen such as shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Responsibility is thus most maintained in Matthew, grace in Luke, both being true and of capital moment. Again, in Matthew it is “he that falleth,” in Luke “every one,” &c. There is breadth in judgment as in grace. Mark has not the verse at all, as not bearing on service, the theme of the Spirit by him.

“And the scribes and the chief priests that very hour sought to lay hands on him (and they feared the people); for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.” Again does the Holy Spirit notice their bad conscience, their hatred of Jesus, and their fear of the people. God was in none of their thoughts: else had they repented and believed in Jesus. What a comment on the

parable was their desire to lay hands on Him! Thus were they soon to fulfill the voice of the prophets and the parable of the great Prophet Himself.

“And they watched and sent suborned persons pretending to be righteous that they might lay hold of his word so as to deliver him to the power and the authority of the governor. And they asked him, saying, Teacher, we know that thou rightly sayest and teachest, and acceptest no person, but in truth teachest the way of God. Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar or not? But perceiving their deceit he said unto them, Show me a denarius; whose image and title hath it? And answering they said, Caesar’s. And he said unto them, Therefore render the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God.” (Vers. 20 - 25.) The moral depravity of all concerned is here very marked, whether of suborners or suborned. Simplicity of purpose detects and exposes the crafty. Jesus sacrifices no duty. Let Caesar have what is his, and God His own. The world-panderers and the zealots were alike foiled, who set one duty against another, doing neither aright because each was seeking self. “And they were not able to lay hold of his word before the people, and wondering at his answer were silent.” (Ver. 26.)

“And some of the Sadducees who deny that there is any resurrection came up and asked him, saying, Teacher, Moses wrote to us, If any one's brother having a wife die and he be childless, that his brother take the wife, and raise up seed to his brother. There were then seven brothers, and the first having taken a wife died childless; and the second, and the third, took her; and likewise also the seven left no children and died; and lastly the woman died. In the resurrection therefore of which of them does the woman become wife? For the seven had her as wife. And Jesus said to them, The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage; but those counted worthy to obtain that age and the resurrection from among [the] dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they can die no more, for they are equal to angels, and are sons of God, being sons of resurrection. But that the dead rise even Moses showed at the bush when he calleth Jehovah the God of Abraham, and God of Isaac, and God of Jacob. But He is not God of dead but of living, for all live to Him.” (Verses 27 - 38.)

We need not combat here men like Dr. Campbell, ably as he wrote on the Gospels, or Dwight, who contend that the point is a future life rather than the resurrection of the body. Not so. The proposed case could hardly have risen but as a difficulty in the ways of a risen body, though it is doubtless true that the Sadducees went farther and denied angels and spirits.

Our Gospel, it is of interest to observe here, furnishes several distinct truths beyond what is found in Matthew and Mark. Resurrection from among the dead (not resurrection as such) has its own proper age, a time of special blessedness which the resurrection of the unjust cannot be 6aid to be. It was after this the apostle longed so ardently, minding no sufferings meanwhile, none above all of Christ in character. The resurrection of the wicked is for the second death. The resurrection from among the dead is for the righteous who die no more, being equal to angels and sons of God, being sons of resurrection. The resurrection of the unjust is the awful condition of eternal judgment, as they had rejected Christ and eternal life in Him. God is Abraham's God and will raise the dead to enjoy the promises not yet fulfilled; He is not God of dead men but of living; for to Him all live, even before the resurrection comes as well as when it does come. Thus Luke above all the evangelists gives us a full glimpse of the separate state, besides the certainty of resurrection and glory. “And some of the scribes answering said, Teacher, thou hast well said. And they did not

dare any more to ask him anything.” (Ver. 39, 40.) We shall see that the Lord's turn is come to question them.

Chapter 134

Notes on Luke 20:41 and 21:1-4

In the various parties, if the leaders of religious thought in Israel, did not dare any more to ask the Lord anything, He puts the crucial question to them; not of course to tempt like them, but to convince them that the Pharisees had no more real faith than the Sadducees, and that the scribes had no more understanding of the divine word than the crowd who knew not the law. His indeed was a probe to conscience and an appeal to the scriptures, if peradventure they might hear and live. Alas! they had ears but heard not, and their own Messiah's highest glory they denied to their own perdition and God's dishonor. And this is no peculiarity of the Jews in that day; it applies as really now throughout, and even more conspicuously among Protestants than among Papists. At bottom, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, earthly religion slights Christ: sometimes by open antagonism as when His Deity is opposed and His sacrifice set aside; at other times by setting up rival mediators, the virgin, saints, angels, priests, &c., who usurp that which belongs exclusively to Him. To us then there is but one Lord, even Jesus Christ; and as we cannot serve two masters, so we cannot have two Saviors; but either men hate the one, and love the other; or else they hold to the one, and despise the other.

“And he said to them, How say they that the Christ is David's son; and David himself saith in the book of Psalms, Jehovah said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I put thine enemies [as] a footstool of thy feet? David therefore calleth him Lord; and how is he his son?” (Ver. 41 - 44.)

There is and could be but one answer. The Messiah, David's son, must have been a divine person in order to be David's Lord, the everlasting enigma of unbelief, now as then the stumbling stone to the Jew. Yet is it as certainly if not as clearly and continually presented in the Old Testament as in the New; and as it is essential to His proper dignity and enhances incalculably the grace of God, so it is indispensable that there should be an irrefragable rock of salvation whether for an Israelite or for any other. Without the Godhead of Jesus, however truly man as He is, Christianity is a delusion, an imposture, and an impossibility, as Judaism was an unmeaning child's play. To Him, God and man in one person, do the law and the prophets bear their unequivocal witness, not more surely to God's righteousness without law than to the Christ's glory above law, however He might deign to be born of woman, born under law, in order to redemption for those who were in this position. (Gal. 4)

But man fears to face the truth till he is born anew. It annihilates his pride, it exposes his vanity in every sense, as well as his guilt and ruin; it makes God the only hope and Savior. Man does not like what grinds his self-importance to powder, and, unless grace intervene savingly, will risk everlasting destruction rather than yield to the testimony of God. But the truth erects a judgment-seat in the conscience of each believer, who now owns himself lost that he may be saved, and saved exclusively by His grace who will be the judge, to their endless misery and shame, of all who despise His glory and His mercy now.

To the believer no truth is simpler, none more precious, than the Christ a man yet God, son of David yet David's Lord, the root and the offspring of David, who came to die but withal the living

and eternal God. On the intrinsic dignity of His person hang the grace of His humiliation and the value of His atonement, and the glory to God of the kingdom He will take and display as Son of man. He is now the center to faith of all who are brought to God reconciled by the blood of His cross; as He will be of all things that are in heaven and that are on earth reconciled by Him; but if not God, equally with the Father, such a place of center in grace or glory must be a deadly blow at that honor which is due to the only God, because it would be giving to a creature however exalted the homage proper to Him alone. His Godhead therefore is essential to His character of the model man; the denial of it logically implies the horrible libel and lie that He is no better than the most fraudulent and successful of impostors. This may serve to prove what the guilt of discrediting the Son of God really is; this explains why whoever denies the Son has not the Father, while he that confesses the Son has the Father also. He who honors not the Son honors not the Father who sent Him.

Therefore is judgment given only to the Son; because He alone in infinite love stooped to become a man and to die for men, yea for the guiltiest of sinners, who alas! repaid His love by the deepest dishonor, rejecting Him when He came in grace, as they reject Him preached in grace still, who will judge them as Son of man in that nature because of the assumption of which they despised Him and denied His Godhead. Thus will God compel all, even the proudest unbeliever, to honor the Son as they honor the Father. But this will be to their judgment, not salvation. Eternal life is in hearing Christ's word now and believing Him that sent His Son in love: otherwise nothing remains but a resurrection of judgment in vindication of His injured name, the rejection of the Father in the Son.

We need not dwell on other truths wrapped up in the citation from Psalm 110, though of the deepest interest and elsewhere applied in the New Testament. Here the object is as simple as it is fundamental, an inextricable riddle to the incredulous, Jews or Gentiles. But it is especially the former who have ever stopped short there, silenced but not subdued. As for such Gentiles as professed to receive the only solution in His person, the enemy finds other ways to nullify the truth wherever they are unrenewed by grace. False friends are no better than open enemies, but rather worse; ungodly men turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only master and our Lord Jesus Christ, whose judgment is just and sure, as we sec in the solemn epistle of Jude.

“And, as all the people listened, he said to the disciples, Beware of the scribes that like to walk in robes and love salutations in the markets, and first seats in the synagogues and first places at the feasts, who devour the houses of widows and for a show make long prayers: these shall receive more abundant judgment.” (Ver. 45 - 47.)

The difference in the object of the Holy Spirit's writing by Matthew and Luke, as well as Mark, comes out here in a striking way. For the former devotes a considerable chapter to their position, their utter failure and the stern judgment awaiting such hollow formalists from God. Mark and Luke touch the question only, the one as a falsifying of service, the other on moral ground, for the instruction of disciples. What is specially Jewish, either in title or in forms and habits, disappears; what Mark and Luke record is not loving service but selfishness and hypocrisy, the more fatal because of the profanation of God's name.

Luke again is with Mark in giving the widow poor but rich, and this doubtless for reasons analogous to their report of the exposure of the proud and empty scribes; Matthew has her not at all. For far different was the Israel of the then day, and with this he is occupied, the judgment coming on Jerusalem, rich but poor, with which the Lord concludes His denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees.

“And he looked up and saw the rich casting their gifts into the treasury, but he saw also a certain poor widow casting into it two mites. And be said, Verily I say unto you, that this poor woman hath cast in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have cast into the gifts, but she out of her need hath cast in all the living which she had.” (Chap. 21: 1-4.) It is a lovely picture of devotedness in the widow: how much lovelier to behold Him, who gave her the faith and drew out her love, admiring and so richly appreciating the fruit of His own grace! May He have so to speak of our wealth toward God in the day that approaches, when mammon and every false estimate shall have disappeared forever!

Notes on Luke 21:5-38

Luke alone of the Evangelists notices the fact that the disciples spoke to the Lord about the votive offerings with which it was adorned; all three speak of its goodly stones or buildings. But this does not warrant the inference that the prophetic discourse which follows belongs to those in the temple rather than those on the Mount of Olives. It has been properly remarked that the questions are distinct from the Lord's solemn answer to the admiration expressed, and may well have been to the chosen four on retiring thither as we are told He did by night at the end of our chapter. “And as some spoke of the temple that it was adorned with goodly stones and offerings, he said, [As for] these things which ye behold, there shall come days in which stone shall not be left upon stone which shall not be thrown down.” On the other hand it is surely without justification to assume that Luke could not have omitted the change of scene and auditory if aware of it. On both sides such reasoning leaves out the Spirit of God, and His having a purpose by each which alone accounts for differences on the basis of His own perfect knowledge of all, not of the writers' ignorance.

“And they asked him saying, Teacher, when then shall these things be? and what [is] the sign when these things are about to come to pass? And he said, See that ye be not misled. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am [he]; and the time is drawn nigh: go ye not after them. And when ye shall hear of wars and tumults, be not terrified; for these things must first come to pass, but the end [is] not immediately.” (Ver. 7 - 9.) It will be observed that the Holy Spirit inspired the writer to drop the question respecting the coming of the Son of man and the completion of the age. As with Mark, they ask when the destruction of the temple shall be, and the sign of its commencement. The Lord fully replies, but as usual gives much more. But there is neither the completeness of dispensational information right through, nor details as to the consummation of the age, found in the Gospel of Matthew. On the other hand here only are we given distinct light on the coming siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Romans, here only its subsequent ignominious subjection till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Other peculiarities of Luke we may see as we proceed through the chapter. The question of the disciples goes no farther than the demolition the Lord spoke of, the Spirit having reserved for Matthew the parabolic history of the course, conduct, and judgment of Christendom, as well as the special account of the Jews at the end of the age, and of all the Gentiles gathered before the throne of the Son of man when He is come. The early warning that follows the inquiry here refers to what soon ensued. There may be analogous deceits in the last days; but I apprehend that here we are in view of what has been. If it were the closing scenes, where would be the propriety of assuring the disciples that the end is not immediately? Matthew may take in what soon followed; but the characteristic feature with him is the end of the age, first in general, then specifically, with its shadows before.

“Then said he to them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: there shall be both great earthquakes in various places and pestilences and famines, and there shall be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things they shall lay their hands upon you and persecute you, delivering up to synagogues and prisons, being brought away before kings and rulers for my name's sake; but it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle therefore in your

hearts not to meditate before your defense; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist or gainsay. Moreover ye shall be delivered up by parents and brethren and relations and friends, and they shall put to death [some] of you, and ye shall be hated by all on account of my name; and a hair of your head shall in no wise perish. By your patience ye shall gain your souls." (Ver. 10 - 19.) The strict application of all this to the state of things whether in the world or among the disciples before the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans must be evident to every unprejudiced mind. Luke alone sets forth the grace of the Lord in giving His own a mouth and wisdom beyond the craft and power of all adversaries. In Mark they are to speak "whatsoever shall be given you; for not ye are the speakers but the Holy Spirit." Luke also puts in broad terms their winning their souls, which would be true in the highest sense for heaven if they were slain.

Next we have a graphic picture of the crisis for Jerusalem under Titus. "But when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that its destruction is drawn nigh. Then let those in Judea flee unto the mountains, and let those in the midst of it depart out, and let those in the fields not enter into it. For these are days of vengeance that all the things written may be fulfilled. Woe to them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days; for there shall be great distress upon the land and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by edge of sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by [the] nations until [the] times of [the] nations be fulfilled." (Ver. 20 - 24.) Here there can be no misunderstanding unless for a pre-occupied mind. The siege with its consequences described by our Lord cannot be a future event because it is followed by the humiliating possession of the Jewish capital by one nation after another till the allotted seasons of Gentile supremacy terminate. This is peculiar to our evangelist who accordingly speaks of armies encompassing the city, which was true then, not like Matthew and Mark of the abomination of desolation, which can only be verified in its closing throes. Hence too the reader may notice, that in spite of a considerable measure of analogy (for there will be a future siege, and even a twofold attack, one of which will be partially successful, the other to the ruin of their enemies, as we learn from Isa. 28; 29 and Zech. 14), there are the strangest contrasts in the issue; for the future siege will be closed by Jehovah's deliverance and reign, as the past did in the capture and destruction of the people dispersed ever since till the times of the Gentiles are full. Accordingly we hear nothing in this Gospel of the abomination of desolation, nor of the time of tribulation beyond all that was or shall be; we hear of both in Matthew and Mark where the Spirit contemplates the last days. Here we are told of great distress on the land and wrath on the Jewish people, as indeed there was. The notion that Luke's variation is designed as a paraphrase of Matthew and Mark, a simpler expression in his Gospel for one more obscure in theirs, is most unworthy of the Holy Ghost and destructive of the truth in the first two Gospels if not in the third. There is fresh truth, and not a sacred comment on what the others said.

In verse 26 and onward we are naturally carried on to the conclusion of the Gentile times. "And there shall be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at sea and waves roaring, men fainting from fear and expectation of the things coming on the habitable earth; for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draweth nigh." (Ver. 25 - 28.) It is Luke only who mentions the moral signs of men's anguish spite of the deceits and pretensions of

that day. No doubt there will be strong delusion and the belief of falsehood; but for this very reason there is no rest nor contentment, for only the grace and truth of God in Christ can give peaceful enjoyment with a good conscience. Hence God will know how to trouble men's dreams and to break up Satan's ease, their horror culminating at the sight of the rejected Lord, the Son of man, coming in a cloud with power and glory. But there will be those then on earth, disciples tried by the evils of that day, for whom even the beginning of these troubles and the tokens of change for the world will be the sure harbinger of deliverance.

“And he spake a parable to them, Behold the fig tree and all the trees: when they already sprout, by looking ye know of your own selves that summer [is] now near. So also, when ye see these things take place, know ye that the kingdom of God is near. Verily I say to you that this generation shall not pass away till all things be done. The heaven and the earth shall pass away but my words shall in no wise pass away. But take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be weighed down with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of life, and that day come upon you suddenly; for as a snare it will come upon all that are settled down upon the face of the whole earth. But watch, at every season praying that ye may be deemed worthy to escape all these things that are about to come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” (Ver. 29 - 36.) We have here an instance of the exceeding accuracy of scripture even in figures. Who but God could have thought of giving only the fig-tree in Matthew speaking of Israel, the fig-tree and all the trees in Luke where the Gentiles are mixed up with the troubles of Israel?

But this is not the only point of interest in this appendix to the prophecy. For the Lord has given us the positive proof, by the way in which verse 32 stands here, that “this generation” cannot mean a mere chronological space of thirty or even one hundred years, for it is brought in after the running out of Gentile times and the coming of the Son of man with power and glory, events still unfulfilled. Its force is moral; not exactly the nation of Israel but that Christ-rejecting race which then refused their Messiah as they do still. This will go on till all these solemn threats of judgment are accomplished. It is profitable to remark that here, not in doctrine or in practice only, but in these unfoldings of the future, the Lord pledges the impossibility of failing in His words. The Lord does not say that “this generation” shall not pass away till the temple is destroyed or the city taken, but till all be fulfilled. Now He had introduced the subsequent treading down of Jerusalem to the end of Israel's trials in His appearing, and He declares that this generation shall not pass away till then; as indeed it is only then grace will form a new generation, the generation to come. The more we hold fast the continuity of the stream of the prophecy, as distinguished from the crisis in Matthew and Mark, the greater will be seen to be the importance of this remark.

Notice the strongly moral tone in which the dangers and snares of the days before the Son of man appears are touched by the Lord, an often recurring characteristic of our evangelist, The concluding verses (37, 38) are a summary of our Lord's manner or habit at this time, the nights spent on the Mount of Olivet, and by day teaching in the temple, whither all the people came early to hear Him. It was this which led several copyists to insert here the paragraph from John 7:53 to 8: 11; but there is no real ground for such a transposition, any more than for denying it to be the genuine writing of the last evangelist in spite of alleged difficulties.

Notes on Luke 22:1-34

The end approaches with all its solemn and momentous issues; which our evangelist relates after the wonted manner, adhering to moral connection rather than illustrating dispensational change, or the series of facts in His ministry, or the glory of His person.

“Now the feast of unleavened [bread] that is called passover was drawing nigh, and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might kill him, for they were afraid of the people. And Satan entered into Judas that is called Iscariot being of the number of the twelve; and he went away and spoke with the chief priests and captains how he should deliver him up to them. And they rejoiced and engaged to give him money; and he agreed fully and was seeking an opportunity to deliver him up to them away from [the] crowd.” (Ver. 1-6.) When the will is thus engaged on the one side and on the other nearness to the Lord was enjoyed without self-judgment, nay, in conscious hypocrisy and the habitual yielding to covetousness, Satan readily found means to effect his own designs, as a liar and murderer, against the Son of God. Yet how reassuring it is to observe that both man and the devil were powerless till the due moment came for the execution of God's purposes which their malice even then only subserved, unconsciously and in a way which they counted most sure to hinder and nullify them. But He catcheth the wise in their own craftiness.

It may be well here to note that the English Version misleads if it be inferred from verse 3 that it was at this time Satan entered into Judas; for we know from John 13:27 that it was only after the sop, the latter Gospel also distinguishing this full action of the enemy from the earlier occasion when he had put it into the betrayer's heart. The truth is that Luke has no expression of time here, using only a particle of transition, and therefore contents himself with the broad fact without entering into the detail of its successive stages, which found their fitting place with him whose task of love was to linger on the person of the Lord.

“And the day of unleavened [bread] came in which the passover was to be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare the passover for us that we may eat. But they said to him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said to them, Behold, when ye have entered into the city, there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he goeth in; and ye shall say to the owner of the house, The Master saith to thee, Where is the guest chamber where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went away and found as he had said to them; and they prepared the passover.” (Ver. 7-13.) There is no ground of difficulty here for him who believes the word of God. He who beforehand could describe thus minutely the person, place, time, and circumstances was in communion with the divine power and grace which controlled the heart of the Jewish householder, even though a stranger hitherto, and made him heartily acquiesce in the Lord's using it for the paschal feast with His disciples. That God should thus order all in honor of His Son for the last passover seems to me beautifully in keeping as a testimony in Jerusalem where the religious chiefs and even a disciple with the mass were hardening themselves to their

destruction in His rejection and death.

“And when the hour was come, he took his place, and the apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer, for I say to you that I will not any more at all eat it until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And having received a cup, he gave thanks and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will in no wise drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God come.” (Ver. 14-18.) What an expression of tender love for the disciples! For the last time He would eat it with them, not at all more. As to the cup of the passover, they were to take and divide it among themselves, not He with them. The passover was to be fulfilled in the kingdom of God; and of the fruit of the vine He would in no wise drink henceforth till the kingdom of God come. It is the sign of the passing away of the old system.

Next, the Lord institutes the new thing in a foundation sign of it. “And having taken a loaf with thanksgiving he broke and gave [it] to them, saying, This is my body that is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup after having supped, saying, This cup [is] the new covenant in my blood, that is poured out for you.” (Ver. 19, 20.) It was a better deliverance on an infinitely better ground, as the cup was the new covenant in His blood, not the old legal one guarded by penal sanction in the blood of accompanying victims. What immeasurable love breathes in “my body that is given for you,” “the new covenant in my blood,” &c. It will be observed that Luke presents a more personal bearing of the Lord's words here, as in the great discourse of chapter 6. Matthew gives rather the dispensational change in consequence of a rejected Messiah.

“But, behold, the hand of him that delivereth me up [is] with me on the table; for indeed the Son of man goeth according to that which is determined, but woe to that man by whom he is delivered up! And they began to question together among themselves which of them could be he that was about to do this. And there was also a strife among them which of them should be accounted greater: but he said to them, The kings of the nations rule over them, and those that exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But ye [shall] not [be] so; but let the greater among you be as the younger, and the leader as he that serveth. For which [is] greater, he that is at table or he that serveth? [Is] not he that is at table? But I am among you as he that serveth. But ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint to you as my Father appointed to me a kingdom, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Ver. 21 - 30.) The Lord announces the betrayer's presence at that last feast of love. How perfect the grace which knew but never once by behavior made known the guilty soul! how consummate the guile of him who had so long heartlessly companied with such a Master! Now when His death in all its ineffable fragrance and power for them is before Him and as a sign little then appreciated by them, He tells out the sad secret which lay on His heart, a bitter burden He felt for him who as yet felt it not at all. And the disciples question who it could be, but none the less strive for the greater place. How humbling for the twelve, especially at such a moment in presence of Him, of the supper before them, and of the cup before Him alone! But such is flesh, in saints of God most of all offensive when allowed to work. No good thing dwells in it. Tenderly but in faithful love the Lord contrasts the way of men with that which He would cultivate and sanction in His own. The condescension of patronage is too low for saints. It is of earth for nature's great ones. He would have them to serve as Himself. In a ruined wretched world what can the love that seeks not its own do but serve? The greatest is he that goes down the lowest in

service. It is Christ: may we be near Him! Then He turns to what they had been in view of His disposal of the kingdom according to the Father's mind, and puts the highest value on all they had done. Matchless love surely this which could thus interpret His calling and keeping them as their continuing with Him in His temptation! But such is Jesus to us as to them, while in the day of glory each will have his place, yet all according to the same rich unjealous grace.

But the Lord makes a special appeal to one while warning all of a common danger. “Simon, Simon, behold Satan has begged for you to sift as wheat, but I have besought for thee that thy faith fail not; and thou, when once turned back, stablish thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both unto prison and unto death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow to-day till thou hast thrice denied that thou knowest me.” (Ver. 31 - 34.) Love not only brings into what itself possesses, but holds out and provides against the greatest possible strain where every appearance must condemn the object loved. Yet was it no lack of love that exposed Peter to the sin of denying his Master, but his self-confidence made shipwreck of his faithfulness. Through grace alone his faith failed not utterly. We see it not only in the tears of bitter self-reproach, but yet more in the earnest ardor after the Lord which went into the tomb whither John had outrun him. But we see the grace of the Lord, which here supplicated beforehand, still shining after all in the message to the “disciples and Peter,” in His early appearing to him by himself, and in his later more than reinstatement when all his failure was traced and judged to the root. What can we express but our shame and sorrow that such is nature even in the most zealous, when put to the test and above all when the word of the Lord is practically slighted? If we believe not His admonition of our own weakness, we are on the point of proving its truth, perhaps to the uttermost.

Notes on Luke 22:35-71

The Lord now prepares the disciples for the great change at hand. He contrasts their past experience with that which was coming. “And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse and scrip and sandals, did ye lack anything? And they said, Nothing. He said therefore to them, But now he that hath a purse, let him take [it] and likewise his scrip, and he that hath none, let him sell his garment and buy a sword. For I say to you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among lawless [men], for also the things concerning me have an end.” Thus the changes to them depended on Him. Jesus was about to be given up to the hands of wicked men; the protection thrown around Him, as around them, was now to be withdrawn. Clearly this is no question of atonement though of suffering and rejection in which others could have communion, as the apostle expressly teaches in Phil. 3 Jesus was despised and rejected of men, yea, given up to it finally of God, besides being for us made sin which belongs to Him alone.

Little did the disciples understand their Master. Indeed flesh and blood can never relish suffering, more especially suffering such as His where man proves his vileness and opposition to God to the uttermost. Even saints are slow to enter in. They necessarily feel the value of atonement; for otherwise they have no standing-place, not even a well-grounded hope of escape as sinners before God. “And they said, Lord, behold, here [are] two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough” —a correction of their thought, however mild. For had it been a question of the literal use of the sword in self-defense, two must have proved a wholly inadequate means of protection. The Lord had employed the sword, purse, and scrip as symbolic of ordinary means on which the disciples were henceforward to be thrown, but certainly not to abandon personally the ground of grace in presence of evil, even to the last degree of insult and injury, on which He had insisted at the beginning of their call and charge as apostles. No more however is said; the true sense is left for that day when the Holy Spirit being given would lead them into all the truth. Alas! Christendom has lost the faith of the Spirit's presence as well as the certainty of the truth, into which grace alone has been leading back a feeble remnant as they wait for the return of the Lord Jesus. Truths such as this cannot be appreciated unless We go forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach.

But now we approach what is still more solemn and sacred ground. “And going out he proceeded according to custom to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said to them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and, having knelt down, he prayed, saying, Father, if thou wilt, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.” It was indeed no wonted occasion even for Him, but the awful moment of the enemy's return who had departed for a season after his old defeat in the wilderness. But this garden was to behold an equally decisive defeat of the enemy as became the Second man, the Lord from heaven. It was no longer Satan seeking to draw away from the path of obedience by what was desirable in the world. He sought now, if he could not drag Jesus out of the path of obedience, to fill Him with alarm and to kill Him in it. But Jesus shrank from no suffering and weighed before God all that was before Him.

He watched and prayed and suffered being tempted. The disciples failed to pray and entered into temptation, so that nothing but grace delivered them.

The Holy Spirit does not give us the detail of the three prayers of the Lord as in Matthew, but rather a summary of all in one. In both we see His dependence in prayer and His tried but perfect submission to the will of His Father. Here however we have what is characteristic of our evangelist, both in the angelic succor which was sent Him, and in the bloody sweat that accompanied His conflict. It is well known that many fathers, Greek and Latin, have cast a doubt upon verses 43 and 44. “And an angel appeared to him from heaven strengthening him. And being in conflict he prayed more earnestly and his sweat became as clots of blood falling down upon the earth.” Several of the more ancient MSS indeed also omit them, as the Alexandrian, Vatican, and others, besides ancient versions; but they are amply verified by external witnesses, and the truth taught has the closest affinity to the line which Luke was given to take up. The true humanity and the holy suffering of the Lord Jesus stand out here in the fullest evidence.

Here again however, observe that the suffering differs essentially from atonement. For not only does He speak out of the full consciousness of His relationship with the Father, but He has also the angelic help which would have been wholly out of season when forsaken of God because of sin-bearing. All was most real. It is not meant that His sweat fell merely like great drops of blood, but that it became this as it were; that is, the sweat was so tinged with blood which exuded from Him in His conflict that it might have seemed pure blood. “And rising up from prayer he came to his disciples and found them sleeping from grief. And he said to them, Why sleep ye? Rise up and pray that ye enter not into temptation.” We shall see presently the result of their sleeping instead of praying. Not only did the absent Judas betray, but all forsook, and the most prominent of the three chosen to be nearest the Lord denied Him with oaths, denied Him thrice before the cock crew. They entered into temptation and utterly failed. We can only be kept by watching and prayer. Evil is not judged aright save in the presence of God. There the light detects and His grace is sufficient, even for us. But man has no strength against Satan. It must be His light and His grace; without the power of His might we enter only to dishonor our Master. Leaning upon Him the weakest of saints is more than conqueror. Thus only is the devil resisted, and he flees from us.

“As he was yet speaking, lo, a crowd and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss him. And Jesus said to him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” How gracious, but how terrible the words of Jesus to him who knew his Master and his Master's haunts enough to deliver Him thus to His enemies! “And those around him, seeing what was about to happen, said, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And a certain one of them smote the bondman of the high priest and took off his right ear. And Jesus answering said, Suffer thus far, and having touched the ear he healed him.” He could still work miraculously by the Holy Ghost. Indeed we know from John 18 that He could and did cast them all down to the ground by the power of His name; but here it is the witness of His grace to man, even at such a moment, rather than of His own personal majesty, who was about to be cast off and to suffer on the cross. Each incident is of the deepest interest and eminently suited to the Gospel in which it occurs.

“And Jesus said unto the chief priests and captains of the temple and elders who had come against him, Have ye come out as against a robber with swords and sticks? When I was day by day with you in the temple, ye did not stretch out your hands against me; but this is your hour and

the power of darkness.” (Ver. 52, 53.) God was giving up the Lord Jesus to men before He was forsaken in accomplishing the work of redemption.

“And having apprehended him, they led and introduced him into the house of the high priest. And Peter followed afar off. And having lit a fire in the midst of the court, and sat down together, Peter sat among them. And a certain maid having seen him sitting by the light fixed her eyes on him and said, And he was with him. But he denied him, saying, Woman, I do not know him. And after a short while another seeing him, said, And thou art of them. But Peter said, Man, I am not. And after the distance of about one hour, another strongly maintained, saying, In truth he also was with him, for he is a Galilean too. But Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he was yet speaking, a cock crew. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he said to him, Before the cock crows to-day, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter going forth without wept bitterly.” (Ver. 54 - 62.) We see here the worthlessness of natural courage in the saint and the weakness of one's own love when relied on. Only God can sustain, and this too in exercised distrust of self, when the word is received by faith and the heart abides in dependence on God. A servant girl frightens an apostle, and the first false step involves others deeper and farther if possible from God, for what is our consistency if we be not consistent with the cross? The unbelief which refuses the humiliating warning of the Lord works out the accomplishment of His word. But the Lord never fails, and as He had not in faithfulness beforehand, so, after the fact, He does not hide His face from Peter, but turns round and looks at him. His own sufferings did not pre-occupy the Lord, so as to forget Peter, and Peter's guilt and shame in no way turned the Lord from him but rather drew His look towards him. “And Peter remembered the word of the Lord,” and his sorrow worked repentance, though the Lord carried it farther still, as we know, after He rose from the dead; for the root of evil must be judged as well as the fruit, if we are to be fully blessed and would know how to help others, as Peter was called to do and did.

Then follows the sad tale of men's insolence and blasphemy towards the Lord. “And the men that held him, mocked him, striking him; and covering him up they asked, saying, Prophesy who it is that struck thee. And many other things they spake blasphemously against him.” (Ver. 63 - 68.) Such was the rude evil of the underlings. The chiefs might act with more seeming decorum, but with no less unbelief and scorn of His claims. “And when it was day, the elderhood of the people, both chief priests and scribes, were gathered together, and led him into their council, saying, If thou art the Christ, tell us. But he said to them, If I tell you, ye will not at all believe; and if I should ask, ye will not at all answer. But henceforth shall the Son of man be seated on the right hand of the power of God. And they all said, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, Why have we need of witness further? For we have ourselves heard from his mouth.” (Ver. 66 - 71.) There was lying testimony brought against Jesus; but it failed. He was condemned for the truth, which man believed not. He declines speaking of His Messianic dignity, which was already rejected by man, and was about to be replaced by His position as Son of man on the right hand of the power of God. If they all infer that He is the Son of God, say it or gainsay it whoever will, He acknowledged and denied not, but acknowledged that truth which is eternal life to every believer.

Notes on Luke 23:1-38

We have next the scene before the Roman governor. Heartless as he was and with little conscience, still willfulness characterizes the Jews. “And the whole multitude of them rose up and led him to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this [man] perverting our nation and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a king.” (Ver. 1,2.) Thus they who were really impatient under the Roman yoke and breaking out from time to time into turbulent opposition were here forward in the pretense of loyalty. But this was a little thing compared with the blindness of unbelief which denied their own Messiah. Nor could any charge be more false. He had departed from themselves when they wished to make him a king. He had only just before expressly enjoined that they should render to Caesar the things that were Caesar's, no less than to God the things of God.

It will be observed that when “Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? he answering said to him, Thou sayest.” (Ver. 3.) The Lord acknowledged the authority that was ordained of God, however He might suffer from it. This is the true safe-guard of faith, let the authority be ever so faithless. We are called to walk in His steps. We are not of the world even as He is not of the world. By and by we shall reign with Him and shall judge the world, we shall judge even angels. The more are we called above the world in spirit to be subject to God's authority in it: only we must obey God rather than man and therefore suffer where His will and the world's authority come into collision. So the Lord here witnesses a good confession and submits to all the consequences.

But it is striking to observe that the Lord's confession of the truth (for indeed He was the King of the Jews) did not damage His cause before the Roman governor but with His own people, blinded against the truth. On the contrary “Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, I find no fault in this man. But they insisted, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee as far as this.” (Ver. 4-6.) Satan was pushing the incredulity of Israel to the lust extremity. It is always so finally with his victims. Christ, in the fullness of His grace and truth, thoroughly brings out what is in man, because He brings in God.

“But Pilate having heard of Galilee asked if the man were a Galilean. And having learned that he was of Herod's jurisdiction he remitted him to Herod who himself also was at Jerusalem in these days. And when Herod saw Jesus he rejoiced exceedingly, for he was wishing for a long time to see him, because of hearing [much] of him. And he hoped to see some sign done by him, and he questioned him in many words, but he answered him nothing.” (Ver. 6-9.) The silence of the Lord was a very solemn condemnation of Herod, while it gave the fullest opportunity for the rude insolence of his followers as well as of the accusers. “And the chief priests and the scribes stood and accused him vehemently. And Herod with his troops set him at naught and mocked him, and having arrayed [him] with a splendid robe, sent him back to Pilate.” The Spirit of God does not fail to notice here the moral peculiarity of the transaction. There had been a feud between the Governor and the King, but “Pilate and Herod became friends with one another that very day, for

they had been previously at enmity with each other." (Ver. 12.) Thus it is against Christ that Satan contrives to make his union in the world, as the grace of God does by Him and for Him.

The closing hour approaches. "And Pilate having called together the rulers and the chief priests said unto them, Ye have brought to me this man as turning away the people, and, behold, I, having made examination in your presence, find no fault in this man, as to the things of which ye accuse him; nay, nor yet Herod, for I remitted you unto him, and, behold, nothing deserving of death is done by him. Having chastised him therefore, I will release him." (Ver. 13 - 16.) Such was the boasted equity of the Roman empire, of man. There was no doubt of the innocence of Jesus. The charges of the people had been proved to be fictitious. The hardened judge could not condemn but acquit as a matter of justice. He was willing to concede something to please the people, but he was anxious to release the prisoner. Whether the 17th verse be genuine or not, there can be no doubt from what follows that it was the custom to release a prisoner at this time. Several excellent authorities omit the verse, as the Alexandrian, the Vatican, the Parisian uncials (62 and 63), with several very ancient versions, whilst others change its position. Nevertheless the Sinai, with the mass of MSS. and some of the best versions, contains it. On the whole the balance seems in its favor, as it also would be harsh to act upon an unexplained custom. "Now he was obliged to release one for them at [the] feast. But they cried in full crowd, saying, Away with this [man] and release Barabbas for us; who for a certain tumult made in the city and murder had been cast into prison." Such was the choice of man, such the value of their loyalty to Caesar, such their care for God's respect to the life of a fellow creature made in His image. A rebel and a murderer preferred to Jesus!

"Again therefore Pilate addressed [them], wishing to release Jesus. But they kept calling in reply, Crucify, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil has he done? I have found no cause of death in him. Having chastised him therefore, I will release [him]. But they were urgent with loud voices begging that he might be crucified; and the voices of them and of the high priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that what they begged should take place, and released him that for tumult and murder had been cast into prison for whom they begged, and delivered up Jesus to their will." (Ver. 20 - 25.)

Thus all the world was proved guilty before God, but none were so deeply involved as those whom it least became. The people who had the law fell under its curse, not merely because they were disobedient to its requirements, but worst of all, because they were resolutely bent on the rejection of their own Messiah to death, and this, when the heathen sought to let Him go. Such is what the world was proved to be, where the reality came out through Him who alone was real, the Holy and the True. No room for boasting more: there never was, in truth, but now it is evident and impossible to be denied by him who rightly reads the word of God.

Nevertheless the Spirit of God gives us more. "And as they led him away, they laid hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, coming from [the] country, and put on him the cross to bear [it] after Jesus." (Ver. 28.) There was no restraint now, but if man were lawless, God remembered Simon another day, and his sons are not forgotten in the record of life. (Compare Mark 15 and Rom. 16) It may be a terrible truth that God looks down from heaven and beholds the children of men, and sees none so worthy of reprobation as those who misuse selfishly the highest privileges of His mercy; but when we know Him, or rather, are known of Him, it is not the least of our comforts that

God takes account of everything and knows how to reply in His grace to those who have power on the side of their oppressor.

It is not that man lacks feeling: but feeling without faith comes to nothing, no less than mind, or authority, or position, were it the highest in the religious world. The affections of nature may be sweet but never can be trusted to stand firm to Christ, however moved for a season. “And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who wailed and lamented him. And Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep over yourselves and over your children; for, behold, days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed the barren and wombs which bare not and breasts which suckled not. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall upon us, and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be in the dry?” Jesus knew what was in man, despised not the feelings of the women, but trusted Himself to none. Tenderly He warns them of that which man believes not till it comes, for it is a part of man's wisdom to suppose the future uncertain in the words of God, because it is uncertain to man. Fools and slow of heart to believe what the Lord said no less than their own prophets! Had they believed them, they had not refused Him. Had they received Him, days of heaven had dawned upon the earth, on Israel especially, and all the glorious visions of His reign had been accomplished. But Israel was ruined and guilty, man fallen and lost, and all in such a state reject Jesus. Therefore God works out deeper counsels by the cross of Jesus in heaven and for heaved, now testified by the Holy Ghost sent down here below. These are the counsels and the ways of His grace, but His warnings stand equally and His word must be accomplished to the letter. Soon had they an accomplishment, though I do not say that there may not be more in store at the end of the age, when those who refused the true Christ that came in His Father's name shall receive the Antichrist coming in his own. And the overflowing scourge shall pass through and the apostate Jews be trodden down by it. The Messiah was the green tree, the Jews the dry. If He because of their wickedness came into such sorrow, what was not reserved to them for their own? For, whatever His grace, God judges righteously.

“And two others, malefactors, were led with him to be put to death.” (Ver. 32.) Jesus was spared no insult. As He was the song of the drunkard, so He made His grave with the wicked. “And when they came to the place called Skull, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left. And Jesus said, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” It is not here, as in Matthew and Mark, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” It is the expression of His grace towards sinners, not of His abandonment by God in accomplishing the work of atonement; and it is of the deepest interest to see that, as the answer to the one came in resurrection-power and heavenly glory, so of the other in the proclamation of forgiveness by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Therefore Peter could preach (Acts 3:17). “And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as also your rulers. But those things which God had showed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent therefore and be converted for the blotting out of your sins, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,” &c. But here again we have to wait. The message of forgiveness was refused, a remnant indeed believed, received forgiveness, and rose into better blessings; but the mass pursued their heedless unbelief to this day and will sink into deeper darkness. Yet assuredly light shall spring up in the darkest hour and the remnant of that day shall be brought out of their sins and ignorance alike to be made the strong nation when He appears to

reign in glory.

The horrors of the crucifixion in its detail come before us. “And parting his garments they cast lots. And the people stood beholding, and the rulers also with them sneered, saying, He saved others, let him save himself if this is the Christ, the chosen of God. And the soldiers also were mocking him, coming up, offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou art the king of the Jews, save thyself. And there was also an inscription over him, The king of the Jews [is] this.” (Ver. 35 - 38.) In every respect the word of God was accomplished, and the ways of men laid bare. It was no question of a class and its peculiar habits. High and low, the governed and the governors, civil and military, all played their part; and the part of all was enmity against God revealing His love and goodness in His Christ. The folly too of man was apparent no less than grace in presence of his wickedness. It was because He was the king of the Jews, as none other had been or can be besides, that He saved not Himself, and can therefore send out the message of salvation now and bring salvation by and by. Little did man, in that day, weigh the import of that which was written over Him in Greek and Roman and Hebrew letters, “This is the king of the Jews.” If man wrote it in scorn, God will give it all its own force—God who overrules the will and the wrath of man to praise Him. Through the crucified, God will bless the world by and by, Jew and Gentile, high and low, even as His grace gathers out from it now.

Notes on Luke 23:39-54

Here God would give a testimony of His grace to man, suited to His Son and suited to the cross. Hence He was pleased to choose the most hopeless circumstances in the view of nature, and even while delivering a soul, up to this steeped in guilt and degradation, in the agonies of death, and with the forebodings of a judgment incomparably more solemn, even as it is eternal, to secure in the fullest way His own immutable character, and to manifest in practical righteousness the ungodly one whom His grace had justified by faith. All this and much more may be seen in the history which our evangelist alone gives of the converted robber.

“Now one of the hanged malefactors reviled him, Art not thou the Christ? Save thyself and us. But the other in answer rebuking him said, Dost not even thou fear God, because thou art in the same judgment? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due requital for what we have done, but this [man] hath done nothing amiss. And be said to Jesus, Remember me when thou shalt come in thy kingdom. And he said to him, Verily, I say to thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Ver. 39-43.)

There is no sufficient reason to suppose that the robber was converted before he was crucified or even before he had joined his fellow in reviling the Lord. The earlier Gospels give us ground to believe that both were thus guilty, that the rejected Jesus was exposed to this as well as to every other draft of the bitter cup. I am aware that general phrases may be used, but I see no sufficient ground to doubt that each of the robbers did thus join in insulting the Lord of glory. “Why should we hesitate? Is it because the conversion of one of them might seem too sudden? a reason in my judgment wholly insufficient. Conversion is usually if not always sudden, though the manifestation of it may not be. The entrance of the soul into enjoyed peace may be long delayed and may demand the removal of many hindrances. This is rarely done in a very short time; but it is wholly distinct from conversion, and the two things should not be confounded as they too often are. Conversion is the soul's turning to God through a believing reception of the Lord Jesus; the enjoyment of peace depends on the soul's submission to the righteousness of God when the redemption-work of the Lord Jesus is seen by faith. Hence there are many souls who are truly converted because they have bowed to Jesus, who nevertheless are often cast down and unhappy and burdened, because they do not equally see peace made by the blood of His cross. Where there is the simple reception of the gospel the converted soul passes so soon into peace that one can well understand how the two things get confounded in the minds of many; as many others, on the contrary, confound them, because, unconsciously slighting conversion, which frequently plunges the soul in deep exercise and trouble of conscience before God, they only take into account that complete relief and peace which the gospel ministers.

Certain it is that the malefactor was now converted who rebuked the sin of him who persisted in reviling the Lord. On the other hand there may be the surest reviling of the Savior without one word which man as such would consider blasphemous. In this very instance the impenitent robber simply said, “Art not thou the Christ? Save thyself and us.” It was a thought, it was language not

unnatural to man's mind under such circumstances. It was blasphemy to the mind of the Spirit. That the promised center and medium of every blessedness for the earth, for man, and for God here below, should die upon a cross did seem beyond measure strange; that He who had all power to save others, not to speak of Himself, should be pleased so to die, was naturally incredible. Man does not understand the depth of the humiliation of Jesus any more than the grace of God, or of his own utter need as measured and met by both.

But it is deeply interesting to see that a new born soul discerns according to God, and this instinctively in virtue of the new nature where no formal teaching had been given or received. The converted robber at once warns his impenitent fellow of his sin, sets before him his danger, confesses his own natural state, his own life, his own ways no less evil than the other's, and in the most serious and feeling way vindicates the glory of the Lord Jesus. “Dost not even thou,” said he in a reply of rebuke, “fear God?” The death which was before his spirit gave the gravest tone to it and made him speak out with evident anxiety, and this not so much for himself personally as in compassion for the reviler, however he might feel his sin. There they were, “in the same judgment,” as a fact, but how different in God's eyes!

And faith gave him to estimate this aright—the crucifixion of a malefactor unrepentant, of another repentant, and of Him whose grace drew out the repentance of the latter and hardened the former to the uttermost because he believed not. There is no true fear of God apart from faith; but faith produces not only hope and confidence in God, but also the only genuine sense of what it is to be a sinful man in His sight, and hence the only real humility. Such was the present state of this converted robber. Nothing shows it better than that he should so forget himself as practically to preach to the reviler, to set before him his sin and his danger, to hold up Jesus Christ the righteous. He does not stop to think of the singularity of such words from his own mouth, that he, a wretched guilty degraded malefactor should appear to presume to speak of God to man, to rebuke a fellow-sinner, to maintain unsullied the name of Him whom the highest authorities had just condemned to die on the cross. This in truth is the humility of faith, not the mere human lowliness of trying to think as ill of ourselves as we can, but the divinely given sense that we are too bad to think of ourselves at all, because of the perfection we have seen in the Savior, the Son of God, the man Christ Jesus.

Not that this self-forgetfulness produces the smallest unwillingness to confess our own sins, but on the contrary makes us free to acknowledge them fully, as we see in the words “And we indeed justly, for we receive the just requital for what we have done, but this man hath done nothing amiss.” The converted man owns himself as bad and as justly condemned as the unconverted one, but lie takes all care to exempt Jesus from the common character of fallen man. “This man hath done nothing amiss.” How had he learned it? We know not that he had ever listened or ever seen Him before; but we may be certain that never before had he such a knowledge as would warrant such language. Was he rash then? He was taught of God, he had beheld the Lamb of God. On the cross he had seen enough, heard enough, to be certain that there was hanged beside him the long-expected Messiah who should save His people from their sins and blot out their iniquities as a thick cloud, who should make reconciliation for iniquity and bring in everlasting righteousness. As for himself, his wicked life was ending, the forfeit of his crimes, due to the outraged majesty of the laws he had broken. But if there was a just sentence of man in his case, there was forgiveness with God that He might be feared; and the spotless dying Lamb had given

him to realize both his own sins and God's holiness as never before.

Without a particle of high-mindedness, he felt that the opinion, yea the solemn judgment of man was nothing in divine things. The high priest had treated the claim of Jesus as blasphemy; the Roman governor had given him up, knowing he was innocent but afraid of displeasing Caesar, to the murderous will of the Jews. But grace had made single the eye of the converted robber; and his whole body was full of light. He could answer for Jesus as one that was known thoroughly. “This [man] hath done nothing amiss.” It was contrary to all made experience, not only to what he knew of himself and of others known to him but to all ever reported since the world began. Yet it was not more sure that others were sinners than that Jesus was not. It was faith, and exactly such a confession of Jesus as glorified Him at that moment when in the eyes of the world at the lowest point, despised and rejected of men. No angel was here to comfort, no apostle to confess who He the Son of man was. If all else had forsaken Jesus and fled, the converted robber from the cross was there to confess the crucified Lord, in terms hardly hoard before but truly adapted in the wisdom of God to give the lie to unbelief. The God who opened the lips of babes and sucklings a few days before to set forth His praise wrought in the hanged robber with yet greater power now.

“And he said to Jesus, Remember me when thou shalt come in thy kingdom.” An admirable prayer and in beautiful keeping with the whole truth of the position. It is not what we might have thought at first sight suitable to such a case. The Lord described a poor publican saying acceptably to God, Have mercy upon me, the sinner that I am. The converted robber here has no doubt of the Lord's mercy. He does not ask for a part in His kingdom, but to be remembered by Jesus then. What! He, a robber, to be remembered by the King of kings and Lord of lords? Even so. He was right, and those who would judge him wrong are so themselves. They enter not, as he did, into the glory of Jesus, who, as He calls His own sheep by name now, will not forget the last any more than the first then in the perfection of His love. He prays to be remembered when Jesus should come in His kingdom, for he at least believes in the kingdom of the Son of man. Others might set up the inscription without faith over the Crucified, but the name and kingdom of the Crucified were inscribed on the converted robber's heart.

Remark also how he was guided of the Spirit, not more concerning Christ and His ways and character than about His kingdom. Truly be was taught of God. Some looked only for the kingdom of Messiah here, others since conceive that Jesus is gone into a kingdom far away. He prays to be remembered when Jesus shall come in His kingdom; for, as our evangelist shows in the parable (chap. xix. 11, &c), He is gone to a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return. He will be invested with the kingdom on high, as also is shown by the prophet Daniel; but He will surely come in His kingdom instead of merely closing all things here below. Not so He will come in His kingdom. He shall reign over all peoples and tribes and tongues. Yet it is no mere earthly realm, but the kingdom of God, consisting of heavenly things us well as of earthly (John 3:12); nor is it a kingdom of the Spirit, though the Spirit makes it good now in those who believe, but a real personal kingdom of Jesus; and the converted robber, with all saints, will be remembered when He shall come in His kingdom. The once robber will surely have his place in that day. He knew whom he had believed and was persuaded that He is able to keep what he had committed to Him against that day.

But the prayer of faith, while it surely has its answer according to the measure of our soul's confidence in divine love according to the word, has its answer also according to the depths of divine grace and truth far beyond our measure. so it was now. “And he said to him, Verily, I say to thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (ver. 43). If the prayer of the robber was admirable, much more was the reply of Jesus, a reply ushered in with special emphasis, not for him only to whom it was said, but for us also who believe in Him that died and rose again for us. The blessings of accomplished redemption are not deferred till that day. They are true now whether we live or die. “We are the Lord's, and we know it; we are bought with a price; we are washed from our sins in His blood. By Him the Father has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Such is the position, such the standing, such the assured known privilege of the believer by virtue of redemption. The converted robber was the first soul to taste of this rich and fresh mercy. The Lord assures him not merely of His remembrance in the kingdom, but of being that very day with Himself in paradise. What a testimony to the all-overcoming and immediate power of His redemption! A robber so purged by His blood as to be that very day with the Son of God, and this, not in heaven only, but in its brightest highest seats. For such is paradise.

Believer, heed not those who may say that the Lord, separate from the body, abode in gloom till His resurrection. Not so. His spirit was shut up in no prison, but commended by Himself to the Father; and where He is, there too are His saints. Doubtless He had not yet ascended; for ascension, like resurrection, is predicated of the body; but His spirit went to paradise, and as Adams paradise of old was the choicest spot of an unfallen earth where all was very good, so is the paradise of God the choicest of heaven. Hence the Apostle Paul, in 2 Cor. 12, connects it with the third heaven; and the Apostle John holds it out as the promised scene of glory where the overcomer shall by and by eat of the tree of life. No believer can conceive that this will be a place of dimness and doubt and restraint, but of divine and everlasting glory through the Second man, the last Adam.

In this paradise then the Lord declares that the converted malefactor should be with Him to-day, so completely were his sins blotted out by blood, so rendered capable himself, by and in that new nature which grace gives the believer. Instruction most weighty for us, and a hope full of glory, for it is the present fruit of redemption and the gift of grace to every believer. It was not assuredly his own act of dying which had this virtue for the malefactor, but the death of the Lord; and this is as free and full for every Christian as for him to whose faith it was then made known. To us now it is proclaimed in the gospel. Shame on those who profess to believe the gospel, but deny its most precious and eternal blessings. Nor is it merely the dark and queen-like Circe who cheats her victims and destroys them with poisoned cup, and will surely find her plagues from God in one day. How few among those who have cast off her thralldom enjoy the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free! How many with an open Bible overlook the plainest lessons where there is no veil, but man stands immediately confronted with the light of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ! Anything short of this is not the true grace of God, is not the gospel of the glory of Christ, but the darkening effect of that unbelief, so prevalent in Christendom, which has, as it were, sewn up the veil again with God at a distance within, and man without wistfully looking for a deliverance as if the Deliverer had not already come and finished the work of redemption. For the soul salvation is come: for the body, no doubt, it waits till Jesus come again. But this is another matter on which we

need not inquire more now.

Nor did God permit that so stupendous an event as the death of His Son should leave unaffected that world which He had made, or that legal system which He had set up by Moses in the midst of His earthly people. “And it was now about [the] sixth hour, and darkness was over the whole land till [the] ninth hour, and the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and, having said this, he expired.” (Vers. 44 - 46.) And the testimony was not without immediate effect on, the officer in command at the crucifixion. “Now the centurion, seeing what took place, glorified God, saying, Certainly this man was righteous.” (Ver. 47.) But the mass were filled with the sense of having committed themselves to they knew not what. “And all the crowds that came together for that sight, having beheld the things done, returned beating their breasts.” (Ver. 48.) Not that some were not there who prized His ministry and were attached to His person, but far off in that of man's shame and guilt and of Satan's power. “And all his acquaintance stood afar off, and women that accompanied him from Galilee, seeing these things.” (Ver. 49.)

But God used that very day and His grace who was thus put to death to bring out to distinct association with His name a good and righteous man. If Jesus in His life of rejection had not Joseph openly in His train, the death of the cross made him bold while others fled or stood aloof. “And, behold, a man named Joseph, being a counselor and a good and righteous man (he had not consented to their counsel and deed), from Arimathea a city of Judea, who waited for the kingdom of God, himself went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus; and, having taken down, rolled in fine linen and placed him in a rock-hewn tomb where none had ever been laid. And it was preparation day, and sabbath dusk was drawing on.” (Vers. 50 - 54.) On their affection, not without darkness a brighter day was soon to dawn.

Chapter 140

Notes on Luke 24:1-27

The sabbath day had interrupted the loving labors of the women with their spices. “On the first day of the week, very early [at deep dawn] in the morning” they returned. (Ver. 1.) Love is usually quick-sighted; it might have the sense of coming danger where others were dull; it might have the presentiment of death where others saw triumph and the effects of burning zeal for God and His house. None but God could anticipate the resurrection. Their labor was bootless, as far as their own object was concerned, whatever might be the reckoning of grace. In these scenes of profoundest interest Jesus alone is perfection.

“And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher; and entering in they found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, in their perplexity about it, that behold two men stood by them in shining raiment; and as they were fearful and bending their faces to the ground, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living One among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spoke to you being yet in Galilee, saying, That the Son of man must be delivered up to the hands of sinners and be crucified and rise the third day.” (Ver. 2-7.) But men and even saints are dull to appreciate the resurrection; it brings God too near to them, for of all things none is more characteristic of Him than raising the dead, and most of all resurrection from among the dead must be learned by divine teaching as only He could reveal it of His grace. For this breaks in upon the whole course of the world and displays a power superior to nature, triumphant over Satan, which delivers even from divine judgment. Here it was the deliverer Himself: often had He told the disciples of it; He had named even the third day. Yet those who were most faithful, as they understood not at the time, so remembered not afterward till the fact had taken place and heavenly messengers recalled His words to them afresh. “And they remembered his words and returning from the sepulcher related all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now they were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the [mother] of James and the rest with them who told these things to the apostles; and these words appeared in their eyes as idle tales and they disbelieved them.”

The resurrection of the Savior is the foundation of the gospel; but it is the writers of the Gospels themselves who let us know both the ignorance and the obstinate unbelief of those who were afterward to be such devoted and honored witnesses of Jesus. Nor need the believer wonder. For if the gospel be the revelation of God's grace in Christ, it supposes the utter ruin and good-for-nothingness of man. Doubtless it is humbling, but this is wholesome and needed; no sinner can be too much humbled, no saint too humble; but no humiliation should weaken for a moment our sense of the perfect grace of God. The lesson must be learned by us in both ways; but of the two the sense of what we are as saints is far more profound than of sinners when just awakening to feel our real state before God. And this is one of the great differences between evangelicalism and the gospel of God. Evangelicalism owns the fallen and bad estate of man as well as the mercy of God in the Lord Jesus Christ; but it is altogether short when compared with God's standard, death and resurrection.

It owns that no power but that of Jesus can avail; but it is rather a remedy for the sick man than life in resurrection from the dead. It is the same reason which hinders saints now from appreciating themselves dead and risen with Jesus that made the disciples so slow to comprehend the words of Jesus beforehand and even to receive the fact of His own death and resurrection when accomplished.

We may observe too how little flesh could glory in what we have here before us. Out of weakness truly the women were made strong, while they who ought to have been pillars were weakness itself or worse. The words of the witnesses of the great truth seemed in their eyes a delirious dream, and they who were afterward to call men to the faith knew by their own experience, even as believers, what it is to disbelieve the resurrection. How this would enhance their estimate of divine grace! how call out patience no less than burning zeal in proclaiming the risen One to incredulous man! He who had so borne with them could bless any by Him who died for all.

“But Peter rising up ran to the sepulcher, and stooping down seeth the linen clothes lying alone, and went away home, wondering at what had happened.” (Ver. 12.) It is to John we are indebted for telling his part and God's analysis of his own inner man. “Then entered in therefore the other disciple also who came first to the tomb, and he saw and believed. For they had not yet known the scripture that he must rise from the dead.” “He saw and believed.” It was accepted on evidence: he no longer doubted that Jesus was risen; but it was founded upon his own sight of indisputable fact, not on God's word. “For as yet they knew not the scripture that he must rise from among the dead.” Still less was there any intelligent entrance into God's counsels about resurrection, any adequate understanding of its necessary and glorious place in the whole scope of the truth.

Next our evangelist gives us fully and with the most touching detail that appearing of the risen Lord which the Gospel of Mark sums up in a single verse, “After that he was manifested in another form to two of them as they walked going into the country.” (Chap. 16:12.)

Here I cannot doubt that it is a testimony to the walk of faith to which the Lord no longer known after the flesh would lead on His own. It is of no consequence who the unnamed one may have been. They were disciples staggered by the crucifixion of the Messiah, whom grace would comfort, founding their faith on the word and giving the saints to see Jesus unseen, whom they knew not while they looked on with natural eyes. One of the ancients, Epiphanius, conjectured the companion of Cleophas to be Nathaniel; among moderns the learned Lightfoot is confident that he was Peter. We may rest assured that both were mistaken, and that he could hot have been an apostle; for on returning to Jerusalem the two found “the eleven” among those gathered together. (Ver. 33.) The grand point of moment is the Lord's grace in leading them out of human thoughts to Himself as the object of all the scriptures, and this too as first suffering, then entering His glory.

“And behold, two of them were going on the same day unto a village, distant sixty stadia from Jerusalem, called Emmaus; and they conversed with one another about all these thing that had taken place. And it came to pass while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus himself drawing nigh went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, “What words [are] these which ye interchange with one another as ye walk and are downcast? And one of them named Cleopas answering said unto him, Dost thou sojourn alone in Jerusalem and knowest not the things come to pass in it in these days? And he said to them, What things? And they said to him, The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty

in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to [the] judgment of death and crucified him. But we hoped that he was the one who should redeem Israel; but then also, with all these things, this is the third day since these things came to pass. Yea, and some women from among us astonished us, having been early at the sepulcher, and not having found his body they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels who say that he is alive. And some of these with us went to the sepulcher and found even as the women also said; but him they saw not." (Ver. 13 - 24.)

How blessedly we see the way of the Lord Jesus drawing the hearts of men of God with the cords of a man! In resurrection He is still truly man, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," and adapts Himself to the heart, even though, as Mark lets us know in the verse already cited, their eyes were holden so that they should not recognize their Master: He had appeared "in another form." But He drew out their thoughts to lead them into the truth, in order that the very sorrows of His rejection which seemed so inexplicable to them and inconsistent with their expectations might be seen to be required by the divine word, and thus be a confirmation, not perilous, to their faith. They had looked for redemption by power; they now learn in His suffering to the uttermost, the Just for the unjust, redemption by blood; and not this only but a new life out of death, and superior to it, witnessed and established and given us in Him, Satan's power in sin and its consequences being vanquished forever, though for the present only a matter of testimony to the world and of enjoyment by the Holy Ghost to the believer.

"And he said unto them, O senseless and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets he expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Ver. 25 - 27.)

Such is the real secret of unbelief in believers. They fail because they do not believe all. Having but a partial view of divine truth they easily exaggerate here or there; and the rather as, not reading Christ throughout scripture, they are apt to shirk that rejection in the world now which disciples must accept or at least experience if they follow the Master, as surely as they will share His glory by and by. In the world, as it is, Christ could not but suffer: and every one that is perfected shall be as He. It is morally inevitable as due to the divine nature, as well as required by the word. It could not be otherwise, God being what He is, and man a sinner in thralldom to the enemy. But now He was dead and risen; and they must know Him thus, no longer according to their old and Jewish thoughts. We have Christ's own word for it, that He was in the mind of the Spirit in all the scriptures; and they are blind or blinded who see Him not in every part of the Bible. He is the truth, but it is only by the Holy Ghost we can find Him even there.

Chapter 141

Notes on Luke 24:28-53

A great lesson was taught during the walk to Emmaus. The accuracy and light of the scriptures showed, where men, and even believers, had overlooked much. The Jews had contented themselves with their general testimony to the hopes of the nation and the glory of the kingdom; but they had passed by, as the Lord proved, what was really deeper and now of the most essential importance—the sufferings of Christ, no less than the higher and heavenly part at any rate of the glories which should follow. The Lord condescended to draw the evidence from the written word of the Old Testament, rather than to take His stand upon present facts alone, or His own fresh revelations. But more was needed than the value of scripture thus proved, and this He supplies.

“And they drew near to the village where they were going, and he made as though he would go farther. And they forced him, saying, Abide with us, because it is towards evening and the day is sunk low. And he went in to abide with them. And it came to pass as he was at table with them, having taken the bread, he blessed, and, having broken, gave [it] to them. And their eyes were opened thoroughly, and they recognized him, and he disappeared from them.”

Not that the occasion was the Eucharist, but that He chose the act of breaking the bread, which He had previously made the symbol of His death for us, to be the moment and means of making Himself known to the two disciples. Thus was He to be known henceforward, no longer after the flesh, but dead and risen. Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.

Hence, too, the moment He was recognized, He vanished from them. It is no longer a visible Messiah, any more than a living one. He is only rightly seen by the Christian when unseen, yet He must have come and accomplished the mighty work of redemption first. For this purpose He had died, having glorified His Father on the earth and finished the work given Him to do. But this done, He does not yet take His old and predicted place on the throne of David. This awaits the day when Israel shall be brought back repentant and blessed in their own land, under His glorious reign, and all the earth shall reap the fruits to the praise and glory of God the Father. But, for the present, new things have come in. The Redeemer is gone to heaven, not come to Zion, and on earth He is known by His own disciples in the breaking of bread, His presence being exclusively known to faith.

“And they said to one another, Was not our heart burning in us, as he spoke to us on the way, as he opened to us the scriptures? And having risen up that hour, they returned to Jerusalem and found assembled the eleven and those with them, saying, The Lord is indeed risen and hath appeared to Simon. And they related the things on the way, and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.” (Ver. 32-35.) As the angel had expressly said, “Go tell his disciples and Peter” (Mark 16), so He appeared to Cephas (1 Cor. 15:5), then to the twelve. And so it is taught us here, “And while they were talking these things, he himself stood in their midst, and saith to them, Peace to you. But confounded and being frightened, they supposed they beheld a spirit. And he said to them, Why are ye troubled, and wherefore do reasonings rise in your heart? See

my hands and my feet that it is I myself; handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones even as ye see me have. And having said this he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they were yet unbelieving for joy and wondering, he said to them, Have ye anything to eat here? And they gave him part of a broiled fish [and of a honeycomb]. And having taken, he ate before them." It is the Lord Himself, risen from the dead but a real man, with hands and feet, capable of being handled and seen, not a spirit, but a spiritual body. Of this He gave the fullest proof, by proceeding to eat in their presence. As having a body He could eat; as having a spiritual body, He did not need to eat. Thus the resurrection of the body had its glorious attestation in His own person, the needed and weightiest possible support of their faith. Christianity gives an immensely enlarged scope to the body as well as the soul; for our bodies are now the temple of the Holy Ghost as surely as we are bought with a price, and exhortations to Christian holiness are founded on this one wondrous fact. Christ was the great exemplar as man; His body was the temple of God. We are only fitted for it through His redemption.

But, further, there is a message. "And he said unto them, These [are] the words which I spake unto you, while being yet with you, that all that must be fulfilled that is written in the law of Moses and prophets and psalms concerning me. Then he thoroughly opened their understanding to understand the scriptures, and said to them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and arise from [the] dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all the Gentiles beginning at Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but do ye settle in the city, until ye be endued with power from on high." (Ver. 44-49.) It was no new thing for the Lord to disclose His death and resurrection. He had been intimating it from before the transfiguration with increasing plainness; but they had heeded little a truth the need of which they did not feel for themselves and the moral glory of which for God they could not yet see. It was impossible to affirm with truth that it was a surprise to Jesus, or that law, psalms, and prophets had overlooked it, for on this truth of His death and resurrection hang the types as a whole, and this is the deepest burden of the prophets and of the psalmist. But now the suffering Christ was risen from among the dead, and repentance and remission of sins must be preached in His name to all the nations with Jerusalem as the starting-point. What wondrous grace! The nations had slain Him at Jerusalem's instigation, but God is active in His love above all the evil of man or of His own people.

It is well to note however that repentance is preached with remission of sins; nor can we exaggerate its importance if we do not misuse it to depreciate God's work of grace by Jesus Christ our Lord. Many, no doubt, misuse it, and more misunderstand it; but repentance abides a necessity for every soul which looks out of its sins to the Savior. He has finished the work by which comes remission of sins to the believer; but it is not the faith of God's elect where the soul overlooks its sinfulness, where the Holy Spirit does not produce self-judgment by the word of God applied to the conscience. Faith, without such a recognition and self-loathing and confession of our sins and state, is only intellectual and will leave us to lie down in sorrow when we most need solid ground and peace with God. Repentance, on the other hand, is no preparation for faith, but the accompaniment of it, and is alone real where faith is of God. It is deepened too, as faith sees more clearly.

It is well to note also that the promise of the Father is distinct from repentance and remission of sins, as it is again from the opening of the understanding to understand the scriptures. These the

disciples had already; they had to wait for the promise of the Father. Till the descent of the Spirit they were not endued with power from on high. Then the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven, wrought variously to the glory of the Lord.

“And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. And it came to pass, while he was blessing them, he was separated from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they, having done him homage, returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.” (Ver. 50-53.) To that spot outside Jerusalem Jesus had often gone. There was the family that He loved; thither He leads the disciples for the last time on earth, and thence, in the act of blessing, with uplifted hands, departed from them and is borne up into heaven—the risen man, the Lord from heaven. What a contrast with him who fell and all the earth through him, transmitting the curse to his sad descendants! Here it is not the first Adam, but the Last; and as is the Heavenly, such are they also who are heavenly. Filled with peace and joy what could they do but continually praise and bless God, who had, in the second Man, accomplished His own will, though at infinite cost, and perfected them that were sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all? They were, and are, perfected in perpetuity: no less a result than this satisfies God's estimate of the sacrifice of His Son. But assuredly the promise of the Father, when fulfilled, did not make the joy less or the praise more scanty. For He is not only power for testimony, but also for the soul, the One who gives us now the full taste of fellowship and causes worship to ascend to our God and Father in spirit and in truth. But of this the sequel of Luke, commonly called the Acts of the Apostles, is the due and full witness, and there, if the Lord will, we may enter into the detailed account which the Spirit has given us of His work, whether in individuals or in the Church to the glory of the Lord Jesus. Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Chapter 142

Man Not Only Lost Life but God

It was not only that man by sin lost natural life, but he lost God; and it is not only that Christ gives me now a new and better life than the tree of life could give, but He gives me God; He brings me to God and puts me in the presence of God. He makes known God to my soul, and gives me to be sure of His love.

Chapter 143

Notes on Matthew 1-3

Most readers [of this publication] already know, I suppose, that the Lord Jesus is presented to us in each of the four Gospels in a different point of view. It is only with one of the Gospels that I am going with God's help to occupy them at present; and if I here point out the character of each of the four, it is to put more in relief that of the Gospel taken up.

First of all the Gospels are divided into two classes: on one side, the Gospel of John; and, on the other, the first three called synoptic. This division is just. Every one in reading feels how different John is from the three others. I proceed to point out more precisely the difference.

In the first three Gospels Christ is presented to men, more particularly to the Jews, for the purpose of being received, and each of them closes with the account of His rejection.

It is not so with John. From the first chapter we find the Lord rejected. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not, He came to His own, and His own people received Him not. And in the following verses we see that it is grace which causes Him to be received by any. He is received by those who are born (not of the flesh, but) of God. In the entire Gospel the Jews are treated as reprobate, and the sovereign grace of the Father who draws and election are put forward. The sheep hear His voice. The Jews do not hear Him because they are not of His sheep. Moreover He is come from the Father, and come into the world. There is also no genealogy which goes up to the stock of promise in Abraham and David, no human genealogy which goes up to Adam (son) of God. It is God, the Word, who was with God and who was God; in whom was life, and the life the light of men, light shining in darkness which the darkness comprehended not; then the word made flesh, God manifested here below. And all agrees with that: no agony in Gethsemane, nor cry on the cross. When the moment arrived He delivers up His spirit, the hour being come to pass from this world to the Father. It is what He is that is presented to us in this Gospel; and, whether Jew or Gentile, we must be born anew. At the end the coming of the Holy Spirit, testimony before the world, is to replace Him among His own, for the world also is judged. John passes at the close to some ulterior manifestations of His glory on the earth in a manner designedly mysterious, and without any ascension scene. It is Himself, Son of man, but God manifested here below.

The first three Gospels, we have said, relate the manner in which Christ was presented to men to be received, and His rejection, then His resurrection; Mark and Luke add His ascension.

In Luke, after the most delicious picture of the little remnant faithful in the midst of the corruption of Israel, we find the Son of man and grace toward men by Him. The genealogy goes up to Adam; and He, the Second man, the last Adam, ascends to heaven from Bethany, blessing His own. The commission given to the apostles comes from heaven and embraces all, Jews and Gentiles.

In Mark we find the servant and prophet. This Gospel begins with His ministry, preceded by that of John the Baptist. We find at the end His meeting with the disciples in Galilee after His resurrection as in Matthew; but besides an appendix from verse 9, in which what is found in Luke and even in

John is briefly stated, that is to say, the heavenly side of these last events, and a commission given to the disciples more general and more universal. It carries salvation or condemnation to all the creation under heaven.

I have reserved Matthew for the last of the Gospels because I must occupy myself with it with more detail. It presents to us Emmanuel, the Messiah, object of the promises and the prophecies, Jehovah in the midst of Israel, Savior of His people but rejected as in Isa. 49 and 50, and His presence on earth replaced by the kingdom in mystery (chap, 13.), by the church (16.), the kingdom in glory (17.); but whilst insinuating the substitution of the church and of the kingdom, the principal subject is always the Lord in His relation with His earthly people, His meeting with His disciples after His resurrection in Galilee. They are sent to the Gentiles, and there is no ascension. Consequently we begin quite naturally with the Son of Abraham and the Son of David. Jesus is viewed as the Heir of the promises, as the Son of David. We find ourselves in the atmosphere of the thoughts and the hopes of Israel, not of Israel's thoughts and hopes according to God. The genealogy is traced in the line of Joseph from whom He inherited royalty according to the law. But His birth really of Mary presents facts evidently still more important being close to His person as far as manifested on the earth. Save to draw the attention of the reader to them, these facts, all-important though they be, are so well known and so simply related that I have hardly need to enlarge on them. His human nature, conceived in the womb of the Virgin, without spot or stain, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is a thing perfectly holy; also it is, according to the flesh, born of God whilst being the Seed of the woman, true man in this world. And not this only. He was to be named Jesus (Joshua, or Jahoshea), Jehovah the Savior, for He should save His people from their sins. As He was Jehovah, the people was His people.

Thus we have a man without sin and Jehovah manifested in flesh: a fact which is a proof of infinite grace, to which nothing is like, which abides alone in the annals of man as in the counsels of God. It is true that redemption was necessary, namely His death, in order that this fact should be available for men, and that the counsels of God should be accomplished. But all depended on the fact that God became man, that the Word was made flesh.

Never elsewhere had there been a man having perfectly knowledge of good and evil without sin, never divine perfection—God Himself—manifested in flesh, which will remain eternally true, and without which redemption itself could not have been accomplished. We shall find in all His life the perfect obedience of man, the perfect manifestation of God. Also He is owned of the prophecy in Isa. 7, Emmanuel, God with us! and Joseph gives Him the name which was assigned Him by the angel, the name of Jesus. Thus according to the testimony of God He has taken His pace in the midst of His people.

But the nations were to hope in the Branch out of the root of Jesse (Isa. 11:1, 10), and Magi from the east arrive to do homage to Him who is born King of the Jews. Already, from that tender age, must He know what it is to be rejected. The false king of Israel seeks to have Him put to death; and Joseph, directed peculiarly by God, takes Him to Egypt, whence He was to come up again, the true vine, to begin afresh the history of Israel as the green tree, the living vine; as when risen He would recommence the history of man, the Second Adam. He returns called out of Egypt, Son of God, but has to take His place where one truly an Israelite in whom was no guile could not believe anything good was to be found. He dwells at Nazareth. All this is most significant, but is

only preliminary as a preface which indicates the subject-matter treated in the book of His life which follows.

In chapter 3 we begin His history with the preparatory testimony of John the Baptist, who goes before the face of Jehovah. Such is the clear and precise declaration of Mal. 3:1, or, if we take the quotation of Matthew himself, it is the voice of him who prepares the way of Jehovah. Such is Christ. Jehovah in the midst of men and in particular of the Jews, such, in a striking way, is the Christ of Matthew; but the Son of God also has taken the form of a servant as we are going to see.

The testimony of John did not accept the fact that one was son of Abraham as to the flesh. God could raise up sons to Abraham by His mighty power. The judgment or the kingdom was in view. Repentance must be in order to bear good fruit; and for sinful man the very first of those fruits was repentance. His baptism, in a word, was the beginning of repentance at the approach of the kingdom and as a preparation for entering in. The people not repenting could not enter in a lump. But if he, John, baptized for repentance, One was there who was about to execute judgment by purifying His floor, but He baptized with the Holy Ghost. These three characteristics belonged to this testimony: particular and separative judgment (verses 10), already the ax was at the root of the trees; He who baptized with the Holy Ghost was there; He would purge His floor by a definitive judgment which would gather the good grain and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. Jesus presents Himself for baptism. It is His floor which is going to be purged; the granary is His; it is He who burns the chaff in the judgment. But He comes to place Himself in the midst of His people. Nothing more striking than this juxtaposition; nothing more positive than the declaration that He is Jehovah; nothing clearer than the fact that He places Himself in the midst of His people in the path where grace conducts them. Assuredly He does not join Himself with the rebellious and intractable people, but from the first step taken by those who by grace listen to the word of the testimony of God, from the first step in the good way He is found with them in His infinite grace. The heart answers at once to the testimony of John that He who came had no need of repentance: we know it. Quite the contrary, He was fulfilling righteousness. But for His own it was just the thing according to God. The life of God, which put forth its first breath in. the atmosphere of God but in the midst of men, took its first step in the divine way—the way toward the kingdom which was going to appear. He would not leave them there alone. He takes His place with them. Infinite grace, sweet thought, full of His love for the heart of His own!

Remark also how He abases Himself here to the level of His messenger: “thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” You have your part, I mine, in accomplishing the will of God. There He is already a servant! He is baptized, and His place taken in the midst of His own, in the midst of the faithful remnant that walked under the effect of the power of God's word. And now where is He, the Servant, He who humbled Himself, who has His place with His poor people, the poorest of His flock? Heaven is open, the Holy Spirit descends on Him, the Father owns Him as. His Son. He is the model of the position He has taken for us by redemption. Never had heaven so opened before; never had there been on earth an object which He could own as making His good pleasure. Now there was. For us too the veil is rent, and heaven is open. We have been anointed and sealed of the Holy Spirit as Jesus was; the Father has owned us to be His beloved sons already in this world. He was such in His own proper and full right, worthy of being so in Himself; we are introduced by grace and redemption. But entered into the midst of His people He shows what is the position which in Him belongs to them; as I have just said, He is its model. What happiness!

what grace! But, carefully remark, His divine person remains always such, a difference besides which is never lost, whatever be His abasement and His grace toward us. When heaven is open for Jesus, He has no object above to which He looks to fix His attention. He is Himself the object that heaven contemplates. When heaven is open for Stephen, as for us by faith, Jesus the Son of man is his object in heaven which is open for His servant. In grace the Lord takes a place with us; He never loses His own either for the Father or for the heart of the believer. The nearer we are to Him, the more we adore Him.

Remark here also another thing altogether notable. It is in and by the voluntary humiliation of Jesus that all the Trinity is for the first time fully revealed. The Son is there, the object specially conspicuous as man; the Holy Spirit comes and abides on Him; and the voice of the Father owns Him: marvelous revelation associated with the position that the Son had taken! The Son is recognized as Jehovah in Psa. 2 The Holy Spirit is found everywhere in the Old Testament. But the full revelation of the three persons in the unity of God—the basis of Christianity—is reserved for the moment when the Son of God takes His place in the midst of the poor of His flock, His true place in the race in which He had His delights, the sons of men. What grace is that of Christianity! what a place is that where our hearts are found, if taught of God we have learned to know this grace and Him in whom it is come to us! Here then is our position according to this grace in Christ Jesus, before God our Father accepted in the Beloved.

Notes on Matthew 4

Nevertheless, if such is our relation with God, we are in conflict here below with the enemy of our souls. Well, here too Jesus must go into it for us. This follows immediately. Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit to be tempted by the devil. If He takes or rather makes our place with God, He must take it in face of the enemy to bind the strong man that held us captive. I know not, dear brother, if this grace strikes you as it strikes me: but it seems to me to go beyond all the bearing of our thoughts as much as the effort to reproduce it in human words for drawing the attention of souls to it only betrays the weakness which speaks of it. However let us pursue our essay, since it can be studied in the word itself, once the attention is thus drawn to it.

Jesus takes our place in conflict: solemn moment where all depended on His victory. It was not possible doubtless that He should not bear off the victory; but if the Second man had fallen like the first, all was ended and lost. Yes, that could not be; but He must conquer for us and conquer as man. It is exactly out of this position that the enemy wished to withdraw Him, out of the position of a servant of man as such. “If thou art the Son of God “(and the Father had just owned Him such)—if thou art Son of God, speak that these stones may become loaves. Act as Son. There is no harm in eating when one is hungry. You have only to say this word and have wherewithal to satisfy your wishes. That is, do your will: leave the position of servant you have taken. Not for a moment! He had taken, being in the form of God, the form of a servant; and He abides servant of His God.

And, in these days of slighting the word, it is good for the heart to remark how He answers. A single text of the word, of the scripture, suffices for the fidelity and the almightiness of the Lord, for the wisdom of the Son of God; a single text suffices to reduce to silence the devil who wished to lead Him astray. The Son of God remains in His position of man, the servant; and the word of God directs, is the opening of, His ways. “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” What a beautiful and perfect example! Not a movement of His heart toward any other thing than the authority of His God, of whom He had made Himself servant. The word of God issues from the mouth of God—the words issued from His mouth, blessed be His name, direct to man. Christ maintains Himself in the place of man. Man shall not live by bread alone. The word is the source of His conduct; He lives by it. It is His directory doubtless; but it is also what puts His will in movement: without it He does nothing. He is come to do the will of God. The words which proceed out of His mouth declare this will and put in movement the soul of man the servant. Such is the obedience of Christ. The devil can do nothing there; he is silent.

Remember here, though they be only accessory circumstances, that this conflict did not occur in the garden of Eden, not in the midst of enjoyments which testified the goodness of God. Christ had already passed forty days, a solemn period of exercise and endurance, as we know by Moses and Elijah, and in an analogous manner by the forty years of Israel in the wilderness. He had been withdrawn from the ordinary state of humanity, not to prepare Him for the presence of God, as

Moses and Elijah had been. He was in the wilderness, far from the pleasant things which, by the goodness of God, remain to man in this fallen world, for a struggle, (not that we know that this was with special temptations, but for a struggle) with the enemy. His position was such as that of the world in its moral reality as God sees it, a desert where Satan rules. (Mark 1:13.) Put to the proof thus by love for us and, while accomplishing the counsels of God, submitting fully in the ways of God (for He was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness) to the sufferings which come by the power of Satan into this world, He enters into the special conflict that He had to carry on with Satan, where we have to follow Him, but fighting against an enemy already beaten. He is not weary of His service of fidelity, He remains man the servant in obedience, He owns the absolute authority of the word, resting thereon as the basis of all His conduct. It is simplicity which is absolute perfection. Satan is vanquished. I repeat, a single text of the word—whatever be the foolish pretensions of man—suffices for the Lord, suffices for Satan. May this word suffice for us! Only may God give us grace to make use of it under the guidance of the Spirit of God whose sword it is, in order that it may be effectual in our hands.

But to dare obey God in this world there must be confidence in God. This is the second trial the Lord undergoes for us. “If thou art Son of God, cast thyself down.” Try if God will be faithful to His promise. (Psa. 91) This too was just out of the path of obedience. In this path He could always count upon God; but to put God to the proof to see if He would be faithful is not to confide in Him as assuredly such. This is what is meant by the expression “tempting God,” and not to go too far in confiding in Him. (Ex. 17:7.) The confidence is perfect like the obedience. He waits on Jehovah. Sure that He will be faithful, that He is so always, He has but to follow the path of obedience and to depend on Him. His word will direct His steps and His thoughts, and will be accomplished in His promises. Such are the two elements of the life of the new man, of the life of Christ in us—obedience, and dependence. Christ was perfect in both, in an obedience which had the word, the will, of God, as the source of His activity, not simply as its rule. When Satan presents the word falsely as a snare, the word suffices as a perfect answer to conduct the steps and the thoughts of man.

Remark further in these instructive answers of the Lord that, when it is a question of the wiles of the devil, the wisdom of the Lord confines itself to a striking simplicity, and in this that there is no need to think save of one's own duty. This is enough, and Satan can do no more. Man must live not by bread only but by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God. There is all; but it is all. His conduct is perfectly traced. It is submission, the path marked by the words of God. He does not enter into controversy with the enemy. He is found in this later with men. Here it is the perfect path of obedient man, his walk with Him. The word of God traces for Himself this path, and the end is completely attained. Satan is vanquished.

Afterward Satan shows himself; it is no more a question of his wiles. He offers the world and its glory to the Lord if He will pay him homage. For the obedient man that owned God it was to betray himself, and for such a man Satan manifested has no power. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. The world is the bait that Satan can offer that one should follow him. The man who wishes nothing but his God is sheltered from every real danger here. Nevertheless it is still by the word that the Lord answers. It is the Spirit's sword for man, the sword of God, but made for man who by the Spirit makes use of it; and if he seeks only to obey, it is enough for the certain defeat of the enemy of souls. The devil quits the Savior; and if Man must fight and conquer by an obedience so

simple, angels of God Himself are there to render Him service.

Without being able here to bring out the instruction found in these details, I desired particularly to draw the attention of your readers to the way the Lord made and took our place on both sides, so to speak: on God's side, Son, anointed of the Holy Spirit, before the Father, with heaven opened; then in conflict with Satan when in fact He bound for us the strong man.

The Lord, man here below, had been owned by the Father as His beloved Son, heaven being open on Him, and Himself anointed by the Holy Spirit. He had thus presented in Himself the place which according to God's counsels those should hold whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren. He had for them entered on the conflict the strong man wages with them and, having conquered him for them, had shown them how, by His grace, they could conquer in their turn. He must exercise His ministry in the midst of the people, and, whilst announcing the gospel of the kingdom, spoil the strong man that He had bound.

But from the beginning the disposition of man manifests itself. John the Baptist is put in prison. Jesus, from Judea where He had wrought, goes away to Galilee amongst the poor and despised of the people. He abides at Capernaum, a place even called His city. It is there according to prophecy (and Matthew always give us Him who is the subject of prophecy) that the light must shine: neither at Jerusalem in the midst of the proud chiefs of the Jews, nor where He was at home does He begin His work. The poor of the flock, the testimony of God, the Spirit of the Lord perfect in spiritual wisdom unite to direct His steps towards the place willed of God. I do not say that prophecy directed His steps; but His acts accomplished prophecy.

What Jesus announced was what John had published. It was a call to repentance because the kingdom of the heavens had drawn nigh. The throne of God had been established on the earth at Jerusalem; the Eternal had forsaken it at the time of the Babylonish captivity, and the seat of the supreme power was transported there, and this power confided to the Gentiles. But the heavens were to reign and God to establish from above His beneficent power over the earth. Up to this day He has not taken His great power and acted as king; but the king is seated in heaven on the throne of the Father, and the kingdom exists in mystery.

It is important to remark here that it is not a question only of the salvation of such or such an individual (while the things may be bound together, and in fact are so, as John 3 proves), but of the establishment of a system of authority by which the heavens impress their character in blessing on the earth. The rejection of Christ has introduced better things, and relations more intimate and more entirely heavenly; but the kingdom will be established with a still fuller development when the Lord returns. This however is not the place to pursue this theme: let us follow our Gospel.

The Lord becomes the center of a people which are attached entirely to Him: an important principle, a right belonging to Him alone. He preaches repentance to all. One must return to God in self-judgment, for Israel was far from Him, and the crisis of their history arrived. But, besides, the powerful attraction of the Lord's call attached souls to Him by making them leave all and break every other tie. Emmanuel was there; and those He called were His. The call was to be the fishers of men.

After this the ministry of Jesus is summarily recounted in the three verses that follow, indeed in the single verse 28. The more these verses 17 - 23 are examined, the more one sees that they

contain, and designedly, a compendium of all the Lord's ministry. Verses 24, 25, tell us the effect of this ministry in Palestine and all the neighboring countries. Besides, it makes a ministry accompanied by a power suited to draw their attention. He gathered disciples round Him. The gospel of the kingdom was announced; and the character of the miracles was as important as the power which accomplished them: it was the power of God manifested in goodness on the earth.

Great crowds followed Him. It was of importance that His disciples and even the multitude should understand what was the true character of the kingdom about to be introduced and of those about to have part in it. John's ministry however had detached a remnant from the impenitent mass of the people.

Notes on Matthew 5-7

The Lord then, seeing that His teaching had attracted the crowd, gathers His disciples and proclaims the great essential principles which were to serve as moral foundations for His kingdom, and to characterize those who were to have part in it. The first sixteen verses of chapter 5 contain the enunciation of these principles, as well as the character and position of the true sons of the kingdom. What follows to the end of chapter 7 consists of warning against the wanderings of the heart of man, and puts the ancient sayings and precepts which had currency among the Jews in contrast with the morality required by the kingdom of the heavens. It was a question of having the heart pure and clear from hatred, and the spirit submissive in such a way that its impatience should not rise up, and that its evil should not come to light in the heart itself; it was a question of the patience and the gentleness which is more bent on keeping the heavenly character than one's own goods of the goodness ready to give and resembling the character of God Himself their Father who loves without being loved.

Next (chap, 6.), the Lord would have the motives pure, and prayer in reference to the true relations at that time of His own with God and to the desires flowing from them. He would have the aim of the heart heavenly, and that it should have confidence in God for this low world; then again (chap, 7.) that one should not judge when it was a question of motives, but that one should not misunderstand when the insolent contempt of God and of morality manifested itself; that dependence and confidence should be diligently expressed in presenting our requests to God, which He would hear as our loving Father: lastly, that practical obedience should lay a solid basis for the hope of the future.

It is evident then that the subject spoken of is not redemption, nor the sinner, but the character which suits the kingdom and necessary to enter it. The state wished for precedes entrance into the kingdom. Their righteousness must surpass Pharisaism, for God was looking at the heart. Israel was in the way with Jehovah and must make friends with Him. The kingdom of the heavens was going to be established: there was what one must have for entering in. One had to do with God. As to the disciples, opposition is supposed to their testimony, and conflicts; which gives occasion to the revelation of the heavenly part of the kingdom. (Ver. 11, 12.)

Thus the positive part of our Lord's teaching embraces the promises (as verse 5) for the earth, and for the heavens the verses already referred to. Others apply generally to the spirit desired by God, which, at bottom, is the character of Christ Himself. The disciples were set as the salt of the earth (of that which was in relation with God) in contrast with every corruption, and as the light of the world, the testimony of God to those who lay in the dark outside. Their testimony ought to be clear enough for men to know to what they should attribute the fruits manifested in them. The place of the disciples was thus sketched clearly, the remnant called by grace.

The sermon on the mount is in no way a spiritualizing of the law. There are but two commandments one could say that allusion is made to; and even this is not true, for the Lord gives a teaching which does not agree with that which was current among the ancients, if He does not

even contradict it; and never would He have spoken thus of the law of God. He says that every word of the law and of the prophets shall come to pass; He Himself came not to make void but to fulfill. Moreover to “fulfill” has not at all the sense of obeying, but just simply what is said of giving the fullness. Disobedience of the law when it was in force was not the means of entering into the kingdom. The Lord, like the gospel, confirms fully the law as come from God. When it subsisted, to be obedient to it was the path of God; but here, while saying so, the Lord puts His teaching in contrast with the discourses of the times of the law. The narrow gate and the strait way characterized the walk of the disciples; their fruits would show the true nature of those who sought to make them go out of it.

The sermon is not the rich grace preached to sinners any more than redemption, but the path traced for the faithful who would have part in the kingdom which was going to be established. It will be remarked that the name of Father is very distinctly employed in this discourse of the Savior. As it is said in John 17, “I have declared unto them thy name;” the Son being there, the name of the Father was revealed. Such is the measure of conduct ordained for the disciples with respect to others— “perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” From this name flow the principles of their walk in this world. It is true that they were here, and He in heaven; and they addressed Him accordingly; but the Father was revealed. It is for the coming of the Father's kingdom that they were to pray.

Having presented the great principles of the kingdom of the heavens, the Lord comes down from the mountain, and then begins the presentation to Israel of Jehovah come in grace in the midst of the people, Emmanuel, God with them, and of all the features of goodness, compassion, love, revealed in His ways towards them up to His rejection: a picture of every beauty and of the most profound interest! These features we will endeavor as much as we can to reproduce, while feeling how much the pen, alas! the heart also even though involuntarily, fails in it. But before entering this divine garden to enjoy the flowers and the fruits that grow there, it will be well to say a word on the kingdom and on the sermon, which we have just summed up briefly in reference to the kingdom.

This kingdom as a whole is in view in its heavenly part and its earthly part in verses 5 and 12; and that which they were to pray for, we have seen, is the kingdom of the Father. But the disciples are all in the midst of difficulties and of persecutions, the salt in the midst of corruption, the light in a world of darkness. The law and the prophets were to be accomplished; but another thing is now introduced. Such was to be the kingdom of the heavens. The King was there in all adverse world, and in the midst of a people which was going to reject Him. But the kingdom of the heavens could not take place. For this the King was to go up to heaven; for the kingdom of the heavens is the kingdom of God while the King and the government are in heaven.

Notes on Matthew 8

In what precedes we have a sketch of the Lord's ministry and of the principles of His kingdom. It is a complete whole. In what follows we see Him as He is presented personally to the people with the re-suit of this presentation. He is rejected by Israel, and Israel is replaced for the moment by the church and the kingdom, though owned anew in grace when the kingdom shall be restored. For the moment it is the personal presentation of the Lord to the people with the consequences of this presentation. As He descended from the mountain with the crowd, a leper came to meet Him. Now Jehovah alone healed leprosy. The man had learned that Jesus possessed the necessary power, but was not assured of His good will. If thou wilt, said he, thou canst cure it. But love and power were found there: Jehovah was there in grace to heal. I will, said Jesus, be thou clean. To whom did it pertain to say thus, I will: be thou? To One only: and the thing was done. But He who said so was also there to draw near the man, as Himself man, He lays His hand on the man, He touches the leper. Beautiful picture of that which was really there! God capable of doing everything, love and goodwill to do it, but man in the midst of a contaminated race which He has touched in His grace without being driven back by the evil, without being contaminated by the defilement though He touched it to heal it; and the man was healed, for Jehovah was there, man in the midst of His people. Such was the great fact by which this part of the Gospel begins. It is the essential fact of everything—Emmanuel. Another element accompanies it. He owns the authority of the system in the midst of which He found Himself. The healed leper must go and show himself to the priest; who, while pronouncing him clean and accepting his sacrifice, was owning in fact the divine power of Him who had thus healed the leper. The Man who is truly of humanity though without defilement, and whom the evil He came into contact with could not defile, was Emmanuel, Jehovah who healed, but entering by the door and subject to all that Jehovah had ordained in Israel.

The second fact is a fact parallel to this one. A man from among the Gentiles, with a faith which was not cramped by the proud egotism which confined all of it to the promises made to the people and to the privileges which belonged to them, but saw the divine power (if it was there) more in its own vastness, beseeches Jesus to heal his servant. The faith which places a man in the presence of God, which realizes His presence, is always humble. The Gentile does not deem himself worthy that Jesus should come under his roof. He has only to say a word: everything would obey Him, as his soldiers himself. Jesus owns his faith; and the word is said: his servant is healed. But see another great truth which comes out here: the faith of the Gentile is owned, and the children of the kingdom according to the flesh shall be cast out. “Where God is found, He cannot limit Himself to a particular people, whilst coming into the midst of them according to His promise; and, what is more, He cannot deny Himself nor change His character. If those who were of His people answered not to His character, they could not be with Him; and now He was revealing Himself and was the necessary center of all that which could be owned.

Afterward He is present in that power of goodness which puts aside all the effects of sin and of Satan's dominion in this world. At one word from Jesus diseases cease, and demons flee away,

and those possessed are delivered. It is not only power but goodness. It is God who is there, but at the same time the Man who has a perfect sympathy with men carries their miseries on His heart and burdens Himself with the sorrows of their infirmities. He heals while feeling them; as we hear Him groan deeply at the tomb of Lazarus, though He raises Himself from among the dead.

But it is none the less true that He is the despised and rejected of men: the Son of man has not where to lay His head—has not the privileges of the foxes and of the birds in this world. He is not of this world; and to follow Him is to break entirely with everything which is of it. God come into this world is come because the world is without Him, and ought to have absolute right to the heart; and this to separate it from the world and from the flesh which has arranged itself without Him, and to attach the heart wholly to Him who was come to seek it. And the most powerful motives for the human heart were null before the rights of God come in grace because man was lost. It is not that God does not own the relations that He Himself has formed; but that when they make good their rights against Him who formed them, these rights are lost entirely, being derived from His will: to resist Him while asserting them is therefore to destroy them. Besides, if the Lord is there, His rights rise above everything.

The Lord does not seek the admiration of the crowd; He does His work, but a curious multitude is nothing for Him. He goes to the other side of the lake. But to accompany the Lord, to be truly with Him, is not tranquility but the exercise of faith. A tempest arose, and the ship is covered with waves. According to appearances the Lord is a stranger to the peril of His own; He sleeps, and the disciples think they will be swallowed up by the waters. There was a certain faith in Him if He were awake: at least He could occupy Himself with the danger. But all the same, what want of faith to think that the counsels of God and the Lord Himself were going to be swallowed up together by a storm, or according to the world by an accident! They were in the same ship with the Lord, the object of all the counsels of God. Accidents do not happen there, not to say anywhere else. A word on His part calms the waves and the wind. The companionship of the Lord when He is rejected conducts us in the storm, yet He seems to let all go without paying heed to it; but we are, thank God, in the same ship with Him. He exercises faith and appears to be indifferent with regard to difficulties; He is not uneasy, and His grace and power awake at an opportune moment. It is the character of the road to which the Lord has introduced His own in quitting the multitude of this world.

But there is more. Come with power to destroy the work of the devil, His presence manifests the power of the enemy; it awakes and displays itself; and just because He acts, the Lord allows that the reality of this power should be manifested. The impure beings which become the vessels of this energy of the enemy hurl themselves down to destruction. A word of the Lord delivers him whom the world could not bind; but the world cannot endure God so near it, and under the quiet influence of Satan, more dangerous than His force, gets quit of the Lord. It is not the power of Satan which was the question (for that a word was enough), but of his influence over the heart, yea, over the heart, just as the heart of man will not have God. What manifests Him no doubt manifests Satan; but it is the deliverance of those who are in subjection to his power. But then it is God; and man wishes none of Him even when He is delivering. It is the history of the Savior, of God, in this poor world.

Such is the summary presentation of Emmanuel, of the path of Jesus towards the earth; the fullness of grace, but man will not have God. It was in Israel indeed that all this took place, and it is thus presented here; but the work is extended to the world in grace and in judgment. It is a remarkable picture of the presence of Emmanuel and of its effect: grace, goodness in power on the earth, the manner in which it was received, and the result of its manifestation for the heart of man. What follows, chapter 9, is His ministry.

Notes on Matthew 9

In chapter 9 we find the work of the Lord, His character in grace; as in chapter 8 His person (more precisely however in Israel), but rejected. The Lord returns to His own city (Capernaum), but far from the scene, which closes the last chapter (which is complete in itself), the world rejecting Him and He quitting the world.

Now He is seen afresh in the midst of His service in Israel. Faith brings a man struck in His body. The Lord is still here as Emmanuel, yet man in their midst, but there He is announced with the promised blessing of Jehovah's presence in grace. Here it is no question of redemption (though certainly without it there could not be such a pardon), but of the application of pardon in grace in Israel as we see in Psa. 103; and for present blessing Israel must be pardoned. The Lord comes with this blessing, and it is a direct testimony to pardon: else He would have simply healed the paralytic as in other cases. But when Jehovah came in grace, He pardoned all their sins end healed all their iniquities. The Lord announces the presence of Jehovah to do the first of these things. The scribes murmured in themselves. Who but Jehovah could pardon? But He who knew their thoughts was there and proves by the other portion of the verse that the Lord was there in the power of His grace. He heals immediately the infirmity of the sick man.

We may remark here that in this, as in the preceding chapter, He takes the title of Son of man, His title of predilection or love for us, of a much larger import than that of Christ, which, though He was the Christ, He was not come to take and never does take in Israel. He is there as Emmanuel Jehovah to save His people, but as Son of man, a title of all importance. He who takes the kingdom in glory from heaven, who even has all things under His feet, Christ never presents Himself as Christ. The Son of man was to be strong for God (Psa. 80:17); but at present He must suffer. But, though in the midst of His people, necessarily when here below God must take in His nature and in His work His place in respect to men above all relationship according to the law as the rejected One on the earth. The Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins; as the crowd say that God has given such power to men.

The pardon then was there, and grace toward sinners. He was there in this character. He goes and eats with the tax-gatherers after having called Matthew who was one of them. It was not the outside which guided His walk. God was there, and the work was to be the effect of His presence and of His grace, not to depend on what He found. He knew also the heart and the vessels to choose and bring under the effect of this grace as His instruments. But the principle of the work was the principle of His grace: He was come not to find but to bring what was necessary; and the vessels to receive this for service were chosen vessels, known of God and disposed by grace as new and suited instruments.

Therefore He is there forgiving sins and eating with sinners; but it is Jehovah who heals. (Psa. 103) The revelation as to the work goes farther. It could not be put into the old Jewish forms, nor could one take what was found in them as vessels containing it. A tax-gatherer was to be an apostle; a Pharisee at most to learn that he must absolutely be born anew. None of the old forms

of righteousness really in relationship with the flesh and man in the flesh could receive the new wine: the doctrine of grace in power came by Jesus Christ. The old leathern bottles belonged to the flesh, but now was come the divine power in grace and, being completely new, it would have its own vessels. Besides, the Bridegroom was there. It was not the time for the sons of the bride-chamber to fast: the time would come for that. It is a striking thing to see how the Lord always holds His rejection as an integral part of His history. The Son of man must suffer, the Bridegroom be taken away. It was Jehovah there in grace: this could not adapt itself to the old bottles and could only excite the hatred of man and of Israel who preferred their bottles, as giving them importance, to God Himself, and that when He was revealed in grace.

The following account contains the real history of Israel arrived at the point of dying. Christ has to do with them as dead, and so He can; but those who in the way with Him have faith in Him are completely healed when every resource had failed. The virtue and the power of life were in Hint, whilst is result He had to quicken Israel really dead; Such is the history of the Son of man's ministry—of Jehovah in Israel. To this are added two accessory effects of His power, as to His special character relative to Israel when appeal is made to Him under the name of Son of David. However the general character although manifested in Israel goes in its nature beyond them—Jehovah and the Son of man—and this it is which has a character of interest so profound to be remarked; but He was the Son of David in Israel.

In verse 27 we enter exclusively on the Israelitish ground where the spirit of the heads is fully manifested whilst the patience of the Lord continues still in grace. The blind in Israel recover sight by faith in the Son of David, and here He is in the house, and then He opens there also the mouth of the dumb. The attention of the crowd is drawn, and they confess that they have never seen the like. But if He casts out the power of the devil, the heads of the people call His power that of the devil. The spirit of an unpardonable apostasy was already manifested; but Jesus had not done His work of goodness in Israel, and He goes through the villages and the small towns, teaching, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and working cures. His heart was touched with compassion for Israel, for those multitudes which were as sheep without shepherds. For if He was Jehovah in His goodness, His heart could be moved with what He saw as man and until that goodness could find no more place for its exercise. His time found no obstacle in the wickedness of those who were His enemies; the harvest was yet abundant, the laborers but few. Oh! how much the heart can still feel this. He wishes as yet to accomplish His work, to have His sheep. Our part is to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers.

We have then in this chapter the grace of His ministry, its true character, the ministry of Jehovah in grace, profitable for faith, but which is to raise the dead, and which, as an actual thing, is rejected and blasphemed. His person and His work have no place here save in grace. Whilst He can work thus, He continues to occupy Himself with all those who can be reached.

Notes on Matthew 10

The Lord who, touched with compassion for the destitute masses, had told His disciples to ask the Lord of the harvest to send workmen into the harvest, moved by the same compassion, sends them Himself; for He is also Lord of the harvest. But here it is always for searching out the lost sheep of the house of Israel; He has always His rejection in view, but He acts still in the circle of the promises, and does not quit it whilst announcing that they would come from the west and from the east. The Servant accomplishes His service in the limits of His mission; but God in His grace cannot be thus confined. The grace of His divinity and of H is rights pierces across the humiliation to which He subjected Himself. But He serves in these limits still and sends His disciples into the field where He still seeks His sheep. They were not to go by the way of the Gentiles nor to enter a town of the Samaritans. They were to preach the near arrival of the kingdom of the heavens, then to exercise the power that Jesus had confided to them, that of destroying among men all the power of the enemy up to death itself. Remark here that not only did Jesus work miracles, but He could confer the power of working them. It was the divine power which was revealed in His person whilst serving as He had been sent.

The discourse of the Lord is divided into two parts: one referring to the mission in which the disciples were engaged at that moment; the other more general referring at the same time to the service which the disciples should accomplish after His death, really up to His return, to the presence of the Holy Spirit and to the return of the Son of man, but always to a service rendered in the midst of Israel, though the effect is extended to the Gentiles, yet by means of the persecution excited by the Jews. The first part extends from verse 5 to 15; the second from verse 16 to the end, comprising the general principles of their position.

As the disciples went from God, invested with His power to overthrow all that of the enemy, they were also to trust entirely to Him, to take nothing with them, nor to make provision of that which was necessary for their journey. Emmanuel present disposed the hearts and took care of them. The time would come without doubt, when it would not be so with them. (See Luke 22:35, and following verses.) However, they were to ask, in going into a city, who was worthy, and to remain there till they went away from the city. It was, we may say, the last testimony rendered to Israel. There was still that of the seventy, the last time that He went up to Jerusalem; but there is no question of them in this Gospel. The Lord was warning the remnant in Israel. In wishing peace to a house, if the Son of peace dwelt there, the peace would abide there: otherwise it would return on them. This is not the gospel sent to the world, to sinners, but the gospel of the kingdom sent to those who had ears to hear in Israel. Afterward, where they were not received, they were to wipe off the dust from their feet. We see the final character of the testimony they were to bear. The judgment of such a city would be more terrible than that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Here closes the first part of their mission. The Lord Himself sends them with the consciousness, and He expresses it, that He was sending them like sheep in the midst of wolves, and that they must be wise as serpents and harmless as doves—counsel impossible to follow but for those who are taught of God.

The world may be prudent, knowing evil; the heart may be simple by ignorance and find itself betrayed; the Christian may be wise, prudent, by the wisdom of God who directs him, and simple because he walks according to the life which is in him, and expresses nothing else than that which is found there. The two things are connected; because by the positive possession of good one discerns evil, and snares do not succeed; because the motives which engage men to touch them exert no influence on the heart. One preserves simplicity because one acts according to what one is; and we are prudent because, knowing that we are in the midst of evil, we avoid it by the intelligence which belongs to spirituality! It is not the simplicity of ignorance, but of good which avoids whatever should make one quit ones true position before God. But (terrible word for-man), “Beware of men” says the Lord; and all are cast as such now into the same mass—He does not say, of Israel. It was exactly in Israel that they labored, but Israel is blinded with the mass of human iniquity. God could think of them and the promises, but in fact the heart of man was there as elsewhere. They would be forced to appear before the Jewish authorities by their malice, and not only so but before the Gentile tribunals, and thus bear a witness which would reach the high places of the earth; for it is then God carries His testimony into the high quarters of the world, and not by rendering His own worldly. But God would be with them.

And here we see clearly that this part of the chapter referred to the time when the Lord would be away. It would be the Spirit of their Father speaking to them. But the hatred of the human heart against the testimony of God would be shown in pushing men on to break the ties that God had formed at the time of creation; the affections of the flesh, of the human heart, would be changed into positive antipathy. The more intimate the relation, the more implacable its hatred. There are rights in these relationships; but now it would be the rights of hatred: brother would deliver brother to death.

What a solemn effect of the rejection of Christ, the only true tie of man with man, because the will is restrained and God owned! God can hold the bridle, and He has done so in mercy, but when He is rejected in grace, there remains only the manifestation of man's heart as it is. Nature does not bridle nature; and the testimony of God merely awakens the hatred of him who wishes none of His rights, who does not wish that there should be any, because he knows that' he has abandoned Him. But His grace pursues His work to draw away souls.

If the disciples were persecuted in one city, they were to go to another. They should not have accomplished their task in Israel before the Son of man was come. Thus we see that this testimony of the disciples in Israel extends even to the return of the Lord. Interrupted by the destruction of Jerusalem, and unfinished, it was to be accomplished. Another testimony has been raised up of God in the person of Paul, apostle of the circumcision; but here we have the mission of the disciples formally limited to Israel, and the Gentiles excluded. They were to expect reproach; they were not above their Master whom their adversaries had already called Beelzebub. Their part was to confide in God, whatever the concealed plots of their enemies; all should be set in light, and they were to act as being in it already. They were not to fear. First, they should fear Him who could cast body and soul into hell much more than those who could do nothing but lull the body. But, besides, without their Father—Him who guarded them as a Father—not a sparrow fell to the ground. They had more value in His eye than many sparrows. Lastly, he who confessed Jesus before men, Jesus would confess him before the angels of His Father. These are the three motives that He gives for firmness; but they were not to think that He was come to send peace on

earth. As the final result He will, reigning as Prince of peace: but a Savior rejected is another thing. This would bring intestine war into the house; such the sad effect of the arrival of God and of truth on the earth. Man could not endure them, and still less at home; but on the other side He was the touchstone for the heart. It was all over with man according to nature—nature which God owned in itself fully, but which, on the rejection of Christ, the key of the arch if it could have been blessed, was fallen into ruin; and now all depended on Jesus alone; and if man violated the natural relationships by hatred, His own devoted to Him was to be above nature by grace. He was, He is, all: when it is a question of Him, all must yield, and this in regard not only to these relationships but to self (and it is always self that is in question). We must take up the cross and follow Christ. He that would find his life should lose it, and he that would lose it for Christ's sake would find it. All depended now, in a fallen and judged world, on the reception of the word and on the estimate made of it, and on righteousness according to God. He that received a prophet in the name of a prophet, because he was such, had in the eyes of God the usual value of the word that he carried, for it was the word that he loved, such as it was from God; and so with practice. Ceremonies had come to nothing. The point was the word of God and what He loved in a world which had broken with Him. If it were only a cup of water given because of Christ, the soul that gave it loved Christ and would not be forgotten. It is exactly as to God’s ways in the midst of Israel that all these things are displayed. To their work in Israel the instruction given to the twelve disciples applies; but what instruction for us all as to the effect of the rejection of Christ! The chapter after this shows us the change that followed historically, and the place taken by Christ when rejected by man, alone remaining upright before God in the ruin of the world and of Israel.

Notes on Matthew 11

The question is raised by John now in prison if Jesus was the Christ when no deliverance had been wrought for Israel. This was not a failure of confidence in the word of the Lord, for John does not refer to this word; but all is changed in the relations between John and Christ and Israel. As to intelligence John probably as an individual was embarrassed; but the effect of this embarrassment was to exchange his part of prophet for a question of individual faith, and the turn that things take and that Jesus gives them is according to divine wisdom. Fully owned of Him as more than prophet, John has to believe in Jesus individually by the testimony that Jesus gives of Himself, able to do everything, full of grace to think of the poor, to bring them the gospel, but already rejected, and a little remnant owned in His words, “blessed is he who is not offended in me.”

So that we have still Jehovah in Israel a stone of stumbling, but a sanctuary for those who trust in Him. John must receive Jesus on this testimony. Thus it is Christ who renders testimony to John, Jehovah who owns His servant, and not John to Jesus. The testimony of the two had been tendered; the mournful strains of John, the attractive sounds of the flute had been heard, both in the market place; but Israel would neither be humbled for the one nor rejoice in the other. All that was closed. Only there was a remnant according to grace, and the wisdom of God in the two had been justified in the two by these children of wisdom: and Jesus remained alone in His grace, Jehovah in the world, in a world where man had shown that he wished none of Him, to manifest what He was in Himself for the wants of those who, in such a world, had made the discovery of their wants and their miseries. The world had been put fully to the proof, and Jesus who had done so and knew that there was nothing there to console a tried heart, who knew that His spirit had been like the dove sent by Noah in that grace which shone only with so much the more splendor that the world was dark, presents Himself to every burdened heart as the resource, and a perfect resource, for its wants. He gives rest, in the revelation of the love of the Father in His person; then, in the perfect submission of a heart bowed under the will of God, practical rest in life. But the details demand a little more attention.

The Lord was not at all insensible to His rejection; He felt it profoundly, although it was in a spirit of grace. We see Him weep later over the final obstinacy of Jerusalem; His heart of love thought with grief of the hardening of Jerusalem in seeing the city, beloved but wicked, reject the last effort of God to bring her back and bless her. Here the feeling of His heart was a little different. He had displayed His power in blessings and in testimony; and all had been in vain. He had reproached them with the hardness of their heart. He had spent Himself for them; but their heart had remained insensible. Neither Tire nor Sidon, neither Sodom nor Gomorrah, would have remained insensible in the same circumstances; they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Their judgment would be so much the more terrible; but then in the same hour He accepts all from the hand of His Father: perfect subjection! He had seen good to humble the pride of man, and had hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them to babes. In the eye of God these ways were good, and Jesus accepts them without question.

Then in this perfect submission of man opens out before Him all the truth of His glory, and of the relative position of Israel and of Him, and of Himself with men. The Son of God was there. All things had been delivered to Him by the Father, and none knew the Son but He. He was in the truth of His person which none knew. The divinity of the Son is guarded in His humiliation by the inscrutability of His person. The testimony rendered to that which men in Israel were called to believe had been accepted; but the full truth went much farther and came forth out of obscurity, now that the testimony of John, of Christ, and of His works was rejected. As for Him, He was unknown; He revealed the Father. The sovereign grace of God in this revelation is then manifested. One has but to come to Him, and he will have rest. It was no longer the kingdom in Israel, but, by the revelation of the Father, rest for the weary soul. Thus it is God in grace for him who has need of it—the Son revealing the Father.

But there is another element in this touching picture of grace. The perfect submission of a man humble of heart had been the occasion of the revelation of glory and of grace in His person. It is just the same in John 12. It is always so. Submission to the ways of God opens the door to the knowledge of His grace and of His glory. Now it was thus with Jesus as man; and He engages His hearers to take the yoke, the yoke that He had taken Himself, and to learn of Him in this manifestation of submission and of poverty of spirit, and they should find rest for their souls. It is perfect grace, the revelation of the Father in the Son, which gives rest to hearts weary of this world of sin; it is the perfect submission of the will which gives practical peace to the heart, whilst one crosses it. It is Christ the Son revealing the Father, the man Christ perfectly subject to the yoke, which gives both.

Notes on Matthew 12

In the twelfth chapter we find the final rejection of the Jewish system and of those who were at its head. Christ breaks with the system and judges the leaders of it, takes a place above the sabbath, which was the seal of the covenant, foretells the complete ruin of the perverse generation of Israel, and refuses to acknowledge His words according to the flesh with that people, and will only acknowledge disciples who were brought in by the word and who had obeyed it. But we must examine the chapter more closely.

The Pharisees reproved the disciples for having plucked the cars of corn and rubbed them in their hands. The Lord answers, that when David, the anointed of God, had been rejected, the law of Moses had lost its force. The priests also violated the sabbath, when an occasion called for it: and there was One greater than the temple, the living God Himself making His temple in man. They ought then to have understood the meaning of those words, that mercy rejoices over judgment. Further, the Son of man was Lord of the sabbath; He was above the system that He had Himself established as Jehovah, and His title as Son of man placed Him outside and above the claims which the old covenant had over man, and the rest which it demanded but could not give. He besides shows their hypocrisy in these things, in the case of the man with the withered hand. The love and goodness of God are above ceremonies, however holy these may be. Thus His person, being rejected as David's had been, is above the Jewish system, and the goodness of God cannot yield the sovereign right of His divine grace towards man. But the time of judgment was not yet. His voice is not heard in the street till the moment comes when He will raise it in judgment in the day of His glory, and when He will send forth this judgment victorious over all opposition, and even the Gentiles will trust in Him. He casts out another demon, and the enmity without heart and without conscience of the Pharisees breaks out. They could not deny the miracle, and rather than acknowledge Jesus they attribute it to a demon; that is to say, acknowledging in spite of themselves that power was there, but, being “enemies of God, they called the Holy Spirit, by whom the miracle was wrought, a demon. There was no forgiveness for this.

After this the Lord then comes to the complete condemnation of the Jews. Full of unbelief, they, who had just attributed the sign to the devil rather than believe it, ask for a sign; but the Lord gives them none other than that of Jonas, a prefiguration of His time of being in the grave, but a sign that it was now too late for them, that the One whom they had already rejected was the Son of God, and that all connection with this generation was forever at an end. He brings forward the men of Nineveh and a queen of the south who would rise in judgment against this generation; for a greater than Jonas or Solomon was there.

It seems to me that a deep feeling of sorrow betrays itself in the words of Jesus at the sight of the unbelief of the leaders of Israel, blind men who pretended to lend the blind. But the time of judgment was come, and the Lord pronounces that judgment. The unclean spirit had gone out of that people, the spirit of idolatry, I doubt not, for since the captivity of Babylon they had not fallen into idolatry: but the demon needed, so to speak, this people among whom the name of God was

found, but where God was no longer, and whom they had rejected when He came into their midst in the person of Jesus. The house was empty, swept and garnished: religious forms and external piety were found there; but God Himself was no longer there. The unclean spirit would enter with seven spirits more wicked than himself, and the last state would be worse than the first.

The last state of the people, at least that of the perverse generation, would be worse than its former sins. They have already shown themselves as the swine of Gennesaret after the death of the Lord; but the words of the Lord will be accomplished at the end of the times, when the Jews will again become idolaters and when all the devil's power will be developed under the Antichrist.

It is well to understand each for himself how, if a vice is conquered without God, nothing is really gained. A gross vice may be given up for a more subtle sin. If there is not really the work of God in the heart, it may be hardened, and Satan will reign there more than ever. But here the Lord applies what He had said to the generation which had rejected Him, to the unbelieving and perverse Jews from whom God hid His face to see their end.

Then those who were the expression of the bonds by which He was attached to the Jewish people according to the flesh came pressing this claim. The Lord would not acknowledge them, and pointing out His disciples, said, Behold my mother and my brethren; the relationships I acknowledge are those formed by the word of God. As to the history of the Jews, all was at an end. Grace might continue and take up the people in a remnant owned of God; but as to responsibility, their history was ended.

The Lord seeks no more for fruit on a tree manifestly bad, and shows Himself, as a sower, by the wayside, bringing that which, when received in the heart, would produce fruit. This, however, introduced the kingdom of the heavens in which the Gentiles could share.

Chapter 151

Notes on Matthew 13:1-35

The chapter to which we are now come has been so often handled that I shall have no need to dwell much on the details. Only we shall need a general glance at the position it holds in the Gospel, and some words on the last parable.

We have seen the Lord pronounce on the Jewish people a judgment, which extends even to the last days, breaking, as come in flesh, all His relations with them. The heads of the people had blasphemed against the Holy Spirit and brought this judgment on the entire system, although the patience of God still sought all those who had ears to hear. The Lord sought no more fruit in His vineyard. There was only verjuice after all His pains. Such really was man; for Israel was only man placed under law with all the advantages God could lavish on him. In the trial to which man had been subjected, two things had been proved: that he could not attain to righteousness according to the law; and that he would not receive God come in grace, manifested in humanity to gain man and exercising a power to heal all the evils to which man had been subjected by sin.

He quits the house, a sign (I doubt not) of the immense change in the ways of God, and sits in a ship on the sea, and presents Himself as a sower, that is, as no more seeking fruit but carrying with Him in this world what was to produce it. The Lord goes no farther than the word of the kingdom. The verses 10 - 17 state the judgment of “the people according to the prophecy of Isaiah, of which the Lord in His patience had so long put off the accomplishment, and the separation of a remnant owned of the Lord—a remnant whose ears and eyes were opened by grace.

It is well to recall that there are seven parables: the first is not a similitude of the kingdom, the others are. Of these the first three present to us the form the kingdom took in the world: the last three, the thoughts of God in establishing in this manner the kingdom, and then the result of all at the end of the age. The first is occupied with individuals and the visible effect of the word. There is no question of the work of the Holy Spirit, which is found elsewhere doubtless; but here it is the exterior work of Christ in sowing, and in effect the consequence as far as manifested on the earth. We have just the word of the kingdom, but neither the kingdom nor the end of the age. Christ sows and there is the result in this world, in man on the earth: the seed produces fruit in one case out of four. In the first the seed does not penetrate at all: Satan takes it away as soon as it is sown. There is levity of heart, an indifference which receives nothing; the word is not understood, the heart is occupied with something else. However it is a word adapted to man and sown in his heart. In the second case, on the contrary, the heart is gained as to its feelings for a moment, but the conscience is not reached. There is no rest: the doctrine has been received for the joy that the message brings; and when the word brought sufferings instead of joy, the heart wished no more of it. There was not a true want. The Holy Spirit always produces wants. It was not as with the apostles: “Lord, to whom shall we go?” In the third case the world has choked the good seed. Alas! there is no need to explain it: we see it every day. However, it is a subtler thing: the world, business, has not the evil look of gross sin; but the word is choked and produces nothing.

The danger and the tendency of these things are found in the Christian: according to the measure the world exercises empire over him, his life suffers from it. Be it he is not dead but he sleeps, he does not understand spiritual things; he does not see or even enjoy them. Unhappy in the presence of spiritual Christians he enjoys not the things they enjoy, and suffers even from reproofs of his conscience. And if he goes with the world, he suffers also in reflecting on it, his conscience reproaching him with want of faithfulness; like a sick man who suffers, he is not dead: otherwise he would not suffer; but it is a sad means of knowing that life is there.

In the fourth case the word is understood; it penetrates, grows, and produces fruit in different degrees in different persons. In the first case it is said that the word was not understood, in this ease it is said that it was; in the other cases the point is not touched. In the first case it was seen that nothing had penetrated. In the two following there was the appearance of it, but there was nothing: the plant perished without fruit. In the last case the seed is developed in the interior of the heart and fruit is produced: precious effect according to the nature of what was sown, fruit for Him who had sown the seed and for him who had received it! There is no judgment, but the patent facts stated by the Lord in contrast with the vineyard and His fig-tree where He was seeking fruit, and in contrast also with the kingdom or state of things in the world, and their result in the judgment at the end.

The first of the following parables shows the effect of the sowing in the world up to the end of the age, but does not take in the execution of judgment: this is found, as well as the manifestation of glory, in the explanation made to the disciples in the house. It should be remarked that, in the parable of the sower, he is not named. It is the effect of the word in the heart of man, whoever may have sown. Here, on the contrary, we have a similitude of the kingdom, and he who sows takes the character (not of Christ—we have seen His work closed in His rejection, the Messiah seeking fruit was come to be received in Israel, but) of Son of man. He who sows is the Son of man, and the field is the world; but I anticipate.

We have always the general character of the work that the Lord wrought: He sowed; but not the personal result in the world. He has sown good seed in His field, but the responsibility of man is in question in the result produced; and whilst they slept, the enemy came and sowed tares. That did not hinder the good grain from being in the garner, but spoiled the whole of the crop in the field, and the evil which had been done was without remedy. It is forbidden the servants to root up the tares for fear of rooting up the good grain with them, precisely what happened when they would do so: the two were to grow together till the harvest. The kingdom of the heavens presented in this world a spoiled crop, fruit, on one side of the Lord's work, on the other of the enemy's work. Now in the parable we have only what happens in the kingdom before the manifestation of the King and the execution of judgment by Him. When He shall be manifested and the public judgment come, there will be no more parables, the mystery of God will be closed. In the parables we have mysteries, that which demands a revelation to know them; the execution of judgment is in itself the most striking revelation. In the parable we have then at the end in general the time of the harvest; and the tares are gathered first in bundles to burn them. The tares are there in bundles on the field of this world, and the good grain is hid in the Lord.

Afterward, before explaining the parable of the tares, the Lord gives two other similitudes of the kingdom; and remember that it is a question here of the kingdom. It is well to remark that the word

for likeness is not the same in these parables and that of the tares. Here it is only the character the kingdom will take; it is “like” to, &c. In the parable of the tares, “it is become,” has been made, “like.” It is a character that it has taken in actual circumstances considering the rejection of the King.

It is worth while also to remark in these parables those in which the thing in itself is the subject of comparison, and those where it is the individual or those who form the essential part of the parable. The kingdom itself is like a little grain of mustard seed becoming a great tree, symbol in the Old Testament of a thing elevated in the world, of a political power. We know well that that is come—that the birds nestling in its branches signifies the protection it affords. (Cf. Dan. 4:12.) It is the public appearance of the kingdom system such as it has been for ages: here is no judgment.

Next comes the parable of the leaven. The likeness is the leaven. The woman is not a sower. It is not the Lord who sows what is designated as the good seed, it is not a great tree in the world. It is a doctrine which insinuates itself everywhere in certain limits, and forms the entire lump according to its own nature. The whole is leavened: it is Christendom. But in neither of these two parables do we arrive at judgment. It is the kingdom such as it is when the grain of mustard seed or the leaven has fully acted and produced its effect. It is true that leaven is always employed in an evil sense; yet I do not think this is the aim of the parable, but the doctrine which forms all in one sole lump where it penetrates. If it was purely the evil as evil, we should have had some exception. This is marked in the tares, but on another side. It is not the good that is sown, nor the Lord who sows; so that the notion of positive good is carefully avoided as well as of him who does so. The point is not the word of God but the fact of the general profession of Christians and in a form where no idea of good is presented; for certainly leaven is not, in the word, an image of good. No more is the parable the description of an individual. There is hardly need to discuss this point, because it is a similitude of the kingdom of the heavens, and in no case is an individual the kingdom of the heavens. Besides, the result in an individual is not that which is depicted here.

These then are the three descriptions of the kingdom on the earth during the absence of the King, such as the kingdom is presented to the eyes of all: a mixture of good and bad, the harvest thus spoiled as a whole; afterward a great human and political power on the earth; and a general profession of doctrine without question of the individual state of anyone whatever. Afterward the good corn is hid in the garner; and providence prepares the seed of the enemy to be burnt in binding them together in bundles on earth.

Chapter 152

Notes on Matthew 13:36-58

Then the Lord enters the house; and there, speaking to the disciples alone, He enters more into the inner principles of the kingdom of which He speaks, communicating not the effect in the world, but the thoughts of God, the great result which would explain all in judgment and glory manifested on earth, and the real aim of what the Lord had done as well as the action of those who enter with intelligence into His ways.

First He explains the parable of the tares. We have already spoken of the chief features, but the Lord adds here what concerns the manifestation of the result in this world. In the parable we have left the wheat in the garner and the tares in bundles on the field, the wicked gathered by the angels or by the providence of God. But here appears on the scene the Son of man to remove every scandal from His kingdom (which He does), and He casts the wicked into a furnace of fire where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. It is the judgment executed. The servants were to let the tares grow. Then after the judgment the righteous shine in the kingdom like the sun—in effect like Jesus Himself. This is the result and this the divine explanation of what was a mystery before, for the judgment manifests what faith discerns. Remark that all that is revealed is in the world, first the kingdom before, then after, the judgment. The fact is stated that the corn is hidden; but nothing is said of the garner nor of the state of the corn when it is there.

In the parables which follow we have, as it has been said, the thoughts of God, the aim of the Lord in the kingdom, but still those thoughts, without speaking of a result in judgment, as we have seen in that of the mustard seed and that of the leaven. The first shows us the kingdom as the discovery of a treasure formerly unknown, hidden in a field; and he who had found it renounces all that he has to have it, and for this buys the field. This is what Christ did. All that He had as Messiah on earth He left to have the treasure of His people by taking the field where they were found, the world, to have them. They were hidden in this world; but Christ knew about them, taught of the Father as Man on the earth, and gave up all up to His life to have us. If in fact we renounce all to have Christ, nevertheless it is no question (as people too much forget) of an individual, but of the kingdom; and, further, we buy no field to have it.

The second case is a little different. The point is not a discovery. The merchant was in search of good pearls. He knew what a good pearl was, he could appreciate them, he wanted good ones. Now Christ has found in the church the object of His search, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. I do not think of the church as a body or system, but of its moral beauty. The merchant had taste for beauty in pearls, Christ for what was beautiful in the eyes of God, and, to have it, He left His Messianic glory and His life. What happiness to think that He satisfies His heart in us, and what perfection of beauty in God's eyes is the thing wrought out'. Zion is called the perfection of beauty, but there it was earthly; here it is heavenly according to the heart of God.

The last parable demands the most serious attention. For my part I do not doubt that it applies particularly to these days. The net of the gospel is cast into the sea of people and gathers fish of every sort. The effect of the gospel is not that all the fish enter into its meshes, but that a quantity

of all sorts, good and bad, are gathered within the net. This is the result. Then those who drew the net sit down there, on the shore, and engage in what they have at heart, in the aim for which they have drawn the net—to get good fish; and they choose, separate them from the bad, and put them apart in vessels, rejecting the bad and leaving them there. It is the fishermen who do that, and occupy themselves with the good. That is to say, when Christianity has gathered, as it has done, a certain mass of people who are placed all together in the net of Christendom, at the end of the days the servants of Christ occupy themselves with the mass and gather the good into vessels. They are the servants of Christ who have intelligence and can distinguish them—know what they want. When the public government shall arrive, there will be the inverse. The angels, ministers of the providence and the government of God, take not the good but the wicked on the earth and cast them into the fire. The principle, I believe, applies always when the gospel in a district has gathered many persons: the aim of the Lord is to put His own together in companies apart. But the parable seems to speak directly of the result of the operation of the gospel in gathering many persons as having part in the Christian name; then, as a second operation, on the shore they sort them and engage in putting the good apart. The execution of judgment is another thing. In this parable as in the two preceding we find spiritual discernment with respect to the aim of God. In the second this characterizes the action of the merchant; in the first and the third the field is bought, the net filled, but in the two cases the treasure and the good fish are distinguished from what is taken outwardly and govern the action both of the merchant and of the fishermen.

It is to be remarked that four of these similitudes do not speak of judgment, but of the outward appearance or of the aim of God in the kingdom, and of the result whether in the world or with God. The great tree and the leaven—such is the result in the" world; the treasure and the pearl—such is what is acquired for God. In the first and the last we have the judgment; but the difference is sensible. In the first, naturally, we see the Lord begin the work; and He has done so, of course, without mixture of evil, the good corn being all good. The enemy makes a distinct work—cannot do otherwise. There is a harvest; but the word has produced individual plants: the mixture is found in the harvest. But there are two works distinct, and the two things remain such till the end, and the preparation for judgment is the action of God in the world, and He is occupied first with the wicked to prepare them for the judgment. Men do not act; they are forbidden to act. What is produced is the effect of the action of the Lord and of the enemy. The servants slept: that is all. Wheat and tares were always wheat and tares, fruit of a distinct work.

In the net the mixture was the result of the work of man, the kind of fish distinct, doubtless, but all gathered into the net by a single toil, and that on the part of men, the fishermen. This is not here a work of the enemy, but the imperfect work of man. It is only the fact however which is stated. The net is full, then drawn on shore, and those who have the intelligence of what is a good fish, those whose aim (and it is that of God) is to have good fish, sort them and put the good into vessels. The explanation, as previously, is the judgment which draws publicly what was true and understood spiritually before. But the angels occupy themselves only with the bad. In the first parable it is a question of rooting out of the world the bad, which was not allowed to the servants. In the last it is a question of putting the good together into vessels, which was their intelligent work. We must not forget that the last times were already come in the days of the apostle.

Notes on Matthew 14

The immediate connections then existing of the Lord with the Jews were, as we have seen, terminated, and the kingdom of heaven was proclaimed according to the form which it was to take in consequence of His rejection. He was no longer seeking fruit from His vine, but was sowing that He might have fruit through the word. But Jesus continued to think of the people, showing what He was, and alas! what they themselves were, and what was to take the place of His connections with the Jews, such as they would have been, if He had been received by them.

Chapters 14 and 16 show us what He was then for the Jews, and what the remnant would become through His absence from that people, and the rejection or setting aside of the people. Chapter 15 brings in what He was for them as a divine person, even when the people were wicked and rejected; but being so, because He was God, and His counsels could not change. This favor extended itself to the Gentiles who had no right to the promises, although He did not abandon His positive connections with Israel; for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. But we must remember that in this unfolding of the ways of God the grace of the Lord, divine and personal grace, is manifested in the most touching and instructive manner, and practical lessons for us are brought out continually from what is passing.

The rejection of the testimony of God begins to be realized in facts. John the Baptist is put to death by Herod through the instigation of his wife. The Lord, touched and sensible of the violence done to His faithful servant, retires into the desert. Elias, as it is said elsewhere, had come, and they had done unto him whatsoever they listed, and the Son of man was also to suffer at their hands. This act of cruelty was not only the death of the faithful proclaimer of the Lord, but from the heart of the faithful witness it spoke of the state of the people. But however painful His feelings were, as having come into their midst, divine love rises above all, above the sufferings of the Son of man.

The multitude hear that He has retired into the desert, and hasten thither. Coming forth from His retreat He sees the crowd, and, moved with compassion, He heals them. His goodness did not become weary in presence of the iniquity of man, now hastening to accomplish it. Evening being come, the multitude was there, having nothing to eat. The disciples feel the inconvenience of their position, and wish to send them away, the natural resource of man. But God was in Israel and wished that His disciples, after so many proofs should have the consciousness of the power that was there.

But their heart had no other resource but that which was visible to man and according to a human measure. Give ye them to eat, said the Savior, and I myself will give to them. But they, instead of having faith in God in the divine power of the Savior, had five loaves and two fishes. What a difference between faith and the flesh! between God who can do everything and the poor resources which are in our hands. But the flesh sees no farther. The disciples could not make use of the power which was there. Alas! they did not think of it. But here the Lord was manifesting what He was in the midst of evil; not putting Himself in relation with Israel, if Israel wished it, but showing Himself above Israel, the Jehovah who blessed His people, according to His heart. It was but a

testimony to that grace, but it was to that grace that the testimony was rendered. In Psa. 132 it is said of the time, in which Jehovah will arise and will remember David and will act in grace according to His own heart “He will satisfy His poor with bread,” and He does so, a testimony useless for Israel, and even for the disciples save for grace, but not for His glory. The rejected Christ is Jehovah, the Savior of His people, spite of all. The prelude to His rejection and to His death leads Him to give the proof of His divine and almighty grace, which is above the evil and unbelief even of those who belong to Him. But it is none the less true that this is only a testimony, and that things take their course, and this is intimated here in the facts.

He sends His disciples to cross the sea alone, dismisses the people and goes up into a mountain apart to pray: a living picture, in a few strokes, of all that had happened. The Jewish people is sent away, Christ is on high and His own on the sea. However, as we have seen all through in this Gospel, the Jews or the disciples as a remnant are in the foreground. I have no doubt but that even the number of the baskets of fragments, however slight the indication may be, has reference to the full blessing of the latter days in the reign. It is the number sacred to that, twelve tribes, twelve apostles, twelve thrones for them judging the twelve tribes, twelve stars on the woman. It is the idea of the perfection of the government of God in man. This is why it is also found in the heavenly Jerusalem. But let us pass on to the more formal facts of this history.

The Lord makes His disciples embark in a little boat without Him, then He dismisses the multitude of the Jews who had rejoiced in His presence. It is not here judgment on the people, but Himself disappears, so to speak. Those who belong to the Lord, the little remnant, are besides exposed to the violence of the storm, without having the Savior personally present with them. He is on high alone. Mark the situation. But some other facts are brought in. The Lord rejoins them, master of all the elements which try them on the road. The water and the waves are the pathway of His feet, and as soon as He joins them all is calm, and those in the boat recognize Him as Son of God, the world likewise, Gennesareth which had rejected Him now joyfully receives Him, and its wounds are healed as the remnant of Israel had found peace.

We have not yet spoken of another fact. Peter leaves the ship to go to Jesus, before He rejoined the disciples. He walks upon the water when Peter goes to meet Him. This port of the history presents us, I doubt not, with the Christian position outside Judaism. Jesus has not rejoined His disciples whom He had made embark when He had separated from them. Christ alone is the strength and the motive: “if it be thou;” one must walk where there is nothing, as Christ walked. Trouble of the waves causes Peter's faith to fail, but the grace and the power of the Savior are there for the others, as for himself. He stretches out His band and supports His poor servant. This is what He has done in order that we should walk as He walked where there is no support but Himself. Once Christ is come back to His disciples, all is peace and the voyage ends; but there are some precious personal instructions here.

The Christian has to walk over the water, to walk by faith, as Jesus walked, where there is no path, but divine power, for man cannot walk—is totally incapable of doing so. To walk there is the fruit of the power of Christ and of faith in the Christian, but this is not all. The eye must be fixed upon the Savior, without that one sinks. Peter had looked at the agitated sea and was sinking. Christ being out of his view, there was a comparison made between the difficulties and himself. Impossible so to walk. He was right; but the divine power was utterly forgotten. So Israel with the spies. The

cities are walled up to heaven, the Anakims were there, we were like grasshoppers. This was to forget God. Was He like a grasshopper before the Anakims? And what did the walls up to heaven? They fell down at the sound with a ram's horn. No, it is a question of looking to God and the path of His will, as Joshua and Caleb said, If the Lord take delight in us, we are well able. Peter had said, “If it be thou,” but then he should always have looked to Him. And see how foolish is unbelief. He saw the sea agitated. What if it had been calm? The reason of the difference was not there, but in looking to Jesus—or not. If one looks to Him, all is possible and all succeeds, because He can and will do all, all blessing all the fruit of faith, thanks be to God. He is there to sustain us even when our faith comes short. If Jesus is the object who makes us walk on the water, Jesus is the strength to walk there, but the eye must be kept fixed on Him. If His power is there, the storm does nothing. If His power is not there, we sink in the calm as much as in the storm. The walk is in every case by faith: and we need Jesus always and with Him can do everything. Storm and calm are alike.

Chapter 154

Notes on Matthew 15

In this chapter the great controversy with the people, a controversy at bottom with the heart of man, is continued, but on moral ground; always in the midst of Israel, but full of instruction for all ages. It is ordinance in contrast with the morality willed by God, which is immutable in this sense that it refers to the relations in which man is found placed whether with God or with man, which consists in the maintenance in walk of that which suits those relations. Once God has found these relations, whether of the creature with Himself or of His creatures among themselves, the duties exist of themselves, being only the practical expression of the relation, as a true worship rendered to God, or piety and filial obedience with every other consequence of those relations. Now the corrupted heart of man loves its own will and the satisfaction of its lusts too much to fulfill its duties; and forms of piety which feed its self-love please it more than duties and leave it free to follow its lusts. Neither God nor His character is truly known. God is not honored by the heart, and the heart is not purified. To wash his hands suits such a man better than a pure heart or approaching God really.

The Lord touches distinctly this moral plague, showing at the same time that the worship of these hypocrites was as far as possible from being accepted of God; that the commandments of men could not but put God aside and exalt man to the detriment of the divine glory. The commandments of God were nullified, His worship encroached on by the false authority of man, and in vain offered by the same persons who were dragged along in the current (for the heart of man is easily subdued by such pretensions to piety), and man replaced God in what acted on the heart.

The Lord takes care to protest openly against the very principles which led to this hypocrisy while addressing the crowd that He called to Him. There is nothing the Lord detests more than human religion, the traditions of men. Nothing shuts out God more while abusing His name and thus subjecting, consciences which do not know Him truly.

Nothing however is more simple; what issues from the heart is what defiles the man. But we see how the heart of man is influenced by these things, and how the simple by this means fall under the influence of hypocrites and of every class of religious teachers. The Pharisees were scandalized at it, said the disciples. And no wonder. To have a conscience before God according to His word, and in the light of God for itself, spoiled all their business. But through love for us, through the necessity of what is true and good, this is what must be.

Then, at the point at which we have arrived in the history of the Savior, it was no longer a question of minding these false doctors—these were not plants that the heavenly Father of our Lord had planted. They were to be rooted up. It was needful to leave them—a solemn thought with regard to the people and still more for Christianity! These were blind leaders of the blind; both were falling into the ditch.

As to the disciples, the Lord's answer goes much farther, while at the same time it makes evident the apostle's want of intelligence; in effect, the principle is evident. But what a picture of the heart of man followed, thanks be to God, by that of the heart of God and of His ways in grace! That which went out of the heart defiled the man. All is simple. But what is it that went out from it? Evil thoughts, murders, then a terrible list of those dark productions of a depraved and corrupt heart. But cannot the Lord relieve a little this gloomy picture by touches of light which are found in these hearts? He finds none. Thus characterized, He leaves the heart of man. He was not wanting in goodness, He knew the heart—knew everything about man; but beyond that list He is silent. It is not saying that there are not amiable features in the natural heart (that may be so even in animals), but morally this is what comes out of the heart, the fruits of the root of the sin which is there, restrained, kept in, modified, yet the fruit that man's heart produces wherever he is permitted to follow his inclinations.

Thus the Lord passes from the hypocritical customs used by man to cover what he is and to give himself a religious character (even though the truths which he professes may be divine, and the, system in its origin emanating from God)—passes, from traditions of men and the vain worship of human ordinances, to the heart which it seeks to cover, and lays it bare. We learn what is in the heart, as God sees it in those who are not among the plants planted by the Father. And their religion which concealed it—what was it? Hypocrisy, and God set aside by human ordinances.

Thus we see, in a people that God had brought near to Himself and in a religion that He had Himself established, God set aside in order to bring in man, his holy traditions and his commandments with hands washed in the place of his heart; and then, what the natural heart is in its fruits before God.

Now the Lord passes in the most striking manner to what is outside all the promises, to a race that was accursed according to the promises made to the people of God, to the place that the Lord quotes as an example of hardness of heart (chap. 11), and shows, whilst at the Same time recognizing the dispensations of God towards His people, and His faithfulness in sending them the Messiah, what a heart comes to that is driven by its need and by the faith which goes right to the heart of God, and what that divine heart is for the wants that faith brings to Him, what He is in Himself outside dispensational rules. The Lord goes towards Tire and Sidon. A Canaanitish woman comes towards Him. Her daughter was tormented with a demon. She recognizes the Lord, as the heir of the promises in Israel, as Son of David. This was truly faith as to His person; but what part had a Canaanitish woman with the promises made to Israel or with the blessings that were granted to them as the people of God? The Lord does not answer her. Deeper lessons were to be given of what man is, but also of what God is.

The disciples would have wished the Lord to grant her what she asked, in order to get rid of her; but the Lord maintains His place as Son of David. He is sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The need of the poor woman rises above her formal acknowledgment of Jesus as Son of David. “Lord, help me.” Her wants are simple. They are plainly declared. But the Lord wishes to put her thoroughly to the test. “It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it unto dogs.” The Lord acknowledges the dispensations of God with respect to His people, however wicked they might be, and the woman does so also; but lessons far deeper are here taught. The poor woman—man as shown in her, finds his place. He is under the curse, without promise, having a

right to nothing, or the power of the demon. He must own his condition, and this is what the woman does. She is a dog, but in need. Her hope is not in any right that she possesses, but in the free goodness of God. It is a need which comes face to face with God come in grace. She fully recognizes what she is, a dog; but she maintains that, if it be so, there is sufficient goodness in God for such beings. Could God say, No, there is not? Could Christ represent Himself thus? Impossible. By faith want is met across all the obstacles of Jewish rights and of personal un-worthiness, thoroughly owning them, but placing itself outside every right in immediate contact with the goodness of God.

Such is faith. It recognizes the state of ruin and of wretchedness in which we are; humble and true, it brings its need to God, but counts on what He is. Now He cannot deny Himself. Besides, it is the key to all the gospel. Jesus was the Christ, the Son of David, a minister of the circumcision; but behind, so to speak, God was there, in all the fullness of His grace, and He passed over the strait limits of Israel and of the promises to be Himself in grace—grace which sufficed for everything. The curse might be there, complete unworthiness; but if want was there and placed itself by faith on the ground of the grace and goodness of God, the barriers disappeared, want and God met together, and the answer was according to His sovereign goodness, the riches of His grace, and according to the faith which counted upon it. The daughter was healed, the Canaanitish woman happy, and God in Christ revealed.

Chapter 155

Missionary Object Not to Hinder Acceptance of Truth

Let not an anxiety for missionary objects hinder the acceptance of the truth. for no so strong motive for missionary exertion exists with the anti-millenarians as with those who believe God's judgments are presently coming; for that belief urges them to special labor for the gathering in of God's elect to the knowledge of the refuge, before the scourge sweeps the earth, to preserve them that have believed.

Chapter 156

Modern Millenarianism

My Dear——,

You will be pleased to hear that I lately fell in with the British Quarterly Review, containing the article on Modern Millenarianism, which a good while ago you wanted me to read. Though particularly occupied just now with souls—a far better and more important object than books—I must try to find time for a few remarks on the paper, the tone of which greatly commends the writer to my heart, if I dissent from most of his conclusions on the subject.

One quite agrees with him that the Jews were wrong not intellectually merely but morally in excluding from their faith a rejected, suffering, crucified Messiah—in expecting His glory without His sufferings. “We can now see, from Genesis to Malachi or at least Zechariah, plain intimations that He must needs first suffer. But even disciples were slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken. Alas! it is ever so. The present testimony of God, at any given epoch, is always the test truth, but strong and simple faith ever cleaves to it in spite of shame and disrepute. (Compare Heb. 11) So, while the Shekinah was present in the holy of holies, Israel was constantly tempted to lust after idols: when that was withdrawn, these ceased to be the special temptations, as is obvious in the later prophets. So, when a Christ in humiliation was presented to faith, Israel would none of Him.

But, again, the promise of a glorious returning Christ, we know from 2 Peter, was to fare no better with the last-day scoffers; and it is to be remembered that saints, if mingling much with the world, its literature, its philosophy and its politics, must inevitably be tinctured more or less by the spirit of the ago. Such seems to me the condition of the writers in this Review, if we take the article on Lord Macaulay and especially pages 26, 27 as a specimen of their sentiments on the momentous topic therein discussed. One can understand God overruling the existence of sects and employing their activity and even rivalry; but it argues a moral blindness to God's object and glory in His church on earth to treat sectarianism as not merely a peccadillo but the legitimate consequence of a right principle. “The very disunion he notices in our church arises from the strength and excellence of its principle.” &c. “Sectarianism is, as we have said, the necessary consequence of the first principle of Protestantism.” It may be “of Protestantism,” but assuredly not of Christianity, whose inspired records and standards uniformly condemn it, root and branch, as a fleshly evil. (1 Cor. 1; 3; Gal. 5) Need it surprise one to read in another paper, page 269, that Cromwell was the noblest product of Puritanism as it was of Protestantism, and this again of Christianity? For, sad to say, pride is often in the ratio of degradation. Nor can we be astonished that both writers are warm admirers of Mr. Carlyle and his writings, and that the latter is so tender to skeptics of the class of John Sterling. The spirit of such scribes savor of the world, not of the Father, and can only corrupt the saints from the simplicity that is in Christ. I would not, I do not, till I know more, confound article 6 with articles 1 and 8: but beyond a doubt the connection is not the best. So that one should not look for any great light on prophetic or dispensational truths in a publication which endorses unsound doctrine on a question so distinctly answered in scripture, and so important in practice, as that of

sectarianism—whether it be a good or bad thing. If wrong about the church's present responsibility, a writer, whom such a class of men would tolerate, could not be expected to be right about the future glory of Christ. Their principle is the exaltation of man in his present state, of Christians in their existing denominationalism; in a word, of Christendom as it is. As this principle naturally leads to the justification of sects, so it fears and dislikes the coming of Christ in judgment of what they justify and of all other evil; it fosters the expectation, unauthorized by scripture, of a reign of the gospel, instead of submitting to the testimony of the gospel of the reign; at best, it seeks a present escape from tribulation, and a proximate triumph for the church (without Christ) on earth, instead of waiting for the appearing of both in a glory whereby the world shall know that the Father sent the Son and loved the church as He loved Him. It goes much farther, even to joining with papists and infidels to overthrow a rival religious body in the vain expectation of bettering society, without imputing more selfish motives. But I am writing an essay, instead of offering a few remarks on the paper.

To return then, it is allowed that Mr. R. Herschel's thoughts and criticisms (given in pp. 153, 154) are incorrect, though there are in them elements of truth, as in those of his critic. Surely no serious person would contend that in Acts 7:38 the word ■κκλησ■α has the same force as in Acts 2 or Matt. 16; 18. The truth is, that the word in itself means "assembly," and is capable of application to a bad or good one, a civic or a religious one, the congregation of Israel in the Old Testament, or the church of God in the New Testament; that is, it proves nothing for the question at issue. Again, I grant and constantly teach, that the Abrahamic promises are quite distinct from God's grace to the church. They involve blessing for the Gentiles, but surely for "thy seed" in a larger measure and a higher mode; whereas the essential feature of "the mystery" is the abolition of any such distinctions between Jew and Gentile. This perfectly falls in with my view, but seems to be excluded by the system of the review, though the principle is surrendered in page 155. In the millennium the Abrahamic promises will be the governing idea; now it is "the mystery" (though it is also true that, in virtue of union with Him who is Abraham's Seed in the highest sense, we enjoy those promises in principle, as is taught in Gal. 3) As to the second point neither Isa. 65 nor Amos 9, cited in Acts 15 teach the long-continued rejection of Israel, much less do they reveal the calling of the church. They leave room for it and agree with it doubtless: but the calling of a body which knows neither Jew nor Gentile within itself, but of both makes one new man, was a mystery as yet hid in God, not disclosed in the prophecies though they might confirm it when it was disclosed. I agree that it was made known not to Paul only but to the New Testament apostles and prophets, and to Paul emphatically. So, too, it is agreed that Herschell's construction of Eph. 3 is a total mistake. But it remains true, that while the church shares many blessings of which the Old Testament speaks, her own proper characteristics as Christ's body and bride were not predicted but hidden previously, save in types which gave no light till themselves received it through the revelation of the mystery in Paul's epistles.

We maintain then, not that Israel, and Judah, Jerusalem, and Sion, the priests and the Levites, may not be typical of God's people now in some of their manifold relations to God and man, but that the church as such, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all, is nowhere predicted in the Old Testament, though prophets may allude to and bring out particular features which are of course true of those who compose the church: as, for instance, God's visiting the Gentiles, &c. But surely this itself is not the church. And if any part of the Old Testament does, where and what is it?

Indeed Eph. 3 and Col. 1 ought to be enough, I think, to set aside such a notion. The use of Isa. 54 in Gal. 4 is in no way adverse, but just what we freely allow. If the critic will have it to mean more, as he appears to do in speaking of “its proper fulfillment,” he must know that one can easily disprove so narrow a way of interpreting the prophecies; and this from the New Testament use of Old Testament prophecy. Gal. 4 says nothing of the sort, and the context of Isa. 54 repudiates such exclusiveness and claims much more, without denying that this was an accomplishment of it. (Compare Matt. 2:15, 17, 18, &c.) This, then, is the answer to what is urged in pages 159 - 163.

The “olive-tree” is a distinct idea, and must not be confounded with the “one new man” of Eph. 2. The olive-tree was not a new thing, and goes up no higher than Abraham: Abel, Enoch, Noah have nothing to say to it. It is the tree of earthly testimony, the responsible separated witness of God, and extends into the millennium when all Israel shall be saved. It does not obliterate Jewish and Gentile distinction, but maintains the Jews to be the natural branches though Gentiles may be for a season grafted in. But the “one new man” is above such differences. Here both are brought in and reconciled in pure grace. Here there are no natural members. All is supernatural, and the idea of cutting off is unknown. Whereas, in Rom. 11, the Jews were cut off in part that the Gentiles might be grafted in amongst them. This clearly then is a place which Christendom now holds in continuation of Israel, liable to be cut off if unfaithful, and in no way clashing with the truth in Ephesians that the church as such has her own peculiar privileges, which, so far from being enjoyed, were not even revealed before the descent of the Spirit, consequent on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and His ascension to heaven.

Nor is the new birth what makes the one body, but the baptism of the Spirit. Compare Acts 1:4, 5 with 1 Cor. 12:13. All saints in all ages are necessarily born of the Spirit; but to be baptized of the Spirit was the new and distinctive blessing never realized before Pentecost. And this it is which forms the church, as we learn from 1 Corinthians, &c. Accordingly Heb. 12 expressly distinguishes “the spirits of just men made perfect” (i.e., the Old Testament saints) from “the church of the firstborn,” &c.

As to what is said on prophecy, it is clear to me that the reviewer does not see that, besides man's sin, and the new birth, and redemption, with their great issues, scripture treats largely of the government of the world whereof Israel was the earthly center, as we are told in Deut. 32 Now, just as clearly the close of this vast tragedy is placed at the end of the age. Thus, I believe that the predictions which speak of the Lord's glory, revealed in judgment and government of this world, await their grand fulfillment, though pledges may have been given. One cannot but be sorry to see him repeat the objection of German skeptics and others founded on Edom, Moab, &c, having ceased to be. Even to the poor Jew they still exist, and God remembers them, howsoever they may be called now; and when the day of visitation arrives, He will judge them as such. At least, all he says here is assumption, and, so far from disproving anything, itself requires proof, and is against the evidence of such scriptures as Dan. 11:41, &c. There is no more difficulty in their re-appearing than in that of the ten tribes; and those who believe in the future restoration of the one cannot well deny the future judgment of the other. The idea of germinant accomplishments of either we feel no disposition to reject; but they are rather an argument for than against the full manifestation; as the many antichrists in the apostle's time proved that it was the last time, at the close of which the Antichrist should come, they inchoate accomplishments, he the ultimate. Undoubtedly there is truth in applying prophecies; for they have their partial developments which

the spiritual man may and ought to judge; but where scripture is to be interpreted, the grand matter is the full meaning, not what is true merely hut what is adequate, and what exhausts the terms of the prediction. This is, I humbly judge, a sufficient reply to the use made of Deut. 30; Isa. 11; 43; Jer. 23; 30; 31; 33; Ezek. 20; 37; Amos 9,; Zech. 8; 12.

On the “promises made to the fathers” we need not dwell as so much has been said by others. The subject of the resurrection and the judgment may claim more notice. Simultaneity of either is taught nowhere in scripture, so far as I know. What looks most like it is John 5:28, 29. But the reviewer must be aware that ■ρα (“hour”) is capable of meaning a long protracted period—nay, that it is so used, a few verses before, of the quickening-hour (i.e., from the days of our Lord to the present moment). Why then may not the hour in which the resurrection occurs extend over a period of a thousand years or more, if so required by Rev. 20 or other scriptures? Matt. 25, so far from being a judgment of all the dead, includes not one dead person (if so, where?) and, even of the quick, it is not universal. It is a judgment of “all the Gentiles,” as distinguished from the Jews who are disposed of in Matt. 24. No doubt it is a final judgment, so far as regards those concerned. That it is universal, even to look at the living only—that it embraces the dead is to beg the question. Again, Acts 17:31 is a judgment of the ο■κουμ■νη, the “habitable earth” and its inhabitants. No dead people are here referred to. That is, the proofs alleged are really no proofs at all.

The main objection to taking Rev. 20:4 - 6 literally, as stated in page 183, seems to be that these verses do not include all the saints from the beginning. But do they not? The reviewer, like many others, restricts verse 4 to the martyrs and confessors, leaving out entirely those referred to in the first clause. Now the verse really speaks of three classes. “I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them” —a purposely broad and vague category, so as to include the elders who obtained a good report by faith, and us for whom God provided some better thing, (that is, saints generally, whether martyred or not,) followed by the two special companies of sufferers whom the Apocalypse so largely describes. (Chaps, 6, 12, 15.) The interpretation which loses sight of a clause whose terms are purposely so comprehensive as the first in this verse is quite unreliable, and the true force of “the first resurrection” comes out more plainly than ever. Compare with it Luke 20:35, 36; Rev. 20:4 is a description of all saints who reign with Christ, not of a part only, nor of mere representatives, but of the whole. “The souls τ■ν πεπελεκισμ■νων,” &c. are in addition to, not a specification of, those already seen enthroned. The impersonal use, as Stuart contends, of ■κ■θισαν falls in with this, and the α■το■ς would refer to the sitters on thrones, followed by the groups of persons first seen disembodied, and subsequently united to their bodies. This is the simple meaning of the verse, as all can see when it is suggested, and accordingly κριμα has its ordinary signification.

It is admitted by the reviewer that, if John had said anywhere “This is the second resurrection,” the explanation would have been authoritative. Now it is not duly observed, that “this is the first resurrection” is the divine explanation of the first vision, not the symbol but the authoritative solution of it; just as much as, in all earlier scene, “the seven heads are seven mountains” and “the ten horns are ten kings.” Here, as in so many other scenes, you have first the hieroglyphic and then the key. I admit that the expression as to the postmillennial judgment scene is “This is the second death,” not the second resurrection, because the point is not merely their reappearing but their awful and endless doom, the lake of fire. No resurrection can be inferred from verses 7 - 9:

but there is a life-resurrection in verses 4 - 6, and in verses 11 - 15 a judgment-resurrection; the one comprehending those who have done good, the other, those who have done evil, as in John 5, and the word “hour” in verse 28, as we have seen from the analogy of verse 25, leaving ample space for the intervening period.

As to the objections in page 186, &c. 1. I deny that the life and reign, &c. is the judgment. It is a connected but distinct thing. 2. I have already denied that there is the smallest intimation of a resurrection in Matt. 25:30, 31. 2 Cor. 5:10 speaks only of the saints, as the reviewer seems to admit in page 183. Acts 17:31 is equally irrelevant. It is not necessary that the two resurrections should be parallel: they are really contrasted in character. 3. The limit of a thousand years is with the reign, not with the life, though in another sense they reign everlastingly. The comparison of verse 6 with 4 is decisive as to this. Why then should not the resurrection in verses 12, 13 be a sequel to 41 and 5? 4. Our view preserves the antithesis much more than the ordinary one, and is unobjectionable on that score. I do not admit the correspondence between 2 Cor. 5 and Rev. 20 if only because the former must take in “us all,” i.e. is universal, while I believe that of Rev. 20 is of the unjust only. There are alas! bad works in God's servants, and the Lord is not indifferent to building up such materials as wood, hay, and stubble upon Christ, but there are no good works in the unjust. Hence, in the account of this last judgment, there is no hint of any good things, more than of good men; while in 2 Cor. 5 you have both, though the good be not unmixed in the saints. This, in Rev. 20:11 - 15, is the κρ■σις, and no man living shall be justified there—no, not if God entered into it with His servants; but they have everlasting life and shall not come into κρ■σις. They are passed from death unto life, though the Lord Jesus will beyond doubt examine their ways, and then shall every man have praise to God. Not a word in the closing scene of Rev. 20 implies the presence of a saved soul: all is consistent with the idea that the judgment is of the wicked only, the book of life being brought forward on God's part, so to speak, as the books were on man's; and both appearing in their terrible sentence. Even the reviewer is obliged to allow that the expression, “till the thousand years,” &c. does not necessarily restrict the resurrection of the rest of the dead to that moment, but simply that it cannot be before. Besides, there is a difference in the way in which Satan's release is spoken of, μετ■ τα■τα δ. ■. λ. μ. χ This formula does tie the loosing of Satan to the close of the thousand years, but is nowhere used about the resurrection of the rest of the dead. So that the argument tells exactly against the point desired. 5. It is astonishing how sensible Christians like the reviewer, Dr. David Brown, &c, overlook the fact that “the dead” is a phrase which, at the epoch in question, coincides as a fact with “the rest of the dead.” In Rev. 20:12 either phrase might have been used, on our theory; in chapter 11: 18 only τ. ν. the dead, and not “the rest of the dead.” In the passage before, ο■ς ν. means all the dead (that is, of course, excepting those raised more than a thousand years before); in the other passage it means all the dead too (that is, just as simply good and bad, because it is before all resurrections, as the other is after one of them). These objections, suggested by the context, are really null, and verses 7 - 9 are the antithesis to verses 1 - 3, and not to 4 - 6 which finds its contrast in 11 - 15; the loosing of Satan, &c, to his being bound, and the second death to the first resurrection.

I must beg the reviewer's pardon for thinking his view of the whole scene, &c, both careless and beyond reasonable belief. The triumphs of the principles of martyrs cannot be called God's judgment and vengeance for their blood on those that dwell on the earth. Besides, what was celebrated in heaven (Rev. 5:10) was that they should reign on (or over) the earth—not their cause

merely, but themselves. One can understand principles reigning or perhaps by a harsh figure being “kings;” still it would be hard, as some have said, to make “priests” of them, while it perfectly suits the person; and lastly, while it is quite intelligible for an affectionate laborer, rejoicing over his tried brethren, to say, “now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord,” it is not so to speak of the souls of beheaded ones living, save in the sense of being united to their bodies. In other words, there is no analogy whatever between the context of 1 Thess. 3, and of Rev. 20 As to 1 Cor. 4:8, one cannot, for a moment, accept an interpretation so vague. They were anticipating the time of the kingdom, having tired of the place of tribulation and patience. Would to God, says Paul, that the time for reigning had really come, that we, poor, despised, buffeted, hungry, devoted to death, might reign with you!

The explanation offered of “the rest of the dead” is, if I remember rightly, what Dr. Wardlaw offered long ago. It is only conceivable in those who have studied very superficially, and who wish not to reduce their ideas to the vision, but to accommodate the vision to their ideas. Look at other passages of the book, where ο■ λοι■■ occurs; and is it not a phrase immediately related to the context wherein it occurs? See in chapter 2:14, “you, the rest in Thyatira who have not this doctrine,” &c, antithetical to those described in the same scene, or epistle, who had. Again, in chapter 9: 20 the non-repentant remnant is in contrast with the killed third part of men, as in chapter 11:11 the affrighted remnant after the slain seven chiliads. Again, in chapter 12: 13 - 17 you have the dragon persecuting the woman who brought forth the man-child: he is caught up out of the way, she flees, the earth helps, and the furious dragon goes away to make war with the remnant of her seed, i.e., evidently in contrast with τ■ν ■■■ενα just named. So again in chapter 19 by ο■ λοι■■, the remnant, is meant that part of the Lord's enemies which remained for the sword that proceeded out of His mouth, after the beast and false prophet were cast alive in the lake of fire—a living remnant who are to be thus judged, and there the scene closes. Then, after the intervention of quite a different vision wherein an angel is seen securing the serpent for a long but limited space, there comes before the prophet the vision of thrones filled already with sitters upon them, beside two other classes of holy and blessed sufferers who are subsequently said to be clothed with their bodies (i.e. “they lived") and reigned, as well as the precious enthroned ones. In contrast with those who lived, the rest (ο■ λοι■■) of the dead are clearly another remnant, not a living but a dead remnant who do not receive life till the millennium closes. That this is spoken of natural death, and of life after that, is manifest from the fact that both they, and the first resurrection class, who together form “the dead,” are here regarded as having been “dead” in the same sense. The death, therefore, common to both can only be natural death, and hence also the resurrection is a real literal resurrection of the saints before the millennium, and of “the rest of the dead” after it. The distinction is certainly as plain as possible between the remnant in Rev. 19 and that in chapter 20.

Further, one must repeat that the whole is not merely symbolical. Doubtless the thrones are symbols here, as are the white horses in the preceding chapter. But then we have, besides, the revealed explanation— “this is the first resurrection.” It is not then a resurrection, as in Ezek. 37, used to symbolize some other action of divine power and grace but a vision is seen, and the Holy Ghost explains it as the first resurrection, shared by those who are priests of God and of Christ, and who reign with Him a thousand years. Then, upon the loosing of Satan, we have the last rebellion of mankind—the nations from the four quarters of the earth, who are devoured by fire

from God out of heaven, and of course added to the rest of the dead whom “the first resurrection” had left undisturbed in their graves. Subsequently appears a great white throne, and One sat upon it from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And the dead are seen standing before the throne, and the final assize ensues. This is no coming of Christ in judgment of the earth, and of course all mention of living saints caught up to Him is absent. It is a judgment of the dead before the throne, not an advent of Christ to the earth, for earth and heaven are fled before His face. Not a word is hinted about His coming to the living, but the dead stand before Him—where is not said, but it is clearly neither the heaven nor the earth that now are, but both will have disappeared. This then is not at all the time nor the circumstances described in Matt. 25; for there you have all the nations, as such, gathered and separated before Him after He has come (to earth) and taken His seat (not on the great white throne for judging the dead but) upon the throne of His glory when He shall judge the Gentiles, when the apostles shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. That is, the popular scheme is confusion, a vain attempt at harmonizing a scene of judgment of nations (on the earth of course, for there are none in heaven, nor in eternity), with one so different in nearly every respect as the judgment of the dead: here no living are in question, there no dead. It seems therefore the extreme of hardihood, in the way of interpretation, both to expunge the personal coming of the Lord in judgment of the quick from Rev. 19:11 - 21 where it is more fully described than in any part of scripture, and to insert it in Rev. 20:11 - 13 where it unquestionably is not depicted, and could not be; for at that time there are no quick to judge and no earth to come to—a double failure, in the latter adding to, and in the former taking from, the plain force of the words of this prophecy. Possibly Acts 17:31 may coincide with Matt. 25, but not 2 Cor. 5:10 for reasons already given, all being distinct in character from Rev. 20:11 - 13 as shown above. The reviewer's reason for denying that Rev. 19:11 - 21 describes a personal coming appears to be akin to those who object, because it dwells so elaborately upon the person of the “Word of God who comes to make war! whereas in Rev. 20 we are to suppose His personal coming must be, because it is not described at all!! Is this “God's pure daylight, the true analogy of scripture,” beaming upon the apocalyptic symbols?

I know not who ever drew so crude an inference from 1 Thess. 4:16 as that which the reviewer calls “the argument,” unless it were some ill-taught Bloomsbury lecturer. Every one else holding the pre-millennial advent known to me interprets both clauses in this and the following verse as he does; so that the argument does not lie there, but in the fact of the resurrection here noticed being exclusively that of the righteous at Christ's coming; whereas that of the unrighteous, as we have just seen from Rev. 20, is when heaven and earth have fled away and His coming is out of the question. It may be, of course, that some ignorant person has so argued; but we are no more responsible for such mistakes than is the reviewer for the crudities of many of his friends. A similar remark applies to the alleged millenarian use of 1 Cor. 15:23, 24. I can only say that such egregious misinterpretations are new to me. All well-instructed students of prophecy that 1 am acquainted with admit and contend that τ■ τ■λος means the end (not of the dead but) of Christ's kingdom which He takes as the exalted man; that the only resurrection here treated of, besides Christ's, is of those who are His. On the other hand, there is not the least foundation for the reviewer's statement that “when they were gathered in, the end of His temporary mediatorial dispensation would have arrived.” There are three epochs referred to: first, the resurrection of Christ; next, that of His people (in order to reign with Him); then, the end of this kingdom when He

delivers it up to God even the Father, death itself having died. Now this is manifestly confirmed by 2 Tim. 4, where the judgment of quick and dead is connected with “His appearing and His kingdom” —not as if His kingdom closed with His appearing, but rather that His appearing ushers in His kingdom; and, before that kingdom terminates, the resurrection of the wicked and all judgment are necessarily over. So also Rev. 20, where we have the resurrection of the holy severed by more than a thousand years from that of the rest of the dead, and it is with their judgment (and not the first resurrection) we find the annihilation of death connected in this chapter. Here again the same remark applies as has been said of 1 Thess. 4—they that are Christ's rise at His coming; and of these only and separately does 1 Cor. 15 speak; whereas “the dead” which remain, after the millennium is closed, are not raised till His coming is an impossibility, for the earth is fled away. I should say therefore, that the separate and subsequent resurrection of the wicked conclusively follows from a comparison of 1 Cor. 15 with 2 Tim. 4 and Rev. 20, as well as the truth that the kingdom in question fills the interval between the ■πειτα and the ε■τα (i.e., the “afterward” and the “then” of these verses).

I am glad “the reviewer gives up, as not sufficiently explicit, the usual way of neutralizing the force of the expression “resurrection from the dead,” as distinct from “resurrection of the dead.” Others too, I remember, have been either ignorant or unfair on this head: for though “the resurrection from the dead” is of course a fortiori “of the dead,” never does the converse hold; and this establishes their distinctive character. The natural meaning of the terms is selection, and therefore priority in rising of those selected. To say “not priority,” after admitting that it implies selection, is to my mind unintelligible; and it must be repeated that Matt. 25:32 does not state or imply but exclude resurrection from that scene. Again, one cannot understand the note which says that “we lay no stress on the difference between ■ξαν■στασιν τ■ν ν. (as Rec. and Griesbach have it) and τ■ω ■κ ν. (as Scholz, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Alford, Wordsworth, and Tregelles read).” Why, the difference is that the former is wrong and the latter right, the former is a contradiction in terms, while the latter is established by external evidence and harmonizes the internal. Thus the argument in favor of a separate precious resurrection of the righteous appears sound and decisive, and the popular notion of one common resurrection of all the dead is contrary to the plainest scriptures.

Yours affectionately, W. K.

Chapter 157

Scripture Query and Answer: Partakers of the Divine Nature

Q. 2 Peter 1:4. What is the force of being a partaker of the divine nature? H.

A. Far from bringing into Godhead, which is incommunicable as supreme, while we are creatures, I do not even accept a common expression from Romanists downwards—union with God. But the moral elements of what He is He can communicate in giving us life in Christ. Nature is properly what makes any being what it is, as “angel,” “man,” “cow,” or anything else. 2 Peter 1:4 is not the simplest and clearest passage to explain the point, because it is properly moral, i.e., specially what characterizes the Christian as such. The reason I think so is, that it speaks of great and precious promises by which it is more to me what John 3 calls “born of water,” and “Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” Still it is not separable from the other point, life-giving. But it speaks of promises, and escaping corruptions which are in the world. This side of being born again even Romanists, and also Arminians, and most evangelicals admit and confine themselves to, i.e., an action of the Holy Ghost by the word by which man is morally purified. Nay, Wesleyans would say that it may be regained; and even those who do not go so far still hold it as only a purifying of what is. The Wesleyans say that man had body, soul, and spirit before the fall, and after the fall body, soul, and spirit corrupted; that, when one is born again, the corruption is removed; and hence that one may be quite perfect as man, if the corruption be wholly removed. But, without touching on perfection now, this is, to say the least, a most defective view of the matter. The Lord is a life-giving Spirit; and, operating by the Holy Ghost, “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” — not the Spirit who is God, but one is by His divine power quickened, just as that which is born of the flesh is flesh. I receive spiritually life from Christ, as I receive naturally life from Adam. In this sense Christ is my life. He is eternal life (1 John 1), and “he that hath the Son of God hath life.” It is not I as of the flesh, but Christ lives in me. Hence, viewed abstractedly as thus born (for so John views things), it is said he cannot sin, because he is born of God. And this life we have in the power of Christ's resurrection; and it is acted in by the Holy Ghost given to us because of Christ's work. So after His resurrection, as God breathed into Adam, Christ breathed into His disciples. Through this it is said “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” A great accessory truth that comes in connected with this is, that, Christ having died, I am counted (Col. 3) of God dead as to the flesh, and am to count myself so (Rom. 6), and to realize it (2 Cor. 4), so that only the life of Christ should he manifested. This is the point to which my soul clings on this subject, the real communication of life in receiving Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost acting in it in power, created again in Christ Jesus, though the flesh still be there. But I am not in flesh but in Christ, and am privileged and bound to hold it dead. Of course this does practically cleanse by and according to the word. One may not be able to explain it physiologically, but it is quite plain in scripture; and in it the saint will live eternally with God. “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit” —partakes of the nature of that of which it is born. It is holy, loves, and, as in Christ as a man, obeys. In a word it is the reproduction as to its nature of Christ's life. “If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.” It is as new a thing as a graft in a wild tree.

As regards using Old Testament facts as figures or types, our imagination is to be held in check, nor can we ever insist on such as a doctrine. But there is a passage which may assist the mind on this point, 1 Cor. 10:11, where the word “ensamples” is types or figures. This gives the principle. Then we must only look to the Holy Ghost and divine guidance to use them soberly and aright.

The shade of different meaning in κοινων■ς and μ■τοχος is, I believe, just; but it is a question of adequate observation of its New Testament use in Greek, and any adequate proof would make one abandon it. Κοινωνο■ is really partners in Luke 5, then, μ■τοχοι the fact of taking part; but I have no anxiety to insist on this.

Φ■σι■ is moral in 2 Peter from the force of what is said in the passage. In divine things this is everything, as holiness, love, &c.; but the point to be insisted on is, that there is more than mere moral effect, though there be this—that Christ is for us a life-giving Spirit; as born of flesh involves a like nature.

I do not know whether the question has been met as you wish, for there is no effort to anticipate and answer the objections easily made by unbelief. But I think, if you take the passages, the life-giving and Christ being our life will be very plain, and that is what to my mind is so important, though we never know what it really means till we know it as deliverance in power, the flesh being held as dead, according to Rom. 8:2, 3, having passed out of the state described in chapter 7. according to the doctrine of chapter 6 and the beginning of chapter vii.

Chapter 158

Peculiar Views

One of the symptoms of latitudinarian infidelity at the present day is the dislike of what they call “peculiar views;” and this is the more subtle as it is often found among orthodox men in churchism as well as dissent, who count themselves and are accounted by others as far as possible from unbelief.

But it is unbelief so to deal with any truth taught in God's word; and all the truths of revelation will be found at bottom “peculiar views” to the natural mind when their edge comes in contact with the will of man. Thus election, eternal life, human responsibility, divine judgment, everlasting punishment, when faced, prove stumbling-blocks no less than the Deity of the Son and of the Spirit, incarnation, atonement, resurrection, and imputation of righteousness.

It is the same principle even among Christians when they cavil against the assertion of the Holy Spirit's presence, the church's heavenly character, the completeness of redemption, the distinctive calling of the Christian, the coming and the day of the Lord. For it is the same evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, which, in the unbeliever rejecting the Lord Jesus and the grace of the gospel, in the believer decries as “peculiar views” those truths which are essential to the glory of the Lord and the well-being of the Christian, but ignored if not rejected throughout Christendom.

Chapter 159

Brief Thoughts on Philippians 1

The epistle to the Philippians has a peculiar character, rather distinct from the other epistles; though there are indeed traces of the same in the epistle to Timothy. Taking it characteristically, it is the epistle of Christian experience. We do not get doctrinal teaching in it, but the experience of Christian walk—not the experience of one who is going wrong, but of one who is going right, the experience which the Spirit of God gives. The apostle is perfectly clear as to his position, yet here he counts himself not to have attained anything. He is on the road, he has not got there; but Christ had laid hold on him. When I speak of my place in Christ, as in Ephesians, it is in heavenly places; but, as a matter of fact, we are here going on through the earth full of temptations and snares. Philippians gives us—not of course failure—but the path of the Christian, salvation being looked at throughout as at the end of the wilderness. Paul had no doubt that Christ had laid hold on him for this blessedness, but he had not got there. Salvation is always looked at as the close of the journey in Philippians.

It is so much the more remarkable as to the Christian's path that you never find sin mentioned from the beginning to the end of the epistle. The thorn in the flesh was needed when Paul came down from paradise; it was not that the flesh had got any better. The thorn was something to hinder sin, something that made him outwardly contemptible in his ministry. Every one, probably, would have a different thorn according to his need. There is no change in the flesh, but the power of the Spirit of God is such that the flesh is kept down. “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus” would not be necessary if the flesh were any better. It is not that there is any uncertainty as to salvation or acceptance, but that we should so walk through the wilderness that the flesh should be shut up, as it were. Suppose I have a troublesome man in the house; if I keep him locked up, I am quite easy about him; but sometimes we are foolish enough to leave the door open. God looks at us as dead with Christ, and we are called on to reckon ourselves dead. I have a title to do it because Christ has died, and I am crucified with Christ. It is not only that we are born of God, but we have died with Christ.

Up to the middle of Rom. 5 sins are treated of, and atonement; in verse 12 nature is dealt with. We have each our own sins, but “by one man's disobedience” we have the same nature, we are all in the same boat; the remedy for this is that we have died with Christ. You cannot say of a man lying dead on the floor, “You have got bad passions and self-will;” he has neither passions nor self-will, he is dead.

Then we have the power of Christ. “In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” You say you are in Christ, then your acceptance is perfect; if you are in Christ, Christ is in you: then let me see Christ and nothing else.

If you are dead, you cannot live on in sins. If you have got Christ, it is in His death you have got Him. In Col. 3 we have God sees us as dead; in Rom. 6. I reckon myself dead; in 2 Cor. 4 we have “bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” This is going very far indeed. Death to a Paul was so realized that only the

life of Jesus works in him.

In Phil. 1 we see the position and life of the Christian in this scene; in chapter 2 we see the pattern of Christ; in chapter 3 the energy that carries the Christian through this world, all things being dross and dung that he may win Christ; in chapter 4 we see the Christian's superiority to all circumstances. We have in this epistle the whole character of Christian life; this assumes that our place in Christ is settled. You cannot manifest Christ if you have not Christ. Assuming that Christ has borne our sins, and that we have died with Him, we get on that foundation the unfolding of the path of the Christian, the manifestation of this life we have got from God (a thing John looks at abstractedly in itself); “He that is born of God doth not commit sin.” The Christian is to manifest the life of Christ, and nothing else. “Ye are” (not “ought to be") “the epistle of Christ,” and let Christ be read in you as plainly as the law in the tables of stone. As Christ represents us before God, so you appear in the presence of the world for Christ. It is a great thing to say that my heart is so full of Christ that nothing but Christ appears. If I am in lowliness of heart before Him, living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, I shall manifest Christ. In these days when the word of God is so called in question, it is blessed to think how a single verse of scripture was sufficient for Him for authority, and sufficient for the devil who had not a word to say.

There is no uncertainty as to the faithfulness of Christ in bringing us through the wilderness. The moment the Christian looks at himself in Christ, there is no “if;” but the moment you get a Christian in the wilderness, there are “ifs,” not that there is the smallest doubt, but to bring in dependence. We are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation” —no doubt here, but dependence. I am “the righteousness of God in him.” “If ye hold fast the beginning of your confidence;” if I hold fast, I am not to be trusted—it is positive dependence every moment; I learn that. The mischief of the state of the heart is that, as to will, man has got independent. The whole thing for us is to get to absolute dependence on infallible faithfulness, on unwearied love to carry us through. The heart is brought back to blessed dependence; the dependence is blessed, but the sense of that faithful love is unfailing joy and rest. It is not that the “if” is not true, but the Father's hand will never let it take place. We have grace to help in every time of need; without Him we can do nothing; with Him, in a certain sense, everything. We learn here that I can never excuse myself if I let the flesh act. The existence of the flesh does not give a bad conscience: otherwise we should never have a good one.

“And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent.” There is growth. What I desire to press is, the practical place into which God has brought us in grace to Himself. “Thou hast guided them by thy strength to thy holy habitation.” That is where you are brought: God has brought you to Himself. It is not a rule imposed, but Christ revealed. The question for you as Christians is, Are you walking in the light as God is in the light? God is light and love; His essential names. You are brought to God without a veil, and there is light on everything you do.

God has brought us to know Christ: “This is my beloved Son,” that is what I delight in. The more we look at Him the more we see there is the place God has brought us. If heaven opens on Him, it opens on us; if God owns Him as Son, He owns us as sons.

Now we have to learn Christ. Has Christ had such a place in your hearts today, that the things which spring from Christ sprung from you? Have you understood that Christ has brought you to

Himself? Now especially it is important that Christians should be Christians. What He was before God in perfection reproduced itself before men to please His Father. Are you learning Christ, beloved friends? When I look at Christ, I see God manifested in a man in this world, the expression and pattern of what God delights in. I am not before God on the ground of what I have done, or what I am, but on the ground of Christ. There is for us this continually learning Christ. God has been revealed to us, we have seen what He is—seen it in light to love it. It is not an effort that I may get more like Christ, but that, according to the knowledge of Him I have got, there should be nothing contrary to that knowledge. I do not expect a babe to be a man. When one sees a babe delighting in its mother, and obedient, it is just as delightful in its way as to see a man.

“That in nothing I may be ashamed, but that with nil boldness, as always, Christ may be magnified in my body whether by life or by death.” Whether it were life or death that he came across, Christ would be always glorified in his body. The Christian, having his eye on Christ, knows no standard but Christ in glory. We are “to be conformed to the image of his Son;” this is the blessed hope of the Christian and nothing short of it. “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly;” there is no doubt, no uncertainty of our having it, or of what it is. Christ is “the firstborn among many brethren” —they like Him. Christ “shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.”

I see Christ up there, and I get this unspeakably simple truth that when I was a poor sinner, another man stepped in and set me free. “Let these go their way,” Christ said of His disciples; they go away, they run—poor work, but they are safe. He takes the whole thing on Himself, and He is to be the judge. The perfect good of God and the perfect evil of man met at the cross; everything was settled there. The new heavens and the new earth depend upon the cross. The Man who was there made sin is now sitting on the right hand of God in glory. The Holy Ghost comes down and makes me know that my place is settled before God. A sinner cannot have confidence if sin is not put away, but there He is, the pattern of what I am to be, our “forerunner.”

I am going to bear the image of the heavenly; I want to attain that, to win Christ, to be like Him forever. The treasure is indeed in an earthen vessel, but I have got the treasure. I never rest until I am like Christ in glory. Christ is my life; that life lives on Christ as its object; I am going to be like Him, I shall never be satisfied till then. The Spirit of God realizes this in our hearts in power. The light that shines from the glory shines in my heart.

Even before chapter 4 how perfectly the apostle puts the heart at peace. “Some preach Christ even of envy and strife:” never mind, if Christ is preached. What peace of heart he had! He had been in prison for four years, in the most trying circumstances; “all this,” he says, “shall turn to my salvation.”

It is what is behind that faith gets hold of! The wretched Jews, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the sabbath day, send the soldiers to break their legs; and what did they do? They sent one of them right into paradise!

Paul has been feeding the church ever since from that prison at Borne.

“To depart and be with Christ is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” So completely happy, so completely settled that I do not know which to choose! Self is gone. It would be worth while to stay because I can labor for Christ. Christ loves the church: then I shall

stay! With him it was laboring for Christ, or living with Christ. Christ had such a place that the power of circumstances disappears. How near he lived to Christ! There was not perfection—not yet—but he had Christ completely. He was living up to Christ in the measure to which he had attained.

We may get a blessed truth, as Peter did, revealed by the Father, a real revelation, I do not question that, but the flesh may not be broken down up to the measure of what we have been taught. Peter was doing Satan's work, and Christ said to him, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” Would not Christ have to call you Satan in something?

If we are not bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, our condition of soul is not up to the measure in which we have been taught.

Have you the true desire? Is there a locked up chamber in your heart? Christ will open it some day. Can you say, “Search me, O God, and know my heart.... and lead me in the way everlasting?”

The Lord grant us wisdom to understand His love!

Chapter 160

Brief Thoughts on Philippians 2

In this whole epistle is little or no doctrine, but the practical exhibition of Christian walk by the power of the Spirit of God.

The next chapter gives the energy of divine life; and the last superiority to circumstances. Chapter 2 shows us the spirit in which Christ walked down here, as the true character and spirit of the Christian, the meekness and gentleness of Christ, as in the third we see the energy of divine life. In some Christians there is a certain degree of natural energy. When Moses killed the Egyptian, he had not forgotten the fleshly energy of Pharaoh's court. Flesh on God's side can never stand flesh on the devil's side. Moses had to be kept for forty years keeping sheep that he might learn to be quiet. If one side of Christian character is wanting, the other is always defective too. You never get one side by itself without even that being defective.

In this chapter we see the perfect blessed giving up of self, and the most delicate consideration of others. Wherever true love is at work, you always reckon on the love of others. Epaphroditus was very uneasy because he perfectly reckoned on the love of the Philippians when they heard that he had been sick. You see the thoughtfulness and considerateness of grace where self is done with. It was perfect in Him.

Where there is not the positive power of Christ's presence, self will be there directly.

How gently and graciously the apostle speaks! The Philippians had thought of him in prison. He had heard of disputings among them: Euodias and Syntyche were not of the same mind; but he cannot rebuke them sharply when he had just received their kindness. “Fulfill ye my joy,” if you want to make me perfectly happy, you will be like-minded, “having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” —a rebuke, but a very gentle one. The spirit in which he writes is exceedingly beautiful.

Here we find that which in Christ leads to all this. In Him there was the total absence of self; in us there ought to be the suppression of self. “In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” This will be no difficulty to us if we are with Christ. If I am with Christ, if I think of self at all, what do I think of? My faults, of course. I see in Christ such obedience, such love and grace, that I must think of my own failures. If I look at a brother, I see the blood of Christ upon him, I see the Spirit in him when I look on him with the eyes of Christ. Wherever the heart is feeling with Christ, one cannot but see good in others. Paul always speaks first of the good amongst those to whom he writes. There is only one exception to this amongst the epistles. Take Corinthians (which is not an exception): they were going on shockingly ill, and yet he says, before there is a word about the evil, “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in everything ye are enriched of him.” The Epistle to the Galatians is an exception; there he plunges right into the evil at once. Where doctrine and faith were touched, he was a great deal more severe than when Christians were walking badly, not that there is any excuse for a bad walk. “I stand in doubt of you,” he says to them; but in the next chapter, “I have

confidence in you through the Lord;" his mind rises up to Christ.

In the ordinary path of the Christian, the heart being with Christ, the thing I see in myself is never a good thing—not that this brings distrust, for this is all wrong—it is thinking Christ's heart is like mine! I do not doubt His love, but the effect of living near Him and being with Him is that, while love is perfect, light is perfect too. Suppose one Christian a powerful evangelist, another a teacher: the teacher will think, "What a poor evangelist I am!" the evangelist will feel, "Oh! I know only the elements." He does see Christ in his brother. We are wretched creatures in ourselves, but this is not a cold measure of what a person is, but the thoughts of Christ about others and about self. The man who has a great gift from God will be thinking of bringing it out as pure as he got it in— "He has lit a lantern in my heart: does the light come out as pure as it went in?" It is wonderful the happiness with which a person walks when going through the world in that way—self is gone. As a Christian, he sees that God has lit up grace in his heart, but alas! the walls of the lantern are sometimes dirty; when he looks at others, he sees they let out a little light any way.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." What was the mind that was in Jesus? It was always coming down. We should call it a long journey from the throne of God to the cross; it was very far indeed, and it was always down. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The more He humbled Himself, the more He was trampled on. He begins His ministry with "Blessed, blessed," He has to end it with "Woe, woe." He goes down, whether trampled on or not, till He can go no lower, down to "the dust of death."

He "being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation." He always was God, but He laid aside the form of God, the outward glory, "and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." He will never cease to be a servant, though Lord of all; He will never give up this service of love to minister to our blessing. In the condition of Godhead to begin, He takes the form of a servant, and He was always obedient. He had no will of His own: nothing could be more humble than this. We find in this chapter the path the Lord went, from having the form of God, down to that death on the cross. Adam was in the form of man, and he did set up by robbery to be equal with God; he was the first example of "he that exalteth himself shall be abased." The Second Adam abases Himself and is exalted; He lays aside His glory and takes a servant's form.

Man (especially in these days) is just the opposite; man's mind does not want God. The whole effort is to get the first man up; and you find even Christians joining in this, following where they cannot lead. Are children more obedient, servants more faithful, men of business more honest? It is the exaltation of man's will and the setting aside of God. The Second man's path was exactly the opposite; He always went down. Are you content to do this? Are you content to have the mind that was in Christ Jesus, content to be always trampled on? This was God's path in the midst of evil, and this is what we want to get. People talk about "God's creation" —why it was sin made it as it is, not the physical world of course, but the world as we have it. When was the world embellished? By Cain, when he went out from the presence of God. Man tries to make the world pleasant without God: this is the true and real character of the world. You continually hear it said, "What harm is there in music? what harm in painting?" There is harm in not one of physical things; the harm is in the use I make of them. What harm is there in strength? None whatever; but if I use my strength to knock a man down, there is harm in that. The harm is in the use people make of things. What harm

was there in the trees of the garden? None. Men have in a certain sense lost God, and they try to get on as well without Him as they can. Christ was in this world in the form of a servant, a poor carpenter. Love delights to serve, blessed infinite love! Nothing could be more divine than when He gave up “the form of God” and went down, down, till He came to the gibbet—I do not say the cross, for the cross has become an honored name— but the actual gibbet. Then God exalts Him as man.

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” We see the perfectness of love that takes the form of a servant and gives up self in everything. If this mind is in you, you do not look at self to look at the good that is there, or to spare yourself suffering. “And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God;” such is the character of divine love come into this world of evil. “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” will not do now. The world would be a paradise if that were done, but it is not a paradise; and what we want is a spirit of love that will carry us through this world. “For us” “to God:” there was in Christ the absolute giving up of self for what is perfectly worthless, and yet with a worthy object. Take the divine side of love; and the worse the object, the greater is the love; but if you take the human side, the greater the object, the greater is the love. We find both in Christ. If I take the creature side, the excellence of the object makes the greatness of the affection; if I take the divine side, the worthlessness of the object makes the greatness of the affection. We see divine power come into the midst of evil—there never was anything like it. God could not come among angels as He came in this sinful world. “Unto the glory of God by us.” “That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.” “Which things the angels desire to look into.”

Christ is the center of all that. I find His divine person tracing this path all the way down. He never gives up the service of love. He will reign as King above all; all must confess His lordship. But the service of love He will never give up; as indeed it is a higher thing. He is “made Lord” (He was always God, of course), but He makes Himself a servant.

“Jesus knowing that.... He was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments and took a towel and girded himself.” If He was going out of this world, the disciples might say “He is gone into glory and has left us here; His service is over.” “No,” says the Lord, and He shows them that He does not give up His service. The key to John 13 is this: “I cannot stay with you, but you must have a part with Me: a spot will not do there.” He will take the place of a servant even in the glory. “He shall gird himself.....and will come forth and serve them.” His love is His glory; the nearer we are to Him, the more we shall adore Him.

In 1 Cor. 15 we read,” Then shall the Son also himself he subject.” He gives up the kingdom which He will rule in, but He keeps His place as man. He will be the “Firstborn among many brethren” forever and ever. His ear was bored to the door-post. The slave had a right to go out free after seven years of service, but He says, “I will not go out free, I will be a servant forever,” when He could have had twelve legions of angels at His command. Down here He was as much God as before He came down, but He had the “form of a servant.” “He ever liveth to make intercession for us,” and it will be His delight and joy to minister blessing throughout eternity, and thus make it doubly precious to us.

If I get hold of the path, the spirit, the mind of Jesus, nothing could be more hateful to me than anything of self. You never find an act of self in Christ. Not merely was there no selfishness, but there was no self, in Him. He has given us the immense privilege of always going down to serve others as He did.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” Salvation is always looked at as the end of the journey, as the thing arrived at, in this epistle: therefore he speaks of working it out. “Work out your own salvation:” this is in contrast with Paul's working, not with God's work, as people so often misunderstand it to be. Paul was in prison: they had lost him. They had not lost God, but Satan seemed to have got the victory. If you are there with Joshua fighting Amalek, it is a very solemn thing; and if you have not Moses' hands up, you will be beaten. There is no uncertainty, but it is exceedingly serious to fight God's battle against Satan. Perhaps you think it must be easy to fight God's battles. It is not easy even with the Lord to help me; it is a most solemn thing that my business is to overcome Satan. There was no conflict in Egypt; the Israelites were slaves there. When out of Egypt, there was both the conflict and the trial of the wilderness. When they got over Jordan, they entered into Canaan, and whenever Joshua crossed the Jordan, conflict characterized their state. “Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?” There was no circumcision till they crossed the Jordan; the stamp of Egypt was on them till they were dead and risen. It is a solemn thing that I stand in Christ's place, in Christ's name (every Christian does, of course, I mean), in the scene of Satan's power. We are vessels of God's power against Satan. Here am I standing in Christ's name in Satan's world! God works in me; but this makes it only the more serious still: I should not fail.

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings.” Before God we never murmur, never dispute. If God were seen, there would not be one murmur, one disputation; and faith realizes His presence.

It is remarkable as to the exhortation which follows, that if you take it to pieces, you see Christ in everything. “That ye may be blameless and harmless:” He was that. He was the Son of God, “without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.” He was “the light of the world,” while He was in it; “holding forth the word of life” —this was just what He did. “Ye are the epistle of Christ,” filled up with mud it may be, and hard to read, but still ye are the epistle of Christ.” “That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” I owe everything to Christ: I owe Him salvation, heaven, everything. I owe Him myself; the heart becomes engaged in this manifestation. He is gone, and He has left us here, and He says “I am glorified in them.”

Is that kind of desire yours? Not the desire of the sluggard who has nothing, who roasteth not that he took in hunting; but the real desire of manifesting Christ—the desire that cannot bear anything that is not Christ? God helps us in this. Paul could speak of “always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus;” he takes death and holds it on himself. He wants to keep the walls of the lantern bright, and so he would rub them. “Always!” this is a great deal to say. What we have to do is to carry about with us the dying of the Lord Jesus, and then the flesh would never stir. We fail in this, and the Lord comes in and helps us. “We which live are alway delivered unto death.” The flesh is always present, there is no change in that. The Lord knows He has to help us, and He puts us through trials and exercises; the Lord makes everything to work for good to us. The apostle could say, “delivered unto death for Jesus' sake.” When we look back to a past life, we have more to be thankful for our trials than for anything else. Till the root is reached, the Lord does not let you

go; the heart desires this—would not let the trial slip away. Oh! if we only trusted God, there would be confidence in His love. “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.” Are your hearts on the things that are seen, or on the things that are not seen?

There are three spaces in our hearts: Christ must be at the bottom of our heart and at the top also; it is what is between the two that shows my state.

Has your heart been open all day for the things of the world to trot over? Has the highway of your heart been open all day?

May God give us to be anything or nothing, so that the Lord Jesus may be everything!

Chapter 161

Brief Thoughts on Philippians 3

In this chapter we get the energy that carries the Christian on through the wilderness in view of the glory. It does not give us the meekness and gentleness of Christ like chapter 2, but the energy that counts all but dross and dung to win Him. Doctrine is not the point in this epistle. Salvation is always looked on as at the end of the journey. The Christian is viewed as in a race, and in that race he is entirely under the power of the Spirit of God; the flesh is not looked at as acting. Christ is before us; the thing we are predestinated to is to be conformed to His image. There is no thought now, inasmuch as there is a man in the glory, of any place or object for the Christian but to be with and like that man in the glory. As Christ was taken up as man into glory, we shall be taken up the same way to be like Him. The thought of the believer can never rest short of that. Paul says that he wants not to be unclothed, but clothed upon. “To depart and be with Christ” is blessed, but it is still waiting. The apostle here says that he will “change our vile bodies.” The cross having come in, it has given us the death of the old man, and the reception of Christ as head of the new family in glory; we look off from everything to this. The hope that is in Christ is that when He appears we shall be like Him. The hope we have is to be like Himself, with Himself surely, but like Himself: nothing short of this is the object of the believer. He would grow undoubtedly, but still it is growth by looking at an object we shall never attain to till we are raised from the dead in His image or changed into it.

There is no mending of the flesh, no sanctification of nature, no forming of man as he is—there is death. The old man has been entirely and finally judged, but Another is now in the glory as man. This we could not have as all object of faith until Christ was risen. God has “provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” — “perfect,” that is, in glory. That could not be, nor was there any title for it, till the work upon the cross; there was the title and groundwork for all this. There was no connection with Christ as man among the children of Adam; He was a true man, but union there was none whatever. He was one of them, but He was alone. He was a man without sin; we were men with sin: you can never unite the two, for they “are contrary the one to the other.” He could come in grace as a true man amongst us, but He abode alone. In Heb. 2 four reasons are given why Christ took flesh and blood: first, to make atonement; second, for God's glory and counsels; third, to destroy him that had the power of death; fourth, that He should go through every sorrow, and so have sympathy with us. There was perfect grace in Him, but He was alone. People speak of Him as “bone of our bone,” but this is totally false; we are bone of His bone now that He is on high. Wherever you find the thought of Christ being bone of our bone, you get redemption and atonement made unnecessary, or at any rate muddled up. “When atonement has been wrought, then by the Holy Ghost He unites us to Himself, and says we are “members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.”

Thus we learn that the only thing by which the flesh can be dealt with is death. Until atonement was made God could not deal with sinners in the way of righteousness; He could forbear— “For the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God.” The difference with us is that righteousness is there before Him, and we are in it. Our souls stand in divine righteousness in the

presence of God.

The apostle does not talk of sin in the flesh here. The flesh has its religion as well as its lusts, and this is much more attractive than worshipping God in the spirit, the flesh cannot do this. “Though I might also have confidence in the flesh,” such is the flesh's religion. Paul was the most positive enemy of God all the while. Suppose this blamelessness of Paul— to whose credit was it? Paul's. Wherever religion is a credit to us, it is not worth anything; worse than that, it deceives us. You may have all the truths which do not test faith, and yet be without this. The time will come when whosoever “killeth you will think that he doeth God service.” They thought they were doing God service, but they would not hear of the truth that tested faith—the Father revealed in the Son.

Thus the whole system of the religion of the flesh is set aside here. It is always the truth that tests faith. Suppose I fast twice in the week, and give tithes of all I possess, to whose credit is this? Mine. The moment I get the cross the flesh is judged, and that is no credit to me. The thing that tests faith flesh resists. The disciples would not hear of the Lord's death because it tested their faith. Peter, the very man that owned what He is going to build the church on, says, “That be far from thee,” and the Lord has to call him “Satan.” Although he had got a truth, he had not the flesh judged up to the measure of what he knew; he would not have a truth that breaks through the flesh in a way he does not like.

“That I may win Christ— “this is the great principle of the whole chapter, and you get perseverance in it, which is more. Suppose a man just saved, what does he think about the world? That it has deceived him. Leave him for a while, and his family twine round him, and soon he begins to seek the things of the world. Paul saw Christ on the way to Damascus, and he gives up his importance, his Pharisaism, his teaching, everything else, and he counts all but loss that he may win Him. “And do count them but dung that I may win Christ;” not “did count” such would be comparatively easy. The value of Christ must be fresh enough in the soul, as a present thing, to enable one to count all the rest mere dross and dung. Everybody is governed by the object he is pursuing, and what is more everybody judges of others by the thing he is pursuing himself. One man makes money his object, another pleasure. The man who loves money says, “Oh! what a fool that man is to spend so much on his pleasure,” and the man who loves pleasure says, “What a fool that man is to hoard up his money, it is no better to him than so much clay!”

The moment I want to win Christ, all besides is dross and dung. “You have only to lay aside every weight.” Paul could say, with Christ as his object: only to lay aside is easily said, but the moment it becomes a weight it is easy. When I say “I must get Christ,” death may be on the road, but never mind so that I get Him. The desire is not weakened by the eye being dimmed by present things. Paul goes on. There we get testing. He went on looking at Christ. He had found Christ the satisfaction of his soul, and he did not hunger, he did not thirst, as the Lord says, for anything else. People talk of sacrifices; but there is no great sacrifice in giving up dung. If the eye were so fixed on Christ that these things got that character, it would not be a trouble to give them up. The thing gets its character from what the heart is set on. The moment the heart is set on Christ, all the rest becomes dross. The man with one object is the energetic man. The Christian's one object is Christ— the object God has and the object the Spirit gives to the heart of the Christian. We have not only to say that Christ is the one sole object of the heart; there are distractions. We allow other things to come in, the eye is not single.

Paul however would “be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness.....but the righteousness which is of God by faith.” The apostle was still looking forward as he is always doing in this epistle. Here he speaks of righteousness in contrast (not to his sins, but) to his righteousness. A poor man may not part with his old coat; but if you give him a new one instead, he will soon have done with it. The moment the soul has the eye fixed on the Lord Jesus all his righteousness becomes filthy rags, and the heart revolts from mixing it up with Him. When the Spirit is come, He will convince the “world of sin, because they believe not on me.” The world's sin was proved by not believing on Jesus; all are under sin together. The one single righteous person was turned out of the world: where will you find righteousness now? At the right hand of God. The world will never see Him again except in judgment. Satan was never called “the prince of this world” till Christ came, till the cross. When He comes, Satan raises the whole world against Him. “There is the prince of this world,” the Lord says. He was ruler before, but in the cross Satan was proved the prince of this world.

Again, we hear of “the righteousness which is of God by faith;” not now righteousness of man for God, but of God for man. “Being made conformable unto his death.” In a world where Christ had been rejected, the object of all my hopes is at the right hand of God. I have got a life completely paramount over death. The resurrection of Christ was past sin, past Satan's power, past judgment, past death. The Second man had gone into death—was made sin; but He is risen, and all that is past. God has been glorified, and death belongs to us now as we belonged to it in the first man. We have got this divine life which is above everything in this world. If I know Him, I want to know the power of His resurrection that left everything behind. What comes next? “The fellowship of his sufferings. “Being made conformable unto his death;” all was gain to Paul. Do not we see the blessedness of being a martyr?

“If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead;” death might be on the road, but death would be positive gain because one would be like Christ. Christ risen becomes power in me, going through the same scene as He did. The apostle was a man of like passions with, us, but he was single-eyed. Here he gives us not only the Christ he was going to win, but something he was going to win for himself— “the resurrection from the dead.” In Mark 9:9, 10, we read of “the rising from the dead" about which the disciples questioned; every Pharisee, every orthodox Jew, believed in the “resurrection of the dead.” What did the resurrection of Christ mean? It was God's seal on everything He was, and everything He had done during His life here. He took Him out from among all the other dead. If He takes people out from among the rest of the dead because He delights in them, that is the seal of their acceptance. Paul says, “No matter what it costs me, I will attain to that.” What condition is the saint raised in? “Sown in weakness, raised in power; sown in dishonor, raised in glory.” “Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.” As God put His perfect seal on Christ and Christ's work, and raised Him, so when He raises us up, He puts His seal on us: only it is because of His righteousness, not our own. The apostle was apprehended of Christ Jesus, but he had not got it yet. “What I am looking for is to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold for me.” When we attain to that, we get Christ Himself and being like Christ; we could not get that down here.

Perfection as to the state of the Christian means perfect conformity to the image of Christ in glory.

Three classes are spoken of here, the “perfect,” those “otherwise minded,” and those who are the enemies of the cross of Christ. The perfect are those who have entered by the power of the Spirit of Christ into this thought of being perfectly like Him. Many a Christian knows only the forgiveness of sins; he has not got the thing that is before him, but the thing that is behind him. The thought of having Christ in glory and being like Him, governed Paul completely; but, like a man going through a strait passage with a lamp at the other end of it, he got more of the light as he went on, though as yet he had not attained. Every step the Christian takes he has got more of the light, “Beholding.....we are changed into the same image,” though in a certain sense we have none of it. One has not merely seen redemption that has given him the object, but he is running after the object. He has got what Christianity gives—got all of it, and that, in a certain sense, is perfection. “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling (calling above) of God in Christ Jesus.” Till we are above, we have not got the calling—the effect of it, I mean. It cost Paul suffering, it cost him difficulty, but it filled his heart with joy—filled it with Christ.

You know persons who have found they are poor sinners, who see their sins are forgiven, but they do not see farther; they are “otherwise minded,” but God will reveal this to them; wait a while, have patience. “But many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ” —those who call themselves Christians and love the world. Men who mind earthly things are the enemies of the cross of Christ. The cross and the glory go together, not at the same time of course, but the one depends on the other. The cross of Christ toward this world is saying, “The world seeth me no more.” The cross is perfect security for heaven, but entire judgment of this world. Paul's heart having followed Christ up there, his object, his heart, is there. “One thing I do” —that is the Christian. You may be in various circumstances, you may be a carpenter as Christ was; but the Christian's “conversation is in heaven.” What is he waiting for? For Christ to come and take him to Himself. His heart is fixed on Christ's person. He has won him at the cross, and He has carried him into heaven with Him. I am changed into the same glory as Christ, while it is acting on my soul that I am to be like Him; it governs the heart all the way. The righteousness of the law was the righteousness of man, the law was the measure of man's righteousness. Christ Himself is our righteousness. I have got life from God and righteousness: both are Christ. The power that raised Christ from the dead the Spirit will exercise to raise or change our bodies. These are God's thoughts about us. What am I going to get? Christ, and to be like Christ; then do you run after Him. Can we say we are doing that?

I distrust the moral condition of the man that thinks much of crimes. The thief went into paradise to be with Christ, the moral man went out.

Can we say “this one thing I do"? I have but one thing, and I am pushing on. If you wanted a person to get to London, whether would you rather meet him four miles from London with his back to it, or four miles from Holyhead with his face to London? Even a babe may have his face turned to Christ. Are you going God's way? Can we honestly say, with glory before us, with Christ before us, “One thing I do"? Which way does your eye turn? Which way are you going? God has only one way—Christ.

There is the constant solicitation of distractions on the road: quite true, everything round us is a temptation. When the people came to Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, of what was it the occasion to Him? Of perfect obedience. Of what to Peter? Of temptation.

What one looks for in the Christian is a single eye.

One of the comforts of heaven will be that there I shall not want my conscience; I want it every moment now; I cannot let my heart out now.

The Lord give us in all liberty of heart so to see Him before us that we may run bard after Him, having our hearts kept by the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Chapter 162

Brief Thoughts on Philippians 4

This chapter takes up the entire superiority to circumstances which characterizes the Christian. The apostle had gone through very trying circumstances; he had been in prison for four years, chained to a heathen soldier—a terrible kind of thing. There he had been to have the experience that no circumstances could ever separate from the love of Christ, and that the life of Christ was paramount to everything. Christ felt all, far more than we do, but there was that which sustained Him and made it positive joy to Him, It is a great thing to see that the power of Christ in us can set us entirely above everything. Paul knew how to suffer need, and he knew how to abound—a far more dangerous thing; for if we suffer need, we are thrown on God necessarily. “What we find all through this epistle is the power of the Spirit of God raising him above all circumstances and sorrows; it is always the power of the Spirit of God which sustains him.

Sin is never mentioned in the epistle, nor flesh. But we get the power of the Spirit of God carrying us through this world where temptations are: not that the flesh is any better, but there is such a thing as living above it. This is a very important principle for all of us. It is true that “in many things we offend all;” but scripture never supposes that we are going to offend; and we never can excuse ourselves if we do offend. The flesh is as bad as ever, and what we get is, not the grace of God for it, but a thorn in the flesh, the thorn being from the grace of God of course. If we are conscious of weakness and are leaning only on grace, we need not offend: there is power for us. It is possible that at a given moment I may not have power; but this is because I have been going wrong previously. Christ was witnessing while Peter was denying; but Christ had been praying while Peter had been sleeping. The armor should be put on before the battle, not just at the battle. “When Satan came to Him with his wiles, the Lord had only to rest quietly in obedience: there was no long reasoning, no confusion about it. Satan says, “Command that these stones be made bread;” the Lord answers He is come to obey. For it is written that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Then Satan tells Him to cast Himself down (that is, not to trust God), but is told, “It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” These are wiles; but when Satan comes openly, then resist Satan. “Get thee hence, Satan:” then he flees. “We have not to overcome him who is overcome; but we have to overcome his wiles by the word in obedience.

The only effect of trying circumstances is to give much deeper acquaintance with the Lord's faithfulness, and to give much deeper joy. At the end of four years in prison Paul could say, “Rejoice in the Lord always:” he had nothing else to rejoice in. He says, as it were, “the more I know of every trial and hindrance in my work as an apostle, the more I can tell you, You can rejoice in the Lord always.” It is a beautiful thing to see Paul the person to say, You must be always rejoicing. The thing that hinders our rejoicing is not trouble, but being half and half. If in the world, his conscience reproaches the Christian; if he meets spiritual Christians, he is uncomfortable there; in fact he is happy nowhere. A man's affections do not hinder his work for his children. If we were serving Christ simply, we should go back to Him all the happier when the service is done. We never can give a reason for not rejoicing in Christ, except the evil of our

hearts. Here we get what is so important practically—to rejoice always. Any one can rejoice in the Lord when the Lord gives him what he likes. “Bless the Lord at all times:” that is the testing point. “In everything give thanks.” “Jehovah is my shepherd: I shall not want;” not, “I have got blessing and I shall not want,” but “Jehovah is my shepherd: I shall not want.” “He restoreth my soul.” He stood by me when in misery, sorrow, failure it may be. I may get my own weakness, death in the way; but the table is spread in the very presence of my enemies (like Joshua and the Israelite eating at the Passover, before ever a blow was struck). God's natural work is v to give us green pastures and still waters; but He makes everything work together for our good: it is not the circumstances, it is the Lord. “I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah forever.” After the sorrowful and trying things Paul had passed through, he is full of comfort. He had had green pastures, pleasant things from the Lord; but he rejoices all through, whatever the circumstances.

Again, he says, “Let your moderation [yielding-ness] be known unto all men: the Lord is at hand.” He does not insist upon his rights, because he trusts the Lord; he is not careful. Abraham says to Lot, “Go to the left and I will go to the right.” Lot chooses Sodom—always the effect of choosing for oneself. The part Abraham seemed to have lost was Sodom and Gomorrah, soon covered by the Dead Sea.

Then there is another exceedingly strong thing connected with it: how long is this going to last? “The Lord is at hand.” You have got your joy and strength elsewhere, and “the fashion of this world passeth away.” If conscious that my portion is in Christ, the looking for the Lord, who is my portion, makes me to sit loose to everything here. If our expectation, if the feeling of our hearts, is that the Lord is at hand, (I do not mean prophecy, but the personal expectation of the saint himself,) it must be so. What event is there between you and heaven? The only one is our going up there. If I am looking for Christ to come straight down from heaven and take me up, what event is there between? It is no great wonder if the Christian has power to go through circumstances to master them; he has joy in the Lord that nothing can touch. In waiting for Christ what must be done before He comes? “The day and the hour knoweth no man;” but there is only one thing that must be done, the gathering in of the saints. “The longsuffering of God is salvation.” “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise,” but He is waiting on poor sinners. Prophecy does not prophesy of heaven; faith looks to heaven, and sees what is there. Prophecy is God's politics, and it saves us from human politics—a great mercy too. Our portion is Christ Himself.

There are trials in the way; but then you get, “Be careful for nothing.” This is a magnificent sentence! It leaves no loophole. It has often stopped my mouth completely when I have thought of the church, the saints. “Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God.” He does not say, Do you go and find the will of God, but reckon on God that you are going to get the best thing. Present your requests to God; thank Him before you get them. He does not say you will get them always; it is the interest which God takes in us that is the point here. Paul besought the Lord three times that the thorn should be taken away; “Indeed I am not going to take away what I sent for your good:” such virtually was the answer. “My grace is sufficient for you.”

“And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts.” This is not peace with God; or that your heart keeps the peace either. The peace keeps your heart, and it is the peace of God, the peace He is in. My own peace I understand very well. The peace He is in keeps

my heart, and it passes all understanding—of course it does, because it is “the peace of God.” I do not know what I may get; but of one thing I am sure—I shall get the very best thing, though it may come in a way very grating to my feelings.

When this is the case, I can think of what is good. God thinks of my trouble; I can now think of what is good. “Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are of good report.....if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.” What a blessed condition of soul this is, beloved friends! There is no burden in my cares: I cannot burden God, when I put them there. “And the God of peace shall be with you.” Cast your care on God, and the peace of God will keep you; walk as a Christian ought to walk, and the God of peace will be with you. You have a companion in the path of trouble and sorrow, and such a companion too! “The God of peace!” He is never called the God of joy. Joy is an uncertain thing; peace is always there. This word continually through scripture is attached to God's name. Where peace is there is no trouble.

Rejoicing in the Lord always, his moderation known unto all men, the Lord at hand, no care—what a happy picture of the Christian!

There is more: “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again, wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.” Observe the delicacy of the apostle here; “I am glad that at the last” —this proves that he had been in trouble, in want—I do not mean you were forgetting me, but ye lacked opportunity. “I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content;” this is the effect of trusting Christ in it all. “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound.” He was in abundance sometimes; and this is much more dangerous: we are apt to rest in the gift instead of looking at the giver; but with Paul it brought out only thankfulness. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” This is the epistle of experience. It is not people can do all things, but “I can do all things;” Christ is always sufficient. Paul found it so; he had gone through perils of all kinds, but Christ was always sufficient; he was in abundance now, but Christ in all things was sufficient. It is a blessed truth that, though we may fail Him, we cannot be in circumstances Christ is not sufficient for. Whether it be the Church or individual saints, it is impossible to be in a place for which Christ is not sufficient. Paul was in danger from the flesh, and a thorn was sent to him. The thorn was something which made him in some way despicable in his ministry. The wonderful effect of his preaching, then, did not come from him; the evidence of the power of Christ was there. “Then let me have it,” Paul says: “I glory in my infirmities.” The thorn was not power, but it was the way of power; the flesh is broken down completely that Christ may come in. If there had been a fourth heaven, the flesh would have been only the more puffed up: you cannot correct what is evil in its nature. What came to make nothing of Paul is not power, but Christ is there. 2 Cor. 12 takes two sides; we have there a man in Christ (a man in the flesh totally put down) and then Christ in a man, the other side of the Christian life—the power of Christ in us, and with us.

Do not say, “A Christian can do all things;” it is quite true in the abstract, but not what the apostle says. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” “I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content.” He found Christ always sufficient. His whole heart was full at the same time of affectionate remembrance of the Philippians. “Even at Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.”

I think it is beautiful how the apostle does not take himself out of a man. Superiority is to go through circumstances and feel them all, and yet be above them. Look how he speaks of Epaphroditus in Phil. 2 As a doctrine, if he had died, he would have gone to heaven; but it was not that: he felt it as it was, it was not a hard thing that cast off the trial. When the Lord saw the widow, “He was moved with Compassion.” There was no insensibility in Him, but in going through the circumstances He was sensible of them, yet above them. The way we should walk is as never governed by circumstances; not in insensibility', but in superiority. Christ is the answer to it: cast your care on Him.

Paul attaches all the importance of divine grace to their service. You see what a link there is in the church of God even in gifts: poor old bed-ridden women may have prayed for Paul! “My God shall supply all your need” — “my God,” he knew Him— “the God I know, the One I have been with” —as if answering for the God he knew. How his heart gets up to the source of it all! The heart gets back to God. What was to be the measure of supply? Was it their need? No, “his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” We find here a blessed picture of the way in which the Spirit of God lifts him, while feeling everything, above the circumstances. It is perfect impressibility by the circumstances here below, but we have this source of strength in Christ Himself. The thing I have to learn is my own weakness.

We make a mistake about the apostles, we often think of them as if they were eagles soaring above all. Paul says, “I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling.” There were great people in Corinth; Paul was a blessed vessel, but the vessel must be made nothing of. What we have to learn is being nothing that Christ may be everything. If a person is humble he does not want to be humbled; but if he is not humble, he must be.

Are we content to be nothing? Are we content to walk in the secret of God? The Lord give us to learn practically what it is thus to pass through this world. You can get neither the Christian nor the church in a state that Christ is not sufficient for.

The Lord give us to know our nothingness.

Chapter 163

The Pope and the Scriptures

Being Bishop Strossmayer's speech in the recent Vatican Council, from an Italian version published at Florence.

“Venerable Fathers and Brethren:—

It is not without trembling, yet with a conscience free and tranquil before God who lives and sees me, that I open my mouth in the midst of you in this august, assembly. From the time that I have been sitting here with you I have followed with attention the speeches that have been made in the hall, hoping, with great desire, that a ray of light, descending from on high, might enlighten the eyes of my understanding, and permit me to vote the canons of this Holy Ecumenical Council with perfect knowledge of the case.

“Penetrated with the feelings of responsibility, of which God will demand of me an account, I have set myself to study with the most serious attention the writings of the Old and New Testament, and I have asked these venerable monuments of truth to make known to me if the holy pontiff, who presides here, is truly the successor of Peter, vicar of Jesus Christ, and the infallible doctor of the church. To resolve this grave question I have been obliged to ignore the present state of things, and to transport myself in mind, with the evangelical torch in my hand, to the days when there was neither Ultramontanism nor Gallicanism, and in which the church had for doctors Paul, Peter, James, and John—doctors to whom no one can deny the divine authority without putting in doubt that which the holy Bible, which is here before me, teaches us, and this the Council of Trent has proclaimed as the rule of faith and of morals. I have then opened these sacred pages, Well! (shall I dare to say it?) I have found nothing either near or far which sanctions the opinion of the Ultramontanes. And still more, to my very great surprise, I find in the apostolic days no question of a pope, successor to Peter, and vicar of Jesus Christ, any more than of Mahomet who did not then exist. You, Monsignor Manning, will say that I blaspheme; you, Monsignor Fie, that I am mad. No, Monsignori, I do not blaspheme, and I am not mad. Now, having read the whole New Testament, I declare before God, with my hand raised to that great crucifix, that I have found no trace of the papacy as it exists at this moment. Do not refuse me your attention, my venerable brethren, and with your murmuring and interruptions do not justify those who say, like Father Hyacinthe, that this Council is nothing, but that our votes have been from the beginning dictated by authority. If such were the case, this august assembly, on which the eyes of the whole world are turned, would fall into the most shameful discredit. If we wish to make it great, we must be free. I thank his Excellency Monsignor Dupanloup, for the sign of approbation which he makes with his head: this gives me courage, and I go on.

“Reading then the sacred books with that attention with which the Lord has made me capable, I do not find one single chapter, or one little verse, in which Jesus Christ gives to Peter the mastery over the apostles, his fellow-workers. If Simon, son of Jonas, had been what we believe his holiness Pius IX. to be to-day, it is wonderful that He had not said to him, ‘When I have ascended to my Father, you should all obey Simon Peter as you obey me. I establish him my vicar upon

earth.'

“Not only is Christ silent on this point, but so little does He think of giving a head to the church, that when He promises to His apostles to judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28), He promises them twelve, one for each, without saying that among these thrones one shall be higher than the others—which shall belong to Peter. Certainly, if He had wished that it should be so, He would have said it. What do we conclude from this sentence? Logic tells us that Christ did not wish to make Peter the head of the apostolic college. When Christ sent the apostles to conquer the world, to all He gave the promise of the Holy Spirit. Permit me to repeat it: if He had wished to constitute Peter His vicar, He would have given him the chief command over His spiritual army. Christ—so says the Holy Scripture—forbade Peter and his colleagues to reign or to exercise lordship, or to have authority over the faithful like the kings of the Gentiles. (St. Luke 22:25.) If Peter had been elected pope, Jesus would not have spoken thus, because, according to our tradition, the papacy holds in its hands two swords, symbols of spiritual and temporal power.

“One thing has surprised me very much. Turning it over in my mind, I said to myself, if Peter had been elected pope, would his colleagues have been permitted to send him with John to Samaria to announce the gospel of the Son of God? What do you think, venerable brethren, if at this moment we permitted ourselves to send his holiness Pius IX., and his Excellency Mons. Plantier to go to the Patriarch of Constantinople, to pledge him to put an end to the Eastern schism?

“But here is another still more important fact. An Ecumenical Council is assembled at Jerusalem to decide on the questions which divide the faithful. Who would have called together this Council if Peter had been pope? Peter. Who would have presided at it? Peter, or his legates. Who would have formed or promulgated the canons? Peter.

Well! nothing of this occurred. The apostle assisted at the Council, as all the others did, yet it was not he who summed up, but James; and, when the decrees were promulgated, it was in the name of the apostles, the elders, and the brethren. (Acts 15) Is it thus that we do in our church? The more I examine, O venerable brethren, the more I am convinced that in the scriptures the son of Jonas does not appear to be first.

“Now, while we teach that the church is built upon Peter, Paul (whose authority cannot be doubted) says, in his epistle to the Ephesians (2: 20), it is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. And the same apostle believes so little in the supremacy of Peter, that he openly blames those who would say, We are of Paul, we are of Apollos (1 Cor. 1:12), as those who say, We are of Peter. If therefore this last apostle had been the vicar of Christ, Paul would have taken great care not to censure so violently those who belonged to his own colleagues. The same apostle, counting up the offices of the church, mentions apostles, prophets, evangelists, doctors, and pastors. Is it to be believed, my venerable brethren, that Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, would have forgotten the first of these offices, the papacy, if the papacy had been of divine institution? The forgetfulness appeared to me to be as impossible as if an historian of this Council were not to mention one word of his holiness Pius IX. [Several voices— ‘Silence, heretic, silence.'] Calm yourselves, my brethren, I have not yet finished. Forbidding me to go on, you show yourselves to the world to do wrong, and to shut the mouth of the smallest member of this assembly.

“I continue. The apostle Paul makes no mention, in any of his letters directed to the various churches, of the primacy of Peter. If this primacy had existed, if in one word the church had in its body a supreme head infallible in teaching, would the great apostle of the Gentiles have forgotten to mention it? What do I say? He would have written a long letter on this all-important subject. Then, as he has actually done, when the edifice of the Christian doctrine is erected, would the foundation, the key of the arch, be forgotten? Now, unless you hold that the church of the apostles was heretical, which none of us would either desire or dare to say, we are obliged to confess that the church has never been more beautiful, more pure, or more holy, than in the days when there was no pope. [Cries of ‘It is not true; it is not true.'] Let not Monsignor di Laval say,' No.' Since, if any of you, my venerable brethren, should dare to think that the church which has to-day a pope for its head is more in the faith, more pure in its morals than the Apostolic church, let him say it openly in the face of the universe, since this enclosure is the center from which our words fly from pole to pole.

“I go on. Neither in the writings of Paul, John, nor James, have I found a trace or germ of the papal power. Luke, the historian of the missionary labors of the apostles, is silent on this all-important point. The silence of these holy men, whose writings make part of the canon of the divinely-inspired scriptures, has appeared to me burdensome and impossible, if Peter had been pope, and as unjustifiable as if Thiers, writing the history of Napoleon Bonaparte, had omitted the title of emperor. I see here before me a member of the assembly, who says, pointing at me with his finger, 'There is a schismatic bishop who has got among us under false colors.' No, no, my venerable brethren, I have not entered this august assembly as a thief, by the window, but by the door like yourselves. My title of bishop gave me a right to it, as my Christian conscience forces me to speak and to say that which I believe to be true.

“What has surprised me most, and what moreover is capable of demonstration, is the silence of Peter. If the apostle had been what we proclaim him to be—that is, the vicar of Jesus Christ on earth—he surely would have known it; if he had known it, how is it that not once did he act as pope? He might have done it on the day of Pentecost, when be pronounced his first sermon, and did not do it; neither in the two letters directed to the church. Can you imagine such a pope, my venerable brethren, if Peter had been pope? Now, if you wish to maintain that be was the pope, the natural consequence arises that you must maintain that he was ignorant of the fact. Now, I ask whoever has a head to think, and a mind to re-flect, are these two suppositions possible? To return, I say, while the apostle lived, the church never thought that there could be a pope; to maintain the contrary, all the sacred writings must have been thrown to the flames, or entirely ignored.

“But it is said on all sides, Was not Peter at Home? was he not crucified with his head down? Are not the pulpits in which he taught, the altars at which he said the mass in this eternal city? Peter having been at Rome, my venerable brethren, rests only on tradition; but, if he had been Bishop of Home, how can you from that episcopate prove his supremacy? Scaliger, one of the most learned of men, has not hesitated to say that Peter's episcopate and residence at Home ought to be classed with ridiculous legends. [Repeated cries, ‘Shut his mouth, shut his mouth; make him come down from the pulpit.'] Venerable brethren, I am ready to be silent; but is it not better, in an assembly like ours, to prove all things, as the apostle commands, and to hold fast what is good? But, my venerable friends, we have a dictator, before whom we—even his holiness Pius IX.—must

prostrate ourselves and be silent and bow our heads. That dictator is history. This is not like a legend, which can be made as the potter makes his clay, but is like a diamond which cuts on the glass what cannot be canceled. Till now I have only leant on her; and if I have found no trace of the papacy in the apostolic days, the fault is hers, not mine. Do you wish to put me into the position of one accused of falsehood? You may do it, if you can. I hear from the right these words— ‘ Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.' (Matt. 16) I will answer this objection presently, my venerable brethren; but, before doing so, I wish to present you with the result of my historical researches.

“Finding no trace of the papacy in the days of the apostles, I said to myself, I shall find what I am in search of in the annals of the church. Well, I say it frankly—I have sought for a pope in the first four centuries, and I have not found him. None of you, I hope, will doubt the great authority of the holy Bishop of Hippo, the great and blessed Augustine. This pious doctor, the honor and glory of the Catholic church, was secretary in the Council of Melvie. In the decrees of this venerable assembly are to be found these significant words— ‘Whoever wills to appeal to those beyond the sea shall not be received by any one in Africa to the communion.' The bishops of Africa acknowledged the bishop of Rome so little that they smote with excommunication those who would have recourse to an appeal. These same bishops, in the sixth Council of Carthage, held under Aurelius, Bishop of that city, wrote to Celestinus, Bishop of Rome, to warn him not to receive appeals from the bishops, priests, or clerics of Africa; and that he should send no more legates or commissaries; and that he should not introduce human pride into the church.

“That the Patriarch of Rome had from the earliest times tried to draw to himself all the authority is an evident fact; but it is an equally evident fact that he had not the supremacy which the Ultramontanes attribute to him. Had he possessed it, would the bishops of Africa—St. Augustine first among them—have dared to prohibit the appeals of their decrees to his supreme tribunal? I confess without difficulty that the patriarch of Rome held the first place. One of Justinian's laws says, ‘Let us order, after the definition of the four Councils, that the holy pope of ancient Rome shall be the first of the bishops, and that the most high Archbishop of Constantinople, which is the new Rome, shall be the second.' ‘Bow down then to the supremacy of the pope,' you will say to me. Do not run so fast to this conclusion, my venerable brethren, inasmuch as the law of Justinian has written on the face of it, ‘Of the order of the patriarchal sees,' precedence is one thing, the power of jurisdiction is another. For example, supposing that in Florence there was an assembly of all the bishops of the kingdom, the precedence would be given to the Primate of Florence, as among the Easterns it would be accorded to the Patriarch of Constantinople, as in England to the Archbishop of Canterbury. But neither the first, nor the second, nor the third, could deduce from the position assigned to him a jurisdiction over his colleagues. The importance of the bishops of Rome proceeded not from a divine power, but from the importance of the city in which they had their seat. Monsignor Darboy is not superior in dignity to the Archbishop of Avignon; but, in spite of that, Paris gives him a consideration which he would not have, if, instead of having his palace on the bank of the Seine, he had it on that of the Rhone. That which is true in the religious order is the same in civil and political matters: the Prefect of Rome is not more a prefect than he is of Pisa; but civilly and politically he has a greater importance. I have said that from the very first centuries the Patriarch of Rome aspired to the universal government of the church. Unfortunately be very nearly reached it; but he had not succeeded assuredly in his pretensions, for the Emperor Theodosius II

made a law by which he established that the Patriarch of Constantinople should have the same authority as he of Rome—(Leg. god. de sacr., &c.) The fathers of the Council of Chalcedon put the bishops of the new and the old Rome in the same order on all things, even ecclesiastical. (Can. 28.) The sixth Council of Carthage forbade all the bishops to take the title of prince of the bishops or sovereign bishop. As for this title of universal bishop, which the popes took later, Gregory I., believing that his successors would never think of adorning themselves with it, wrote these remarkable words, 1 None of my predecessors has consented to take this profane name; for when a patriarch gives himself the name of Universal, the title of patriarch suffers discredit. Far be it then from Christians to desire to give themselves a title which brings discredit upon their brethren!' The words of Gregory are directed to his colleagues of Constantinople, who pretended to the primacy of the church, pope Pelagius II. calls John, Bishop of Constantinople, who aspired to the high priesthood, ‘impious and profane.' ‘Do not care,' he said, ‘for the title of universal, which John has usurped illegally. Let none of the patriarchs take this profane name; for what misfortunes may we not expect, if among the priests such elements arise? They would get what has been foretold for them—He is the king of the sons of pride.' (Pelagius II., Lett. 13.) These authorities, and I might add a hundred more of equal value, do they not prove, with a clearness equal to the splendor of the sun at mid-day, that the first bishops of Rome were not till much later recognized as universal bishops and heads of the church? And, on the other hand, who does not know that, from the year 325, in which the first Council of Nice was held, down to 580, the year of the second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople, among more than 1,109 bishops who assisted at the first six general Councils there were not more than nineteen Western bishops? Who does not know that the Councils were convoked by the Emperors without informing, and sometimes against the wish of, the bishop of Rome?—that Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, presided at the first Council of Nice, and edited the canons of it? The same Hosius presided afterward at the Council of Sardica, excluding the legates of Julius, Bishop of Rome.

“I say no more, my venerable brethren; and I come now to speak of the great argument—which you mentioned before—to establish the primacy of the Bishop of Rome by the rock (petra). If this were true, the dispute would be at an end; but our forefathers—and they certainly knew something—did not think of it as we do. Cyril, in his fourth book on the Trinity, says, ‘I believe that by the rock you must understand the unshaken faith of the apostles.' Hilary, Bishop of Poictiers, in his second book on the Trinity, says, 'The rock (petra) is the blessed and only rock of the faith confessed by the mouth of Peter;' and in the sixth book of the Trinity, he says 'it is on this rock of the confession of faith that the church is built.' ‘God,' says Jerome in the sixth book on Matthew, 'has founded His church on this rock, and it is from this rock that the apostle Peter has been named.' After him Chrysostom says in his fifty-third homily on Matthew, ‘On this rock I will build my church—that is, on the faith of the confession.' Now, what was the confession of the apostle? Here it is— ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Ambrose, the holy Archbishop of Milan (on the second chapter of the Ephesians), Basil of Seleucia, and the fathers of the Council of Chalcedon, teach exactly the same thing. Of all the doctors of Christian antiquity Augustine occupies one of the first places for knowledge and holiness. Listen then to what he writes in his second treatise on the first epistle of John: ‘What do the words mean, I will build my church on this rock? On this faith, on that which said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' In his 124th treatise on John we find this most significant phrase— 'On this rock which thou hast confessed I will build my church, since Christ was the rock.' The great bishop believed so little that the church

was built on Peter that he said to the people in his thirteenth sermon, 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock (petra) which thou hast confessed, on this rock which thou hast known, saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, I will build my church—upon myself, who am the Son of the living God: I will build it on Me, and not Me on thee.' That which Augustine thought upon this celebrated passage was the opinion of all Christendom in his time.

“Therefore, to resume, I establish—1, That Jesus has given to His apostles the same power that He gave to Peter. 2, That the apostles never recognized in Peter the vicar of Jesus Christ and the infallible doctor of the church. 3, That Peter never thought of being pope, and never acted as if he were pope. 4, That the Councils of the first four centuries, while they recognized the high position which the Bishop of Rome occupied in the church on account of Rome, only accorded to him a pre-eminence of honor, never of power or of jurisdiction. 5, That the holy fathers in the famous passage/Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,' never understood that the church was built on Peter (super Petrum), but on the rock (super petram) that is, on the confession of the faith of the apostle. I conclude victoriously, with history, with reason, with logic, with good sense, and with a Christian conscience, that Jesus Christ did not confer any supremacy on Peter, and that the bishops of Rome did not become sovereigns of the church, but only by confiscating one by one all the rights of the episcopate. [Voices— 'Silence, impudent Protestant! silence!'] No, I am not an impudent Protestant.

“History is neither Catholic, nor Anglican, nor Calvinistic, nor Lutheran, nor Arminian, nor schismatic Greek nor Ultramontane. She is what she is—that is, something stronger than all confessions of faith of the Canons of the Ecumenical Councils. “Write against it, if you dare! but you cannot destroy it, any more than taking a brick out of the Coliseum would make it fall. If I have said anything which history proves to be false, show it to me by history, and without a moment's hesitation I will make an honorable apology; but be patient, and you will see that I have not said all that I would or could; and even were the funeral pile waiting for me in the place of Peter's, I should not be silent, and I am obliged to go on. Monsignor Dupanloup, in his celebrated Observations on this Council of the Vatican, has said, and with reason, that if we declared Pius IX. infallible, we must necessarily, and from natural logic, be obliged to hold that all his predecessors were also infallible.

“Well, then, venerable brethren, here history raises its voice with authority to assure us that some popes have erred. You may protest against it or deny it as you please, but I will prove it! Pope Victor (192) first approved of Montanism, and then condemned it. Marcellinus (296 - 303) was an idolater. He entered into the temple of Vesta, and offered incense to the goddess. You will say that it was an act of weakness; but I answer, a vicar of Jesus Christ dies rather than become an apostate. Liberius (358) consented to the condemnation of Athanasius, and made a profession of Arianism, that he might be recalled from his exile and reinstated in his see. Honorius (625) adhered to Monothelitism: Father Gratry has proved it to demonstration. Gregory I. (578-90) calls any one Antichrist who takes the name of universal bishop, and contrariwise Boniface III. (607-8) made the parricide Emperor Phocas confer that title upon him. Paschal II. (1088-99) and Eugenius III. (1145-53) authorized dueling; Julius II. (1509) and Pius IV. (1560) forbade it. Eugenius IV. (1431-39) approved of the Council of Basle and the restitution of the chalice to the church of Bohemia; Pius II. (1458) revoked the concession. Hadrian II. (867-872) declared civil marriages to be valid; Pius VII. (180023) condemned them. Sixtus V. (1585-90) published an edition of the

Bible, and by a bull recommended it to be read; Pius VII. condemned the reading of it. Clement XIV. (1700-21) abolished the order of the Jesuits, permitted by Paul III., and Pius VII. reestablished it."

"But why look for such remote proofs? Has not our holy father here present, in his bull which gave the rules for this Council, in the event of his dying while it was sitting, revoked all that in past times may be contrary to it, even when that proceeds from the decisions of his predecessors? And certainly, if Pius IX. has spoken ex cathedra, it is not when, from the depths of his sepulcher, he imposes his will on the sovereigns of the church. I should never finish, my venerable brethren, if I were to put before your eyes the contradictions of the popes in their teaching. If then you proclaim the infallibility of the actual pope, you must either prove, that which is impossible, that the popes never contradicted each other, or else you must declare that the Holy Spirit has revealed to you that the infallibility of the papacy only dates from 1870. Are you bold enough to do this? Perhaps the people may be indifferent, and pass by theological questions which they do not understand, and of which they do not see the importance; but though they are indifferent to principles, they are not so to facts. Do not then deceive yourselves. If you decree the dogma of papal infallibility, the protestants, our adversaries, will mount in the breach, the more bold that they have history on their side, whilst we have only our own denial against them. What can we say to them when they show up all the bishops of Rome from the days of Luke to his holiness Pius IX.? Ah! if they had all been like Pius IX., we should triumph on the whole line; but alas! it is not so. [Cries of 'Silence, silence; enough, enough.'] Do not cry out, Monsignori! To fear history is to own yourself conquered; and, moreover, if you made the whole waters of the Tiber pass over it, you would not cancel a single page. Let me speak, and I will be as short as it is possible on this most important subject. Pope Vigilius (538) purchased the papacy from Belisarius, lieutenant of the Emperor Justinian. It is true that he broke his promise and never paid for it. Is this a canonical mode of binding on the tiara? The second Council of Chalcedon had formally condemned it. In one of its canons you read that the bishop who obtains his episcopate by money shall lose it and be degraded.' Pope Eugenius III. (IV. in original) (1145) imitated Vigilius. Bernard, the bright star of His age, reproves the pope, saying to him,' Can you show me in this great city of Rome any one who would receive you as pope if they have not received gold or silver for it?'

"My venerable brethren, will a pope who establishes a bank at the gates of the temple be inspired by the Holy Spirit? Will he have any right to teach the church infallibly? You know the history of Formosus too well for me to add to it. Stephen XI. made his body be exhumed, dressed in his pontifical robes; he made the lingers which be used for giving the benediction be cut off, and then had him thrown into the Tiber, declaring him to be a perjurer and illegitimate. He was then imprisoned by the people, poisoned, and strangled. Look how matters were re-adjusted. Romanus, successor of Stephen, and after him John 10, rehabilitated the memory of Formosus.

"But you will tell me these are fables, not history.

Fables! Go, Monsignori, to the Vatican Library and read Platina, the historian of the papacy, and the annals of Baronius (a.d. 897). These are facts which, for the honor of the holy see, we should wish to ignore; but when it is to define a dogma which may provoke a great schism in our midst, the love which we bear to our venerable mother church, Catholic, Apostolic, and Eoman, ought it to impose silence on us? I go on. The learned Cardinal Baronius, speaking of the papal court, says

(give attention, my venerable brethren, to these words), What did the Roman church appear in those days? how infamous! Only all-powerful courtesans governing in Rome! It was they who gave, exchanged, and took bishoprics; and, horrible to relate, they got their lovers, the false popes, put on the throne of Peter.1 (Baronius, a.d. 912.) You will answer, these were false popes, not true ones: let it be so; but in that case, if for fifty years the see of Rome was occupied by anti-popes, how will you pick up again the thread of pontifical succession? Has the church been able, at least for a century and a half, to go on without a head, and find itself acephalous? Look now! The greatest number of these anti-popes appear in a genealogical tree of the papacy; and the absurdity it must have been that Baronius described! because Genebrardo, the great flatterer of the popes, had dared to say in his Chronicles (a.d. 901), 'this century is unfortunate, as for nearly 150 years the popes have fallen from all the virtues of their predecessors, and have become apostates rather than apostles' I can understand how the illustrious Baronius must have blushed when he narrated the acts of these Roman bishops. Speaking of John 11 (931), natural son of Pope Sergius and of Marozia, he mote these words in his annals— 'The holy church, that is, the Roman, has been vilely trampled on by such a monster.' John 12 (956), elected pope at the age of eighteen, through the influence of courtesans, was not one whit better than his predecessor.

"I grieve, my venerable brethren, to stir up so much filth. I am silent on Alexander VI., father and lover of Lucretia; I turn away from John XXII. (1319), who denied the immortality of the soul, and was deposed by the holy Ecumenical Council of Constance. Some will maintain that this Council was only a private one; let it be so; but if you refuse any authority to it, as a logical sequence you must hold the nomination of Martin V. (1417) to be illegal. What, then, will become of the papal succession? Can you find the thread of it?

"I do not speak of the schisms which have dishonored the church. In those unfortunate days the see of Rome was occupied by two competitors, and sometimes even by three. Which of these was the true pope? Assuming once more, again I say, if you decree the infallibility of the present bishop of Rome, you must establish the infallibility of all the preceding ones, without excluding any; but can you do that when history is there establishing with a clearness equal only to that of the sun, that the popes have erred in their teaching? Could you do it and maintain that avaricious, incestuous, murdering, simoniacal popes have been vicars of Jesus Christ? Oh! venerable brethren, to maintain such an enormity would be to betray Christ worse than Judas; it would be to throw dirt in His face. [Cries, 'Down from the pulpit, quick; shut the mouth of the heretic!']

"My venerable brethren, you cry out; but would it not be more dignified to weigh my reasons and my proofs in the balance of the sanctuary? Believe me, history cannot be made over again; it is there, and will remain to all eternity, to protest energetically against the dogma of papal infallibility. You may proclaim it unanimously; but one vote will be wanting, and that is mine! The true faithful, Monsignori, have their eyes on us, expecting from us a remedy for the innumerable evils which dishonor the church: will you deceive them in their hopes? What will not our responsibility before God be, if we let this solemn occasion pass which God has given us to heal the true faith? Let us seize it, my brethren; let us arm ourselves with a holy courage;. let us make a violent and generous effort; let us turn to the teaching of the apostles, since without that we have only errors, darkness, and false traditions. Let us avail ourselves of our reason and of our intelligence to take the apostles and prophets as our only infallible masters with reference to the question of

questions, 'What must I do to be saved?' When we have decided that, we shall have laid the foundation of our dogmatic system firm and immovable on the rock, lasting and incorruptible, of the divinely inspired holy scriptures. Pull of confidence, we will go before the world, and, like the apostle Paul,, in presence of the free-thinkers, we will ‘know none other than Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.' We will conquer through the preaching of ‘the folly of the cross,' as Paul conquered the learned men of Greece and Rome; and the Roman church will have its glorious '89. [Clamorous cries, ‘Get down! Out with the Protestant, the Calvinist, the traitor of the church.'] Your cries, Monsignori, do not frighten me. If my words are hot, my head is cool. I am neither' of Luther, nor of Calvin, nor of Paul, nor of Apollos,. but of Christ. [Renewed cries, ‘Anathema, anathema,, to the apostate.'] Anathema! Monsignori, anathema!'

“You know well that you are not protesting against me, but against the holy apostles under whose protection I should wish this Council to place the church. Ah! if covered with their winding-sheets they came out of their tombs, would they speak a language different from mine? What would you say to them when by their writings they tell you that the papacy had! deviated from the gospel of the Son of God, which they have preached and confirmed in so generous a manner by their blood? Would you dare say to them,. We prefer the teaching of our own popes, our Bellarmine, our Ignatius Loyola, to yours? No, no;, a thousand times no; unless you have shut your ears that you may not hear, closed your eyes that you may not see, blunted your mind that you may not understand. Ah! if He who reigns above wishes to punish us, making His hand fall heavy on us, as He did on. Pharaoh, He has no need to permit Garibaldi's soldiers to drive us away from the eternal city. He has only to let them make Pius IX. a god, as we have made a goddess of the blessed virgin. Stop, stop, venerable brethren, on the odious and ridiculous incline on which you have placed yourselves. Save the church from the shipwreck which threatens her, asking from the holy scriptures alone for the rule of faith which we ought to believe and to profess. I have spoken: may God help me!”

Chapter 164

On Prayer

I do not think that the promises refer to prayers offered up one for another only, though this is a largo part of the cases put forward in scripture: “pray one for another,” “for me also,” “laboring earnestly for you in prayers,” and many others; but the prayer of faith is not confined to this. There are prayers for opening the door for the gospel and for all men. If it be not the prayer of positive faith, we are told in all things to present our requests to God but then the answer is, or may be only, that God's peace which passes all understanding shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. For the prayer of faith or rather the promise to it there are certain limits as to the certainty of answer, such as “in my name,” “according to His will,” “if ye abide in me and my words abide in you ye shall ask what ye will,” “if two or three agree,” besides what stops prayer; as a sin unto death. But then I see no limits put to the expectation of faith if God gives it. If it be my will asking amiss to consume it on my lusts, I cannot expect an answer. But the Lord contemplates the giving of faith and certainty of answer for drying up of a fig-tree or removing a mountain, and whatever I can ask believing, I receive it. This is a very important principle. But first the limits on which formal promise of answer rests besides special faith.

The first passage I may refer to is “If we ask anything according to His will He heareth and we have the petitions.” This supposes the demand according to His will, and then we can reckon on His power accomplishing it. This is the general Christian confidence, a great boon to be assured of the acting of Him who is Almighty in the way of His will. Next it is said, “If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will.” Here I do not doubt there was special reference to the twelve; but in principle it applies to all Christians. Where the mind is formed by the words of Christ, when they abide in One who lives in dependence on and confidence in Him, one thus abiding in Him, having Him in spirit and his mind guided by Christ's word, his will is (so to speak) Christ's, he asks what he will, and it will come.

Another case is where any two are agreed. Here individual will is set aside. It is where Christians have a common desire and agree to present it to God. The deliberate formal agreement supposes a common Christian mind, and it will be done. So, when I ask, coming for what I can attach Christ's name to under His auspices, the Father will do it. Here I doubt not too the twelve are specially in view; still it is in principle every Christian. A man cannot in faith bring Christ's name attached to his lusts; and all these statements suppose the disciple and faith, as James expressly teaches us, and indeed the Lord Himself.

But there are other statements which cast us more generally on the goodness of God, His interest in us, and show that, where faith is in exercise, the answer will be there: “whatsoever ye ask in prayer believing that ye receive it and you have the petition.” This supposes faith and intimacy, so to speak, with God. The heart is supposed to be in His interests, and then, if there is faith as a grain of mustard seed, a mountain goes. I do not doubt this kind of faith was much more when any as the apostles felt themselves interested in God's cause, identified with Him and it on the earth; but there is no limit to it. Where such faith is, such answer will be; and God is as much occupied

now with the details of blessing for us as for the great deeds of those days. It might be more palpable, more concentrated too then, but not more true. Not a sparrow falls now without Him more than then; and the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availing much is ever true: only we must, so to speak, put ourselves with God, for those to whom these things were said were identified with Him and His interests on the earth. This gave their prayers of course a peculiar place; but then if faith (that is, the operation of His Spirit and grace) brings me into His interest now even in details, the promise is there, and we can reckon on God and His power exercised in love now us then. There is no limit: only it is the working of His Spirit in us, and hence faith that reckons on the answer. Presenting our requests, subject to His will, is always right. Of this we have an example even in Gethsemane; so Paul for his thorn in the flesh. And the answer will be more glorious and blessed than the request, even when it does not as asked answer it. (See John 12 and Psa. 132) So Psa. 21 and even Paul's request about the thorn.

Let us trust His love, and this will not come short, and if He has given us faith to expect a specific answer, bless God for it. Only our will must not come in (this was the case of the quails; even if it was answered, but as a rule not) as James teaches. But where there is earnest faith, God will surely hear, though He may give us safeguards against our own will in it! J. N. D.

Chapter 165

Prayers in Ephesians 1:15-23 and 3:14-21

On prayer is attached to the name of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, because He is looked at as man; the other to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, because He is looked at as Son. The beginning of chapter 1 gave us God's calling, that we should be “holy and without blame before him in love,” that we might receive “the adoption of sons.” After stating His purpose concerning Christ Himself, that all things are to be gathered together in one in Him, the apostle goes on to the inheritance of which the Holy Ghost is the earnest, and then to the prayer for them on this ground. At the very close of the chapter he adds our relationship to Christ Himself, “the church which is his body.” It is always well for us to remember that Christ has purified to Himself a peculiar people, a people of possession, and we cannot rise up to the counsels of God and mind of Christ unless we are brought into these intentions of God. The most immediate and closest object of His thoughts is His saints. I necessarily take in all saints if I am in His thoughts; I cannot have the mind of Christ without taking in all them; it is the very spirit of Christ Himself.

There are two parts in this prayer of the apostle. The first is, that they might know the place itself; the second, that they should know the power that brought them there. The very fullness of the blessing we have got is that we are blessed with Him. As we were associated with the first Adam in ruin, so we are associated with the Second man in glory. There is nothing He has that He does not bring us into. This is the character of perfect love. Christ gives “not as the world giveth.” The world may give generously sometimes, but it has done with what it gives; Christ gives by introducing people into what He is enjoying Himself. Take glory: “the glory which thou gavest me I have given them.” Take joy: “that my joy might remain in you.” Take peace: “peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” Take love: “thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” Having become man and accomplished perfect redemption, He would not take the inheritance without His joint-heirs. He is the source and head of all the glory that is given. “What is the hope of His calling?” Not of your calling—this would not do at all. Here it has the fullest and highest character. He takes the heart up to these thoughts and counsels of God. We are called to be before God holy and without blame; we are called to be in Christ's place before God, before the Father, perfectly answering to His love. He does not pray that they may have it, but that they may know it.

As to His inheritance in the saints, if our minds took in the Jewish place compared with our own, this would be extremely simple. Whose land was Israel's? It was God's inheritance; and those in whom He inherited it were Israel. We are not an inheritance, but we are heirs of God. We have nothing below what God would have in His mind here.

Observe the prayer is, “That the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened.” We must not think that we ought not to know these things. The New Testament carefully tells us that we have them laid open to us expressly. “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” “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” —such was the state of the Jews; but it is not our state, These things are not only given to us, but we are given to understand them; we are not in the condition of

the Old Testament at all. In 1 Cor. 2 we have the three steps: revelation by the Holy Ghost; communication of the word given by the Holy Ghost; and the reception of the word by the Holy Ghost.

Take the account of the heavenly city in the Apocalypse—it means something. All those images are characteristic in scripture; I quite admit they are only figures, but they convey thoughts. The more we live in the mind of God, the more intelligent we are. The same things I see through a glass darkly, I will see more clearly, but not differently. Thus, the “white stone” is a symbol full of power. We have common joys, but there is the immediate approbation of Christ to the individual. “Gold” is always the sign of divine righteousness in itself. In the laver the priests were to wash and be clean; but with the sea of glass like crystal I walk upon purity. So “fire” is judgment, as “a sea of glass mingled with fire;” it is perfect purity as the result of judgment. “The street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.” Instead of walking through the dirt of this world, I am to walk on holiness and righteousness according to God. In the Apocalypse we do not go beyond the idea of God in government.

Now we come to the power that brings us into these things. “According to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.” “What an immense truth there is in connection with this! The Messiah was not merely the promised Son of David, but the One in whom all God's counsels would be accomplished. He went down below all things, and then goes far above all heavens. This dead man is raised above all principality and power. He had gone down into the place of death, and men are consequently looked at as dead in sins, not as living in them.

It is well to note here that to look at the sinner as alive in sins, or as dead in them, it is the same state, but a different aspect of it. In Romans man is seen alive in sins, and Christ meeting that state. There is nothing of justification in Ephesians, not a single stir of life there; we were dead in the sins, and Christ died for the sins. God comes in and takes us all up together, looked at as in the mind and counsels of God. God quickens us together with Him. Christ comes down to this place of death, having cleansed our sins on the road, and God raises Him. Man is looked at consequently as united to Christ. This you do not find in the other epistles. The same power has wrought in every individual who believes in Christ that wrought in Him. Christ had gone into death for us, entering into the whole thing in grace and finding us where we were, and, having wrought the work that entitles Him to take us out of it, we are raised with Him, seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is your place; He does not ask you what you think about it! There is no person who has the Spirit of Christ but that is his place. “We are waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body, but one must be either in Christ or out of Christ. There are never two places for the Christian.

All things are to be put under Christ's feet as man, for God “gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body” —a short sentence, but the whole mystery is in it. It is a quotation of Psa. 8, “all things are put under his feet.” In Psa. 2 He is seen as Son of David, King of Zion, Son of God. Nathanael refers to this psalm; and Jesus says to him, “Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man.” He is rejected, and then comes out Psa. 8 Now He is crowned with glory and honor, but we do not see all things put under His feet yet. He is now sitting on the Father's throne. “To him that overcometh will I grant to

sit with me in my throne." "Sit thou on my right hand," says Jehovah, "till I make thine enemies thy footstool." The day of grace is before that "till." There is our comfort and blessing, that He has finished the work for His friends. "By one offering he hath perfected forever them which are sanctified." "We stand therefore between the work which He perfected at His first coming, and His second coming. We are not, like the Jews, waiting to see that His offering is accepted, because the Holy Ghost is come out meanwhile and seals those who believe in Christ. I know the acceptance; I know that He is our forerunner. Then He deals with His enemies. When thus set over all things, the Son Himself will be subject to Him who put all things under Him—a most blessed truth for us. He will reign while He brings all into absolute order for God; when this has been done, He will take His place as man and never give it up. He is the first-born among many brethren. Over everything He created, He is to be set as man; but a head without a body would not be complete. The supplement is wanting: the church is His body.

No one ever mentions the church but Paul. Others may speak of a local church; and Christ said, 'On this rock I will build my church;" but I am not speaking of this either. If the church had been revealed before the cross, you must make every Jew who was in it break the law. The essence of the church is that all are one, Jew and Gentile.

The prayer in chapter 3 is addressed to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There the apostle does not ask that they may know all these thoughts and counsels of God, but that Christ may dwell in their hearts. He is not now looking at them objectively, but at Christ in them. He desires that they should have Christ actually, consciously, by faith dwelling in their hearts, settled in the perfectness of divine love, that they may be able to comprehend the length and breadth and depth and height—he does not say of what—while putting Christ in the center of all that glory. If I look at the length and breadth and depth and height, it is dazzling; but if I found my closest friend the center of the Queen's court, I should be at home at once. Is it that I have lost anything by this, that it is the humble lowly One who is dwelling in my heart? Not a bit.

Thus, if in chapter 1 we have exterior power bringing up Christ, or ourselves by grace, into a position of glory at God's right hand, in chapter 3 we find divine power in us as in the position, and we sought to be strengthened and filled accordingly, in order to realize what it and God Himself is in the fullness of it. It is not God dealing with man, but Christ's relation as Son and dwelling in us by faith; He, the center and divinely entitled light of the fullness and display, dwelling in us to give competency to enter into all the scene. Rooted and grounded in love we are at the center thus in its moral or rather divine springs, and so embrace all that partake of the divine nature, because it is the action of that nature. Thus we look out into the wide extended scene of glory, whose limit none can tell; yet still this is a display, not a source, a scene, not Himself. In love we are at the source of all. We know the love of Christ that passes knowledge. "What I know it in has made it wholly and peculiarly mine, yes, mine as being nothing in it. Christ is divine, infinite in nature; it is so proved in the way it adapts itself to all my wants and weakness, known in adapting itself to them, yet known in itself. As Christ's love it is for man, is manifested in man, and adapts itself to man; yet therein as divine it passes knowledge and brings man, as spiritual (he can feel, think, and apprehend as man,) into the enjoyment of the scene, in which God is displayed, and to God Himself according to His own fullness, and this filled with love as in the center of it consciously. It is we, not brought into a scene by power but filled up to the measure of the fullness of God, Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. Thus love is the spring of power in us, so that we estimate the

scene of that fullness according to the title, character, and nature of God in it, He Himself being the ultimate blessedness of which we are conscious. What makes us familiar there is that that which is in us, and which is the central light of all, is One we know, who dwells in us by faith, the nearest and most confided in of all, yet the fullness of Deity is in Him. Compare Rev. 21:23.

God “is able to do exceeding abundantly according to the power that worketh in us.” This is what we are to look for now: has your heart got hold of this? There is a power that works in us, and He can do exceeding abundantly above all we ask and think according to it. How little faith there is in the power of God!

I believe everything is in ruin and confusion; but there is no ruin or confusion in the power of Christ. I never can think of a power of evil that is not below His power.

Chapter 166

Present Salvation

So a learned professor of divinity entitles a sermon on John 3:36, preached toward the close of last year. There is this inconvenience in noticing it that one does not, cannot, sympathize with the preachers objected to. What can be more offensive or dangerous than crying up grace without righteousness, faith without repentance, pardon without life? The professor may be assured that there are those who, preaching salvation as an actual state, hold also quite as firmly as himself the importance of salvation as a future thing. But they deny that the formularies he seeks to justify express the truth as it is revealed.

It is rather unhappy however that Professor Salmon's second paragraph, the opening of the case, exhibits reasoning and criticism far from exceptionable. For no intelligent Christian doubts that the New Testament speaks of salvation in these two senses, present or future, not to speak of others. But there is neither confusion of the two, nor uncertainty how each is used. In general the line of truth pursued by an inspired writer in a particular book excludes one or other, though there are subjects, and hence books containing them, which admit of both; but in no case is there vagueness for a mind imbued with revealed truth. Thus in Ephesians salvation is viewed exclusively as a thing complete and now enjoyed by the Christian; in Hebrews it is regarded as going on and only consummated in resurrection-glory when Christ appears to those that look for Him. Does Dr. S. make this distinction? or the Prayer-book?

Now I repudiate animosity against the Anglican formularies. My grounds of objection lie far deeper than questions as to any words or forms employed in the Book of Common Prayer; and I am wholly apart from every effort to overthrow the National Establishment in England any more than in Ireland, regarding politics as at best beneath a Christian, and these changes as playing into the hands of infidels or papists, though most of the godly dissenters seem to be beguiled into them.

But in plain straightforwardness it seems indisputable that the petitions, “O God, make speed to save us,” “O Lord, save thy people,” “Show thy mercy upon us, and grant us thy salvation,” are drawn from the Old Testament, and express the hopes of Israel before the work of redemption and the distinctions it maintains could even exist. The want of seeing this has involved the Reformers, not to speak of the Fathers, and the medieval writers, in great darkness. Has Dr. 9. emerged into light, as far as this momentous matter is concerned any more than his predecessors or his neighbors?

Till Christ died and rose and went to heaven, it could not be said of any, as in Eph. 2:4-10, “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith be loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved): and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Nor could Isaiah or Malachi have said of the Jew, as Paul (2 Tim. 1) of Christians, that God “hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought light and immortality [incorruption] to light through the gospel.” So the same apostle adds to Titus, “according to his mercy he saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

In the Psalms and the Prophets we hear the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of prophecy, stimulating and guiding the cry of the saints of old before the cross of Christ. It could not be otherwise. They were petitions in due season. To have spoken as Paul did later would have been presumptuous and false. The basis was not yet laid, the Savior not even come. To adopt the language as to this of David or Jeremiah now is ignorance and unbelief; for it is to blot out the infinite work of the Son of God, it is to slight the witness the Spirit of grace is now rendering to its value in God's sight—its efficacy as a present fact for the believer, who cannot worship as he ought unless he know and enjoy it.

It is not only want of knowledge to confound distinctions so momentous, which the accomplishment of atonement has necessarily brought in; but I ask, Is it really meant that we are saved and not saved in the same sense? If this be rejected as absurd, the question is, Do the Anglican formularies, does Dr. S., truly draw the distinction according to the New Testament? I should rejoice to believe that they did: but both appear to be self-evidently at fault here. Dr. S. seeks to justify the Prayer-book's use of these petitions on the ground that they are the words of scripture found in the Psalms. This justification is the best proof that, as the framers of the prayers did not know the real difference introduced by redemption in Christ, so neither has Dr. S. learned it to this day. Indeed it is the lamentable state of Christendom generally. They are like the virgins who, instead of going out to meet the bridegroom, have gone in somewhere to slumber; instead of going forth to Christ bearing His reproach, they go or keep within the camp. Scripture accurately employs the term “save” or “salvation,” for soul and for body, for past, present, and future; the Prayer-book comprises all together, so as to impair if not destroy the peace and joy of believers, leading them to perplexity and producing false hopes in unbelievers: the former never receiving the true, simple, constant fact of salvation, while waiting for its complement at Christ's coming; the others using the same language for their condition, fearing yet hoping, without any adequate sense of utter present ruin, divinely given faith in Christ.

Dr. S. cites Acts 15:11, 1 Thess. 5:8, Rom. 8:24 (■σ■θημεν, a curious text for a scholar and divine to cite for future salvation) and Rom. 5:9, 10. I will give him another from the same Epistle (13:11, 12), which may help the reader to understand these all the better: “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand.” Now I ask him or any other competent man: Is it just to mix up New Testament texts which speak of salvation in glory by-and-by (which no Christian questions), with the use men have made of Old Testament passages which merge soul and body together, as all must have done till Christ died for our sins while not yet come to raise or change us? Is it not increasingly plain that Dr. S. defends the liturgy because he is himself in a confusion akin to that of its compilers? He is not entitled to say as he does, “I will not delay to examine the correctness of a theory, according to which the Christian Church has been wrong from its first foundation to the present day, in supposing that whether in its

public worship or in the private devotions of generation after generation of its most saintly members, it could find in the Psalms of David adequate expression for its deepest feelings." (Page 5.) "Wrong from its first foundation!" nay, but since the enemy contrived to Judaize it.

Nor do I think that any Romanist need ask more than Dr. S. here concedes, to land alike episcopalians and presbyterians in the darkness of his own superstition; being fully assured that such a use or rather abuse of the Psalms of David, as the "adequate expression for the deepest feelings" of the church or the Christian, if not derived from Romanism, is traceable to that scarcely better catholic system which preceded the ambitious politics of the papacy. Not one clause in one psalm, I am bold to affirm, expresses the proper and peculiar feelings of the Christian or of the church. There is not one cry of Abba Father; not a hint of drawing within the veil; not an unequivocal expression of membership of Christ; still less of the distinctive love of Christ for the church as His body for which He gave Himself.

Further, I maintain that the Psalms abound with expressions just and proper for Israel of old, and for Israel in the last days, but utterly incongruous and unsuited and improper on any fair interpretation for the Christian or the church ever since its first foundation till now. Does Dr. S. soberly pray that our foot may be dipped in the blood of our enemies, and the tongue of our dogs in the same? Is it the "deepest feeling" of the Christian that God should persecute our enemies with His tempest, that they should be confounded and troubled forever, yea, perish? Would he be happy to take and dash, the little ones of Babylon against the stones?

Not for a moment are those expressions impugned in themselves. They are righteous altogether; and they will express the feelings of the Jewish saints adequately in that day when Jehovah is Himself judging the earth and the quick upon it. But now God is showing the riches of grace and longsuffering, not yet judging the habitable world in righteousness; and we are called to speak to ourselves and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, that is, not in the Psalms, but in Christian compositions of these various characters; as indeed believers are constantly found to do so, and did from the first.

But an opening criticism of Dr. S. was referred to, which must now be noticed. Speaking of the Prayer-book, he says, "It contains the prayer, 'O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, grant us Thy peace,' whereas it is said [by the preachers he is chastising], Paul teaches us, that being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now it is clear that, if the Prayer-book mean the same peace, it is at issue with Rom. 5, and indeed the general teaching of the New Testament. Does Dr. S. seriously deny that the Epistles contemplate the Christian as having peace with God? Can he say that the Prayer-book does?

I only notice by the way the fact that the liturgies of Rome and England misquote scripture gravely in their reference to John 1:29, which speaks of" sin," not sins; and the difference of force is great to anyone familiar with God's word: so great that, while the Gospel expresses perfect truth, the Anglican or other misquotations would imply, if true, that there was nothing more against the world, its sins being gone. Logically they would infer the destructive lie of universalism.

Another point notable is the following: "I may remark in passing that this very text (Rom. 5:1), which is one of the main pillars of the system of doctrine which I am considering, is now given by the principal critical editors, in the form, 'Let us have peace,' according to which reading the text

changes sides, and makes Paul guilty of the same error which is reprehended in our church, namely, exhorting his converts to a peace which they had already. I mention this various reading, not that I myself prefer the altered reading, but as the immense preponderance of ancient witnesses, whether manuscripts or early citations, is in favor of it, the example shows how very precarious is the deduction of a doctrine from a single text," &c. (Page 4.) Does it not show ratio! how precarious is Dr. S.'s critical judgment? For the question between ο and ω is precisely one of that class as to which the ancient manuscripts are least reliable. "Whether we can best account for their frequent lapses in the interchange of these letters by ignorant copyists deceived by the ear may be a question; but the fact that the most ancient and best cannot be depended on in such cases is certain. Compare 1 Cor. 15:49, Heb. 12:28. This explains why the reading of several of the oldest MSS. may be merely a clerical blunder. If Tischendorf is gone over to ■χωμεν with the uncorrected text of the Sinai, with Vat., Alex., &c, Lachmann abandoned it for ■χομεν in his maturer edition. There is no deficiency whatever in external authority, for the majority of uncials, and cursives, supports ■χομεν. The criterion for a spiritual mind under such circumstances is the bearing of the context: and, if so, I have not a doubt that this reading and not ■χωμεν is required by the scope of the verse and the argument generally. But the odd thing is that Dr. S. himself accepts the reading ■χομεν, "we have." If so on solid grounds, why is it precarious to use it? If he have no solid grounds, why "prefer" it?

It is not contended then by any man sound or instructed in the faith, that it is improper to speak of salvation as a future thing. But future salvation in scripture is the close of present temptation, up to the redemption of the body at Christ's coming again. Does this justify the unbelief which overspreads the confessions and theologians of Christendom in their attenuation of that which grace has already given the Christian? or the effort to cover over this consequent ignorance of our actual privileges in Christ, prevalent not merely among the greater national systems but among dissenters generally? An appeal to the Psalms of David seems to be a plain and conclusive proof that this charge is just: where Christ's light is enjoyed, who could doubt it? Again, to cite 2 Thess. 3:16, or Rom. 15:13, does not warrant Christians in asking for peace in the sense of Rom. 5:1, which they are supposed to have already. Distinguish the nature of the peace, and the argument is powerless; for it assumes the identity of what is quite distinct. Peace with God founded on our soul's submission to His righteousness in Christ is a wholly different thing from practical peace in the midst of the questions apt to agitate believers, then especially so when the association of Jews and Gentiles, for the first time in the history of God's dealings with man, brought up many serious occasions of discord. If those who had peace with God needed (as they surely did and do) peace from Him in these and all other trials, we have the truth of scripture as to this, but no real apology for the feeble and indeed false teaching of the Prayer-book, which habitually (though I am sure moat unwittingly) tends to hinder and deny peace with God.

The reasoning, criticism, and use of scripture by the Professor in page 6 are far from exact. The Bible does not speak of the very admission into the Christian church as an act of salvation; nor does it interchange the terms of being saved and "being added to the church;" nor does το■ς σωζομ■νους mean those that were then being saved, but the class destined to salvation, which is fairly enough rendered in our version. There were οι σζζ■μενοι in Israel before; now the Lord, instead of leaving them there, was adding them ■π■ τ■ α■τ■ (if, as seems required by the best evidence, we omit τ■ ■κκλησ■■). But this is in no way to speak interchangeably of their salvation

and of their addition together; still less does it speak of their admission as an act of salvation. It rather distinguishes the two things, and makes their being the class destined to salvation the ground for putting them in the new position. Those who believed in Christ were hence to form an assemblage apart; in Acts 4:23, called “their own company,” in Acts 5:11 (if not in chap. 2:47), styled “the church” or assembly, according to our Lord's words in Matt. 16:18; 18:17.

As to the stress laid on the participle, it is certainly a mistake; for, though such a form of the word is in itself capable of being so used, it is quite wrong to infer that it necessarily so means. For the participle is equally susceptible of an abstract signification, which expresses simply that the persons are objects of the operation in question without reference to present or past time. For if the point were the present time, such persons could not be said to be σωθ■ντες or σεσωσμ■νοι, both of which terms are used or implied of Christians in this life as to salvation, no less than σωζ■μενοι. They are used of the godly Jews expressly in the Septuagint, σωζ■μενοι being the character, σωθ■ντες the fact, and σεσωσμ■νοι the present result of what is past. In no case can this be a question of those that were then being saved; for, if it were, it would be impossible consistently to employ about them the other terms, all referring to the same salvation in a similar sense. For manifestly, if ο■ σωζ■μενοι meant those in actual process of salvation, they could not also be described as ο■ σωθ■ντες, by which nevertheless the same translators describe them in the same book of Isaiah. The conclusion therefore is irresistible that ο■ σωζ■μενοι must have been technically employed in its abstract application of a character and class, and not of time present as Professors conceived.

Again, a somewhat similar reasoning applied to his use of 1 Peter 3:21. Baptism unquestionably is the well known initiatory sign, the figure of salvation by Christ's death and resurrection; but this is abused, if used, as apparently it is, to weaken the grand truth that according to His mercy He saved (■σωσεν) us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. The present tense is frequently used, as here, for a moral fact irrespective of time: if time were emphatic, ■'σωσεν could not be applied to the Christian now. Nor does 2 Peter 2:21 modify that truth; for it speaks of the vinous turning away of those who had once confessed Christ, but it carefully avoids all idea that they had ever gone beyond knowledge, nor hints that they had at any time possessed life in Christ. Thus theology has misled Dr. S., and the desire to extenuate the forms of his own religious connection not only fails but throws him, as far as it works, outside the limits of scripture.

Dr. S. justly feels that God's gospel is inseparable from holiness of walk, in contrast with heathenism, which allowed of sin alike in the false gods and in their votaries; as does priestcraft now and of old in Christendom: witness any system of penance, indulgence, and the confessional. The mere revelation of a future life had not of itself, as he says, the power to bring morality and religion into closer union. And no doubt it is delusive to flatter oneself that thinking rightly about God, or paying Him due honor, will stand without practical righteousness. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and the unrighteousness of men that hold the truth in unrighteousness.” Thus, whatever the self-deceiving thoughts of the Newmans now, or of the Jeromes of old, if there be a difference as there surely is in judgment, their unrighteousness is to Him most offensive, who know most or are most orthodox, for they hold fast the truth in unrighteousness. God is not mocked: as men sow, they reap. Nor is antinomianism confined to Romanists, but as widely found as the unrenewed heart when it adopts a form of godliness. Most freely and fully do I grant that God holds to His principles immutably, as the apostle elaborately

insists in the earlier half of Rom. 2. In fine, Christ is life as well as righteousness, and thus holiness is secured no less than justification.

But is it not strange for any one who knows the truth of the gospel to deduce from the truth of God's moral government, however certain and important it may be, the doctrine of salvation, present, future, or any other? “Only embrace that salvation, only join yourself to Christ now, only strive to be like Him through the aid of that Holy Spirit whom He has promised to give you, and you will not have to wait for a future life in order to taste the happiness which is the portion of His people.” Is this Dr. S.'s gospel? It might suit those not too infirm who could step down after the angel's visit into the pool of Bethesda; but how for the lost, for the dead in trespasses and sins? Does he recognize the need of quickening? not merely of a new walk but of a new and divine life? yea, of deliverance from the law of sin, and not only of remission of sins? There is no adequate statement of these things here or anywhere also in the sermon, though it is a discourse on “present salvation.” Nay, what is said seems scarcely consistent with the truth.

On the other hand it may be granted to Dr. S. that there is need to warn souls against self-delusion, for a man's own favorable opinion about his condition in the sight of God must be false, if he rest not on Christ and His work; and it is a wicked and dangerous absurdity to teach that, if a man pronounces himself saved, he is saved. But is it really believed that God justifies freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus? that to him who worketh not but believeth on Him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness? that David was inspired to tell us of the blessedness of the man to whom God reckons righteousness without works? It is the Master who says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (John 1:24.) It is an inspired servant who says, “Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand.” But why should Dr. S. add, “No matter into what sins he may afterward fall, his acceptance with God remains unshaken, for he has once for all passed from death unto life?” The doctrine for which I contend does not put an arbitrary break between our future portion and our present life: for the Christ we shall have in glory is the Christ we have now in grace. No doctrine so excludes any gap whatever as our Lord's words, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.” (John 10:27-29.) I complain of Dr. S.'s language, not for its strength but for its weakness. How different the words of the Apostle Paul, with death and judgment before him, when speaking of the power of life in Christ possessed by Christians! “Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we [it is nothing peculiar, but the common expression of Christian feeling] are always confident.” (2 Cor. 5)

Entirely do I accept the statement that faith is in Christ, not in ourselves. True faith sets to its seal that God is true, not that my hopes about my acceptance are well founded. But it is a painful descent from faith, to silence doubts by “those rules of practical probability which are the very guide of our present life.” Do we not read that “whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world” “And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” But it is hard to conceive how on Dr. S.'s showing a young believer, or an upright old one, could have unbroken confidence. His gospel

seems to be partly Christ, partly the believer's own conviction that he is saved in detail from his sins in practice. Does not this savor of faith in himself? It is not Paul's gospel.

For my part I see in scripture, a much richer salvation, than that poor evangelicalism which is apparently the object of Dr. S.'s attack. His own statement too seems to be just as meager and otherwise as objectionable. The written word declares that God sent His Son into the world that we might live through Him, and that He might be the propitiation for our sins. Without life in the Son we would not enjoy God; without His expiation we could not be purged so as to have no more conscience of sin. Children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, we have not redemption only but the Spirit of His Son sent into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. We believe in His death for us, and we know that our oil man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. “We have died to sin and live no longer therein. Thus we have by grace not remission of sins only but deliverance from sin—a privilege utterly denied, not ignored merely but denied, by the Prayer-book. But I am compelled to go farther than the Professor, and am assured that it is a most miserable system of theology, which represents the Christian as still tied and bound by the chain of his sins—a dark and enslaving tradition, which ignorantly abuses the latter part of Rom. 7 (the parenthetic discussion of a soul in bondage to the power of sin) to set aside the liberty wherewith the law of the Spirit of life in Christ seta one free as in chapter viii. For we cannot rightly be under both husbands, as this unhappy and unholy scheme supposes (and Dr. S. tells us that holiness and happiness are one); but dead to the law by the body of Christ we are married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

None of our heavenly privileges is here touched on; so that I am not going into what might seem deep. But what sort of theology is it which blinds men even to the meaning of baptism as set forth in Rom. 6? Assuredly the young evangelists are superficial: are the theologians much better? Is it not ominous that both have to learn what their baptism means? and that the wildest Irish evangelist is not so far from this elementary truth as is the Anglican service for baptism?

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Chapter 169

The Prodigal With the Father

(Luke 15)

I take this chapter because one finds so many souls not in the second condition of this repentant prodigal; as to the state of their minds, they have not the best robe and the fatted calf, not being with the Father on the ground on which the Father reveals Himself. The whole thing is the Father's mind, what the Father felt and did. From the prodigal's confession, all is the Father's mind and the Father's ways. There are numbers of saints not on this ground: there is not this conscious place with the Father.

There are two very distinct states in this prodigal; only in the second, do we really get the Father's thoughts and feelings, not the prodigal's, but the effect upon him. This is not the judgment, or the presenting of the blood to God as meeting that judgment, but God in justifying grace, and the way the soul enters on the enjoyment of that grace. The side on which the gospel is presented here is not that judgment is outstanding, and that the blood is there to meet it, but the joy of divine love in blessing the wanderer brought back by grace.

We must not confound God's government (in which He may have anger even with His own children) with God's nature, which cannot allow sin. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” From the nature of God, the moment He is revealed, He abhors and rejects the sin, and, from the holiness of His nature, He judges it. We are to walk in the light, as God is in the light. God has no measure with sin (there are indeed “many stripes” and “few stripes"), but His nature rejects sin. Adam returns to the dust from which he was taken—present judgment that marked God's displeasure.

God may chasten His own children, but what is so dreadful is being shut out from the presence of the Lord forever. There is no veil over the glory of God. If you have to do with God at all, you must deal with God, not as under the law when there was a veil, and God was hidden, but now He has come out, and wrath from heaven has boon fully revealed. This is not the side we have here, but the grace that goes out to seek the lost. We get the Trinity in this chapter, but not as a doctrine. We find the activity of God in grace in the Lord and the Holy Spirit, and then in the way the soul is received. The shepherd has lost his sheep, and he goes after it, and brings it back, while the sheep never put its feet to the ground. Then we see the piece of money—there could be nothing that passed in it, no activity. Then there is another, thank God, not a new but a most blessed and lovely principle, that it is not our joy, but God's joy.

A Pharisee is a man who thinks he has a righteousness for God; we have that described in the elder brother—you do not want to be a Jew, to be a Pharisee. It is the most hateful thing in God's sight that exists.

A Pharisee has no sense of sin, no sense of holiness, or of love; there is nothing so foreign to the heart and mind of God; there is the most thorough selfishness in him, not a thought of anything else. The Pharisees had the law, the prophets, Christ as coming in the flesh, the word of

God—they had got it enough to take pride out of it, but not so as to enter into the Father's heart. “Thy brother is come;” that ought to have touched his heart—not a bit. There is no sense of righteousness or of holiness in the Pharisee; there is only the making the outside of the cup clean, as if God did not see the inside.

The Lord takes the case of one that has gone to an excess of riot, as the prodigal; grace reaches him, and this is God's delight. The moment the soul has got hold of what God is, it is not feeding on husks, that is the worst thing, as regards the heart; there is not one bit of difference when you come to the root of the matter. With the first act of the young man, the mischief was done, when he turned his back on his father's house, and took his own way. When he crossed the threshold of his father's house, he was as much a sinner as when he was eating husks, and, what is more, he was nearer returning when he was eating husks; there was no pretense then that he was not perishing.

There was enough evil to reach the conscience. “Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me,” we all say. We like our own will; we like to be from God to do our own will. This is what you all are as children of Adam; you have your back upon God, and your face to your own pleasures. There is no return till that is confessed. Suppose a son goes off' in wild wickedness from his father's house; he may not be a thief, he may be an honest cleric, but everything is wrong till he comes back.

The heart of man in itself never returns to God. There is a famine in the world; when natural things are gone, what has the heart left? There is in many a heart the sense that there is a famine in the world; the heart has nothing to satisfy it.

There is no giving in the devil's country. You would not have to take so much pains to make yourself happy, if you were so! All these artificers in brass and iron are merely an effort to make the city (where we are without God) pleasant. That kind of heart never turns the heart to God, but turns it to what satisfies the flesh. There is no giving there, there is selling oneself. “And he joined himself unto a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.”

When he comes to himself, there is a total change; the goodness of God comes into the heart. “How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare!” He does not say “I shall get it,” but the sense of goodness is awakened in the soul, and this produces a want of another kind.

Whenever the Holy Ghost works in the soul, there is a want of some kind: I want more holiness, I want to be like Christ. Wherever there is the revelation of Himself to the heart, there is always the sense of the goodness of God. People say, “If I perish, I perish at the cross;” conscience is awakened, but the heart is attracted. “I will arise and go unto my father.” Now it is not that he has got to his father, but his face is turned to him—an immense thing for the soul, but there is not peace yet. “Bread enough and to spare:” there is abundance and plenty there. He did not know if he would be let in, but he knew there was plenty to be let into. “I will arise and go unto my father:” the moment it is so, God and the soul have met. He did not say that he would change his ways, but “I must go to my father;” the heart wants God. “And will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” The next thing is honest confession. It is often a long while before we get up to this, knowing that we have no title. “I cannot take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs.” “Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table.” I am just a wretched dog, but there is goodness enough in God

for those who have no title. If you take holiness as a ground of your acceptance, it is a mistake: it is righteousness.

This young man never has a word to say to the blessing till everything is spent. Are you fit for God now? It is not what is in God that meets your case, but what is in you will, you hope, meet God's case: this is all wrong. We have seen the young man's heart brought to God in a sense—all quite right, but he begins to think how he will be with God when he meets Him. What did this prove? That he had never met God at all! People talk of a humble hope of some small corner in heaven. God's presence is there, and are you fit for that with all those rags on you? There was a work of God in the man's soul, but there was this thought. He had no terms to make with his father when he met him. You find numbers of souls, who have not really met God to find what His thoughts are, partly hoping, partly fearing. He was not judging from what God was, and had been. He had not given himself up, as nothing but sin, to find what God was to those who have nothing but sin. What was the effect of his returning? To bring him to his father with all the traces of the far country, totally unfit for his presence. He was coming back to God's presence in his rags (the effect of the experience of God's work in our hearts is to bring us to God in our sins); just as he had come out of the far country. Till we submit to that, we never get peace. We are often reasoning from our thoughts and feelings to what will be, but that is giving God the character of a judge; and if He has the character of a judge, there can be nothing from Him but everlasting destruction. Why not confess you have not met Him yet? I do not say He has not met you. The father kissed the prodigal in his rags. He deals in absolute grace with me such as I am, loving me when I am in my rags—a condition totally unfit to be in the house. The father acted from his thoughts, and feelings, and mind, and the only effect of the wretchedness of the son was to draw out the compassion of the father. The very essence of Christianity is that, because we could not meet God as a judge, God has come to us in grace to show that He is greater than our sins.

The footing we are upon with God is not what we are for God (this has to do with government), but what God is for us. He does not look for righteousness, but He brings it. It is not what God finds, but what God gives.

With his father on his neck, the prodigal never says, “Make me as one of thy hired servants.” He had met his father, and consequently he knew his position with his father; the whole thing depended on what his father was for him.

Are you content that your position with God should depend on what God is for you, not on what you are for God? He has learned his father's heart towards him; he knows a son's place because he has found his father's heart. The grace has gone out, and righteousness goes in.

The young man had got his share before. The “best robe” was what the father put upon him now, that he might be the witness to the whole house of what were his father's thoughts. We come not simply with our rags off, but with Christ on. He brings us to His own presence according to His own heart.

There is not a word about the son now. It was the Father's delight to have him, and He puts that delight upon him—Christ. It is experience we get when the son was on his way to his father, but experience is not righteousness. The experience was there, but experience led him in rags to his father's presence. I get Christ as my righteousness. Then the soul sits down and enjoys all the

Father has to give. You will find it hard for your heart to bow to dependence on what God is to you. There can be no real true holiness practically till we have got the certainty of salvation. How can a child have fit affections if he has not a father? An orphan is capable of them.

Do not be merely satisfied with being saved. I am uneasy when I see a person resting too long on contrasts. I believe we shall remember it in heaven; “the Lamb as it had been slain” will be before us there. Do not be always saying, “I was scampering away, and He took me in.” Have you found nothing within the family—nothing in the firstborn among many brethren, without thinking of that? Walk is all important when I am a child. Then it is God deals with us in close government—thank God for it!

Is the place of your heart with the Father, living there with the affections belonging to that place? Are you content to take your whole condition and blessing from what the Father is to you?

Elements of Prophecy: Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Christ is the center of the counsels of God, and hence of prophecy, which treats of the earth, and His government of it for His own glory. Hence the importance of Israel, of whom, as according to the flesh, came Christ who is over all, God blessed forever. They are His people by a choice and calling which cannot fail in the end, though there may be and has been a fall and a long continued disowning of them in God's righteous judgment of their apostasy. But mercy will restore them ere long, humbly, joyfully welcoming the Messiah they have so long rejected.

This had been feebly seen, nay, generally denied, throughout Christendom for ages. Scarcely any error is more patent throughout the Fathers than the substitution of the church for Israel in all their system of thought. Every Father, whose remains have come down to us, is a witness of the same allegorizing interpretations, not only the Alexandrian school of Clement and Origen, but Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and the Pseudo-Barnabas. The Latins followed in the same wake, not Augustine and Ruffinus and Jerome only, but Tertullian, Cyprian, and Lactantius. Not one held the restoration of Israel to their land, converted nationally; the millenarian portion expected that the risen saints would reign with Christ in Jerusalem rebuilt, adorned, and enlarged, not that the Jews should be restored and blessed in the land. The mediaeval writers naturally adopted the same view: so did the Reformers, as far as I am aware, without an exception. All fell into the error of putting the church into the place of Christ, and of leaving no room for His earthly people, besides His heavenly saints, and glorified bride. They neglected the warning of the Apostle Paul, and assumed that the Jewish branches were broken off that the Gentiles might be grafted in and take their place gloriously, and forever. They did not take heed to the prophetic word, as Peter exhorts, but applied systematically the predictions of Israel's blessing in the last days to the Christian church: still less did they appreciate the day dawning or the day star arising in the heart. Catholics, papists, protestants, had no real light, no spiritual intelligence, as to the hopes of Israel as distinct from those of Christians.

Is it not as solemn as it is startling to see thus beyond just question the immediate, universal, and lasting departure of the Christian profession from prophetic truth? But so it is and must be. The divine glory in Christ for all things in heaven and on earth being the blessed and revealed purpose of God (Eph. 1:10), when this is forgotten, false hopes spring up. Man, self, becomes the end, instead of Christ; the true light is lost, and darkness ensues in the just retribution of God. The effort to make the church all, instead of preserving the true dignity of the church as the heavenly spouse of Christ, lowers her to the position of Israel, a people reigned over, not reigning with Him, His inheritance, not heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

The future actings of God as revealed in prophecy are the expression of the principles on which He will govern the world; and so His word is the means by which alone we learn these principles fully. If we fail to ascertain them thus, we form our own thoughts of that which God gave us, prophecy whereby to know His mind. Our business is to gather of what and whom God speaks;

and no greater delusion can befall us than to imagine that, because all scripture is for our profit, all must be about ourselves. The purpose of God as to the Jews is in its place as truly the object of faith as His counsels respecting the church. Thus, the apprehension of His various ways for glorifying Christ is essential to real understanding of His word. Here, as everywhere, a single eye is needed. With Christ before us, the whole body will not fail to be full of light.

Is not this to take away scripture from the Christian? Quite the reverse. To understand it according to God is the truest and richest gain; to misapply it to ourselves in Gentile conceit is ruinous. Yet there is no instruction in the past or future history of Israel as revealed in the Bible which is not for, though not about, the church. That such scriptures concerning the Jew may have been written so as to bear an analogous application to the Gentiles is not denied; but the application calls for the utmost caution and a right dividing of the word of truth, because each economy has its own peculiarities, and in not a few things there are confessedly decided and intended contrasts. It is an error therefore to read the church in Judah and Israel, Zion and Jerusalem; and the effect of this alchemy which the Fathers originated and handed down to popery and protestantism alike, has been both to rob Israel of their proper hope and to lower that of the church incalculably.

Yet no maxim of interpretation can compare with this most misleading identification for importance, antiquity, or widespread reception. Since the apostles, perhaps beyond every other tradition, has this been accepted always, everywhere, and by all. Fathers, Romanists, Reformed, have alike applied it habitually in their comments, as well as in practice.

Few sober minds doubt that the visions in Dan. 2; 7, start from the times of the prophet; that the Revelation applied in some sense from John's day; that the fourth beast sets forth the Roman empire; that the little horn in Dan. 7 denotes its last ruler; that Babylon in Rev. 17 represents Rome; that the prophecy in 1 Tim. 4 was fulfilled long ago; that the man of sin relates to the Antichrist, and is rather the ecclesiastical or false prophet power of Rev. 13 than the imperial chief or first beast; that the two woes in Rev. 9 are strikingly illustrated in the Saracens and Turks, and that the days, times, &c, may have had a symbolic force.

But these are points of detail, all of which together are a trifle compared with the one grand principle which effaces Israel from prophecy and installs the church in their stead. What then can be thought of the judgment that could overlook an error so transcendent, vitiating all sound exposition of both Old Testament and New from Genesis to Revelation? One can account for it by two considerations: first, a quite superficial estimate of the evil involved in this old and general error; secondly, a very exaggerated feeling against those who looked for a personal Antichrist among the Jews and a future revival of the Roman empire before the age ends, lest it should weaken protestantism in the face of the popish re-awakening in our day. There is no adequate sense of the wrong which has been already done the truth for nearly eighteen centuries, and the darkening influence which Judaizing the church has wrought far and wide in Christendom, among the Orientals, Greeks, and Latins, as well as protestants more recently, throughout all its history save the first century. The feverish doubt caused by a few fanciful essayists like Drs. Maitland, Todd, and Burgh, Messrs. Tyso, Dodsworth, and the like, were slight indeed compared with the original paralysis which destroyed all true power in the body of Christian profession, whether in the distinct perception of the Christian's heavenly privileges in union with Christ on high, or in the just recognition of God's fidelity to Israel.

To my mind the way in which protestant compromise has played into the hands of Romanism is very grave (and this in many ways more than the prophetic speculations which palliated popery); but I speak of an error far older, deeper, more withering, and less suspected, which seems not to cross the vision of him who would defend the protestant interpretation of prophecy against the futurist assailant.

The fact is too that it has been the common view of protestants as well as futurists to take for granted the natural if not necessary clearness of fulfilled prophecy; to make much of general consent among interpreters; and to decry that view which could not plead antiquity or what was held by alleged heretics. Protestantism has ever made much of history, as if time were the interpreter rather than the Spirit of God leading souls into the truth. Hence protestantism has sought to maintain that prophecy extends in nearly equal proportion over all ages down to the future advent of our Lord. This naturally excites the desire to find what answers to it up to and in our own day. And it is vain to deny that the ablest of protestant interpreters have themselves laid down that the main use of prophecy is to convict, if not convince, unbelievers. Futurists have in this simply turned protestant batteries against the protestant system of interpretation.

The Christian, if wise, will eschew party spirit and narrowness here as elsewhere. He need not be a mere futurist because he cannot be a mere protestant; and if anything ought to deter him from such systematizing, the contractedness of the one, and the virulence of the other, ought to serve as an effectual beacon against both. That half-a-dozen men in their zeal for what they saw to be unfulfilled pushed matters to extremes against the protestant school which had misled them is clear; but to say that the system of the futurists in its very foundations directly contradicts the early writers is the last degree of controversial blindness if not asperity.

I am sure that it is a poor thing to court or reckon up the suffrages of the more ancient Fathers who wrote on prophecy; but it is absurd to deny that, right or wrong, they stand in the main with the futurists against the historicalists. They held that the end was nigh; they held that the Antichrist was an individual, not a succession; they held that he would take Christ's place, not His vicar's: they held that he would set up to be God in the temple of Jerusalem, not as the Pope in Rome; they held that the days are days, not years, so that the times of Daniel and of the Apocalypse would be but a brief crisis. Now those are the capital points of futurism, as opposed to protestantism; and how the earlier Fathers thought is beyond controversy. Their foundations are those of the futurists. What has been alleged by special pleading consists of mere individual eccentricities, exaggerated into its very foundations, in order to ensure (or at least yield the semblance of) an easy victory.

Thus the great mass of futurists have ever held that the visions in Daniel start from his own time, if not from a defined point not far distant as the seventy weeks. But then they suppose a gap in the fourth or Roman empire, which, after extinction, is to revive for the time of the end; and of this they have unquestionable proof from scripture. A few persons were attacked excessive in their sentiments. It was apparently from not knowing how much there is common to intelligent minds both futurist and protestant, as well as to Christians who have larger views than either. It was ignorance probably; if not, it was worse. Such strokes of strategy may suit polemical objects; but they retard the truth, and injure those most who deign to use them or are misled by them.

Not the least hurtful of influences in the protestant system is the assumption that history is the interpreter of prophecy, and the undue place thus given to it. Prophecy explains history, never the converse. No matter how the facts answer to the prediction, they are but the least and lowest part: God's mind in the facts is the grand thing, and of this the Spirit is the only teacher, not history. Now He can and does lead the believer into the divine mind as well as the outward facts before, no less than after, fulfillment: so utterly do I reject the alleged futurist principle that fulfilled prophecy is plain as distinguished from the obscurity of what is unaccomplished. Not so: scripture is only understood aright by the Spirit, who is independent of time or history, and gives divine certainty by and to faith, whether the word of God be about the past or the present or the future. On the face of it the theory is false; for we must understand the prophecy before we can apply it truly, and when we do understand it (which is quite independent of its being fulfilled or not) we have what God meant. The proof of its application to events (that is, of its accomplishment) may be interesting to believers, and useful to meet (or stop the mouths of) unbelievers; but this is not the primary and ordinary intention, for it is in general given to instruct, cheer, and warn the believer, not merely to prove that God knows and speaks the truth beforehand as in some few exceptional instances.

And just think of the state of mind which could cite Deut. 4:32, and Psa. 28:5, in proof of the duty of studying history for the interpretation of prophecy! The first passage reminds Israel of the great and terrible fact that God spoke to them out of the fire. Moses appeals to them if ever man had heard the like. What is this to the purpose? Still less, if possible, is the second: the works of Jehovah and the operations of His hands are anything but man's account of man's doings. Nobody doubts that history, as far as it is true, must confirm a prophecy which really speaks of the same events: the question is its use in interpreting.

Nor are notorious facts justly to be styled history. In facts of the kind God acts in known public judgment, of which all the world can take cognizance. The fatal flaw here again is the leaving aside His public government for providence secret in its ways, which is not really the subject of prophecy as the general rule. In short then the use of fulfillment in reasoning with infidels is one thing; quite another is interpretation, which is our question.

It is in vain to deny that prophecy in general, even the visions of Daniel, which take in the rise and progress of empire very cursorily, converges on the close of the age. Nor is there the least inconsistency in one who sees this, which it is utter prejudice or dishonesty to evade, complaining of that exaggeration of past or passing events to which the historicalists are notoriously prone. Take Dan. 7 for instance: is it not plain that the early verses as to the first three beasts are only introductory to the object of the Spirit? and that His object was meant to act as a present thing on the conscience, as well as to guide the feet of the saints when the circumstances appear? The confusion arises from the supposition that God's moral government as such has its results now, which it never can have till Christ be manifested, in view of whom all has been carried on.

To the historicalist Christ and His glory is not the key of God's government; he is occupied with the past or present, which is but a parenthesis of secret providence between God's immediate government of old on earth and His resumption of it in the midst of Israel when the beasts and the Gentiles at large are judged. He makes a Ptolemaic theory, instead of seeing facts as they are with Copernicus; he views Christendom meanwhile as the central object, instead of Christ the true center of the solar system. Hence, during that period of which history ancient or modern is so

boastful, the great actors are regarded but as “beasts;” and all is passed over lightly till the conclusion of their history when judgments crowd into a brief space, and the Lord Jesus closes them all by His own personal appearing to judge and reign. Of these “times of the Gentiles” God has not lost sight; and hence they are noticed in Daniel, Zechariah, and the Revelation; but it is mainly to show how Christ will displace all, and take the reins of God's kingdom. Now that God has brought in fuller light as to this, the historicalists are those who oppose it most keenly, because it corrects a vast deal of their visionary interpretations, and they are not prepared for that which makes little of man as he is in order to exalt the second Man. Like the masses in Christendom, they had lost sight of the proper hope of the Christian. Neither did the so-called futurists deliver minds from the prevalent confusion, being occupied themselves with the solemn events of the last crisis of the age or with the reign of Christ manifested in glory that succeeds. They had, none of them, any adequate hold of the heavenly hope as a distinct thing from prophecy. They might be thought to heed the prophetic word, but enjoyed little, if at all, the day dawning and the day star arising in their hearts. All was confounded for both.

Elements of Prophecy: 2. Historical School

Chapter 2

The historical school allege in favor of their view certain presumptions, such as these:—

(1) That it is the nature of scripture prophecy to occupy a continuous range of divine providence, and that this must he especially true of such detailed and symbolic visions as those of Daniel and John; (2) that the writers of the primitive church almost unanimously contradict the theory of a future crisis, and agree with the Protestant interpreters on the most material points; and (3) that the discordance of those who contend for a convergence on the end of the age is fatal to the alleged superiority of their interpretation in point of simplicity, harmony, and clearness.

(I.) - The following scriptures have been produced to prove, not only that the inference is unsound, but that the allegation is entirely false. The test chosen is to take the leading prophecies in order from the first and to observe the length of the continuous period over which each of them extends.

1. Gen. 3:15 is supposed to denote a continuous period of seven thousand years from the death of Abel to the judgment. But surely this is an arbitrary view, and though in the scripture there may be included the enmity between Satan and man, no spiritual mind can fail to discern that according to scripture the grand bearing of it is found in the two great crises of the cross and the appearing of the Lord Jesus.

2. Gen. 6:3. No one doubts the striving of God's Spirit, or, at least, the days of man an hundred and twenty years; but again, the interest is concentrated on the judgment which closes all rather than spread that interval.

3. Gen. 9:25 - 27. The curse on Canaan B.C. 1451 (Zech. 14:21), a period of three thousand three hundred years; but here too one looks onward to the future intervention of Jehovah rather than to any partial dealings meanwhile. And so with the blessing on Shem, and the enlargement of Japheth. To treat John 4:22 as the fulfillment of the former, and Acts 9:18 (? 15), 28:28 as the fulfillment of the latter, seems most inadequate. It confounds the earnest, which may be more or less continuous, with the fulfillment, which is yet future, and far from an unbroken line.

4. Gen. 13:14 - 17. The possession of Canaan B.C. 1451 - A.D. 70 for 1500 years would be a poor answer to the rich words of the God who gave promises to Abraham. The true accomplishment is still future, and will only be under Messiah and the new covenant.

5. Gen. 15:13 - 16. No doubt the Israelites were afflicted 400 years by the stranger; but the point of hope was the judgment of that nation, and Abraham's seed coming out with great substance.

6. Gen. 22:16 - 18. Gal. 3 shows us that no long period is the point meant, but Christ the risen Seed of Abraham through whom blessing comes to all the nations. The Jewish promise of supremacy for the countless seed of Abraham is as yet unfulfilled. There is no question here of a space of 4000 years, but of the consequences of Christ's first coming and of His second.

7. Gen. 49:3 - 27. Here too, in the scattering of Levi, we think not so much of a space as of a fact. There is more ground to speak of continuance in the case of Judah; but it is to me clear and certain that the gathering or obedience of the nations to Shiloh is yet future. It is the kingdom, not the gospel, which is before us here, and a future crisis, not past or present history.

8. Ex. 3:7 - 12. The sign is not the space of 40 years, but the final token of bringing Israel to Horeb.

9. Lev. 26 No doubt the chapter speaks of past sorrow and desolation; but the remembrance of Jehovah's covenant and of the land, when Israel repent, is absolutely future.

10. Num. 24:17 - 24. Here also I cannot doubt that the star's smiting Moab and Edom refers to the great future epoch, not to any bygone period, though there may be a past application of “the ships from Chittim” &c.

11. Deut. 32:7 - 43. I see nothing properly to be styled a history of Israel in their own land in verses 7 - 20 extending over a long period, but rather Jehovah's blessing, Israel's rebellion, and then His judgment, morally pronounced, followed by its execution; then the day when Jehovah's hand will take hold on judgment to render vengeance to His enemies. Is not this crisis rather than the continuous range of events regulated by providence?

12. Deut. 33:5 - 11. Past discipline appears here and there, but the prophecy points to the known and final crisis. What we see in the Pentateuch is abundantly confirmed in the rest of the Old Testament. Hence we may conclude that, with few exceptions, the nature of prophecy is to deal in crisis rather than to occupy a continuous range of providence. At another season we may look into the symbolical and detailed visions of Daniel and John in detail.

(II.) - It is supposed that a full induction of facts proves that the writers of the primitive church agree with the Protestant interpreters on the following points:—

1. That the head of gold denotes the Babylonian empire, not the person of Nebuchadnezzar, or Babylon and Persia in one.

2. That the silver denotes the Medo-Persian empire.

3. That the brass denotes the Greek empire.

4. That the iron denotes the Roman empire.

5. That the clay mingled with the iron denotes the intermixture of barbarous notions in the Roman empire.

6. That the mingling with the seed of men relates to intermarriages among the kings of the divided empire.

7. That the lion denotes the Babylonian empire.

8. That the eagle wings relate to Nebuchadnezzar's ambition.

9. That the bear denotes the Medo-Persian empire.

10. That the rising on one side signifies the later supremacy of the Persians.

11. That the leopard relates to the Macedonian empire.

12. That the four wings denote the rapidity of Alexander's conquest.

13. That the fourth beast is the Roman empire.

14. That the ten horns denote a tenfold division of that empire, which was then future.

15. That the division began in the fourth and fifth centuries.

16. That the rise of the ten horns is later than the rise of the boast.

17. That the vision of the ram and he-goat begins from the time of the prophecy.

18. That the higher horn of the ram denotes the Persian dynasty beginning with Cyrus.

19. That the first horn of the he-goat is Alexander the Great.

20. That the breaking of the horn, when strong, relates to the sudden death of Alexander in the height of his power.

21. That the four horns denote four men's kingdoms into which the Macedonian empire was divided.

22. That the three kings (Dan. 11:2) are Cambyses, Smerdis and Darius.

23. That the expedition against Greece is that of Xerxes, B.C. 485.

24. That the mighty king (ver. 3) is Alexander the Great.

25. That the king's daughter of the south is Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus.

26. That the one from the branch of her roots is Ptolemy Euergetes.

27. That the sons of the king of the north are Seleucus Ceraunus and Antiochus the Great.

28. That the battle (ver. 11) is that of Raphia.

29. That the battle (ver. 15) is that of Panium.

30. That the daughter of women (ver. 17) is Cleopatra, daughter of Antiochus the Great.

31. That the expedition (ver. 18) is that of Antiochus against Greece.

32. That the prince (ver. 18) denotes the Roman power.

33. That the death of Antiochus is predicted in verse 19.

34. That the raiser of taxes is Seleucus Philopator.

35. That the letting person or thing (2 Thess. 2) is the imperial power of Rome.

36. That the Apocalypse begins from the time of John.

37. That the first seal relates to the early triumphs of the gospel.

On the other hand it is allowed that the early Christian writers are opposed to the Protestant school as to the following weighty points:—

1. That the ten toes denote individual persons.

2. That the ten horns denote the same.

3. That the little horn (Dan. 7) is an individual king.

4. That the times, time, and a half of Daniel are three and a half years.

5. That the period of Dan. 8 is 2300 literal days.

6. That the 1200 days, and 1335 days in Dan. 12 are to be taken literally.

7. That the man of sin (2 Thess. 2) is an individual.

~8. That the 42 months are three and a half years literally.

~9. That the 1260 days are literal.

~10. That the two witnesses are individuals.

11. That the beast and the false prophet are two individuals.

12. That the ten kings (Rev. 17) are individuals. The points are marked with ~ where concurrence is but partial. Thus some at least of the ancients apply the toes of iron and clay, or divisions of the empire, not to the barbarian kingdoms which sprang up in the 4th and 5th centuries, but to the kings of it at the very end, whom the Lord will find and crush at His second advent; as they also interpreted the little horn in Dan. 8 of Antiochus rather than of Antichrist, and some of the periods indefinitely.

But it is a total mistake that any, save a few extreme futurists who never exercised influence on serious souls in general, differ from the former list, save as to 35 and 36 in part. Thus the letting power is, I believe, the Spirit of God, and this not merely as dwelling in the church, but yet more distinctly as acting governmental in divine providence. Hence the ancient reference was imperfect rather than false. Corrupt as Babylon is, it is not yet the apostasy nor the man of sin revealed. He who letteth acts still, though imperial Rome is long gone. The Holy Spirit is that power and person who hinders as yet the display and working of the lawless one, whatever governmental means He is pleased to employ in the world's government. Again, I do not doubt a general application of the Revelation since the time of John, viewing the seven churches as past, instead of as “the things which are” followed by the rest of the book as converging on the great future crisis. Of 37 the less may be said, as almost every person of intelligence has now abandoned the old fancy of early gospel triumph and among them the very person who first drew up this list.

But it must be repeated, that among sober Christian inquirers the long first list is accepted on all sides; so that the second tells against the historical interpreters with unbroken force. This demonstrates how far any are justified in affirming that the Protestants have the warrant from antiquity tenfold on their side. The truth is that in all their distinctive features they stand wholly unsupported and opposed.

Yet one must frankly allow that no importance whatever should be attached to early tradition. Scripture, and scripture alone, is the only sure arbiter, the sole reliable source of the pure truth of God; and the children of God should be the more jealous on this score, as we see around us the unmistakable results of recurrence to tradition in the revived Judaism of our day. It is ridiculously ignorant however to suppose that the mass of Christians who look for the brief future crisis of a personal Antichrist in Jerusalem and a revived Roman empire to be destroyed by Christ in person have ever questioned these thirty and more points any more than the dozen which follow. The representation to the contrary is a mere disreputable trick of controversy, unless indeed those who made it knew very little of the real thoughts of those who have most studied prophecy in our day.

(III.) The last head remains to be noticed, the discordance of such men as Drs. Maitland, Todd, and Burgh, of Messrs. Tyso, &c. The believer is in no way concerned in defending the discrepancies of all, any more than the desire on the part of some to palliate Romanism. They were none of them men who took their stand in simple faith on the word and Spirit of God. Nevertheless, faulty and rash as their interpretations may be, and in points of detail often at variance with one another, they did service in recalling attention to the neglected and imminent end of the age, “the time of harvest,” as in other senses, so for prophecy also. There would be little edification in occupying the reader with a collation of their mutual contradictions or with those of the Protestant school, which simply show how far both are from deserving confidence. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light (no morning) in them.” The Christian has no interest save in God's communications, which are very sure, and make wise the simple. In keeping them there is great reward.

Here too appears the importance of seeing that the manifestation of God's glory in Christ is the proper object of prophecy. Had this been seen and held firmly, men could not have lost themselves in vain efforts to find in the past or the present what answers not to it save in scanty measure. Before Christ God was proving in every form the first man: since His rejection and the accomplishment of redemption on the cross, the Holy Spirit is revealing the mystery hidden from ages to the church, as well as publishing the gospel to every creature. It is of the scenes called the consummation of the age, συντ■λεια το■ α■■νος, as well as of the subsequent kingdom, when the Son of man is manifested in power and glory that prophecy treats, whether in the Old Testament or in the New. Rarely does the Spirit touch on any circumstance of guilt on man's part or of judgment on God's, without going onto these solemn times which introduce the days of heaven on the earth; and this is just as true of the symbolic visions of Daniel and John as of the rest, although there is no doubt expressed in the last a more systematized series.

But other dealings of God at the time of the prophet were but inchoative and germinant: the crisis is, as the rule and with very few and slight and evident exceptions, the plane of incidence where prophetic words and visions and types meet in Christ, then revealed and no longer hidden as now the center, of all things in heaven and on earth. To stop short of this, and arrest the mind meanwhile on analogies supposed or even occasionally real, is not only an error fatal to the true understanding of prophecy but bears evidence of a heart not in accord with the mind and purpose of God in glorifying His Son. For special reasons there might be a chain of comparatively ordinary events in providence revealed, as for instance from the first and through the greater part of Dan. 11, where in scripture historical account fails. But even there it is but introductory, as invariably, to the great principle of crisis. For we are only brought down continuously on the one hand to

Antiochus Epiphanes and his iniquitous efforts against the Jews, the temple and the law, with the disastrous issue for himself, his instruments, or his victims, and the Maccabean stand on the other hand. Then follows a vast break, and we are abruptly landed in presence of the last willful king in the land of Judea, and the final conflicts of the kings of the north and the south, terminated by divine intervention and the deliverance of the chosen people. It is plain to any upright and intelligent mind that, whatever be the importance of every word (and this it is not for me to deny or weaken), the grand point of the Spirit is to direct all hearts to the tremendous catastrophe of the close, which follows, not the merely introductory thread of continuous facts, 2000 years past, but the vast gap, after Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees, till the personal Antichrist reigns in the land, the old jealousies of the north and the south reproduce themselves round devoted Palestine and the Jews, and the power of God interferes to put down all rebels within or without, and establish the wise and holy in peace under the reign of Him who is Ancient of days no less than Son of man, and who must yet be honored on earth as well as in heaven to the glory of God the Father. “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” The risen saints will reign along with Him over the earth, but from their own proper heavenly sphere: He is head to the church over all things.

Chapter 172

New Translation Psalms 42-44

1 To the chief musician; Maschil, to the sons of Korah.

2 As the hart longeth after the brooks of water, so my soul longeth after thee, O God.

3 My soul hath thirsted for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

4 My tears have been food to me by day and by night, whilst they say unto me all the day, Where [is] thy God?

5 These things do I remember, and I pour out my soul within me; when I pass through the crowd, I go softly with them unto the house of God with the voice of singing and praise, a multitude keeping a feast.

6 Why art thou cast down, [O] my soul, and hast been disquieted within me? Wait thou for God, for I shall yet praise him [for] the help of his countenance.

7 O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan and the Hermonites, from the mountain Mizar.

8 Deep is calling unto deep at the voice of thy waterfalls; all thy waves and thy billows have passed over me.

9 By day Jehovah commandeth his mercy, and by night his song [is] with me, supplication to the God of my life.

10 I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

11 With a sword in my bones mine oppressors have reproached me, when they say all the day unto me, Where is thy God?

12 Why art thou cast down, [O] my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Wait thou for God, for I shall yet praise him, the help of my countenance and my God.

New Translation Psalms 45-47

Chap. 46

1 To the chief musician, to the sons of Korah; upon Alamoth, a song.

2 God is a refuge and strength unto us, a help in distresses very readily found.

3 Therefore will we not fear in the changing of the earth and in the moving of mountains into the heart of the sea.

4 Its waters roar, they are troubled; the mountains tremble with its pride. Selah.

5 [There is] a river; its streams make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

6 God [is] in her midst: she shall not be moved; God shall help her at the appearing of morning.

7 Gentiles raged, kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice; the earth melteth.

8 Jehovah of hosts [is] with us; the God of Jacob [is] a refuge unto us. Selah.

9 Come, behold the works of Jehovah, who hath set desolations in the earth,

10 Causing wars to cease unto the ends of the earth; he breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear; he burneth the war-chariots in the fire.

11 Leave off, and know that I [am] God: I will be exalted among the Gentiles; I will be exalted in the earth.

12 Jehovah of hosts [is] with us; the God of Jacob is a refuge unto us. Selah.

New Translation Psalms 48

Book Second

Chap. 48

1 A song; a psalm for the sons of Korah,

2 Great [is] Jehovah and exceedingly praised, in the city of our God, the mountain of his holiness.

3 Beautiful for elevation, the joy of the whole earth [is] the mountain of Zion, [on] the sides of the north; the city of the great King.

4 God hath been known in her palaces as a refuge.

5 For lo! the kings met, they passed through together.

6 They saw, so they wondered, they were terrified, they fled in alarm.

7 Trembling seized them there, pain as of one bringing forth.

8 With an east wind thou breakest the ships of Tarshish.

9 As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of Jehovah of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish her forever. Selah.

10 We have meditated on thy mercy, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

11 According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise, unto the ends of the earth: of righteousness is thy right hand full.

12 Mount Zion rejoiceth, the daughters of Judah exult because of thy judgments.

13 Surround ye Zion and encompass her; count ye her towers.

14 Set your heart to her rampart; consider her palaces, that ye may recount to the generation following.

15 For this God [is] our God [for] ever and ever; he will lead us unto death.

New Translation Psalms 49

Chap. 49

1 To the chief musician; for the sons of Korah, a psalm.

2 Hear ye this, all the peoples; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world,

3 Both low and high, rich and poor together.

4 My mouth speaketh wisdom, and the meditation of my heart [is] understanding.

5 I incline mine ear to a parable, I open upon a harp my riddle.

6 Why should I fear in the days of evil? The iniquity of my supplanters surroundeth me,

7 Those who trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.

8 In no wise can a man redeem a brother, he giveth not to God a ransom for him

9 (But the redemption-price of their soul [is] precious, and it hath ceased forever),

10 That he should still live for ever and not see corruption.

11 For he seeth [that] wise men die; together the fool and the brutish man perish and have left to others their wealth.

12 Their inward thought [is] their houses [shall be] forever, their dwelling-places to generation and generation; they have called their lands by their own names.

13 But man in honor abideth not; he hath become like the cattle, they have been cut off.

14 This their way [is] folly for them; yet those who come after them will take pleasure in their words. Selah.

15 Like the sheep they have laid in the grave; death feedeth upon them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; but their form is to be consumed in the grave from its dwelling.

16 Surely God will redeem my soul from the hand of the grave, for he shall receive me. Selah.

17 Fear thou not when a man becometh rich, when the glory of his house increaseth.

18 For he taketh not all this away when he dieth; his glory shall not descend after him.

19 Though he blesseth his soul in his life, and men will praise thee when thou doest good to thyself,

20 Thou shalt go unto the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.

21 Man in honor and who understandeth not hath become like the cattle; they have been cut off.

Chapter 176

New Translation Psalm 50

Book Second

50

1 A psalm of Asaph. God, God Jehovah, hath spoken and hath called the earth from the rising of the sun unto its setting.

2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

3 Our God shall come and shall not be silent; a fire consumeth before him and hath been very tempestuous round about him.

4 He calleth unto the heavens from above, and unto the earth to judge his people.

5 Gather together my saints unto me, making my covenant by sacrifice.

6 And the heavens declare his righteousness, for God [is] judge himself. Selah.

7 Hearken, O my people, and let me speak, O Israel, and let me testify against thee: God, thy God, [am] I will not reproach thee because of thy sacrifices and thy burnt-offerings continually before me.

9 I will not take a bullock out of thy house, [nor] he-goats from thy folds.

10 For unto me [belongeth] every beast of the forest, the cattle upon a thousand hills.

11 I have known every bird of the hills, and the wealth of the fields is with me.

12 If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for unto me [belongeth] the world and its fullness.

13 Shall I eat the flesh of bulls and shall I drink the blood of he-goats?

14 Sacrifice unto God thanks-giving, and perform unto the Most High thy vows.

15 And call upon me in the day of distress: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

16 And to the wicked one God hath said, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes? and thou hast taken my covenant into thy mouth.

17 But thou hast hated correction and hast cast my words behind thee.

18 If thou sawest a thief, then thou didst associate with him, and with adulterers [has been] thy portion.

19 Thy mouth thou hast let loose unto evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.

20 Thou sittest, thou speakest against thy brother; against the son of thy mother dost thou utter destruction.

21 These things hast thou done, and I have been silent; thou hast imagined [that] I have been altogether like thyself; I will rebuke thee and will set in order before thine eyes.

22 Consider this, I pray, ye forgetters of God, lest I tear in pieces and there be no deliverer.

23 He who sacrificeth praise glorifieth me, and him who considereth his way will I cause to see the salvation of God.

Chapter 177

New Translation Psalm 51

Book Second

51

1. To the chief musician; a psalm of David,

2. When Nathan the prophet came unto him, as he had gone unto Bathsheba.

3. Be gracious unto me, O God, according unto thy mercy: according unto the multitude of thy compassions blot out my transgressions.

4. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

5. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin [is] continually before me.

6. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and I have done the evil in thine eyes; in order that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and be pure when thou judgest.

7. Behold, in iniquity was I born, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

8. Behold, thou hast desired truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden [part] thou wilt make me to know wisdom.

9. Thou wilt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; thou wilt wash me, and I shall become whiter than snow.

10. Thou wilt make me to hear joy and gladness; the bones [which] thou hast broken shall rejoice.

11. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

12. Create for me a pure heart, O God, and all established spirit renew thou within me.

13. Cast me not out from thy presence and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

14. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and let a free spirit uphold me.

15. I will teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall turn unto thee.

16. Deliver me from blood, O God, the God of my salvation; my tongue shall celebrate thy righteousness.

17. O Lord, thou wilt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare thy praise.

18. For thou delightest not in sacrifice, else would I give it; in burnt-offering thou dost not take pleasure.

19. The sacrifices of God [are] a broken spirit; a heart broken and contrite, O God, thou despisest not.

20. Do good, in thy favor, to Zion; thou wilt build the walls of Jerusalem.

21. Then wilt thou delight in sacrifices of righteousness, burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altars.

New Translation Psalms 52-54

Book Second

52.

1. To the chief musician; a psalm of instruction of David,

2. When Doeg the Edomite went in and told Saul and said to him, David went unto the house of Abimelech.

3. Why boastest thou thyself in evil, O mighty man? The mercy of God [is] all the day.

4. Thy tongue deviseth wickedness, as a sharpened razor, working deceit.

5. Thou hast loved evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking righteousness. Selah.

6. Thou hast loved all words of destruction, O tongue of deceit.

7. God also will destroy thee forever; he will lay hold of thee and tear thee away from thy tent, and he will root thee up from the land of the living. Selah.

8. And the righteous shall see, and they shall fear and shall laugh over him.

9. Behold the man who setteth not God [as] his strength but trusteth in the multitude of his riches; he is strong in his wickedness.

10. But I [am] like a green olive-tree in the house of God; I have trusted in the mercy of God forever and ever.

11. I will praise thee forever, for thou hast done [it], and I will hope in thy name, for it is good, in the presence of thy saints.

The Psalms: Book 2, Psalm 43

Book Second

Chap. 43.

1 Judge me, O God, and plead my cause with an ungodly nation; from a man of deceit and iniquity do thou deliver me.

2 For thou [art] the God of my refuge: why hast thou cast me off? why do I walk mourning under the oppression of the enemy?

3 Send thou thy light and thy truth: they shall lead me, they shall bring me unto the mountain of thy holiness and unto thy tabernacles.

4 And I will go unto the altar of God, unto God the gladness of my joy, and I will give thanks unto thee with the harp, O God, my God.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Wait thou for God, for I shall yet praise him, the help of my countenance and my God.

Chapter 180

The Psalms: Book 2, Psalm 44

Book Second

Chap. 44.

1 To the chief musician; to the sons of Korah, Maschil.

2 O God, with our ears have we heard; our fathers have declared unto us the work [which] thou didst in their days, in the days of old.

3 Thou [with] thy hand didst drive out the Gentiles and plant them; thou didst evil to nations and didst send them forth.

4 For not with their sword did they take possession of the land, neither did their arm deliver them; but thy right hand and thine arm and the light of thy countenance, because thou takedst pleasure in them.

5 Thou [art] he, my king, O God; command the deliverances of Jacob.

6 By thee will we push down our adversaries; in thy name will we tread under foot those that rise up against us.

7 For not in my bow will I trust, and my sword shall not save me.

8 For thou hast saved us from our adversaries, and those who hate us thou hast put to shame.

9 In God have we praised all the day, and we will give thanks to thy name forever. Selah.

10 But now thou hast cast off and put us to shame, and thou goest not forth with our armies.

11 Thou causest us to turn back before the enemy, and those who hate us have taken spoil for themselves.

12 Thou givest us as sheep (for) food, and among the Gentiles hast thou scattered us.

13 Thou sellest thy people without gain, and hast not increased by their price.

14 Thou settest us [as] a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and a derision to those that are round about us.

15 Thou settest us a by-word among the Gentiles, a shaking of the head among the nations.

16 All the day my shame [is] before me, and the confusion of my face hath covered me,

17 Because of the voice of him who reproacheth and blasphemeth, because of the face of the enemy and the avenger.

18 All this has come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, and we have not acted falsely to thy covenant.

19 Our heart hath not turned backward, nor hath our step declined from thy path.

20 But thou hast broken us to pieces in the place of large serpents, and hast covered us over with the shadow of death.

21 If we have forgotten the name of our God, and have stretched out our hands to a strange god,

22 Will not God search this out? For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

23 But for thy sake we have been killed all the day, we have been counted as sheep for slaughter.

24 Awake; why sleepest thou, O Lord? Arise, cast us not off forever.

25 Why hidest thou thy face? [Why] forgettest thou our affliction and our oppression?

26 For our soul hath been bowed down to the dust, our belly hath cleaved unto the earth.

27 Arise, a help unto us, and redeem us for thy mercy's sake.

The Psalms: Book 2, Psalm 45

BOOK SECOND

Chap. 45

1 To the chief musician upon Shoshannim; to the sons of Korah, Maschil, a song of love.

2 My heart hath overflowed [with] a good matter; I am declaring my works to the king; my tongue [is] the pen of a ready writer.

3 Thou hast been very fair above the sons of men; grace hath been poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee forever.

4 Gird thy sword upon the thigh, O mighty one, thy glory and thy majesty.

5 And [in] thy majesty prosper, ride, for the cause of truth and meekness of righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

6 Thine arrows [are] sharpened—the peoples fall under thee—in the heart of the king's enemies.

7 Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness [is] the scepter of thy kingdom.

8 Thou hast loved righteousness and hated wickedness: therefore God, [even] thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy companions.

9 Myrrh and aloes [and] cassia [are] all thy garments; from the palaces of ivory stringed instruments have gladdened thee.

10 Daughters of kings [are] among thine honorable women; at thy right hand hath stood the queen in fine gold of Ophir.

11 Hear, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear, and forget thy people and thy father's house.

12 And the king greatly desireth thy beauty; for he [is] thy lord; and bow down thyself to him.

13 And the daughter of Tire [shall be there] with a gift; the rich among the people shall entreat thy face.

14 All glorious is the king's daughter within; of gold-embroidered work [is] her garment.

15 In embroidered work of many colors is she brought unto the king; the virgins after her, her companions, are brought to thee.

16 They are led forth with gladness and joy; they enter into the palace of the king.

17 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy sons: thou shalt appoint them as princes in all the earth.

18 I will make mention of thy name throughout all generations: therefore peoples shall give thee thanks forever and ever.

The Psalms: Book 2, Psalm 47

Book Second

Chap. 47

1 To the chief musician; to the sons of Korah, a Psalm.

2 Clap your hands, all ye peoples; shout unto God with the voice of rejoicing.

3 For Jehovah most high [is] to be feared, a great King over all the earth.

4 He destroyeth peoples under us, and nations under our feet.

5 He chooseth our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom He hath loved. Selah.

6 God hath gone up with a shout, Jehovah with the voice of a trumpet.

7 Sing praises unto God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King.

8 For King of all the earth is God; sing ye Maschil.

9 God hath reigned over the Gentiles, God hath sat down upon the throne of His holiness.

10 The princes of the peoples are gathered together, [with] the people of the God of Abraham; for unto God [belong] the shields of the earth; he hath been greatly exalted.

The Psalms: Book 2, Psalm 53

Book Second

53

1. To the chief musician upon Mahaleth; a psalm of instruction of David, 2. The fool hath said in his heart there is no God: they have done corruptly, they have done abominably [in] iniquity; there is none doing good.

3. God hath looked down from heaven upon the sons of man to see if there is any one understanding, seeking after God.

4. Every one hath departed; together they have become corrupt; there is none doing good, there is not even one.

5. Have not the workers of iniquity known, eating up my people [as] they have eaten bread? they have not called upon God.

6. There have they greatly feared [where] there was no fear; for God hath scattered the bones of him who was encamping against thee: thou hast put [them] to shame, for God hath rejected them.

7. Who will give out of Zion the salvation of Israel? When God turneth the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad.

The Psalms: Book 2, Psalm 54

Book Second

54

1. To the chief musician upon Neginoth a psalm of instruction of David, 2. When the Ziphites went in and said to Saul, Is not David hiding himself with us?

3. O God, save me by thy name, and by thy might thou wilt judge me.

4. O God, hear my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth.

5. For strangers have risen up against me, and oppressors have sought after my soul; they have not set God before them. Selah.

6. Behold God [is] a helper for me, the Lord is among those that uphold my soul.

7. He will return the evil to mine adversaries: cut them off in thy truth.

8. With a free-will offering will I sacrifice unto thee, I will praise thy name, O Jehovah, for it is good.

9. For from all distress he hath delivered me, and mine eye hath looked upon mine enemies.

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Chapter 186

Recent Baptismal Agitation: Correction

Dear Brother,—You are not alone in speaking strongly of some tracts lately published. They are condemned not only by all who differ from the author's views, but (what is of more importance) by wise and sober brethren who accept that which may be called the same side of the question. How grievous to have to speak of sides in the least of divine things! But so it is.

I have for many years said little on the matter, save where clearly called for. Every one who loves the Lord Jesus and serves the church has probably more or less observed the keen feelings and strong language the discussion of baptism is apt to excite, in utter disproportion to its relative place and as usual most heatedly among such as least understand its nature and consequences. It has seemed the plain path of grace and wisdom, not to say of truth and righteousness, to set one's face resolutely against party-spirit, and so against the zealots of either side. They both tend to make a sect of their own, the horror of which, to me, is none the less, because the sect would fight under Baptist or Pedobaptist colors. Indeed if there could be a shade of difference, where both tend to a common evil result, one ought to feel most where most truth was thus perverted. Those who thank God for the apostle Paul's gospel should not forget his thankfulness on this score (1 Cor. 1:14 - 17); and the value of these words of the Spirit appears to me so much the more plain, weighty, and urgent in the actual weakness of the saints and confusions of Christendom.

It would be well for all to avoid one-sided and exaggerated statements. There is no doubt for instance that Baptists generally take wrong ground in advocating what is due to this institution of the Lord. They plead the instance of John the Baptist and our Lord's example for us also to accomplish all righteousness; they insist on the baptism of believers as a matter of obedience; they dedicate their babes meanwhile till they are converted and seek baptism for themselves. Granted that all this proves distressing ignorance not of Christian baptism only hut of Christianity; but is it not forgotten that no less ignorance in these very particulars, involving the most fundamental principles, rests on the great mass of Paedobaptists, save that they talk of dedicating their children to God in baptism?

The only fair inference therefore is that the legal or Judaizing view complained of is quite independent of this question, attaching to the general creed and practice of Christendom, and surely developing itself in ordinary Baptists and Paedobaptists alike, though in a slightly different form and phrase. On a fair comparison I am afraid the statements about baptism made by the ancient fathers in general were no better than Tertullian's, and that the Mennonites are no worse than Lutherans or Calvinists or Anglicans. The departure from Christian truth lies far deeper than this question; and the Paedobaptists generally are surely not less legal and superstitious than the mass of Baptists. Nor is there ground save for anguish and humiliation in considering the words and ways of them all as one weighs what Christ is to us and has called us to. Why then mix up all this with the question? The common Pedobaptist is as ignorant as the Baptist of the difference between John's baptism and the Christian one; they both know as much or as little of death and resurrection with Christ.

Again, which of the two has been the most guilty of erasing from Christian baptism its character of privilege conferred, by erecting it into a saving ordinance obedience to which, is peremptory? Both have gone far away from the revealed word, but not least the Pedobaptist.

So, as to the meaning of baptism, it will hardly be argued gravely that Paedobaptists ordinarily enter into it one whit better than Baptists. It was the former, not the latter, who invented the flattest possible contradiction of its character. It was not the more despised of the two who spread everywhere the dreadful error that baptism is the sign and even the means of new birth. At the same time I frankly allow that they both equally misunderstand death with Christ. It is therefore unfounded and unfair to reason against the Baptist system as the culprit when in fact Pedobaptism proves equally open to the same charges. The fault common to both lies elsewhere. They have both alas! forsaken to an enormous extent the fountain of living waters, and they have each hewed out broken cisterns of a different pattern that can hold no water.

For my part I rejoice when brethren who have had a bias one way or other in days of law have learned of the Lord to meet and go on in grace, whereto they have already attained walking by the same rule, and, if in anything differently minded, confiding in the God of all grace to reveal even this to them. Hence it is a joy to see that, spite of ruin, all simple-minded men agree that baptism is the initiatory institution of Christianity, and that believers, if they have not been, should be at once baptized as the sign of having part with Christ in His death and resurrection. A true and loving and large heart seeks not to widen the breach, but rather to expose and rebuke, as of the enemy, all such efforts.

This is my reason for deploring the last of these tracts, which you justly say is the worst of the kind one has ever seen. I have in my time read not a few painful productions of Papists and Protestants; but I confess that not one occurs to my memory lower, looser, or more systematically perverting the scriptures. Were F. Xavier the famous Jesuit missionary alive, he would smile at such a justification of his procedure from such a quarter; and Charlemagne might have found a two-penny tract as useful as the sword to induce the Saxons to enter the river and be baptized.

For the doctrine broached is that faith before baptism is more wrong than right! that not believing but baptism is the means by which the nations were to be discipled! that they must be brought into the sphere of the church or assembly to receive not only the Spirit but His testimony concerning Jesus! and that this ground, which is Popish as far as it goes, is God's order!! To believe and be baptized is out of His order!!! To make sure of the meaning we are told that Peter did not tell the Jews at Pentecost to believe but to repent. “They were to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ that they might believe on Him!” &c. Hence even their receiving Peter's word is restricted to “Repent and be baptized,” &c, and thus the men repenting after a Methodist sort without being true believers were added to the house over which Christ is Lord, so that they could own Him such, “for of course they must be in the sphere of His lordship before they can own Him Lord.”

By this strange doctrine evangelizing is annulled and the purity of God's assembly destroyed. For the notion insisted on throughout is that adults not only may but ought to be received by baptism in order that they may believe and be brought to the Lord where the remission of sins is. Baptism to get life is not only the strangest want of intelligence but fundamentally false doctrine. “Scripture teaches baptism unto Christ, who is the life, in order to get life,” p. 13. Scripture never teaches this, but on the contrary that the believer has part with Christ in death, and this by baptism as its sign.

Nowhere do I remember from any one called a brother such a rash, not to say heartless, sacrifice of the gospel and the assembly of God to a novel idea, which after all is only the revival of an old error which has already corrupted Christendom. Can any notion of Baptists be worse?

I have not reasoned on the various scriptures, to every one of which the grossest violence is done, as indeed must be in order to silence their true sense and force a meaning completely opposed. It is to be hoped that few if any are prepared to endorse statements so erroneous and unholy, and that brethren everywhere will know what their duty is in dealing with such heterodoxy. It would be easy to expose the ignorance of God's word and the false reasoning habitually displayed. My object for the present and in this periodical is simply to protest publicly against a dangerous and offensive production.

There are reasons why I desired to say not a word; but called on as I am by appeals from north, south, east, west, I could no longer hesitate to address myself to you the last of these applicants. May no love of party betray even one into indifference to Christ and the truth!

Yours affectionately,

To Mr. W.T.B.

W.K.

Chapter 187

X. Y. on Rev. 7

The querist writes that in the third paragraph (p. 255), there should be neither “chapter” nor “20,” nor “chapter 20” again repeated, nor “chapter 10,” nor “chapter 10” again repeated. In the next paragraph “third, verses 4 - 9,” ought to be verse 9, and (p. 25G) “chapter 10:9” ought to be simply verse 9, reading “his” for “her” three lines after. The sentence most affected should run thus: “verse 9 would be a mere needless repetition of verses 4 - 8. Verses 4 - 8 is literal Israel; verse 9 the Gentiles; verse 11 the church, as we have,” &c.

From Cape Breton Island were sent two numbers of a British serial, peculiar enough in this that they reproduce extracts from a pamphlet on Church Discipline, which the author, living in New Zealand, has himself retracted. It was no wonder; for just think of anyone committing the mistake of fancying, because there is no article in the Greek, that the correct (!) rendering of 1 Cor. 12:27 is, “Now ye are a body of Christ!” A little more knowledge would have guarded against this, but as usual, what is unfounded takes with partisans. The Editor of the little magazine speaks of “many expressions of thankfulness.” It is well that all such should weigh the fact that God has taught not a few in New Zealand the error of this tract, without one word of external criticism or comment. Indeed, the whole reasoning is unsound and the tendency unholy.

Answer to X.Y. on Revelation 7

Dear Mr. Editor,

I allow myself to send a brief reply to the inquiry of “X. Y.” in your April Bible Treasury. Agreeing entirely with his view of the subject in general, there is, it seems to me, one mistake which embarrasses him in this interpretation. It is this: that these Gentiles are brought to the Lord under the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in a larger measure than the day of Pentecost. That comes after the full restoration and blessing of Israel. There is an action of the Holy Ghost more in the character of John Baptist, an Elias work in Israel; and, as regards the Gentiles, it is a regular part of the service of the remnant of the Jews called thereto of the Lord. This testimony is found as to Israel in Matt. 10 which to the end of verse 15 gives the three missions from verse 6 or more generally that which went on after the Lord's rejection and to the end when the Son of man should come. This ground as to the Gentiles in chapter 24:14 closes the general instruction, verse 15 beginning the time of special tribulation.

It is not “our gospel” with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, but this gospel of the kingdom that was preached when John Baptist was there, and by the Lord Himself. Let it be remembered now that we have no date for the rapture of the church—that the dates begin with a week of Dan. 9, and half a week of great tribulation when the sacrifice is made to cease. But this does not affect the general testimony of Matt. 24 which may begin before the week, and be carried on among the Gentiles during the great tribulation at Jerusalem. Only the church must be caught up, it seems, before the accomplishment of a renewed testimony of the kingdom apart from what has gathered the church. The final previous testimony to the nations is found in Rev. 14:6. This takes away all date from the testimony to the nations, save the relative one that the church is gone. But when we remember that all is done with accelerated rapidity in that day, a nation born in a day, a short work to be made on the earth, that before Zion travailed she brought forth, that for the elect's sake God has shortened the days, we may look for a more rapid accomplishment Of this work of testimony among the Gentiles also. There is another mission in Isa. 66, but this is when the Lord has appeared in glory and judged all flesh, and it results in bringing up scattered Israel. The dispensational value of the Gospel of Matthew has not (I think) been adequately estimated by students of the word. J. N. D.

Answer to X.Y. on Revelation 7

Dear Mr. Editor, The points to which “X. Y” draws attention in his letter in the April number of “The Bible Treasury” are very interesting. A work of God, not bounded territorially by the limits of Christendom, will take place upon earth after the church has been removed from this scene, a work prolific in fruit among Gentiles, and unequaled, as regards the area over which it will spread, by all the efforts of Christians from Pentecost to our day; though falling far short, in the blessings souls will thereby enjoy, of the privileges, the hopes, and the portion of those now called out from both Jews and Gentiles to form the bride of Christ and to know, whilst on earth, what it is to be sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

Two questions arising out of the consideration of this subject “X. Y.” asks in your columns, the one, as to the time requisite for this immense work to be accomplished; the other, as to the agency employed to effect it.

First, as to the time. Of the seventy weeks or heptads which we learn from Dan. 9:24 were to intervene between the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, and the entrance of Israel into their final blessings under the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, their Messiah, sixty-nine had run out before the Lord had been cut off by death upon the cross. But do we ever read that only seven years will elapse between the rapture of the church and the Lord's return in power to effect the deliverance of His earthly people? Are there not on the other hand indications in the word which would lead us to conclude that a longer period of time will elapse between the two above mentioned events than one heptad of years? For the beast (the prince who shall come of Dan. 9) who will confirm a covenant with the Jews for one week, or heptad, and will break it in the middle of it, rises up (as we learn from Rev. 13:1) out of the sea: a figure, is it not? of a troubled and abnormal condition of things on the Roman earth, the result perhaps of the providential judgments of God described under the first four seals, when peace will be taken away from the earth. What length of time then will elapse between the rapture of the saints and the rise of the beast out of the sea is, I believe, veiled from us; and what interval of time there will be between the rise of the first beast and that of the two-horned beast (the false prophet and the Antichrist), out of the earth, is also (am I not right?) a period of time unmeasured for us in the word. Taking then these things into account, there are surely grounds to make us slow to conclude that a very short time only will elapse, after the church's departure, before the Lord is seen coming in the clouds of heaven. But, if on this point we can only speak of probabilities, we can say (I believe on the authority of the word) that that whole epoch cannot be a long one; for we read in 2 Thess. 1:7 - 10 that divine vengeance will overtake souls on earth, at the Lord's return with His saints, who have not obeyed the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, an intimation surely that the mass of those who will have been proved by the rapture to he professors only in name will still be alive upon earth, when He shall be revealed from heaven, forming that class described in Revelation as the dwellers (chap. 3:10; 4:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8; 17:8) and sitters upon earth. (Chap. 14:6.) Whilst then scripture clearly bars the thought of any extended duration of time during which the work amongst the Gentiles will be carried on, the fruits of which we read in Rev. 7, there seems surely just ground to forbid us limiting it to one heptad of years.

But how are these Gentiles to be taught, and when? And first, who are they? They “come out of the great tribulation for so we should read, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” A description this is, general in its character, bearing testimony to their walk, and their preservation through the fierce time of trial, here called the great tribulation; but predicating nothing of any particular testimony borne by them against special evils which will be rife in those days, though they will be contemporaneous with the beast, the false prophet or antichrist, and the king of the north of Daniel, the Assyrian of Isaiah. Others, as the two witnesses of chapter 11 and the company on the sea of glass of chapter 15, will have stood out as witnesses for God and the Lord Jesus against the idolatrous worship of the beast; but these seem to be the fruits of a wider work among Gentiles, gathered out of every nation, and of kindreds, and of peoples, and of tongues, monuments of God's upholding grace throughout the great tribulation and preserved alive on earth at its close, as the term “come out of” would seem to imply, and the

description of their blessings would surely intimate. And, just as there will be a sealed company made up from all the tribes of Israel, of whose special service in testimony we read nothing (a company distinct from that of the 144,000 of Jews who will stand with the Lamb on mount Zion, chap, 14), so, judging from the description of these Gentiles given by the elder, and from the place in the book in which they are introduced, may we not regard them as the result of a general work among Gentiles throughout that whole epoch, apart from any special testimony borne by some, or the service rendered by others (for example, those in Matt. 25 who will inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world)?

But how can this work be effected? I would suggest that, looking at them as connected with no special testimony of that day we have indications in the Book of Revelation of instruments by whom such a work might be carried on. For no sooner will the church be removed than God will begin to work afresh in grace in this sin-defiled world. The earliest intimation of this we have in Rev. 5, in the fact of the elders in heaven having golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints then in trial on earth. Again in chapter 8 we have mention of the prayers of saints on earth in trial, which, taken up by the angel, are answered by judicial dealing with men upon earth. And before that scene at the golden altar we read in chapter 6:9, 10 of souls which have already been slain for their faithfulness to God after the rapture of the church. Thus God had evidently been working, and from the answer given to the souls under the altar He would continue to work, till their brethren, that is, Jews, and their fellow-servants (may not these be Gentiles?) which were to be slain, as they were, should be fulfilled. I submit then that with these scriptures before us we have indications of the existence of agencies by whom such a work may be carried on.

Other points of interest raised by the consideration of the question proposed by “X. Y.” might, I think, with profit be discussed, but as the space in your journal, as well as the patience of your readers, is not inexhaustible, I forbear to suggest them, and will conclude with one remark; namely, the illustration we have in chapter 7 of the difference between standing openly on the ground of redemption accomplished, and the being dealt with in grace on the ground of the atoning work of Christ. As standing nationally on the former ground the preservation of the company from each of the twelve tribes is announced before they enter on their tribulation; whereas Gentiles, who have not that ground nationally before God, are only seen by the prophet, as preserved, after their time of tribulation is over. The grace is the same in both cases; but, God's purpose about the nation having been previously made known, their future can be declared beforehand, whereas it is the preservation of the Gentiles which manifests God's purpose about them.

C. E. S.

Chapter 189

A Thought on the Revelation

You may observe that the expectation and the desire of getting the earth into possession and under dominion rule the mind of Jesus and the saints through the Book of Revelation.

In the opening of the prophetic part, chapter 4, you see the sign of the earth's security—the rainbow. And in the same chapter the Lord is celebrated as the One for whose pleasure all things were created, that is, His glory as Creator is owned: we are, in spirit, in Gen. 1.

Then, in chapter 5, the book of the inheritance of the earth passes into the hand of the Lamb. We are in spirit in Gen. 2, where the Lord God Himself, and all the creatures owned the dominion of Adam, the Lord God by confessing it, the creatures by submitting to it. And in this same chapter the heavenly saints glory in the prospect of their reign over the earth.

Judgments proceed under the opening of the seals of the book, the necessary precursor of the destined kingdom. They are continued under the trumpets. But in chapter 10 the Lord Jesus, as the mighty angel, triumphs in the near approaching moment of inheritance and dominion over the earth and sea, and then in chapter 11 the saints in heaven do the same.

The voice heard in heaven in chapter 12, and the song of the victor-harpers in chapter 15, alike utter joy in the thought of “the kingdom of the Christ,” or of “all nations worshipping him.”

Then, in chapter 19, after ridding the earth of the great offenses, the marriage is celebrated; but the subject of the joy even then is the kingdom, “Alleluia, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.”

In chapter 20 the first resurrection is spoken of, as being for the very purpose of His going in or manifesting the kingdom; “they reigned and lived with Christ a thousand years.”

And how does the book close? Not with a sight of the church in the hidden places of heaven, as the Father's house, but with a sight of the church in the manifested heavens, the place of power, up to the light of which the kings will bring their honor and glory, and forth from which will go the water of the river and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations. It is such a sight of the glory as suits the earth in the days of the kingdom, when the earth will own the supremacy of heaven, and live upon the bounties of heaven. (Rev. 21; 22)

This is a suited close of the book. The heavens being occupied by the saints, the distinct rulers of “the world to come,” or of the millennial earth, it is fitting that we should then see that action which reduces the earth to the obedience of God, in the perfectness of which reduction all in heaven rejoice.

The volume of God thus closes as it has opened. Heaven and earth are exhibited now, as they had been created then, only with glorious differences: heaven with an elect household of saved sinners in it, or all as the blessed God Himself and His angels; earth purified and made the scene and the witness of richer blessings from God and His Christ than ever the garden of Eden had known.

“In the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.”

Chapter 190

The Book of Revelation Compared With the Gospel of John

Beloved Brother,

Your inquiry about John and the apocalypse has great attraction for me; but having been so much occupied by the order or structure of parts of the book of God, and knowing how much my poor soul should rather desire to know it as its substance and power, I feel a little timid in coming again so distinctly to the old work, as your letter invites me. But that is not your fault, but mine. Had the soul felt the power, as the mind has discerned the order, of God's word, one might still go on, and welcome every fresh task. But we have to do with the God of all grace—and even the bad habits and tendencies of the soul, and the poverty of our best affections (chiefly humbling and grieving as they are) in the presence of such a god, as we would deal there also with our overtakings and betrayals

I have never read John as the Prophet, so to speak, of the Church (that is, the Church, as the mystery gives it to us, as the body of Christ). Paul is conveniently and characteristically that. John enters into regions which the Church knows and appropriates; but it is not so formally to sec her there, to see her (I mean) in her person and condition as the Church of God.

He assumes at the opening of the Gospel, as you observe, the loss of Israel. “He came to his own, and his own received him not.” From thence He becomes the witness of two things, personal quickening and heaven. The Spirit in Him delights to draw the living picture of a sinner brought unspeakably near to the Son of God, quickened by the knowledge of Him, made the personal vessel of an indwelling Comforter; and the expectant heir of a mansion in the Father's house.

Such sinners may be as many as the stars of heaven. But it is not John's business to constellate them. It is not his office under the Holy Ghost to embody them in one, making them exhibit “the fellowship of the mystery.” I do not know that for a single moment we track him at such work in either his Gospel or his Epistles. It is not in presenting quickened sinners as forming “the body of Christ,” or as constituting “the fullness of him that filleth all in all,” that John is engaged; but in the previous work of the quickening itself of the individual elect sinner, and the linking of the hope of such an one with mansions in the Father's house in heaven.

It is not the case, however, that in the doing of these services for us, John loses all sight of Israel and the earth. This would not be a correct thought. He never reaches a sight of the mystery; but at the same time, as in the distance, he never loses sight of Israel and the earth. It is, I grant, only in the distance he sees those objects, but still he sees them.

In the first chapter of the Gospel, he sees the Jew and the kingdom on earth in the person and confession of Nathanael, the Lord there distinctly making promise of the earthly millennial joy.

In chapter xii., after being seated with the risen heavenly household at Bethany, we get the joy of Zion in her day rehearsed, and the joy of all the attending nations—the earthly scenery of millennial days being thus more largely exhibited in John's gospel, than in the kindred passions in

the others, for there alone we get the Gentiles seeking Jesus.

And in chapter 21, in the restored office of Peter, we get, as I judge, something that tells of Israel, when an unbroken net shall gather them.

And beside these distant prophetic glimpses of Israel and the earth, in days of glory by and by, we find the Lord, in John's Gospel, more at Jerusalem than in any of the Gospels. This surprised me when I discovered it, not that I at all mean by this to say that He was specially lingering over Israel. No. All places were alike to Him, I may say, in John's Gospel. But so it is, that He is seen there more than in the other Gospels; and we find, in chapters 5, 6, 7, distinct applications to the conscience of the Jews on the ground of certain ordinances and feasts among them.

But, beside this, there is nothing of dispensational details, that is, of Christendom, in his writings. When he looks at corruption, he does not look at it in its history, its progress, or its different aspects and characters. He contemplates the great closing feature, but scarcely anything beyond that. Paul looks at Christendom. So does Jesus in other Gospels. Paul anticipates “latter times,” and “last days,” and their different workings. Jude and Peter anticipate Cain, Balaam, and Core, forma of apostasy in Christendom. But John looks right onward to the last days and to Antichrist himself, suggesting last days present in spirit, and many Antichrists already in spirit. But there is no attempt whatever to fill up the interval, to furnish the history and progress of the dispensation, or give us a chart of Christendom, so far as John 13 prophetic. (See John 5:43, 1 John 2:18.)

What then, beloved, do we get in our divine John? We get the witness of what the individual saint is as quickened and brought personally near (with unspeakable nearness) to the Son of God; as indwelt, informed, by the Comforter; not as a vessel in God's house or Church fit for the Master's use to the benefit of the household, but as a vessel full of richest treasure for his own personal joy and dignity, as a child of God and a native of heaven. We get the witness of what the earth will be in season, in the day of its visitation and glory; but this only in the distance, the heavenly people always occupying his foreground; and finally, we get the witness, not of a lengthened and varying course of corruption, but of a certain form of it, which is to mark the worst and last days, with notice that in the spirit we are called into conflict with that even now. This is, I judge, what we find in John. Of course I do not assume that this is all. But these three distinct subjects engage his thoughts.

Is the Apocalypse then (considered as giving us only the closing days previous to the exhibition of the millennial heavens and earth) such a book as such a penman would be summoned by the Holy Ghost to give us? I believe it is.

It opens with the judgment of the candlesticks; or the crisis of the Church. And that scene closes by leaving in the soul an impression, that the Lord was to be disappointed in the steward of His glory in this age, as He had ever been in all His stewards—in him who had the care of the garden Eden, and in those who afterward had his rights and possessions in Canaan, and in the throne and sanctuary there, committed to them. The Church, as an embodied witness, is just seen for a moment in such a condition as to leave this thought with us; and then (because the Church on earth was not his theme) John passes rapidly to his proper regions, the heavens, to see there his proper objects, sinners who had been saved and quickened, whose destiny, he had told us before in the Gospel, was laid in heaven.

The detailed history of Christendom's corruption is thus passed by. We see the candlesticks under inspection, “for that they may be no longer stewards;” we gather an impression that unfaithfulness will be the cud of their stewardship, as of every previous one; but that is all. We have nothing in the course of things here, but we see the results of grace in heaven, elect quickened sinners in the presence of the throne of God.

This is not discord. John had already told us of such quickened sinners, destined for heaven. At the close of his Gospel, we had intimation that nothing was known as to times and days and months and seasons; that, if Jesus pleased, some might live till He came, but whether or not, there was to be a following of Him to heaven, and here we see them in heaven: when they got there, we know not.

There are, however, after this (in the Apocalypse), the visions of a prophet. Yes; John has visions, visions of coming days—days on earth; but such days as are to succeed the heavenly people leaving it.

This is still in harmony. For John had in other writings looked at his heavenly people (as I have already said) as personally, individually, in nearest intimacy with the Lord; as informed and filled by the Spirit of truth, and as expectants of heavenly mansions; but his business had not been to look on them as on the earth in the unfolding of the earth's history and their part in that history. And so now, when John gets visions of the earth, his heavenly people are not there.

Besides, when a prophet before, he had been a prophet only, as I have already said, of last days or of Antichrist's way; and so here, when called to be a larger prophet, it is of last days he is given visions, and of Antichrist's way he is made again the witness.

And, further still, this is accompanied by constant visions of his own peculiar people (the heavenly saints); for in those exercises of his spirit in Patmos, he passes from heaven to earth, and again from earth to heaven, with ease, rapidity, and frequency. It is not that he has lost sight of his own people, because he has become the prophet or seer in Israel, as I may say; but he is made to see only those moments in Israel's history, which allow him to have his eye upon the heavenly people (whose minister and prophet he specially was) all the time. So that we know not which to call chief in his visions—those visions, all awful and gloomy as they are, of the corruptions and judgments that proceed on earth; or those visions, all peaceful and bright, of the family already at homo in heaven.

I might be bold to suggest that the earthly action is really but second, like an underplot; because, at the cud, the earth is altogether in the distance, and the heavenly part of the millennial system is that which owns and claims all. The city which occupies the greater part of the last two chapters is heavenly, and her joys and treasures and dignities are published to us in fullness, while the interests of the earth in those days of blessedness get but a passing notice.

All is harmonious, I take it, dear brother; Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse—all is harmonious—all is John—all is that perfect wisdom of the Holy Ghost who breathes through His instruments and fills His vessels to tell us what a Master of assemblies He is, who is condescending to serve and furnish our tables.

Thus have I mused and written on reading your paper which much attracted me. If I have expressed a judgment decidedly, you will know that I do not mean to teach or dictate, but the heat of my heart led me on a little with boldness. Correct me as freely and where you judge I have mistaken the mind of the Spirit. I have written as the subject was in my mind. Excuse blots and corrections!

May the truth of these things be the substance of our souls more and more, if their beauty be our admiration.

Believe me, dear brother, Ever yours affectionately,

To W. K. J. G. B.

Chapter 191

A Letter on a Serious Question Connected With the Irish Education Measures of 1832

Sir, I address you thus formally in a public document in which it is my object not to express any personal feelings, but investigate principles. Your language (as reported) has given me occasion to address you on the subject on which I write; a matter which I confess has occasioned some astonishment to my mind, though other principles than astonishment bring it into action. The character of the public meeting held in this city on the subject of the anti-scriptural system of education needs no comment at present. You were present at that meeting and spoke; but it is not my object to discuss the character of your speech. The unholy marriage between Infidelity and Popery—the devil's apostate counterpart of the union between the bride the Lamb's wife and the great head of the Church—whose banns have been first published in this unhappy country, if not adequately exposed (as I think none can feel its evil sufficiently), has yet given occasion to so loud an expression of principle as I trust will, under God, give stability to those who might otherwise have been entangled, and maintain the public expression of the right, here at least, before God, when ail principle and allegiance towards Him have been so atrociously invaded. But you were following in your opposition in the rear of those to whom you owed canonical obedience. It was at least, sir, an unfriendly way of doing it.

But not to leave seriousness, considering the path which the Archbishop has trodden, it was well you were behind him. Authority and circumstances hide much from the world, and I must feel that it is the assumed orthodoxy of official situation, which could alone blind the clergy of this country to the principles of the Archbishop, by whom they are governed. Such principles known I should be sorry indeed to follow, and the fullness of an episcopal robe does but ill conceal—even though one be behind it—the false principles which may be set before its face. The circumstances of the case are these: a scheme is set on foot whose professed object is to exclude the scriptures from the school instruction of the children of this country, and this not for the purpose of meeting the poor people or consulting their feelings. It had required, Mr. Stanley states, the energetic exertion of the priests to prevent the people from embracing the proffered boon of instruction in the word of God, the boon of God Himself; not then to meet the prejudices of the people, but in acquiescence, we learn from the same authority, with the principles of the Roman Catholic religion. The scriptures are the witness not only of the holiness of God, but of His love, of His prerogative love in Christ. The Archbishop has set himself forward as the main effectuator, as under the circumstances he certainly is, of a scheme which is professedly to meet the priests, in accordance with their principles, in excluding from the schools this witness of God's love in Christ; for their introduction Mr. Stanley himself states to be the vital defect of the previous system.

But the clergy are more deeply concerned in this and the laity too, than, as far as I can see, they are aware. The only discerning spring of Christian activity, synergism in God's love (for Christianity is the activity of God's love), is the knowledge and love of Christ. The perception of His person is the great center and spring of all vital theology. To see this is the material of faith. “He that seeth

the Son, and believeth on Him hath everlasting life." Not to see this leaves a person in the darkness of this world.

The Archbishop of Dublin is a Sabellian. Of the painful situation in which this may place the clergy it is not for me to judge. What the laity will feel in thinking of their association with him, on the general superintendence of the establishment, they must consider for themselves. But Sabellianism may be considered some questionable opinion or difference. But you must know, Sir, that it strikes at the root of all vital as well as orthodox Christianity, by neutralizing the distinction between the Father and the Sou. The Father's sending the Son—the Son's obedience to the Father—the whole scheme of mediatorial Christianity—that is, Christianity itself, becomes lost in this form of infidelity. A Trinity in character, but not a Trinity of persons, in the essential force of that word, may ease the proud mind of man of that which is beyond its natural powers, but takes away, at the same time, the whole basis on which a sinner can rest by faith. Men may be guilty of Tritheism, and Sabellians may avoid this. But they also may undermine the faith in another way.

I shall extract, pretty much at length, the statements of Dr. Whately on this subject in the article on the word person, in the appendix to his logic, "Ambiguous Terms." "Person in its most ordinary use, always implies a numerically distinct substance; each man is one person, and can be but one. It, besides a peculiar theological sense, is more closely connected with its etymology. It is well known that the Latin word persona signified originally a mask which actors wore on the stage; each of which being painted in each instance suitably to the character to be represented, and worn by every one who acted the part, the word came to signify the character itself which the actor played; and afterward any character, proper or assumed, which any one sustained; as for example in a passage of Cicero (De Oratore) whore he is describing the process by which be composed his pleadings, by imagining himself in the place of his opponent and of the judge, as well as his own. 'Tres personas wins suscipio, summa animi aequitate; meam adversam, judicis.' We should render this by saying, 'I assume these three characters,' or, 'I place myself in these three situations.' The further transition, by which persona, and, as Anglicized by us, person came to signify commonly a distinct being, is very natural, though I believe it never took place while the purity of the Latin idiom lasted. Persona, in some sense, not far remote, it may be supposed, from its classical signification, was adopted by theologians to distinguish the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in the blessed Trinity, so as to imply the strict and proper unity of the divine Being, Who is all and each of these: and the word person was employed by our divines as a literal, or rather, perhaps, all etymological translation of the Latin word persona. In this sense, its difference from person, as employed in ordinary discourse (in which however it seems to have been much less common at the time when our liturgy, &c, were framed, than in the present day), is of the highest importance: since it is evident that 'three divine persons,' in the ordinary meaning of the word, is precisely equivalent to 'three Gods.'

Again— "In this our Church, very wisely and scripturally, sets before us the relations in which the Most High stands towards us of Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier: thus adhering to the apparent design of Holy Writ," &c. "The same consideration has induced me to insert in the present edition some extracts from the theological works (less known than they deserve) of the celebrated Dr. Wallis's, the mathematician and logician, who appears to have been the Church's most powerful champion against the Arians and Socinians of his day. Not that I wish implicit deference to be paid to any human authority, however eminent: but it may be worth while to correct the notion, if any

shall have entertained it, that the views of the subject here taken are, in our Church, novelties. That which makes these expressions (namely, those respecting the Trinity) seem harsh to some of these men, is because they have used themselves to fancy that notion only of the word person, according to which throe men are accounted to be three persons, and these three persons to be three men. But he may consider that there is another notion of the word person, and in common use too, wherein the same man may be said to sustain divers persons, and three persons to be the same man; that is, the same man as sustaining divers capacities. As was said but now of Tully, tres personas unus sustineo. And then it will seem no more harsh to say, the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God, than to say, God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Sanctifier, are one God—it is much the same thing whether of the two forms we use." (Letters on the Trinity, p. 63.)

"' The word person (persona) is originally a Latin word, and doth not properly signify a man (so that another person must needsimply another man); for then the word homo would have served, and they needed not have taken in the word persona; but rather one so circumstantiated. And the same man, if considered in other circumstances (considerably different), is reputed another person. And that this is the true notion of the word person, appeared by these noted phrases, personam induere, personam deponere, personamagere, and many the like in approved Latin authors. Thus the same man may at once sustain the person of a king and a father, if he be invested both with regal and paternal authority. Now, because the king and the father are for the most part not only different persons but different men also, (and the like in other cases) hence it comes to pass that another person is sometimes supposed to imply another man, but not always, nor is that the proper sense of the word. It is Englished in our dictionaries by the state, quality, or condition whereby one man differs from another; and so, as the condition alters, the person alters, though the man be the same. The hinge of the controversy is that notion concerning the three somewhats, which the Fathers (who first used it) did intend to design by the name person; so that we are not from the word person to determine what was that notion, but from that notion which they would express to determine in what sense the word person is here used,' &c., &c.—(Letter in answer to the Arian's Vindication.)"

This article was much altered in the fourth edition, and a good deal added, in the way of explanation, to guard against the too evident conclusion from the preceding extract. The date of this, sir, is 1831. But, however guarded, there is no repentance from the heresy itself. I shall insert a short extract, which may be sufficient to show this— "Person, in its ordinary use at present, invariably implies a numerically distinct substance. Each man is one person, and can be but one. It has also a peculiar theological sense, in which we speak of the 'three persons' of the blessed Trinity. It was probably thus employed by our divines, as a literal, or perhaps etymological rendering of the Latin word 'persona.' I am inclined to think, however, from the language of Wallis (the mathematician and logician) in the following extract, as well as from that of some others of our older writers, that the English word person was formerly not so strictly confined as now to the sense it bears in common conversation among us." Then follows the extract from "Wallis; and he adds in a note, "We are taught to call no man master on earth; but the reference to Dr. "Wallis may serve both to show the use of the word in his day, and to correct the notion, should any have entertained it, that the views of the subject here taken are, in our church, anything novel."

Having quoted so largely from the other edition, it is needless after this to quote more. The circumstances connected with these alterations I shall not touch upon: if authentically stated, they do not weaken the inference naturally drawn from the papers themselves. I care not, sir, for the term Sabellianism: but when the personality of the Son of God is avowedly attacked, I cannot be surprised that the person who does so should be the instrument of establishing the first open public act of infidelity—avowedly rejecting the scriptures, to meet the principles of the Roman Catholic religion. It may not be unprofitable to see the suitableness of the agent to such a work. With what satisfaction any one can follow in the rear, or own canonical obedience to such a one, I must leave to their own consciences and their fidelity to Christ to determine. Certainly the fate of the Archbishop has been unfortunate. Famous, if fame is to be trusted, for being opposed to the union of church and state, he has with painful singularity united himself to it in its first public act of professed infidelity, to be the solitary agent of any consequence in carrying the blighting influence of that infidelity into general and diffusive operation. But he denies the personality of the Son of God, and I am not surprised?" But are standards of truth no security as regards those who have solemnly signed them? Sir, whatever scripture may say of the personality of the Son of God, you must own it, and Dr. Whately ought; but his mind seems vague in this on principle, as it is far from scriptural truth. He thus writes, in a note to the same article, in the appendix to his Logic (4th edition, p. 331)— "And truly, it is much better thus to consult scripture, and take it for a guide, than to resort to it merely for confirmation, contained in detached verses, of the several parts of some system of theology, which the student fixes on as reputed orthodox, and which is in fact made the guide which he permits 'to lead him by the hand;' while passages culled out from various parts of the sacred writings, in subserviency to such system, are formed into what may be called an anagram of scripture; and then by reference to this system as a standard, each doctrine, or discourse, is readily pronounced orthodox, or Socinian, or Arian, or Sabellian, or Nestorian, &c.; and all this on the ground that the theological scheme, which the student has adopted, is supported by scripture. The materials, indeed, are the stones of the temple; but the building constructed with them is a fabric of human contrivances. If, instead of this too common procedure, students would fairly search the scriptures, with a view, not merely to defend opinions, but to form them; not merely for arguments, but for truth: keeping human expositions to their own proper purposes (see Essay vi., first series), and not allowing those to become practically a standard—if, in short, they were as honestly desirous to be on the side of scripture, as they naturally are to have scripture on their side, how much sounder as well as more charitable would their conclusions often be!"

The note of admiration as well as the italics in the several quotations are Dr. Whately's. Dr. Whately may be amiable, affable in manner, and efficient in business; but truth is truth, and principle is principle, and talents, however great or over-estimated, and the most candid kindness of manner, are but snares to the unwary. Satan is not foolish enough to make mischief disagreeable. These things appear to me, sir, not only heretical, and (as I should call it) infidel, on the most vital principle of Christianity, but, considering the circumstances in which the author of them is placed, sad want of principle. But when I consider that one who has sworn that the essential point of popish instruction and worship is a "blasphemous fable and a dangerous deceit," as Dr. Whately has, should be the principal agent for securing the instruction of the majority of the children of this country in it, and their actual attendance on it, I cannot be surprised, sir. There never was a stronger instance of the principle, that, where the truth of the gospel did not exist, the

grace or principle of it could not be found. I confess, sir, more heartless unprincipledness I never heard of. Nor, slight as Dr. Whately's tie may be to standards winch have elevated him to the place from which he throws them down, will the refuge this may be afford him much shelter. The results of such instruction as he is putting the children under I shall state in his own words. They are from a note to the same article. There is some ignorance on the subject shown in it, but it is immaterial to the present point.

“The correctness of a formal and deliberate confession of faith is not always of itself a sufficient safeguard against error, in the habitual impression of the mind. The Romanists flatter themselves that they are safe from idolatry, because they distinctly acknowledge the truth, that God only is to be served, viz., with latria, though they allow adoration (hyperdulia and dulia) to the virgin and other saints, to images, and to relics. To which it has been justly replied, that, supposing this distinction correct in itself, it would be in practice purgatory, since the mass of the people must soon, as experience proves, lose sight of it entirely in their habitual devotions.”

It must be a happy office to one who has a heart and a conscience to secure to the mass of the people instruction, which must plunge them into idolatries, however people may flatter themselves. But I must not pursue this part of the subject, or I should say a great deal more than is needful; and the general principles of the subject are already before people's minds. There are two points which do not seem to be generally felt: that this is the first public loading act of infidelity, namely, a professed rejection of the scriptures, to meet the principles of the Roman Catholic religion; and, secondly, what it specially behooves the clergy to look to, that, under the garb of that which might seem to afford security for principle but may be the hiding-place of the contrary, we have one holding principles anything but a security against infidelity, a denial of the personality of the Son of God in anything like the sense in which that is ordinarily understood; and who holds that, as applied to the Son of God, it means no more than if I should say in making all oration, I put myself into three positions with the utmost equanimity—my own, my adversary's, the judge's. What use standards or undertakings may be to secure the principles of any connected with, or admitted into, the Church under such circumstances, I must leave to others to judge. One thing I am sure of, which keeps my own soul in peace, that in the midst of this “all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose.”

But I should be sorry, sir, to follow in the rear of a diocesan, who denied the Lord that bought me; and when I see even the primate expressing his assurance of the zeal for protestantism of the Archbishop of Dublin, if I respect the feeling which prompted it, I cannot but feel it important to inquire upon what ground of security in the truth the Protestants of this country rest, as regards one (as the Archbishop is) in perhaps the most important human station which any one can fill in it. Few, I dare say, read Dr. Whately's Logic, and few know, therefore, his principles. I have transcribed his own statements here: let Christians judge.

Some question having been raised as to the principles of the Roman Catholics, as to reading the scriptures, it will be seen, by the following translation of the fourth rule of the Council of Trent respecting the Index, that a person reading them without the written permission of the bishop is refused absolution.

“Whereas it is manifest from experience, if the sacred Bible be allowed everywhere without discrimination in the vulgar tongue, more injury than profit arises thence, on account of the

rashness of men; let the judgment of the bishop or inquisitor be abided by in this respect; that, with the counsel of the parish priest, or confessor, they may allow the reading in the vulgar tongue of the Bible, translated by Catholic authors, to those who, they shall understand, may receive not injury, but increase of faith and piety: which privilege let them have in meeting. But he who without such privilege shall presume to have or read them, cannot receive absolution of his sins, unless he shall have first given them up to the ordinary. But let booksellers who shall have sold, or in any other way given to those who have not the aforesaid privileges, Bibles written in the vulgar idiom, lose the price of the books, to be converted into pious uses by the bishop, and let them be subjected to other penalties according to the quality of the crime at the discretion of the bishop. But regulars without a privilege from their prelates cannot read or buy them."

I close a letter, sir, written under sufficient suffering of body to have disposed me to keep quiet, if I had not felt it a duty. I have very briefly brought the subject forward, stating little of ray own views or feelings, not because I have them not, but because I rather desired the facts should be presented for consciences of others. God may bring good out of evil. But these sorts of circumstances are just the trials of the faithfulness of God's children. Let it be known only that, though God may be in a distinct position, there is, according to Dr. Whately, no distinction in the person of the Father and the Son. What may be the duty of the clergy in such a case I leave to themselves: of that of a Christian I can have no doubts.

O God, to what a pass is Thy church come, when they who govern and should feed it are found, even where the truth seems specially professed, deniers of that upon which Thy whole glory rests, even the person and therefore the mission of Thy Son, who loved it and gave Himself for it! O Lord, regard Thy people, and give them faithfulness and wisdom to do that which becometh Thy saints for the glory of Thy name, and acknowledgment of Thy love through Jesus, Thy sent One, come in the flesh, that, according to that which is given them, all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father by one Spirit! Amen. I am, sir, faithfully yours,

J. N. D.

Chapter 192

Review: The True Theory of the Greek Aorist, by William Howell, of the Bristol Grammar School, &c. London: Simpkin. Bristol: Kerslake

The attention of Christians interested in the study of the Greek Testament is directed to this little pamphlet; especially at a time when some essays on Greek syntax have given a one-sided bias to minds inexperienced in such pursuits. Undoubtedly the rigid rule ("never translate the aorist by 'have'") is extremely compendious and would save a world of difficulty. But unhappily it is an error, for there are very frequent cases both in the sacred writings and in profane where the rule fails; and this, for the simple reason that the English preterite is not equivalent to the Greek aorist. The assumption that it is must therefore be, as it is in fact, attended by such an abundance of unquestionable exceptions as to disprove the supposed rule. But there is the less reason to say more now, as the subject has been already handled in these pages.

In the first division of the tract Mr. H. discusses the statements of Buttmann, Donaldson, Jelf, and others. He endeavors to show from the usage of English (where a so-called present may also express past and future, and where a past may express a future), that the Greek aorist, confessedly indefinite, may be something more than is alleged. He seeks to nullify the precise position of modern grammarians by the conclusions of each and all. This however is rather negative criticism; and the question cannot be decided by lively sallies on the one side, any more than by slips or mistakes on the other.

In the second part of the inquiry, Mr. H. asks, What is this inherent power of the aorist? His answer is, that "the aorist tenses were designed as supernumerary tenses to be used for any and all the other tenses according to the taste of the writer." In support of this the following points are offered:

1. These aorists were first employed in a comparatively advanced stage of the development of the Greek language, the second aorist being more ancient than the first.

2. They have displayed their character by a gradual and eventually an utter extinction of the ancient perfect and pluperfect tenses.

3. It is admitted by authorities that they have been more or less employed instead of all the other tenses.

Euphony and expressiveness, he thinks, may have given birth to the first aorist.

The following eighteen illustrations Mr. H. cites chiefly from the historical books of the New Testament. These I proceed to examine as of interest and importance to the Christian. He wishes to prove that the present, &c, might have fairly done duty instead of the aorist; my aim is to show that the aorist is employed with propriety, even though in some cases another tense might have been used with little or no sensible loss.

1. Matt. 3:3: ■τοιμ■σατε (1 aor.), Prepare ye the way, &c.; ποιε■τε (pres.), make His paths straight. Heb. 12:13: ποι■σατε (1 aor.), make straight paths.

2. Matt. 6:25: μεριμν■τε (pres.), take no thought. 31: μεριμν■σητε (1 aor.) idem.

3. Matt. 10:11: κ■κε■ με■νατε (1 aor.), there abide. Luke 9:4: ■κε■ μ■νετε (pres.), idem.

4. Matt. 11:15: ■κον■τω (pres.), he that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Rev. 2:7: ■κονσ■τω (1 aor.),-an ear, &c.

5. Matt. 17:17: φ■ρετ■ μοι (pres.), Bring him hither to me.

Mark 9:10: φ■ρετε πρ■ς με (pres.), idem. Luke 9:41: προσ■γαγε (2 aor.), idem.

6. Matt. 21:2: πορε■θηε (1 aor.), Go into the village. Mark 11:2: ■π■γετε (pres.), idem.

Luke 19:30: idem, idem.

7. Matt. 6:11: δ■ς (2 aor.), Give us this day our daily bread. Luke 11:3: δ■δου (pres. mid.), idem.

8. Heb. 3:1: κατανο■δστε (laor.), Consider the high priest.

-12:3: ■ναλογ■σασθε (1 aor.), Consider Him that endured.

-7:4: θεωρε■τε (pres.), Consider how great this man was.

-10:24: κατανο■μεν (pres.), Let us consider one another.

9. Matt. 21:46: κα■ ζητο■ντες α■τ■ν κρατ■σαι, they sought to lay hands on Him.

Mark 12:12: κα■ ■ζ■τουν α■τ■ν κρατ■σαι, idem.

Luke 20:19: κα■ ■ζ■τησαν ■πιβαλε■ν, idem.

John 7:30: ■ξ■τουν ο■ν α■τ■ν πι■σαι, they sought therefore to take Him.

10. Acts 9:26: ■ζ■ειρ■το κολλ■σθασ, he assayed to join himself.

—16:7: ■πε■ραξον... πορε■εσθαι, they assayed to go.

Heb. 11:29: πε■ραν λαβ■ντες, assaying to go.

11. Matt. 26:4: συνεβουλε■σαντο (1 aor. ind.), consulted that they might, &c. Mark 14:1: ■ξ■τουν (imp. ind.), sought how they might.

12. Luke 7:38: ■ξ■μασσε (imp. ind.), did wipe, &c. John 12:3: ■ξ■μαξε (1 aor. ind.), wiped, &c.

13. Matt. 13:3: σπα■ρειν (pres. inf.), a sower went forth to sow.

Mark 4:3: σπε■ραι (1 aor. inf.), idem. So Luke.

14. Matt. 11:9: ■ξ■λθετε (2 aor. ind.), what went ye out to see? Luke 7:24: ■ξεληλ■θατε (per. m.), idem.

15. Matt. 9:13: ο■ γ■ρ ■λθον (2 aor.) καλ■σαι, I came not to call.

Mark 2:17: idem, idem, Luke 5:32: ο■κ ■λ■λυθα (per. m.) καλ■σαι, idem.

16. 2 Cor. 1:12: ■νεστρ■φημεν (2 aor. p.), we have had our conversation.

Eph. 2:3: idem, we had, &c.

17. John 3:32: κα■ ■ ■■ρακε κα■ ■κουσε, and what he hath seen and heard.

18. John 15:6: ■■ν μ■ τις με■ν? με■νη iv εμο■, ■βλ■θη ■ξω, if a man abide not in me,' he is cast forth; the future βεβλ■σεται would have given the same sense. Farrar, Greek Syntax.

1. It would be strange indeed if the aorist in the first verb, the present in the second, were used with no precise object, seeing that the LXX have thus rendered the prophet; and so it appears in all the synoptic evangelists, who are by no means used merely to repeat their original. To me it seems plain that, while the paths are left for continuous or repeated action in detail, the way of Jehovah is viewed as having been made ready with promptness. The same principle applies to Heb. 13:13, and the more strikingly, because the aorists of 12 and 13 are followed by an emphatic use of the present in 14.

2. The disciples were not to be anxious (pr.) as a habit as to food and raiment: a look at the birds, an observation of the lilies, however transient, might well reprove it. They were not to be anxious (aor.) at all, said the Lord—not for the morrow. (Ver. 34.) It is a stronger statement, excluding even a single instance.

3. The phrase of Matthew seems correctly due to ■ως ■ν ■ξ■λθητε, which puts a term; whereas Luke's is expressly different and equally exact, κα■ ■κε■θεν ■ξ■ρχεσθε. Either might be said with truth, but they are not of the same value, and there is no ground for charging with looseness the phraseology of one evangelist more than another.

4. The Lord was still speaking in the Gospel; in the Revelation it is a final warning given peremptorily in each assembly's case.

5. In Luke it is a precise order to the father, and so also singular. In the two first it is more general, as marked in the tense as well as the number.

6. In Matt. 21:2 the true reading is probably not πορε■θητε but πορε■εσθε (■, B, D, L, Z, 33, 13, 61, 69,126, 157, 346, Orig. Euseb.), and so the tense is the same as that of ■π■γετε in Mark and Luke.

7. The aorist for the single act (σ■μερον) in Matthew is just as proper as the present for the habit (τ■ καθ' ■μεραν) in Luke. They could not be interchanged without altering each clause.

8. The two aorists are acts viewed as consummated, or in themselves; the two present as calling for continuous consideration.

9. The effort is rendered more definite in Luke by the use in him only of ■ν α■τ■ τ■ ■ρ■ which accounts for ■ξ■τησαν there only.

10. The aorist in Heb. 11:29 is strictly correct as being the historical fact. The imperfect in Acts denotes continued or repeated effort in the act.

11. A similar remark applies to the aorist in Matt. 24:4, as compared with the imperfect in Mark 14:1.

12. So in Luke 7:38, it is the graphic power of the imperative, whilst John 12:3 presents no more than the fact historically.

13. If a sower go forth on his task, it might be said either σπε■ρειν or σπε■ραι, viewed continuously or as a point; in fact ■, D, L, M, X, with more than sixty cursives, have σπε■ραι in Matt. 13:3; while in verse 4 of both Gospels ■ν τι■ σπε■ρειν is used necessarily because it is a course of action, not an act in itself. Thus we see, even when either might be used, that there are limits.

14. The difference is that the perfect gives vigor to style where it is suitable or desired by presenting the fact with its effects up to the present, the aorist gives the past only. In Luke therefore it should be “have (or, are) ye gone out,” &c.

15. So with the next set: “I am not come to call” represents Luke. ["I have dined,” to use an illustration of our author's, could only be used with propriety of to-day.]

16. There is no need to translate ■νεστρ■φημεν differently in 2 Cor. 1:13 and in Eph. 2:3, “we bore ourselves,” or “had our way of life” suiting both; and so in fact Mr. Green and Dean A., two of the most recent translators, recognize no difference.

17. I see no reason for doubting here also the distinction between the perfect and the aorist, the former expressing a permanent effect, while the latter does not go beyond the act or circumstance itself.

18. No doubt, in ordinary Greek, the future would as a rule be found in the apodosis; but this does not warrant one to say that the future would have given the same sense as the aorist, or another to infer that the aorist is equivalent to a future, or a present, or a perfect. It seems to my mind that our Lord used what best expressed His mind, and that none but the aorist could here convey with the same force the man cast out who abode not in Him. It may be called rhetorical; but it vividly gives the instant issue, as He saw it, of abandoning Him: other results follow at length, and they are so expressed.

What appears to have misled our author is the difference of idiom. For it is one thing to give a fair English version, another to trace the precise force and shades of difference in the Greek. To suppose that imperfects, aorists, and perfects, can be used indifferently in the same sentence is to destroy the precision of language. To explain why each is used rather than any other is exactly the business of a scholar, not to explain them all away. And in New Testament Greek it must be remembered that the believer in inspiration is entitled to have the assurance that every minute difference is used with divine exactness and with a purpose worthy of Him who wrote it.

Chapter 193

The Robber Saved

(Luke 23:39-43.)

We do not find, except during the three hours of darkness on the cross, that by any sorrow, weariness, or trial, the Lord Jesus was ever hindered from entering into the sorrow of others. None could put Him in a place, except when working out atonement, where He did not enter into human suffering; such unweariness of love do we see in Christ. Still He was light; and the more we look into His history, the more comes out the terribleness of the heart of man. It was never manifested till then. There are amiable natures and unamiable natures; but we never learn what the heart of man is till then. The thing that tries the human heart is, What is its object? not, What are its mere natural qualities? “There is none that seeketh after God.” Man saw no beauty in Christ. There is nothing in the heart that looks at the Lord so as to find in Him an object and a delight. There is no root till the conscience is reached; there may be attraction, but until the conscience is in the presence and sight of God, nothing is done; it is like the morning dew which passes away. “The same is he which heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himself.” Wherever the conscience is reached by God, there is some sense of goodness. Fear and terror may predominate, but there is attraction, and the heart cannot let it go. Faith always gets both: God is love, and yet He reaches the conscience. There is that which reaches the conscience and that which inspires confidence, when the eye is on Christ.

On the authority of Christ Himself we have the certainty of salvation, that is, the Christian state; and no other the Christian suits. It is the only real Christian state which the word of God owns. The condition of the Christian is the effect of the work of Christ. It is not that there is no conflict, but that Another has taken my responsibility. My place before God is not the effect of what I have done, but of what Christ has done. Christ is the ground on which I stand before God: if it be so, what has He done for us? He died for our sins; then they must be put away. He is the judge, but He cannot judge what He has put away. That we might walk with God in peace, He has sent the One who is to be the judge first to be the Savior. Confidence is connected with righteousness now.

In the history of the robbers we have both sides. In the other malefactor, taunting Christ, we see how the heart of man is enmity to God. It was the triumph for the moment of the first man and of Satan too. It is sad to think what our hearts are, if left to themselves. When the heart is let out, where will it slop? Satan is over us. Here then we have the triumph of the wickedness of man over the goodness of God. We cannot get rid of Satan's power yet; we may bind it in a sense. The heart of man cannot bear the presence of God. There is not a vanity, not a bit of dress or money, that has not more power over the heart of man than all that Christ has done or is. You never yet found a man enjoying himself who would hear of Christ. The world would not have Him when He came in grace, nor would it now; but it must have Him when He comes in judgment. Take the majority of people in this city, and suppose them let into heaven! They would get out as fast as they could. In the repentant robber we see grace. He was crucified on a gibbet; but no matter, gibbet or no gibbet, when God and the soul meet, we have the simple and immense fact that the soul is

brought at once into His presence. When God has dealt with the consciences, we make no more promises for the future. Unlike the naughty child that says, “I'll be better to-morrow;” the soul confesses sin to-day. “Dost thou not fear God?” is the word, not “are you not ashamed of being a thief?”

Have you ever been brought into God's presence? “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” If you have not been consciously in God's presence, wisdom has not begun for you. Before Christ you must be, and you must be there in truth: the difference is whether you are before Christ in the fullness of His grace, or before Him in judgment. “We indeed justly.” He did not say that the world was guilty but that he was the guilty one—it is not simply that sin is sin, but that I am a sinner. His thought is that he himself is justly there. It is a personal thing—not merely that God is holy, not merely that the world is guilty, but that you are guilty.

“This man hath done nothing amiss.” He would guarantee the whole life of Christ—it contrariwise was a divine revelation to the soul. Who is there that is a Christian that would not lay down his life for this? “This man hath done nothing amiss.” It was a divine revelation of the perfectness of Christ's person. Could your soul answer for Christ in that way? Here is a man who does so when everybody is deserting Jesus; here is divine faith that He was perfectly sinless: his eye is opened, his heart brought to the consciousness of it. It is not only that he has the fear of God, but he sees the perfectness of Jesus. Heaven was opened when Christ came out for public service; there never was a man before of whom God could say “That is all I want.” Has your heart echoed, and said “That is all I want?” Nowhere else can the heart so rest when we see the evil around, and the imperfections even of saints. His mind, having got hold of Christ, finds rest in Him. All around is a wide waste of waters, the heart would get wearied, but it turns to Him; and what a rest! Things would be unbearable but for this, but the heart, when it turns there, enters its sanctuary.

“Remember me,” said the converted robber. What sign was there that Jesus was Christ the Lord? There was not a cloud on this man's heart because he was divinely taught. One heart recognizes that He is Lord in spite of everything. Pilate had washed his hands before all the people, and given Him up to the Jews; He was denied by one of His disciples, betrayed by another. Everything was against it. “Lord, remember me;” without a sign, the robber owns Him—how bright to faith! This man had no time to grow or serve or walk; but there was thorough conversion, full faith, a sense of what the Messiah was, and belief in His coming in His kingdom. Faith in itself is always certain; it may lead us to doubt about other things, but it is always absolutely certain. The believer has set to his seal that God is true; he does not say, “Perhaps He is true.” Wherever I receive it as the word of God, I receive it with absolute certainty; if it be not so, I do not receive it as the word of God at all.

“Remember me, when thou comest in thy kingdom.” His whole concern was that Christ should remember him. We see in him boldness with a bold sinner, lowliness as to himself, a sense of the perfectness of Jesus, and the knowledge that He would come in His kingdom. Happy are we if we are in the state of this robber! If you were in suffering, in trial, is it the only thing you would care about, that Christ should remember you?

Another thing is Christ's answer to him: “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” The character of Luke is to bring in present blessing. Before ever the kingdom came, he would go straight to paradise. Faith never looks at my heart but at the object God reveals. When brought to the

consciousness of what I am, my eye rests on Christ Himself. When the thief looks to Christ, he has Christ's answer. The rest given to our souls is the positive answer of God. We have the positive declaration that this robber, taken up for his crimes, was that day absolutely fit for paradise; so perfect is the work of Christ. Observe this robber, and the woman that was a sinner, how they understand Christ, because they want a Savior! When I come to God with Christ in my hand (like Abel with his lamb), God says to me, “You are righteous.” By faith I see Jesus is sitting on the right hand of the majesty' on high: when did He go there? “When he had by himself purged our sins.” Then I know my sins are purged before God. There is no progress here, no such thing as being fitted for heaven. Growth there ought to be in us if left here, progress in likeness to Christ; but it is never in scripture connected with fitness for heaven: Christ is my title. There is growth, but it is never treated as our fitness. This robber was fit for paradise at once; he went there any way that day: I suppose he was fit for it, since he was fit to be with Christ! Suppose I were to make all the progress the most blessed saint ever made, could I say I was fit thus for Christ? God forbid! yet I am fit. Death for the believer is simply that he has done with all that is mortal and sinful.

How little the outside is the truth! The Jews sent soldiers to break their legs: how little they thought they were sending the robber straight to heaven, to be the first companion (there were Old Testament saints of course) that followed the blessed Lord!

It would be well for us if we were as close to Christ as that poor robber. When the veil was rent, the whole thing was changed. The Old Testament was a declaration that man could not go to God in the light. God did not come out; and man could not go in. The gospel says that God did come out, and man can go in. “We have boldness to enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus.” If sin is there, how can I enter into the holiest? I am in Christ, not in the flesh. Our sins He bore; we have died with Him, and should enter into the holiest. Access is free, the veil being rent: we are accepted in the Beloved. Until the work was done, He did not give up the ghost. Now, as a present thing, we have boldness to enter into the holiest. Are you there? The veil is rent: you cannot have God afar off. There is no more a veil: we are before the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So full and complete is the revelation, that I see God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ, the witness of salvation accomplished. The glory is in the face of the One who bore my sins. In the presence of the absolute light and righteousness of God you must stand, or you cannot stand at all. The world may blind your eyes; but there is no veil on the presence of God.

Notes on Romans 11:1-10

It was the prophet Isaiah then, after Moses, not Paul, who had distinctly pronounced Israel a rebellious people, spite of God's daily pleading with them, and the call of the Gentiles who had not sought it. It was in vain to quarrel with the gospel on this score. The question is raised consequently whether Israel was wholly to lose their position in God's favor according to promise. The apostle proves the contrary in this chapter.

“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? Far be it! For I also am an Israelite, of Abraham's seed, of Benjamin's tribe. God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew. Know ye not what the scripture saith in [the section of] Elias, how he pleadeth with God against Israel? 'Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have dug down thine altars; and I only am left, and they seek my life?' But what saith the divine answer to him? ‘I have left to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' Thus then in the present time also there hath been a remnant according to election of grace; but if by grace, no longer of works, since [if it were,] grace becomes no longer grace [; but if of works, it is no longer grace, since (if it were) work is no longer work]. What then? That which Israel seeketh for he did not obtain, but the election obtained, and the rest were hardened; even as it is written, ‘God gave them a spirit of stupefaction, eyes not to see and ears not to hear unto this day.' And David saith, ‘Let their table be for a snare, and for a trap, and for a stumblingblock, and for a recompense to them; let their eyes be darkened not to see, and bow down their back alway.” (Ver. 1-10.)

This is the first answer to the question of Israel's total and final rejection. God foreknew His people when He chose and called them; and, knowing all their evil beforehand, He certainly will not cast them off. He has not done so, as Paul's own case proved; for he was no bad instance—he who had shared in the nation's guiltiest prejudices and bitterest unbelief and rejection of Jesus; yet had God called him. His love lingered over His poor unworthy people even now, as Paul was also a pattern for them who should hereafter believe on Christ Jesus to eternal life. On him first was the Lord showing the whole of His longsuffering: yet was he also an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, the one recalling the ancient promises, the other subsequent sin, himself withal present electing mercy, a pledge of the future grace which would save the people fully. Were the exclusion absolute, Paul certainly could not have been brought into His favor. But there is further proof still. “Know ye not what the scripture saith” in the account of Elijah? The disheartened prophet saw himself alone faithful in that dark page of Israel's history—himself therefore the object of hatred unto death as far as king and people could. But the divine admonition let him know of a complete remnant, “seven thousand, such as bowed not the knee to Baal.” Thus then in the present time also there has been a remnant “according to election of grace.” It was electing grace now as then. The general state was at that time undeniably apostate: what was it in Paul's day?

This gives the apostle the occasion, never let slip by the Holy Spirit, of asserting grace in its exclusion of works—in their mutual exclusion, if we accept the received reading. But I do not see

that the bracketed clause adds to the precision of the truth; whereas it was natural enough to tack it on, especially as the form in the Vatican copy seems an evident error (χ■ρις instead of ■ργον in the end of the disputed clause).

How then stands the case? “What Israel seeks, this it obtained not, but the election obtained; and the rest were hardened.” It will be noticed that those we call ordinarily the remnant or righteous portion of Israel are designated “the election,” while the mass are called the rest or remnant. “Hardened” also is the right sense, rather than blinded (though this is also taught elsewhere). It may be that ■πωρ■θησαν was confounded in thought and sense with ■πηρ■θησαν, as another has pointed out in the Vatican text of Job 17:7 in the LXX.

This leads the apostle to adduce the testimony of scripture, in the words (apparently mingled) of Isa. 29:10 and Deut. 29:4, followed up by the still more tremendous imprecation of David in Psa. 69:22, 23, all speaking of the ungodly in Israel. Here again the law, the psalms, and the prophets gave their joint overwhelming evidence in terms so vehement that the apostle had rather to bring in “strong consolation” from the unfailing faithfulness of God for at least a remnant as we have seen, before he established every word by these “two or three witnesses” for the general condition of Israel. What more apt to clench the question? What wiser course possible for the apostle?

But let me refer to Calvin's comment on these quotations; for, able as he was, pious too and grave in general, his narrow system exposed him here to adventure remarks on the apostle no less unworthy than presumptuous. “Que adducit testimonia, quanquam ex variis potius scripturae locis collecta, quam ex uno loco desumpta sunt, omnia tamen videntur aliena esse ab ejus proposito, si ex circumstanciis suis ea propius expendas. Ubique eniam videas excaecationem et indurationem commemorari, tanquam Dei flagella, quibus jam admissa ab impiis flagitia ulciscitur: Paulus autem probare his contendit, excaecari non eos, qui sua malitia jam id meriti sint, sed qui ante mundi creationem reprobati sunt a Deo. (!) Hune nodum ita breviter solvas, Quod origo impietatis, que ita in se provocat Dei furorem, est perversitas naturae a Deo derelictae. Quare non abs re Paulus de aeterna reprobatione (?) haec citavit, que ex ea prodeunt ut fructus ex arbore, et rivus a scaturigine. Impii quidem propter sua scelera justo Dei judicio caecitate puniuntur: sed si fontem exitii eorum quaerimus, eo deveniendum erit, quod a Deo maledicti, nihil omnibus factis, dictis, consiliis suis, quam maledictionem accersere et accumulare possunt. Imo aeternae reprobationis ita abscondita est causa, ut nihil aliud nobis supersit, quam admirari incomprehensibile Dei consilium sicuti tandem ex clausula patebit. Stulte autem faciunt, qui simulac verbum factum est de propinquis causis, earum praetextu hane primam, que sensum nostrum latet, obtegere tentant: acsi Deus non libere ante Adae lapsum statuisset de toto humano genere quod visum est, quia damnat vitiosum as pravum ejus semen: deinde quia, peculiariter singulis quam meriti sunt scelerum mercedem rependit." Calv. in loc. i. 149, ed. Tholuck, Halae, 1831.

One could understand a believer perhaps saying that the citations of an apostle seemed foreign to his purpose when not examined with their context; but is it too much if we denounce as irreverent no less than unintelligent the man who could venture so to speak, for no better reason than a blind love of His own scheme? It is excellent and right that scripture should declare hardening to be an infliction of God after men have already proved their ungodliness. It is false and bad to say that Paul labors to prove here that the blinding was not because it was deserved but in consequence of eternal reprobation. In fact scripture teaches no such doctrine. Nowhere are any said: to be

rejected before the foundation of the world. Nor this only: they are punished at the world's end for their wickedness, not because of a divine decree. Indeed a judgment in this case would be nugatory. But they are judged each according to their works, and the lake of fire is their sentence; though scripture takes care after this to append the divine side, adding that if any one was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire. So in a previous chapter of this epistle Paul had carefully shown how God, willing to show His wrath and make His power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted) for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy which He had before prepared for glory. To me I confess it looks like the blinding influence of falsehood when men overlook the difference of vessels of wrath fitted on the one hand to destruction, and of vessels of mercy which He on the other hand before made ready for glory. It is guilty man who is the agent in sin and misery; God only who is the source of all the good, though His longsuffering be conspicuous most of all if possible in bearing with the evil.

In short then not only not Paul but no other inspired writer ever speaks of “eternal reprobation;” it is merely a dream of a certain school. So the curse of God follows, instead of causing, the impious ways of men. Arminianism is wholly astray no doubt in reducing God's election to a mere foresight of good in some creatures; but Calvinism is no less erroneous in imputing the evil lot of the first Adam race to God's decree. They both spring from analogous roots of unbelief: Calvinism reasoning, contrary to scripture, from the truth of election to the error of eternal reprobation; Arminianism rightly rejecting that reprobation but wrongly reasoning against election. Like other systems they are in part true and in part false—true in what they believe of scripture, false in yielding to human thoughts outside scripture: happy those, who are content as Christians with the truth of God and refuse to be partisans on either side of men!

Notes on Romans 11:11-24

The next position of the apostle is, in great part, decided by the question: “I say then, Did they stumble in order that they should fall? Far be it: but by their trespass salvation [is come] to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy. But if their trespass be [the] world's riches and their loss [the] Gentiles' riches, how much more their fullness? Now I speak to you, the Gentiles; inasmuch therefore as I am apostle of Gentiles I glorify my ministry, if by any means I shall provoke to jealousy my flesh and save some of them. For if their rejection [be the] world's reconciliation, what the reception but life from [the] dead?” (Ver. 11 - 15.)

Thus the very slip of Israel from its place of witness and depository of promise, turned as it is through divine mercy into present favor towards the Gentile world, becomes an argument in the hands of grace to assure their future restoration. The apostle alludes to the words of Deut. 32, the bearing of which on the question is as evident as to the Jew their authority is indisputable. It was not Paul but Moses who declared that the Jew provoked Jehovah to jealousy, that he was unmindful of the Rock who begat him, the glory of God that formed him. It was Moses who testified that Jehovah said, “I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be; for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved me to jealousy with [that which is] not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with [those which are] not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.” Undoubtedly it is the sure and solemn threat of God's displeasure in turning from Israel to the Gentiles, as certainly as Israel used to turn from Jehovah to false gods. But the threat, now accomplishing after the utmost patience, and only accomplished when they added to their old idolatry the still graver sin of rejecting the Messiah and disdaining the gospel that offered them the pardon of these and all other sins by His blood—the threat itself contains the no less sure intimation of restoring mercy in the end. For certainly He who acts with a view to provoke them to jealousy through blessing the Gentiles does not mean to cast them off eventually, rather the very reverse. One sees by such admirable reasoning and such profoundly accurate employment of the Old Testament scripture how truly it is the same Spirit who wrote of old by Moses working now by Paul.'

Apart from any particular allusion, the state of things whether now or by and by accords perfectly both with the facts of Christianity and with the general prospects for the world according to the prophets. For it is just when the Jews lose all their place and nation no less than distinctive rank as a witnessing and worshipping people in their land that we see the Gentiles gradually renouncing their idols, and the true God and His word incomparably better known than even of old in Israel. Revealed truth, having its center and display in Christ, alone accounts for the eclipse on the one side and the possession of a brighter light on the other. Did not the Jews reject the true light which now shines on nations so long benighted in idolatry? Again, while owning the mercy of God, which has thus wondrously turned aside to visit the Gentile with the gospel during the continued unbelief and consequently dark and wretched nothingness of the Jew, who can overlook the rich and full stream of Old Testament scripture which depicts the joy and blessedness of the whole earth only

when God causes His face to shine on Israel? “God shall bless us” (says the inspired Jewish psalmist); “and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.” It is right to preach, a privilege to look for souls to be blessed; but it is vain, because unscriptural, to expect universality of blessing and delivering power over the world as a whole till Zion's light is come and the glory of Jehovah is risen on her. Then and not before shall the Gentiles come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising; then the nation and kingdom that will not serve Zion shall perish—a state of things in evident contrast with the grace that goes out now to Jew and Gentile indiscriminately, and gathers believing souls by the Spirit for heavenly and eternal glory, instead of being a display of the righteous government of Jehovah-Messiah in Israel and over all the earth.

Hence it is obvious with what strict truth the apostle could affirm that the salvation to the Gentiles, by the slip or trespass of the Jews, is but to provoke them to jealousy instead of being a sign of being abandoned forever as a people by God; nay further he could reason, in harmony with the prophets, that if their trespass is the world's wealth, and their loss and diminution the Gentiles' wealth, how much more their fullness? The apostle here accounts, or, if one will, apologizes, for his bringing in the Gentiles when discussing the destiny of Israel. He was speaking to the saints at Rome, “to you the Gentiles.” Further, “inasmuch therefore as I am apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry:” how or why should he forget the divine mercy to such hinging on God's ways with Israel that now occupied him? Especially too as he was thereby seeking to further that provocation to jealousy for which he had the authority of Him who alone is good and of whose compassion toward Israel he was no less assured than of His righteous displeasure at their sins. “If by any means I may provoke to jealousy [those who are] my flesh and may save some of them.” (Ver. 14.) “For if their rejection [be the] world's reconciliation, what their reception but life from among [the] dead?” Such we have seen is the uniform impression left by the Psalms and the Prophets, as every candid and intelligent Jew must feel. Then only will be “the regeneration” when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory with His glorified assessors, and all the nations as well as the twelve tribes of Israel shall know what it is to have a king reigning in righteousness and princes ruling in judgment. It is the mistake of Origen, Chrysostom, and Theodoret, of Meyer, Fritzsche, Tholuck, &a, to bring in the resurrection literally as meant here, though I doubt not that the first resurrection will have then taken place as proved by the most positive evidence of scripture. Nor is there just ground for Dean Alford's singular indecision who objects both to the true and to the erroneous view. Whatever the divine mercy in the “world's reconciling” which we now know while the gospel goes forth to every creature, a wholly different blessedness awaits all the earth as “life from the dead,” when all Israel received back and saved, far from their old envy and churlish scorn, shall bid all the lands to sing joyfully to Jehovah and come before His presence with triumphal song. If His house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations, in that day also is His name to be great among the nations, and in every place incense is to be burnt and a pure offering offered to His name. How far beyond the present, and how different, though the present may be an earnest and pledge! Will it not be for all on earth “life from the dead?”

It seems to my mind that Calvin is far from having a simple, clear, or strong view of the argument, though I do in no wise deny his generally grave and pious sentiments. But he says that you will be greatly hampered in understanding this discussion, except you take notice that the apostle speaks, sometimes of the whole nation of the Jews, sometimes of single individuals. The truth is that the question is exclusively about the nation as God's witness on earth and inheriting the line of

promise from Abraham. There was no doubt about individuals. But Paul, we have seen, beautifully uses the faith of himself and others as a proof that even during the judicial hardening there is a remnant according to the election of grace, and that the call of Gentiles meanwhile is but a provocation to jealousy, instead of implying that God cast away His people, and that they have fallen never more to be received as Israel. And here I cannot but deplore the presumption, as well as ignorance, with which even so godly a person as the Genevese chief speaks, especially on verse 12. The apostle should have been humbly listened to, not corrected. Need I add that the rudeness of speech belongs exclusively to the critic, and that the inspiration is thoroughly exact, not the too confident commentator? A human antithesis, which Calvin ventured to say would have been more proper, is in force, beauty, and truth far short of that which the Spirit has given. A rising or raising up of Israel conveys no such import of necessary blessedness as their “reception” after their stumble, loss, and rejection. Even if we did not see and could not prove this, every believer is bound to resent such want of respect to scripture.

Here the apostle adds some observations which not only confirm but explain much: these the reader should the more sedulously weigh because they are in general ill understood. “But if the firstfruit [be] holy, the lump also; and if the root [be] holy, the branches also. But if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wast graft in among them and wast made fellow-partaker of the root and of the fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches: but if thou boastest, not thou bearest the root but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, Branches were broken off in order that I might be graft in. Well: through unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, it may be he will not spare even thee.” (Ver. 16 - 21.) From principles familiar to the Jew in the Old Testament the reasoning is drawn, and the ways of God in government are vindicated with singular force. The Jew, springing from Abraham, the one first chosen and called out to have promises in his line (though for all others in their effects), had been the natural trunk or branches of the olive tree. The Gentile grew wild outside. But God must have branches in keeping with the root, and, because the Jews were not, judgment proceeded against them. It was evident then, first, that boasting least became the Gentiles, who had no necessary or natural connection with the root, the father of the faithful, like the Jews; secondly, that they had most reason to fear, for if God had dealt with the failure of the seed of Abraham, it was not to be conceived that He would tolerate Gentile iniquity. It belonged to the plan of God to graft the Gentile into the line of promise on earth, in place of Jewish branches broken off through their unbelief. By faith the Gentile stands: let him not be highminded but fear. Otherwise God will not spare.

“Behold then God's goodness and severity: upon them that fell severity, but upon thee God's goodness if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they too, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be graft in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wast cut off from the olive tree wild by nature, and contrary to nature wast graft into a good olive tree, how much more shall these who are according to nature be graft into their own olive tree?” (Ver. 22 - 24.)

It is of the greatest moment to avoid confounding the continuous line of the inheritance of the promise on earth, the olive tree, with the mystery of Christ and the church where all is new and above nature. There is no breaking off members from the body, nor is the Jew a natural limb any more than the Gentile. All is heavenly grace and entirely distinct from the system of administered

promises which began with Abraham, the firstfruit. No doubt those who compose the church, Christ's body, come in as branches standing through faith in the room of the broken off Jewish ones; but others do also who are mere professors of Christ, and do not appreciate God's goodness but forsake it for forms or skepticism or open evil, and will thus fall under His just severity when the moment arrives to cut off the faithless Gentile graft, as before the unbelieving natural boughs of Israel. It is no question of saving grace here but of earthly responsibility according to the respective testimony, first of Israel, next of Christendom. A man of exercised conscience, or even of ordinary knowledge of the New Testament, cannot look on the Gentile profession of Christ east, west, north, south, and affirm seriously that they have continued in God's goodness; if not, the sentence is excision for the Gentile, as of old for the Jew. Will the tree then he cut down? In nowise more in the future than in the past. Contrariwise the judgment of the Gentile branches makes way for the grafting in of the Jews, for they will then no longer abide in unbelief, and God is able to graft them in again. It is indeed “their own olive tree,” which God never forgets, nor should the Gentile.

Thus we all may and should clearly see the distinctness of the responsibility of the creature, whether in Israel or in Christendom, from the security of the elect who are saved by grace. Salvation is of Him who is rich in mercy, possible only, though given fully and freely, to the believer in virtue of redemption. But this does not hinder the trial of Christendom now, as of Israel in the past. The revealed result is the apostasy; but grace will translate the saints risen or changed to meet the Lord at His coming, as His day will fall with unsparing judgments on His enemies and most severely on those who abuse in the worst way the best and brightest privileges. The cutting off of the apostate Gentile profession will make way for the reception of Israel.

Chapter 196

Notes on Romans 11:25-26

The apostle had reasoned against the notion that God had cast away His people; first, from the remnant according to the election of grace, of whom he was himself a sample; and next, from God's revealed object in calling Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy, which brought in the beautiful and instructive episode of their own olive tree, still pointing in a similar direction; but now we come to a ground more definite and conclusive. The word of God has given express testimony to His purpose of recalling Israel in sovereign mercy after and spite of all their sins, giving them in the latter thorough repentance and turning their heart toward their Messiah so long rejected.

“For I do not wish you, brethren, to be ignorant of this mystery, in order that ye be not wise in your own conceits, that hardness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles shall have come in; and so all Israel shall be saved, even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant on my part to them when I shall have taken away their sins.” (Ver. 25-27.) If the apostle used the Septuagint Version of two passages in Isaiah (chaps, 59: 20, 27: 9; compare also Jer. 31), in the Greek text as it now stands the phrase is neither “to” Zion, as in the Hebrew, nor “oat of” Zion as in the epistle, but ■νεκεν (“for the sake of"), save in two copies referred to by Holmes and Parsons in their great edition of the LXX, one of which is certainly a correction, the other probably so. That Origen, Chrysostom, and Theodoret cite according to the New Testament decides nothing against the common text of the Seventy. And this is confirmed by the plain fact that Origen, who had quoted the prophet when interpreting Psa. 14 according to the apostle's form of citation, gives in his Hexapla the text of the LXX. just as it now stands, while we see Aquila and Symmachus adhering precisely to the Hebrew. It is evident to me that the last verses of Psa. 16, 52 fully and literally justify the apostle, who was directed by the Holy Spirit to use the Old Testament in such a way as looks lax to the hasty, careless, or unbelieving, too disposed to regard an inspired man as like themselves, but really with the most comprehensive wisdom and the nicest exactitude, so as to convey the mind of God as contained in His word, not in one text only but out of many interwoven into one. The Deliverer will come to Zion, out of which He will subsequently send the rod of His power for the full deliverance of His people, in the day that He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob and place him forever under the new covenant.

Thus if the hardening of Israel (though, we may bless God, only in part) was then true and still goes on, long before announced, the same prophet and, we may add, the rest of the prophets anticipate the bright day for the earth when all Israel, as such, shall be saved. The πλ■ρωμα, fullness or full complement of the Gentiles, who now believe, will have come in; and so the long guilty, long chastened, people of Jehovah will turn to the Lord and own Him in the crucified Nazarene, their Lord and their God; even as Thomas who in this represents them, seeing Him and believing.

There is no comment in the New Testament more important for determining the just meaning of Old Testament prophecy. The allegorical school of ancients from Origen down to the moderns of

our own day are in this far from the truth of God. Indeed it is as a system mere trifling and its root unbelief, as its dogmatic effect is to shake confidence in the plain written word, and its practical result is not only to deprive the ancient people of God of their hope, but to lower and obscure our own by substituting the earthly position of Israel (confused and spoiled by a so-called spiritualism) for separation to and union with Christ in heaven, the true place of the Christian and of the church. It will astonish some of my readers to learn that Origen, undoubtedly one of the ablest and most learned of the early Greek fathers, speaks of Zion as representing the Father in this very connection! Others may be more sober; but they understood the truth no better than he, if they did not commit themselves to such wild flights of fancy. If some might have hoped better things of Theodoret, like Chrysostom, I am forced to prove how precarious is the teaching which, after saying truly that the Jews will believe, on the conclusion of the work spoken of among the Gentiles, tells us that “all Israel” means those who believe whether of Jews or of Gentiles. Even this meager expectation of blessing at the end for Israel is boldly denied by Jerome (Comm. Esai. 11.), who will have all to be understood of the first advent!

Nor did the reformers clear themselves from the ignorance and prejudice of the fathers, partly through their dread of Anabaptist violence and fanaticism in their dreams of a fifth kingdom, dreams which after all are far more akin to the theories of Rome and the fathers than to the holy and heavenly hopes given in the written word. For it will be observed that such visionaries look for a Zion of their own on earth, just as in a modified sense their adversaries interpret the prophets of the church. All were at fault, though in different directions; so must all be who do not see the church's portion to be a heavenly one with Christ at His coming, who will restore His people to the enjoyment of every promised blessing and glory on the earth, the nations being then only blessed as a whole though subordinately. But the risen saints will reign with Christ over the earth. We are blessed in heavenly places in Him.

Hence we can understand the vacillation of Luther. But Calvin was always wrong, as an instance of which may suffice his interpretation of this place where he makes “all Israel” to mean the whole of those saved, the Jews having only the superior place as the firstborn.

Much more correctly have Beza on the Protestant side, and Estius on the Catholic expounded the verse and shown the opposition of π■ς ■σρα■λ in the future hardening ■π■ μ■ρους, which strictly means “in part,” not a mere qualifying of a severe declaration, “until” also specifying the point of time at which the great change takes place. To say with Calvin that “until” (■χρις ο■) does not mark this but only equivalent to “that” shows the strong prejudice of a good man whose knowledge of the language was imperfect and who missed to a great extent the point of the chapter before him, through that wisdom in one's own conceit against which the apostle is warning the Gentiles. That “the fullness of the Gentiles” cannot mean the general conversion of the world to Christ, is perfectly certain if it were only from the previous reasoning of the apostle in the central portion of the chapter, where he asks if the slips of the Jews were the world's riches, how much more their fullness? and shows how he was provoking them to jealousy to save some; for if their rejection be the world's reconciling, what their reception but life from among the dead? And this, as already shown, harmonizes with the constant testimony of the Law, and the Psalms, and the Prophets, which invariably make the blessing of Israel as a creation the condition and under God the means of the blessing of all the earth—a new state of things, not the gospel or the church as now known, both of which are inconsistent with it, but the kingdom in its manifestation of glory

when in the broadest sense all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Here the commentators are, I must say, painfully defective. The effort of some ancients, and of moderns like Grotius and Hammond, to find the accomplishment in the apostolic times is of all schemes the grossest absurdity, and the most directly opposed to the text commented on.

It may be added that, though Dean Alford took the term Israel in its proper sense, he like the rest spoils much of the force of the truth by winding up with the assertion that the matter here treated is their reception into the church of God. Not so. The question of the olive tree stands wholly distinct from the church, though no doubt there are branches now in the olive tree since Pentecost which are also members of Christ's body, the assembly of God. But the olive tree is another idea altogether and embraces the dealings of God on the footing of promise since Abraham through Israel of old, the Gentile profession now, and Israel again in the millennial age, not believers only but responsibility according to the privileges given, with judgment executed on the faithless Jewish branches of the tree to let in the Gentiles, as it will be executed on the disobedient Gentiles when God will give repentance to Israel and remission of sins at the appearing of Christ and His kingdom.

Hence the apostle goes on to affirm what is wholly different from the gospel and church state. “According to the gospel, [they are] enemies on your account; but according to the election, beloved on account of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God [are] irrevocable.” (Ver. 28, 29.) The meaning is that, after the Jews proved their hostility to the gospel instead of being saved by it, which God turns, as we have seen, to His gracious call of the Gentiles meanwhile, election love will still prove faithful in the latter day to the sons for the sake of the fathers. This is not. the principle on which souls are blessed now whether from Gentiles or from Jews. There is no difference. All are alike guilty and lost through their sins; all alike forgiven and saved through faith. But after the actual unbelief of the Jews, sovereign mercy will interpose at the end of the age. For the gifts and the calling of God admit of no regret on His part. He may repent of creation (Gen. 6), never of what grace gave in promise to Abraham and to his seed, never of His call which was first illustrated publicly in the father of the faithful. According to that “election” He will yet break their stony heart and put a new spirit within them.

“For as ye were once disobedient to God but now have become objects of mercy through their disobedience, so have they also now become disobedient to the mercy shown to you, in order that they also may become objects of mercy. For God shut up together all in disobedience in order that he might show mercy to all.” (Verses 30 - 32.)

Wiclif, Tyndale, and Cranmer, with the Vulgate, the Peschito and the Philoxenian Syriac, the Arabic, are here more correct than the Geneva Version, Beza, and the Authorized. Calvin seems nearer to the truth, but has not quite hit the mark. “That they became unbelievers through the mercy shown to the Gentiles” is indeed somewhat harsh; nor is there any need of his explanation for clearing up a difficulty created by his own mistake. The Jews rebelled against the mercy shown to the Gentiles as we learn from the Acts, 1 Thess. 2, &c, and as experience shows in fact to this day.

There appears to my mind not only an absence of any just sense in the modern view but positive error at issue with the chapter, the context, and scripture in general. With the chapter it clashes, because the previous argument treats the restoration of the Jews as life from the dead to the

world, not the fullness of the Gentiles the means of their restoration; with the context, because the express point is to crush all conceit from both Jew and Gentile, and especially from the Gentile as now enjoying light whilst the Jew knows a dark and cold eclipse; with scripture at large, because nowhere is the mercy shown to the Gentiles hinted at as the (or a) means of Israel's recovery. No doctrine can be conceived more foreign to the Bible than that it is by the instrumentality of believing Gentiles that Israel as a nation shall at length look to Christ and so obtain mercy. As the Gentiles were warned that they must be cut off if they continued not in God's goodness (and none but the most unspiritual, not to say hardened, can affirm that they have so continued), the sentence is excision, not the honor of bringing Israel into the faith. No doubt the believing Gentiles will be translated to higher blessedness, as the believing Jews were when the faithless Jews were cut off. Thus the prime object is to extinguish all self-confidence and boasting. As mercy alone accounted for bringing in the Gentiles on Israel's rebellion against God, so the Jews when grafted into their own olive tree will feel that nothing but mercy could have done it or explain it, somewhat in unison of spirit with the apostle of the circumcision when at the council of Jerusalem he uttered the memorable words, so worthy of the occasion, “We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they” (the Gentiles), not they, even as we (the Jews).

Thus they were all sinners; and the dealings of God in holiness and love and truth only brought out the stubborn insubjection of both Jew and Gentile, on the one hand, and the incomparable mercy of God, on the other: man's claims, righteousness, privileges, all ending in unbelief and rebellion, but God never more truly shining as God than in His mercy enduring forever.

Can one wonder that the large and fervent heart of the apostle, animated and filled yet guarded by the inspiring Spirit, breaks forth in an outburst of praise as he looks back on the grace and ways of God in Christ? “O depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge: how unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways? For who hath known Jehovah's mind? or who became his counselor? or who first gave to him and it shall be repaid to him? Because of him and through him and to him [are] all things: to him the glory unto the ages. Amen.” (Ver. 33 - 36.) He is the source, means, and end of all He has counseled, accomplished, or purposes still to effect for His own glory.

The appropriateness of the doxology to the epistle is not only remarkable in itself but exactly in place where it stands. Indeed it is not alone; for, as we have a very brief one in the first chapter, we have another very notable in the last. Here it is the admiration of his soul as he looks back on the triumphs of divine mercy—the last thing of which man would think in discussing the dispensations of God. Yet to the spiritual mind subject to the written word and confiding in the known characters of God as He has revealed Himself in Christ, such is the bright and blessed and adoring conclusion. The depth of His wealth, wisdom and knowledge is to be seen, felt, proved, but unfathomable; His decisions beyond scrutiny, His ways not to be traced out, yet all open to our learning of Him with ever swelling praise. For who knew Jehovah's mind? or who became His counselor? Yet has not the apostle touched on other and heavenly purposes for the glory of Christ in the church, of which he speaks to the Ephesian saints in due season. Here he had only been given to develop the righteousness of God in the face of man's unrighteousness, known from the beginning and revealed all along, and the methods by which God humbles the pride of each and gives the fullest scope to His mercy, causing evil itself to set forth good with the utmost luster. Who then has given to God and made Him debtor to repay? For of Him and through Him and to Him are

all things: to Him be the glory forever. The gospel is His, the righteousness His, the grace His, and so is the glory. To Him then with the apostle our hearts join in ascribing the display of perfect excellency without end.

Notes on Romans 12:1-8

The apostle had set forth the doctrine of grace in atonement and salvation; he had shown in the resurrection of Christ the living link that binds together the justification of the believer with life, and hence with holiness of walk and heart—a link too often forgotten in the teaching, if not in the practice, of the children of God. He had reconciled the indiscriminate grace of God in the gospel with the ways of God and the special promises to Israel, and shown by the past, present, and future course of dispensations on earth that, as man's part has been unfaithfulness through unbelief, and all its train of miserable consequences, so God's has been and will be the triumph of His goodness for the Gentiles now, for the Jew shortly, all concluded in unbelief that He might have mercy on all. Now he begins formally to exhort the saints by the compassions of God thus displayed in redemption, and even in His dispensations.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the compassions of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service.” (Ver. 1.) It is the detailed application of the principle laid down in chapter 6, where we first hear of the Christian reckoning himself dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus, under grace, not under law. Prom this there is no receding to law now, as the tone of the exhortation itself testifies. But the compassions of God are morally to form the believer within and without. Just as in chapter 10 the apostle had taught the value of confession with the mouth as well as of believing with the heart, so here the brethren are entreated to yield their bodies as a sacrifice to God. Many then as now would have been disposed to have professed all inward devotedness with license for the outward man. The possibility of this self-deception is here precluded, the more strikingly as the exhortation is made not to Jews with their system of external observances, but to Christians who know that without faith it is impossible to please God. Thus is secured the service of the man as a whole; just as the apostle says elsewhere in his desires for the Thessalonian saints, “The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly, and your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Again, the word “to present,” or yield, is so put as to convey the idea of a completed act summed up in its conclusion. It is not mere effort as under law, but a thing done once for all, though of course stamped on the entire Christian walk up to the last according to that beginning. The Spirit of God contemplates nothing less for every soul called of God out of this world, reconciled by the death of His Son and to be saved by His life. How could He lower the standard of Christ?

But the mention of “bodies” in God's wisdom associates itself with the thought of a sacrifice so familiar then to every mind even among the Gentiles. Only in Christianity it is an incomparably more intimate and personal question than in Judaism. Animals devoted to death and sacrifice do not suffice or suit, but our own “bodies,” and this of course as a living sacrifice contrasted with those of dead beasts, which of themselves left self unjudged and untouched. With the Christian's self-sacrifice God is well pleased. It only is holy now, what was once legally so being in truth proved profane, now that the true light shines; it is acceptable to Him as the expression of giving God His true place, and of man, the believer, taking his. Without this the show of doing good and

communicating is vain; with it such sacrifices are indeed well pleasing to God. Further, this is “our intelligent service.” Worldly elements are condemned, carnal ordinances passed away, formal worship at an end. God will only be served now intelligently. It is no question of reason judging for itself without the word, but of the Spirit guiding the mind by divine revelation understood growingly.

“And be not conformed to this age but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that ye may prove what [is] the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Ver. 2.)

Here it is not the man personally devoted to God but a negative guard from external influence, and the direct contrary positively carried on by the renewing of the mind, the end being the thorough discernment of God's will. Thus, in order to prove practically that good and acceptable and perfect will, there is need on the one hand of being continually on the watch against the course of this age, the spirits and habits of men where opinion rules, and on the other hand of being transformed; yet this not after a mere outward sort but by the renewing of the mind. It is by practical exercise that one grows in learning His will, and proves that it and it only is good and well pleasing and perfect. Here again we see contrast with the Gentiles on the one hand who knew not God and therefore not His will, on the other with the Jewish people subjected to known definite requirements independent of spirituality. The whole course of men outside Christianity, even if it profess to recognize God in outward acts, is wholly ignorant of relationship with Him, and, having no faith, regards it as the presumptuous assumption of believers. Now the Spirit, in calling us to a path of separation from the ways of men, lays down no lines of outward difference but what follows the mind renewed, and this in steps of enlarging obedience. So Jesus learned obedience (for as the eternal Son He had only known to command)—learned it in a path of suffering unequaled. “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;” and God's will He did and suffered at all cost, as we know now to everlasting In the age to come there will be no such discordance enjoined nor right nor even possible; for the world will be under the direct and displayed government of God in Christ the Son of David and the Son of man, the power of evil being publicly put down and expelled. But now it is otherwise in this present evil age, when (Chap. 12: 1 - 8.) divine life has to swim against the stream. Proportionate is the blessing of fidelity to the name of the Lord when His throne is unknown save to faith and disregarded by men as such. It is therefore a way of obedience hard to nature but pleasant to the new man directed of the Spirit that glorifies Christ, who is the way, and the only way, through the wilderness of the earth to the Father. “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” Self-will is detected and detested; the good and acceptable and perfect will of God is more and more discerned. This cannot be where the spirit of this age governs.

“For by the grace given me I tell every one that is among you, not to have high thoughts above what he ought to think, but to think so as to have sober thoughts, as God hath dealt to each a measure of faith. For just as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same function, so we, the many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of each other. And having gifts differing according to the grace given us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith; or service, [let us occupy ourselves] in service; or he that teacheth, in teaching; or he that exhorteth, in exhortation; he that bestoweth, in simplicity; he that taketh the lead, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.” (Ver. 3 - 8.)

From the more general principles of Christ's devotedness and obedience we descend to the reason the apostle gives. High-mindedness is incompatible with either; it is the very reverse both

of the love which animated Him in giving Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savor, and of the obedience which He closed in the death of the cross. High-mindedness hinders both the doing our own duty and others in theirs. So Paul speaks to every one among the saints at Rome. This was no pretentiousness on his part but the lowly discharge of the task assigned him by the Lord Jesus, and not the less decided because it was in lowly obedience. And as each did his own proper work according to the measure of faith dealt out by God, each would act with humility but with firmness, knowing it was God's will and his own service. Unbelief seeks great things and overlooks the one thing of moment—our own duty assigned of God without going beyond its measure or outside its nature. Let us remember however that there is a false modesty that fails to act, as well as the want of modesty that goes too far.

For it is in this after the pattern of the body with its many members, the doctrine so fully unfolded in 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians. Here the apostle but touches on it in a practical point of view, to illustrate the importance of various members in one body mutually helpful; many as they may be, one body in Christ and severally members one of another.

Besides let us never forget that, whatever the differences, all are gifts; and the grace which has given has made one to differ from another but also each necessary to the others, as all in the one body. Whatever we have from the Lord, let us use all in subjection to Him, and for the object He had in view: if prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith. Such an exhortation is the more weighty, because we see that even the highest of the gifts of edification comes within the scope of such a caution. He that prophesied had to beware of overstepping what God had given. The reality of gift did and does not supersede the need of regulation by the word. None put the hearer's soul more directly in contact with God than prophesying; yet must it be conformable to the faith. And if a man's gift lay in ministering to the saints, not in the way of speaking but serving them otherwise in love, his wisdom would be to occupy himself in this, as also the teacher and the exhorter in their own work, not in a service for which they had no divinely given fitness. It is plain that each of these gifts is distinct, though of course God might give more than one sometimes to the same man. But commonly each would have his proper gift.

Another remark it will be well to make, that God guards us here from so sharp a distinction as would favor the ruinous distinction, into which the early church too soon slipped, of clergy and laity. Even tie more moderate of those who would apologize for it seek to extract the transition from public to private gifts out of the omission of ε■τε ("whether" or "or"). But this is wholly fanciful; for the Holy Spirit has taken care to render such a scheme untenable by placing the most public gift possible, the ruler or leader (■ προ■στ■μενος) between "him that bestoweth" and "him that showeth mercy," all three being found after the omission supposed to mark the private gifts. The desire to avoid the force of this has led men into arbitrary meanings of ■ πρ. as merely presiding over one's own household, which really demands that sphere to be defined as in 1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12; or a patron of strangers as in Rom. 16:2, which however is a different word. But 1 Thess. 5:12 (not to speak of 1 Tim. 5:17) clearly shows the true meaning where it occurs absolutely.

Again, we may notice that, as he that bestows has to take heed that he yield to no evasive pretexts, but to cultivate liberality (which with money is "simplicity"), so the leader or ruler is exhorted to diligence, and he that shows mercy to show it with cheerfulness, not as if he grudged

the consolation. Some take ■ μεταδιδο■ς as the official distributor of the public charities of the assembly, rather than as dispensing from his own property; but διαδιδο■ς in that case would probably have been the word chosen.

Notes on Romans 12:9-21

The apostle now goes out into broader ground and enjoins on the saints every sort of Christian duty, not in outward conduct only, but perhaps even more as to the tone, temper, and spirit in which the Lord would have all done by them. “Showing mercy” or compassion naturally serves as a link of transition, and prepares the way for the more general exhortation to love, lowliness, and patient grace.

“Let love be unfeigned.” (Ver. 9.) Love is of God. Therefore it is of the deepest moment that it should ever he genuine and incorrupt: for the higher its source, nature, and character, the more dangerous where that which is spurious usurps its place and name, misleading others and oneself under a fair but false pretension. It is not the same as the brotherly kindness of verse 10; and the reality of the distinction reappears in 2 Peter 1:7. On the other hand it is far from being that kindness to all men, the perfection of which we know in the Savior God as witnessed in Christ the Lord. Love is the activity of the divine nature in goodness, and hence is inseparable from that nature as reproduced in the children of God. Nevertheless this does not absolve them from the need of self-judgment that it be sincere and undefiled, seeking others' good according to God's will unselfishly. The letting in of hopes, fears, or objects of our own falsifies it.

Hence in the same verse the connected injunction, “abhorring evil; cleaving to good.” It is a word the more needful in our own day especially, because we live in Laodicean times of sickly sentiment where latitudinarian charity abounds, the essence of which is a spirit of indifferentism toward evil, in particular evil against Christ. And the danger as well as the sin is the more extreme, because it is and has long been that “last hour” of which John warns so solemnly, the hour not of Christianity prevailing but of many antichrists, though not yet of the Antichrist. But where love is real, there is and must be the detestation of evil, no less decidedly than the close attachment to good. If the latter attracts, the former offends and is often ill received in the world as it is. But the Christian must cherish the instincts of the new nature and he subject to God's word who has called him out to be a witness of Christ here below where evil meets him at every step and turn. The amiability which would shirk difficulties and apologize for sin is thus proved to lack the salt of the covenant of God, and will soon be seen to be honey and to end in leaven, instead of being the flour and oil which God looks for in such offerings.

“In brotherly kindness affectionately kind one toward another; in honor anticipating each other; in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; in hope rejoicing; in tribulation enduring; in prayer persevering; distributing to the necessities of the saints, studious of hospitality.” (Ver. 10-13.) Here we begin with the call to tender interest among brethren mutually; and so also not exactly to prefer or esteem others better than ourselves, as in Phil. 2:3, important as such lowliness of mind is, the mind that was in Christ Jesus. It is here a question of not merely repaying the courtesy of others, but of taking the lead in treating them with honor and thus by example leading them on in these comely ways. Then, instead of allowing slothfulness, the apostle insists on zealous diligence. Lest this however should be only outside work, he immediately adds “in spirit

fervent," and these with a blessed motive to both, "serving the Lord." It is well known that Griesbach, following a few MSS, versions, and fathers, joined with Erasmus in reading καιρ■ for Κυρ■■, contrary to the mass of authorities and almost all other editors. It was, we may boldly say, infirmity in judgment; especially as the internal evidence is at least no less adverse than the external. Serving the time (rather "season" or "opportunity") seems at least somewhat unworthy, is little suited to the context in itself," and easily susceptible of the worst abuse. It is no fair instance of a more difficult and therefore preferable reading. The two words may have been confounded by an ignorant scribe, who took the abbreviated form of κω as meaning καιρ■ instead of Κυρ■■. Possibly it may have been willfully altered, but we should be slow to suspect this when we can otherwise account for a change.

Further, the mention of the Lord and of His service appears to me the link in the mind of the Spirit with the bright future ("in hope rejoicing"), as this again very simply connects itself with present suffering ("in tribulation enduring"), and with the grand support of the soul, come what may meanwhile, "in prayer persevering." This portion concludes with the remembrance of the poor saints, which stands in a similar relation here, as the third clause to the two former in the preceding verse, in which (we know from his own touching account in Gal. 2) the apostle was ever diligent, as well as the pursuit of hospitality, which the conventionalities of modern life should not enfeeble if we would be wise in the Lord.

In verse 14 practical grace to enemies in power (or at least having the means of harassing the saints) is urged with emphasis. "Bless those that persecute you; bless and curse not." So did Jesus.

Sympathy in joy and sorrow next finds its place (ver. 15): "Rejoice with [any] rejoicing, and weep with [any] weeping; having the same mind one towards another, not minding high things, but going along with the lowly." (Ver. 15, 16.) Spite of the antithesis tempting one to take the last word in the same gender as in the clause before, which is grammatically easy, I think that the differing form is both more in keeping with the fullness of the apostle's style and better in this passage, though "lowly things" may yield a sense not to be despised. What a contrast with the self-exalting and disdainful spirit of the world! How blessed to see it exemplified in the human path of the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, and enjoined by a servant of His whose qualities of mind and heart have found few if any equals, among men! Nowhere perhaps, where they let out their thoughts and feelings, can one find the very opposite so painfully as among the Rabbis. Their scorn for the unlettered poor is unbounded. But indeed it is too natural to man as such. Here we have exhortations to Christians. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself so to walk even as He walked.

Following up this the apostle says, "Be not wise in your own eyes; recompensing to none evil for evil; providing things good before all men: if possible, as far as concerneth you, being at peace with all men: not avenging yourselves, beloved, but give place to wrath, for it is written, To me [belongeth] vengeance: I will recompense, saith [the] Lord. If therefore thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for, doing this, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Ver. 16 - 21.)

Self-confidence is another and kindred danger, which in such a world as this would soon ensnare the saint in retaliation. In every way contrariwise we are called to be witnesses, not of the first

man, nor of the law, but of Christ, and hence to be above suspicion before all men in providing things good or comely (for such is the true sense here, rather than benevolent); and this too] in a spirit of peace with all, as far as depends on us. It is a solemn thought that wrath and vengeance belong to God. It becomes us, instead of avenging ourselves, to bend before the blast, looking to God; nay, to render service to an enemy in need and distress. This will bring him to a point with God or with you: if he melt, so much the better for all; if he harden himself, so much the worse for him. For the Christian it is exercise in the divine nature, that is in faith and patience and love. For the Christian rule is Christ, not to be overcome by evil, but to overcome it with good. So God, in our own case as with all who love Him, overcame our evil with His good in Christ our Lord; and now also He gives us to be imitators of Him in grace, which wins the victory in His sight and to our own consciousness, even when we may seem most downtrodden before the world. For this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith—of course faith working through love.

Notes on Romans 13

The apostle next enters on the relation to worldly authority of the saints, after treating of their attitude toward all men as the witnesses of the good they had learned in Christ, where God overcame all evil with His good, and privileges us as partakers of it both to be active in it and to suffer for it.

“Let every soul be subject to authorities in power. For there is no authority save from God, and those that exist are ordered by God: so that he that setteth himself against the authority resisteth the ordinance of God, and those that resist shall receive judgment for themselves. For rulers are not a fear for the good work but for the evil. Dost thou wish then not to be afraid of the authority? Do good, and thou shalt have praise from it; for it is God's servant to thee for good; but if thou do evil, fear; for not in vain doth it wear the sword; for it is God's servant, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore [it is] needful to be subject not only on account of wrath but also on account of conscience. For on this account ye pay tribute also; for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing.” (Ver. 1-6.)

The holy wisdom of the exhortation is as worthy of God, as the suitability of all that is taught is apparent for those who, though not of the world, yet have relative duties in it, as they wait for the Lord and are called to do the will of God meanwhile. By a gradual transition we are brought from not avenging ourselves, and overcoming evil with good, as becomes the children of God, to our relation to the authorities in the world whose office it is to avenge evil, punishing evil-doers, and praising those that do well. It was pre-eminently in place from the apostle writing to the saints in the great metropolis of the Gentile world, imperial Rome. No otherwise had the apostle of the circumcision exhorted the Christian Jews scattered over the East. The falsehood, the folly, the impurity, the abominations of the Gentiles would naturally expose those who mingled their idolatries with the civil power to find the latter jeoparded when souls discerned and rejected the former in the light of Christ. Hence the exceeding moment of pressing the place which worldly authority should have in the conscience of the saints from among either Jews or Gentiles as of God, spite of the heathenism of those who were in possession of it. “Let every soul” is more comprehensive (and I cannot doubt so intended of the Spirit) than every saint. No position exempts. The household too ought to feel it, children or other dependent relations and servants, as well as believers. It is laid down purposely in the broadest terms: compare chapter ii. 9. If the verb be regarded as in the middle voice, it would express the willingness of the subjection so much the more strongly: just as the other side, “he that sets himself against” is seen in verse 3.

Again, “authorities in power” (■ξουσ■αις ■περεχο■σαις), is an expression that embraces every form of governing power, monarchical, aristocratic, or. republican. All cavil on this score is therefore foreclosed. The Spirit insists not merely on the divine right of kings but that “there is no authority except from God.” Nor is there an excuse on this plea for change; yet if a revolution should overthrow one form and set up another, the Christian's duty is plain: “those that exist are ordained by God.” His interests are elsewhere, are heavenly, are in Christ; his responsibility is to

acknowledge what is in power as a fact, trusting God as to the consequences and in no case behaving as a partisan. Never is he warranted in setting himself up against the authority as such, for this were to resist the ordinances of God, and those that resist shall receive judgment for themselves. For it is by no means “damnation,” but “sentence,” or the charge for which he is condemned. Scripture is ever sober, as the apostle said he was, for our sakes: if he were ecstatic, it was for God, as might well be. Other scriptures show that where the authority demands that which is offensive to Him, as for instance that an apostle should speak no more of Jesus or that a Christian should sacrifice to an idol or an Emperor, we must obey God rather than man, but suffering, not resisting, if we cannot quietly leave the scene of persecution. For it is evident that it is impossible to plead God's authority for obeying a command which dishonors and denies God. Every relation has its limits in conduct which virtually nullifies it; as this is a requirement which undermines its own authority by antagonism to Him who set it up. But Calvin seems to speak unwarrantably when he goes so far as to say that tyrannies are not an ordained government; and those who listened to him or shared his thoughts have proved that they did not count it beneath Christians to take an active part in overthrowing what they considered tyrannical.

It is a wholly inadequate apprehension to regard the magistrate on the side of man only. Not that he may not be chosen in ever so various a form by man, but that he is God's servant, as here repeatedly said. He is His servant for good, not for evil. But if you practice evil, what then? Fear; for not in vain does he wear the sword; for he is God's servant, an avenger for wrath to him that does evil. To see God in the magistrate brings in conscience. Wherefore one must needs be subject not only on account of wrath (this would be merely a question of consequences from the man), but also on account of conscience. “For on this account also ye pay tribute.” This is connected with the foregoing exhortation as to magistrates, and prepares the way for more general relationships in the world. “For they are God's ministers [or officers], attending diligently unto this very thing.” Thus they are designated God's διακονο■ and also His λειτουργο■, the one as doing the work prescribed to them in keeping the order of the world in obedience to the laws, the other as public functionaries or officially appointed to it. The payment of φ■ρος was for the administration of government, a tribute or tax on persons or property or both, as τ■λος was on merchandize and therefore fairly translated “custom.” Hence the apostle (ver. 7.) exhorts,” Render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.” The greater and the lesser are thus taken in, each in its just measure; which the Christian can heartily pay, inasmuch as he is entitled to acknowledge God in all without seeking anything for himself. For we are here occupied with what is of God in the repression of evil and hence external to the proper sphere of Christian life, save as honoring God in every respect.

But next we enlarge yet more. “Owe no one anything except to love one another; for he that loveth the other [i.e. his neighbor] hath fulfilled law. For Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if [there be] any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to the neighbor: love therefore [is] law's fulfillment.” (Ver. 8 - 10.) Thus the debt of love is the only one which is legitimate and in honor, good among men and acceptable to the Lord; the debt we should ever be paying, but never can pay off. Grace alone gives the power, but law is fulfilled thereby and indeed only thus. Law had continually claimed but never found it. Those under the law were under obligation but were wholly unable to make it good. Grace revealing Christ not only shows us its

perfection and fullness but forms the heart accordingly. The commandments man wards are comprehended in loving one's neighbor; so are those God ward in loving God. Thus what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; in order that the righteous demand of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. (Rom. 8:3, 4.)

There is another powerful motive for the believer, the nearness of that day when all that is not of Christ must be detected and pass away. “And this, knowing the meet time, that already [it is] time for you to be aroused out of sleep; for now [is] our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, and the day is drawn nigh. Let us cast away therefore the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. As in daylight let us walk becomingly, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in chambering and lasciviousness, not in strife and envy; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and take no forethought for the flesh for lusts.” (Ver. 11 - 14.) For the earth the Sun of righteousness is not yet risen; for it the believer, though he has Christ the true light for himself, knows that it is night still. Yet daylight has dawned and the morning star arisen in his heart. Hence he sleeps not as do others; or, if he should, judges it as sin, for he is in the secret of the Lord and is charged with the gravest mission of love and holiness in the witnessing of His name as he passes through the world. Man slumbers heedless of danger, spite of solemn and reiterated warning. His evil conscience forbids his crediting the grace which is in God; his self-complacency blinds him to the moral beauty of the dependent and obedient Man, as well as to his own need of such a Savior and such a salvation as God urges on him; and so he sleeps on till he perishes, waking up too late to the truth he has rejected and the grace he had slighted irreparably then. The believer with his soul saved already looks for a salvation worthy of Christ and of His redemption at His coming; and, though the interval may seem long sometimes, he knows that it is ever growing nearer. The works of darkness are therefore wholly incongruous and must be cast away. In such alas! the Gentiles used to walk when they lived in them; even as the Jews under the law occupied themselves with dead works. But now, dead to them, they would put on the armor of light; and though the day be not yet, they as children of it would walk comelily as in its light. What have such to do with revels and drinking bouts, with ways of lewdness and lasciviousness, with strife and envy? Are they not the blessed saints of God in full view of the speedy coming and day of the Lord? How suitable the call to put on the Lord Jesus Christ! As we have Him inwardly our life, may we wear Him outwardly, cherishing Him as our all, and make no provision for the flesh with a view to lusts. This were to revive the old man already crucified, to have believed and to hope in vain.

Notes on Romans 14:1-12

The apostle now proceeds to treat of a question exceedingly delicate and critical, especially in days and places where the saints consisted of any considerable mixture of converts, brought out of systems so oppressed as those of Jews and Gentiles. What to the strong in faith is an indifferent matter may trouble the conscience of those who are weak, as the apostle here distinguishes them. The weak were such Christians as were still shackled in conscience by their old Jewish observances, as to days, meats, &c, by distinctions not moral hut ceremonial; the strong were those who saw in their death with Christ the end to all such bondage and enjoyed liberty in the Spirit. Carefully must we guard against the offensive misinterpretation that the weak mean those who tampered with evil. Contrariwise so fearful were they of sin that they were needlessly burdened and thus cherished a conscience not tender only, which is of the utmost moment for all, but scrupulous. But they were in no way lax, which is an evil of the greatest magnitude and only exaggerated, not diminished, by increase of knowledge. The weak were really ignorant of the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free, and hence apt to burden themselves continually where they might have found rest for their souls. They knew not that His yoke is easy and His burden light.

The practice to which brethren are called in such matters is mutual forbearance (chaps, 14, 15: 7), all agreeing in doing what they do to the Lord, spite of difference in judgment of what should be done. Room is thus left for growth in knowledge as the word of God opens to our faith, while conscience meanwhile is respected. “Now him that is weak in faith receive not to decision of reasonings. One believeth that he may eat all things, while he that is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth; but he shall stand, for God is able to make him stand. One esteemeth day above day, while another esteemeth every day. Let each be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day to [the] Lord regardeth [it], [and he that regardeth not the day to the Lord regardeth [it] not.] And he that eateth to [the] Lord eateth, for he thanketh God; and he that eateth not to [the] Lord eateth not and thanketh God. For none of us liveth to himself, and none to himself dieth; for both if we live, to the Lord we live, and if we die, to the Lord we die. Therefore both whether we live and whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this [end] Christ died and lived, that he should rule over both dead and living. And why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou too despise thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God. For it is written, [As] I live, saith [the] Lord, to me shall bend every knee, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each of us shall give account about himself to God.” (Ver. 1 - 12.) It is obvious that the Gentiles, as having been outside the law, would be least affected by such scruples. But the apostle puts the difference on a ground far deeper and holier than any such accidental and circumstantial distinction after the flesh. A believer whether a Jew or a Greek might freely realize his deliverance from questions of meats or days. Not a few Gentiles in those days knew the law and could not but feel the immeasurable superiority of its institutions as compared with the

abominations of the heathen. So we might have difficulty in understanding that those regulations given by the true God through Moses to His people could vanish away, null and void for the Christian. Hence therefore we hear of him that is weak in the faith, as the next chapter opens with the conduct which becomes us who are strong in bearing the infirmities of the weak, the apostle identifying himself of course with such as see earthly restrictions at an end. But while grace alone produces strength in the faith, there is far more behind in the grace which produces it, and what savors more characteristically of Christ. The knowledge of faith is good; the love that is of God, of which Christ was the perfect expression, is still better; and he who has that knowledge is above all called to walk in this love, as indeed every one who is born of God must be. The question of eating and days may concern the least things, but it can only be rightly solved by the deepest truth and the richest grace—both come through Jesus Christ, and the portion really of the Christian. But how little Christians appreciated Christianity then, how much less now!

Undoubtedly then he who believed that he may eat all things is far more right in thought than he who makes a point of eating herbs. Still there was no ground in such prejudices or in their absence for making little of the weak and for judging the strong; for there was a double danger of fault—to him who knew his liberty, of despising the scrupulous; to him who was scrupulous, of judging censoriously the free. But such weakness is no more folly than such strength is laxity; even as divine love is always holy while always free. God has received the believer; and this is said emphatically of him who was judged licentious by the weak; as the brethren on the other hand are called to accept, but not to the determination of controversial questions, him that is weak in the faith. How much ignorance the Lord bears with in the most intelligent! “Who art thou that judgest another's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.” He beautifully adds (in answer doubtless to many a bitter anticipation of what would be the end of their liberty) “and he shall be made to stand; for the Lord is able to make him stand.” For the strong have no strength of their own, but grace will hold them up. Would we wish it otherwise, if it could be? Do we not delight that all is of Him?

In speaking next of a day regarded above a day the apostle enlarges. Giving up idols the Gentiles saw nothing in one day more than another. The Jew was naturally disposed to cling to old religious associations. But in this the Lord's day is in no way included; for it rests on the highest sanction of the risen Lord (John 20:19, 20), confirmed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven (Acts 20:7; Cor. xvi. 2; Rev. 1:10), and is no open matter as to which each is to be fully assured in his own mind. For a Christian not to regard the Lord's day would be a direct dishonor put on His own special meeting with His disciples on that day, an open slight to that witness of grace and of the new creation as the sabbath was of the old creation and of law. Only we must bear in mind that, while some lower the ground on which the Lord's day is observed by reducing it to the mere practice or authority of the church, others unwittingly foist into Christianity what properly belongs to man and Israel. But the Christian is not a mere son of Adam or Israel. He is called out from both into an incomparably higher relationship. He is dead and risen with Christ; and to this change the Lord's day is not the least striking testimony. On it the Lord proclaimed His brethren set in the same place with His God and Father as Himself risen from the dead. To confound the Lord's day with the sabbath is to confound the gospel with the law, the Christian with the Jew, Christ with Adam. The very absence of a formal enactment in its case is admirably consistent with its nature as contrasted with that day which, sanctified from the beginning, entered so prominently into God's

dealings with Israel as to be a sign between Him and them.

Were the Lord in view then, it would be seen that the eater eats to Him, for he gives God thanks, and the abstainer abstains to Him and gives God thanks. The truth is that we belong to Him, not to ourselves, either in life or in death. Living or dying, it is to Him: whether one or the other therefore, we are His and this grounded on His dying and living (i.e. in resurrection), the grand doctrine of this epistle and the basis of Christianity. Thus is He Lord of all, dead and living. Hence one must be aware of meddling with His rights. “Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou too despise thy brother?” We are forgetting our place and His, in thus turning either to the right or to the left.

“For we shall stand before the judgment-seat of God.” To this end is cited Isa. 14:24: every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God. “So then each of us concerning himself shall give account to God.” How incongruous for one to judge, for another to despise? We shall each give an account, and this about ourselves and none else. To bring in Christ truly is the due settlement of every question. To Him all bow that believe, as all unbelievers must bow in that day when He shall judge the quick and dead. The believer comes not into judgment, but shall be manifested there and give account. When those who believe not give account, it is judgment for them, and hence necessarily condemnation; for as they confess no Savior, so they can no longer hide their sins. What David deprecated by the Spirit (Psa. 143:2), we are assured by our Lord Jesus will not be our lot. (John 5:24.) Nor does the believer need judgment to vindicate Jesus; the unbeliever does because he refuses His grace. Thus admirably perfect are the ways of God with both, in everyone and in everything glorifying Himself by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Notes on Romans 14:13-23

From the account we shall render to God each concerning himself, the apostle draws the conclusion. “Let us not then judge one another anymore, but judge this rather, not to put a stumbling-block or an occasion of fall before one's brother” (ver. 13): a principle as true for the strong as for the weak; for though the weak were the more prone to judge, the strong to despise, both are called to make this their determination, if they would not be an occasion of stumbling or offense, whether in act or thought.

Not but that the apostle had a judgment as to these questions. He was clear as to the Lord's mind, but he would not insist upon this at first, being more careful that the affections should be right, than merely to lay down an accurate judgment; and in truth it is thus only that soundness in determining all questions can be arrived at. Wrong feelings falsify the judgment, as on the other hand, if the eye be single, the whole body shall be full of light. When Christ is the object, the path will be unmistakably clear. Hence we need One to guard our hearts, and One only can, and He has called us to liberty, but we need to watch that this liberty be never perverted to license for ourselves any more than to slight others. Love is the bond of perfectness.

Here the apostle says, “I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing [is] unclean of itself; except to him that reckoneth anything to be unclean, to him [it is] unclean.” It is no question now of meats, in which they who walked were not profited. It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace. The Lord Jesus is also the truth, and has put everything in the light of God. But conscience must be heeded, and the strong must be careful not to weaken or wound another's conscience, whatever be his own conviction. “For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer according to love.” But love is the energy of the divine nature in which the Spirit guides, not in self-will. “Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died.” The Holy Spirit speaks according to the tendency of our conduct. Anything that would stumble another tends to destroy. What a misjudgment to insist upon liberty as to meat so as to nullify the value of Christ's death as far as we can! Grace may, and no doubt does, deliver, but our misuse of liberty remains no less guilty in the sight of God. “Let not then your good be evil spoken of, for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” This is a weighty practical truth, and we need, especially if we have knowledge, to guard against pressing anything beyond those who are but ill-instructed. It was not so that Christ walked and that God dealt with our own souls. And now that Christ has revealed God, it is of the deepest consequence that we insist only on what is grace and what makes for edification.

The reader will observe how “the kingdom of God” is used here, not so much dispensationally as morally. Indeed it is so where the phrase occurs in Matthew, who alone also uses the well-known formula “the kingdom of heaven.” Only the latter phrase invariably occurs in a dispensational sense, and means that state of things where the heavens rule now that Jesus is cast out from the earth; first, while He is hid in God; secondly, when He comes again in the clouds of heaven with power and glory. But the kingdom of God might be said to be already there, already come upon

them, when He, by the Spirit of God, cast out demons. The kingdom of heaven, contrariwise, could not be said to have come till He went on high. Thus the kingdom of God might be used where the kingdom of heaven occurs but also as here where it could not be. The apostle insists that the kingdom of God cannot be lowered to that which perishes with the using; it is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, the inward spirit and practical power of the Christian. “For he that in this serves Christ [is] acceptable to God and approved of men.” It is walking in the Spirit, in short, the true guard against fulfilling any lust of the flesh. “Against righteousness and peace and joy there is no law.” “Let us therefore pursue the things of peace and the things of mutual edification.” God Himself is the God of peace, and the Lord is Himself the Lord of peace who gives us peace continually in every way. Knowledge puffs up, love alone builds up. And as He builds (Chap. 14: 13 - 23.)

His church infallibly upon the rock, the confession of His own name, so we, by the godly use of His name, are called to build up one another. We can understand therefore how impressively the apostle again urges, “Do not for the sake of meat undo the work of God.” “All things indeed [are] clean.” This is freely allowed to the strong, but “it is evil to the man that eateth with stumbling.” This is the danger for the weak, and love would lead the strong to consider the weak, assuredly not to help the enemy against them. “[It is] right not to eat meat nor to drink wine [nor anything] in which thy brother stumbleth or is offended or is weak.” (Ver. 21.) There might be various degrees of danger; but the only thing that becomes the saint in this is to seek his brothers good. “Hast thou faith? have [it] to thyself before God: blessed he that judgeth not himself in what he alloweth.” To be strong in faith then is right: only it should be conjoined with the energy of love for those who are weak, guarding against all boast also in that which is received by grace from God. “But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because [it is] not of faith; but whatever [is] not of faith is sin:” a maxim often strained in ancient and modern times to pronounce upon unbelievers and the worthlessness of every act in their lives. But this is clearly not in question here; rather is it a matter between Christians, some of whom saw their liberty, others being still in bondage. It is a great favor to enjoy the liberty of Christ in the smallest matters of every-day life; but he who has entered into this is so much the more bound to consider the believer who is still hampered with doubts as to this or that. To imitate liberty without believing its ground would be to endanger the work of God. Grace respects the conscience of him that doubts, and instead of trifling with scruples would rather seek to lead into the due application of Christ to the case by faith: without it all is vain or worse. “Whatever is not of faith is sin.”

Notes on Romans 15:1-13

The apostle identifies himself with the strong, as indeed might have been gathered from the latter part of chapter 14:14-23. He had no difficulty himself as to any creature of God; nevertheless be maintains the claims of conscience inviolable in the weakest of the saints, and, as we have seen, is anxious to settle, not so much questions, as souls. He puts them all in direct responsibility to Christ as Lord and in view of the judgment-seat. Nevertheless the judgment he had received by grace he does not withhold. Having stated it however, he returns to the exercise of love. It would be wretched and a mere triumph for the enemy to make things in themselves indifferent an occasion of stumbling and of sin. “But we the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves.” (Ver. 1.) To press our own convictions is neither the divine nor the human way to convince: not the human, because will only provokes will, and defers the end we most desire; not the divine, because it is not the way of faith either on our part or on theirs whom we hurry. How much better to walk in faith and leave God room to act! He can and will give efficacy to His own grace and truth. “Let each of us please his neighbor for good unto edification.” (Ver. 2.) Love is better than knowledge: this puffs up; that builds up. “For the Christ also pleased not himself, but even as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me.” (Ver. 3.) Such was the perfection of devoted love in Christ. He identified Himself with God even as He was God. The zeal of His Father's house ate Him up, and as the image of the invisible God He bore the brunt of all that touched God. How wondrous that we should now stand in a similar place! Yet it is most consistent with the grace which has made Him our life and given us the family interests in all respects.

Thus, if we are called to be imitators of God as dear children and walk in love even as Christ loved us, so also to bear the world's enmity against God, as feeling for Him and with Him in the midst of a gainsaying generation. By grace we are one with Christ. In practice too we are to cherish His portion here below; and thus what the Old Testament says of Christ, the New says of the Christian. Hence all scripture is not confounded but interwoven, and every scripture becomes of the deepest interest and profit, to us above all who are brought into such an identity of place with Christ. “For as many things as were written before were written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.” (Ver. 4.) How gracious is God and how rich His provision! We might have been unprepared and disheartened otherwise. We are here shown that the path of love is the path of Christ, and that patience as well as comfort are meant to be the pathway in which we have our hope. Christ was the perfect pattern of all patience. Near but how far off, yet comparatively nearest to Him, come the apostles, notably Paul himself. May we seek this. It is the proof of power, and in the most excellent way. In the world as it is, it is ever called for, in heaven no longer needed. “May the God of endurance and comfort,” says he, “give you to be of the same mind one toward another according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one accord, with one mouth, glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ver. 5, 6.) If Christ Jesus engages the thoughts and mind of each, there will be the same mind, and the God who made Him the channel, as He was the only full expression of endurance and comfort in a

world full of misery, can give us to glorify Him thus. Oneness of mind or feeling is an illusion otherwise. Such unanimity glorifies the creature, the first man, not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We want no other motive, no object but Christ. This alone glorifies God. “Wherefore receive one another, even as the Christ also received you unto [the] glory of God.” Certainly Christ did not receive souls for settling points of difference. He who died and rose for us is above the controversies and the scruples and the self-importance of men. Our best wisdom is to worship and serve Him, who glorified God here below and is now glorified by Him on high. But His glory is a safeguard no less than a motive: for, if it blot out by its brightness the questions which are apt to vex Christians in the inverse ratio of their intrinsic importance, it displays the true significance of what is involved in that which otherwise might seem of no moment. Who without it could have conceived that the truth of the gospel was compromised by Peter's no longer eating with Gentile believers, after certain came to Antioch from James? Who would have written so peremptorily to the elect lady and her children if one sought to visit them who brought not the doctrine of Christ? To receive such would have been to God's dishonor as distinctly as saints are to be received to His glory. Christ, not this question or that, abides the only unerring test. To receive one in His name is to God's glory, as surely as to reject those who plead that they are Christians so as to deny the Christ of God.

“For I say that Christ became a minister of circumcision for [the] truth of God to confirm the promises of the fathers, and that the Gentiles should glorify God for mercy, according as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among [the] Gentiles, and will sing praises to thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, Gentiles, with His people; and again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and land him, all ye peoples. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be the root of Jesse, and one that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles: On him shall [the] Gentiles hope.” (Ver. 8 - 12.) It is plain here that we approach the same twofold line as we have seen from the beginning, where Jesus is viewed as Son of David according to flesh, Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead. He had been made a minister of circumcision for God's truth in order to confirm the promises made to the fathers; but also that the Gentiles should glorify God for mercy. For the one there were definite covenant grounds on which God entered with Israel: not so with the others, who were dealt with in pure grace. To some the latter may seem vague and insecure as compared with the former; but this only because God is feebly known. In fact His grace flows without limit when the people who had the promises rejected Him in whom alone they can be made good; and as there is no limit to the mercy of God, so there is no question of claim, competency, or desert in our own. Thus, while it did not become the Gentile believers to slight the Lord's connection in flesh with Israel, it was of great moment for the Jewish believers to note that the ancient oracles testified of that further outgoing in mercy when the truth was overlooked by, and unbearable to, self-complacent unbelief. The Psalms, the Law, and the Prophets bore concurrent witness to that mercy toward Gentiles which the Jew found it so hard to allow, save on conditions exalting to the first man instead of to the praise of the Second. None goes so far as to teach the one body of Christ in which all distinctions should disappear. This was the mystery kept hid from the ages and ages. But prophecy did declare mercy to Gentiles, and joy with Israel, and Messiah their object of hope as well as Governor. The first citation is general; the second joins them in gladness with Israel: the third asserts the universality of the nations' praise; the fourth speaks distinctly of Messiah's ruling Gentiles and of their hope founded on Him. The apostle makes no comment: the suggestion was plain, the bearing on the actual state at Rome full of

instruction to such as had ears to hear, clenching his previous exhortation. He was led only to add the prayer, “And may the God of peace fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope by [the] power of [the] Holy Spirit.” (Ver. 13.) Thus He who saves the believers already justified to have peace with Himself through our Lord Jesus Christ is entreated as “the God of peace” to fill them with all joy and peace in believing. Settling points of conscience however wisely could effect no such result; whereas, when hearts are thus filled with divinely given happiness, not only do questions disappear without controversy, but the power of the Holy Spirit vouchsafes abounding hope instead of a fleshly contest between the past prestige of the Jew, and the present privileges of Gentile saints. He who goes forward with the revealed future in view will desire that whatever he does now, even in such matters as eating or drinking, may be to God's glory, not occupying those who are to share it with debates, but diffusing the joy and peace which fill himself in believing.

Chapter 203

Notes on Romans 15:14-33

The application we have seen of the Old Testament to the actual call of Gentiles as well as Jews is the transition to a delicate, dignified, and withal affectionate apology, if such it may be called, which the apostle gives next. He explains why he had thus written to the Christians in Rome, and why he had not yet visited them, intimates what was in his heart as regards his work in relation to them, and asks their prayers, adding his own.

“But I am persuaded, my brethren, even I myself, concerning you, that yourselves also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. But I have written more boldly to you [brethren], in part, as putting you in mind because of the grace given to me by God that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, carrying on sacrificially the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by [the] Holy Spirit. I have then my glorying in Christ Jesus in the things that pertain to God.” (Ver. 14 - 17.)

Thus the apostle lets these saints know, though a stranger to them as a company, his own personal assurance, spite of his strange expostulation and earnest caution throughout the epistle, of that which grace had already wrought among them in goodness and knowledge as well as in ability to admonish one another. As the apostle John tells the babes in his first epistle, he had written, not because they did not know the truth, but because they did. Yet he wrote the more boldly in part as reminding them, because grace had given him to be an official servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. They therefore came within his domain; but what tender consideration of others, what confidence in the precious fruits of grace and truth, and what a contrast with that haughty assumption which was most of all to go forth from that very city when at a later day she should sit as a harlot queen and make men drunk with the wine of her fornication!

It will be observed that there are energetic figures employed here, as where the apostle describes himself as λειτουργ■ν X. ■., and yet more, ■ερουργο■ντα το ε■. τ, O., and again, ■να γ. ■ προσφορ■ τ. ■θ. We can easily understand how ritualism catches at such phrases to eke out the semblance of a sacerdotal character for a servant of the Lord Jesus. But it is vain. Far more distinctly and with less ambiguity does the. Spirit assert a priestly place for every Christian as such, as we may see not only in words but in the standing and functions to which all are called expressly; as in Heb. 10:19 - 22, 1 Peter 2:5 - 9, Rev. 1:6. The apostle once more magnifies his office; and if the Roman saints felt his weighty words, they must think of him as a public servant of Christ Jesus, occupied with presenting the Gentiles, that it might be an offering acceptable to God; as Aaron of old offered the Levites before Jehovah for an offering of the sons of Israel, the Christians being sanctified by the Holy Spirit as the Levites were by birth and ceremonial rites. The truth is that in this context the apostle uses λειτουργ■σαι of the Gentile believers serving the Jewish saints in carnal things as he has λειτουργ■α in speaking of the service of the Corinthian and Philippian saints (2 Cor. 9:12, Phil. 2:17, 25, 30.) Hence there is not the smallest ground for confounding ministry with priesthood, or for the notion that scripture admits of a sacerdotal caste between the Christian and God. On the other hand no intelligent believer will weaken either the

perpetuity of Christian ministry, or the extraordinary place of apostles, above all of him who was apostle not from men, nor through man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead. Paul then had his ground of boasting in Christ Jesus in the things regarding God.

“For I will not dare to speak of any of these things which Christ did not effect by me for obedience of Gentiles by word and deed, in [the] power of signs and wonders, in [the] power of [the] Holy Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about Illyricum I have fully set forth the gospel of Christ; and so zealously aiming to preach the gospel, not where Christ hath been named that I might not build upon another's foundation, but according as it is written, To whom it hath not been told concerning him, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand.” (Ver. 18 - 21.)

Here he comes to matters of fact and how far the mighty offering of the Gentiles had been waved before the Lord. In a few pithy words and with the most genuine modesty he sums up his life of labor in the gospel. Truly it was Christ who effected it by Paul in the power of the Spirit. His principle was to preach Christ where His name was unknown, according to the word of Jehovah in Isa. 3:15. The Roman saints then could understand why he had been laboring elsewhere rather than in the great city where from the beginning of the gospel some seeds of the risen corn of the land had taken root and borne fruit. Laboring in the vast field where none had been born he adds, “wherefore also I have been often hindered from coming unto you; but now having no longer place in these regions and having a longing to come unto you for many years whenever I go unto Spain; for I hope when I go through to see you and by you to be sent forward thither if first I be in part filled with you [i.e., your company]. But now I go unto Jerusalem ministering to the saints; for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a certain contribution for the poor of the saints that [are] in Jerusalem. For they have been pleased, and they are their debtors; for if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they ought also in fleshly things to minister to them. Having finished this then and sealed to them this fruit, I will go away by you unto Spain; and I know that on coming unto you I shall come in fullness of Christ's blessing.”

There is a time for all and a place for each, of which the Lord only is absolute judge; but He does not fail to give the sense of it to His servants: according to the measure of their spirituality they will gather it. The object which the Master had in view through the apostle being now achieved, he had no longer place in the East; and the old longing to visit the saints at Rome, often hindered, came up again when he proposed to go onward to Spain. For, it will be observed, Spain, not Rome, was the point sought, doubtless according to the measure of the rule which God apportioned him. His eye was on the regions beyond, but he hoped by the way to see the Roman saints and by them to be sent forward thither “if first I be in part filled with your company,” for he will not allow that any time could exhaust his love for them or enjoyment of converse with them: hence he says, if I be in part “filled with you.” Meanwhile he was engaged in an errand of compassion for the poor of the saints at Jerusalem. The saints of Macedonia and Achaia (at that time the two provinces into which the Romans long before separated Greece politically) had raised means to help their brethren; and this the apostle treats rather as a debt of love than its simple outflow. If the Gentiles were partakers in the spiritual privileges of the Jews, ought they not to remember their poor saints in fleshly things? They were pleased, he repeats, but they are their debtors. Grace pleads powerfully, for it sees with single eye and desires the reciprocation of love which exercises and unites the heart in all that are of God. The least things as well as the greatest afford the materials; and he who does not think a deacon's service beneath an apostle was inspired to write of all for

our edification, assured of a fullness of Christ's blessing for saints at Rome when he came. Whether he attained his desire to visit Spain may be a question, as many have doubted it, though one may not be prepared to affirm it. Much depends on the point so much contested of a second imprisonment in Rome and that which filled up the interval of the apostle's free labors after the first. Certain it is that he came to Rome, when he did, differently from his expectations, a prisoner of Jesus Christ; but was it with less blessing?

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.” (Ver. 30 - 32.)

It is sweet to find the earnest desire of the great apostle for the prayers of the saints, even of those he had never visited. But the knowledge of Christ, whilst it fills the soul with happiness, knits us up with all that are His, and enhances in our eyes the value of their prayers, always effectual on the part of godly men of all ages. Again, the Spirit, as He comes the witness and power of divine love in its perfection, so produces unselfish working of affection Godward as well as toward man. He sought their striving together with him in prayers to God for him: first, that he might be saved from those that believe not in Judea, ever implacable toward him who was once a leader of their unbelief, now a champion of the grace they hated; secondly, that his ministry for Jerusalem might be acceptable to the saints, for alas! the unbelief of believers, especially the Jewish ones, wrought deeply against the apostle, and none the less because he loved them so well and labored for the relief of their need, in which this ministry of his consisted (Gal. 2); and both these, in order that he might come in joy to the saints at Rome by the will of God, “that I may be refreshed with you” (not merely you by me) added and most truly felt. How forcibly he closes this with “May the God of peace [be] with you all. Amen.” (Ver. 33.) To seek the peaceful blessing of others in the happy pathway where the God of peace is with us. May we have it, and all saints!

Notes on Romans 16:1-16

Apostolic salutations follow. Not that the apostle had been to Rome, still less had wrought there, but this the more illustrates the principle. There are such links of labor, and a special tie with the saints to which one is blessed of God. But the divine bond of love is both deeper and larger than that which is ordinarily recognized by Christian men. Love is of God and goes out to all who are of God, yea, beyond -thorn, in the overflowing of divine grace that seeks to save the lost. Besides, the apostle fully realizes his relationship as to the letting out of his heart among Gentiles, and so, as writing to the Christians in this city—the metropolis of the world—the wisdom of God had taken care that, boastful as it was, and far more boastful as it was going to be when the church utterly sank into the world's ways and desires and ignorance of God, they should not truly boast of an apostolic foundation. The message of grace in redemption was carried to Rome, but it would seem rather by indirect means than by the express visit of any among the more known laborers of the Lord, still less by an apostle. That it was founded or governed by Peter is a mere fable, resting on no evidence save of fathers, whose statement as to facts in those early days is egregiously unreliable, and openly at variance with the inspired record. Peter was apostle of the circumcision, whether in Palestine or out of it, and where we do hear of his work outside, it is with the believers from among the Jews, according to the arrangement agreed on (doubtless by the Spirit of God) with the apostle Paul who had the apostolate of the uncircumcision; and this very epistle gives unquestionable evidence that Paul had not as yet visited Rome, though he fully recognizes the saints already there. It is possible those who first carried the gospel thither may have been the Romans sojourning in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10). Certainly there were then dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, pious men, from every nation of those under heaven, and one cannot doubt that their visits or return or even communications to their own lands would help to spread the gospel far and wide.

However this may be, the apostle goes into remarkable detail in his salutations to those at Rome. “Now I commend to you Phoebe our sister, being minister of the assembly that is in Cenchreae, that ye may receive her in [the] Lord, worthily of the saints, and assist her in whatever matter she hath need of you; for she also hath been a helper of many and of myself. (Ver. 1, 2.) We know from elsewhere that elderly females, especially widows, held a position official or quasi-official in which they rendered service to the assembly where they lived. A deaconess such as Phoebe was distinct from these widows; but the one illustrates the other: the value of this would be specially felt of old before Christianity had vindicated the place of women, and this too, particularly in the east as well as in dissolute Greece. Indeed at all times and in all places there are functions to be discharged from time to time more fittingly by a godly female rather than by any men, however pure-minded or elderly. Phoebe was one of these in the assembly of the port of Corinth—Cenchreae. As she had thus been honored of the Lord and recognized by His chief servants in the ordinary circle of her Christian duty, so the apostle now introduces her thus to the saints at Rome that they might receive her in a becoming sort, and this, not merely in spiritual things but in whatever business she might need their help, for she too, as he affectionately adds,

had been helper of many and of himself.

“Salute Prisca and Aquila my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus (which [ο■τιωες }] for my life staked their own neck, to whom [ο■ς] not I only give thanks, hut also all the assemblies of the Gentiles), and the assembly at their house.” (Ver. 3 - 5.) Here the apostle stamps them as his fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, the more carefully because Aquila and he had wrought in the same trade of tent-makers; but the natural occupation disappears, however rightly noticed in its own place. Grace acknowledges this godly converted Jew and his wife, not only as workers in Christ Jesus, but as fellow-workers with the apostle. Nor this alone: they had for his life risked their own neck, and thus earned the thankfulness not of himself only, but of all the assemblies of the Gentiles too. Further, he salutes the assembly also in their house. The trade of tent-maker, if pursued at Rome, would naturally furnish him with a large room, where not a few might assemble. We know that for a considerable time after this Christians were in the habit of so meeting, as is shown for example in the answer of Justin M. to the prefect Rusticus.

“Salute Epaenetus, my beloved, who is [the] first-fruits of Asia for Christ.” Achaia in the received text is wrong. The household of Stephanus were the first-fruits there, as we know from 1 Cor. 16:16. The apostle could not say that Epaenetus devoted himself in an orderly way to the service of the saints like the Achaian household; but at any rate he is not without honor in the Lord nor without the apostle's special affection.

“Salute Maria” (or Mary; the reading differs), “who labored much for you.” (Ver. 6.) It seems a question whether it be not us. Much as the apostle might value this, his loving heart delighted in her abundant labor for them.

“Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and fellow captives which [ο■τινες] are of note among the apostles, who [ο■] also were before me in Christ.” (Ver. 7.) We see how the apostle delights in noticing very distinctive form of service, relation, or fellowship.

“Salute Amplias, my beloved in [the] Lord. Salute Urban, our fellow-workman in Christ; and Stachys, my beloved.” (Ver. 8, 9.) The reader will notice the shades of difference which love marks; for being unselfish it can see clearly, and promotes love and honor among the saints, being above the unworthy pettiness which disparages what we may not have ourselves or like not others to have.

“Salute Apelles, the approved in Christ. Salute those that belong to Aristobulus. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Salute those belonging to Narcissus that are in [the] Lord.” (Ver. 10, 11.) Still do we find love, but it is discriminating no less than unfeigned. He who had stood trial for Christ is mentioned with honor; but the kinsman of Paul is not forgotten. He would conciliate his brethren after the flesh by thus naming one who was a Christian. Nor are certain great names without witnesses for Christ, even if Narcissus be not the famous freedman of Claudius executed some few years before the epistle was written. (Suet. Claud. 28; Tac. Ann. xiii. 1.)

“Salute Trypliena and Tryphosa, that labored in [the] Lord. Salute Persis the beloved, which (ipis) labored much in [the] Lord. Salute Rufus, the elect in [the] Lord, and his mother and mine.” (Ver. 12,13.) Those Christian sisters are here graciously named, but with due meed, those as laboring, this as having labored much in the Lord: the two former as at present in the work; the latter for her past and great service. Christ opens the heart and mouth in the fullest recognition of work for His

name; but He purges our dim eyes also. Nor had He forgotten Simon the passing Cyrenian, who, as he came from, the field, was compelled to carry the cross by the mob of soldiers and others as they led Jesus out to His crucifixion. The Lord repaid with interest the burden of that day. Compare Mark 15:21. Rufus is here before us “the elect in [the] Lord,” and his mother who had been as such to the apostle. Salvation came to that house.

“Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren with them. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them.” (Ver. 14,15.) The names of these Christians follow without specific notice, and among them one to whom many have attributed the allegory of the “Shepherd,” read in the assemblies of the third and fourth centuries. But Origen and Eusebius err in their identification; for Hermas the author wrote about a century after the Epistle to the Romans was written, his brother Pius being then bishop of Rome.

“Salute one another with an holy kiss; all the assemblies of Christ greet you.” (Ver. 16.) The Roman saints were enjoined to manifest mutual love in the Lord; and the apostle sends greeting from all the assemblies of Christ. Who knew their minds and hearts better? He who wrought and wrote by Paul; He would keep the saints in the interchange of true and warm but holy affection in His grace.

Chapter 205

Notes on Romans 16:17-27

It is not all however the joy of love in these concluding messages of the apostle. The largeness of his heart had delighted to take note of whatsoever things were true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; if there was any virtue, if there was any praise, he thought on these things in writing to the saints at Rome, and inscribed a memorial of Christ on each name which came before his spirit. But there were other things very different, men of a temper and state diverse from those and wholly opposed to Christ. It needed, however, the power of the Spirit to detect these in their beginnings, and to descry both the character and the end of all such ways. For I cannot accept the notion of Olshausen, that the persons, against whom the apostle warns the saints in Rome, had not yet made their appearance there. The circumstance that it is only at the end of the epistle that we find a short admonition against divisions couched in general language, so far from being decisive, is no evidence at all that the persons in question did not actually exist at Rome. Such is not the way of the Spirit of God. He may speak prophetically, but He starts from an actual ground-work of hostility to the Lord and of danger to the saints. Naturally the evil would develop itself worse and worse, but in the epistles especially, as in scripture generally, there was moral mischief before His eyes at that time, which awakened His care for the saints, as to which He gives them admonition.

“But I beseech you, brethren, to consider those that make the divisions and the stumbling-blocks contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and turn away from them, for such serve not our Lord Christ but their own belly, and by their plausibility and fair-speaking deceive the hearts of the guileless. For your obedience has reached unto all: as regards you therefore I rejoice, but I wish you to be wise unto the good and simple unto the evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you.” (Ver. 17-20.)

Insubjection of spirit is a dangerous thing among those who teach in public or in private, and quite as much in private only as in public. It is truth severed from Christ and that consciousness of divine authority and of dependence on grace which we all need to keep us right, most of all perhaps those who teach. Few men are in such danger of mental activity in divine things; and this not merely because of self-importance on their own part, but from the desire to satisfy the craving for what is new among the saints themselves. The excitement of novelty is apt to carry away the natural mind, especially among the weak, to the hurt of all, both teachers and taught. Divine revelation, not human thoughts about it, alone secures the glory of Christ and the well-being of souls. As the Holy Spirit wrote it to this end, so He alone can make it good in practice. Mental activity gathers round its own source and forms a school; truth wielded by the Spirit judges the flesh in its most specious form, nourishes the new man, and builds up the body of Christ to God's glory.

The brethren then are besought to beware of such as made these divisions and stumbling-blocks. What they had already learned would serve as a test for these piquant statements which pampered nature under the show of utterly condemning it. Even asceticism is not the denial of self,

still less is it Christ. The seemingly opposite snare of doing good in the world on a grand scale by the troth is yet more evidently apart from the cross and contrary to it. Whatever be the shape of contrariety to the doctrine we have been taught, the duty of saints is to turn away; for they that are such are slaves not to our Lord Christ, but to their own belly: so contemptuously does the Holy Spirit characterize their work, let it be ever so refined in appearance, let it ever so loudly boast of its own superior spirituality. But not he who commendeth himself, but whom the Lord commendeth. Still the hearts of the guileless are in danger of being deceived by the plausibility and fair-speaking of these makers of parties, and are warned accordingly. For the spirit of obedience which those teachers lacked exposed them with the taught if not accompanied with vigilance; I say not suspiciousness, for this is an unmitigated evil and the fruit of a corrupt heart, not the holy action of faith, jealous for the glory of the Lord and the good of saints.

If therefore those at Rome were conspicuous for their obedience, it was only a reason for the apostle not to weaken that which was truly of God, but to guard it by what is equally so. “As regards (or, over) you I rejoice, but I wish you to be wise as to the good and simple as to the evil.” Such is the divine remedy, oven as our Lord Himself put it figuratively in Matt. 10:16; combining the prudence of the serpent with the harmlessness (or simplicity, it is the same word) of the dove. Human wisdom seeks to guard itself by a thorough knowledge of the world and of all evil ways. This is not the wisdom that cometh down from above, but earthly, natural, devilish. The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, yielding, full of mercy and good fruits, uncontentious and unfeigned. It needs not to cultivate acquaintance with evil; it knows good in Christ, it is satisfied and adores. It hears and loves the shepherd's voice; a stranger's voice it knows not, and will not follow. And this, as it suits the simplest soul brought to the knowledge of God, it may be to-day, so it alone becomes the wisest, because it alone glorifies the Lord, as indeed it is the only path of safety for us, being such as we are and in such a world. For in it evil as yet has the upper hand, though the believer has the secret of victory over it, already vanquished in the cross of Christ. Still nothing as yet appears of that victory as a whole, whatever be the testimony of faith, at that time too not without external signs to unbelief; but in the midst of the conflict the heart is comforted and cheered, for the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly. The first revelation of grace may to our impatience seem to linger, but faith can rest upon the word “shortly.” Faithful is He who hath called us, and spoken it, who also will do it. This draws out afresh the prayer of the apostle, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you:” they needed it, and so do we.

The apostle then sends the salutations of others around him.

“There saluteth you Timothy my work-fellow, and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater my kinsmen.” (Ver. 21.) Faith wrought at all times the first link with God for a soul outside of this fallen world, and this is brought into greater simplicity and strength than ever by the gospel. But the gospel produces a fellowship of heart, little if at all known before it. Hence the place and moment of these mutual salutations.

“I Tertius, who wrote the epistle, salute you in [the] Lord.” (Ver. 22.) The epistle to the Romans was not, like that to the Galatians, written by the apostle's own hand, but dictated to an amanuensis, as indeed was the ordinary practice of Paul. (Cf. 2 Thess. 3:17.) Love however gave him who wrote it down a place for Christian greeting.

“There saluteth you Gains, the host of me and the whole church. There saluteth you Erastus the steward of the city, and Quartus the brother. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all. Amen.” In Gains we see how Christ becomes the spring of large and holy hospitality. Erastus is the witness that conscience is not forced or hurried; not only was he the steward of the city, but he is expressly so described in scripture. Such a position in heathen times especially would expose him who held it to difficulties and dangers. But Christian conduct should ever flow from the intelligent sense of our relationship to God and of the claims of His truth and grace. In order to this, room must be left for growth and the exercise of right and godly feeling. Quartus has his place in scripture as “the brother,” traditionally, of course, one of the seventy, as most of the unknown names here are fabled to have been, and afterward bishop of Berytus. These salutations too the apostle seals with the same benediction and, if possible, more fervently, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

Even so he cannot close this most comprehensive epistle without a burst of adoration, which serves the important purpose of linking on this unfolding of the gospel in its simplest elements, its practical results, its connection with the dispensations of God, and the duties consequent upon its reception, with the revelation of the mystery given in some of his later epistles, especially to the Ephesians and Colossians.

“Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to [the] revelation of [the] mystery kept in silence in times of the ages but now manifested and by prophetic scriptures according to commandment of the everlasting God made known for obedience of faith unto all the Gentiles, to God only wise, through Jesus Christ to whom be the glory unto the ages (or, forever), Amen.” (Ver. 25 - 27.)

To the Roman saints the apostle does not develop the mystery. The gospel of the glory of Christ he proclaims to others. (2 Cor. 4) Each aspect has its appropriate application. The heavenly side is not for all the most wholesome. Here they had a more primary and fundamental need, and this he has here supplied by unfolding to their souls the bearing of Christ's death and resurrection on their wants, first as sinners, then as saints. But the heavenly privileges of the Church are only alluded to, not sot out. There is a season for everything, and the highest truth is not always the most important for the exigencies of souls. To the Ephesians he could disclose all the heavenly privileges of the body of Christ. To the Colossians, just because they were in danger of turning aside for philosophy and earthly ordinances of a religious character (for both snares were laid for their feet), he could and did bring out the glory of Christ as the head of the church, and indeed His divine fullness in all respects, but it was meat in due season to feed the Roman saints rather on Christ dead and risen. However, here at the close, he alludes to a mystery as to which silence had been kept in the course of ages, but now manifested and by means of prophetic scriptures made known unto all the Gentiles in order to obedience of faith. Carefully remark that the true word and thought is “prophetic scriptures,” that is, not “the scriptures of the prophets” or Old Testament, but those of the New Testament, for we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Paul's writings, for instance, are prophetic scriptures, and in some of these the mystery of Christ and the church is fully made known, not merely touched on as in Rom. 12:5. This is according to commandment of the everlasting God; for the mystery, if the last in revelation, is first in purpose. Between them lay the times of the ages during which creature responsibility was fully tested and proved wanting; then, grounded upon the cross of Christ, exalted to heaven, is revealed the

mystery, and this is during the days, not of the law given by Moses, but of gospel mission to all the Gentiles for obedience of faith, wherein God proves Himself alone wise, no less than good, through Christ Jesus, to whom be the glory forever. Amen.

The temporal ways of God were bound up with Israel and the earth. The mystery attaches to heaven. and eternity, though the message of it is sent out to all the nations.

Chapter 206

Short Introduction to Romans

The Epistle to the Romans, though not the highest in its character of truth, more comprehensively than any other sets forth God's glad tidings, and this with a method and depth which attest not merely the style of Paul but the wisdom of the Holy Spirit who inspired the great apostle of the Gentiles. His Son (for so the apostle preached Him from the first, Acts 9:20) is the object of faith, come of David's seed according to flesh, marked out Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead. Thus the connection with the Old Testament is maintained, while the way is open for a new order of things through resurrection wherein guilt was removed, sin judged, and life manifested victorious over the enemy in his last stronghold of death, yea, with a title superior to God's eternal judgment.

Then, after presenting himself suitably, as apostle by call to those called at Rome, he testifies his thanks for their faith, and his great desire to see them, whatever the hindrances till then, for their mutual refreshment. He desired fruit there as elsewhere, being debtor to all. He was not ashamed of the gospel (or glad tidings): it is God's power to salvation to every believer, because divine righteousness is revealed in it by faith to faith, as the prophet declared in a dark day for Israel. Thus, if the Son is the object of faith, the believer has part in God's righteousness. Man had no righteousness for God, who reveals His to man; and hence it is a question of believing. For His wrath is revealed from heaven against all impiety, and unrighteousness of men holding the truth in unrighteousness: the one embracing every shade of heathenism or ungodliness, the other especially Jews or, as we can now add, Christendom. How deep the need, how grave the danger, of sinful man.

To the end of chapter 1 the Gentiles are convicted of their impiety in a brief but appalling sketch, confirmed too truly by all that remains of antiquity, utterly depraved not only by their lusts and passions but yet more by their idolatry which sanctioned, yea, provoked and even consecrated their worst evils. It will be observed therefore that the apostle does not trace the ruin to the beginning of the world but only since the flood when men inexcusably slighted the testimony of creation, and, knowing God, glorified Him not as God, but professing to be wise became fools, and setting up idols were given up by the one true God above them, whom they would not serve, to become slaves of every vileness below them.

The opening of chapter 2 looks at the moralists, at men, Gentiles or Jews, who speculated on good but were a prey like others to the wickedness they condemned, despising the riches of God's goodness as they forgot His judgment, with whom is no respect of persons, those who sin without law perishing also without it, and those who sin in it to be judged by it in the day when God judges the secrets of men, according to the apostle's gospel, by Jesus Christ. Here he names the “Jew first” and the “Greek” in judgment, as before in the administration of the gospel. For judgment takes account of all things, and hence of superior advantages, each giving account according to his light and receiving according to his deeds. For salvation is according to grace, reward or judgment according to works. Thus both tests are applied, what they fell from, and what God will

bring in at Christ's coming and kingdom. And as wrath revealed from heaven stood in contrast on God's side with earthly judgments in providence, so here on man's side does the judgment of the secrets of the heart.

The Jews are then distinctively and expressly brought forward, who with better light were no better morally, for the name of God was blasphemed on their account. So far is circumcision from availing them against their base inconsistencies that it becomes contrariwise uncircumcision, even as uncircumcision keeping the requirements of the law should be reckoned for circumcision, judging such as with letter and uncircumcision transgressed law. Sin is shown to be the great leveler, as righteousness does not fail to exalt. A transgressing Jew was as bad as, indeed worse than, a Gentile; a Gentile who wrought righteousness no less acceptable than a Jew. God will have moral reality; and this, wherever found, alone secures His praise.

This raised the question, in chapter 3, of the superiority of the Jew, or of the profit of circumcision. The apostle allows it in every way, and first in being entrusted with the oracles of God. But man's unfaithfulness in no way hinders the certainty or the justice of God's judging the world. Nor do outward privileges in any wise suppose or secure a better condition, though aggravating responsibility. And the fact that what the law or Old Testament says, it speaks to those under it (that is, to the Jews), totally convicts them; for it declares in the plainest terms that there is none righteous, none that understandeth, none that doeth good, all gone out of the way, and no fear of God before their eyes. Thus, as the beginning of the argument proved the Gentiles ruined, so does the end the Jews: the result is, every mouth stopped and all the world under judgment to God. What is His sentence?

Is there no mercy? There is His righteousness by Christ Jesus, righteousness which justifies the believer. Doubtless by works of law no flesh shall be justified, for by law is knowledge of sin, the very reverse of sins forgiven, or of righteousness.

Law therefore cannot help Israel, still less a Gentile. What is the resource then? The apostle returns to the thesis which preceded his reasoning, and, with so much the more evidence of its urgent necessity, affirms that now apart from law God's righteousness is manifested. A truly wonderful statement, in which we have the relation of the gospel to the Old Testament, its universal direction, and its application in fact as being contingent on faith, while it meets all on the ground of sheer ruin and so of pure grace. It proclaims the work of the Lord which answers to the mercy-seat with the atoning blood of Jehovah's lot sprinkled on and before it, thus a righteous ground laying both to justify the forbearance of God in dealing with the saints of old or their sins in past times, and to display now that God is just, while He justifies him that believes in Jesus. By faith boasting is thus excluded, and God is shown to be the God who justifies both Jew and Gentile while law itself is established instead of being made void.

There is nothing to hinder our understanding δικαιοσ■νη θεο■ in its usual sense of an attribute or quality of God, because it is also δικαιοσ■νη ■κ π■στεως, for indeed it is revealed in the gospel for us to believe, and therefore we could profit by it on no other principle. It is of course χωρ■ν ν■μου “apart from law” (Rom. 3:21), which, if obeyed, would have been man's, not God's, righteousness. The δωρε■ or free giving of righteousness (Rom. 5:17) is perfectly consistent with this: God's grace was the source of this gift; it was no question of one's work or fitness as under law. So Rom. 10:3, Phil. 3:9, are both thoroughly in harmony with the fact that the apostle speaks

of divine righteousness, or God's consistency with Himself in justifying the believer through the redemption that is in Christ. Undoubtedly it is a righteousness of which He is the author (as Phil. 3:9 teaches), and which He approves; but it is below the mark merely to say this. For if man be imagined to have obeyed the law, it would have been a righteousness available before God; and man would have lived instead of dying. But this would have been neither eternal life in the Son, nor God's righteousness but man's. Hence the definition of Luther, Calvin, Beza, Reiche, De Wette, &c, is unsatisfactory, as Luther's version, which is a paraphrase expressive of it, is erroneous. A righteousness which God might give or approve need not be His own, which the apostle over and over declares it to be. Of course, it is not divine justice abstractly (which is perhaps the unconscious difficulty of most who approach the subject), but God just in virtue of the Savior's work. How does He estimate it, how act on it, for the believer? The infusion of divine righteousness has no just sense or appears to confound justification with life; whilst the idea that it means mercy is a poor evasion which weakens the grand truth that not His love only but His justice justifies the believer in Jesus.

The remarkable fact may here be noticed that confessedly the majority of commentators, who shrink from the plain meaning of the phrase in Phil. 1:17, and even in chapter iii. 21, 22, confess that in verses 25, 26, it does signify, not God's mercy, nor His method of justification or act of justifying (which in Greek is expressed by δικα■ωσις), nor that righteousness which is acceptable to God, but His justice. Here this is allowed to be the proper meaning of the terms, and what the context demands. Not merely did justice seem compromised by praetermission of past sins, and therefore require vindication, but the work of Christ had so glorified God in the judgment of sin that it was only just for God to remit sins, yea, to justify him that is of faith in Christ Jesus. And so, it cannot be denied, the apostle but explains what he means by δικαιοσ■νη θεο■, when he adds that God set forth Christ a propitiatory, or mercy-seat, that He might be just and justify the believer. If then it be so, that δ. θ. can only mean God's righteousness where it is fully expounded (as in vers. 25, 26), how unreasonable to give the same phrase a different force in the same context! (Vers. 21, 22, just before.) If this be owned, with what consistency can one question its meaning in chapter 1:17? Even chapter 3:5 makes this apparent, for there beyond controversy the phrase means the consistency of God with His character (that is, His righteousness) in judging the world which rejects Christ, as the other passages show His righteousness in justifying those who believe in His name. Compare also Matt. 6:33, James 1:20. Elsewhere (save in 2 Cor. 5:21, which stands alone in using the abstract for concrete, but otherwise strengthens the same truth) the terms in the Epistles of Paul signify God's justice in justifying those who, resting by faith on Jesus and His blood, are accepted in all the value of His acceptance before God.

Chapter 4 confirms the principle of faith for justification by the example of Abraham, backed up by David's testimony in Psa. 32; and this before the law or even circumcision. Thus, if the Jews contended for the inheritance by law or ordinances, they must shut him out who had it by promise, and therefore by faith: if they were his children really, they must receive all from God on a ground that ensures the promise to all the. seed, Gentile no less than Jewish; and the rather, as in his ease and Sarah's they were as good as dead, and their accomplishing of the promise out of the question, that God alone might be looked to as able to quicken the dead; just as we, Christians, believe, not here simply on Jesus, but on Him that raised from among the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered for our offenses, and raised for our justification.

The consequences of being thus justified by faith are stated in the first half of chapter v.: peace with God, His actual grace or favor, and the hope of His glory in which we boast; nor in this only, but in tribulations because of their effect experimentally; yea, finally, boasting in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom now we have received the reconciliation.

But the work of Christ goes much farther than remission of sins or the display of divine love to us in view of guilt, however important it is that we begin with this. Pardon refers to our sins which must otherwise be dealt with in the day of judgment; but there rises also the question of our nature or actual state, not merely of our bad works but of the sin that produced them. Here it is not personal guilt, nor Jews and Gentiles convicted as before, but the race with its head, and the sin which came in by that one man, though each also has his own sins. This clearly brings us up to Adam, though (thank God) also in presence of Christ, the law which came in meanwhile and by the by only shaping sins into offenses and causing them to abound. Now, if a single man righteously involved all his family in sin and death, who can dispute the righteous title of God that the grace of another man, Christ, should abound to His family for eternal life? Such is the argument from chapter 5:12.

If grace be so rich in every way and forever, should we continue in sin that grace may abound? It is a denial in effect of Christianity: so we learn in chapter vi. We that died to sin, how shall we longer live in it? We were buried with Christ by baptism unto death that we should walk in newness of life. Our old man was crucified together that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin. For he that died is justified from sin. Thus we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Sin shall not have dominion, for we are not under law but under grace. Shall we sin then because we are thus? Certainly not. We were slaves of sin, but now, freed from it, we have become slaves of righteousness and of God, have our fruit unto holiness, and the end, worthy of His grace, eternal life.

Chapter 7 handles the question of freedom from the law, as it was already shown that grace strengthens against sin, instead of making it a light or open matter. The married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he is alive: death severs this bond. So are we made dead to the law by the body of Christ that we should belong to another who has been raised from among the dead in order that we might bear fruit to God. We were in the flesh, but now are cleared from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held, so that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter. Observe however that it is not by abrogation of the law but by our death to it, that grace acts.

Not that the law is sin, but sin, getting an occasion or point of attack by the commandment, works every lust, deceives, slays, and also becomes exceeding sinful. But though renewed, the person finds himself without strength, discerns evil in his nature as distinct from himself, delights in the law of God yet sees another law in his members bringing him into captivity, and so learns in conscious wretchedness the value of Christ for deliverance no less than pardon, though this in no way alters the two natures.

Chapter 8 closes the discussion with the fullest statement of the results of Christ's work in death and resurrection for the Christian. Three divisions present themselves: first, the deliverance pursued even to the raising of the mortal body, the Spirit being regarded as characterizing that life and state; secondly, the relations of the Holy Ghost to the Christian as acting in, with, and on him

in power and person; and, thirdly, God for us in the face of every trying experience and all hostility from the creature, fully and triumphantly securing us.

First, what a status for those in Christ! The necessary action of their new nature, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, bespeaks their deliverance from the law of sin and death; as again God has already condemned in the cross sin in the flesh, not merely in its outbreak, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For there are persons characterized by each in life and character, the mind of the one death, of the other life and peace; and this, because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, and they that are in it cannot please Him, while Christians are not in it, but in Spirit, and so, Christ being in them, they hold the body as dead on account of sin, as the Spirit is life on account of righteousness. But even their mortal bodies will be raised on account of His Spirit that dwells in them. Secondly, the Spirit is a Spirit of sonship and an earnest of the glory that is coming, and we meanwhile groan by the Spirit, and God thus finds the mind of the Spirit, not selfishness, in us, while He makes all work for good. Thirdly, along with God's purpose of conforming us to the image of His Son in glory, we have divine power assuring us so that, come what will, nothing shall separate from His love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Chapter 9-11 follow the doctrine, and have for their object to conciliate the special promises to Israel with the indiscriminate grace to sinners as such without exception in the gospel.

In chapter 9 the apostle shows that not he but the Jews could be more justly censured for making light of the peculiar privileges of Israel; as in truth he loved them quite as fervently as Moses. It was a question of God's call in Isaac. Nay, more, we see fleshly right still more manifestly excluded by the blessing of Jacob in disparagement of Esau, and this before the birth of the twins. It is a question thus of sovereign grace. Did they then complain of God's unrighteousness? It was all for Israel, that sovereignty of God: else what had become of them ruined before the golden calf at Sinai, had not God said, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy?” On the other hand Pharaoh is the witness of His hardening and judgments. Does man yet find fault because God acts as He will? This is met by asserting God's title to judge man, and rebuking man's pretension to judge God. He has power; but how does He use it? With the utmost long-suffering toward the vessels of wrath, and in the richest mercy to its vessels, the latter being in themselves no better than the former. Thus mercy calls Gentiles who had no privileges and Jews who had lost all. Hosea and Isaiah, more than once, confirm all, showing not only Gentiles called but Israel stumbling at the stumbling-stone laid in Zion, while faith only would not be ashamed.

In chapter x. the apostle expresses his heart's desire on their behalf for salvation. But their zeal was not according to knowledge. They were ignorant of, and did not submit to, God's righteousness, seeking to establish their own. For Christ ends law (and all such efforts are legal) for righteousness to every one that believes. They speak incompatibly, that which is of law, and what is of faith; but God's righteousness is that of faith, Christ is the ground of it, and salvation the result, which therefore is as open to the Gentile as to the Jew who believed. Hence a testimony was sent out by God; and if few Jews received it, none the less did it go out unto all the earth; and here testimonies thicken from law and prophets to show God found by Gentiles, and Israel disobedient and gainsaying.

Chapter 11 proves that the rejection of Israel is neither complete nor final, corroborated by the olive tree which lets us see the cutting off that awaits unfaithful Christendom no less surely than what befell the Jew, but that the Redeemer would yet come out of Zion turning away ungodlinesses from Jacob, and so all Israel be saved, coming in at length as an object of mercy no less than a Gentile. This drew out the transports of the apostle as he thought of the depth of the riches of God's wisdom and knowledge.

From chapter 12 we enter on practical exhortations formally. The apostle beseeches the saints by the compassions of God to present their bodies a living sacrifice, without conformity to this world, but transformed by the renewing of their mind, to cultivate a sober, not a high, mind, as God dealt to each. For we being many are one body in Christ, and members one of another, with gifts differing which each should occupy himself in. More general calls follow, grace here too reigning through righteousness in the walk and spirit, widening toward men at large which draws out the caution against avenging ourselves: rather should we, as God does, overcome evil with good.

Chapter 13 exhibits the relation of the saints to outward government in the world; subjection to what is thus set up of God, whatever it be, in the world, so that to oppose the authority is to resist His ordinance, on account not only of wrath but of conscience also; and on this account paying tribute and to all their dues, owing no man anything but love, the fulfillment of the law. And this too, urged the more by the nearness of the day, in the light of which we should walk, remembering that the night is far spent, and not gratifying flesh which loves the dark.

Then in chapter 14 follows the duty of brotherly forbearance, rendered at Rome in those days the more incumbent because of so many Jews and Gentiles meeting together there as Christians. The weak, as they are called, who were burdened with scruples, were not to judge the strong, who knew their liberty; neither were the strong to despise the weak. Conscience must be respected; Christ is Lord of dead and living: and to God every one of us must give account. Rather let one! judge to put no stumblingblock in a brother's way, nor thus for meat destroy him for whom Christ died. Peace and edification should be sought, but also a good conscience, for whatever is not of faith is sin. The beginning of chapter 15 concludes this question with Him who pleased not Himself but bore the reproaches men cast on God, thus entitling the Christian to all the comfort of the scriptures which speak of Christ, and strengthening us to receive one another, as Christ did, to God's glory.

Next we have, from verse 8, a statement of God's ways in the gospel justified by the Old Testament, and of his own ministry among us Gentiles, as a reason for thus exhorting them, though giving them credit' for goodness and knowledge and ability to admonish one another. From Jerusalem and in a circle round to Illyricum he had fully preached the gospel, and so aiming, not where Christ was named, but where they had not heard of Him; and now that his work was done in the East, his old and strong desire to visit the West, after a deacon's service for the poor of the saints in Jerusalem (for nothing comes amiss to love), revives the hope to see the Roman saints on his way to Spain. But God had plans of His own; and if Paul was not saved from unbelieving brethren after the flesh in Judea, it was but to give him more the fellowship of Christ's sufferings who was delivered to the Gentiles by the Jews.

Chapter 16 finishes with commendation of a sister Phoebe, servant of the assembly at Cenchreae, salutations minute and varied in the appreciation of all that was lovely and of good report, and

warnings against those who make divisions and stumbling-blocks contrary to the doctrine they had learned. To turn away from such men eaten up with self-importance is the best answer to their kind speaking and fairness of speech. Here as elsewhere we should be wise to what is good and simple to evil. The God of peace will see to all that is above us, bruising Satan under our feet shortly. How much do we not need the grace of our Lord with us now!

The apostle's amanuensis, Tertius, adds his salutation, as do a few others. The Epistle closes with a doxology wonderfully suited to all we have had before us, yet intimating truth not here developed in harmony with which was his preaching. In the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians is this hidden mystery fully set out, the Epistles to the Corinthians acting as a link of transition, but each in due place and season, and all important for the saint and for the church. To the only wise God through Jesus Christ be glory forever. Amen.

Chapter 207

Thoughts on Rom. 6-8

In chapter 6. I understand the apostle to be reasoning with the believer upon the claims which sin has on him. And the apostle tells us that sin has been disposed of. Sin was once the master or king; holding dominion, it issued its commands through all the members which were thus “instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.” But sin has now, as such master, paid his wages. Its wages was death; and we have died in or with Christ, and thus sin is disposed of, or we have done with it; for Christ had done with it when He died. “He died unto sin.” It is true He had to do with sin in His death which owned the dominion of sin, that being the wages paid. But in resurrection Christ had to do with God and not with sin. He rose by the glory of the Father, and by resurrection lived unto God as in His death, He had died unto sin so that the believer, now associated with Christ in His death and resurrection, has done with sin and has to do with God. Sin in its wages is disposed of and so should it be in all its claims: for if we no longer receive its claims, so no longer are we to do its service.

It is as those who are alive from the dead that we should walk, and if that condition be rightly apprehended (alive from the dead, or risen) continuance in the doing or service of sin will be found a thing not to be at all even counted upon.

Such indeed have rather to reckon themselves “dead unto sin” and alive unto God through Jesus Christ.

Such truths their baptism reads to them. If indeed sin be willingly served, we own that sin is still alive and not thus disposed of, and we deny the whole of this truth and our standing in Christ; for when we died to sin, that is when sin paid us its wages (in Christ put to death), then the “old man or the body of sin was destroyed;” that is, all our members and faculties, once the sphere and instruments of sin's dominion and service, in that character were put to death also, so that all our members and faculties now should own and assert and exercise themselves in a risen character.

I judge that sin itself must be distinguished here from both the “old man” and “the body of sin.” These rather signify the scene of the dominion of sin or the strength or instruments by which, and in which, he ruled and exercised himself.

In Rom. 7 the apostle entertains the claims of the law upon the believer, and shows that they also have been disposed of. He docs this very simply; he says that the authority of the law addresses itself only to a living man, that is, a man in the flesh. It is the flesh or man as born of Adam, that the law was given to; but the believer has ceased in this sense to be a living man, has ceased to be of Adam, inasmuch as he has died and risen again; and consequently being a dead and risen man, and not a living man, the law does not address its claims to him, he is not the object for the law.

But in this the law is not spoken of in the same relation to us as sin had been. Sin had been spoken of as a master or being; but the law is here spoken of as a husband. And the result of our being dead to sin is life to God, but the result of our being now dead to the law is here shown to be marriage with Christ. These distinctions you will find have their beautiful moral force and meaning.

Then in the close of this chapter (having thus shown how that sin and the law have been disposed of or set aside, the one as a master, the other as a husband) the apostle tells us at the same time that they have been discharged with very different characters: sin, with as bad, the law with as good, a character as even the inspired pen of an apostle could write for them. All evil in us is declared to have come from the one, while from the other nothing flowed but that which was holy, just, and good. And the moment that the real character of the law was understood by the quickened soul, this grievous state of things arose— “the commandment came, sin revived and I died” —the law was felt to urge one thing upon the conscience—sin was felt to exact another thing in the old man or the members; and this state of things drew forth the sense of death in the soul and the cry for deliverance, and the answer comes in Jesus revealed in the power of His death and resurrection.

The law being good has not been discharged in the way that sin has. It has been discharged as a husband only (as that to which the soul was debtor and with which it was in union), because we are no longer living, but dead and risen, men. Its holy and good words as expressive of God are still delighted in and allowed.

In Rom. 8 we get the believer thus escaped from sin as a master, and the law as a husband, in his new place in Christ. Being in Him the believer has become a spiritual person, no longer in the flesh, and thus the flesh is discharged as well as sin and the law; that is, we are neither under the old master with the old husband, nor in the old nature; and by the way the apostle shows that the flesh, thus discharged, could never (let God do with it what He might) have yielded any fruit or allegiance to Him, so that, as we speak, it was “bad rubbish” in itself, and to be free of it is “good riddance.”

Having thus cleared the way to look at the believer in his new place in Christ, the apostle then with delight traces the holy prerogatives of such an one.

1. He is nothing less than a son, having the Spirit of adoption, not the spirit of bondage as a servant.

2. Being thus a son, the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, is in him as at home.

3. Being thus a son, he is also an heir, having co-heirship of God with Christ Jesus.

4. And as the great principle of this co-heirship, he is to shine in the same personal glory by-and-by as Jesus, on the hope of the manifestation of which glory in us the whole creation now waits. And though all this condition of the believer may cause him to groan under the sense of his present state in the body, and that he is only still in hope, like the whole creation. Yet the Spirit given to him and being in him, groans also, and groans with so pure a groan that God has entire fellowship with it. And even more than this: God, in His sovereign rule of all things, constrains them all to work together for the believer's good, that without as well as within us He may be for us.

And, finally, the one great original purpose of conforming the believer to the model or pattern of the glorified Son is that which has been the spring, and is the everlasting and abiding spring, of all the divine procedure and action.

This is the train of glorious privileges which flow forth from the believer's union with Christ. Nothing is too excellent for God to do or to devise for such an one; all the joy that the fullest love can

inspire, all the dignity that the highest glories can put on us, are ours thus according to the counsel of God in Christ Jesus. God is for us—that can easily account for all this train of joys and glories.

But if He is for us, who can be against us? Who can do anything to harm us? Is there an accuser, a judge, or an executioner, still standing out? The first may go away rebuked by this that God has justified us; the second may go away rebuked by this that Christ has died—has already suffered the judgment, and His work has been accepted to the full in heaven itself; the third may go away rebuked by this that all the malice of earth and hell together shall never drag us away from the embraces, the firm embraces, of our God in Christ Jesus our Lord. And if there be now neither accuser to charge, nor judge to condemn, nor executioner to punish, the court is cleared. We have left the scene, to which as sinners we had been righteously dragged, to meet Him who has delivered us, in other scenes altogether; not as the Judge but as the Bridegroom, to enjoy a Husband in a Savior forever and ever. J. G, B.

Chapter 208

Hints on the Sacrifices in Leviticus: Chapters 1-3

Notice in the first place, that the tabernacle has been set up. It is out of the tabernacle of the congregation that this instruction is given. It supposes God is there, and it is a question of approach to Him.

There are two classes of sacrifices: those made by fire for a sweet savor; and the sin and trespass offerings (pretty much the same thing), which were not for a sweet savor, though the fat of them was burnt on the altar. The three sacrifices of sweet savor are, the burnt-offering, the meat (or meal) offering, and the peace-offering. “Peace-offering” is a bad name: “sacrifices de prospérite” they are called in French.

As to the offerings, they are here given as from the Lord in their order; they are for men, but still from the Lord, just as Christ was; whereas when men came to offer, they came, not with the burnt-offering, but with the sin-offering first. Here the divine statement of them is made, and the sin-offering is last because this is what Christ became when He had offered up Himself. It is first when persons come by them, and the order in a measure shows the character.

We first come in Lev. 1 to the burnt-offering; “If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd,” and so on. Sometimes a bullock, and sometimes a goat, or a sheep, but a “male without blemish,” representing Christ in His perfection.

“Of his own voluntary will” should rather be “for his acceptance.” There is one passage made me question it rather, but I believe that is what it should be. In chapter 22 you may make a difference; in verse 19 it means “freewill,” but in verse 29 it should be “for his acceptance.” The offerer puts his hand on the head of the victim. “And it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him, and he shall kill the bullock before the Lord.” Then the priest should bring the blood and deal with that; this is the priest's first act—to bring the blood.

The special character of the burnt-offering is, that it was not for a committed sin; on the contrary, what is to me a most wonderful thing is that not only the question of our sins is elsewhere met, but in the burnt-offering it is the question of glorifying God in the place of sin itself—Christ “made sin.” And He who know no sin was made sin, and stood in the place of sin (at the cross) before God, so as to glorify God there; “made sin” which, except in a divine way of wisdom, is impossible. But Christ was made sin of His own voluntary will, and yet it was in obedience: these are combined; the two things are together. God “hath made him to be sin.” God put Him in the place of sin, and He offered Himself for sin (and He is our passover), freely and entirely for it.

This is what we were reading in John, “if ye seek me, let these go their way;” Christ put Himself forward, “offered himself without spot to God;” but at the same time, He is “made sin” —it is obedience too. The thing was, to unite this fact of sin being under God's eye, and so to have it there as that God should be perfectly glorified about it. And only in a victim could this be. And there was perfectness in bringing it, for it was the giving up of Himself. Besides the fact of our sins put away there, you get nothing like the atonement. It is all for us all the while, yet Christ is there

“made sin” in absolute obedience and self-sacrifice, but making good the righteousness and love and majesty and honor and truth of God, and everything else that is in God. Now it is by this we come; and therefore it is not only that the sin-offering has been there, but in coming by this I come in all the value of that which has glorified God in that very place where I was; I come to God in all the value of this, and get the acceptance of it before God, like Abel. Nowhere else at all is anything seen like this.

Until the man lays his hand upon the victim, it is not a sacrifice properly. Christ “through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God;” but now when I lay my hand upon the victim, that is the application of it, more than part of it.

We hardly get the “made sin” in the verses here. A man's bringing a burnt-offering is as good as coming to the Lord and saying, “I have no devotedness to bring; but all is due to the Lord, and I bring it in the person of my sacrifice,” which in principle would be Christ. This is our coming by it, but we must come as having undevotedness, and not only everything wanting but enmity against God—all that is bad. And then I am accepted in all the value of what Christ has done. Christ has been perfect in obedience and devotedness unto death, and He glorifies God giving Himself up to God altogether, for this is the character offering Himself has, and He is made sin and dealt with as such, and in this shows His absolute devotedness to God. He is sinless too, of course, for He is without blemish. You will get the perfectness of Christ looked at in all His thoughts and will, as attested in the meat-offering; but here more, He is given up as a victim, made sin: there is the blood and atonement here. In the meat-offering you get what Christ was Himself; here it is His offering Himself in the place of sin, that is, “made sin.” If I say “instead of” I must say “sins,” here not “instead of,” but “made sin.” We have sin brought in, which is more than saying we have sinned.

Just look round about and always and see what has come of God! He created everything good, and what state is it in? It is all corruption and defilement, and, if you could have the devil gay, it is here. Where was God's glory and all that He had made blessed? and where was His power? It was all utter dishonor done to God. Therefore there was Jehovah's lot on the day of atonement. The whole thing was God's character. Suppose God cut all off: it would have set aside wickedness, but there could be no love in that, though it would have showed how man had failed. It would have looked like “I have not made the thing well, and I am obliged to smash it up.” But the moment Christ comes in, you get perfect love, complete righteousness against sin, all that God is, looked at as against sin in itself; you get in the cross perfect love to the sinner, God's majesty maintained. “It became Him in bringing many sons into glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.” You get the truth of God carried out even against His own Son; that everything God is, the most opposite things, righteousness and love (which would have been so without sin, but) all brought out here, in the person of Him who offered Himself in obedience and love; “that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.” Every moral element, even that which seemed incompatible, all that God was, was displayed. And this is the place where God has been dishonored. Thus, where all evil was, everything that was base and degrading, there the opposite was brought out, when Christ was made sin.

The burnt-offering has more to do then with the nature, the sin and trespass-offering with acts of sin. The one, the burnt-offering, is where the moral nature of God was in question; and the other, the sin-offering, where ordinances were. The burnt-offering has to do with the perfect nature of God. The great thing is that it meets God really, and in the place of sin. You might say, perhaps, it deals with our state rather than nature on our side.

It is the “Where art thou?” not “What hast thou done?” “Where art thou?” and Christ was the forsaken of God; there is grace for us. Thus the burnt-offering goes wider than the state of the world, and this is why I say in the place where sin was. But I am not speaking of Satan to include him at all.

The expression in verse 4, “to make atonement,” is the Piel form of the Hebrew verb ■■■■■■. It is all a question what ■■■■■■■ means. What led me to that was, it is the same word which is usually translated “to make atonement for,” which means “to cover.” If I am putting away sin I cover it, but then I find the word ■■■ means “upon” (or with), and if you cover upon, you put out of sight. Thus I find this word Caphar used about the scapegoat, Caphar with the altar, the incense altar, as well as with the scapegoat. I get into some abstract way of thinking about it, and, if you look in a dictionary, you find no great help.

The scapegoat is an instance of the perfect nonsense of speculation. Some make the scapegoat a demon and then sent away; some that it was sent away to appease the demon lest he should do mischief to Israel; and one makes out that Azazel was a demon, and they sent the sins all back to him.

Well, it is as to sin in the sin and trespass-offering, but here it is sin. It is the same Hebrew form in Lev. 1:4; 16:10, “to make atonement for him,” and “with him,” in our Bibles.

There is “atonement about” and another case two or three times of “cover over” and “from.”

The entire burnt-offering was wholly burnt to God;

it was Jehovah's lot in a way on that one point—sin. Skin—as in the case of Adam and Eve—was given to the priest, but the whole carcass went up burnt to God. It was Christ's offering Godward, so to speak, but as a man, and made sin.

The wrath of God against sin was here, yet there came up a sweet savor. Such is the very fact. Instead of His being disobedient unto death, death was there and sin was there, and He was obedient unto it; it was the perfection of the opposite of sin. Here Christ does God's will perfectly, and that is the mystery. In the very place and condition of sin you find this; when He offers Himself and says, “the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me; but that the world may know that I love the Father,” that is perfectness on one side, “and as the Father gave me commandment,” that is the other side; and, being made sin, He has to drink this cup, and He says, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” ·

Is the priest's having the skin, the satisfaction of Christ in His own work? Perhaps so. Christ is covered with the glory of it any way; only He had nothing like nakedness to cover. Abel's offering had this character in its nature. There is no sin-offering until the law, though sins were there. The law brought out the definite transgressions and therefore the sin-offering then got its place in an intelligent way. Abel had no sin actually named. It was the “where,” and not the “what,” in his case.

The epistle to the Romans is the broad fact of the “what” to chapter v. 11; afterward the “where” is followed out. What we call the nature is practically identified with the “where;” but in the burnt-offering we look more on God's side, at the fact rather than at the nature that is active. Now, in order to get rid of the nature, I die with Christ: this is another element brought in. For when I look at the condition, I say, there is Christ the victim that died between me and God because of sin.

Then you get details. They washed the parts of the animal, that they should be ostensibly clean, to keep the idea of absolute cleanness.

Being made sin is not the idea of imputation. With imputation I could not have a sweet savor. This sacrifice is not for remission but for glorifying God. The end of 2 Cor. 5 is not remission. That is where I take up the difference between God's righteousness and righteousness under law. Men make Christ's righteousness in life under law to be our righteousness. All that was necessary in Him first. But in my righteousness now, I get all the perfection of what Christ is. It is not what He did, as a living man, but God's own character was glorified in it, and my positive righteousness is according to what God's nature is. That is why I felt the importance of what was said about it. My objection was that it kept saints back from the infinite acceptance they have in Christ in this way. It was not the mere putting away of sins as in Rom. 3; 4, which is only forgiveness; but the burnt-offering has its own infinite value and character. The result shows it: Christ is now in the glory, and I am accepted in the Beloved.

In the meat-offering we get a picture of Christ's person fully tested by the righteousness of God.

Eire is testing judgment, not death at all. If there be only a little dross, fire purges it out; if there be only evil, it is consumed.

It has been thought that the grades were to enable a poor man to bring an offering, which some have thought showed the estimate of the offerer. It was not killed before the altar, that is, between the gate and the altar, but northward. It might show a certain intelligence; at any rate, it was not simply the man's coming up as he pleased. One entered the gate at the east of the court, and the north was to the right hand. He must do God's will.

In the meat-offering the points are, the perfect humanity, and the Holy Ghost, which was the oil, but employed in different ways. The frankincense is the perfect grace that goes up to God. The burning on the altar is the thing that gives the sufferings of Christ. There are other variations; the oil kneaded in the flour gives Christ born by the Holy Ghost; the anointing with oil is what Christ was after His baptism. There is another character; it was broken to bits, and they were all anointed with oil to show that every part of Christ was in the power of the Spirit of God.

Its simple existence as a cake was sinless humanity and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

It is baked, but not baked meal by itself: when it was a meal-offering “baked in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened mingled with oil, thou shalt part it in pieces and pour oil thereon.” There it is a kind of cake common among the Hebrews, then “baken in the oven,” or “in the frying pan,” that is, every possible way. When it was offered, it was taken out. Parted in pieces means in every detail, words, works, everything. There were two things that could not be in it, honey and leaven, save in two exceptional cases. But there must always be salt. It is said both of sin-offering and meat-offering, that they are “most holy.”

Next they were eaten by the priests; it was a priestly thing, not to be eaten by the priest's daughters, as was allowed in some of the peace-offerings.

Leaven is corruption or sin; and honey is not allowed either, for it represents the sweetness of nature, which may be a very pleasant thing sometimes, but cannot go into a sacrifice; salt must—"the salt of the covenant of thy God," which is the separative power of holiness. "Every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." Everybody will get judgment; wicked and good will get fire, but it is only sacrifices offered to God that really have the power which separates from evil and keeps evil away.

Honey is pleasant and good in its place sometimes. I was thinking of Jonathan. The Lord does refresh us with outward mercies, kind things, the friendship of brethren, but with caution as to the use of them. "Hast thou found honey? Eat as much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith and vomit it," and too much even here does do so.

The Lord Jesus had no honey, not a bit; He had divine kindness. Honey would have taken Him up to Mary and Martha when Lazarus was sick, if I may use such a figure; but salt kept Him away. There could be no honey in a sacrifice, nor in a meat-offering, "for ye shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering of the Lord made by fire."

The honeycomb in Luke 24, I suppose, was good in its place. It is not meant that honey is always bad. Naturally the moment He became the cake after the baptism of John, there was no honey. There should be our answer to it, "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." Fire being the perfect testing of God's judgment, we have Christ here not merely looked at as making atonement, but also as tested by the fire on the cross. This is true of everyone, everyone shall be salted with fire. The fire burns out dross, if there is any to burn. This is the testing of Him who was made sin; but there is no bloodshedding here.

It answers to the Lord's death in Luke, and this character is in the garden there. John is the burnt-offering rather, in which He offers Himself. There were some meat-offerings in which leaven was bound to be put. On the day of Pentecost when the church was offered, brought to God, leaven was put in; and in the offering of the firstfruits—not in the first of the firstfruits—there was leaven. The moment you bring us in, you have it, but not in anything for a sweet savor.

As to "green ears" of corn dried by the fire, Christ was a green tree, as a living one, and He says as it were, "if I come to this, what will come to Israel, that is dead?" Here, too, green is full of life, and then dried by fire. So Christ, and He was a sweet savor. "Thou shalt offer for the meat-offering of thy first fruits green ears of corn, dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears." They were to be full as Christ was. The rest was most holy, when the memorial and the frankincense had been burnt; this all went up to God. You have both meal cakes and firstfruits as meat-offerings; and there was always oil upon it, except in the case of meal for a poor person's sin-offering. And, also, in the offering of anything with leaven, there was a sin-offering with it, which meets our leaven, so to speak.

There are beautiful details of Christ, what you see in His life. Somewhat like a great picture full of people, where they give you a little outline of the heads of them all to say who they are. For these sacrifices are very like that.

Then, in the peace-offering, we have the great facts of atonement for sin, no less than of His death, as well as the bread come down from heaven. It is not the same thought, but the two things; and the result. We have had Christ in perfectness as dying for us, and in the perfectness of His person, and then we come to talk of communion.

The force of the offering is communion, no doubt, because the people eat of it; but the name has nothing to do with that. It is a prosperity-offering, or a thanksgiving, or for vows. The man brought his animal, laid his hand upon its head, killed it at the door of the tabernacle, and the priest took the blood and sprinkled it upon the altar. The fat went to the Lord to be burnt upon the altar for a sweet savor. You cannot separate that from Christ offering Himself as a burnt-offering.

The word is merely to make a fire. I do not know of any distinct meaning. It may be mentioned like the unjust judge in the parable: God is not an unjust judge, but the judge is introduced to make the picture complete. In the meat-offering there is all Christ's life before He was offered. A peace-offering could not be offered by itself; it is not to be separated from the burnt-offering. (Chap. 3:5.) In point of fact, the meat-offering was offered with the burnt-offering; they are two aspects of the same Christ. “The priest” does not mean “the high priest.” It is said, “The priests, Aaron's sons, shall do” so and so.

When we arrive at the law of the peace-offering, a portion is for Jehovah, for the priest that offers it, for the priests in general, and for the company. There is God's joy, Christ's own joy; the priests generally, as such, rejoice, and the company of the faithful.

Fowls were allowed for a burnt-offering, as a perfection of grace, if a man was poor; whereas for a peace-offering, if he could not bring an animal, he might stay at home and take it quietly. No matter how poor my thoughts are, I cannot do without a burnt-offering.

These were all the offerings of a sweet savor. The fat and the blood were not to be eaten; the spring of life—the fat was the expression of that; and all that was in Christ, was offered to God. “Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked.” Fat is used there for a certain energy of life, and so elsewhere.

The family eat the peace-offering, so, if a man asked a company to dinner, he had to make a peace-offering of it, and part was offered to Jehovah, and part to the priests, and the company made their feast of the rest. If a man killed an animal in the wilderness and did not bring it for an offering to the Lord, that soul was to be cut off from his people. (Lev. 17:3, 4, and 5, and Deut. 12:21.) And you notice his own hand is to bring the offering made by fire. (Chap. 7:30.) “The fat with the breast, it shall he bring, that the breast may be waved for a wave-offering before the Lord.” “And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest for a heave offering of the sacrifices of your peace-offerings.”

First is the offering in itself, and then the directions for all the circumstances connected with it.

In reality, when you come to the peace-offering, it was a festival. All that concerns sin comes first, and then other things afterward.

Chapter 209

Hints on the Sacrifices in Leviticus Chapters 4-7

There was no forgiveness for sins done with a high hand under the law. It is said distinctly, “if a soul shall sin through ignorance.” Paul says mercy was shown him “because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” So of old, if a man sinned haughtily, as in blasphemy, he was stoned. There is forgiveness for such sins now; but not if done after full knowledge of Christ so as to give Him up. “If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”

Nothing is excluded from forgiveness now except blaspheming the Holy Ghost in apostasy from Christ; that is, denying Him in nature. One may go to Christ as a wretched guilty man ("such were some of you"), and yet be forgiven.

In Israel there was a priest, by whom those who sinned had to approach; but the priest could not come within the veil except on the day of atonement. Suppose the people sinned, they were cut off from God; and if the priest sinned, the people were cut off, because they could only come to God by the priest.

The blood was not carried in for a single person, because this would have said that the whole thing was wrong, which was not the case; it was for the high priest or for all the people.

All is changed as to this now. It is what the apostle means by “the shadow of good things to come, and not the very image:” that could” not go on when Christ died and went to heaven. The priest, in chapter 4:2, is supposed to be the high priest. I do not think Aaron's sons would come under the expression in verse 3. They did not represent all the people: only the high priest did so. The “priest that is anointed” always means the high priest. He was not to defile himself for father or mother, or for dead body, and the reason given is, “upon whose head the anointing oil was poured.” The high priest was anointed in a totally different way from the others, without blood; but the others had oil and blood mixed put upon them, and then, with Aaron, they were to put it upon them and their clothes, with him, not with them; they are brought in by the bye, as it were. He was first anointed without blood at all, and then they are brought with him and sprinkled with blood, and after that oil was taken with some blood and put on them. But there was no regular anointing for them; so that properly He was the anointed priest, and when they were in their way anointed, it was with him, their garments, and this and that, with him. So it is given in chapter 8:30; “and Moses took of the anointing oil and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him, and sanctified Aaron, and his garments and his sons' garments with him,” not with them but with him. It is identifying them all with him; he had the anointing already. And the son is then with the priest that is anointed, which is very natural. This gives the place of the church with Christ. Looked at strictly the sons of Aaron represent us. The remnant after we go, as regards the world, will be priests; but they are not partakers of the heavenly calling. I have no doubt the epistle to the Hebrews is like the reaching over the wall; in a way it is blessing in provision for a coming time as well as the present. We do not see the saints, Christians, on the highest ground at all in Hebrews; but Christ is in heaven

looked at as there instead of and for them. I believe He preserves Israel at this moment by being inside, for He “died for that nation.”

There was this peculiarity in the sacrifice for the people as a whole that the blood was brought inside, as the body was burnt outside the camp. The blood was carried in as far as possible, into what was heavenly; on the great day of atonement it went right in, and Israel are reconciled on the ground of what is heavenly, though they do not get things heavenly; but they are reconciled on the ground of the blood being presented to God in heaven, and the day of atonement has this character in measure. The difference between that and the common person's offering is very important; for, if an individual sinned, the people were still in communion, and it is merely a restoring of the person himself; but if the priest or the congregation sinned, the breach was total, and all the people were upon the same ground as the sinner. Reconciliation in the main must be as regards God, and blood must go in to Him: we are wholly upon this ground.

I do not think you could say to or of Israel, If we walk in the light as God is in the light. But the atonement for them had been presented to God in the light. The difference in our case is, that we are called into the place where the atonement has been offered. Israel will have to stand on the ground of mere fleshly religion being set aside. They cannot have their own blessing even without the blood having been offered to God, and therefore without their giving up all fleshly religion. Law was religion in flesh, or religion for a people in flesh, and it was to prove totally wanting. No provisional sacrifices would do. The whole system was to demonstrate the failure of such a ground. They were put there with appliances for occasional restoration, but it was evidently all of no use, and this from the very beginning itself. They made a golden calf at once. God went on to show whether a people could go on, mixing grace with law and grace, as it were to help them out; but they could not. So the sacrifices took that ground of fleshly religion for a time.

In the millennium when it comes, the sacrifices will be figures in a measure as they used to be. The people will not go into heavenly places then; but the sacrifices had to go into the figures of the heavenly places, and the blood was carried into the mercy-seat in the holiest of all and sprinkled there. The camp was fleshly religion, and the veil was there; but the blood must be in the holiest, and the body be burnt outside the camp even for Israel to get a blessing. It must be effectual with God; this is what is wanted. So the apostle reasons for us, that “the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin are burnt without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also that he might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” We have now got heavenly things, and we must go outside the camp. In the millennium they have neither heavenly things nor will they go outside the camp. The blessing depends on Christ having gone outside the camp originally, and He in virtue of His blood is gone into the heavenlies; but when He comes again, the blessing on earth will be made good. Meanwhile we must go outside the camp and have, too, the privilege of going into the holiest; but if I take this world, I say there is no camp now. There is a professing church, we know, but it is all an untrue thing. Whether for us or for the millennium, Christ must go in either case within the veil; but it is only we who go there now. There will be a veil in Ezekiel's temple in that way, but unrent. Israel will not go within.

In another image Moses went and pitched the tabernacle outside the camp, and those who sought the Lord went out to that tent of meeting outside; and Moses goes back, Joshua stays outside: that

is, the Spirit of Christ graciously goes inside to see what He could do with them, while the heavenly Christ stays outside. It is beautiful in Moses again, he says when up in the mountain, “if you do not forgive the people, blot me out! What will you do with your glory? You brought this people out of Egypt.” Thus he identifies the people with God's glory; when he is with God, he insists on their being spared at any cost for the reason that He did identify the people with the glory of God. And then he comes down, and, seeing the calf, he says “kill every man his brother, and companion, and neighbor,” because to him the people were identified with God's glory. His faith says, “spare them:” his faithfulness says “kill them,” —on the same ground of God's glory.

Here in the offering, it is the great principle of Christ laying the basis for it all. But there is in the mercy-seat and altar this difference (though grace is in both): the blood was put upon the altar for the individual; the altar—the measure of it all—was the place of man's responsibility according to the law; whereas when the blood was carried inside, this was where God sat, it was responsibility before Him, and so, except to give a figure of Christ, the priest never went in at all. Judaism could not bring there. I know it was not so ordained at first; but as soon, as the priests failed, then He says even of Aaron the high priest, “Come not at all times unto the holy place within the veil;” for really it was all a failed thing, and man could not have to say to God on that ground.

The gold shows righteousness according to God's nature. Righteousness is the girdle of Messiah's loins. So the high priest had a golden girdle, divine righteousness. The brazen altar was God's perfect judgment of the responsibility of man, which made a difference of measure. God requiring from me according to my responsibility is a different thing from requiring in His own character.

At the brazen altar the nature of God is not brought in. Every sin does touch God's nature, but that is not considered under the law. But on the great day of atonement the work had to be done according to God's nature, or they could not have had to say to God at all.

The blood on the great day of atonement answered for the people's sins for the whole year (and now for us forever); and then it was begun again. The people never went in at all: the blood had to go in (or there could be no reconciliation as a whole) once a year, “the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.” There is never anything about the people going in; only when it was a reconciliation for the whole; the ground must be as Christ laid it, or it would be no reconciliation with God.

The sprinkling of the blood of the others—the ruler's and the common person's sin offering—was upon the brazen altar. But the priest's was on the golden altar; for how could a priest go and offer incense if he had sinned? And if he could not do this, there was no intercourse with God. The people never went beyond the brazen altar at all, where the burnt and peace offerings were offered, the place of ordinary intercourse. They were all individual cases.

On the great day of atonement, everything is done. The sins of the people are dealt with; the nature of God is met, before and on the mercy-seat: the defilement of the tabernacle removed (that is, of the heavens itself, and of the altar); and the people's sins are confessed on the head of the scape-goat.

Had there not been sin in the priests, Nadab and Abihu, &c, would have gone in and out as Moses did; but as it was, they were prohibited.

The veil is not rent for the Jew by and by, unless it be in the sense of the putting away of sin, but not for him to go in.

God could not bless definitely, without being glorified as to sin; but in the two first sin offerings in Lev. 4, the priest did not actually go in, but only where he was accustomed to go, to the altar of incense. But when we come to the real thing done, the blood is upon the mercy-seat, it goes upon the pure gold. The sprinkling of the blood before the veil and sprinkling it upon the horns of the golden altar presents a similar aspect of things. “With us the censer belongs inside, but the altar of incense was outside the veil; it is when its use is interrupted, as it were, by sin, that blood has to be put there. It was sprinkled seven times, this being the perfectness which we constantly find in scripture. The altar itself had been defiled by the sin, and therefore it had to be sprinkled. Then, “outside the camp” is most important here, and on the day of atonement too; because, if we bring in the nature and character of God, the thing is a reproach to the world and it must go outside. There is plenty of religiousness inside the camp, but we cannot have death in the presence of God, nor bring together before God things that do not suit. Suppose you have a number of worldly people round you, you can ask God to bless them; but you cannot go on with a priestly prayer, less so than you could even with the animals around you. But if the individual sinned, there was failure in his individual responsibility, but no interruption between God and the people. The person had got astray, and it was a question of his responsibility, and one that he could so far estimate, so that there is no taking the body outside the camp. Every man knows that sin cannot do for God. So it was then in a worldly religion, the brazen altar being the estimate of the evil according to man's responsibility. But there it came within the limits of man and of the world. Go and say to a worldly-minded man, You must be partaker of God's holiness; or talk to him about a nature that cannot sin because born of God! He either hates it, or thinks you raving; but he would perfectly understand that he is not to steal, kill, and so on. Such was the case with the brazen altar for the Israelite, the law being only a shadow of good things to come. Now, we must walk in the light as God is in the light; for the veil is rent. It is not now merely that I must have the sins put away, of which I am guilty in the earth, so as to go on with God in ordinary intercourse, but the claims of God on me are according to the light in which He is revealed in Christ. So scripture shows distinctly that, though the Christian has a consciousness of failure, he has, when once purged, no more conscience of sins; as typically in Israel the great day of atonement, when the blood was put on the mercy-seat, was the basis of all that went on through the year. God's character must be met, even to go on with His material government in patience and mercy.

If all the people sinned, all were shut out, and so, if a priest sinned, in effect it was the same; but if one of the common people sinned, all the rest are not put out, and then the altar of incense has not to be restored.

Thus, wherever the blood was carried in, the bullock had to be carried outside and burnt; but in other cases the priests ate the sin offering. Christ enters into our sins and sorrows, identifying Himself with them in grace, all spotless as He was Himself.

The moment you get sin, it is dealt with before God. Man has no idea of the effect of the judgment of sin in the divine presence. If a man may take away your character, you might take him away if you could; but if he takes away God's character, nobody cares for that! In the world fleshly religion can take up man's responsibility, and say that he ought to do so and so, and there must be this,

and that, if he does not. But now ours is priestly intercourse, and such intercourse with God must be according to what God is: we must be in His presence to intercede after His mind.

The fat was burnt upon the altar, and the blood was sprinkled there; it was not brought in for the common person, for the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest. The thing God was teaching was in Israel the impossibility of having man in His presence. He could not have Israel near Him. There was man's rule (under the law) just and perfect, with certain types of Christ; but God never came out, and man never could go in. In Christianity God has come out in grace to man, and man is gone in to the glory of God. So we see and have it in the person of Christ.

The trespass-offering is in the main identical with the sin-offering, but it is not sin in some positive evil done against any of the commandments of the Lord, but a thing that natural conscience can take cognizance of. Achan's was positive disobedience: there was no atonement at all for that under the law.

The last three sin-offerings having “and it shall be forgiven him,” but the first not, lead us to suppose that it is dropped purposely as pointing to Christ, the high priest. As any special application, it would be this, I suppose. In his standing as representing the people, there might be that in it. The difference is plain. The distinction between sin and sins as in Romans may be in the burnt-offering distinguished from the sin-offering to a certain extent; but here nature is hardly dealt with specifically. It is exceptional, if we have anything directly referring to sin in the nature. One of the things at times to be met is that some, like Wesley, define sin as the willful transgression of a known law, while others have said that a lust is no sin until it comes into an open act.

In the beginning of chapter 5 (ver. 1), there is the kind of oath that is different from voluntary swearing: “And if a soul sin and hear the voice of an oath” (that is, administered by the magistrate), “and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it, if he do not utter it” (i.e., give his evidence), “then he shall bear his iniquity.”

The Lord Himself said, “Swear not at all:” so we should not voluntarily take an oath, that is, of our own choice and will. But the Lord Himself when He stood before the high priest, the moment He was adjured, took the oath and answered when He had been silent before. It is not evil before a magistrate to swear, but good; it comes of evil otherwise. I should deny God in the magistrate if I did not answer when he adjured me. But to take an oath of my own will is to bring in God for nothing at all, profanely. So the sin here in this verse is not uttering, i.e., withholding evidence. In Ex. 21:6 (and twice in chap. xxii. 9, and once in chap. xxii. 8), “judges” is “Elohim” —God, and this because the magistrate is for God, “the powers that be are ordained by God.” We are to submit to them.

As for the manner of taking an oath, the king holds up his hand to take the oath: it is the commonest way of taking it. You are bound by that as much as by anything else. “Whatever binds is enough. Only I am adjured by God, because the magistrate represents God. There are questions of swearing which present more difficulty; as for instance going into court and swearing to recover a debt for yourself. This is just a case; but I make no rules for anybody: people are not entitled to do so.

There is a double figure in these chapters, not only one of Christ's sacrifice, but also of failure in the assembly, that is, of the saints now. Our whole position is changed now. We have no more

conscience of sins, but we see the way in which the value of what these prefigure is applied as in Num. 19, where they are passing through the world, so to say. There the blood of the red heifer was sprinkled seven times before the door of the tabernacle; it was (for us) settled there once for all. But when a man had touched a dead thing, he was not in a fit state to go into the camp and enjoy his place there, he was unclean and the water of purification must be applied to him; the water, the Holy Ghost by the word, was the witness of what Christ has done. This makes all the difference. Christianity asserts for believers the non-imputation of sins. What was of old was a sacrifice that worked like a priest's absolution now.

In verses 2, 3 we see the person unclean without knowing it. Yet he is guilty, but he cannot act as guilty until he knows it. God cannot look at sin. If I have a spot on my back, God cannot have me with that spot on. Some one may help me to get rid of it, but I am unclean with it. In Num. 5 there is a difference; in verse 27 it is mercy, but in verse 30 the man is to be cut off. What is cutting off? He is put out from God's people altogether. Occasionally God did it; sometimes the people stoned the man themselves. It means death of course.

In chapter 6:1, 9, the point is (and a very important one it is) that the fire was to be burning always. As in Isa. 6 all was from the brazen altar. There is no real prayer or praise, or anything of the kind, save in connection with the sacrifice of Christ; so in Rev. 8. He takes the fire from the brazen altar, in verse 5. The altar in verse 3 seems to me to be the altar of incense. Take it as a rule: no fire is used save off the brazen altar.

So in the peace-offering; they were iniquities if they went beyond the second or third day, because they were not connected with the sacrifice.

Continuous burning gives no cessation of the judgment by God according to a holy nature. It is burning all night, and, in a certain sense, for Israel, who are kept by Christ now, kept through His sacrifice which is perpetual in value.

One other point: in the meat-offering the frankincense went up to God entirely. The priests eat of the flour, but all the grace goes up to God. It was holy; and when the priests offered a meat-offering, it was all burnt. It is Christ Himself: there He is offerer and offering; and it was for no one save God Himself so to speak.

Israel took little of these things really up. Even the instructions of Deuteronomy are very different. All this is written for us. I doubt very much if any offerings, save the official offerings, were offered in the wilderness at all. Stephen in Acts 7 quotes Amos, and asks, “Have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, which ye made to worship them; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.”

Before the strange fire there was more freedom for access, but it was not made use of.

As to the peace-offerings in chapter 7: if the sacrifice were a vow, it might be eaten on the next day as well as the firs, if a thanksgiving, it must be eaten the first day. If there be more energy in the worship, you may carry it on longer (as here two days instead of one); but if it is practically separated from the victim burnt on the altar, it is unclean altogether and is rejected. You cannot separate praise or worship from the offering of Christ: without this it becomes a positive

abomination. A man may be singing a nice hymn with a thought of Christ in it; but being disconnected from Christ Himself, it is a mere piece of music and offensive to God. It is possible to make requests that the Holy Ghost gives to be asked and to find you are losing the sense of the person to whom you are speaking. Worship must be in spirit and in truth. It is solemn to give out a hymn. Take Hymn 151: are you speaking truthfully, in “unchanging fresh delight"? Perhaps you may be able to go up to it. Suppose I sing “O teach me more of thy blest ways,” this is very different: what are these blest ways, and am I learning them? Then again take “O Lord, how blest our journey:” I may ask, Is this true of myself? I do not say, Is it true? but, Is it true to me?

The waving is presenting before God; and the heaving is a little stronger. It is all owned as Jehovah's—all for the priests' eating, and then they eat it.

The drink-offering is universally the joy of God and man. It was thorough action between God and the people.

Chapter 210

Scripture Queries and Answers

Q. Will you kindly reply in the Bible Treasury to the following questions? I feel the subject to be an important one, and shall therefore be glad if you will add your own thoughts respecting it—1. Would the fact of servants not being slaves now, warrant the saying that one could not apply Eph. 6:5 to Christian servants, as they are not in the present day what they were when the apostles wrote?

2. If the exhortations to wives, husbands, &c, flow from not only the relationships but standing brought out in the earlier chapters, can it be true that the relationship of the servant is lost, because he is not a slave? How then can Christian servants in the present day serve the Lord as such; for as far as they are concerned the relationship is supposed not to exist, although that of wives, husbands, children, &c., does?

3. Is the “fear and trembling” there spoken of, used in the sense of fearing wrath or punishment, and trembling in consequence?

4. Is there not ground for watchfulness, lest the spirit that is abroad in the world should manifest itself, in any measure, in the ways of such as serve in our homes or otherwise? And does not the advocacy of such principles tend to unsettle simple minds, and to encourage the insubordination that is so rife in the present day among men?

Yours affectionately, F. W.

A. 1. The direct answer to the first point is that the Spirit employs the word οἰκέται, “domestics,” in 1 Peter 2:18, which simply means such as compose the household, and in no way refers to bondage or slavery. But these servants or domestics are exhorted to as thorough subjection as the Christian slaves in Ephesians, Colossians, or 1 Timothy.

No man can weigh the force of the Holy Ghost's appeal without feeling how deeply God's glory is concerned in their honoring their masters, be they ever so untoward. 1 Tim. 6:2 shows how they are to fool and act if their masters were brethren, as the verses which follow express the Holy Ghost's strong denunciation of such misguided souls as venture to teach otherwise, turning the Lord's grace to the worst pride and rebelliousness.

2. But even if the care of God had not provided such an answer, what could be more ungrateful and base than to avail oneself of the mitigation of circumstances as to modern servants to deny their duty to their masters? The truth is that the ideas of liberty in these days have modified greatly the state of husbands and wives, parents and children, scarcely less than that of masters and servants; but as surely as the relations subsist, the duty abides for each and all.

3. I should refer to Philippians Cor. 2, &c. to show that we ought not to lower “fear and trembling” to mere dread, of punishment, but view it rather as sense of weakness with that of solemn responsibility before God.

4. There can be no doubt that we have all to watch against the spirit of the age, lest we might be infected by it; the more because we may be unconscious of its evil and of our own dangerous nearness to it. There is a desire at work among men to burst all barriers and level whatever either checks men or is above them. Christ's servants have therefore in particular to be on their guard, if they would walk with God in holy separateness from that which characterizes the world, and will more and more till the day of the Lord.

Scripture Queries and Answers

Dear Brother, would you kindly reply, in an early issue, to the following queries?

Q. 1.—Is what is known among us as a “brothers' meeting,” entitled to be looked on as representing “the assembly,” so that its acts should he held to be those of “the assembly?”

2.- Is any meeting whatever, from which any in communion (male or female) are formally or tacitly excluded, entitled to be considered as “the assembly” or as representing it?

3.- Should I infer rightly from your May number that you would deem a “brothers' meeting” a simple reunion of those in “the assembly” who “have the rule,” for cooperation and counsel in matters of detail not calling for direct assembly action ? and that in cases when (acting in the spirit of Matt. 18:15, 16) they have proved unequal to the correction of the evil, and extreme measures seem called for, their only remaining function is to report the ease to “the assembly” to be dealt with there?

4.- Would it be proper for the “brothers” in bringing a case of the above nature before “the assembly” to do so in this wise: that they had gone into such a case and were satisfied that the evil called for excision, and that therefore such a one was no longer in communion? Or ought it to assume something of the following shape: that such a case had been before the brethren; that they had gone into the facts and found them as charged; that they had exhausted efforts to rectify the matter, and now, as a last resort, brought it before “the assembly” for its determination?

5.- In the latter case, ought “the assembly” to be expected to deal with the case forthwith, simply in view of the report and counsel of the brothers, or should time be allowed (unless in cases of notoriety or imperative haste) for individuals in “the assembly” who might desire it to inform themselves, in private, before assuming the responsibilities of action before the Lord?

6.- Would not the recognition of a “brothers' meeting” as representing “the assembly,” be a return to “system?” —the very principle of “a kirk Session?”

A.—A meeting of those who addict themselves to the ministry of the saints may rightly consult and decide on matters which concern the Lord's work and the saints, save in such cases as reception or excision, where according to scripture the assembly as such is called to act. But I know nothing of a meeting even of elders which could be said to represent the assembly. There is individual action, joint action, and that of the assembly: each true, and important, and sanctioned of the Lord; but one does not represent another. The assembly is itself and supposes the place of all, brothers and sisters, with the Spirit freely acting in their midst to maintain the glory and will of the Lord. But a meeting of chief men among the brethren is of great value, substantially of the elderhood in principle if not so now in name; for it is mischievous to be ever occupying the assembly with questions, the natural result of men who wish to set the assembly against ministry, and so

naturally use it for their own self-importance. But no individuals, however gifted, can act for the assembly, though they may be helpful to the assembly in enabling them to judge before the Lord, and they may morally represent the assembly to the Lord's eye for praise or blame. In general, too, cases of evil, which are rightly brought before all, are so plain as to leave no hesitation. Still there are seasons when the assembly might demand more time or evidence before the extreme act of putting away; nor ought the assembly to be hurried into hasty measures, by individuals, whose sole remedy for all evil (the strongest point of their own lack of wisdom and power) is exclusion. In every instance the assembly should weigh seriously and calmly, but in the sense of its own responsibility to the Lord, not at all as the mere executive of elders or chief men, who are liable to infirmity of various kinds; it has the presence of the Lord to count on in a way quite peculiar and is subject directly to Him alone. The question of acting forthwith or not depends entirely on the nature of the case; it should never degenerate into a venture but be the fruit of conscientious judgment in liberty before God. To act simply on the judgment of a supposed representative would be presbyterian, not as God's church; to act only for itself would be congregational. It is God's church; and in the present ruin the Lord graciously attaches the same validity even to “two or three” gathered to His name. If representation comes in rightly, it is here; in a certain sense the local assembly represents the church everywhere; and the church everywhere, in all ordinary cases, acts on the judgment of the local assembly. It is the presence of the Lord in their midst which gives it such weight. Church action otherwise is human.

Chapter 211

Scripture Queries and Answers: Galatians 2:16

Q. Gal. 2:16. It has been lately asserted on the strength of ■■ν μ■ in this verse, that, since it is by faith of Him who is the end and fulfilling of the law that men are justified, it involves in itself the full virtue of a legal righteousness. The apostle does not say, as he often does elsewhere, that man is not justified by works but by faith simply; but that he is not justified by works of law “except through faith of Jesus Christ,” that faith receiving as its portion not only a clearance from all legal blame, but by imputation the positive merit also of that righteousness of law, which, described by Moses, is found only in the man Christ Jesus and with the rest of His personal perfections carried to the account of those who have by grace their redemption and their acceptance equally in Him. It is by the obedience of One, as the same witness testifies, that the many are made righteous—language which, while harmonizing perfectly with the fundamental doctrine of sacrificial atonement, invites us to consider, not the definitive act of dying only by which the Son of God brought to its predestined close the course of His obedience here below, but the proved personal merit also of the man who gave Himself and all that He had shown Himself to be for our sins.....The tables of stone, fit emblems of its (the law's) own unrelenting character, and also of the intrinsic strength and stability of that Man who should perfectly discharge its claims, have disappeared forever.....No longer enmity, law is, in Christ, a part of that “great peace,” which is the eternal portion of them that, in the spirit of a justifying faith, serve still with their minds the law of God. Such is the statement: is it just?

Is it true, in short, that this is the natural force of the words ■■ν μ■ δι■ ■ησο■ as contrasted with ■κ π■στεως, and that it would be possible to justify the authorized version only on the assumption of a large ellipsis? “Man is not justified by works of law” (and therefore not justified at all), except by faith of Jesus Christ. Does the remainder of the verse, as it stands in the original, appear to forbid this?

Inquirer A. I do not think the smallest doubt can rest on the sense of Gal. 2:16. We have only to read the rest of the verse to make the meaning of the apostle perfectly clear, and more than clear if possible, earnestly contradicting such a sense: ■κ π■στεως Χριστο■ κα■ ο■κ ■ξ ■ργων ν■μου. That makes his meaning incontrovertible. But he adds, as anxious to insist on the point, δι■τι ■ξ ■ργων ν■μου ο■ δικαιωθ■σεται π■σα σ■ρξ. How this can be an explanation that we shall be justified by works of law by the faith of Christ, I am at a loss to understand. But it is a mistake as to the force of ε■ μ■ or ε■ δ■ μ■. Not that it is not used as “unless” or “except.” But its connection with the main idea of the previous phrase, and opposition to the manner there stated, is common: it is really stronger than ■λλ■, having the force of only, or but only. Compare Rom. 14:14, where the δι' α■το■ must be left out, and the unclean, or main idea taken by itself. Only in that case a thing is unclean, and the point is the opposition to the way or manner. It is exactly so here. There κοιν■ς! is the common idea, justifying here, δ■ α■το■ the special case hypothetically put and denied. Introduce δ■ α■το■ into the second member of the sentence and you make nonsense of the whole. And so you do here if we read what follows. So Matt. 12:4. It was not lawful for him to eat nor those with him, but only for the priests. So Luke 4:26, 27, but (or but only)

to Sarepta, which was not in Israel: so as to Naaman. There is always the contradiction of or opposition to something in ε■ μ■. The question is to what? In the first case it is of priests to common Jews; in Luke it is to “in Israel!” in Romans “by nature” or to him who so esteems it; in Galatians law and Christ; and always a common idea too, as in Matthew, lawfulness to eat; in Luke, widows or lepers; in Romans uncleanness; in Galatians, justifying. Hence the common idea is not uncommonly left out, and only ε■ δ■ μ■ put in, and the contradicting matter only stated. Meyer, Ellicott, De Wette, Hammond, Fritzsche on Rom. 14:14, all take it as “but,” or “but only” in Gal. 2:16. The difference of ■λλ■ seems to me to be that there is not necessarily a common point or subject as well as contrast, but simply contrast (not this, but that) with ε■ μ■! there is always a common point about which the contrast takes place. But it is a great mistake to think that it makes the whole antecedent clause the common point, which is what the question would do, so that the clause following it is a condition simply of the whole. You may see the grammatical statements in Klotz's Devarius, Hoogeveen or Viger, Bos' Ellipses, and Winer 654, (sec 66), the rest under ti μ■, and the Commentaries in loco. In both, passages from the classics will be found. The point of the difference of ■λλ■ and ε■ μ■ has not been noticed that I am aware of! but I think it will be found just.

There does not seem to me to be the smallest doubt as to the sense of the passage; at any rate, that it means what the question supposes by the grammatical force of the words is a mistake. Passages such as Rom. 14:14 demonstrate it, and others too, as Mark 13:32; Rev. 9:4. In 1 Cor. 7:17 it stands elliptically by itself for “only.” Rom. 3:27 fully confirms what I have said of the difference of ■λλ■. When the supposed common point is set as to be, and a condition or way of it is negatived, what follows ε■ μ■ is exclusive and contradictory of the condition or way. Thus ο■δ■ τις ■λλος α■τιος ■θαν■των ε■ μ■ ωεφεληγερ■τα Ζε■ς. A cause is supposed, ■λλος negatived, ε■ μ■ exclusive and contradictory of ■λλος; when there is no negative and the case supposed, the ε■ μ■ negatives the supposition and says why. Μιλτι■δην δ■ τ■ν ■ν Μαραθ■νι ε■ς τ■ β■ραθρον ■μβαλε■, κα■ ε■ μ■ δα■ τ■ν πρ■τανιν ■ν■πεσεν ■ν. If it had not been for the Prytanis, he would have fallen into it. There are cases where μ■! is left out, and ε■ δ■ put with a possible substitution. It answers in the cases of exclusion to νΖτΖ■ in Hebrew. See Wolff's Curae in loco. When the whole sentence is negative, the ε■ μ■ becomes a positive affirmation of what follows, as 1 Cor. 10:13, Mark 8:14, and others. Sch■tz's Hoogeveen gives a pretty full explanation under the words ε■ μ■ In result, the negation of works, or faith in Christ to the contradiction or exclusion of works of law, is clearly the sense of the passage.

Chapter 212

Scripture Queries and Answers: Remission of Sins

Q. Acts 2:38; 22:16. Is “remission of sins,” or “wash away thy sins” in these texts a question of faith finding non-imputation before God, or of administrative forgiveness on earth?

Inquirer.

A. We must distinguish between the work in virtue of which sin is not at all imputed to those that believe (even as to those about whom there was no question of baptism as Abraham), and the actual administration of the blessing upon earth, both fully revealed and actually applied, the work on which it was grounded being accomplished. This revelation of remission is clearly pointed out. It is promised in the new covenant, and recognized by the New Testament in the institution of the Lord's supper. “This is my blood of the new covenant shed for many for remission of sins.” John the Baptist was to bring the knowledge of salvation to God's people by remission of their sins. (Luke 1) The disciples were to remit sins, and they would be remitted (John 20); and the commission in Luke, the one on which (not that in Matt. 28) all preaching in the Acts of the Apostles is founded, whether Peter's or Paul's, is that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in Christ's name. In past times, righteousness not being revealed, there had been forbearance (Rom. 3); now that Christ has been offered, righteousness in the remission, or pretermission, of the sins that had taken place before (i.e. in Old Testament times) was proved. But this of course is not all. For God then not only announced to souls individually (for, however many heard, it was individually) but set up a system on earth in which the new blessings were found, based on two instituted signs, baptism and the Lord's supper, one initiatory once for all, the other the continual memorial of the Lord's death till He come and the expression of the unity of the body. Of this last it is not our business to speak now. But baptism was the entrance into that system within the precincts of which all Christian blessings were found as externally administered on the earth. The first of these was remission of sins, on the reception of which came also the blessing by the Holy Ghost; and even if this was extraordinarily given as to Cornelius and his house, still they were admitted in an orderly way to the common blessings of Christians here below. But the first grand blessing needed was remission of sins: through this was knowledge of salvation and actual reception of it where it was received. Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in Christ's name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. Peter does this when the Jews on the day of Pentecost were pricked in their hearts, and says that these are the things looked for: If you repent and enter into this divinely administered door of blessing, you will receive the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. He does not say, Be baptized and you will receive remission of sins, but be baptized with the baptism to remission of sins, become Christians where this blessing is found. They were baptized ε■ς to, or for, it: so to Moses, to Christ, to His death. It was the truth and fact to which they were brought: owning this, they would then receive the Holy Ghost. It was the profession they came into. If true faith and repentance were there, they got the present actual administered remission; if not there, they did not get it as we see in Simon Magus. It may be a hardening, but is no blessing to him who is a hypocrite.

Thus remission of sins is not the fact of non-imputation by the death of Christ (which last Old Testament believers had) but an actual status into which a person enters. I may have forgiven a person perfectly in my mind; but he has not forgiveness till it is pronounced upon him. Here there is no outward sign; where there is, it may be abused to self-deception, as we see in 1 Cor. 10. The simile is used to show the difference between non-imputation on God's part and administered or declared forgiveness. See the case of Nathan with David. (2 Sam. 12:13.) Observe also the connection of forgiveness with discipline where non-imputation is not at all the question.

Hence, when Paul was converted, Ananias said to him, “Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.” He entered then into an actually administered forgiveness. “Wash away thy sins” is of course a figure. It is not putting away the filth of the flesh that does it. But I come thereby into that which is proclaimed as the first blessing of the Christianity into which I enter becoming a professed Christian. If faith is there, my conscience is perfect according to the Christian system, and the other blessings follow; if there is profession without real faith, I am in the case of Simon Magus or of 1 Cor. 10; but I have been baptized to that. In Acts 2 and 22 the call is addressed to persons publicly under the power of the revelation and word of Christ; and they are then told what to do in order to obtain the blessings of Christianity actually here on earth, the path to perfect ones above. This must not be forgotten; for then they did enter, and for the first time, into the blessings attached to Christianity on earth.

Therefore Peter can say, in his first epistle 3:21, “Which figure also now saveth us,” taking care (as the proposition is general) to show that it was not simply the outward sign that did it. Hence, when he addressed those pricked in heart by his word, he (on the inquiry what to do) put the whole matter according to the commission in the end of Luke. They inquired for a good conscience; for this is the true force of the expression in 1 Peter 3: not “the answer” as in the Authorized Version, but the inquiry (■περ■τημα) for a good conscience. In Acts 2 they inquired for and got it. They were baptized to this truth and administered fact—remission of sins, and received then the gift of the Holy Ghost.

On the other hand, if a person (being not a professed Christian, a Jew for example or a heathen) was convinced that Jesus was the Christ, or Son of God, and would not be baptized, one would not say that his sins were washed away or that he was saved. See Mark 16:16. But quickening seems never spoken of in connection with baptism. The question raised is not life but washing away or remission of sins. It is not a question of non-imputation, again, but the administration of forgiveness here on earth, as the privilege conferred freely on the conscience in Christianity, in which forgiveness is administered as a present actual thing. The baptized enter into this; though, being an outward or sacramental institution, it may be merely a form.

Chapter 213

Some Observations on the Scripture Lessons of the Board of Education: Part 1

Sir, If we set his relationship for God apart (and if they on whom the education of the country is made to depend are to be trusted, we want no God, or at least can do better than He), I believe it is a just definition of man that he is a laughing animal; for there are some things, speaking as a man, essentially ridiculous; and this, sir, is one of them. Of course you know that I mean the so-called scripture lessons of the Board—the new authorized version of the lovers of education for the instruction of the poor Irish—a Board that honestly desires to provide the well-being of the conductors of schools. How kind and considerate!

But, sir, this is not all. Mr. Carlile, I suppose, knows Hebrew, and this is a translation. Nothing else would answer the purpose— “meet the exigency of the case” —cut the Gordian-knot that tied the destinies of just education, but that some one should sit down and make a new translation of the Bible, or at least such parts of it as were fit to be translated; and here it is with notes, critical, explanatory, and practical. I trust, sir, you will give due publicity to this important fact, for the benefit of others as well as the poor Irish children, that the translator knows Hebrew. He does know what Eden means, and he does not exactly know what Shaphan means; but, for the purpose of making it more clearly intelligible to the rising generation, he proposed to call it Shaphan; neither Coney nor Ischin, nor Daman-Israel, which it is called when the unknown animal is known, answering the purpose at least for Irish children: so we have given the original Hebrew.

As for Eden, very intelligible it would be to say, The children of pleasure which were in Thelassar; or Hasan, or Camah, and pleasure, the merchants of Sheba, and, or planted a garden in pleasure. However, the translator says it may be rendered either as a proper name, or as an epithet. And the translator knows Hebrew—knows Hebrew! knows enough of that, and everything else too, to set at rest all the difficult questions which have hindered Irish education time out of mind, and give just the quantum of scripture which will satisfy Papists and Protestants, Presbyterians, Arians and Socinians, and above all himself (God, sir, we must remember, is put out of question), with just the right sense and nobody to dispute it. O happy ages, that we should have one such man! Nothing wanted and nothing too much—a little bit of David's piety, and that of course rightly applied and understood; and a little bit of his own, which others may apply and understand as they like—a little of the Apostle Paul's commentary with his to explain it; and a little bit of his own without anybody to explain it at all; and those who shall not worship the golden image, set up, as it is, by these monarchs of education, with the trumpet of their own unanimous recommendation! A golden head of wickedness they are. Happy age! that we should have one such man to be the common instrument of so noble an oligarchy in enlightening the happy children of this once unhappy land; that Sabellians, and Papists, and Socinians, and doctors, should find one to make a new translation of the scriptures of God, which should satisfy them all, and enlighten the Irish in Hebrew, and the world as to his attainments. How interesting to see the poor little Irish children considering what Zaphnath-paaneah meant in the Egyptian language upon the authority of

Jerome, and comparing it with what others think, and the habits of the Chinese language; or studying the distinction between doctors and Heliopolis without knowing what others think at all! But then indeed the translator knows all this, though what all this is hard to tell.

There is one thing indeed I had forgotten, that the Board honestly desires to provide the well-being of the conductors of schools. Why the translator must have been aiming at the literary education of the priests—cramming them, I suppose, to appear in the new schools; and this is an instance of “the Board's” friendship and affection for them. Conceive, sir, I pray you, the thought that would sparkle in the mind of a poor little garcoon (after an account that lambs are supposed to signify some unknown coin, though the translator and the commissioners call them lambs) at these ominous letters, the LXX, and that coupled with such a rapid accumulation of uncouth names, Vulgate (pity we had not Jerome again and his prologus galeatus too about the Maccabees and some other books—I wonder will they appear in the new translation: why not? It is only a history framed without the slightest influence from any peculiar view of Christianity), and ancient versions. However, in the midst of these wonders, he has this comfort, that, though last not least the new translation leads him to the conclusion, which, with his ability to estimate an unknown Hebrew word, will be particularly satisfactory—that lambs mean an unknown coin. O fortunati nimium sua si bona norint Agricolae! More might be added, sir, to illustrate the mass of learning which has been accumulated in the new translation, as that Syrian means Aramite, for the use of schools.

But I have done with the translator now, sir. Of all the egregious instances of self-confident flippancy, this provision of Hebrew annotations for the benefit of the Irish children is the most ridiculous. We shall see just now its evil. But there is one serious comfort in it; the translator was even thought to be a Christian, and it gives one hope that this may yet be true, and that it is but a fall, a case when Christians may yet pray for him. It sets beyond all doubt what the writer has never doubted—that it was the snare laid for a man who felt dissatisfied with his situation as inadequate to what he supposed to be his powers, and was led to embrace one which seemed to give him the consequence to which he was entitled. We may trust he may feel the evil honor he has received, and that the praise of God is better than the feeling of self-consequence of ungodly men. I said, sir, I had done with the translator. With the commissioners I must deal seriously; for the weakness of self-confidence is a different thing from iniquity of principle and the mischief flowing from it.

We must bear in mind, for I, sir, at least shall never let it out of my mind, that the system has been introduced in the lieu of one in which the scriptures were read, whether Douay or protestant version—that this was the vital defect of the system, and that because it was opposed to the principles of the Roman Catholic religion. That is, sir—God in His wisdom had been pleased (for the mere right of man is the feeblest side of the question) to write a book for the instruction of His creatures for men. Certain men have stepped in and said, men shall not read it; virtually alleging either the incompetency of God to do it fitly, or His want of authority to do it at all: and rising up in effect to say, that what God had sent, the message of His love and wisdom and mercy, is unfit for man, or at any rate man shall not have it. This is the blasphemy of a system with which we, as Christians, have to contend—the blasphemy of prohibiting, not man, sir, to read, but God to send to His creatures the message of His own will in His own way.

The existing government, of which these commissioners are the instruments, have acquiesced in this. The principles of the Roman Catholic religion are in this to be acquiesced in. God is to be held not to be so entitled; and to hold that He is, renders any system, however otherwise innocent, vitally defective. To the maintenance of these principles the commissioners have set their hands, and that the devil may degrade, as far as possible, any who have any pretensions to Christianity, one becomes the instrument of producing a book which is to take the place—no, that it can never do, but be instead—of the scriptures: which alters them, because they will not do as they are. People may reason and tell falsehoods in prefaces. The scriptures are not used or allowed in the schools, and these lessons are; that is, they are instead of them. Men may talk, in miserable dishonesty, about introduction to the scriptures: are the scriptures allowed to be in the schools? Are they not excluded, and these brought in, because they are so excluded? I would rather far, sir, meet an honest opposer of God's word, than a disingenuous excuse for an act, which is to support the worst and most comprehensive blasphemy against God's authority which can be till Antichrist is revealed—the denial of God's right to speak to every one His will as He has thought fit.

I do not altogether accuse the translator of this disingenuity. He has hired himself to a citizen of that country, and they have sent him into the fields to feed swine. But, sir, in attempting to color the effect, we have the real character of the work admitted. Then, when they get to a certain point of the devil's delusions, they are unconscious often that their excuses are their condemnation. “No passage has been either introduced or omitted under the influence of any peculiar view of Christianity, doctrinal or practical.” That is, the selections have been made without the slightest reference to the truths which they contain. What could the devil himself wish more than to divest the scriptures of those powers of truth which apply themselves to the heart of man, and so turn them into a history, or vague and powerless exhibition of facts, without any purpose, unless to tell us what Shaphans were!

God has always a purpose, and a well-ordered purpose, in all He writes: this doubtless man would avoid. He would cull and pick and choose, and think it wisdom, with professed indifference to the purpose of God. Has Christianity no view of its own? Has God no peculiar view of man, in respect of which He has selected those things from his history, in which the character of His dealings has been manifested, and recorded as such, for those on whom the ends of the world are come? Yes, sir, but these are offensive to man, and God's selection won't do. A Mr. Carlile, or an enemy to God and man, one whom he believes to be the servant of Satan, must come and make selections, in which he must be either wiser than God in doing it, or else do it in order to divest it of all the power and point for the purpose of which God had so selected and arranged it. Away with the disgusting blasphemies! Such must be the result, sir. If I have the wisdom of God, I must have given it just as God gave it; if I have not, I must break in, in ignorance, upon the very purposes and the very connection which God has purposely, in His divine and active and considerate wisdom, therein established. But here, sir, it is made a boast that the influence of any peculiar view of Christianity has been excluded, that is, any view at all: for when there are many, which is in this sentence assumed, each must be peculiar. But they must have introduced the extracts with some view, or they could make no selection. They have a view, but a view which purposely excludes every object with which God caused it to be written.

But, sir, the point is, that God has a view, and has given scripture with this view. It is God's select history of the world, and it is from this that the enemy of God recoils. If it be a matter of indifference

which of two views of Christianity I adopt, it is perfectly clear that both are immaterial. And this is the form which infidelity is now assuming, and this is the form in which it is expressed in this selection. The next thing is, sir, that it is a comment; and a comment cannot be made without any peculiar view. If I apply one scripture to another, I affirm at once its sense. For example, I think many of the quotations from the new translation remarkably calculated to mislead, as affirming that to be their application to which they allude merely, having some other object in view, or which is merely the occasion of much further testimony. They have been taken out of the associations in which God has placed them, and set in those in which these infidels have placed them, without the opportunity of seeing or comparing them with those in which they really stand. And observe, sir, it is done with purpose. They are to learn the use of the sacred history from this. So that it is an authorized comment giving the sense and use of what they read; giving it as a poor wretched man has taken it from a few parts, perhaps misapplied, of God's vast and all-comprehensive word. Wretched compiler! I pity the degradation to which he has been brought. So that while they have not been introduced or omitted under the influence of any peculiar view of Christianity they do teach the use of the sacred history, which has therefore in fact no peculiar view at all, doctrinal or practical. This notion of peculiar view is very plausible with the infidelity of the present day, as it hates any peculiar view which will give that energy of truth which will rescue from the domination of Antichrist. Give all the scriptures, and we want none, for God will give His own. But a selection without a peculiar view is nonsense, save in the pointed deprival of scripture of all power of truth; and a selecting for other reasons besides the truth which it contains, must turn the very word of God itself into a broken cistern which holds no water: the last form of infidelity, the essence of it in those days, short of open rebellion against the Lamb, and the preparation of men for it. In a word, it amounts to an assertion that we may learn the use of the sacred history, its piety, and its doctrines too, without receiving any truth by virtue of which blasphemies against that truth should not be indifferent to us.

The divinity of Christ is a peculiarity with a Socinian. The distinction of persons is a peculiarity with a Sabellian. The unity of Christ's mediatorship and justification by faith, and the final sufficiency of Christ's one sacrifice, are peculiarities with the abettors of Popery; and I must divest myself of the consciousness of the existence of these truths, before I can select from scripture for the instruction of the young. The moment you select, you become a teacher. This book proves it. You must select for some reason. Give all the scriptures, and let them teach, and God's blessing will follow, But as a selector you are a teacher—a responsible teacher; and the point here selected to be taught is, that you may learn the use of the sacred history in total indifference to all the truths it contains; for a selection can be made from which its use can be learned where these truths have not been allowed to exercise the slightest influence on the introduction or omission of any one passage in it. In a word, not merely is the scripture thus excluded, but that is introduced from which children are to learn its use, independent of and to the exclusion of the truths which it contains. And the real way we are taught to read it profitably is to read it apart, and as man shall select it too, from the influence of those truths; in a word, to turn God out of His own word.

The peculiar truths of the Bible, sir, are the weapons of God's power over the heart of man. Take these out of the scriptures, and the salt has lost its savor, and wherewith shall it be salted? “What is the history of Abraham to me, but that he was the friend of God, that his very name reminds me that he is the father of all them that believe, that have the faith of that Abraham who believed God,

and it was counted to him for righteousness; and that it was written not for his sake only, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification. But the selection must be made without the influence of any of these things. The ties by which God has linked Himself with the wants, the necessities, and the sorrows of His creatures that He might deliver them out of them, developed in dispensations unfolding and unfolded by the glory of His Son Jesus, the “Word made flesh, must be broken, defaced. Anything which under divine grace could raise the energies, the feelings, and the thoughts of man, by the sympathies of God, and a love which provided objects such as naught but grace could give to hope through a freely wrought redemption, ending in the glory of Him who established it; all must be concealed. It is a peculiar view of Christianity, and the selection must be compiled from a book which contains it all fresh from God's own hand, and fraught with the tender character of God's own wisdom; and the child must read (without permission to wander into fresher pastures of liberty under the security of the good Shepherd) with this only care, that their influence be utterly excluded. Such, sir, is the professed object and principle of this new translation. As far as anything of scripture goes, we are to be delivered up to “the blighting influences of a cold and heartless skepticism, which, whilst planting nothing in the mind, can produce nothing but the extinction of its best hopes and efforts.”

But, sir, there is a remedy proposed. I know not, sir, why it is, but I am not yet quite used to the iniquity of these days. I never doubted the infidelity on which the whole of the new system of education was based, but the unblushing effrontery with which it is carried on in this preface, (while it cannot rouse my indignation—for these men are too bad for me to feel indignant about—while I doubt not they are wise in their generation in it,) so far amazes me as exhibiting the extent to which Satan reckons on the very form of principle being gone. There is a remedy proposed for the professed emptiness of all scriptural truth and principle by which this new translation is characterized. “To the religious instructors of the children they cheerfully leave, in communicating that instruction, the use of the sacred volume itself as containing those doctrines and precepts, a knowledge of which must lie at the foundation of all true religion.”

The first thing which I may remark here, sir, is the full confirmation of what I have previously said as to the exclusion of all scripture principles from that which has been substituted for the scriptures in the instruction of the children. For it is to another source here described they are left for the acquirement “of those doctrines and precepts, a knowledge of which must lie at the foundation of all true religion.” That then which is given in the school, as instead of the scriptures, is not merely free from peculiar views of Christianity, but does not contain those doctrines and precepts, a knowledge of which must lie at the foundation of all true religion. For these they are referred somewhere else. Does it contain what constitutes the superstructure first? I suppose not. What then? Nothing; and it is from that which thus confessedly contains nothing that the use of the sacred history is to be learned. And it is such a compilation which is an introduction to the sacred volume, and which is to lead to a more general and more profitable perusal of the word of God.

But we have here, sir, honestly afforded us what is really done, and the gross dishonor done to scripture, and the disgraceful character which is really meant to be by these lessons associated with it in the minds of the children, just dawning into thought. But is it ever meant that the poor children have the opportunity of receiving their impressions of scripture from scripture itself? Far from it, sir. These things, such as they are, are an introduction to scripture; but where is the

scripture they are to be introduced to? Recognized in the schools? Oh no! Excluded from them, by way, I suppose, of introducing them to it, making them thirst after forbidden fruit, while the selection is left empty of the doctrines and precepts which lie at the foundation of all true religion, in order to teach them what they are to thirst after; but where are the scriptures they are to be introduced to? They cheerfully leave the use of the sacred volume—to whom? to "the religious instructors of the children!" No, sir, the children must never have them. The rich may, because they will; instructors may, of what sort God knows the commissioners are upon friendly and affectionate terms with them; but the poor, sir, the poor children, are never to have them. It is not to their well-being the commissioners are looking. Well, indeed, they wrote their own judgment when they said, "They were honestly desirous to promote the well-being of the conductors;" for if ever there was anything which marked their heartless and base apathy, as to the poor children, it is this book; indeed as far as priests and infidels go, their honest desire, if honest it can be called, is to promote the well-being of the conductors.

And is it really so, sir? Does Dr. Whately—I cannot bring myself to call him Archbishop of Dublin—does Mr. Carlile—I sorrow when I think— does Dr. Sadleir, cheerfully leave the use of the sacred volume to priests to instruct children out of? Do they take away the scriptures out of their hands, and cheerfully leave them to the priests for their instruction? Am I right, sir, in reading that, "the use of the sacred volume is left to the instructors!" That it does not enter into the contemplation of these persons, that the children should ever see the book, but that they cheerfully leave its use to others to instruct them as they see fit out of it? This is such a gratuitous profession of apostasy of principle, such a profession of heartless disregard for the interests, nay the rights, in the sight of God, of the poor children, that (save as an evidence, as I said before, Satan was exhibiting how far he reckoned upon the destruction of the form of principle) it would be utterly unintelligible. They might have left it in the dark; they might, however heartless and unchristian, have said, They can get Bibles for themselves if they like it; but to show that they positively dissociated the children and any use of the scriptures, to leave it to the use of their instructors, and cheerfully too!

Oh! sir, if I were not used to these things, if I were not accustomed to evil, I could weep—I could weep for the church (oh! how fallen) whose leading characters are identified with such a system. But it is not to a haughty enemy I should tell my sorrows. The path of faith lies difficult but clear. But, sir, while they speak of a system to associate children without peculiarities, the whole system is in itself the infidel development of popery. The children were associated on the principle of reading the scriptures—a strong broad principle in which God sought His views of Christianity, and His authority was recognized; for the subjection to His word was the recognition of His authority. Here the children are given such parts of scripture as man chooses to select, as the authority of man—that is a fact—thinks fitting, and in such connections as man thinks fitting; and the use of the sacred volume itself is left to the instructors.

Why talk of different denominations being brought together? This is precisely Popery. The system is Popery. I care not now as to the principle (however I might in effect) whether the instructors are ministers or priests: the children are not given the scriptures, but delivered up to men, to whom the use of those scriptures is left for their instruction in the doctrines, precepts, and glories of Christianity. There is no other principle recognized in this statement. If you wish to exist, if you wish the principles of God (the principles on which and with which God has blessed you) to exist,

arouse yourselves, ministers, Christians, you that fear God. Talk not of parliaments and petitions, but arouse the minds of the people affected by these things. Testify about them to the people whose children would be sent to these schools of Satan, whose only dealing with scripture is to extract all the virtue from it, that the last instrument of God to rescue man may lose its reclaiming power. A mutilated scripture! (surely shall God's judgments come upon them!) from which that which is peculiar in Christianity has been excluded, that the comments of men to explain the nothings that are left may be introduced to them, their wisdom, and beguile the simple.

All that is valuable in scripture is peculiar, for it is a revelation, a revelation of that which is the supreme actings of God's love, whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, but as far above them as the heavens are higher than the earth. All that is the mere fruit of God's will, all that is the object of faith, must by virtue of its existence be peculiar both from what it is, and from being the object of revelation. Poor ruined lost man wants what is peculiar, or he is lost forever: everything that is not is but part of his ruin; all else is blessedly peculiar. By this as the subject of revelation man is subjected to God, for he receives it on the authority of God's word. It is the obedience of faith. Hence the two great points, the presenting the contents of scripture (the great peculiar facts and truths as such in their reclaiming power), and the authority on which we receive them; so that on the one hand we might be certified that the love contained in them was God's love indeed; and on the other, that we might be subjected to His authority; in a word, that our faith and hope might be in God.

In contending against scripture, Popery covertly, and infidelity openly, deprive us of both these. And so do these commissioners. The authority and instruction of man is substituted for God's, and the lessons are framed upon the principle, that nothing should be introduced or omitted from any peculiar view of Christianity. But this is not all, sir. They positively teach none. Here is that which is given of scripture to the children in the school—that which it affords suitable to them. Here are the lessons which they can learn out of it. But they are taught by the arrangement of their schools that these cannot teach them the doctrines and precepts, the knowledge of which must lie at the foundation of all true religion. They must go to instructors—to men—for that. Such is the direct conclusion from the arrangement, that which is meant upon the face of it, and indeed so stated in this preface, the use of the Bible being loft in it to the instructors. This is a positive profession of the worst form in which Popery arrays itself on this subject. If, sir, the publication of this preface shows how completely infidelity prevails, that the contrary feeling does not even arouse the professors of it to any guardedness in its expression, we may at least feel thankful that those whose eyes have not been closed by its delusions should receive a warning from its openness as to the position they are placed in. But I cannot help asking what will the clergy do as to the archbishop, who cheerfully leaves the use of the sacred volume to the popish instructors of the children? Is there any integrity left?

(To be continued.)

Chapter 214

Some Observations on the Scripture Lessons of the Board of Education: Part 2

(Concluded from page 174.)

But I must turn briefly to a few details as to the volume itself. All that is objectionable it would be endless to notice. In the first place, What is the effect of the existence of such a book? Two translations were in existence. One which Christians in this country put forward as substantially containing the words of eternal life, and for which they appeared in verification of the things which they brought forward to those whom they believed to be in darkness as of the love and mercies of God Himself, concerning their everlasting peace. But there was also another in use among a large body of those amongst whom they labored as witnesses for the word and love and truth of God, or at least recognized by them as more peculiarly their own Testament. But on comparison of these they were found to be so similar as to give credit to the version which they had been taught to consider as heretical, and very commonly the work of Satan himself; and to discredit those who had attempted to invalidate its authority as a bad book, and thereby keep them in darkness; whereas it was now found to be so much accordant with their own, and, what was more important, to substantiate all the truths by which those who labored among them as Christians sought to deliver them from their darkness into the light of God's own truth. And thus, under the circumstances of the case, that which was in itself an evil became in effect, in many instances, the instrument of God.

But what is the effect of this new translation but to declare that neither the one nor the other of them were sufficiently correct representations of the scriptures to be used in the ordinary instruction of children in the schools? A portion is taken from one here, and from the other there, while both are frequently made to yield to the fancies of the new translator, who can validate the one here, and invalidate the other there, or often reject, and whose authority therefore is paramount to both. Nothing can exceed the malignancy of thus unsettling the authority of the only sources from which the peasantry of Ireland drew their knowledge of truth, and to which alone they could refer as corrective of errors, or by which they might know the certainty of those things which have been taught by the Lord and His apostles. It is precisely the point at which Popery had been aiming all through. Thus far, then, the direct object of this work is to deprive the peasant entirely of the authority of scripture in any reference he may make for truth, by virtue of that in which he is instructed from infancy, under the authority of those to whom that instruction is entrusted, in which Protestants themselves have acquiesced! And if he be indeed led to scripture, as the preface states, he is led to a discredited version, for which he has now no substitute, for the other is alike invalidated, and the unhappy man is left in all the uncertainty as to his best hopes, in which it is the delight of infidelity to plunge him. And can we be surprised, if we know anything of human nature, and especially of the habits of those to whom this work is addressed, if the authority here put forward shall effectually invalidate their confidence in scripture?

And thus for the sake of a paltry selection for the use of schools, from which the truths of scripture are excluded, and to minister to the vanity of one man, all the existing translations are declared worthless, all the corrective sources of truth are, as far as these Commissioners are able to do it, at one blow annihilated for the whole unlettered population of the country. Here is a work coming with the authority of government. The Commissioners of Education: two Archbishops, and. they both of one place: a doctor of divinity, who is one of the educators of ministers themselves; and a dissenter who has a great deal of divinity without being a doctor at all; besides Dukes, and Remembaucers, and lawyers, agreeing not only to reject the scriptures, but in what they did admit of them, to reject both the existing translations; and this, not even preferring any other, but that in fact and representation of the mind of God it was so imperfect and so uncertain that the opinion of a single man was sufficient to subvert it. Nevertheless, the authority of these Commissioners is pledged to this: not only that this is truth, but "truth recorded under the influence of inspiration;" whatever previous translations may have been, this the child is given to know is a record "under the influence of inspiration."

And thus again, further, we have practically the authority of man made available for what is truth, and what is recorded under the influence of inspiration. The scriptures they had certainly wore not; for the translator is sufficient authority to alter them, but on the authority of Dr. "Whately, Dr. Murray, &c, the children may receive this, and this much, as recorded under the influence of inspiration, and therefore trust in it; and therefore, observe, not trust in either of the existing translations; for if this be, they are not. But this is not all: much is added and mixed up with the extracts which is not scripture. I shall be told that usually this is printed in different type. Why usually? But in point of fact they very constantly are not so printed. And can we be surprised if, with the authority there is for this work amongst the people, such a radiance of light and authority sanctioning its statements—a mere mask such as this—be lost sight of by a child—and not only are large portions given with only this discrimination, but even a note appended upon a point of translation, so that the distinction between what is scripture and what is not (some of the abstracts being printed in smaller type) is made as indeterminate and various as possible: but the whole, observe, given to be received as conveying the history upon the authority of man. It is quite manifest that, while what is scripture is made to rest on the authority of man, the whole would be received by the children at school as one book with equal authority, as coming from the men from whom the authentication of the scripture itself came: if there were any difference, the notes being looked upon, filled as they are with a smattering of learning, as the most important, and freshest from the authority itself, of the whole; for we must observe that this further principle of Popery has been secured in this selection, namely, that the scripture is not intelligible without notes. I am not conscious of a single principle between God and Popery (for that is the true light to see it in), which has not been carefully secured on the side of Popery, with the acquiescence of Protestants, by this little but most important tract.

Extracts under the influence of inspiration, as man will have it, abstracts, headings, and notes; they are all, moreover, presented to the child as scripture lessons: and this, sir, you must observe, is no augmentative effort, in the course of which its real character may be brought to light, but the habituation of the mind from childhood to these feelings and thoughts, by Protestants and Roman Catholics both, and the practical obliteration of every point which characterized Protestant truth and the authority and certainty of the word of God. Besides this, sir, care has been taken to

separate one part of scripture from another; so that, such as it is, it should not be received in continuity and associations in which God has placed it, but in those into which man should draw it; and this, sir, instead of the healthful and refreshing streams of God's word.

In a word, while the testimony of God has been impugned in its authority, deprived of its authenticity, but presented ordinarily to the poor, and all its truth abstracted as here given, so that irreparable mischief being done to all, care is taken that the poor little Roman Catholic shall not see the light, the Protestant is ensnared by the wicked and lying presence of Scripture Lessons. I would call them Commissioners' Lessons that people may know and note the real baseness of their origin, that they come from a body the majority of whom deny the faith of God, as all are unworthy of the confidence of men. Let scripture be given in the full current of its own blessed truth, and it will not only refresh those that indeed drink of its waters, and carry comfort and fertility all around to the dwellers on its banks where we perhaps can trace no immediate communication of its life-giving power, but, if the evil of man should be thrown upon it, carry it all down till it is lost in that ocean from which it took its source; and all shall still drink of its streams in abiding freshness and unchanged purity. But if we will be turning it into the reservoir which our pride has made for itself, the potty pools which may seem indeed great works for man, not only shall we lose the blessing, sir, but mound upon mound may be raised to stern the evil of its perverted power, but alas! in vain: it will surely break all through, and lay all below in one wide scene of stagnant desolation and corruption, which none shall inherit and none shall stay; but the cormorant and bittern shall possess it, the wild beast of the desert, and the wild beast of the island. Evil shall reign there; and he who would then seek to remedy it shall but lose himself in the deadly evil and malignancy of the whole scene around, the seat and witness of the power of the enemy and of the wrath of God.

Such, sir, will be the sure result of an effort to make communion between that which God has utterly separated by the very existence of the stream of His living word. It shall prove the desolation of infidelity and wickedness over both. No person can estimate the mischief which the successful use of these falsely called Scripture Lessons would work. It is the most deliberate triumph of papal infidelity which has yet been achieved. This has been put out as a trial. The man, sir, who voluntarily gives up one sentence of scripture breaks his responsibility to God and gives up all. He gives up its authority, and then all is given up. He has given up the great point of allegiance to God. But in point of fact, I challenge Dr. Whately, Dr. Sadlier, and Mr. Carlile, to show one single point on the scriptural question between Protestants and Roman Catholics, which has not been given up to the Roman Catholics—by the publication we are considering. I challenge them to show a single point yielded by the Roman Catholics, and a single one not yielded by themselves. And, Protestants, remember, this is a point of allegiance to God; and God will judge by the public acts of the body, and will take the acts of its leading individuals as the act for which all are responsible. For how came it to be done, if it was only the act of an individual? These things will be taken by God, and are, as representations of the state of the body. No church ever fell by evil from without; but if it give up its allegiance to God, why should God preserve it?

If Protestants looked upon Dr. Whately, Dr. Sadlier and the like, as mere common blasphemers of God's word, and with much more responsibility than the Roman Catholics, because they say “we see,” and therefore their sin remaineth, could these acts of theirs take any effect? Clearly not. If, on the other hand, I am told the nominal place of authority in which Dr. Whately is set makes it

wrong so to deal with them, makes it necessary to own them, then, I say, the church of Ireland is gone, its judgment is pronounced, the sign of judgment is on it from God; for by virtue of its very structure, by the obligations it is under, it is obliged to allow of evil, of the denial by its authorities of the principles on which it was founded, as acknowledged by God. The Protestant church exists by virtue of the acknowledgment of the word of God. This word has been denied by its public authority, and the inhabitants of the country cheerfully left for the instruction of popish priests. The church of Ireland either can or cannot reject this apostasy, from the public sanction which it now receives within its bosom. If it can and does not, its guilt will be apparent. If it cannot, then, I say, God is exhibiting the circumstances which will justify His proximate judgment. It has ceased to be available for the purpose of His public testimony in the land, the very object for which it had its position. The hand of God is upon it. He may bless its ministers individually; but the authority of the system may be used for the purpose of denying the principles on which God founded it. It has been so used, and then comes judgment.

If Dr. Whately must be recognized, after this book and its preface have gone forth, in the place of authority in what God heretofore set as the Protestant church, the judgment of God must be recognized also by the church to which he belongs, as impending on it. I repeat it, a shameful and vital dishonor has been done to God by the Protestant church, as to the very principle for the maintenance of which God instituted and owned it. If it cannot reject and repudiate it, then, I say, it stands with the public acknowledgment, that it is absolutely incompetent to maintain this position; nay, that it is competent for one holding its authority to be joined with Papists and Socinians: in denying this principle, and for what is God to own it any longer? Is Protestantism to be sustained when it allows of the far worst part of Popery? and for what? Those concerned may slight the question, but this will only prove the truth of the result. We shall see how it will be in fact. Who is worst, the Roman Catholic who instructs, or the Protestant teacher, or professed teacher, who cheerfully leaves the instruction to them, and the children of course to their instruction, taking care only that they shall not have the scriptures? Judge ye. I know how God judges; and if the Protestant ministers do not exert themselves, they shall have a share of the judgments that must follow.

To secure the better acquiescence in the authority of this tract, the translator in the preface tells us that the extracts are a literal translation from the original; but, in the unhappy blindness which often accompanies the desertion of God's word in seeking another object, he has contradicted himself in the same pages: “The translation has been made by a comparison of the Authorized and Douay versions with the original.” Now every one knows, sir, that the Douay is not, and does not profess to be made from the original at all, but from the Vulgate; and, truly, forming a text by the comparison of this and another translation with the original is not translating at all, certainly not literally from the original. And there are passages taken from the Douay, and important ones too, where is little or no authority for positive variations from the original save that of the Vulgate itself. It may be very well to set upon the front of the statement that it is a literal translation of the original. It was thus Mr. Belsham exerted himself. But it is too bad to find in the same page that it is a comparison of the translation of a translation with another translation which we have after all; and that, in fact, this authority is knuckled to in many instances. Will anybody believe that planting a garden from “the beginning” in Eden was introduced instead of Eastward, because it was more literal? In “Eden” he was forced to retain the authorized translation for sense' sake, though the

Douay and Vulgate translate it otherwise; but then he was to give no advantage to either side: so Mikkedem must be translated “from the beginning,” though he confesses the Hebrew word has both senses, and the place is confessedly to the Eastward. But he was not satisfied with putting “in Eden,” but he must assert the integrity of the Douay, “pleasure,” in a note, the assertion of which would make nonsense of this and other places if “translated literally,” and which is directly negatived by the points as far as they go. But this, sir, is comparatively an immaterial instance, save as to the wickedness of unsettling all the certainty of scripture in the minds of man.

We may pass to others. The Second man from heaven, heavenly; here we have in a note, or the Lord from heaven. Now, sir, this is no question of translation at all. If the compiler translates “heavenly,” he does so by admitting a different reading, which, though probable, is not received in the original by any. But it is in the Douay: and here the Douay has not merely its own value as a witness, but its conventional value as one of the things to be compared with. Therefore, in spite of the original, we have the Douay version; and indeed I have not stated this fully, for although several manuscripts exclude the term “Lord,” the “heavenly” has scarce any support at all. This is pure concession to the Douay and Vulgate.

In the same lesson we have the note to the Douay version, of which so much has been heard; that the sense is the same, whether we read it according to “the original” “it,” that is, Jesus Christ, or “she,” the woman. What do people mean by the sense being the same, “for,” &c.? Do the Commissioners think the sense is the same? No, sir, the children must be troubled with the intricacies of philological speculation. Not that any honest man would have any difficulty here, but Popery must be yielded to in its worst form: this is a pure concession, and that of the word of God, to Popery.

The Commissioners, or some of them, it is manifest, did not think the sense the same, or the note would not be given as a “note to the Douay version.” But they would not exercise an independent opinion. It was not the truth of the thing, but concession to what they believed to be false. And this is the character of the whole work. “Divers of the fathers and the Latin.” What is all this? Is it right, or is it wrong? “Translated literally from the original.” Why so carefully preserved, if it be wrong? What is there of it in the original from which the translation has been made? It is written, sir, “resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” I do definitely charge here the whole of the Commissioners with introducing here what they know to be false, to yield to, or secure, according to the credit of their respective parties, the credit of papal falsehoods. But are the poor children to be subjected to this? They must, sir; they cannot help themselves. These are days of liberty, but not for them.

If ever there was thorough devilish wickedness, it is this Commission; and the worst people in it are the so-called Protestant ministers: we shall see their end.

I may note here a most important comment in the shape of a question: “Why has death passed upon all men?” —a question no way warranted by the structure of the sentence.

In the next lesson, sir, we have a gross dereliction of the original to let in the Douay, and that in a point directly involving the worst principles of Popery. “Whosoever is not just [or righteous] is not of God, nor he that loveth not his brother.” Now, sir, what “original” is this translated from? The Vulgate and some of the fathers: what miserable dishonesty is this! “He that doeth not righteousness” is the original and the English version. But the Douay must be conciliated. No other

possible reason can be assigned for the deviation from the original.

I said, sir, that it was in connection with the worst principles of Popery by which a man is not just as before God by virtue of the work of Christ, but his own state. We have a very Jesuitical note on this subject which shows that it did not escape the Commissioners' observation, and may account for the departure from the original here. “Righteousness, justice. The word rendered in the Authorized version, righteousness, and in the Douay, justice, sometimes signifies the virtue of justice or uprightness, and sometimes the condition of a man, who is just, or justified before God, through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. To express the latter sense, Roman Catholic English translators are accustomed to use the word justice. Protestant translators more frequently use the word righteousness” (p. 39). The cold-hearted wickedness of these men! Well said the prophet, “The unjust knoweth no shame.” They use a different word, and to show their unity the Commissioners will use both; but as to sense Roman Catholics and Protestants are quite agreed as to righteousness or justification. “This latter sense,” common of course to both, is expressed by one, so, and by the other more frequently (not always, I suppose,) so. Indeed! In fact, translators are the only people concerned.

It is a pity we had not Mr. Carlile before, and we should have been spared all the trouble about this way of righteousness. There is no question as to the truth of God. All the artillery of the Council of Trent might have been spared. “A man,” quoth the note, “just or justified before God through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, and this latter sense,” &c. The Council of Trent says, “if any one says that men are justified either by the imputation of Christ's justice (or righteousness to Protestants) alone, or by the remission of sins alone, grace and charity being excluded, which is poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit and inheres in them; or also that the grace whereby we are justified is only the favor of God, let him be anathema.” Again, sir, “this disposition or preparation justification itself follows, which is not the remission of sins alone, but also sanctification and renovation of the inner man through the voluntary reception of grace and gifts; whence a man from unjust becomes just.” Again, the instrumental cause is baptism; and again, “with which endued” (i.e., the justice of God) “we are renewed in the spirit of our mind; and are not only accounted but are truly called and are just, receiving justice in ourselves which the Holy Spirit distributed (or bestows) to each as He will, and according to the proper disposition and co-operation of each.” Convenient it may be to Mr. Carlile, and it may be to others of his coadjutors to get this “latter sense” identified with the righteousness which is imputed to us if we believe on Him who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. Convenient it may be to show that Protestants, when they speak of righteousness before God, have the same sense (merely more frequently using a different word) as when a poor misguided Roman Catholic talks of justice, which, according to the well-defined opinions of the apostate Council of Trent, he is taught must be inherent; and that all simple confidence in the remission of sins by the offering of Jesus Christ once for all, by the which He has perfected forever them that are sanctified, is but the vain confidence of the heretics.

But where is honesty and the truth of God? The direct force of this passage is to give the notion that justification before God, through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, is held in the same sense by Protestants and Roman Catholics. Perhaps Mr. Carlile does, and very likely his so-called Protestant coadjutors may; but if it be so, where is truth, or what are we to expect as to the education of the poor, if the Protestant Commissioners forsooth think thus? Here is a positive

announcement, under the notion of accounting for two words being used, that the sense in which Protestants and Roman Catholics consider this subject is the same; and yet, if I am not much misinformed, Mr. Carlile thinks he gains much from his Popish coadjutors in this matter. But I never knew a case in which the devil was not more cunning than anyone that undertook to do his business in the hope of cheating him. And so it is here. I said the note was Jesuitical; Popish hands have been in it, I am sure, for, while it identifies the Protestant righteousness with Roman Catholic justice, it completely secures the popish view of the subject itself. And in anxiety for this, the very sense of the passage is sacrificed; for the note, if scrutinized, is nonsense. It first states that justice, in the Douay, means either the virtue of uprightness, or the condition of a man, &c.; and then states that Roman Catholic translators use the word justice to express the latter. And now notice the result: justice, and therefore Protestant righteousness, signifies the virtue of uprightness or what? The fact of our acceptance with God? The forgiveness of our sins? Righteousness being accounted to us? Are these ideas admitted? Not at all, but the condition of a man who is justified before God, through, &c. Now this is exactly the distinction of Popery, the distinction of the Council of Trent.

This one note is the surrender of the vital question between Protestants and the deniers of the truth of the Church of Borne; and for which the Lord gave Himself, just as the book itself gives up the authority of the scriptures. Say, that Protestants mean by righteousness, besides practical uprightness (as in the previous perverted text, “he that doeth not righteousness"), a man's being accounted absolutely righteous before God, by virtue and on account of the death, and evinced by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that this consists in the absolute non-imputation of all or any sin: the Roman Catholic starts away. The truth has touched the vitality of his system. Tell him that justice means the condition of a man who is just or justified before God through the atonement, &c, and he agrees at once. Tell him, this is all a Protestant means by righteousness, and he says, You may fraternize with us: there is nothing to hinder you. And in truth there is not. And why put in the note at all? The text told the truth; and therefore the note must be put in to say, that, by believing in God, Abraham was in the condition of a man who was justified before God through, &c, and that in fact this was all Protestants meant by the words.

What God means, sir, is not the question with the Commissioners. They must, somehow or other, make the scriptures suit both parties; but the way we see they do this is, where the scriptures speak plain Protestant sense, the passage is not to be left out, (that might give a handle,) but, what is worse, it being introduced is to be shown in a note that Protestants understand it in no other sense than Roman Catholics themselves do. Either Mr. Carlile and the other, so-called, Protestant members, introduce this note, or the Popish members. If the former, then we have an open willful purpose upon their part to neutralize the truth of scripture; where left to itself, it speaks Protestantism. If the latter, where scripture passages speak Protestantism, the former are obliged to allow the latter to introduce their comments with their sanction, that Protestants themselves think no otherwise on these subjects than they do. But they do, sir; and though Archbishops may deny the faith and take part with Papists, and though Mr. Carlile should give up the authority and obliterate the truths of scripture which he once professed, I trust there are many, if needs were, to lay down their lives for what they have been doing their utmost to suppress in this book and their whole work in this matter and to deprive their poor countrymen of (though that they are not). They have taken away the key of knowledge; they would not enter in themselves, and those that would

enter in they hinder. They have done worse; they are giving the sanction of the profession of the truth to those who are doing so of old. Of the two at this moment, far rather would I be the Roman Catholic Archbishop than Dr. Whately or Mr. Carlile; and I must ask, if Popery be recognized, what business has Dr. Whately to be Archbishop at all?

I have said sufficient to show the character of this book to those who have ears to hear. Others I cannot expect to influence in these days of apostasy. Those who love money better than principle, and seek the cover of the name of Archbishops, and Protestants, for their own acquiescence in infidelity and Popery, may be expected to receive their bounty and rejoice in the wages of their iniquity; but the curse of deceived thousands will await them when all is unveiled.

I might mention other instances of the sublime morality which their suppression of parts of scripture has secured; as that concubines were an inferior sort of wives which men were permitted to have in ancient times—by God, I suppose, though it is not stated whether before the fall, or whether it was an allowance to their passions after it. But when principle is gone, such things can excite no surprise. They fancy it is virtue, and they must rescue scripture—virtuous men!—from the charges to which it might be liable, when they cannot help stating the facts as God stated them. Though why this should have been introduced at all, unless to state that “concubines were permitted,” it would be hard to tell. But these are trifles; the principle of the book is the thing. It is badly executed indeed besides; immaterial things introduced, no scriptural thread in the story, as alienated from the scriptural concatenation of the subjects as possible, a sort of epistle and gospel, collectanea to suit the tastes of the compiler, everything to efface the forms and associations of God's scriptures, and to present merely an allowance framed by the wisdom of man out of scripture; and this itself not under the influence of any peculiar views of Christianity, doctrinal or practical; the open renunciation of Protestantism in form and substance; in form the scriptures, in substance as here stated. And so much so, that, where a passage might seem to favor Protestantism, it is expressly renounced in the note.

Now, sir, to preach Protestantism is one thing. That was not done in the old schools, unless the scriptures, even the Douay version, are Protestantism. But openly to renounce it and deny the scriptures is another; this was reserved for Dr. Whately, Mr. Carlile, and Dr. Sadlier, not for themselves, but under color of their profession, for all the poor children in the country. A comfortable conscience they must have at the thought, if this system succeeds, that as far as they can do, the children of 2,000,000, have been deprived of the scriptures, and of 5,000,000 completely, whom they cheerfully leave to the instruction of Popish priests. So at least, they say. I do not envy them their cheerfulness.

And here I close my painful task, in which we have seen the first fruits of a commission, founded on infidelity, in a work whose chief object is to desecrate the authority, and destroy the certainty, while it robs us of the truths, of scripture; and delighting in a skepticism, which, having no peculiar religious views at all, if the scripture should force any upon us, will take care to explain them away: and, having lost all regard of God in its desire to please men, will take care to do this toward them who are in authority, while the poor children, who are nominally committed to their care, they cheerfully leave to their instructors to teach whatever they please; only taking care of this, that, so long as they are under their control, the fresh breathings of God's healthful and health-giving word and Spirit shall never reach their thirsty and gasping lips, while all they shall mix up for them,

willing or. unwilling, they must take. Well done, good and faithful servants!

Christian friends, the true light in which to look at it is this: there is no government in Western Europe now (that is, within the limits of the Roman Empire,) which is not either infidel or papal. Almost the only public profession of the form of truth, which substantially remains within its existing limits or power, is the profession of a large body, however faithless, in Ireland. Against this the powers of Satan are directed, and in this effort the leading moral instrument is the new Board of Education. The document on which' it was founded was a public manifesto of this. The conduct which it has pursued is here shown to be suitable and accordant to it. The authority of the scriptures is surrendered and their truths covered.

Rouse yourselves, therefore, Christians. Trust not in man, nor in any child of man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in princes. I expect them to have much success. It is a day in which wickedness is allowed to have much success, that it may meet its reward: but if we are faithful to God, they can have no success against us. Christians, therefore, exert yourselves; it is the wily effort of infidelity to poison and destroy your children, and the children of all around you. There is no help in your effort, I warn you so, but in God. Trust not in yourselves; lean upon God, and He will be with you. I have told you, nay they have told you themselves, that the governments of the earth with which we are concerned are infidel. Do you think they will care for the truth, or those who hold it? They do not pretend to it, for there is strength and favor in God. I say, trust in Him, act as Christians, and God will own you. I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you bestir yourselves, that those who have ears to hear may escape this engulfing effort of infidelity. This is a question of Christianity: let every man do something to rescue the children from them. I do solemnly warn you all, Christian friends (and I think I have proved it, if proof is needed) that this is the effort of infidelity to destroy the public profession of the truth, and the souls of the children that are ensnared in it, and I warn those that are engaged in it, that they are involving themselves in the final judgments of God.

Chapter 215

The Sovereignty of God and the Responsibility of Man

The accompanying table was drawn up in order to resolve the difficulties of a person who insisted that if by the decree or sovereignty of God a certain number of men only were to be saved, by a natural conclusion, the rest by a similar decree were lost, it mattered not what their opinions or ways were.

Assuredly, if we draw our deductions according to man's ideas, this would be the case. But faith does not rest upon deductions, whilst drawing them: we often meet with plain texts which contradict men. There are many things in nature which we see and believe, but do not understand, and cannot reason upon. If our minds are formed by and according to the word of God, we shall find that man is always held for a responsible being, and is judged and condemned for his own sins, and not by any pre-determined decree of God.

Before proceeding farther, it may be well to examine the table itself, which exhibits in a marked way the purposes of God, and the responsibilities of man. Of the nineteen passages in Exodus presented to our view, all the authorities agree, that nine of them, namely, numbers 1, 2, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, attribute the hardening of Pharaoh to the will of Jehovah. Number 19 says nothing of Pharaoh himself, but only of the Egyptians in general. Of the rest, numbers 6, 7, 10, attribute the hardening to the king himself. To these last however we must add number 16, which, whether by the rendering of Mr. Young, or that of the Englishman's Hebrew Concordance, is clearly the act of Pharaoh. For the rest, numbers 4, 5, 8, 11, mention the hardening as a matter of fact without determining the agency. Eighteen of our numbers are thus accounted for. The only one that remains, number 3, is exactly of the same form in Hebrew as 5 and 11, and should be added to those numbers, and are so translated accordingly by Mr. Young, the Vulgate, and Arias Montanus. Thus to sum up the hardening of Pharaoh is in nine instances attributed to the Lord; with one more number 19, of the Egyptians in general; four to Pharaoh himself; and five with the agency not stated.

The Lord ever acts for His own glory or name. “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout the earth.” (Rom. 9:17.) Yet the king of Egypt was responsible, even his own people and the surrounding nations being witnesses. First we have Ex. 8:19; “Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God.” Secondly, (chap. ix. 20), “He that feared the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses.” Thirdly (chap. 10:7), “Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God.” Fourthly (chap. 11:3), “Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.”

Sufficient evidence this, that these judgments were telling upon the people of all classes, increased and deepened eventually by the judgment on the firstborn, and more terribly still by the overthrow in the Red Sea, when the Lord said (chap. 14:4), “I will be honored upon Pharaoh; that

the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord;" and again when the people said (chap. 14:25), "Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians." Did not this great deliverance for Israel form the never ending theme of praise from Ex. 15 to the end of their history? See Psa. 78; 105; 106, &c.

What now did the nations of the earth think of this deliverance, whether as to spreading the name of the Lord, or as to Pharaoh himself? Did they look upon him as a stock or a stone, without responsibilities, in short like a beast without any conscience? Let scripture testify. First, there are the bolts and bars on the gates of Jericho and the witness of Rahab, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us.... for we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you, when ye came up out of Egypt.... And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt.... for the Lord even God, he is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath:" a rebuke indeed to the Israelites for not having gone up in the first instance, as if God, when He gives a command, does not put things in train for its fulfillment. This woman mentions the passage of the Red Sea, which had happened forty years before, as filling the Canaanitish nations with terror, so that from the first the way was open into the land.

The Philistines afford us another striking witness against Pharaoh. The ark of God was with them, and it was a question how to get quit of it, and of an offering to the Lord. (1 Sam. 6:6) The priests and diviners are called for. They recommend the people to "give glory unto the God of Israel.... Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go and they departed?" Here is not only a witness three hundred and fifty years after, of the fact of the Exodus, but it is an acknowledgment from the priests of a foreign nation of the perverse conduct of Pharaoh. It is a conclusion drawn by the natural enemies of Israel, whatever the secret purposes of the Lord might be as known to Moses, that the king was righteously judged, as having hardened his heart against the God of Israel. An oppressor before the Lord interfered judicially on behalf of His people; when this interference took place, Pharaoh still refused to own the hand of One mightier than he, in spite of the testimony of the magicians and of his nobles, and of the devastation and misery which his obstinacy was causing. His feeling still was, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." (Ex. 4.)

A few words more will suffice on the subject of God's purpose of sovereignty and man's responsibility, which quotation from Rom. 9 gives occasion for, as showing that whilst the elect are vessels afore prepared unto glory, it is not so with the wicked, as to being afore prepared to destruction, but they are judged for their conduct. "What if God willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath (margin made up, κατηρτισμ■να) to (or, for) destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?" (Chap. 9:22, 23.)

In the case of the wicked, so far from being elected to eternal misery, we find that God endures them—vessels of wrath—with much longsuffering, fitted not by Him but by their own deeds for destruction. The word καταρτ■ζω means to correct, repair, mend; then in its participial form fitted, prepared. The word does not suppose a decree of God, but a work of man. So that, whilst it be true that Christians are "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4), and are "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (ver. 6); and

whilst also it is true that during their lives they receive the call (“Whom he did predestinate them he also called,” Rom. 8:30), again “us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles” (chap. 9:24), yet it would never be right to say, that lost sinners were in a parallel way elected to reprobation. No. Putting aside for the present the case of the heathen, we can say at all events as to Christendom, “For this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thess. 2:11, 12.) It is evident that the condemned ones are so dealt with because they believe not the truth, not that they were elect for condemnation. This leads on to one point further concerning the wicked. It is clear that there is a judicial hardening after much long-suffering on the part of God. It was so of Pharaoh. It was so of the Jewish nation when Christ was in the land. “For this people's heart is waxed gross.... lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.” (Isa. 6) This prophecy of their blinding, written more than seven hundred years before, took effect at last by the mouth of Christ; and Paul, in pursuing them into distant countries, used it again of them in Rome, “Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias, the prophet, unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear and not understand,” &c. (Acts 28:25 - 28.)

And is it not a very solemn fact, that this will be the last condition of Christendom, as we quoted but now from 2 Thess. 2:7 - 12? A judicial blindness and hardening, after much longsuffering on God's part, yea, for centuries. Will there be a single person amongst those who have lived in the midst of gospel privileges—who will blame God Himself for this condemnation? No, every mouth will be stopped—men will depart into a place originally prepared, not for the wicked and impenitent, but for the devil and his angels. Matt. 25:41.

Let us observe, whilst we believe both statements, namely, of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, we are not pretending in a logical way to reconcile them. Perhaps it is never intended as finite beings that we should in this world. There are abundance of paradoxes within the sphere of our own existence which we believe but do not reconcile. If this be the case in the affairs of the lower world, shall there be nothing for us to believe without reconciling in the regions of the upper? No; let us yield unhesitating obedience to, and have unshaken confidence in, the word of the living God—believe what we find there, and leave to our blessed Lord to explain to us the apparent discrepancies therein further or not as He will. Difficulties there will be, and “things hard to be understood;” but it is only the unlearned and unstable who wrest them unto their own destruction.” (2 Peter 3:16.)

Finally, it may be held as certain that those who are saved are saved by grace, through the electing love of God, and that those who, in the very precincts where that grace is operating are lost, are lost by their own fault.

pharaoh's case.

no.|text.|iiebbew|hebrew tense|authorized|young's|vulgate.|kemarks.|

| |wobd.|and conjugation|vehsion.|translation.| | |

1|Exodus|■■■■■■■■|1st person|I will harden|I strengthen his|Ego indurabo|To bind fast.|

|iv. 21.| |singular future.|his heart.|heart and he doth|cor ejus.||

|||Piel.||not send the people away.| ||

2|vii. 3.|[redacted]|1st pers. sing.|I will harden|But I harden the|Do.|To be hard.|

|| |future. Kal.|Pharaoh's heart.|heart of Pharaoh.|||

3|vii. 13.|[redacted]|3rd pers. sing.|And he hardened|And the heart of|Induratumque|Arias Montanus|

|| |fut., with cop.|Pharaoh's heart.|Pharaoh is strong.|est cor P.|Et roboravit|

|||Kal:|| ||se cor P.|

4|vii. 14.|[redacted] |Adjective,|Pharaoh's heart|The heart of|Ingravatum|Grave cor P.|

|| |Masculine.|is hardened.|Pharaoh hath been hard.|est cor P.|Arias Montanus|

5|vii. 22.|[redacted]|Same as|Pharaoh's heart|And the heart of|Same as|To become|

|| |No. 3.|was hardened.|Pharaoh is strong.|No. 3.|heavy.|

C|viii. 15,|[redacted]|Infinitive|He [Pharaoh]|And he [Pharaoh]|Ingravavit (P.)||

|ver. 11,||with copulative.|hardened his|hath hardened Ms|cor siram.||

|Hebrew.||Hiphil.|heart.|heart.|||

7|viii. 32,|[redacted]|3rd pers. sing.|And Pharaoh|And Pharaoh|Same as||

|ver. 27,||fu,t., with cop.,|hardened his|hardened his heart|No. 4.||

|Hebrew.||Hiphil.|heart.|also at this time.|||

8|ix. 7.|[redacted]|3rd pers. sing, fut., with cop. Kal.|And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened.|And the heart of Pharaoh is hard.|Do.||

9|ix. 12.|[redacted]|3rd pers. sing.|And the Lord|And the Lord|Induravitque||

|| |fut. with cop. Piel.|hardened the heart of Pharaoh|strengtheneth the heart of Pharaoh.|Dominus cor P.||

10|ix. 34.|[redacted]|Same as|[Pharaoh] hard-|And [Pharaoh]|Auxit peccatum,|Two verses|

|||No. 7.|ened his heart, he and his serv.|hardeneth his heart, he and his servants.|et ingravatum est cor ejus, et|in one.|

11|ix. 35.|[redacted]|Same as Nos. 3 & 5.|And the heart of Pharaoh was|And the heart of Pharaoh is strong.|servorum illius, et induratum||

||| |hardened.||nimis.||

12|x. 1.|[redacted]|1st pers. sing.|I have hardened|I have declared|Ego enim||

|||preterite. Hiphil.|his heart.|hard the heart of Pharaoh.|induravi cor ejus.||

13|x. 20.|■■■■■■■■■■|Same as|But the Lord|And the Lord|Same as||

|| |No. 9.|hardened Pharaoh's heart.|strengtheneth the heart of Pharaoh.|No. 9.||

14|x. 27.|Do.|Do.|Do.|Do.|Induravit autem Dominus cor P.||

13|xi. 10.|Do.|Do.|Do.|Do.|Same as No. 9.||

10|xiii. 15.|■■■■■■■■|3rd pers. sing.|When Pharaoh|When Pharaoh|Nam cum|Englishman's Heb. Concordance “hardened to let us go."|

|| |preterite.|would hardly|hath been pained|iuduratus| |

|||Hiphil.|let us go.|to send us away.|esset P.| |

17|xiv. 4.|■■■■■■■■■■■■■■|1st pers. sing.|And I will|Then I have|Same as||

|| |preterite. Piel.|harden Pharaoh's heart.|strengthened the heart of Pharaoh.|No. 1.||

18|xiv. 8.|■■■■■■■■■■|Same as|And the Lord|And the Lord|Same as||

|| |No. 9.|hardened the heart of Pharaoh|strengtheneth the heart of Pharaoh.|No. 9.||

19|xiv. 17.|■■■■■■■■|Part sing.|I will harden|And I, lo I strength-|Ego autem||

|| |Piel.|the hearts of the|en the heart of|indurabo cor||

||||Egyptians.|the Egyptians.|Egyptiorum.||

Chapter 216

Hints on the Tabernacle

Ex. 25 begins the instructions for the tabernacle. First, they were to bring all the different materials, and then “according to all that I show thee after the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.” And again, “after the pattern of all that was showed thee in the mount.” These were the “patterns of things in the heavens,” or antitypes of things in the heavens. We must not bring in the highest relationships here. That is, connected with what has been said about priesthood, as “Father” is the highest name for us, so here you find all judicial questions settled. Such matters as cleansing, and all that was responsible down here, are dwelt with, and so on; but no relationships, save Jewish ones. It is this makes the Psalms, beautiful as they are, mischievous in the use men make of them, because souls get into a false relationship with them. You never see the Father's relationship to the child in the entire body of Psalms. It is referred to as an analogy, but not the relationship itself. There are instructions how to walk in faith in this world, but they never put a person in heaven; the Christian class of relationships could not be, for it was not revealed; but many beautiful expressions of faith, confidence, and piety which apply to us all.

To me it is a remarkable thing that we have here the shadow of good things to come, not the very image of them. There is a most wonderful exhibition of what is divine, and yet it contains in it provision for a connection or relationship with what is fallen. Thus what is an altar for? In heaven you get an altar, and on earth pictured out the heavenly things themselves where Christ is gone; still it secretly kept in redemption, and, by sacrifice upon it, all was provided for, and a certain connection with heaven by means of what is earthly.

The existence of an altar and a laver supposed impurity, yet the third heavens are figured there and the throne of God, but along with that an unrent veil. There was a holiest, but no way into it; so that it all has a certain character of revelation of God, and yet of a hidden God after all. Thus we see in it mere connection with heaven before anybody could enter there, and that comes from foreshewing Christ—the perfect—by what is imperfect.

The first thing described (in chap, 25) is the ark, made of shittim wood, and covered all over with pure gold, inside and out, and it said, “thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee,” that is, the law. Now you could not put law in the Father's house; but you could put it where God was in a relationship with man, which regarded him in a judicial manner, as I said. Take the Hebrews, where you have the highest Christian expression of all this; and there we have boldness to enter into the holiest, but we are not sitting in heavenly places. No person ever thought of dwelling in the tabernacle, that is, another set of ideas. God dwelt there, but nobody else.

The moment man dwells there, I must get the Father, and also complete freedom of relationship to Him as such. The moment God revealed Himself as Father, you get the ground on which the relationship was founded, and then comes priesthood, and also adoption, and heirship of the glory. This is what frightened the disciples on the mount of transfiguration (I mean the “excellent glory,” that is, the cloud, or the Shekinah); “and they feared as they entered into the cloud,” that is,

as Moses and Elias entered; it was a new thing altogether to the disciples, a new idea, and a fact before them that produced the fear.

Was not Moses in the cloud before? The cloud came down, and God talked with Moses, but Moses did not enter the cloud; the cloud was more than the holiest. Moses went up, but he never went into the cloud to talk with God, though the cloud covered God from the people. It was the sign of God's presence as when Miriam talked against Moses. (Num. 12) But when you have the cloud on the mount, it was pure law, until Moses interceded with God for mercy; so in itself it was accompanied with thunderings and lightnings—not grace at all. Until Moses got the mercy the second time he went up, he did not go in with God. If Moses went into the tabernacle, that was approaching God; but still it was not like being children in a house, it was approaching a God who will estimate whether you have a right to approach Him or not.

God was here in a certain character, and if man was not fit, he could not go there, for there was moral estimate of what man was. Now the Father has sent the Son; but then it was nothing of the kind, it was purely a question of whether man could approach God. The contrast is brought out in Hebrews, taking Hebrews in the highest way. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus: this is what makes us competent; but still for us God is a consuming fire, estimating everything. The temple was the Lord's house, Jehovah's, and Jehovah was His Father. We were noticing in Corinthians the three names of God in the passage, “I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord (Jehovah) Almighty.”

Christ revealed the Father's name, for He was Son. It was not that man could go to God, but God was revealed to man; it was not sitting in righteousness to see if man could go near, but God was coming out in grace to take man in to Himself. Then you can see what is so terrible in confounding the Old Testament condition with ours; that was only the shadow of good things to come. Evidently it is a solemn truth, whether we can go to God or not; it is a difference in the starting point of the whole being. And more still, it is the Father's eternal love that is thinking of me, though I am a sinner, and meaning to give me such a blessing.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is more contrast than comparison: you have a veil, but it is rent; priests dying because they could not continue, and One who cannot die; sacrifices that were memorials of sins, and a sacrifice which is such as to be proof that sins are no more remembered. The Epistle is not the old system Christianized, so to speak, but another bearing of things altogether.

You have the blood put upon the ark or mercy-seat. The mercy-seat itself is of pure gold. There you see the absolutely divine thing, You see something as to man when the law is put in the ark, because that applies to man, and shittim wood too is in the ark; but the covering is divine righteousness absolutely.

Shittim wood, they say, was a kind of acacia, and figurative, in general, of the human side of things, as gold was of the divine; for when you have a covenant in the law, man is brought in; but the covering was of gold only, and this was divine alone.

There is a physical reason in it too, for they could not have carried it else. There was no appearance of wood, all was gold that was seen, but the covering is pure gold altogether. Then you have the cherubim, and the whole a throne: “he sitteth between the cherubim.” The cherubim seem to be symbols always of judicial power. The seraphs are only in fact named in Isaiah, and

there they say," Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." It was judgment looked at in connection with holiness more than with authority and government. In the Revelation, the four living ones are both cherubs and seraphs. They have six wings and cry, "holy, holy, holy," having the likeness of a man, calf, lion, and flying eagle. Here the cherubim are connected with the judicial throne.

The four faces are the attributes of God in a way. The ox was called a cherub sometimes, though I do not know why. In it is the permanence and stability of judgment; the power of it in a lion; the rapidity of it in the eagle; and the intelligence in a man.

There was another thing in this divine throne—the covenant was there; the terms of the covenant were the law. You have no seraphim here, but it is the throne of judgment just as much. And there is this fact: the cherubim were of gold beaten out of one piece with the mercy-seat. They were divine. And they were together, with their wings stretched out, looking at the covenant, all the attributes of God securing the covenant and judging righteously.

Remarkably enough our rationalists in their researches have found in Nineveh winged things, bulls and lions, and images of cherubim, and so on. It just shows the utter folly of their system, for when Ezekiel has the cherubim, he has these animals sure enough; but they are merely to support the throne. For God is above; they are mere attributes, and God over them.

Here in the tabernacle they were not fully manifested in that way. It is the throne of God, and the cherubim are of one piece with it, look towards one another but downwards fixedly at the covenant, with their wings stretched over to cover the mercy-seat. When Solomon puts his cherubim in the temple, they stood up with the tip of one wing touching one wall, then two tips met in the middle of the house, and the other tip of the fourth wing touched the wall on the opposite side, and they looked outwards, because all the attributes of God were going out to man.

The reason the ark is mentioned as carried then into the temple is because the tabernacle was in ruin. Once men carried it into Dagon's house; now Dagon was part man and part fish, and when the ark went in, the man fell down, and the fish only was left in place. This had its meaning. Now Shiloh was all pulled to pieces when Solomon took the ark and set it in the temple. The Philistines had taken it, but God maintained His own glory (all else must go for nothing); and He watched over it step by step wherever they led it about, and finally took it from them.

It was a cherub at each end and all gold, simply divine, a sign of God Himself, as it were. "And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee." That is first of all, and chief; but no Father sending the Son here. There is the meeting God in righteousness in a certain way, but it is God dealing with man, responsible man, and setting up His own throne in righteousness.

Then you find the table of shittim wood, overlaid with gold and upon it the shewbread always. Then the candlestick of pure gold with beaten work and seven lamps for burning oil. These were on the two sides, and in the same place outside the veil.

But the altar of incense is not described yet, because this is for approach and not for display. The description of the vessels is broken in the middle here by the appointing of the priesthood. First the things that are from God coming out, and then, after the priests are appointed, the things which

are wanted for man to go in. So, in the holy place, there is a table and a candlestick. The table is “before Jehovah,” the number twelve in the loaves on the table, and seven in the lamps; the one is the sign of government in the creature, and the other, of what is divine light in the Spirit; and this is simply divine in its nature. Twelve is government on earth; as constantly one gets it so. Seven is what is spiritual, bad or good, but commonly good. Hence, as to these two numbers, they are both perfection; but one is perfection in a spiritual way, and the other is perfection in a human way. Seven is the highest prime number, absolutely indivisible, nine may be divided though not by two. Whereas twelve is the most divisible of the numbers, divisible by all below its half except five. Their use (seven or twelve) is a matter of fact, and there is a kind of moral reason why they should be used; twelve apostles, twelve foundations to the city, twelve thrones, twelve patriarchs, twelve tribes, and so on. Thus there is the divine light on the one side, and the human order according to God, or God's order in man, if you please, on the other side of the holy place; not in the holiest of all.

The church ought to give out the light now that is true in the power of the Spirit.

The golden altar follows, because we are not yet going in; the altar is for going to God, and so the priesthood comes first before you can have the golden altar.

Afterward come the glory itself and the court of the tabernacle. There are three unities in the tabernacle. It is Christ Himself; then the church, “whose house are we;” and then it is the heavens. He was the tabernacle, and the veil was His flesh; and we are His house; and then He went “through the heavens.” (Heb. 4:14.) God dwelt in Christ, “the Father dwelleth in me;” in the house the church, God's habitation; and in the heavens. All we have had was inside the tabernacle.

The loaves have nothing to do with the church; they are the perfection of administrative order in man. Of course these are all mere images, just like the city, which is a cube. Now a cube is perfection, but finite perfection measurable every way and equal; but you can find no end to a circle, or corner anywhere, to measure from, and which not finite but infinite rather. A cube I come regularly to the end of each way. Perhaps Christ answers more to the most holy place, because you get “the veil, that is to say, His flesh.” Then we read, “He that built all things is God,” and Christ went through all—the court—the holy place, and the most holy place. It is from this earth, up; this earth is the point of departure, for Christ went up from the earth through all the heavens.

Inside was where nobody could go in; there was neither display nor approach. Outside, the incense altar was approach, and the table and the candlestick were display. So until the rent veil, nobody went in, “the Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all, was not yet made manifest while as the first tabernacle was standing.”

In the ark I have God Himself sitting on the throne of judgment; and in it as Christ, all that God could require from man was absolutely there, and God was there too. There is divine judgment, but it is there put into connection with man's responsibility; that is, God's measure of man's righteousness, if you please, not what it is, of course, but what it ought to be. You notice in the Hebrews it is not the temple but the tabernacle that is always referred to. Scripture says we have “boldness to enter into the holiest;” and so we do in spirit. The veil is rent; so that, when we go to worship, we go into God's own presence, we go beyond the veil—inside the veil. Our position is, that the veil was rent from top to bottom, and we go inside where God is. What God is showing

under the law was, that man could not go in; “the Holy Ghost this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest.” Whereas now the Holy Ghost shows that it is; all Hebrews being contrast in that way between what was and what is. The rending of the veil in Christ's death has let us into God's own presence. It did two things, the rending of the veil—it put away all sins for us totally; and also it opened up the way for us to God; so that now, through the work of Christ, we have all opened up for us into God's own presence, and we are without sin when we get there. There are other and higher things, even than this, in the Father and common truth; but all this is necessary for us to go to God.

“Moses was faithful in all his house,” God's house, for the tabernacle was not Moses, but God's house. The house is all one now in that sense, though Hebrews omits notice of the rending of the veil. Perhaps the omission is on purpose. It supposes a rent veil, though it is not stated in so many words. It would have to be rent for the Jews in the millennium; but it is not rent to them, as I believe. The Jews get all the good of the veil being rent, looked at as Christ's death; but, Christ being then on earth, they have not to look through into heaven to see Him.

The court has its place, it was only where the tabernacle was; and it is not the earth exactly nor is it the heaven; if you take it merely as a figure, it is the created heavens.

The “heavenly places” of Daniel do not correspond, “heavenly places” being taken as a general term both in Daniel and in Ephesians.

When Christ was cast out of the world, He was put upon the brazen altar, so that the court is like the heaven as being out of the earth where man was; but scarcely heaven either, for man could not put Him there.

Then you get the court of the tabernacle made, but not the laver here. The camp is earthly or fleshly religion, and, when Christ's death proves that man cannot be in relationship with God, at least in that way, and therefore the blood goes into heaven so as to take my title there, I must have done with human religiousness; and then having an inside place with God, I must have an outside place from the world. Morally, Christianity is turned into a camp again, and, to carry it fairly out, there must be a sacrifice and priest too; that is just what popery has done, and they have given that old character to what Christianity is; sacrifices on earth, and priests on earth going to God for you because you cannot.

But when I get sacrifice carried outside, it is revealed that there cannot be such a thing; and the law is but a shadow in itself, though in it, you find certain elements which are very instructive in going to God. But the moment you apply these things to Christianity, every element is in contrast. Christ has gone through the heavens, the veil is rent, and there is positive access to the holiest. All is just the opposite now to what then was. When we have heaven, we have done with a worldly religion and are outside the camp. And this is the very thing that now characterizes all intelligent Christian; he cannot be adapting the world to God, or God to man. Taking the system as such is to set aside the truth of Christianity. We have the altar, but not that of incense and no laver.

The highest point that Judaism reached was that the priest could go to the veil, but not the people. The priest could have the external display of God amongst men in a priestly way; but there was no going to God Himself. As a rule the veil was on them, but this varied with their spiritual apprehension. Moses might have understood some things. God says of him, “thou hast found

grace in my sight, and I know thee by name." But he stood all alone, he took the veil off his face when he went in to God; but what characterized Israel was the veil on.

The veil is the Word made flesh—Christ—fine twined linen, the positive purity of the nature; and then all the graces embroidered upon it. You get the same here in the first covering of the tabernacle; it is made of the same thing as the veil; it is Christ's human nature. God had no interest in putting colors there without a meaning. If you compare one scripture with another, you may learn what they mean. It is the same with the heavenly Jerusalem, certain things are clear, but you must be careful; there is no temple in it, for if a temple is glorious about God, it hides God; but there, it is God's own glory seen.

Then you get the dress of the high priest; more for Israel than for us, and therefore I do not go into it minutely; but there is the beautiful expression of Christ's care for His people, only the immediate reference is to Israel. Λ coat, a blue robe, an ephod (and in the ephod gold or divine righteousness), and with that, a stone on each shoulder that clasped together the back and front parts of the ephod; and then the breastplate (the breastplate and ephod being essentially the priestly robe). Then we have all the names of the children of Israel, six on one onyx stone and six on the other, on the two shoulders of the priest, and so he carries, as it were, the weight of the people; then in the breastplate again, the twelve names on his heart and the Urim and Thummim were there too, lights and perfections, the judgment of the children of Israel. The Jews' idea of it was that the divine glory lit up the particular letters that gave the answer to an inquiry. In all is a complete picture of the way that Christ cares for His people. He bore the judgment of His people, not here atonement, but the iniquity of their holy things.

This only takes up their lowest condition. It does not testify of Christianity. In a priest, I get one from whom I am separated, for he has to act for me; but when I look at my proper condition as a Christian, I am member of Christ's body, and of His flesh, and of His bones. I am also walking on the earth and have failures, and difficulties; and these all have their needs, and to them priesthood refers. In Hebrews you never get sins referred to as the subject of priesthood, save on the great day of atonement. The priesthood of Christ is continual help to whatever we need as we walk on here. In Hebrews it is first a question of access to God as such. How can this be? The answer is, I am perfected forever by the one offering, and have no more conscience of sins, and so we can go in even boldly. I do not know what place priesthood can have now as to that; it is done already; and then inasmuch as we are perfected in that respect, we have priesthood provided. The frequent common use of priesthood now—the ordinary idea—is a mistake altogether. But when I look at my other character in communion with the Father and Son, it is not that my righteousness is altered; but if I have let in an evil thought, my communion is blasted and then the priesthood is to restore my soul; for I cannot think of God having communion with evil in any way. I remember this question being raised twenty-five years ago.

These then are the priestly garments; but Aaron never went into the most holy place in them; he should have gone in whenever he liked, or at least it was the Lord's will. Nadab and Abihu failed at once with their strange fire, and then the high priest was prohibited going in. But having got the priest with a miter also—holiness to Jehovah—he bore the iniquity of their most holy things. I think he wore that miter even on the great day of atonement when he put off the other garments of glory and beauty. It says he was to bear their names continually before Jehovah.

The words “crowned with glory and honor,” in Heb. 2, are the same as in the Septuagint. (Cf. Ex. 28:2 of the LXX with Heb. 2:7. 9.) There is another thing which is interesting, and which I believe has its truth in Christ; there was a golden bell and a pomegranate alternately on the hem of the robe of blue; it is testimony and fruit; it was that his sound might be “heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.” There was fruit-bearing and testimony, like the early and the latter rain, I should think. It is the two characters of the Holy Ghost's action, testimony and fruit-bearing, the sounding bell and the pomegranate.

Their consecration is seen in chapter 29 and all the sacrifices are together there. Then the moment we have Aaron consecrated, in chapter 30 you have an altar to burn incense upon.

You may notice too that Aaron is anointed with oil, by himself all alone, because he represented Christ. I mean without blood at all; and this is a point of importance. He and his sons were to come together, and they were all washed. I have no washing of this character save the partaking of the divine nature— “which thing is true in Him and in you.” But the distinctive point is, when you come to the consecrating: Aaron is first anointed with oil without blood; and then, when the sons are taken, he is brought in with them to identify us with Christ. And blood is put on the tip of the right ear and thumb and toe, giving complete consecration to God in thought, act, and walk: the same as in the case of the leper, only in the leper there is a question of cleansing a sinner. It makes a great difference” that Christ was consecrated without blood-shedding; of course He did not want any, whereas we do.

The priest being there, we have the altar of incense. The things we have had were the manifestation of God coming out; now we have to approach to Him. The burning of the incense is at the golden altar; it is intercession. Incense was to go up regularly, continuously, as the lamps were to be kept burning, constantly in use. This was the time of service to God, and it was renewed. The lamps were dressed for day and for night.

Then the ransom money comes in, and remarkably there is all the people for whom Moses intercedes: they must be identified with this service. If you number them, you seem to make something of God's people. It is not by blood here, but rather the fact of their giving atonement-money; and He did make them of some importance, even by the fact that they had to be ransomed, though man is a poor sinner if he is ransomed. It comes here because the priest is coming to God, and he cannot go to God except for a ransomed people. Christ is Priest or Advocate, not for the world, and not for the elect either, but for other believers, who must get their place, those who are given to Him out of the world, and believe in His name.

Then comes another thing, the laver; this is not washing the body to be made a priest, but here the priest washes his hands and feet; it was not the washing of consecration; but, when consecrated, he must be perfectly pure for God, and he must wash his hands and feet. Only in our case it is walk, not work, and so it is feet only for us. He was to wash every time he did any service whatever.

The washing of regeneration is not priestly washing; but after that I come inside as a priest, and get the full place of a priest, then follows priestly washing of hands and feet, a washing for those who are within.

The water is the word in its own purity from God; but the place in which I get it is the print. The sinner must have the new nature in order to come in; but then when he says, I must be with God every day, this wants a washing of hands and feet. Until the priest was consecrated, he could not go to the altar or laver at all. Then what is the water of the first washing in chapter 29? That washing is the washing of water by the word—born of water and of the Spirit—and this is never repeated; whereas, every time they served, they washed their hands and feet.

Then, as regards the anointing oil, it was not to be poured on man's flesh; a man must be a priest to have it. You cannot give a nature; and the anointing can only be of a nature that is of God. “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us is God, who also sealed us.” (2 Cor. 1:22.) No human flesh could have that. And no one was to imitate the anointing oil either. On mere human nature you cannot put anointing; you cannot anoint man, looked at as man, nor put the Holy Ghost upon it. As to mere power, He can make a dumb ass speak, but this is not anointing. So with the perfume, it was that which was to go up to God. If I do a gracious thing, it is acceptable, and these sweet spices give us the graces in Christ, &c, at the altar, His intercession, a sweet savor used in that way.

As you look at all this, of course it is quite imperfect as regards our condition; but the provision is clear; and it is most interesting to see God coming out, by table, candlestick, and brazen altar, and then man going in to God, with laver and altar of incense.

From verse 34 to the end of the chapter is the incense. The incense-altar was the ordinary place, frankincense was put upon the meat-offering, but it is not this point here.

In the millennium the Jews will have the true sabbath again, and all the sacrifices will be repeated too, and the feasts, save Pentecost—which belongs to us. The sin-offering, peace-offering, burnt-offering, meat-offering, and the trespass-offering too, are all named in Ezekiel for that day.

Next they made a golden calf. Moses was getting all these things for them, and they in his absence make the calf. It is afflicting, but withal exceedingly beautiful, the intercourse of God with Moses, consequent upon the people making the golden calf—how, in the midst of all the ruin, faith, under grace, can have closer intercourse than when there was no ruin. Moses never had so close intercourse with God, as now when the people had made the calf; and it was while the calf was in the camp. And the way in which God meets Moses is beautiful, “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” And then Moses grows bolder still, and says, “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.”

There is another thought: the ground that God gives for destroying the people is precisely what Moses takes for God's going with them, when once grace has come in. In chapter 32:9, 10, the Lord says “it is a stiff-necked people, now therefore let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them.” And then, in chapter 34:9, Moses says “Let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people.” So God's reason for consuming me would be my sin; and my reason for asking God to be with me, now that grace has come in, is that sin is in me. “What infinite mercy!

Another thing note, beside the way that God answers: God will not call them His people any more. The people had said, “As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what has become of him.” (Chap, 32:1.) And God says, “This people” (5:7), “which thou

broughtest out of the laud of Egypt, have corrupted themselves." So in verse 11 Moses says, "which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt," and in chapter 33:1 the Lord says, "The people which thou [Moses] hast brought up out of the land of Egypt," and in chapter 34:10, God again calls them "thy [Moses'] people."

Chapter 217

Thoughts on Titus 2:9-15

(Chap. 2:9-15.)

The more we study the word, the more we see how it takes us out of this present world, and how it associates us with all things that are of God. When we come to what is Christian, it is not what the law was (that is, righteous claim), but the revelation of God's grace and God's mind to give what takes our hearts from this world, and associates us with a revealed scene that is not this world at all, but outside it all. This is Christianity in its practical character; it is an association completely of our hearts with things not seen. When we walk right, we walk by faith.

“Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” Servants are not to purloin. Why? “That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” Paul was so full of Christ Himself that he could not speak without bringing Christ in. He cannot say, “Husbands, love your wives” without saying what Christ was Himself, “even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.” It is no mere morality, nor a question of results.

The Christian is a person whose mind has got hold of the revelation of God by the power of the Holy Ghost. “He that is of the earth is earthly and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all.” The Lord says, “No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man which is in heaven.” He comes and brings from heaven the full revelation of what He knew. This is the reason that no one received His testimony. He brings in these heavenly things: all His words were the expression of what He was, at the same time perfectly adapted to man down here, while all the fullness of the Godhead was in Him. We find in Christ that which is entirely divine, and perfectly human. It is the bringing down of these heavenly things perfectly adapted to what man was on the earth; and now He sets us to walk through the world according to that which has been revealed to us. So with the servant: it is the motive power. If one say, “You will be killed if you do that,” my answer is, If I die, I shall only go to heaven. Earth loses its power. “Not purloining:” the commonest duties are connected with motives which take the heart above everything here.

There is no difficulty in this world that this principle is not above. You can never take a person entirely out of everything that surrounds him without a motive above them all: you may take him out of one thing or another, but not out of everything. Then the motive is everything done for Christ; and everything else is advanced and elevated because the motive is elevated. If the things in this world cease to be motives (of duties there are plenty), in the commonest things you get the soul lifted out of the world; the governing motives are out of it. The Christian is thus unassailable. If men try him by pleasant and natural things, he is kept; for they are not Christ, and for him to live is Christ.

The law brought in the authority of God, and of course it ought to have been obeyed. The law took up the relationship in which men stood with God and with one another, and said, “You must walk according to these words.” Duties were there, and God took man according to the way he ought to

act, keeping the relationships as they stood; but there was no revelation of Himself. God's authority was there in claim, but this was not a revelation. Law told them what they ought to be as the means of finding out what they were. Christianity is a different thing: it is God revealed in grace, coming amongst men. What the law told was this, on the contrary: that God did not yet come out to man, and that man could not go in to God. Christianity, while fully upholding the authority of the law, is just the opposite: God did come out, and man is gone in.

The law was not an arbitrary thing, but the commandment was holy, just, and good. The apostle as touching the righteousness which is in the law was “blameless;” but the moment the law added this, “Thou shalt not lust,” to the perfect rule from God for man where he was, it might as well have said, “You must not be a man, for man was already fallen and a sinner.” God adds that to the rule of ordinary relationships, and that roaches the conscience.

But Christianity tests man in another way, namely, by this very revelation of God. God did come out in blessed perfect grace and unutterable goodness, His Son became a man. Still it was the revelation of God, and men would not have God, but they rejected and crucified Him. Now the condition of man is proved; the judgment of the world is pronounced. “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin.” “Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.”

Man was thus fully tested. A nation was taken up to try thorough agriculture of the human heart; but it brought forth sour grapes. Then God said, I have yet one Son, it may be they will reverence Him when they see Him. But said they, “This is the heir, come let us kill him.”

Christianity is the testimony that man is lost. You have thus the rejection of Christ bringing in the condition of the whole world before God. Not only is man out of paradise; but he has turned God out of the world. In the cross in which man showed his enmity to God, the blessed work of redemption was wrought, the work that puts away sin was accomplished, and man has gone into glory. As the law was the testing of man as a child of Adam, so in the gospel I have now got the “Second Man” —much more than a man, of course—gone into glory. The more we meditate on the cross the more we see the place where sin above all was manifested, the place where obedience was perfected. Sin was at the highest point, and there was the absolute perfection of obedience; I see sin where obedience is perfected. Christ was there glorifying God in that place of sin. There was the absolute perfection of obedience, and the absolute completion of man's sin. “Where was judgment shown in its fullest character? Not in the condition of the sinner, but in Christ made sin for us. The perfect love of God was shown there; what man was, was shown there, what Christ was, what God was in judgment against sin.

But the consequence of the cross is that man is in glory and believers are justified and cleansed through His blood, all cleared and cleansed. Then the Holy Ghost comes down, dwells in them, and connects them with this Man in glory. Paul first sees Christ in the glory; he did not lose Him in the clouds like the others, but he saw Him first in the glory beyond the clouds. “Delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles:” he was neither Jew nor Gentile; he was completely associated with Christ in glory. The gospel went out to every creature, coming out from heaven on the ground that Christ is in heaven.

The Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them to you. All your relationships as a Christian are in heaven. This is where the Christian is in these verses in Titus. He has the Holy Ghost to go according to the heavenly Christ; he looks back to what I have been speaking of; he stands between the first coming and the second, having a clear apprehension of the effect of the first and also of the second. This is not prophecy at all, which foretells things coming on the earth: there is no prophecy of heaven. Prophecy refers to the government of this world. Hence John the Baptist says, that he was talking of things on the earth. When Christ came He told them heavenly things, and, having put away sin by His sacrifice by the baptism of the Holy Ghost associates with Him there.

The Christian is a person who has the Holy Ghost and who stands between the first coming and the second. Israel is a witness of God's dealings on the earth; the Christian is a witness of His sovereign grace that gives man a place in heaven. Prophecy told of a day of darkness coming on the earth. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.” My candle is a very useful thing. What do you get in the Revelation? Trumpets, seals, vials, all judgment. It is my candle, this prophecy, and I see where all evil will end. It is all very useful as a warning; but when I get Christ as the day star, I get my heart attracted out of the place. “I will come and receive you unto myself” —that is heaven! The Lord teaches us so to look for Him in affection; we are converted to this— “to wait for his Son from heaven;” we are not converted to prophecy. Grace has appeared, and it teaches us to look for the glory of the appearing. Compare verse 11 with 13.

It is hard for us, first to say, “In me that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,” and next, to know that the world is judged.

The gospel is grace addressed to the lost, not probation to see how I shall turn out. It has turned out that I loved every vanity better than Christ; it has turned out that I am lost.

The flowers of human nature are often just as pretty; the blossoms on the crab are as pretty as those of the apple. Character is not the question, but motive. A cross man may be breaking his heart about his temper (there is the same difference in dogs; of course an amiable dog is much pleasanter to meet than a cross dog). It is conscience, not character at its best, that shows I have had to do with God. In the gospel I find what I am, and what God is; I have found a grace which has met man in this state. The gospel turns me from what I am right over to what God is to the lost. I am guilty by what I have done; I am lost by what I am. The fullest grace comes in, but grace connects me with the fullest salvation; salvation has come to deliver me out of the condition I am in. All I have done, all my condition as a child of Adam, I am completely done with; I have got to the end of myself. Salvation is a big word. I have got my place in the Man that has gone into paradise, and not in the man that was turned out of paradise. That is the way grace appears: it is not help; it is salvation, the blood of Christ the ground of it. I get sins put away, the conscience made perfect, and Christ always appearing in the presence of God for me? there is not an instant of my life as a believer that Christ is not before God for me. I am now a man saved, justified, cleansed, made the temple of the Holy Ghost. There I stand in that Man in glory.

Now the Christian is taught by grace. “Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.” I am redeemed out of the world, but I have got to walk through it. How did the present world come? God never made this world or

age (of course I do not mean the physical world), He made paradise. Sin and the devil made this world; for morally speaking God did not make it. Cain goes out from the presence of the Lord; he settles, when a vagabond, in the land of his vagabondage, and builds a city. Next, the city must be a pleasant place: what harm was there in brass and iron? None whatever; but there was a great deal of harm in going out of the presence of Jehovah. What harm was there in the trees of the garden? If you bring in God and Christ in speaking to the men of the world, they will turn you out; they say it is not the time for it. Well, it may not be, but it is never the time with man to bring Christ in. The world is all built up away from God; man will not have God come into it.

You get the whole life of the Christian practically summed up in three words, “soberly, righteously, and godly:” “soberly” with self-restraint; “righteously” as regards others; “godly” with God. In this new place, with new motives, he is to live in the power of his new life; he has got all object out of the world.

Faith, human faith, is always the spring by which anything in this world is done. God gives me what is divine. A man is always what his object is; if Christ is a man's object, he is a Christian. “That I may win Christ,” this was Paul's object. He had found the blessed Son of God willing to become a man to save him; he is looking for Him; he wants to see the One that loved him.

I am not speaking of doctrine, of an item of knowledge, but of what I am converted to; it is the thing for which a man is converted, the object. As I have borne the image of the earthly, I am going to bear the image of the Heavenly. I am going to be with Him, and I want to be like Him. You will find this strikingly as the hope of the Christian; and so the Lord never says a word that goes beyond the present life. He takes care not to put His coming in a shape to make it necessarily more distant. The virgins that fall asleep are the same virgins that awake; that is the principle. The servants the lord gave the talents to are the same servants with whom he reckons. That in the seven churches we have history I do not doubt; but does He give it as history? No, He takes care to give seven churches then before Him; He will never sanction the heart making a delay. You are to live as you would live, if you were expecting Him every day. Whether changed or raised, then we shall be with Christ and like Christ. Christ will be satisfied, so shall I. The thought and purpose of God was to have us like Himself and with Himself. He is still gathering out souls.

“As men that wait for their Lord.” If a mother is expecting her son from America, she is always expecting him, for she loves him. When a person is really waiting for Christ, he has the room of his heart ready for Him. He has given Himself to have us for Himself, the heart united, gathered up, to Him; a peculiar people, a people of possession, manifesting the character of God in grace till He display it in glory.

Now, beloved brethren, where are we? Can we say, “This present evil world,” not in hardness as if we did not once belong to it, but as the world that has rejected Christ, and of which Satan is the prince? The world is not only a sinful world outside the earthly paradise, but a world that rejected Christ when He came into it.

The things I shall have in heaven are to form my heart now. Our hearts are so dim to see these heavenly things, but it is God's thought to reveal them to us. “Now we see through a glass darkly” —true, but we see the same things. 1 Cor. 2, often quoted to prove I cannot know them, really proves I can. “But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” Christianity says He has

revealed them all. Quite true it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive them. In the Old Testament they did not know them (of course not), but the Holy Ghost has come down to reveal them to us. The veil is rent, the way into the holiest of all is manifest; there is a perfect contrast as to the condition of the saint now. I am associated with Him now; I know I shall be like Him then. He has become a man for the very purpose to have me with Him in glory. I know that righteousness is there, and through the Spirit I am waiting for the hope of righteousness by faith i.e., for glory, for Him to bring me actually there. I am so identified with Christ that when He appears I shall appear with Him in glory.

Has this power over our hearts? Are your hearts settled as to the perfectness of His work? Is there such love to Him that you wait for Him who loves you?

The Lord give us in these last days to have hearts thus watching, taking His word, and clinging to it. This gives us what is heavenly, and perfectly suited to us while here.

Chapter 218

To a Sister and a Brother in the Lord on Their Marriage

Dear Miss.....

Be assured you shall have my prayers, as I am sure you will of many other saints. It is a serious position in which you are placed, not only, as it ever is, the influence that a wife exercises on a Christian is danger (as the apostle teaches us) of caring for the things of the world to please his wife, but the rather in the case of a workman of the Lord and who has been blessed as such. You may be blessed to your husband, if God graciously leaves you together in this poor world, as strengthening and comforting and encouraging him, and praying for him in the weariness and trials which accompany that service; but do not seek to relax his energy. A wife sometimes likes to have her husband for herself, and when her husband is the Lord's laborer, it is a great evil. I have known a wife spoil a laborer, and a husband as to herself too, in this way. A husband is bound to care for his wife, to consider her, and to do anything but neglect her: it is surely most evil and sad when he does. But the wife of a laborer for the Lord must put his work and labor before herself; or rather it should be herself too, and this can only be when she lives with and for the Lord. The world claims it: so officers' wives must take their chance, so to speak, and cannot help themselves. But sometimes we grudge so much to the Lord. It is a wise wife who seeks first the Lord, who herself puts Him first before her husband, and does not love him the less. It is a bond; and her husband will honor and value her, and so will the Lord too.

Another danger is where a wife likes to see her husband made much of. It is very natural; but I have seen laborers wholly spoiled by this, creating ill-feeling in his mind, because he had not the importance she thinks he ought to have, and irritating him against others. Let her honor him all right; and minister to his service all she can; but remember he is the Lord's servant; and keep peacefully in her own place, not meddling with his relationship to his labor in a flock amongst whom he may be only helping, as she may very much in it, and leaving it there. Women often see things or motives clearer than men; but if they act by insinuations or small means in these things, it is ruinous. Let them be with the Lord for themselves, if their own pride is wounded (for it is their own) in their husband.

Having said these two or three words, with the privilege of an old man before whom many things, and sometimes sorrowful ones, have passed, I have only to beg you to be assured that I have done so, and I now write really, in sincere sympathy and desire of a full blessing. May He be with you! Many and rich blessings flow from Him in these channels, if we look to Him in them. Trials? Yes. God sanctions fully all these natural relationships; but, sin being in the world, sorrow will follow in their track. But the gracious Lord is come where sin and sorrow had come, no doubt to raise us to far higher blessings, but not to forget us in the path of trial in which we walk down here. He could be moved with compassion when He saw the sorrow, and He has learned His lesson well and can look to and feel for us now.

But your privilege is to live with your husband as heirs together of the grace of life; and then all will be well even in a world of sorrow, and I can only trust you may find abundant communion with him

and joy, and joy together in it. Make, and may he make, the Lord the first object, the real bond; and the rest will come. And, remember, a laborer's wife (as indeed any) must be first with the Lord; and then not be curious about his labor, and all that passes, but his comfort and encouragement, his cheer in it, and sharer in his Borrows because she lives with the Lord.

Very truly yours in Him, J. N. D.

My dear Brother, I thank you very much for your letter and account of.....I bless God with all my heart for the blessing He has given and for the part you have had in it throughout. Be assured of my unfeigned sympathy in your proposed union: always a serious thing it is; doubly so for you, occupied as you have been in the Lord's work; for it is, and especially in such cases, a help or a great hindrance, even where there is genuine affection, and the Lord is not individually the first object, because each will have the other for themselves. I trust it is not so with Miss.....

I pray you may be blessed. It is a serious thing beginning, when in the work, life afresh (so to speak); but it may be a help-meet and a resource in solitary labor. I am passing out of the world even humanly, though at present gradually, (for though weary, I am very well), but have only to say, my salvation is nearer than when I believed. You are, so to speak, entering into it, for it is a new life; to carry your wife to a home, be she ever so devoted, is another thing than going as a preacher. This is a serious thing: I do not mean not a right thing. It may be the very best thing possible for you. I only say a serious thing. It makes me think of you and pray for you, as I do that God may make it minister in much blessing to you and even to your work. If you go to Australia and New Zealand, it may be a great thing for you.

The gracious Lord guide and bless you abundantly in your soul and in your work!

Ever, dear brother, affectionately yours,

J. N. D.

To Correspondents

It seems due to such as doubted the need for the Editor's remarks on the recent baptismal agitation, to say that the writer censured has not only confessed his grave error, but justified what was written in exposure of it. “I accept his letter, as being fully warranted by certain expressions I have made use of, and I own also that the statements I have made are of such a nature as to fully justify the publication of his letter, even after I had withdrawn my tract.” Those therefore who, in the face of this, complain of severity cannot be supposed to judge the false doctrine involved: else they would see more love in reproving than in palliating or cloaking it. May we thank God for what His grace has given, and look for yet more!

Chapter 219

To the Editor of “the Bible Treasury”

Dear Brother, It seems only right to inform your readers that the abridgment of the Memoir of Daniel Mann, referred to in your last number, was made by a Christian lady in the South of France, a member of the Free Church. This lady writes for the “Eglise Liber” and furnished her narrative to that Journal. Her object was to supply an article adapted for the generality of French readers. The tract referred to was reprinted from the four or five numbers of the Journal referred to, the publisher undertaking to print it as a tract before he knew from what source it was obtained.

The right of translation not having been reserved, no reflection can be cast upon the lady who abridged the narrative; but as we are not only to recognize legal rights, but to act graciously one towards the other, the London publisher has since been communicated with and compensation been offered, in case he considered his rights were infringed upon. This he declined.

J. N. D.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

The printer's name was through his mistake omitted on the first few hundred copies which were issued. When this error was discovered, it was immediately corrected, as publications cannot legally be circulated in France without the name of the printer.

Yours faithfully, Oct. 11th. B.

[The foregoing statement is printed as explanatory of the circumstances. Every unbiased reader will see that it is no real justification. If a Christian writer does not reserve his legal rights, this leaves it open to any one to translate but not to mutilate. I do not agree with “B.,” that this is a question of acting graciously or not, 1but rather a plain moral wrong. Even a worldly person of upright mind ought to feel the impropriety of such mutilation without leave first obtained on good and candid and Christian grounds. A money compensation might suit the world but hardly a Christian: the publisher did right to refuse.

As to the general duty of seeking to spread testimony to Christ, and especially gospel truth, in the French as in all other tongues, I warmly sympathize with every such effort if directed after a godly sort. I should counsel every servant of the Lord to reserve no rights; but this gives no sanction to perpetrate a wrong.—Ed. B. T.]

Chapter 220

The Two Rich Men

(Luke 18; 19)

How beautifully the incidents recorded in the Evangelists exhibit the workings of nature and of grace. They are short and familiar, but full of matter for the meditation of our hearts that we may he either warned or comforted.

Uneasiness of conscience was goading the rich young ruler of chapter 18 to seek relief wherever it might be found. He loved the world and could not give it up; and yet he had religious apprehensions of a day of judgment, and owned the fact that there was a kingdom of God still to come. This is a common case. A calculating worldly heart with serious religious sentiments, all together working uneasiness in the soul, He was a sample of the thorny ground hearer. He would fain have both worlds, and yet was not so sure that he had the future world. And how could he? How could such a double-minded man be stable? How could a body, the eye of which was thus evil, be full of light? His uneasiness was goading him hither and thither, and in his waverings he seeks Jesus.

Can anything be more natural? He was not a reckless man of pleasure, but a religious calculating man of the world, who could deliberately weigh his own interests in time and eternity, and make them supreme in all his reckonings.

He was, with all this, of course nothing but an old bottle. The new wine is therefore spilled. The doctrine of Christ is lost upon him. He goes away a lover of the world as he had come, for the love of money keeps him apart from Jesus and thus outside the kingdom of God.

The Lord draws the simplest moral from this incident. “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.” The disciples however are amazed at this and say, “Who then can be saved?” And Jesus answers, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” These last words are much to be noted.

It is the way of the Spirit in Luke to group together matters for moral instruction, making that much rather his end than mere accuracy of historic time and place. After a short interval from the time of the case of the rich ruler, according to this his usual method, as I have said, Luke gives us the case of the rich publican, Zaccheus of Jericho.

They were both rich. This is a common characteristic. And up to this moment they may have had much more in common; but from this out, as far as we learn of them, they are separated forever.

Solemn thought! but a thought suggested by every day's experience.

Zaccheus is not under the goading of a natural conscience. Nothing of this appears in his present movement. His path was under the drawings of the Father, for he seeks Jesus. (John 6) It was the secret effectual drawing and teaching of the Father, and not the goad of an uneasy conscience, that was determining his present path. This was so, as we have said, because it lay toward Jesus;

as He says Himself, “every one that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me.” And that path really leading to Jesus as really led away from the world. For Zaccheus was now traveling a road which nature and the spirit of the world would never have taken. He forgets himself on this journey. He was no longer the rich publican of Jericho. The young ruler, on the contrary, had never forgotten his riches. But wealthy and important as Zaccheus was, all that is now forgotten, and through the crowd he passes, and up the tree he makes his way, careless of every cost if he may but see the Lord.

Very beautiful this. Here is an incident, as I said, exhibiting the working of grace: so the former had done the working of nature.

And the end of these workings is as different as the path itself. He lays his wealth at the feet of the Lord, while the ruler had gone away, full-handed as he came.

For Zaccheus was “a new bottle.'' He keeps the new wine. Both are preserved. The wine is not spilled, the bottle is not burst. The drawing of the Father had led the soul, and the doctrine of the Son fills it.

Here was a living witness of what the Lord had said, “the things which are impossible with man are possible with God.” For here was a rich man entering the kingdom, because he was not under the mere impulse of the conscience—that could never have done it—but under the conduct of God Himself; the teachings and drawings of the Father.

What a volume of holy instruction opens to us here!

And I doubt not that the case of these two rich men suggests some principal features in the parable that follows, “the nobleman that goes into the far country.” The parable itself is suggested by another circumstance, as we learn (chap, 9), but some of the features of it arise hence, as I have said.

For in the unprofitable servant we see a picture of the young ruler, and in the other servants we see Zaccheus. The moral difference between them is this: the unprofitable servant religiously owns the seriousness of a day of judgment and of reckoning, and is careful for his own sake, to provide, as he judges, against it. He lays up his Lord's pound in a napkin, dreading the account he may hereafter have to make of it. But this is all. He has no heart for Christ or His service at all—but having saved himself, as he hoped, against the results of a day of reckoning, he goes forth and spends his activities on himself, or for his own interests. And such an one was the young ruler—he feared judgment, but had no heart for Christ, serving himself in the world.

The other servants had no calculations about judgment at all, but they thought about their Lord and His kingdom. It was their Lord who gave impulse to their activities. They set His service before them when they went forth to do business, they took His talent with them, and not their own. That is, they traded in the world for Him and not for themselves. Altogether the opposite of the unprofitable servant this was. The Lord's talent was not left at home, but carried abroad. Whatever was done by these servants was done for Christ, and not for themselves, whether it was more or less. And such an one was Zaccheus. He looked on his goods and with full purpose of heart used them for his Lord, either by restitution or by alms-deeds serving His glory in the world.

Chapter 221

What Is the Unity of the Church? (Duplicate): Part 1

I should never have spoken of Mr. F. O's. pamphlet if there had not been in it very decided principles upon some important points and an object, which all do not perceive. If it were only the desire to cast contempt upon his brethren which was manifested in it, nothing would be easier than to pass on. Every one can judge how far Mr. O. has profited by the light of brethren, whom he is pleased to treat with a measure of contempt. I do not find the proceeding very noble; but if any one wishes to kick down the ladder by which he has mounted, it certainly is not worth the trouble of writing a pamphlet, however small, to point it out. Mr. O. tells us that he has gone on his way “groping.” When we submit to what is found in the word, we do not grope: one does grope with the thoughts of men. With God's word we may still be ignorant on many points; but if we receive, and that joyfully, the yoke of the word, we do not grope. Mr. O.'s object is to establish or direct independent assemblies and to justify laxity in discipline. He understands absolutely nothing as yet of the unity of the body. Practically his pamphlet is directed against that unity. Those are the only points that I shall take up, presenting what the word of God says of assemblies, and some fresh light that God has granted me. The latter is not of any great importance; but what His word says is always of interest to the Christian. It is a happy thing to know that, if we are grounded upon the word, the fresh light we receive never overthrows the old but completes and makes it clearer.

First, allow me to say that the assemblies of so-called “Plymouth Brethren,” far from calling them selves “the assembly” or “the church of God” in a particular place, have always formally opposed the title. So little truth is there in the insinuation that it is principally this which has hindered these brethren from forming part of the Rochat flock. They believe that they alone are assembled upon the true principle of the church of God, which I in no wise doubt: but they believe that the church is in ruins, and that the pretension to be the church of God in a place would be a false pretension. I add that, if all the Christians in a place were to be found gathered together which would form (according to order) the assembly of the place, I would not give it that title, because the universal church is not gathered, and I do not believe in independent churches. I believe that there were formally local churches representing in a certain sense the whole in their localities; but we are very far from that now. All who have taken the trouble to inquire know, or might have known, that from the first the brethren in question have taken their stand upon the principle of Matt. 18 as a resource given of God in the general ruin. The pretension to be the assembly of God has always been rejected by the brethren we speak of. Every assembly gathered by the will of God around the person of Jesus or in His name is an assembly of God, if it be only a question of the force of words; but when it is a question of being the assembly of God in a locality, it is not so in the true sense of the word, and could not be so, considering the state of the universal church. It may gather together on the principle of the church of God, may find the promised blessing, may be the only one gathered according to that principle in the place, and may attach immense importance to it (and it ought to attach immense importance to it, if it desire to be obedient and faithful); but it is only the witness for God so far as by its separate walk it testifies to the faithfulness of God, to the divine principles which govern its walk and to the true state in which the church is found as a

whole. In this case it will be God's witness; certainly it ought to be so.

Mr. O. will have it that the totality of the churches, that is to say of the assemblies, constituted the church or the assembly. Not at all. Numerically speaking, it is not true. Many Christians were scattered here and there preaching the gospel, converted without being connected with a flock, like the treasurer of queen Candace, like Paul and Silvanus and Timothy and Titus in their labors. But, what is more important, the principle is entirely false, and the question which occupies us is altogether that. The assembly or the body was composed of individuals, and not of churches or of assemblies. Here are Mr. O.'s words in p. 11: “assemblies all united among themselves by one faith and one worship, and forming, in their totality, the church, the body of Christ upon the earth.” There is no such idea in the word. The body had members. Now assemblies were not the members, but Christians individually were the members; and although the assemblies had the same faith and the same worship, it was not this principle which constituted the unity of the body, but the presence of the Holy Ghost which united all believers, Jews and Gentiles, in one and the same body.

1 Cor. 12 makes the doctrine of the word of God perfectly clear with regard to this. The body of Christ on earth is composed of individuals and not of churches. Now if this be the case, there is unity only in the whole; there is none in any local assembly if it be detached from the whole as a whole. If it be regarded as an independent church, it has nothing to do with the body, it is not in principle an assembly of God. At the beginning of the first Epistle to the Corinthians it is said, “to the assembly of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Jesus Christ, saints by calling, with all those who in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” Thus the apostle could say, “Ye are the body of Christ.” The assembly at Corinth represented at Corinth that one and only unity, that of all individuals united to Christ in one body by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Everything had a connection with the one body, composed of all the members of Christ. There was no action which did not relate to the whole body, no suffering of one member which was not felt by all the members of the body: 1 Cor. 12 leaves no doubt upon this point. The gifts were exercised in this whole. (1 Cor. 12:27, 28.) Their object was first the perfecting of individuals, then the edification of the body of Christ. (Eph. 4:12.)

The object of this effort to make independent flocks is the desire of being independent, of doing their will without submitting to the discipline of the church as one body. Mr. O. says as much (p. 43). Each assembly being independent, united only by one faith and one worship (p. 11), is in a position to judge the disciplinary proceedings of another assembly (p. 43). The unity of the body therefore does not exist. An act is the act of an independent church; it has no reference whatever to the whole, and is not binding upon other assemblies or other Christians. Some one may be put out by one assembly and another assembly may receive the one who is put out, It is evident that this is disorder. The “within” and the “without” are not simply the world and the church of God. All that is lost. It is the “within” of a small voluntary and independent assembly which only exercises discipline in relation to itself. It is quite evident that the “within” and “without” of 1 Cor. 5 is not merely the “within” and “without” of a particular assembly, so that the wicked man could be without at Corinth and within at Ephesus. The Epistle carefully teaches the unity of the body on the earth and only recognizes the local act in that unity, a unity composed of individuals and not of churches. Look at the act of discipline in another point of view; and you will see the immense difference of the principles, and how this system of independent churches destroys the truth of

scripture on this subject. “What is the real power, the real source of authority, in discipline? The presence of Jesus: not simply that the discipline is the act of a voluntary society which excludes one of its members from its bosom, but that it is the act of an assembly according to God, assembled in the name of Jesus and acting in His name, and by His authority to maintain the holiness which belongs to that name. Now the independent church is only a society which acts for itself: another assembly may judge all that it has done. There is no trace either of the unity or of the authority of the church of God.

Does it then follow that, if another assembly has acted hastily, a flock is bound hand and foot? In no wise. Just because the unity of the body is true and recognized, and that in a case of discipline the members of that body who gather together elsewhere take an interest in what passes in each place, they are free to make brotherly objections, or to suggest some scriptural motive; in a word, they are capable of all brotherly activity with regard to it. If it be an independent assembly, it is not concerned; there is nothing for it to look into. If these things are done in the unity of the body, every Christian is interested in what passes. It may happen that the discipline of an assembly cannot be owned; but then it is rejected as an assembly, and the presence of Jesus giving authority to its nets is denied—a very grave thing, but one that may occur. Mr. O. has entirely falsified the unity of the body, and wishes for independent churches and a unity of faith and worship, the aggregate of the churches forming according to him the unity of the body. The word of God knows nothing of this system. The reader may judge of it by reading 1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4, 1 Cor. 1 and other passages of the word.

But another object is proposed wherever this system of half-Plymouth-Brethrenism-half-Independency is adopted; for it is not in Switzerland only that this ground has been taken. They wish to be free to support the Bethesda discipline, or that of the neutrals, of those who condemn absolute exclusivism as Mr. O. calls it (p, 41)—an expression which I confess I do not understand. Every one is not excluded, I suppose. Some persons are excluded in Mr. O.'s independent churches. The assemblies of the so-called “Plymouth Brethren” also exclude some. The question is, if the limits that have been put to the exclusion are scriptural. The expression “absolute exclusivism” may serve to bring opprobrium upon assemblies with which one does not agree; it is nonsense. But we have rather more intelligible expressions: “disciplinary ways which go far beyond scripture” (p. 42); and, again,” to combat such teaching we do not excommunicate in large masses Christians who are ignorant of it.” There can be no mistake. Mr. O. condemns the discipline of the assemblies called “Plymouth Brethren,” and be wishes the discipline of Bethesda or of the neutrals. This is the object of his pamphlet and of the support which he gives to independent churches. I will not weary either my reader or myself with the history of this question: but the real point in question is of all gravity for the church of God. Can an assembly be corrupted? We had broken with what we had considered to be outrages and blasphemies against Christ. Up to that time there had not been any great difficulty—some painful things, but settled without much delay. But here we have an assembly which receives those whom we have excluded as blasphemers: could one walk with that assembly, taking the Lord's supper with these excommunicated people?

This is the first question. For my part I could not do so, and those who admitted them knowingly and willingly were not a “new lump.” (1 Cor. 5) This raised the question—Is an assembly corrupted when knowingly and willingly it admits sin as blasphemy? Our adversaries maintained that an

assembly could not be defiled; that individuals who are in sin are defiled, but that the assembly could not be so. They insisted upon this in several tracts. And not only so, but the principal brethren in a so-called neutral meeting signed a printed circular affirming that, if an assembly should admit fornication knowingly and willingly, we ought none the less to acknowledge that assembly and to receive letters of recommendation from it. We judged that, if an assembly (not taken by surprise, which may happen everywhere, or through carelessness, of which we are all capable, but) knowingly and willingly admits sin or blasphemy, it is not a new lump; that in order to be a new lump it must purge itself from the old leaven (1 Cor. 5:7); and that in so doing the other members proved themselves pure in this matter (2 Cor. 7:11): otherwise they would not have been so. This is the principle in question. Several went farther, maintaining that in no case does blasphemy or any kind of doctrine call for discipline.

The effects have been, to my mind, most fatal; but I limit myself to stating the question except that I will communicate the result in one case which may arouse Swiss consciences. The doctrine in question in the United States has not been that of Mr. N., but the denial of the immortality of the soul. There is a meeting at Philadelphia (and there are even two) on the neutral principle which does not follow the so-called exaggerated discipline and which blames the severity of brethren. Those who hold the denial of the immortality of the soul were admitted to the meeting; afterward the doctrine was taught there. We broke or rather refused all connection with these meetings. Those who blamed our severity were not willing to keep themselves thus separate, and now the principal instruments of the Swiss mission or of the Grande-Ligne deny the immortality of the soul. I hope all have not come to this—God knows. I do not enter farther into details: it would be too painful and of but little use. It is certain that the lack of faithful discipline, the loose system extolled by Mr. O., the lack of absolute exclusivism in regard to what is false and evil, has led the Swiss mission into the doctrine which denies the immortality of the soul. They may say, We do not preach it; but the doctrine has currency; people go and ask the minister what he thinks of it; he thinks it is truth, and souls receive it. Well, we refused those who were not willing to break with this system, and I bless God for it; but there is a fine field of labor ruined precisely by the system which Mr. O. extols. Neutral meetings taking advantage of the absence of absolute exclusivism, and approved of for this by Bethesda and by the neutrals and by the O.'s, are traps for simple souls who go to New York and Philadelphia.

(To be continued)

Chapter 222

What Is the Unity of the Church? (Duplicate) Part 2

(Continued.)

The question is no longer Bethesda; but can an assembly which knowingly admits grave errors be recognized as an assembly of God, and those who are accomplices in the thing be held to be innocent, although they support evil, because they are not themselves blasphemers? In 2 Tim. 2 we are enjoined to purge ourselves from vessels to dishonor: is it purging ourselves to be in full communion with them? 1 Cor. 5 and 2 Cor. 7 settle the question for me as to the condition of those who support evil without being themselves personally guilty.

There are many things I might take up in Mr. O.'s tract, but that is not my object. When it is said (p. 2), “The church is begotten of God,” no passage quoted speaks of the church. It is not begotten of God; individuals are. It is not their being begotten of God which constitutes them members of the church, but the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I do not know in what sense Mr. O. thinks the apostle said to the church at Corinth, “Ye are the body of Christ.” But I am not occupied with these things. I only keep to the fact that the tract is a plan of adhesion to a system which denies the true unity of the church, which establishes independent churches, and which justifies a discipline or rather a lack of faithfulness to Christ. This turns what are called holy assemblies into a snare for the simple to entrap them into false and injurious doctrines, and to destroy integrity of conscience—the certain result of all false doctrine.

I believe, not that the public apostacy is yet come, but that, in the spirit of the thing, it took place long ago; just as there were many antichrists although the Antichrist was not there. Now Antichrist, at least the man of sin, is connected with the apostacy. Mr. O. wishes dismemberment. It would be impertinence on my part to contend with Mr. O. about the import of French words; but in the things of God there is something more than words. I find the word he has chosen the most unfortunate possible. The proper meaning of it is the act of tearing away a member from a body. It is employed for the division of a state, a kingdom, &c. But when it is used figuratively, something of the real meaning always remains. It is the greater force coming from without, which divides. Poland and Bavaria have been dismembered. And if one speaks of the dismemberment of a society so that it is divided into several parts, it always leaves the idea of an effect produced on the society. It matters little if the members are agreed about it: the society suffers violence: something of the original thought remains. Now I admit that the apostacy in the full and complete sense of the word has not arrived, and that the application of this term to the Romish system (an application made by the mass of Protestant writers) went beyond the true force of the word. But let it be remarked that the apostacy is the fault of the church on earth; it had lost its first love; it had had time to repent and had not repented; it had a name to live and was dead; it was to be spewed out of the Savior's mouth. This was a moral condition for which the church was responsible; and if the apostacy has not come, we have reached such a point in that direction that the distance which separates us from it is scarcely appreciable: only the Spirit of God is acting in a remarkable manner. After all Mr. O. now admits the fall of the church, which is the important thing. But dismemberment (a frightful

word when the body of Christ is in question) which Mr. O. can make use of because the true idea of the body has no place in his thoughts—dismemberment is only a fact. The apostacy, or the tendency to apostacy, expresses the thought (crushing, if the grace of the Lord were not revealed) of the unfaithfulness of the church to the One who has so loved it. But there is something more. If it be a question of the body of Christ and of members united to the Head in heaven, the dismemberment of the church is a horror. If the church on earth be a simple society, then it becomes dismembered or is divided or decomposed. Now Mr. O. has not the least idea of the unity of the body, nor of the responsibility of the church to maintain that position which it has never had in his eyes. It was a society composed of several local societies. To divide might perhaps be an evil, but an evil which happens to an earthly society. “The church at Corinth, notwithstanding its disorders, was not dismembered in Paul's time; and he could still say to them, Ye are the body of Christ” (p. 3). If Mr. O. had the least idea of the body of Christ, this phrase would have been impossible; it has no meaning for anyone who understands what the body is.

I may be permitted to add a few words with regard to the two points of view in which the word of God looks at the house. Christ (Matt. 16) builds the house, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. It is Christ who builds; the house is not yet completed. In 1 Peter 2 the living stones are added; there is no human architect. In Eph. 2 the building fitly framed together grows up unto a holy temple in the Lord. But in 1 Cor. 3 we find quite another thing. Paul is a wise builder; every one must take care how he builds. There we have the responsibility of man, although the building may be called the building of God. He who, being a Christian, builds well has a reward; but the one who, although a Christian on the foundation, builds badly will lose his labor, but he is saved. There is a third class: he who corrupts others will himself be destroyed. Now Popery and the ritualistic system have confounded the temple that Jesus Christ is building, and which grows up into a temple, with that which depends on man's responsibility—a grave and fatal error. They do the same as to the body. But there was responsibility to maintain the unity of the Spirit, and thus the manifestation of the unity of the body, and the church failed in it: then it confounded the body with what man has built. The unity in John 17 is not the unity of the body; John never speaks of the church. He speaks there of a unity of brethren or of disciples which would in fact manifest the power of the Spirit of God.

Mr. O. refers us to another pamphlet on “Elders,” &c. He wished to name some whenever the minds of brethren might be prepared to receive them. As an authority for this, having thrown overboard the old dissenting principles, he has only this reasoning, namely, that the apostles must necessarily have provided for the future of the church—a point already discussed with M. de G.—which is nothing but a piece of reasoning and of false reasoning, for it supposes that God wished Christians to know that the church would subsist long upon the earth, thus destroying the present expectation of the Lord, which His word avoids in a most remarkable manner by insisting upon that expectation. I believe, in common with many Christians, that the seven churches give the history of Christianity, but God took up churches which were then in existence in order not to take Christians out of this position of continual expectation. The virgins who sleep are those who awake. The servants, who received the talents on the departure of the master, are those who are judged at his return; the duration of the delay does not go beyond the life of the men. “If I will that he tarry till I come,” says the Lord. “We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord,” says the apostle. “And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord,” says again the Lord. An

expectation of every day is not only an idea but was what characterized the early disciples. They were converted to wait for His Son from heaven, and God is not slack concerning His promise. But as to any arrangement which supposes a long continuance of the church, on earth, there is no trace of it in the word.

To support this false idea, Mr. O. has recourse to a passage from Clement of Rome—a fatal sign when one has to go outside the word to support one's thesis. But the phrase, by which Clement tries to explain his views on this point, is most obscure. One of the terms employed is a word entirely unknown, except as used in quite another sense in Plutarch, and is not found at all in Alexandre's dictionary. Even the meaning of the phrase is contested. In general it is applied to the death of the elders named by the apostles. But there are grave theologians who apply the words “when they should have fallen asleep” to the apostles and insist upon the passage as a proof of episcopacy, admitting that there is nothing of that kind in the word of God, but that the apostles, in the prospect of their departure, arranged that other tried men should succeed them in their authority, a position, that Mr. O., if I have rightly understood him, arrogates to himself, by putting himself among the number of those who have replaced the apostles as ■λλ■γμοι ■νδρες. I do not accept this interpretation of the passage from Clement which they support by the δε■τεραι διατ■ξεις of a passage from Irenaeus (if indeed the fragment is his), and by the nomination of Simeon as the successor of James by a convention of the apostles who were still living, of which Eusebius and other patristic authorities speak. But what a poor foundation is all this in comparison of the word of God, given for all times by God Himself, the divine light in the midst of the darkness of this world.

Now this is the main point of the matter. What gave rise to the existence of the so-called Plymouth Brethren is the grand truth, the great fact, of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, to form the body of Christ into one; then the coming of the Savior as the continual expectation of the Christian. These two truths Mr. O.'s pamphlet denies.

There are three principal positions of Christ as Savior: on the cross accomplishing redemption; at the right hand of God, whence He sends the Holy Spirit; and returning to fetch us and to judge the world. The first truth is the gospel preached to man as a sinner. The last two have been clearly brought out again in these latter times and are those which have aroused attention, and have placed the so-called Plymouth Brethren in their present position; they also throw immense light upon the first truth. The evangelical world will not receive them. From that time nothing but conflict and opprobrium, as is always the case with truths freshly brought to light. Mr. O. admits many minor consequences; but his pamphlet entirely denies the real ground of the truth on these points. He wants a unity formed of; local and independent churches, having the same faith and the same worship; and he wishes to prove by reasonings, or rather to suppose, that the apostles taught! Christians to expect a long course of centuries before the Lord should come. That is to say, he still denies the great truths necessary for Christians in these days.! I state the fact because I believe it to be important for Christians, begging Mr. O. to be assured that there is not a trace of hostility in my heart. When evil comes in like a flood, it is not the moment for Christians to be tearing one another, however firm one may be in maintaining the principles that one is assured have been drawn from the word of God.

Chapter 223

What Is a Sect?

The word sect is used in Martin's version to render the Greek word α■ρεσις the meaning of which word is well known. It is used (except in the Acts of the Apostles where it is found six times), once only in the Epistle to the' Corinthians, once in the Epistle to the Gal. 5:20, once in that of Peter. (2 Peter 2) In the Epistle to the Corinthians, it is translated by the word heresy (1 Cor. 11:19.) It signifies a doctrine or a system either of philosophy or of religion whose followers are united to adopt it.

The meaning of the word is a little modified now because the professing church (at least the greater part of it) has taken the name of Catholic, that is to say, universal. Titus any religious body, or Christian congregation, not belonging to this community (so-called Catholic), is called by it a sect. Hence the word has become a term of reproach. All Christian bodies are sometimes called sects, in the sense of divisions, when they are separated from Christians as a whole, or from those who bear that name.

The word sect, however, in itself always imparts more or less what is at fault by the idea it gives that those who compose it are united by some special doctrine or denomination. One must say that this way of looking at it is entirely false; the application may be, but not the idea itself. But the important thing for us to discover is, what makes an assembly of Christians truly deserve this name. Now as it applies to congregations or Christian bodies, in order to judge of them, we must understand the true principle by which we can join together. Whatever is not founded on this principle is really a sect..;, Many Catholics (so-called) have made a bad use of this truth; but it is not the less true that the unity of the church is a truth of the last importance for Christians, whether the unity of all individually, manifested in the world, John 17, or that of the body of Christ formed by the Holy Ghost come down here, Acts Cor. 12:13. Thus in chapter 17 of the Gospel of John, the Lord asks the Father, with respect to those who should believe through the apostle's word, “that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” (John 17:21.) That is the practical unity of Christians in the communion of the Father and the Son. The apostles should be one in intent, thought, and action, by the operation of one Spirit, as the Father and the Son are in the unity of the divine nature. (Ver. 11.) Those who should believe through their word should be one in the communion of the Father and the Son. (Ver. 21.) We shall be perfect in the unity of glory. (Ver. 22.) But we ought to be one now, that the world may believe. (Ver. 21.) Further, the Holy Spirit come down from heaven on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), has baptized all believers from that time into one body united to Christ as a body is united to its head, and manifested on the earth in this unity.

(1 Cor. 12:13.) We see clearly that it is on the earth in chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians, where it is said: “If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.” We do not suffer in heaven. But then he adds: “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

The whole chapter shows the same truth; but these verses are sufficient to show that it concerns the church on earth. This then is true unity formed by the Holy Ghost; that is, the unity of brethren one with another, and the unity of the body.

A sectarian spirit exists when there is a desire to unite disciples on any ground outside this unity, and when an opinion unites those who profess it, that they may be united by means of this opinion. Such unity is not founded upon the principle of the unity of the body, nor of the union of brethren. When such persons are united into a corporation, and mutually recognize one another as members of the corporation, then they formally constitute a sect, because the principle of union is not the unity of the body; and if the members are united, it is not as members of the body of Christ, if even they be such, but as members of a particular body. All Christians are members of the body of Christ, an eye, a hand, a foot, &c. (1 Cor. 12:13 - 25.) The idea of being the member of a church is not anywhere found in the word. The Holy Ghost compares the church on earth to a body of which Christ is the Head. (Eph. 1:22, 23, Col. 1:18.)

Now every Christian is a member of this body, or of Christ. But to be a member of a particular body is quite a different idea. Now the Lord's Supper being the expression of this union of the members, as it is said (1 Cor. 10:17), when a body of Christians only recognizes the right of receiving its own members, there is a unity directly opposed to the unity of the body of Christ. It is possible that it may be by ignorance, possible that these Christians may never have learned what the unity of the body really is. and that it is the will of God that this unity would be manifested on the earth; but as a matter of fact they form a sect, an utter denial of the unity of the body of Christ. Many of those who are members of the body of Christ are not members of this particular corporation; and the Lord's Supper, though the members participate in it piously, is not the expression of the unity of the body of Christ.

But now a difficulty presents itself: the children of God are scattered; many pious brethren are attached to such an opinion or to such a body, and in many respects, even in religious things, mixed up with the worldly-minded. There are alas! many who have no idea of the unity of the body of Christ, or who deny the duty of manifesting this unity on the earth. But all this does not overthrow the truth of God: those who so join together, as I have already said, are but a sect in principle. If I recognize all Christians as members of the body of Christ, if I love them, if I receive them most heartily at the Lord's Supper provided that they walk in holiness and truth, calling on the name of the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:19 - 22; Rev. 3:7), then I do not walk in a sectarian spirit (even though I cannot reunite all the children of God), because I am walking according to the principle of this unity of the body of Christ and seek practical union amongst the brethren. If I join with other brethren to take the Lord's Supper, as a member of the body of Christ only, not as the member of a church, whatever it may be, but truly in the unity of the body, ready to receive all Christians who walk in holiness and in the truth, I am not the member of a sect, I am a member of nothing less than the body of Christ.

But to join together on any other principle, in whatever way it may be, to make a religious corporation, is to form a sect. The principle is very simple. The practical difficulties are sometimes great on account of the state of the church of God, but Christ is sufficient for all; and if we are content to be little in the eyes of men, the thing is not so very difficult.

A sect is therefore a religious body united on another principle than that of the unity of the body of Christ. It is absolutely such, when those who compose that particular body are regarded as being the members of it. A sectarian spirit is shown when these alone are recognized in a practical manner, without calling themselves properly the members of a body. We do not speak of the discipline which is exercised in the bosom of the unity of the body of Christ, but of the principle on which we assemble. The word of God does not recognize such a thing as being a member of a church; it speaks always of the members of the body of Christ. But those are to be firm in manifesting unity as they walk together. We may quote Matt. 18:20 as a precious encouragement in these times of scattering, in these sorrowful times of the last days in which the Lord promises His presence where two or three are assembled in His name. He gives us 2 Tim. 2:22 to direct us in the path of His will, in the midst of the confusion which reigns around us.

Chapter 224

When the Son of Man Cometh Will He Find Faith

Such was the text of a recent sermon by the Master of Balliol College, Oxford. The discourse is no inapt illustration in a way unseen and unintended by the preacher. It proves the vacuum before his own mind; and in this Professor Jowett is but symptomatic of a state which spreads far and wide. Neither the person of the Lord nor the written word of God commands his soul so as to cast down reasonings, with every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. He speaks of men in many ages of the Christian church expecting Christ quickly. The question is, What did the Holy Ghost sanction in scripture? But here too he is quite at sea. Some of the words of our Lord Himself seem (as he says, for he has no certainty) to favor the expectation (rather loosely citing Mark 9, and Matt. 24:34); while in other passages He refuses to speak of “the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.” So is set Paul against Paul, as if 1. Thess. 4: 17 clashed with Phil. 2:23: and no wonder, for if the Master could be inconsistent with Himself, why not the servant? But even this perhaps yields to the words that follow: “And in the first century of the Christian era the same expectation was widely spread, some affirming that Christ would reign for a thousand years; others again imagining that His reappearance was delayed a little while; others were saying as we might do, 'Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers have fallen asleep, all things have remained as they were from the beginning.'“ What an avowal at Mary's! “Others were saying as we might do, 'where is the promise of his coming!'“ Is the Apostle John merely among the some affirming that Christ would reign for a thousand years?

Professor J. did not seem aware that he was applying to himself and his friends the description the Apostle Peter gives prophetically of the scoffers in the last days. Nor can any application really be more just. The sermon as a whole is thorough incredulity as to the Lord's coming again.

One is thankful to assure the Professor that there are thousands of Christians, much more intelligent in the scriptures than any he can produce from Oxford, who cherish the same hope in which the apostles lived and died, who wait for the Lord day by day, sure because of express scripture that He is coming quickly, but fixing no date whatever whether of year or day, yet satisfied that the exact time was purposely undisclosed that the believer from first to last might be always expecting. Men and their opinions have passed away; but that blessed hope abides livingly, and will, till Jesus come and receive us to Himself.

It is fully owned that both Jew's and Christians have indulged in groundless fancies about the millennium. The true point however is What have inspired men revealed for our faith? Did not the Lord inculcate constant waiting for Himself in Matt. 25:1 - 13, Luke 12:35 - 40, John 14: 2, 3? Did not the apostles without exception who wrote? Are these words of theirs either ambiguous or baseless? Will the Regius Professor of Greek venture to say, that the apostolic doctrine as to the Lord's return has been refuted by universal experience? Infidels have said so: what does the Master of Balliol think? He has said enough to raise a question of himself. I am far from agreeing that faith in the prophetic word enfeebles the Christian elsewhere. Indeed he himself is an example

that unbelief in God's revelation of the future is characterized by a loose hold of Christian truth generally: and we have already seen that, instead of reading aright the signs of the times, he is unwittingly an instance of the blinding power of the age. Nor can it be otherwise with one who assumes to divine the future from the present, instead of seeking to apply the end as God reveals it in order to judge the various roads which lead to it.

Professor J. fairly gives up attempting to explain the meaning of Christ's coming again. Certainly it is wiser and better than pretending to speak of what he knows nothing; but what a confession on the part of one who is by his office professedly a steward of the mysteries of God! What may be the force of his citing as to this the Apostle Paul's words in 2 Cor. 12 (“whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell") is hard to say, though it looks like leading men into nonsense, to borrow his own words. But I am sure that neither the mother of Zebedee's children nor any other ever put to Christ the question whether His saints and apostles shall reign with Him, sitting upon thrones and judging the kingdoms of the earth. The Professor has forgotten his Bible and seems never to have read the New Testament with care. It is the positive declaration of the Savior that in the regeneration when He sits on the throne of His glory, His followers are to sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matt. 19:28.) What the mother of James and John asked was that her two sons might have the best places next the king in that day of glory. (Matt. 20:21.) The first never was a question; the second received a distinct answer at once, instead of these being “questions which never have an answer.” Many heathen in ancient and in modern times have shown more knowledge of the Christ they were opposing than the Master of Balliol before the University of Oxford in our day. It is the more humbling to see such deplorable ignorance and incredulity in an amiable man who has written a comment on Paul's Epistles. Had he forgotten or did he not believe such a plain statement as 1 Cor. 6:2, 3? The apostle appeals to the common knowledge, which the Corinthians could not but possess that the saints shall judge the world and angels too; but perhaps all this to Professor J. is only to “argue about poetry or figures of speech.”

We need not follow the very imperfect and faulty endeavor that follows to present “the nature of that struggle which was passing in Christ's mind.” Suffice it to say that the Lord is painfully brought down to the level of an Elijah or a Paul, without one true notion of His proper humiliation or of His rejection, still less of His atonement. I believe that the Lord if on earth would, as He will, judge most severely the guilty and degraded state of Christendom. (Luke 12:45 - 48.) But it is not by skepticism, any more than by superstition, that His servants will gain His approval or help souls now stumbling through this dark world. A greater muddle of scripture can scarcely be conceived than the professor's allusions to our Lord's words or a more random application to passing events, his own circumstances apparently being much before his mind though perhaps unconsciously. But for the proof of this there is no space here, nor would my readers relish occupation with such trifles. Suffice it to say that the great discrepancy is owned between Christ's teaching and things as they are. Only let none imagine that a rationalist has the smallest thought of suffering for the truth's sake. It is sentiment or talk, and nothing more. Such men have none of the faith which makes a confessor or a martyr.

His third point is “shall he find faith upon the earth?” His extraordinary paraphrase of this is, “in other words, ‘What prospect is there of any great moral or religious improvement among mankind?'" He has nothing before his eye but the gradual amelioration of society; he thinks of a new epoch bearing the same relation to the last three centuries which the Reformation did to the

ages that preceded; and he is assured that there never will be a millennium on earth until we make one! Yet no doubt that very day the preacher had joined decorously in two if not the three creeds, acknowledging in these formularies Christ's coming to judge the quick and the dead, and His kingdom which will have no end. Is all this poetry and figure? To him it would appear so. There are those who believe the truth on God's authority, who would decline to join in creeds which are daily becoming more and more a mockery, as all things human will.

Chapter 225

Worship in Spirit and in Truth

(John 4:21-24.)

My present task is to speak a little, not on the worshipper, but on the worship—on worship in spirit and in truth. On this subject many, not to say most, of God's children have accustomed themselves to language and thought in general vague, often removed far from the truth of God They have allowed themselves the habit of calling every religious service worship, embracing not only prayer, but preaching or teaching. Even the larger part of that which is thrown into meter and verse in hymns is only the expression of desire, sometimes of doctrine, very generally of prayer. Proper worship is the rarest thing possible, even among the true children of God. The reason is plain. You cannot have true worship unless the worshippers are set consciously in their Christian place before God. I endeavored to show on a former occasion that the worshippers suppose, not only divine life in the soul, but also the relationship of a child of God known by the Spirit now. This is not the state of Christians generally. They have been, by some sad means or other, I am sure with upright enough intentions, turned aside from the full grace of God. They have been afraid of confiding in what the Lord Jesus has done for their souls. It is granted entirely that the grace of God is so infinite, and so above the thoughts and reasonings of men, that nothing but the power of the Holy Spirit can keep the soul in the enjoyment of it, and that all attempt to look at grace out of God's presence is attended with the utmost danger. The flesh would habitually turn it to license; and thus it is that many godly souls have been stumbled, seeing such overwhelming evil by wrong representations, or, we should rather call them, by misrepresentations, of the grace of God.

They have heard the most high-flown expressions, the cover of sin, or even of hypocrisy. Instead of judging the man, they have sometimes slipped into misjudging the truth of God. This is not wise; for it can never be without the virtual impeachment of the word of God. Their consciences are thus at the mercy of evil or careless men who dishonor all the truth they talk of. When we open the scriptures, we see His grace and truth clearly. The very object of God in so revealing Himself is to put believers convicted of sin and repentant, in the bright, thorough, simple-hearted enjoyment of His grace, that the whole life should be the expression of thanksgiving and praise, as well as service and devotedness to Himself. There is another reason why people shrink from this, because they have accepted the mischievous idea that the Christian is left in this world to improve the race and be an ornament, if not an ameliorator, of society, to deal with mankind as under probation and the law of God, just as Israel were before redemption. Now, I do not for a moment deny the Christian is meant to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth. He is here for a testimony; but a testimony of what? of his own goodness, or of Christ's? It makes a great difference, “Let your light so shine before men,” said our Lord, “that they seeing your good works shall glorify your Father in heaven.” This is the grand point, It is not, Let your good works shine before men, the effect of which would be to glorify yourself. And here is where men are apt to err, because the glory of a certain individual casts a sort of halo around the race to which he belongs.

But it is a totally different thing where our light shines. By our light I understand our holding forth Christ, not qualities of our own, but that which we have only in the Lord. Consequently it is the good confession of His name. When men see good works coupled with the holding up of the Lord Jesus, the profession of Him does bring glory not to us but to bur Father in heaven. These are the words of the Lord Jesus, but men shrink from that which gives them the distinctive consciousness that they belong not to the world; for there it is man has not a little inclination to figure. It does not matter how humble he is, he would like to be somebody. But this is the very thing that Christ would relieve one from; for if the gospel be true, and it is not for Christians to doubt, one of its first principles is that we are dead to the world, and that our life is hid with Christ in God. When a man is dead, there is an end of him. This is what Christ writes upon the believer, what He makes good and true in everyone who has accepted Him and His mighty work. We are crucified with Him, not simply called to crucify nature; but all that are Christ's have crucified the flesh and its affections. Thus you see the first principles of Christianity sever those that are Christ's from the world, from its interests and its objects; while they introduce them, if you will, on a new ground into the world, for it is granted that this is also true. “As thou [the Father] hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” The death of Christ takes us out of the world, but by His resurrection we are sent into the world on a new footing of life and righteousness. It is on the new ground of God's righteousness that we stand as true worshippers, and thus only can we render worship to our God and Father in worship and in truth.

Now even God's children shrink from this place. They love the Lord Jesus. They cleave to His person, they find comfort in His love, they cannot do without His blood; but they would rather not go farther. They would rather not give up the world quite. They would like to be sure of the next world; but the tenacity with which they hold to this world forbids their having a true consciousness of the next. In such a state true Christian worship is impossible. Hence, therefore, as it would never do to deny that they are worshippers, or that they worship, they get to call even going to hear a sermon worship. We all know this, and perhaps some now present are in the habit of saying so. I refer to it for the purpose of showing the too common vagueness of God's children to worship. The condition out of which worship springs by grace is so feebly realized that we must not wonder at it.

What then is Christian worship?

The worship of the Israelites was suited to their condition. In that worship every Israelite joined. He brought his oblation, his gift, his peace-offering; and there were also presented the fruits of the land that God gave them, as we know that God prescribed on their entering the land. Now we should feel that such things do not belong to the Christian properly but to the ancient elect people.

God is not forming since redemption another company of worshippers having no connection either with Jerusalem, or with that mountain of Samaria. A new thing has taken place. Worshippers are no longer called to Jerusalem, nor does grace exclude the Samaritans; but contrariwise, wherever the Spirit of God forms a people for the praise of God the Father of the Lord Jesus, throughout the world, these are the true worshippers; and the true worship is—their adoration of Him who has brought them into such a blessed relationship. Their hearts delight in what He has done and suffered for them; they find their joy in Himself. God has given Him, and He has displayed Himself in Jesus Christ His Son. True Christian worship is their hearts' return for all.

Accordingly, by the Spirit, our Lord Jesus here gives a certain characteristic of it, which I shall dwell on for a few moments. “The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father.” Now it is remarkable, if you look at the language of Christendom at large how little the Father's name appears. Take up any form of worship in any part of West or East: there is trifling difference in this respect. They all agree in sinking down from conscious nearness as children to the Father, into the distant place of a people; before a governor and a judge. If they approach God, it is to God at a distance, to a God that they are in quest of but dread; to a God from whom they are seeking in some way to win a certain measure of enjoyment they do not yet possess, a certain confidence they desire but do not as yet know.

Hence, therefore, we find distance and doubt, fear and anxiety, marked in the formal language of such souls even if children of God. Take one very well-known instance, and by no means, as it appears to me, an extreme case. Texts illustrating the wicked are selected to prepare the soul for a knowledge of God, such for instance as Ezekiel's, “When the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness that he hath done,” &c.; or the words of the prodigal son, “I will arise and go to my Father.” What is the meaning of all this? It is surely not for the Christian. Is the Christian a wicked person, or even one who is arising to go to his Father like the prodigal? In such a state of soul Christian worship is and must be unknown. · After these texts are read, there is a confession, and this again is followed by an absolution; and then, but still with fear and vacillation and perplexity, a certain recognition of and yearning after God is expressed, a deprecation of His anger, entreaties for favor, especially in earthly things, withal prayers for pardon and so forth. You may say, is not that scriptural? But I say, is it scripture for Christians in their worship? No, beloved friends, but for those who have lost the idea of worship, and have sunk into another people who are not another, but rather half Jews and half Christians.

We have referred to the prodigal son. Now if we wanted to take that text to describe Christian worship, it should be the prodigal not in his confession of sin, but when he has arisen and gone to his father, when the best robe is put on, when the ring is on his finger, and the shoes on his feet, and when there is the scene of gladness, not merely the prodigal or the friends or the whole house rejoicing, but, best of all, the father himself rejoicing. “Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and he merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.” Some no doubt will exclaim, That is heaven. Not a bit of it. It is here, it is now. It is true of the Christian in this world. It would be perfectly impracticable for the world; and herein lies their hitoh. They want to bring the world into the worship, and as they cannot raise the world to Christian worship, they sink the Christian in worship to the level of the world. But I deny that the parabolic scene of joy in the parable means heaven; and I will tell you why: The eldest son was in the field; and when he came to the house, he did not understand the reason of such joy. He in effect disowns the prodigal as his brother, and casts up to the father “this thy son,” who had wasted his substance with riotous living. Is not this here below?

Thus the real point is God the Father finding His joy in blessing the prodigal, yea, bringing him into the communion of His own joy. Such is the character and spring of Christian worship. It is the sons of God that enter by the Holy Ghost's power into the delight of the Father Himself in Christ. But, again, you see it cannot be heaven; for when we are there, there will be no elder brothers murmuring at the grace of God. Can you deny this? Can you affirm that this is not the just application of the parable? Can you say that there is any shifting the scene?

It is not in heaven that the prodigal was clothed and blessed. It was here; and it is very solemn to think that it is here, and here only. When we come to be with Christ, there is no putting on Christ in heaven. If I have not put on Christ here, then I shall be found naked, according to 2 Cor. 5:3: “If so be that, being clothed, we shall not be found naked.” The wicked when they rise at the resurrection shall be clothed; they shall have their bodies; but when thus clothed, they shall be found naked, for they have not put on Christ here. The just will have been clothed too, but the clothing of their resurrection-body does not leave them naked, but rather manifests them like Christ. Now, no doubt, men by their clothing may, in the eyes of their fellows, cover over what they really are; but in the resurrection-state all must be manifested, whether they be just or unjust. It is the Christian's comfort that in glory he will be manifested; but for the wicked, what a solemn thought that they will be seen through and through! Then they must—I will not say be honest—but then absolutely be unveiled, and detected in all their hatred and evil. When clothed, they will be found naked. But we put on the best robe now.

We have all the blessing of Christ now as the fruit of redemption; and this is exactly what was intended to be shown. You cannot separate the worship from the worshippers; and consequently, as the revelation of God is always the ground of the worship, and as He makes Himself known as the Father× He necessarily looks for and desires the loving praise of the children of God. He could not look for or accept anything less than such worship. We deserve nothing indeed but judgment; but redemption has made us spotless according to the faultlessness of Jesus Christ before God. What has put us in this absolute purity before Him is the work of Christ already done, and the Holy Ghost is given to us as the power of enjoying it. The Holy Ghost is not given to us in heaven, but on earth. We shall enjoy and worship in perfection there; and no hindrance can he there. We shall be in eternal and complete enjoyment, and in the possession of all that God has given us through His own Son; but here we are brought by faith, yea, in the Spirit, into the reality of it, though there may be hindrances many and great.

The grand object of Christ's becoming incarnate was to reveal the Father. He grew up perfect as an infant, as a boy, as a man. We find Him blending the most entire submission to His parents, with the consciousness of divine relationship. I refer to this to show the consciousness of His Sonship as man here below, for throughout all His life on earth He speaks of God as His Father. Yet when He on the cross made atonement for sin, He poured out His soul unto death, and as He did so with these most solemn words, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” On arising from the dead, He sends by Mary of Magdala the message, “I ascend to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God.” Thus He addresses His own disciples in these two relationships, the one in which He had walked all His life, the other expressed in His dying upon the cross. But He puts His disciples in both His relationships after their judgment was past, after their sins were taken away from them so that all that God is as God, and all that He feels as Father, should be nothing but love and satisfaction in them as believers because of Christ's redemption. What wisdom and grace! and therefore it is that we are now brought into enjoyment of Him not only as Father but also as God—so terrible before redemption, but now the source of the deepest blessing to the Christian. If I did not know Him as God, it would be a very great loss to my soul. We need to be kept with solemn thoughts of His majesty, as well as rest in His love as Father; and the Son of God keeps the whole balance of the truth undisturbed, and lets me learn what He knew of God as God no less perfectly than what He knew of Him as Father. He has now

brought all to me in the way of perfect grace. Thus grace makes believers as Christ Himself, apart of course from His deity.

This is exactly what the Lord Jesus brings them into as worshippers. He says that the worshipper should “worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” Unspeakable goodness! We see this by the person He was then seeking Himself. The woman of Samaria—what was she? She thought Jesus was only a Jew; she did not know that He was the Son of God. But the Lord soon woke her from her dream. In a few words He brought before her all her life up to that moment. He told her of her five husbands, and that the one with whom she now lived was not her husband. Thus she was laid bare before the light of God. She felt that He was a prophet, and the Lord did not leave her until she knew that He was the Messiah, the Son, the Savior. This was a worshipper the Father was seeking, and could she not worship in spirit and truth? He comes with power to make us what He seeks us to be. He does not look to find it in us. He seeks ourselves, no doubt; but He gives us a new life, a new power, the Holy Ghost; and the consequence is, we are thoroughly furnished, not only for every good work, but for Christian worship. This woman is just an instance of it.

But there is more. It is not enough that we worship the Father, as grace reveals Him in the Son. There, is the two-fold relationship, “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” When He speaks of the Father, it is the fullness of grace to make us what He wants us, but when He speaks of God, it is a necessity of His nature, and of ours too as born of Him.

Just so it is that one sees so beautifully in Rom. 2, a witness of the same truth. The apostle is going to bring in redemption through the blood and resurrection of Christ. The one is the basis of justifying, the other manifests its power. But before this he lets us see that God's principles are immutable. He shows us that it is only those that are found neither contentious nor disobedient, but on the contrary, that seek Him according to His own nature, that have eternal life. As he says in verse 6, “Who will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jews first and also of the Gentiles.”

Thus God's moral principles are not at all hampered by the grace of the gospel. There is the secret by which He makes an ungodly man a godly one. But though there is the grace of the gospel by which a man is brought out of guilt and sin unto God, the nature of God is not altered by the grace of redemption in Christ. This may suffice for the general principles of Christian worship for the children of God, I should rather say for such as are capacitated by the Spirit of God to draw near in the love of Christ and in the knowledge of His redemption, by the power of the Spirit to praise and adore the God and Father of our Lord Jesus that has brought them into such a place, and has manifested Himself in such goodness to our souls. And accordingly, it is in this spirit that we should read the New Testament.

Take, for instance, Eph. 1 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in

love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." I refer to this to show the condition, as also the spirit which alone produces worship. Is it any wonder that one cannot get the world to worship? It is not a question of educating men up to the point. The question is, when are people brought into the Christian state? It is then incumbent on them to worship in spirit and in truth. You see the same relationship here, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings. He is not merely going to bless. A man who is waiting to be blessed may be a hopeful person; but he is not yet set free, as in Rom. 8:2, &c.

I remember, well, some time ago, during the revival movement, being often pained by rash expressions, from men talking lightly upon the grace of God. The truth is that bringing a man from darkness to light, from Satan's power to God's, is a serious thing; but I do not believe its reality unless there be a true (I do not say a deep) work in the conscience of the individual; I see this in the case of the woman of Samaria. Christ brought the whole truth of her life into the light. She was convicted. There is no grace unless faith be accompanied by repentance. Here we see all these blessings, but the point I refer to is that it is a present reality. When the children of God have the Spirit as a well within according to His word, then we have Christian worship.

I shall enter, of course, upon the helps as well as the hindrances according to the notice already given, but merely touch now on the principle of Christian worship. Take another passage from scripture, the Colossians. The apostle says in chapter 1, "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, and to all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Now just contrast these words with any liturgy that was ever invented. "Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light!" Do you think that those persons who believe it would be very much afraid of sudden death? that is, of a speedy going to heaven to be with Christ? Why is it that professing Christians are in such dread of sudden death? It is because they think of a needful preparation for death. It all arises from an uncertainty about the Christian deliverance already effected. What is wanted even by real children of God is a better, a truer, knowledge of what salvation is—not a state we are hoping for, but in which we stand virtually now. The Old Testament speaks not of the Father and the Son as the New, or of salvation in the Christian sense of the word; but the one does not set aside the other, they are the complement of each other. In the Epistle to the Ephesians referred to, salvation is always spoken of as past and present. It is a state that flows from what has been done by and in Christ. But then quite in another way we are waiting for salvation. We have got the salvation of our souls, we are now waiting for the salvation of our bodies. But the salvation of the soul is as completely effected as it can be; redemption is wrought by Christ and accepted of God, and the Holy Ghost is already poured out on man. It is a solemn thing to affirm the possession of the Holy Ghost, but at the same time nothing is more sweet. Yet let me tell you that many good men are mistaken by founding the basis of it in something in themselves, instead of what Christ has done, sealed by the Holy Ghost. He never sealed until the work of redemption was done. In the Old Testament times there was never any saint without being quickened by the Spirit of God; but they could not have His seal until redemption was accomplished, as in Eph. 1.

So here we see saints described as giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Without multiplying instances, I give one passage more: “We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” (Heb. 13:10 - 13.) The apostle takes advantage of a beautiful type in the law. When a victim was brought to the brazen altar, the blood was not brought into the holiest at all; the animal was killed outside. But when the blood was carried into the holiest, the body was taken and burned without the camp. This, he says, is what was found in Christ who suffered without the gate and is now gone into the presence of God, in order to place us within the holiest and without the world. Some look for a middle way. It is a poor comfort to have anything but the full grace and glory of God. We should not rest short of the truth of God on man's prudence. The way of prudence is unsafe in the sight of God. It is not faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God. Hold on, therefore, not to the reasonings of common sense, but to the revelation of the divine word. We are brought into the holiest because of that blood that has cleansed us and removed every trace of sin; and here, too, we who are brought into the holiest take the place of Him who was crucified, bearing His reproach.

Are you willing to be despised? to be nothing here, because made everything in the presence of God? This is the true glory of the Christian, and the Christian does most for God when he is most despised of men.

May our record be not in the newspapers, or on tombstones, but on high, where it is never forgotten. The Lord grant, meanwhile, that we be worshippers in the holiest, and witnesses without the camp, bearing His reproach.

Chapter 226

True Worshippers

(John 4:20 - 24.)

The grace of our Lord is as rich as it is conspicuous in the scene before us. Had it not been so, He would not have unfolded worship to this woman of Samaria. He would have chosen some more worthy person. He might have found readily such a one as Peter or John, or had He gone beyond the bounds of His own disciples, such a one as Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea. But not so. He was making known expressly the free-giving of God, revealed in Himself the Son, and distinguishing in the broadest and the most distinct manner the difference between that which had been and that which was now to be. The old worship was altogether unsuited to the new purposes of God; another hour was dawning. She of Samaria thought, like many a one since, that the worship of God was only a question of human opinion. Strange that even God's children should doubt that God's worship must be of God's will! That He Himself should be denied a voice the voice in His own worship is indeed the climax of man's incredulity, But so it has been, and so it is, and men see not the self-will that will not allow God to decide what is His will for the worship of His children.

There is no subject in which men think that difference is more allowable than in worship. But our Lord Jesus brings out the truth of God as to it unmistakably. Not that one pleads for the light of God in this matter and not elsewhere. Be assured that those who complain of lack of light on such a subject in scripture have a far more serious question to settle. Man's will is bad enough anywhere but specially so where it intrudes into God's worship. For this is as much a matter of revelation, and so of faith on our part, as the salvation of a man's soul; and the same faith which can trust God in one thing can trust Him in everything; while on the other hand the incredulity which doubts God on one point is ready to doubt in all. Those who talk doubtingly of the authority or the certainty of God's word as to Christian worship, ministry, the coming of the Lord, or anything else that is revealed, will be found to have no rest in Christ for their souls. The evil heart of unbelief is at work and unrebuked.

I deny (as a matter of fixed principle) that the word of God is obscure: the allowance of such a thought arises from nothing but secret infidelity, and infidelity from an unjudged will. For let us for a moment consider, Is it God's word, and is it for man, that is, for His people? Will you say then that man can speak more clearly than God? Will you say that God, when He proposes to reveal Himself to man, cannot make Himself understood by His own or others?

It is freely admitted that there is another characteristic of God's word. It is necessarily a moral test of the heart; and God, therefore, does put His word in such a form that dependence on Him must be exercised, and that rashness or a heady spirit will mistake. Not that this makes obscurity, but that faith and the affections are thus put to the test. “If thine eye be single,” says the Lord Jesus, “thy whole body shall be full of light.". The light of God always supposes and discovers a certain moral state; but God by His grace makes the heart to welcome the light.

The Lord then clearly draws a contrast between what was and what is now. Undoubtedly the woman of Samaria was wrong in her thoughts. She belonged to a people who took up the law, a heathen people who copied the forms of Judaism in part. “Salvation” says the Lord, “is of the Jews.” They knew whatever had been known in the matter of worship; but no matter what the darkness of the Samaritans, or the glimmer of light among the Jews, another hour was coming when a new character of worship would be brought in for the children of God; and I specially draw your attention to this. It is not for a moment denied that there were other vast changes, such as the preaching of the gospel to every creature. I merely now refer to the fact that the two things were to go on together, but altogether distinct in their own nature. In short, then, the gospel was to he preached to every creature, and the children of God were to be made true worshippers.

What then did our Lord mean by “true worshippers?” He first speaks negatively. “The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.” (Ver. 21.) It was no longer to be a question of “this mountain,” with its spurious imitation of Israel, nor of Jerusalem with its imposing ritual of the law. But “the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. (Ver. 23.) This is the first point of which we have to take notice. Henceforth it is a question of worshipping the Father, a simple but wondrous privilege, in a general way easily enough understood, but not so easily carried out. To do so one must clean break with the world. For man, the world as such, does not affect it, nay, dares not to worship the Father. Nor need you wonder; for if you search the word of God you will always find that “the world” and “the Father” are in constant antagonism; just as the Son of God is to the great enemy, and the flesh or fallen man to the Spirit of God, so is the world to the Father.

One marked feature then of this new worship is, that the world is necessarily excluded. I do not mean by this that the world may not be present to hear; but that the nature of the worship shuts out the world from taking part. This will be made still more evident when we enter into particulars. It is God's children alone, those who have faith in Christ Jesus, who worship the Father. Yet doubtless the attempt has been made in many lands and ages to bring the world into Christian worship. The invariable effect is that such worship turns out fit neither for the world nor for the family of God. The effort to comprehend both on such a ground and for such an end must be a failure, a delusion. For the world, by the very fact that it is the world, is incapable of worshipping. Worship supposes the truth known, yea, it supposes God Himself known; worship supposes a new nature given; worship supposes the gift and power and action of the Holy Ghost; it supposes the Christian assembly wherein the Spirit works by whom He will. And all these things are wanting in the world. Nay, further, to put the world upon this ground is to deceive it; it is to be active parties in falsifying the conscience, and in deluding men as to their true condition in the sight of God.

But there is another and very grave result. The children of God never preserve their own elevation by grace in attempting to comprehend the world as worshippers; for thereby the world is not raised up, but the church sinks to the level of the world. Consequently, the language of such worship savors always of uncertainty, hesitation, and dread, in the soul's relation to God; entreaties for pardon, deprecation of judgment, unbelieving prayers for the Spirit of God to be poured out afresh, and all the other petitions which naturally flow from a position which is essentially false. This is found in all religious systems invented by man.

Yet if there be intermingled with God's solemn judgment of sinners, incongruous as this may be, it appears in some sense a merciful inconsistency, rather than that the unconverted should be cheated by a more consistent worship to take the place of God's children without a warning. For what could be more awful in its way than to hear an unconverted man formally assuming the language of the church, expressing a delight in God of which he knows nothing and a communion with the Father whose love is hateful to him? But in fact all the liturgies I have seen (and they are not few) merely fall back upon the feelings of men, with a slight tincture of gospel and a large infusion of law. There may be sublime language and glowing ideas, chiefly borrowed from the Old Testament; but in substance they are utterly beneath intelligent Christian use, apart from faults of form, and the very idea of a liturgy now.

But, when we come to search and understand the distinctive truths of the New Testament, we see that what the Lord Jesus here intimates of the immense change in worship now at hand was connected with the accomplishment of the revelation of Himself, His work, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Lord could not but say, if one compares the Jews with the Samaritans, “We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.” For worship is always according to the revelation: what then could it be where salvation was not? The Jewish worship was set out in figures and shadows; it was a hope, not an actual relationship and possession. The Jews were looking—and they were right in looking—for the Messiah, who would not only tell, but accomplish, all things; He whom they were looking for was to be a Savior. The salvation that the Jews had before their eyes was still a thing in prospect, and not yet brought home to the heart as a present reality. While they waited for Messiah, the worship was suited to their stale. It was surrounded with priests and forms, which showed that the way was not made manifest into the holiest. (Heb. 9)

But an end came to this state of promise and provisional imagery. The veil was rent from top to bottom, when the Jews led the Gentiles to crucify their Messiah, God's Son. Wonderful to say, in that crime of man, in the cross, God wrought redemption; and man first stood in presence of God, a Savior God. The whole Jewish system was at an end; it was dead if not yet buried, for God allowed a decent time for the funeral. But Judaism cast away life in rejecting the Messiah, and the cross made it evident. From His rejection the Lord (as the Spirit afterward) was gradually unfolding, as the disciples could bear, the new order of things; for those accustomed to the old wine did not relish the new all at once. They frequented the temple at the hour of prayer, though they went to their houses to break bread. For a little while they were half Jews and half Christians. But God was about to lead them out finally, and the Epistle to the Hebrews cut the last cord which bound the Christian Jew to the old economy. From that moment it was unfaithfulness to Christ, as He was now made known, to linger among the old things.

In the same Epistle God instructs us in Christian worship as contrasted with the Levitical service. What do we find? The legal sacrifices superseded by that of Christ, and the Jewish sanctuary, figure of the true into which Christ is gone and we now draw nigh in faith. The old sacrifices were always renewed; the Christian knows but one sacrifice, and the reason why is, that it has brought in perfection. Otherwise you only repeat and thereby give witness that you have nothing perfect. But the essence of the sacrifice of Christ is that it is once offered, and by that one offering He has not merely sanctified, but perfected forever them that are sanctified. Nothing can be more distinct than the doctrine of the apostle as to the offering of Christ for the Christian. He is looking not at passing circumstances, but at the essential difference between the Jewish worshipper and the

Christian. The Jewish worshipper needed the constant succession of offerings to meet his wants; the Christian's wants are already met in the cross and in Christ Himself.

The new state of things has been effected by the grace of God through our Lord Jesus. The Christian is brought into the enjoyment of God for heaven and eternity; and this now by the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, whilst waiting for Christ to take him on high.

Let us look briefly at some of the privileges that constitute the true worshipper. It is evident that the very first want of the soul arises from the fact that he is a sinful, yea, lost man. For a sinner is rather a leper than a worshipper; and a leper, as you know, was by God's word an outcast, one who must stand afar off and announce his own uncleanness; one who was not only out of his tent, but out of the camp of Israel, and so incapable of bringing his gift to the presence of God. Such is really the condition of every sinful man before God. A leper typifies not a Christian in a bad state, but man who is wholly in the loathsomeness and corruption of his natural state, far from God. But the Christian is born of God, has received a new life or new nature that no man possesses naturally, with which Christ alone quickens. How is it to be had? Only in the Son of God, and this only by faith. There is no other life Godward.

It is granted that there is no true faith without repentance, and that what is commonly called Sandemanianism or Walkerism is in this utterly wrong. All efforts to obliterate repentance, in order to ease or simplify believing in Christ, are dangerous, false, and evil. They slight the work of God in the conscience and reduce faith to intellectualism. This, however, is not the point now, but the great truth that he who believes has, according to scripture, everlasting life.

Yet new birth alone does not make one a Christian worshipper. Supposing you had ever so many born of God, you would, were this all, have not one “true worshipper.” Not only, therefore, the world cannot be true worshippers, but even if people were truly converted, this of itself would not constitute them such. Hence it is that Christ does not say a word about true worship in John 3, because He is there simply insisting on the necessity of the new birth. But in John 4 we have Christ Jesus the Giver of the living water, and true worship follows. In John 3 Jesus is the Gift, in John 4 He is the Giver. If some think these distinctions very fine, it is because they do not understand them. They are as plain as they are important; and men simply show their own lack of intelligence in the truth by such quibbling. Are they ever happy men? Do they really enjoy peace with God? When we see clearly our own state and His grace, the rest follows and is enjoyed without cavil. I have said that in John 3 the Lord Jesus is the Gift of God the Father, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” In John 4 the Son of God says, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” The living water is therefore the figure not of Christ, but of the Holy Ghost; and I wish to prove the truth that you not only need life in Christ, but even if you had it, unless you have also the living water, you cannot be a true worshipper. The Holy Spirit must be given in order to this.

Many assume that the moment a man is born again he receives the Holy Ghost. But this is to confound the new birth with the gift of the Spirit. It is untrue that every man receives the Holy Ghost at the moment of being born again. There is an essential difference between the two operations. When one is born again, he is awakened from the slumber of sin and cries to God in the consciousness of his guilt and ruin. From the grace of Christ he may have some comfort, but

God lets him taste of the bitterness of his own heart and ways. In the great majority of cases converted souls know what this is; and it is well that they should.

I do not deny that it is an imperfect state, a state very different from the just effect flowing from a full knowledge of the gospel. Such may look to Christ but not know His work, or the good news of salvation. In this state one is not a true worshipper. How could one not realizing his delivered condition worship in spirit and in truth? Is it pretended that one who cries “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” can at the same time say that “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death?”

Outward affliction well consists with joy in the Holy Ghost at the same time, but not inward bondage with inward liberty. Those who say so cannot know the deliverance in their own souls, or are blinded by tradition and will. Till set free as well as quickened, we cannot truly worship our God and Father. Christian worship is the expression of the heart's joy, of its perfect satisfaction in Christ, of conscious nearness to our God and Father, as children beloved. Salvation (not life) was what he wanted, that the living water might flow, and he adore and praise. We may be born of God, yet without simple submission to the perfect work of the Lord Jesus, one is sure to be craving this or that, doubtless cleaving to Christ, no longer in the dead state of nature but still without real enjoyment of God in peace, perplexed, tried, and unable to say, “Abba, Father.” In this condition, then, Christian worship is impossible, and you do wrong to invite such to worship the Lord. You place them in a false position, you tempt them to become hypocrites in leading them to sing hymns altogether beyond their faith or experience.

With this state of things the doctrine of the Lord entirely coincides. He does not hurry on souls before they have the requisite power through His own grace. When the woman asked Him whether He was “greater than our father Jacob,” He answers, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” He who has so drunk can worship God as a Christian. “God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” All else is the sacrifice of folly, at least it is not worship in spirit and in truth. There is a divine spring of joy given inwardly, and, until one is brought into that condition, it is in vain to expect true Christian worship from him. It is of importance to recognize this, as it is a fact that many converted souls are not thus emancipated from self and the law.

In order to make it clearer, let me refer for a moment to the day of Pentecost, when the Apostle Peter bid those convicted of sin,” Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” When men truly repent, are they not believers? It would be a sorry doctrine that supposes genuine repentance without real faith; yet the gift of the Holy Ghost was consequent upon all. He Himself received the Spirit as the Holy One of God, sealed by the Father as man here below. But we could not have the Spirit thus till sin was judged in the cross and ourselves washed in His blood. Then we could, on the ground of His mighty work which annulled sin, not only be quickened of the Spirit as sinners, but be sealed of the Spirit as saints. This is the Christian, and he is a true worshipper: till a soul is brought really to this, he cannot be. Thus we see in this instance how truly Christ is the Giver of the Spirit to those who already believed. Until redemption was accomplished, there was not a clear space or righteous ground for the Holy Ghost to dwell in. But when the Lord Jesus had effected

that mighty work, He went up on high, and sent the Holy Ghost down. He is thus the Giver of the Spirit. He gives that living water to the believer, not to the world; to the soul that rests on Him and His redemption; not to the soul that hates sin merely, but to him that has found in Jesus and His work all that the heart and conscience need before God. He has received the Holy Ghost, and the grace of God has given it to him.

Those under law, doubtless, do not as yet possess the Holy Ghost. This is why they so often fear and doubt; but when they how to God's righteousness in Christ with simple faith, they receive the Holy Ghost. It may too account for so many persons as are supposed to be brought to God on their death-bed. The great majority of those who are made happy there have been already converted; but there were, perhaps allowed hindrances. With death staring them in the face they submit to the righteousness of God, and the Holy Ghost is then given to them.

But look again at another case in scripture. In Acts 19 it is mentioned that there were at least a dozen men at Ephesus who were believers but had not received the Holy Ghost. They did not even know about it. Of course they had heard of the Spirit, but they had not heard of the gift of the Spirit. They knew from the teaching of John the Baptist that the coming Christ was to baptize with the Holy Ghost; but when they heard the full truth from the Apostle Paul, they received the Holy Ghost. This is the grand point, for miracles and tongues might cease; the Holy Ghost was to abide forever. Therefore I believe that not even the dark ages of popery nor all the divisions of protestantism, so painful to the spiritual mind, have driven back the Holy Ghost to heaven. I believe in His continued presence, because I receive the words of Christ. The Holy Ghost is always given to the believer when he has submitted to Christ's redemption. This shows the great importance of the gift of the Spirit: without it there is no true worshipper. He is not only quickened, but one who has found rest in Christ and is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Such as those the Father seeketh to worship Him.

Accordingly this is the condition that is supposed in all the Epistles. Take for instance the Epistle to the Romans. The apostle addresses them all, the saints that were then at Rome, as being dead to sin and alive to God in Christ, as being in the Spirit, and having the Spirit in them. How blessed! There is a true worshipper.

So again, in the Epistles to the Corinthians, the same thing re-appears. There were many lamentable features there requiring to be dealt with even by public discipline. Did these destroy the standing of the worshipper? Paul calls on the Corinthians to put away the evildoer from the assembly, but not to cease breaking bread themselves. In chapter v. he is speaking, not about the Lord's supper, but of ordinary intercourse with a known unclean professor of the Lord. Certainly we should never be suspicious; but where plain undeniable evil exists, the wicked person should be put away from the saints. Whether he be converted or not is not the question, but proved evil in one bearing the Lord's name in the church is inconsistent with the fellowship of saints on earth. Here it was the very one whom, on repentance, they were called to receive back in 2 Cor. 2; 7.

In the Epistle to the Galatians serious error is corrected and solemn warning given; but they are addressed as God's children, having the Spirit of sonship, and thereby crying Abba Father in contrast with the Old Testament saints. They could worship therefore.

In that to the Ephesians the Christians are treated as already blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ, and hence, as having redemption and sealed by the Holy Spirit, able to draw near to the Father. So the apostle, though solemnly admonishing the Colossian saints presents them as “giving thanks unto the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” &c. They were true worshippers.

The Philippian believers the apostle calls to rejoice in the Lord alway, and says that we are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Even the Thessalonians, young saints as they were, are exhorted to rejoice evermore, and not only to pray unceasingly, but in everything to give thanks as the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning them.

The Hebrew Christians are addressed as having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, and having a high priest over the house of God, to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, &c.

The apostle Peter calls the Christian Jews to whom he writes throughout Asia Minor, a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ Jesus.

The Apostle John treats even the babes of God's family as having known the Father, and all the family as having their sins forgiven, and now children of God. He tells us that, as confessing Jesus to be the Son of God, God dwells in each and he in God. He declares that love with us is made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because, as Christ is, so are we in this world.

There can be no doubt therefore that the contrast is painful in the extreme between the uniform language of the New Testament about Christians as thus called to worship in liberty and joy and nearness to God, and that of liturgies ancient or modern; and this because the results of redemption soon got merged and hidden in Jewish forms, and the law was recalled to the place of the Holy Ghost, and man in the flesh intruded wholesale into precincts which belong only to those solemnly accredited as God's assembly, the body of Christ.

But even the best position and highest privileges will fail to keep a man right with God; dependence on the Lord and obedience alone can do this. Nay, further, the greater the privilege the worse the fall, if the soul wait not upon God. It is a great mistake to think that only the wicked can fall: Christian men may, yea must, if unwatchful. The condition of the true worshipper is not such that he remains immoveable as a statue. He is alive unto God, but is responsible morally; he ought to grow but may decline. No doubt he has his old nature, the only thing to do with which is to judge it, treating it as vile and evil, according to the cross, where it was condemned root and branch in Christ made sin for us.

But, as the rule, all saints are now called to join in the worship of God. They are saved that they may, not serve only, looking down, but worship, looking up. Hence the all-importance of the Lord's Supper, the center of Christian worship, and of its celebration on each first day of the week. (1 Cor. 11; Acts 20) But this will come more fully before us when we treat of worship itself, and of the

helps or hindrances to it.

The souls whom the Lord contemplates are those who, as believing in His name, have not life only but the Spirit, who have therefore liberty and power, and can thus unaffectedly and with simple hearts unite in thanksgiving and praise of their God and His God, of their Father and His Father. Such as may be born anew but are not yet delivered nor in peace with God need the gospel that they may join their brethren, apart from the world in that which will occupy them all forever, begun even now on earth by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

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