

# GOSPEL PAPERS,

ETC.

BY

D. T. GRIMSTON.

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“Hereby perceive we the love (*of God*), because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”—  
I JOHN iii. 16.

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# PREFACE.

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THIS little Volume of Gospel and other Papers, from the pen of a servant of the Lord, lately departed to be "with Christ," will be valued by many in the Church of God. It will be specially prized by many to whom he was personally known, or who were blessed or helped through his ministry.

The Gospel Papers will be printed in small separate books for general distribution.

The Editor wishes to acknowledge the kindness of the Editors of "*Things New and Old*," and "*Faithful Words*," and that of the Publisher of "*Voice to the Faithful*," in permitting the three Papers published in these serials to be reprinted.

With the desire that this Volume (and each separate Paper) may be much more largely circulated and

blessed, both in the Church and in the World, they are now committed to the goodness of the Lord of the Vineyard, that He may deign to use them for His own glory, and for the blessing of precious souls.

F. G. P.

BLACKROCK, *September, 1872.*

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Part I.

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GOSPEL PAPERS.



# GOSPEL PAPERS.

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## “BE YE RECONCILED.”

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2 COR. v. 20.

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I WAS struck yesterday, on entering the meeting room at D——,\* by the appearance of a man whom I did not remember to have seen there before. Throughout the service he listened most attentively, and when the people began to disperse, I could not resist placing my hand upon his shoulder, with the inquiry,—

“Have *you* peace with God?”—“No,” was the reply, “I cannot say that I have.”—“Well,” I said, “my friend, I am sorry for it; but I feel sure I am right in supposing that you would wish to have it.”—“I would, indeed,” said he.—“Well,” I said, “do you believe that you are by nature a lost sinner?”—“We are *all* that,” said he, “and so, of course, I am one as much as any one else.”

“Well,” I said, “then if according to your own confession, you are a lost sinner, you assuredly require a Saviour; and does not the word of God tell you that One has been provided for you, and that if you now believe on Him, you are eternally saved?”—“Oh, but,” he said, “surely it’s not so easy as all that. Have not

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\* Derrygonnelly.

I got something to do *on my part*? Of course I believe, and always did believe that Jesus died for me, but *I must help*."—"Oh——," I said, "and now do tell me what *could* you—a poor sinner, consciously dead in trespasses and sins—*do* to help?"—"I could *pray*," said he.—"Well," I replied, "prayer is very blessed in its proper place; but did you ever notice (opening my Bible) this passage in 2 Cor. v. 20, in which God is *praying you* to be reconciled?"—"Now, will you tell me what you are praying for?"—"Why, of course, for that very thing, to be reconciled," he said.—"Oh, but," I answered, "this passage plainly states that God, on the ground of the accomplished work of Christ, is now entreating you, and sinners like you, to be reconciled to Him. Where, then, is the wisdom of *your asking Him* to be reconciled to you?"—"Oh, but," he said, "I don't believe that I could be reconciled to God without asking for it."—"Then," I said, "I have only to assure you that you are sadly mistaken. God, as the 20th and 21st verses so plainly state, has *anticipated* your petition by Himself sending to ask you to be reconciled; *for* (or because) He has made Christ to be sin, and now, instead of asking, you have simply to *believe* that Christ has been made sin for you, and you are instantly reconciled to God, 'made the righteousness of God in Him.'"—"Well," he said, "I never saw it in that light before. That's quite new to me, and I'll think over it and come and hear you again."—"If the Lord permit," I replied, and so we parted.

And now, my reader, this way of looking at *the most important question in the world* may be quite new to you also; but it is nevertheless blessedly true that, as

we read in Col. i. 20, the Lord Jesus has “made peace by the blood of his cross;” and, therefore, God is now in a position, consistently with His own truth and holiness, to “come out and entreat” (Luke xv. 28) poor sinners to draw near to Him. This He did, *first* by His Son, *next* by those who heard Him (Heb. ii, 3), and *now* He is doing it by those whom the Holy Ghost has sent forth (Acts xiii. 4) as “ambassadors” or heralds, to declare the glad tidings, that “He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Does not the poor blind mendicant at your door, cease *his* cry of want the moment he hears your welcome voice pressing a sixpence on his acceptance? *It is what he wants.* He receives it thankfully, and goes away rejoicing. Why should not *you*, dear praying one, pause in your petitions for a moment, to listen to the voice of God praying to you to be reconciled to Him on the ground of the finished work of Christ? Why should not you, even as you read this, give thanks to Him, believing that you have redemption through His blood, “the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace?” (Eph. i. 7.)

A mind at perfect peace with God ;

Oh, what a word is this !

A sinner reconciled through blood,

This, this indeed, is peace.

Reader, may this peace, unchangeable as Christ is changeless (Heb. xiii. 8) be yours ; but oh ! remember the solemn warning : “If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, . . . how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.” (Heb. ii. 2, 3.)

## AN IMPORTANT QUESTION.

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WHAT does God require as an atonement for my sin? *Is it tears?* The tears of the blessed Lord went up to His Father as "an offering of a sweet-smelling savour," as He wept at the tomb of Lazarus, and over the beloved but apostate city of Jerusalem. The tears of the aged Paul, and youthful Timothy (Acts xx. 19, 31; 2 Cor. ii. 4; 2 Tim. i. 4), were well-pleasing to God, as they wept with anxiety over those whom the Lord had committed to their charge. But where, in the whole canon of Scripture, do we find, that *tears* were ever an atonement for sin?

*Will fastings avail?* The blessed Lord fasted forty days and forty nights while He was tempted of the Devil; and He, as ever, in this, was doing what was well-pleasing to His Father. The prophets and teachers of Antioch likewise fasted, as they waited upon the commands of the Holy Ghost (Acts xiii. 1, 2). But where does God tell us, that *fasting* will procure the pardon of sins? On the contrary, though the self-righteous Pharisee of Luke xviii. fasted "twice in the week," he went not down to his house justified.

*Will prayers avail?* Jesus "continued all night in prayer to God." (Luke vi. 12.) Cornelius, "a just man, and one that feared God" (and "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,"—Prov. i. 7), "prayed to God alway;" and his prayer came up for a

memorial before God, and Peter was sent to deliver him by the word of salvation, and thus introduce him into the blessed liberty wherewith Christ doth make His people free. The poor publican, too, was heard acceptably in his groan of bondage—he “went down justified rather than the Pharisee.” But where does God reveal that *prayers* can come up to God as an atonement for sin? On the contrary, “the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.” (Prov. xv. 8.) “God heareth not sinners.” (John ix. 31.) “When they make many prayers he will not hear.” (Is. i. 15.)

*Will sorrow for sins profit?* The soul of the blessed Saviour was “exceeding sorrowful even unto death.” (Matt. xxvi. 38.) The disciples of Matt. xvii. 23, and the elders of Acts xx. 38, were “exceeding sorry,”—the former at hearing of the approaching trouble of their beloved Master, the latter because they should see the face of their instructor no more. The Corinthian assembly sorrowed after a godly sort, and “carefully” cleared themselves of the sin which was amongst them. But where does the Word of God teach that any amount of *sorrow for sins* will take away their smallest stain? Judas sorrowed in vain—Esau sorrowed in vain. *Life* alone can produce that “godly sorrow” that “worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of;” and they were lifeless!

*Will works do nothing?* Jesus worked the works of Him that sent Him while it was day, for the night was coming in which none could work; and of His great atoning work we will speak more again. Rahab, in the full persuasion that the God of Israel was “God in heaven above and in earth beneath,” and knowing that

He had "given them the land," "received the spies with peace," and perished not with them that believed not, thus proving her faith by her works. Abraham staggered not at the demand of God for his son Isaac, but endured the trial of his faith, by offering his only son on the altar. But where does Scripture ever tell of any amount of *works* serving as a recompense for sin? On the contrary, "by the works of law shall no flesh be justified." (Gal. ii. 16.) Righteousness is "to him that worketh not." (Rom. iv. 5.) "By wicked works we are enemies to God." (Col. i. 21.)

*Will ordinances do?* We read that those who gladly received the word under the preaching of Peter (Acts ii. 41), were baptized and broke bread. Paul himself was baptized and ate the Lord's Supper with the disciples at Troas. (Acts xx. 7.) But where did God at any time provide, that either *baptism* or the *Lord's Supper* should be for a moment thought of as an escape from the righteous penalty due for sin?

Dear reader, if you are resting on your *tears* or your *fastings*, your *sorrow*, your *prayers*, your *works*, or your *ordinances*, as a means wherewith to get rid of your sins, or aid in doing so, I most solemnly warn you that you are building on a foundation of sand—that you are presenting to God that which He will not accept from any unsaved sinner!

His requirement for sin is *death!* not any of the things I have named, which are right and good in their proper place.

And now let me assure you that Jesus, eighteen hundred years ago, met the righteous judgment of a holy God for sin—gave up His precious life for us.

His presence at the right hand of God is a witness to you, that God is eternally satisfied with the atonement He has made for the sins of the vilest sinner. Do you then believe this?

May I then entreat you to turn away from those things in which you have been vainly trusting hitherto, and rest your soul henceforward on CHRIST, as the all-sufficient ransom for your soul—the already accepted propitiation for your sin!

I tell you that, had He left one atom of His work unfinished, He could not be now where He is, at the right hand of God. Oh, look at Him *there*, and be satisfied that He is the *same* Jesus that died for you. His wounds show it—His words tell it. Acknowledge Him then as your Saviour, and know that you are saved! Believe on Him in your heart, confess Him with your mouth, and righteousness and salvation are alike *yours* this moment.

Continue then to gaze on Him, and, as Stephen, you will be inwardly and outwardly conformed to His image. (Compare Acts vii. 59, 60; Luke xxiii. 34, 46; Acts vi. 15; 2 Cor. iii. 18.)

“*The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin.*” (1 John i. 7.)

## A PURGED CONSCIENCE.

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HAVE you, dear reader, a purged conscience?—a conscience, *once* charged with all the sins of your lifetime, *now* cleansed from all those sins, according to God's estimate of the Blood of Christ? "Ah," you say, "would that such a precious possession as that were mine!" "Well," I reply, "this precious possession *is* yours, if you believe what I am going to tell you."

There was a time when such a thing was unknown, when the sacrifices offered year by year, continually, failed to make the comers thereunto perfect as pertaining to the conscience. Their continual repetition was an evident proof of their inability to give this; otherwise they would have ceased to be offered, and the "worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." (Heb. x. 1, 2.) Under the law there was "a remembrance again made of sins every year." (Lev. xvi.) However valuable those sacrifices (and surely they *had* their value) may have been as *the "shadow of good things to come,"* they never gave those who offered them a purged conscience.

The return of the "fit man" *without* the scapegoat, from the wilderness, was the signal to every believing Israelite, to rejoice in the happy consciousness that his sins *for a whole year* were ceremonially atoned for. (Lev. xvi.) But beyond this term his pardon did not go; and the tenth day of the seventh month in each

year found the high priest again repeating the same ceremony.

But, blessed be God, we are "not under the law, but under grace;" and we are privileged to read of "better sacrifices than these." We are privileged to know that "burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin" gave God no pleasure; and for this very simple reason, that they continually brought sin to His remembrance, that hateful thing in His holy eye. Patiently had He forborne with (Rom. iii. 25) the sins of believers of bygone times, until He had variously and thoroughly tested man in the flesh, and proved him utterly irreclaimable. Then at length He reveals His own resources and counsels, and makes known the way by which the vilest sinner may possess a conscience purged from sins, according to His perfect knowledge of good and evil.

*Christ* entered into *all* His mind concerning this, and having entered into all His mind, devotes Himself to do *all* His will—and who but *God* could offer this? He took the body prepared for Him, and in perfect obedience to His Father, and in perfect love to man, offered Himself as the victim, when other sacrifices had been proved to be utterly unavailing. As a *propitiation*, He "made peace through the blood of his cross" (Col i. 20); or, in other words, substantiated every moral attribute of God (and of this the blood of the goat sprinkled seven times on the mercy seat was a figure—Lev. xvi. 15). As a *substitute* He bore, "in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter ii. 24), *all* the sins of His people (and of this the scapegoat, over whose head the sins of the people were confessed, was the type. Lev. xvi. 21). Then having thus offered one sacrifice for sins, He for

ever *sat down* at the right hand of God, in token that *His* work was over, and that no other sacrifice for sins remained.

But the Persons of the Godhead all have their share in this wondrous work. Christ's presence in heaven becomes the moment for the descent of *the Holy Ghost*, to bear the glad tidings that God is satisfied, in the fullest way, by the death of Jesus—that His precious blood is that by which the vilest sinner may have *a purged conscience*. *His* office is to witness to the perfection of the work of Jesus, and to tell poor sinners that their sins and iniquities God will remember no more!

And now, dear reader, will you receive or reject His witness? Will you believe that the offering of the body of Jesus Christ has once for all met God's righteous claims against *sin*, and that your conscience is thus cleansed from all your sins, according to the value God sets upon the blood of His own Son? As you read this paper, if you in simple faith receive the witness of the Holy Ghost, or, in other words, believe His record that the one offering of Christ has put away your sins, *a purged conscience* is yours. You have the word of the living God for it, that your sins and iniquities He will remember no more. You receive the witness (or record) of men, surely the record of God is greater. (1 John v. 9.) Believe it, then, concerning Christ's work for *you*, and a purged conscience is now yours, and yours for ever!

God's mind is, that the worshipper "*once purged*" should have "no more conscience of sins." Happy, then, to have a heart "*sprinkled from an evil conscience*"

(Heb. x. 22)—and to be purged from “dead works to serve (or worship) the living God.” (Heb. ix. 14.)

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. x. 17.) You have heard the word of the Holy Ghost—you believe it, and rest happily and peacefully in the possession of a *purged conscience* before God for ever!

## ARE YOU IN EARNEST?

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THIS question, dear reader, suggests itself on reading the first verse of Luke xv., "THEN drew near all the publicans and sinners for to hear him." The occasion is remarkable. "Great multitudes" went after Him, we are told, just after the parable of the "great supper." But followers such as these the Lord Jesus did not desire. That each one would have met with an instantaneous and ready reception at His hands, had they been really *in earnest*, there can be no manner of doubt; for "the righteousness of God" is "unto all." (Rom. iii. 22.) But knowing full well that a vast majority were seeking present advantage rather than future blessing, He applied to their consciences the searching words we read in chapter xiv. 26—35, words that well might make the heart of the most "in earnest" quail—"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters; yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. For which of you," &c. The mighty work of redemption, with all the fearful "cost" of it, had not stayed *Him* in His career of devotedness. *He* knew full well that Satan's "twenty thousand" would come against Him, but this did not hinder His course of love. *He* had *indeed* forsaken all that *He* had; for, as we read in Phil. ii., *He* first made Himself of no reputation, taking on *Him* the form of a servant, and

then, when found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient even unto *death*. And not only this, but obedient in *life* likewise—He was the perfect “meat offering” from which “the salt” of the covenant of God was never lacking. (Lev. ii. 13.)

To this position of true discipleship He calls on those who have “an ear to hear” to respond. He was thoroughly rejected of the world. Would they, then, identify themselves with One who, before He gave them a crown, had nothing but a cross to offer? Fully and fairly He opens out to them the consequence of following Him. He throws down the gauntlet, as it were, and challenges them to take it up. Well might the stoutest quail at the prospect. *But*, most blessed it is to observe, that *this* was the very moment that the publicans and sinners selected to draw near to Him. “*Then* drew near all the publicans and sinners.” They had heard to the full the terms of discipleship. They were not strangers to the fact that He to whom they now drew near, was “despised and rejected of men.” They knew only too well what the religious world would say to them; but, in spite of all these obstacles, they “drew near,” and placed themselves side by side with the rejected Jesus, and found a welcome from Him. “Wisdom’s children” surely these were; and *they were* “*in earnest*.” Doubtless, they were thoroughly discontented with their present condition. No doubt, they had tried the “far country,” and found nothing but starvation there; they had had fellowship with its citizen, and found him a hard taskmaster. In fact, like the four lepers in 2 Kings vii., they said to themselves, as it were, “Why sit we here until we die? If we say, ‘We

will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there, and if we sit still here we die also: now therefore come and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians; if they save us alive we shall live, and if they kill us we shall but die.” Thus with these poor sinners. They, too, were perishing, but they had an ear to hear (faith comes “by hearing”). They were aware of their wretched, sinful state. They came to Jesus, and found in Him the One whom the Pharisees charged with receiving sinners, and eating with them, causing these self-righteous ones to murmur. They were thoroughly *in earnest*, because they knew their wretched condition, and they found a perfect welcome from Him.

Dear reader, I would ask, Are you *in earnest* on this vital question too? This same Jesus is now in glory, and still invites you to draw near to Him. “This man receiveth sinners,” is equally true of Him now as then; and be assured, therefore, there is a welcome for you. The Holy Ghost, with the candle of the Word of God, is even now seeking diligently in the very corners of the great house of Christendom, to find the lost but precious souls that Satan is seeking to cover with the dust of Antiquity, Legality, Ritualism, and Expediency. Will you not then, as the light flashes upon you from on high, respond to its summons, and let there be rejoicing amongst the angels of God at the finding of the lost one! Will you not allow yourself to be gathered up to-day, to become the precious possession of Christ? Hearken to His voice, “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 v. 24.) Can anything

Speak more plainly than this? You hear His words. You believe in the Father who in gracious love sent His Son, a Saviour, to give you eternal life; the moment you do this, everlasting life is yours—a life as long and as lasting as that of the blessed God who liveth for ever and ever. Your condemnation has passed away; for Christ bore it all, and now ever liveth to make intercession for you. You have passed from the state of death, in which you were, into life; and are introduced into present “fellowship with the Father and the Son.” Could there be higher joy than this? Impossible! “These things,” says the Apostle John, “write I unto you that your joy may be *full*.” (1 John i. 4.)

It is then a question for you, “Will you exchange your present condition as a sinner ‘under judgment’—as ‘all the world’ is declared to be (Rom. iii. 19) in the midst of a scene over which the cloud of retribution is fast thickening—for that of one not only secure from condemnation, but possessed of eternal life in the Son of God?” And although you are passing through a scene on which the cloud of judgment is so soon to burst, yet having for your present portion fellowship with the Father and the Son, and for your hope the return of Him who loved you, and gave Himself for you, you have *fulness of joy*—the foretaste of that which you will have when, in your glorified body, you will be enabled through the Holy Ghost, in unhindered accents of praise and worship, to cast your crown before the feet of Him who has done all for you! I pray you then, dear reader, *be in earnest*, and *to-day* accept *God’s salvation*, if you have not yet done so. “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” (John vi. 37.)

## THE THREE SUPPERS.

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### 1.—“The Great Supper.” (LUKE xiv. 15—24.)

IN blessed contrast to the heart of man, so full of self-interest and self-exaltation, the Lord Jesus in this passage unfolds to us *the heart of God*.

One of those who sat at meat, on hearing of “the feast,” and “the resurrection of the just,” exclaims, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” The Lord Jesus, in reply, tells them of *One* who even now had spread a great supper, at which all who desired might partake. It cost Him dear to be able to announce such a feast; yea, even the blood of His own Son! That sinless, perfect One, had even to “taste death” and judgment, before that great supper could be spread. He died: He rose: He ascended to heaven—thus accomplishing a work which satisfied every claim of God’s righteousness against sin. God’s love can thus freely send forth and say, “Come, for all things are now ready.”

Until now the best robe could not be presented to the prodigal, for God’s righteousness was not vindicated until the Cross. Until now the shoes (comfort for the travel-worn pilgrim’s feet) could not be given him, till purchased by the death of Jesus. Nor could the ring, until now, be put on his hand, nor the fatted calf partaken of; for the veil must be rent, that the prodigal

might be called into fellowship with the Father and the Son. The veil was not rent until atonement was accomplished. But now "all things are ready." The Father's loving hand has all prepared that His heart had planned, and the Holy Ghost has come forth with the summons, "Come," "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek," to those "in the field," and then to those in "the far country."

Dear reader, how are you treating the summons of Him who has spread the feast? Do you say in acts, if not in words, "My earthly things, my fields, my house, my shop, are too engrossing. I have no time to think of God's invitation or of the blessings He has prepared for those who come." Surely you will not say, with another, "My attention is so taken up with the skilfulness with which I conduct my business, the efficiency of my operatives, the first-class character of my workmen who cannot do without their master's eye, that God's invitation has no charms for me." Or do you take the place of the one who says, that "natural affection so engages my heart—family ties that I cannot think of breaking in upon, so engross me with their pressing interests, that I have not even a moment to think of Him who beseeches me." Ah! dear reader, do not let Satan persuade you to be so foolish as to reject God's invitation for the poor toys with which he beguiles and keeps you from seeking first "the treasure which faileth not."

But the rejection of His ambassage, only draws forth greater earnestness on the part of the Provider of the feast, that every seat should be filled. "The poor of the flock" (v. 21) are now His care, like the Samari-

tan woman of John iv., and those of her city. Ah! there was no refusal there. The sense of need is met, by the sense of pardon and joy in the Holy Ghost.

But yet "there is room." The poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind (v. 21) are brought in to be made a "royal priesthood" (comp. Lev. xxi. 16—21), and have taken their place at the bountiful board.

Now comes this invitation to us, poor "sinners of the Gentiles," and it is not merely "go out and *bring*," but "go out and *compel*." Note the anxiety of the Father's heart to embrace "sons." He is not content to have His ten thousands of angels to do His bidding. Nothing will satisfy His love but to bring "many sons to glory!" Surely, therefore, none can say, "There is no invitation for me." "Them" includes every inmate of the highways and hedges; every stray sheep; every lost piece of money; every prodigal. Take a prodigal's place then, lost and helpless, and rest in this finished work of Jesus. Rest in Him who is the expression of His Father's love; in Him "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." "All things," then, are yours. You *have* the pardon of your sins; the present possession of eternal life. You are already brought into the presence of the One whom you can, by the Spirit, call "Abba, Father." You are at home and graced before Him, and in the light, and joy, and blessedness of communion with Himself, and with His Son you have the fulness of joy. (1 John i. 3, 4.)

## 2.—“The Marriage Supper of the Lamb.” (REV. xix. 1—10.)

So much for your present possession—thus far the supper of Luke xiv. Now let us turn to another scene. Not, as we may say, the supper of *grace*, but the supper of *glory*. Not the supper that we enjoy now, blessed as that is, but that which we shall enjoy, when we shall see Him face to face, and know even as we are known. *That* is the Father's repast prepared for the poor prodigal. *This* is the banquet spread for those who share the bridal glory of the *Lamb*. The supper is a different one, but the guests are *the same*. They had once sat down, at the time of conversion, at the feast of grace on which we have dwelt. When their “pilgrim days are done,” they shall enjoy the marriage supper of the Lamb. “Espoused” we are now (2 Cor. xi. 2)—“presented” (Eph. v. 27) we shall be *then*. With Him where He is; beholding His glory! What a scene of praise it is! “Every voice,” the “much people,” “the four-and-twenty elders,” “the four beasts,” and “the great multitude” have but the one cry, “Alleluia!” The bridegroom has come, “the wise” have gone “in with Him to the marriage,” and the marriage supper is spread, and surely then the bride's enjoyment will reach its climax, for she will be in the immediate presence of her Lord!

Dear reader, can you say “I have a perfect title to sit down with Him there—I read it in His precious blood”?

## 3.—“The Great Supper of God.” (Rev. xix. 11—21.)

I MUST now ask you to turn with me to another scene, and read of another supper; not that of the Father for His prodigal children, nor that of the Lamb for His chosen bride, but “the great supper of God.” A solemn scene of judgment for those who have not taken their place at the other. God gives instantaneous reception at the first supper to all who receive His testimony concerning His Son. But His righteousness demands the everlasting destruction of all “who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;” and therefore we find in 2 Thes. i. 6, that it is a *righteous* thing with God to recompense tribulation to them who trouble His people, “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power when he shall come.” And thus we find the Lamb, of whose supper we have spoken, coming, in Rev. xix. 11, in *righteousness* to judge and make war; indignation in His look, the emblem of universal dominion on His brow, His very raiment indicating vengeance.

Ah! poor fellow-sinner, beware of the fate of the elder brother of Luke xv. The Father’s utmost entreaties fail in softening his heart; he remains outside though the Father has repeatedly pressed the invitation on him. What then is the result to those who refuse His invitation? They become the victims of the righteous judgment of Him whom they have rejected;

and, finally, the occupants of the place of torment, where they seek in vain for a drop of water to cool their tongues. (Luke xvi. 24.)

The judgment of all flesh, of Rev. xix. 21, will be followed by the judgment of the raised and wicked dead of Rev. xx. 11—15, and throughout eternity they will have a part in the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone, which is the second death—the part of thousands who have heard and refused the invitation to the Father's supper who allowed "the god of this world to blind their minds, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 4.)

Dear reader, have you taken your place at the great supper of the grace of God? or is this to be your fate?

# G O D ' S   L A M B .

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JOHN i. 29.

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“Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”

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HAVE you, dear friend, ever gazed upon the Lamb of God, whose person and work are brought before us in this passage? The Eternal Word—the Creator—the Light—the Life—the Word made flesh—the only begotten of the Father, is here exhibited to us as God's Lamb!

This was not a title which would be quite foreign to the minds of John's hearers. It had been the delight of God before His Son came into the world, to set before the faithful waymarks by which they might be encouraged amid the darkness and wickedness around.

Just as the finger-post encourages the weary traveller as he passes through some lonely scene, telling him that the road he traverses leads to the desired end, so these bright gleams of light in Old Testament times tell us that God had not forgotten His people, and that He would make good His primal promise spoken in Adam's hearing of the Deliverer, the seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head.

Let us revert to a few of them—take Genesis iv. for instance. Sin had entered the world when the Lamb of God's providing comes in type upon the scene. Abel recognizing the distance that existed between him and God,

and bowing his head to the righteous sentence of God as to sin, owns that nothing will avail with God but the life of a sinless victim, and therefore he takes the "firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof." He saw the righteousness of God demanded a substitute for sin which had no sin in itself, and which could therefore bear sin's judgment in death: he submitted himself to that righteousness, and his "more excellent sacrifice" obtained for him the witness, that he was counted righteous according to God's estimate of His gift (Heb. xi. 4).

Dear reader, have you bowed to His righteousness, and learned, that God accepts the sinner who does so, according to *His* thoughts of the sacrifice of the Lamb of His own providing—His own beloved Son?

Let us look at another. The moment had come for the trial of Abraham's faith, and Isaac, in whom the promises of God were centred, must die. Obedient to the word of God, the father hesitated not a moment; early in the morning he started forth on his sorrowful journey to offer up his only son. Faith triumphs over difficulties: he believed that He "was able to raise him up even from the dead." In simple confidence then, he trusted God, and in reply to Isaac's inquiry, he says, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering."

The decisive moment came: the altar was built; the wood was placed in order; Isaac was bound and laid upon the altar, and the hand stretched forth to slay his son, when the voice of God stayed the blow—"Lay not thine hand upon the lad," and turning about he beheld "a ram caught in a thicket by his horns:" another moment suffices to offer him *instead of* his son;

and he rightly named the place "The Lord will provide."

In Exodus xii. we find God displaying to us another picture of His interference in grace to shield man from impending judgment. *That* night He was about to pass through the land of Egypt to execute judgment. But His people must be spared, and therefore a mode of shelter from judgment is proposed to them, by sprinkling upon the lintel and door posts of their houses the blood of "a lamb without blemish." They believed in the coming judgment; they obeyed the directions given; they took the lamb; they killed it; and with the blood upon the door post and lintel they sat down in security, and fed upon the one whose blood was the sole ground of their safety on that awful night of judgment; resting simply on the word of Him who said, "When *I* see the blood I will pass over you." How plainly does this point us to the "Lamb without blemish and without spot," by whose precious blood His people are redeemed. (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.)

Dear reader, have you discovered that you can be sheltered under the blood of God's Lamb, in calm undisturbed security, knowing from His own word that when *He* sees the blood He will pass over you?

We are at our journey's end, for these types and shadows have conducted us to the brightness of the presence of "the Lamb of God" Himself: waymarks now are no longer needed; finger-posts are passed and well-nigh forgotten in the presence of the glory of the Lamb of God. In obedience to His Father's will He had come (Ps. xl. 7, 8). In obedience to the same will "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter," and

crucified. God presents Him thus as an object of faith for all who will receive Him.

But there was one important difference between the sacrifices of Old Testament times and the Lamb of God. In old times the offerer had to bring his lamb—he was an actor in the proceedings; and without his activity there could be no sacrifice. Not so now—it is *God* who has provided—*God* who has brought His Lamb—*God* who has accepted Him. Man could have no share in the work, for the plan had been devised by God, and by God has been accomplished. The sacrifice is of God's providing, therefore the sinner's acceptance is according to the value God sets upon His own Lamb.

Have you, my reader, entered into this? Can you say, "I am accepted according to the value God sets upon His Lamb, that in love He provided for me"?

Mark now the character of His work. It is two-fold—He "taketh away the sin of the world;" and He "baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Can anything be more complete, more suitable to the nature of God than this? Not merely do I see my sins removed, but I see sin itself dealt with in Christ, when He as God's Lamb bore its judgment—bowed His head and died! How complete a work!—*Sin itself* dealt with in all its horrible enormity. It is unbelief alone which deprives the sinner of an interest in the work accomplished by the Lamb of God.

But this is not all—His work being finished, He rises and ascends up where He was with the Father, to give us a more abundant blessing than before. Those who have received Him are now baptized with the Holy Ghost, thus uniting them to their absent Head and

Lord. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free" (1 Cor. xii. 13). And thus we who have believed are united to Christ, and to each other.

Now mark the way in which those who first heard the message of glad tidings received it, and through abiding with Jesus, received strength to testify of Him—"The two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus."

How simple and beautiful! "Faith" came "by hearing" (Rom. x. 17). They heard the word—they received Him—they believed in His name, and all things were but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Him—as in Saul's case the sevenfold crown of fleshly glory (Phil. iii. 5, 6) was cast aside in the presence of the more excellent glory of the Lamb of God! They received "power to become the sons of God," and followed *Him*: and they *abide* with Him. This was the place that Mary chose (Luke x. 39—42). This, again, was the place that John took, not because he had a better right to it than Peter, but because he loved it more (John xiii. 23); and this is the place that we have an equal right to share; for Jesus says, "Abide in me" (John xv. 4).

If you know anything of it, dear reader, are you cultivating that habitual nearness of heart to Christ, that continual dependence on Him, that constant outflow of affections towards Him of whose changeless love you are assured? The result of cultivating this, beloved, will be, peace flowing "as a river" and abundant fruitfulness. Remember that without Him you can do nothing—and service, though outwardly dazzling, is worthless unless

flowing from abiding fellowship with Him—habitual nearness of heart to Christ!

Now comes their testimony—"One of the two . . . was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother—he first findeth his own brother Simon and saith unto him we have found the Messiah . . . and he brought him to Jesus."

May we learn our lesson from this too—and go forth from the presence of our Lord to win those who are "without God in the world" to Christ. We may well delight to tell of the One whom we have found; surely like the woman in John iv. we may say, "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did;" or like the Mary of John xx., we may tell of the One who is now ascended to His Father, and to our Father, and to His God, and our God. It is thus we know our ascended Lord. May we so testify of Him that those around us (and "thy friends" first, Mark v.) may know the Lamb of God in the glories of His person, and in the virtues and excellencies of His work!

## D O U B T S.

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CALLING on S. to-day I observed that he did not look so bright as usual, and soon the cause discovered itself. "Do you know," he said, "I sometimes think I am deceiving myself, and that I am not a child of God at all; for when I was converted, ten years ago, in the time of the Revival, I *felt* such a load of sins taken off me, and then I was so happy, but I have not at all the same feeling now, so perhaps after all I am self-deceived."

I saw at once that the fault here was self-occupation, looking *in* instead of "looking *off*" unto Jesus," and therefore I said, "Well, dear S., I am not surprised at what you say, for it is the natural result of founding your acceptance with God on your *experience*, and not on what *He says* in His word. I passed at one time through the same experience, and therefore I can feel for you. I used shortly after my conversion to have at times great sensations of joy, followed by corresponding feelings of depression, and while these latter continued of course I was miserable; but what gave me perfect peace was the ceasing to take account of my own feelings *altogether*, and begining to rest calmly and quietly upon what God says in His word about Christ, who was delivered for my offences and raised again for my justification (Rom. iv. 25); and I reasoned with myself thus: If Christ has indeed been delivered for my

offences, there is no necessity for me to be delivered for them, for God is too just to demand payment over again for a debt already discharged, and if He has been raised again for my justification, no one can ever lay anything to my charge, for His resurrection has set me in righteousness in the presence of God. By His death and resurrection my sins were put away, and I am constituted righteous before God. I stand before God righteous as He is righteous. I believe this, and therefore, however much my feelings may change, I never doubt that I have peace with God."

"Well, Mr. ———, I quite see what you mean, and I'm sure it is very happy for *you*, but how am I to know that He died for *me*?"

"O," I said, "that is easily discovered. Look at Rom. v. 6, where it says, 'Christ died for the *ungodly*,' and ver. 8, where He died (it says) for 'sinners.' Satan never yet could persuade me that I was neither a 'sinner' nor 'ungodly,' and therefore I always have the assurance of God's word that He died for *me*; and putting two and two together, if He died for me I know that God is satisfied, and therefore not a shadow of a doubt as to my acceptance, ever crosses my mind. I am enabled to 'joy in God,' by whom I have received this wondrous reconciliation."

"Well, Mr. ———, I think I must not doubt any more; I see I must cease to be occupied with myself, and enter more into what God has *done* for me, and what Christ *is* to me."

## "I'VE GOT THE GRIP."

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"WE have half an hour before the meeting," said my companion; "shall we go down and see poor Hugh M.? Perhaps a word from you might do him good. He has been for thirteen years in anxiety about his soul, but never seems able to accept God's salvation."

"Agreed," said I, and off we went together. The evening had closed in, and we found him and his dear wife, a nice happy Christian woman, at home, and with much kindness they welcomed us, and we sat around the bright turf fire that was sparkling on the hearth.

I gradually introduced the subject, speaking of ordinary topics first, then giving the conversation a religious turn, and finally putting the question home to him, as to whether he *personally* knew the blessedness of peace with God.

"Well," he said, and his genuine frankness won my heart from the first, "I dunna want to make ony secret on it: I've been these thirteen odd years looking for it, but I don't know how it comes, I canna get the grip."

I saw at once that the man was thoroughly in earnest, that he was upright in heart—had been in the presence of God, and knew his lost condition, and therefore I had no difficulty in presenting to him, in the plainest and simplest way, the gospel.

"Now, dear Hugh," I said, "I am sure you would take no ground but that of a vile guilty sinner, one

that has no claim upon God whatever, and deserves nothing but hell."

"Indeed I do," was his reply: "this old bad heart of mine is full of sin, and I know that I am a poor lost guilty sinner," and the earnest way he spoke revealed the really anxious condition of his soul.

"Well," I said, "I am thankful thus to see you in your true place before God, repentant to the very heart's core; now I want to ask you what is revealed in the word of God as to those for whom Jesus died. Will you turn to your Bible for a moment, and read what is said in Rom. v. 8? 'But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.' Now, according to your own admission, you are a hell-deserving sinner, and God reveals to you that for such as you His Son was put to death, and therefore you may know that His death has satisfied God for your sin and put it away."

"Oh but," he said, "I canna get the grip. I see it all, it's so plain, but somehow I canna get the grip"; and the perspiration rolled down his face in his earnestness.

"But," I answered, "you are making 'a difficulty where God makes none: you are waiting to get a grip, when you ought, like a little child, to be simply receiving God's testimony that Christ by His death has made a full atonement for your sins; that God has accepted His finished work, of which Christ's presence at His Father's right hand is a proof to you, and that believing in Him you are free from all your sins in the sight of God; for He says, 'all that believe are justified from all things.' (Acts xiii. 39.)"

“Well,” he said, “I dunna ken how it is, I feel I want to grip it, and I hae nae power. I canna believe it is for me.”

Again and again I pressed him with all the earnestness and clearness I could, for I felt the soul was hanging betwixt life and death, and the least turn the wrong way might end fatally; but he still maintained he “couldna get the grip.”

Our time was up, and we had to leave; but so heavily was he laid upon my heart, that I could not help praying for him specially at the meeting we were holding. The answer was not long deferred.

He says that it was about the middle of the night that he awoke in fearful trouble about his soul: he felt he should have to cry out, for his heart was bursting; but he suddenly felt as if the blessed Saviour was personally present, and saying so sweetly to him, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

“O Lord,” he said, “I’ll come, I’ll come,” and he then and there believing came to Jesus and found that peace he had sought for thirteen long years, and then that glorious hymn came to his mind,

“I hear the words of love,  
I gaze upon the blood,  
I see the mighty sacrifice,  
And I have peace with God.”

He had “got the grip” at last—and peace with God was his, through faith in Jesus—and now he sits at the feet of Jesus, a purged worshipper, having no more conscience of sins.

As I write this simple story that happened last week, I am reminded of how, in Numbers x., the Ark of God

went out of its due order in consequence of the failure of the people's leader, God in His rich grace rising superior to His servant's weakness; for, as in the present instance, though the gospel is His "power unto salvation to every one that believeth," and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" yet He would seem in the fulness of His love to have gone a little out of the ordinary course of things and granted some manifestation to His poor creature that He might no longer doubt, but "rejoice believing." So with Thomas. (John xx.)

But be that as it may, dear reader, will you let me now affectionately turn to you and ask you, Have you received God's testimony concerning Jesus, and are you therefore *saved*? Most solemn is your position if still dead in trespasses and sins, as we all by nature are—heirs of wrath and misery—but do not wait till you get the grip, do not wait till you have some vision in the night, for such may never come to you, but in simple faith believe on Him who said to that doubting heart, and who says to you, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.) The Lord bless you.

## A CONTRAST.

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IN one of our Irish towns, where a School of Art has recently been established, the following incident occurred.

A certain day was fixed for the judges' examination, and each competitor was to have his design, drawing, or model completed by that time, or he would not be entitled to a prize. Amongst the most talented of those who entered the lists to compete in oil-painting was Miss W.

The subject chosen was a bunch of ripe grapes, and with great assiduity she laboured to outstrip her fellows in the contest. Miss W. was the first to begin work when the doors of the school were opened, and the last to leave her easel when the appointed hour came for all to retire. Her energy and skill were not without reward, for day by day as the examination time drew on, all who saw her work pronounced it excellent, and assured the diligent labourer that she must win the prize; and so, with renewed ardour, she persevered in her undertaking.

At length came the day for the judges to make their award; the picture was just in time, and certainly a masterpiece it was—the full, rich, purple grapes in all their lustre seeming quite to stand out from the canvas; while the broad, bright, green leaves, so truthfully depicted, only seemed to make the fruit look more

life-like. The judges, men of reputation and acknowledged taste, commenced their inspection of the drawings submitted to them, and without the slightest hesitation gave the palm of victory to the indefatigable artist of the cluster of grapes and vine-leaves. The first prize for painting in oil was hers.

With joy the master of the school himself went to the home of the young artist, to be the bearer of what he knew would cause the greatest pleasure; but judge of his horror and dismay when, instead of telling her the welcome news, he learned that poor Miss W. had *died the night before* of small-pox. The over-fatigue of both mind and body had produced a lassitude of constitution, making her a ready prey to the disease which at that time was raging in the neighbourhood. The very night her work was finished she was taken ill, and in eight-and-forty hours she was a corpse! Her picture still remains, the admiration of all beholders—the rightful winner of the prize—her sad but only monument; *she* had gone to give account to Him who will render to every one according to the deeds done in the body. The day of the Lord will alone reveal whether she had obtained mercy ere she passed away. Her only testimony here, as far as it is known, was her persevering effort to obtain the crown corruptible.

How different is the case of Miss M., her fellow townswoman. Coming home from her employment one day, she heard some one in the street proclaiming the truth as in Jesus, to a small company of poor men and women. Attracted by the sound, she listened, and inwardly resolved that where the preacher told out his message on Sunday, she would surely go.

Miss M. ascertained the place where the preacher was to be found, and many times did she listen to his voice, always hoping that her turn would come, and that God would change her heart, like those of others whom she knew intimately. But though she longed to be converted, she seemed to have been passed by. Was there no mercy for her? Was she to be amongst "the lost" in the day of the Lord? She dreaded death, and justly, for she knew her sins were unforgiven. She said her prayers devoutly, read her Bible, attended public religious instruction; but for all this, to say her peace was made and that she was accepted of God, was an impossibility. One and another visited her, but she seemed hopeless. At length an almost morbid state of despondency stole over her; no words seemed to have any effect upon her; and her interest in the soul's concerns gradually lessened. It was feared, too, by those who looked on that she was fast sinking back into the world from which she had so long appeared to be escaping. But God is rich in mercy, and just as Satan seemed to have grasped his prey, He came in in grace, and made her His.

It was a few weeks ago last Sunday the preacher chose 1 Tim. i. 5 as his text, and dwelt on the three things that characterize a Christian—"a pure heart," "a good conscience," and "faith unfeigned." He showed how that God was happy in bestowing these things on the sinner by means of the gospel of the glory, the good news that Christ Jesus (this "faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation") had come into the world to save sinners.

Miss M. listened most attentively throughout, and

when she heard that Saul, the "persecutor, blasphemer, and injurious," was saved upon the spot through faith in Jesus, quite a new light burst in upon her soul. "What," she said, "that murderer, Saul of Tarsus, saved, then why not I? He believed that Jesus who died on Calvary was the Son of God, and his Saviour. Why should not I do just the same? I see it now as it never crossed my mind before; that He who is now seated in the highest heavens satisfied His Father's glory, and at the same moment took away *my* sins, and I am therefore free for ever to gaze up into the face of Him who died for me."

She could scarce restrain herself from going up at once to the preacher, to say what the Lord had done for her; and she went home singing in the fulness of her newly-found joy, to tell her family how that now her peace was made, for, as she said, "Christ, at God's right hand, has put away my sins."

Miss M. still remains a bright and blessed testimony to the grace of God—a *picture*, in a tiny way, not of earth's fair produce, but of Him who to the eye of faith has superseded and displaced what once too fully charmed the taste and senses of the unrenewed heart.

Dear reader, are you one of those who, like the first-named in this paper, will leave behind you in this world no trace but that which human skill and moral culture can produce? Or are you like the fellow townswoman, to those around a feeble but a true presentation of the One whom the world has cast out? of the One who seeks from His people a testimony to God, set forth when here below? May it be yours, not merely to possess and enjoy, but to reflect Him till He comes!

## MY CONVERSION.

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MY DEAR —,

I DO not think I ever told you and dear — what God has done for my soul. You remember me very well, I dare say, as to what I was twelve years ago—a lover of gaiety; fond to excess of hunting and shooting; addicted to almost everything that young men of the present day delight in. Until I came to Ireland, I was in my religious views rather High Church, and used to like the beautiful chanting of the Temple Church and St. Paul's, Knightsbridge; and though I did not fast on a Friday, like some of my family, I had a certain respect for those who did, and felt sure that on account of it they would have a better chance of heaven than I would. I used to say a short prayer morning and evening, go to Church generally twice of a Sunday and almost always on Saints' days, and occasionally taught in the local Sunday School.

Once I had a very severe illness, and was almost at the point of death, but I felt calm and happy, and almost sorry when they told me I was sure to get well. This, I must own, sobered me a good deal; and for a long time after this I tried to be good, read a portion of my Bible every day, and added a long prayer out of a book to my usual short one. I had, too, dreamy, romantic thoughts about God, and used to indulge in pleasant reveries concerning heaven. But, alas! as I

got stronger the old tastes came back. A nice, clever hunt was too good an opportunity to be missed. The tailor took my measure for a new scarlet coat; the gun was looked over and got into order; and the old saying was true of me, "When Satan was sick," &c. And thus time wore on.

As you know, I married; and then a neat phaeton, and comfortable house and garden, with choice standard roses, &c., had to be attended to, and, I am afraid, like many others, I was decently religious on the Sunday but careless all the week. However, I had family prayers every morning with the help of a book, and sang at the harmonium in Church, and indeed took some pains to improve the singing.

All this time God was watching me, and, I believe, had marked me for His own. At length I heard of a gentleman in the County Kerry (whom I had known well as a most clever and agreeable, but apparently godless man) addressing meetings on religious subjects; and more than this, that a cousin of my own had become by this means impressed, and was addressing meetings of a similar nature. All this sounded very strange, for both of them, when I had lived amongst them, had been completely men of the world, and we had passed our time together in riding, boating, and the like pursuits. A vague curiosity, therefore, came over me to know what all this was about, and a strange, unaccountable feeling, half of interest, half of dread lest I too should become in time in like manner influenced. I was most comfortable and happy as I was, and did not like to be disturbed, for I felt that that kind of thing must cut at the root of all my then joys and

interests. And yet I felt, too, that they had got something that I had not, and I would like to know something more about it.

I was not long to be doomed to disappointment. My cousin wrote, proposing a visit. I met him at the crossroads in my dogcart, and as we drove along I could not help thinking to myself, Why does not he, who is so religious, speak on religious subjects, and not on ordinary topics as of old? and so uncomfortable I became on this score that at last I said, "Why don't you tell me something about the Revival?" "Ah!" he said, drawing a long breath, "have *you* got everlasting life?" "No," I said; "no, I wish I had, and then I'd have no more of this routine of prayers that so wearies me." For a moment he paused, and then said, quite solemnly, "Prayer is a joy to me now, and not a routine, for I am saved." "Oh," I said, "surely that's presumption to say you are saved *now*; perhaps you may be when you die, but surely you are wrong to say you are saved now." "No," he said; "God says, 'He that believeth on the Son, *hath* everlasting life.' I do believe on the Son, and therefore I believe what God says, that I *have* everlasting life, and thus I know that I am saved." Well, by this time we had reached the house, and between preparations for dinner, &c., much of our conversation passed off my mind, but I know my impression was, that in saying he was saved he was *thinking a great deal too much of himself*.

After dinner, he asked whether I would have any objection to get a few people together in the carpenter's shop (a large suitable room), for he would like to give them an address. "Oh," I said, "by all means, if you

think it would do them any good." The appointed evening came, and as we drove in, he kept telling me, "There'll be great blessing to-night." "Well," I said, "we'll see." Many came together, and he sang a hymn, and then prayed extempore, and afterwards spoke, giving, as far as I remember, a slight sketch of Bible history, and then impressed upon us his favourite text, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life." The meeting ended, and I asked, "Where was the blessing?" "Wait till to-morrow night," was the reply. To-morrow came. In the morning we had rashly put a pair of half-trained horses into the carriage, and they ran away for more than a mile with fearful rapidity with us; and when they stopped from sheer exhaustion, I know the impression on my mind was that God had sent me this to stop me on my headlong course to hell; for I then began to feel I was *unsaved*.

The evening came. A young man spoke first, who had had deep religious convictions for some time before, and he said one word that went to my very heart: "Many of you, I doubt not, are religious—respectable—moral, but perhaps, as I was once, you are not ready to meet your God." "Oh," I said to myself, "that's just my case;" and I thought, surely those words must have reached every soul in the room as they did mine. That night I asked no more "Where was the blessing?" I felt it had come, and come to me. For some days I was restless and uneasy. I could not go to a flower-show that I had intended to, for I felt the solemn question of my soul's salvation was unsettled. I tried to read my Bible, but could not understand it. I tried to pray, but utterly broke down. I had no rest,

for I did not know God's Christ. My convictions of the necessity of *knowing* one was saved deepened, and one night I resolved to pray till my mind was at ease; and I prayed a long time, and again and again—aye, and with tears too. I went to bed exhausted, and in the morning woke at ease and happy, I knew not well why. And yet I thought there must be a reason, and then I remembered the oft-repeated text, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life" (John iii. 36). *I* believe on the Son, and therefore *I* have everlasting life, for God hath said so.

Oh! the joy of that happy, happy day. I knew God had had mercy on me, a poor, vile sinner. Was there ever any one so bad as I? I knew He loved me. I knew that Jesus loved me, that He died for me, and that His blood cleanseth from all sin. Oh! I was so thankful, but then next day I was unhappy again, and the next, and the next, for I didn't *feel* I was saved. And then, at last, there came a dear kind letter by post, to say, "If you look for feelings, you are like the Jew that looked for a sign and never got one. Surely the simple evidence of the written word is enough for you: 'He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life.'" And now, once more I was at rest. "Oh!" I said, "he that believeth hath; *I* believe, and I *have* eternal life." How can I doubt now? God has said it—that blessed God that sent His Son to die for me. Why should I doubt His word? I do believe it; I rejoice in the fact that everlasting life is mine.

Ten years have rolled away since then, and I have never ceased to know, and through His changeless mercy never will, that Christ has saved my soul from

hell, and given me an inalienable title to pass eternity with Him in glory.

Dear ——, can you say the same? May the Lord bless this simple story to you.

Ever yours affectionately.

## THE NECESSITY OF "MY CONVERSION."

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MY DEAR —,

I AM truly grateful to you for your kind reception of my letter, giving the account of my conversion, though I own your comment on it much surprised me, and yet, when I remember my own wrong thoughts on these subjects, perhaps I should not wonder after all. You said, I am informed, "He must have thought me very wicked, or he would not have sent it to *me*." No, dear —, I did not intend to convey the thought to you that you were, in my opinion, an especially wicked person; on the contrary, as people go, I should have considered you decidedly above the usual level in the way of amiability and kindness; my every recollection of you leads me to this conclusion; but, while I say this, I deem it right to set before you the ruin of the whole human family, and that you, amongst the number, share its consequences. If you intelligently grasp this truth, you will understand how all distinctions of class, education, and moral attainment are at an end, and the whole human family are on an equal footing in the sight of God.

As you have often read and know, the race of man takes its origin from Adam and Eve. He was formed out of the dust of the ground; she was made of his substance, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. When thus created they were set to stand for God, the centre of the

first creation, over which the full control was entrusted to them (Gen. i. 28); but, attached to their tenure of these rights for God, was one condition. The tree of knowledge of good and evil (God's prerogative) was absolutely and definitely debarred from them. You know their subsequent history; how Satan's craft succeeded too well,—how Eve became his victim,—how her husband is seduced by her, and thus how the place allotted to them is forfeited and lost to them for ever. Man, in his first condition, created sinless but liable to fall, fails under the primal test applied to him, and thus becomes a fallen creature, and is consequently banished from the presence of God. God is changeless in His holiness; Adam and Eve are sinners now, no longer innocent, and consequently an insuperable barrier exists between them, and our forefathers are driven out from before the face of their Creator. Does not this failure influence us? Do we not feel its effects? Most assuredly we do. Just as when a forest tree succumbs to the strokes of the woodman's axe; every branch and tendril, every bud or blossom, each bough and leaf, will feel the influence of its fall, and lose of course vitality. So with us; as yet unborn, but all foreseen according to the mind of God, the whole of Adam's race must feel the effects of his one act of disobedience, resulting in his banishment from God. He falls, his children yet unborn fall with him. When they enter the world in infancy they find themselves shut out from God, "far off" from Him, and "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1, 13). What a solemn thought it is, and one we do well to ponder over, that all alike are thus shut out from God by nature. The infant in its mother's

arms, the full-grown man in all the vigour of his maturity, the centenarian in his green old age, are all alike in this, their death by nature, and their natural distance from their God.

This truth once clearly grasped, sets at rest all thoughts of intrinsic goodness, natural fitness to approach to God. We are a fallen race, a race in whom the poison of sin is found by nature, and as such cannot draw near a holy God, who cannot for a moment brook the presence of evil. It is, of course, quite true that cultivation and moral attainment may work wonders, but where can the man be found in whom there is not the germ, the root of evil, and even were this so perfectly kept under by restraint and strict self government, we must admit it were enough to for ever preclude him from the presence of Him who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look upon iniquity." We value, and justly, the amiable and the good, and prefer association with them to companionship with the violent and corrupt; but, alas! we must admit that those most gifted with the grace of nature are before the Lord as much "the lost" as those whose walk and ways preclude us from their company. Adam and Adam's race are doomed for ever; not one exception to the rule has ever been or will ever be found.

Surely, you too, dear ——, are not without your place in this general ruin—universal failure; you, too, may trace your pedigree to Adam, and discover that through his transgression you are amongst the banished from God's presence.

But perhaps it might occur to you that man in later days recovered himself and was enabled to regain his

lost position, and that thus, like him, you, too, might have a chance of earning God's good pleasure. On the contrary, the patient study of the Scriptures will most clearly prove, that though the utmost opportunity was given to the race of man to show themselves once more the worthy objects of God's confidence, they only sinned more grievously than before, and thereby increased, if possible, the distance that already separated Him and them, and proved beyond all question that root and stem alike were past improvement—like a farm that some adventurous agriculturist becomes the tenant of. He tries his utmost skill upon the land; the most approved courses of rotation, the most skilful husbandry, the various manures of the newest and best recommended kinds, but all in vain; crop after crop fails; year after year results in sorrow and disappointment; so at last he gives it up reluctantly, and recommences labouring on new soil altogether, and under different auspices.

So with the human race. They had failed under the first experiment. God begins again, and now leaves them to themselves to answer to the dictates of the conscience they had obtained through the fall, and choose the good and avoid the evil if they could, the knowledge of which they had sought, obtained, but could not profit by. Under the light of conscience man was left from Adam's day to that of Moses—but the murder of Abel, the wickedness that brought in the flood, the independent action of the building Babel's tower, with many another, are the proofs to us that Adam's race, under this new experiment, only prove themselves more utterly unworthy than before of God's good pleasure.

This crop has failed as well as its precursor, and now the God of patience tries a new experiment, and puts one race, a sample of the whole family, under a revealed code of instructions. What nation more favoured than the Jews, what people therefore better entitled to respond to all the care and culture granted to them! But their ways, from first to last, reveal the utter vileness of the human heart. They had hardly got the law they had volunteered to keep when they are found, in rank defiance of its first enactment, worshipping a golden calf! Their subsequent history only shows them even more unworthy of their place as God's witnesses on earth, God's servants; and at last, after many a century of long suffering and forbearance, God gives them up, and makes them the slaves of those who should have been their vassals had they been obedient to His law. And now another plan begins, another course of testing what the heart of man is, and whether under any trial it can bear fruit for God. The Gentile might have said, "My Jewish neighbour I despise, and had I had his privileges I had not been found like him, so utterly disregardless of the claims of God and man." And, therefore, God takes him up next in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon's King, and puts the sceptre of power into his hands. Can he say "I have never sinned; my history records no failure?" On the contrary, scarcely had the reins of government been entrusted to him, than afraid to lose them, and without the holy fear of God that should have filled his soul, he plunges all within his realm into open idol worship. Thus the Gentiles, too, are found swelling the ranks of those whose ways are contrary on every hand to God.

But yet again, the balances of the sanctuary are put into exercise, and the most searching test of all is now before us. "It may be," God had said, "they will reverence my Son when they see him." And Jesus enters on the scene. Could there be one more inoffensive, winning, gracious, gentle, one less calculated to provoke the enmity of man? He took no place when here. He interfered not with the schemes of man, and all their plans of human aggrandisement and worldly honour. But such was their natural hatred of God that the very presence of one like God aroused their wrath, and in result we find that king and ruler, priest and elder, soldier and civilian of the lower rank, combined together to extirpate the only one that ever thoroughly returned good for evil, blessing in exchange for cursing. How utterly is now exposed the utter baseness of the human heart, the irreclaimable condition of the human race.

What can God do now but give it up? His tests are all exhausted. He has no more experiments to try. He utterly repudiates man in nature from that moment, and the cross is not only the most glaring display of the corruption of the natural heart, but the evidence that man has come to an end before his God, and that in the Second Adam the race of the first runs out and is no more seen.

Like an hour-glass, whose sand is gradually seen to ebb as moment after moment flees away, the last grain has now passed through the narrow aperture, and the space above is vacant, while the heap below has reached its fullest measure. In Christ the Crucified the race of Adam ends for ever (judicially) before God, and all are laid beneath the tomb.

But now the hand of God is seen to exercise its energies, to turn the glass, and once more the sand is seen in motion; not the same, it is true, though similar in many ways. Christ is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; the Head of a new race; the First-born from among the dead, and from Him flows out, as formerly there came from Adam, the stream of life, that widens out into the countless masses of the heavenly family. The source of the first race was corrupt and tainted, and, therefore, to every one that took his origin from it the taint was conveyed, and consequent corruption was his state.

The headspring of the new stream is infinitely pure, and therefore each who draws from it his source of life is like it, pure and holy, and without the chance of decay. The first life was liable to fail, and before it came to us had failed. The new existence, placed within the reach of all, can never fail. It comes from an incorruptible source; it is preserved by One who is Himself the incorruptible.

Christ is the source of this new stream of life, and all who receive Him (John i. 12, 13) have part in it, and swell the waters that are fast rising to their proper level, the ocean of eternal life that is found in heaven. The first to have their part in it were those on whom the risen Saviour breathed (John xx. 22), though, centuries before, God had a people spared amid the universal ruin, from Adam down to John the Baptist, and from that day to this the stream has still been swelling on, and, by the power of God, souls "lost" through Adam's fall have turned their eye to Christ, and thus, through faith in Him, exchanged their place in

Adam for a place in Him; stepped out of the ruin of the first creation to stand before God in all the liberty and blessedness of the new race that He now sees in Christ, His own beloved Son.

This was the truth that He Himself explained to Nicodemus (John iii.); this was the truth the Jewish teacher found so hard to understand, "Ye *must* be born again." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," the first creation; "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," the new race. But here He did not stop; he further said, "The Son of man *must* be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life," and thus, before the astonished ruler's eyes was unfolded the way in which he was to be transferred from the low level of the first creation to the high platform of the new family; and, as we learn from chapters vii. and xix., he believed in Jesus, renounced himself in Adam, and became possessor of eternal life in Christ the Son of God.

As to the wondrous privileges and blessings inseparable from this life, the Scripture is not silent, as a careful study of John xiv. to xx. will show clearly.

His "life" is ours, as we have seen. His "Father" thus becomes our Father, His "God" our God; His "peace" is ours, His "joy," His "love." His "words" refresh our hearts, His "word" directs our pathway, until His "glory" becomes ours, and we are like Him, and, far more, are with Him for ever. I do not dwell on these, but I would rather pause and ask you, dear ——, whether it is not sadly true that you, with all the human race, are on an equal footing in the sight of God, and, therefore, need like me "conversion." This

is freely offered to you now. Do not refuse it, but, like me, confess your lost, your dead condition, and believe in Jesus unto everlasting life. (1 John v. 13.)

Believe me,

Ever yours affectionately.

## MY POSITION.

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MY DEAR —,

HAVING told you of my conversion, and the necessity of it, I will now proceed to speak of my present position in the sight of God. It was not in a moment that I saw my full security. I knew that life was mine because that God had said, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life;" but still the thought would ever and anon come over me, What if I cease to believe? the world is full of trial and temptation; Satan reigns there; what if some device of his upsets my faith, and, after all, I lose the prize I have just received, and be worse off than ever? I lived in fear and trembling, and though no doubts existed as to my present possession of eternal life, how long this priceless gift might be continued to me was a question I could neither solve nor fathom.

I scarcely remember, after this lapse of time, through whom or how the blessed certainty first reached me of eternal security, though I still can call to mind the rest it gave me. It seemed new life to me; my present up to this was bright, my future gloomy; now both present and future were alike undimmed in lustre, for I saw that God was for me, and that thus none could prevail against me. The two most mighty hands throughout the universe enclasped me; the two most loving hearts in being beat in kindness towards me, and thus no ill could touch me. Satan might pluck the sheep from out

the fold of Judaism, but never from the Shepherd's or the Father's hand. (John x. 27—30.) Apart from God, the unseen powers might avail; and were it not for Christ's love, visible adversaries might assert their claims, but invisible things cannot detach the Christian from the love of God, and things that are seen cannot succeed in separating the weakest babe in Christ from His unbounded, ceaseless love. (Rom. viii. 33—39.) Eternal security was mine, through mercy, as well as the present possession of eternal life. Not that I felt the trials of the way were lessened—far otherwise, for difficulty after difficulty rose unknown before, as if, that now being free from Satan's bondage, he would try to make my path as rough as possible; but then I knew it could not last for ever, and to depart and be with Christ would be more enjoyable the more the present scene was dark and dismal. How truly had death lost its sting, the grave its victory. To die were gain, because it was to be with Him who loved me and gave Himself for me, and the day of judgment, once a cause of fear when sin was known, now no more brings terror, because I have learned that perfect love that casts out fear and *boldness*, because I know my standing is as Christ is before His God. (1 John iv. 17, 18.) It is true that subsequently it was mine to learn that at the judgment seat of Christ each thought, each word, each action, would be tested in His presence; the history of my life, as seen by Him, unfolded there and the works of the flesh exposed, and, in blessed contrast, those of the Spirit recognized and rewarded (Rom. xiv. 10—12, 2 Cor. v. 10); but this, so far from reproducing terror, was but found to be an occasion of the deepest joy, for then a

glorified body would be mine, and, nothing hindering the action of God's indwelling Spirit, I should rejoice to learn from Christ Himself the full extent of all the ways of grace from first to last; God's providential mercies, before I knew the Lord, in keeping me from many a danger, many a snare; and, since I knew Him, His preventing and restoring care, checking the outbursts of my selfish will, and in love recalling the poor heart that might have wandered far away from Him. But neither this nor the more easily learned truth of "no condemnation," for a moment dimmed my sense of calm security, but rather on the contrary filled my heart with a deeper sense of the wondrous mercy that surrounded me.

I think about this time the blessed truth of priesthood dawned upon me; the need of it I long had felt, and surely had experienced its action; but what it was that kept me free, encompassed as I was with weakness, or who the person was that thus was interested in me, I could scarcely have explained to anyone. But when I knew that Christ's activities were still in exercise towards me, those energies that first had prompted Him to leave His throne of glory and brave shame and suffering, this was cause for fuller praise than ever, and led up the soul to occupation with the One whose service was as ceaseless as His constant love. One's daily life bore testimony to how much there was of nature's weakness still attaching to one; I do not say of sin, for that involves another principle, but how much need of sympathy and intercession there existed, while still the body struggled through the world which yet was groaning beneath the curse that fell on all the first creation. It was true the next was certain, and one knew what it

was to be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; but still one felt the body compassed with infirmity, and full of weakness, hindering the progress of the soul, whose instincts all were heavenward and holy, and therefore felt the need of another's supporting strength to carry one through the wilderness. This strength was found in Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us. His priesthood of a higher and more lasting order than that of Aaron, He exercises a similar office, and with never wearied hands (compare Exodus xvii.) maintains His people in God's presence, sympathizing with them all the while; and He is fitted for this, in that He, while still on earth, passed through the very scenes and circumstances in the midst of which we now require His care and sympathy. What rest it gave the heart to know that Priestly care never wearied, and that this was the duty of the One whose love was strong as death, and many waters could not quench it. And not alone His intercession, but His service was soon found to be my portion, for, from John xiii., I learned that as He washed His people's feet while still on earth, He now performs a similar gracious office towards us, only of a higher order. From on high He sees the danger we are in through contact with a world where He is not, and therefore through His word preserves our souls from its contamination, bracing with bands of truth our loins, too prone to weakness, and thus preventing us from falling when the pressure comes; and not only this, but should we, like Peter, have been sleeping when we had best been watching, and like him have failed when trial came, I learned that He, as our servant in His patient love, will use His Word to pierce our hearts, and eradicate

the root of evil whence the failure sprang, and then come in in love, and once more fill our souls with joy in blessed intercourse with Him in whose presence is joy's fulness. But this latter truth brought in the knowledge of His *advocacy*. He with watchful care had known the coming trouble—Satan's wiles and our imperfect preparation for it, and in His love had pleaded for us that our faith might fail not, though our feet might slide. An earthly advocate will undertake our case, and may succeed or the reverse. He is but man after all, and has to do with men, and consequently doubtful are the issues; but Christ is One whose advocacy cannot fail. Our cause that He has undertaken, He will carry through; and though the process is for us most humbling, and the more so in proportion to the extent of failures, still the result is not uncertain, for His righteousness and His propitiation have not altered, though our approaching failure has brought into play His advocacy. (1 John ii. 1, 2.) How sad that such should ever be required, but how much it magnifies the grace of Him who, when we were lost, sent us a Saviour; when we are weak, provides an High Priest; and when we fail, has given an Advocate.

But these were not the only truths that gave me cause for praise. It was true that I had learned my sins were forgiven through that faith that has Jesus as its object, and therefore is the right one (Acts xiii. 38, 39), and because so many texts abounded on the subject, could have no doubt that the worshipper once purged should have no more conscience of sins—that the moment I believed, the sins of my lifetime were gone, and that eternally. To doubt this, were to doubt the

Word of God, and reduce the sacrifice of Christ to the level of a Jewish ordinance. With them each fresh recurring sin demanded fresh atonement; with us, the believer is perfected for ever as to his conscience in the presence of God. (Heb. x. 10—14, Eph. i. 7, 1 John ii. 12, &c.) It is true the child may fail, and does, but his sin does not affect his standing; on the contrary, because he is His child, his Heavenly Father deals with him, with chastisement of more or less severity, and leads him to confess his failure, and learn His faithfulness and righteousness in granting him forgiveness. It is true sins unconfessed may end in the sin unto death, so we do well to judge our hearts, lest the faintest stain of sin remain upon us, and thus involve still closer fatherly dealing, even unto our removal from the scene where we in grace are left to glorify the Father, in the place of Him whose testimony on earth was closed at Calvary. Paul possessed a purged conscience, yet he said, "Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence, both towards God and men." (Acts xxiv. 16.) How blessed thus to keep the balance of the truth.

My sins then had ceased to be a trouble to me, for I knew that I was washed for ever in the blood of Jesus, white as snow; and now the Holy Ghost had come to dwell in the body fitted for His presence. What a blessed truth was this; for I was fitted for conscious sonship (Rom. viii. 15, 16), worship (John iv. 14), testimony (John vii. 38, 39), and many another privilege besides, of which both Rom. viii. and many other chapters (Ephesians *passim*) tell us freely; and now my thought must be in no wise to grieve Him who deigned to dwell

within me, and secured me, till the moment He should change my body for a heavenly one. (Eph. iv. 30, Rom. viii. 11.) But though this blessed truth entranced my soul, I felt within the springs of evil and the old nature's tendencies as strong as ever. This produced unhappiness. To do the will of God was my desire, but my untamed heart within prevented this, and I found the more I strove against it, with its evil thoughts and tendencies, the more completely I discovered my helplessness and utter inability to overcome it. The sturdy heart of evil was my foe; I hated it, I strove against it, but I could not free myself; it more than matched me, until at last I ceased my striving, turned from self to God, and then found out that Jesus was not merely my Saviour from my sins, but my Saviour from myself! He bore my sins, it is true; but at the cross my hateful self died likewise, and I could see my old man crucified with Him. (Gal. i. 20, Rom. vi. 6—11.) What joy was this? The one with whom I had fought was dead for faith; I had died with Christ, and pommel a dead foe I need do no longer, but rather let him lie in peace: then, as alive to God in perfect liberty, press on towards the One whose perfect work had saved me from my sins, as well as from myself. I took my place henceforth on new creation ground in full deliverance, "Alive unto God in Jesus Christ" my Lord; and this truth of death involved results of more importance than I had at first supposed. Dead to sin no doubt I was, and therefore having done with it, henceforth to live to God, but dead to law, I found another consequence, and simply for this reason, it was to men in the flesh the law had been given—the Jews, in days while yet God recognized and

tested still the first creation, but now, though long the law had been my master, I, through Christ's death, had passed out of the condition to which the law attached, and before God, was in the flesh no longer, therefore was the Lord's freeman, henceforth to walk after a higher standard—Christ Himself, and thus fulfil the law of Christ. (Gal. ii. 19; iv. 1—17, Rom. viii. 4.) But then, though true that the law no more directed me, save so far as it was incorporated into the law of Christ, surely (I thought) it was still my righteousness before God, in that Christ had kept it for me. This too I found a fallacy; to wear a robe of righteousness, the man must still exist who needs this covering, but my old man had died with Jesus, hence nought remained to cover up or hide; thus Christ's keeping of the law (though surely blessed in its place) was not my standing in God's presence. But what it was 2 Cor. v. 21, and other not less manifest passages, informed me. No longer righteousness so blessedly suitable for earth was mine, but heavenly righteousness, that of God Himself. In perfect consistency with both His nature and His character, so perfect was the work of His Son, He now can bestow on us a standing suited to His glory and our need, and in that righteousness we stand before Him in His Son,—righteous because the claims of righteousness were met for ever at the Cross. What a blessed place—righteous even in the presence of a righteous God.

## “OH! THE BRIGHTNESS OF CHRIST.”

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“JOHN,” I said to an old man I had employed to work in my garden, “do you think are you ready to meet your God?” “I fear not, sir,” was the reply, as he leaned his hand upon his spade and wiped his brow. “I know I must be born again, and I am afraid I cannot say I have been so.” “Well now, John,” I answered, “I am sure you are not one of those that think they can do anything towards being born again; that they can by works, or prayers, or sorrow, qualify themselves for the new birth that they know they require.” “Oh no, sir,” said he, “I am not so ignorant as that. I have read my Bible, and I know that the carnal mind is enmity against God, that it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, and that they that are in the flesh cannot please God; though I am a poor man now, sir, I once had a comfortable farm, and received in my time a very good education.” “Well, John, I am very glad you see what you say you do, that man by nature is so radically bad that he can produce nothing that God can receive, and that, therefore, it is absolutely impossible that he can do anything towards being born again. And now, John, can you tell me how a man must be born again? for we know that unless he is so, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John iii. 5.) “Well, sir, I fear I must ask you to explain it to me, for that is just the point I have often longed to know, and to which I have never

yet attained." "Well, John, I will tell you as simply and plainly as I can," and I opened my Bible at John iii. 14, 15, "and that in the words of Scripture: 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Now, here you have the love of God, the work of Christ, the sinner's faith, and the result attained to. God loved the world, and proved His love by the gift of His only begotten Son. Christ, as Son of Man in men's place, was lifted up upon the Cross. He thus becomes the object of faith to the universe, and the promised blessing is to 'whosoever'—anybody. The moment we believe on Him we possess eternal life, or, in other words, are born again." "Well, sir," said John, "I certainly never saw it so plain before; I had thought there was far more in it than that," and he seemed to look brighter as he spoke. "No," said I, "there is no more than what I say, and the comparison the Lord uses makes it still more plain. You remember in Numbers xxi. how, because of the people's sin, the Lord sent serpents to bite them, and many died of their wounds; and when they cried to the Lord, He told Moses to set a serpent of brass on a pole, and that whoever looked at it, his bites would be healed; and now, just in the same way, those who are under God's wrath on account of their sins, have but to turn the eye to Christ, to believe on Him, and their judgment is at once removed, and they receive the gift of eternal life,—that 'heavenly thing'

to which the Lord alludes (verse 12); that new existence; that life in resurrection that completely takes the recipient of it beyond the reach of death, and brings him into the heavenly kingdom, the kingdom of God." "Well, sir, I think I understand it now," said John; "I am very much obliged to you." I did not speak to him again for some days, preferring to wait and see whether it was really the work of God in his soul, or the natural joy that only too often the strains of grace produce; but when I did so, I could have no doubt the Lord had sealed him for His own, and from that moment he grew steadily in the things of God, and presently desired to be associated with the Lord's people in the remembrance of Him who died for them. He took his place amongst us, and seemed very happy in the Lord, and fully to enter into and enjoy worship in spirit and in truth. But ere long his health broke down. An asthmatic affection seized him, and it became evident that he was not long for this world. I scarcely remember anything more enjoyable than my visits to him, for he could not face the sharp spring winds. To seek in any way to minister to him was out of place and undesirable. I used to sit and listen to him worshipping the Lord. His frame was wretchedly emaciated; but it seemed as if, while the body became weaker, the Holy Ghost, who had come to dwell therein, had fuller liberty, and made his unutterable groanings (Rom. viii.), by anticipation, change almost to songs of praise. His constant theme was *Christ*, and he seemed to have the person of the Lord most vividly before him. "Oh! the brightness of Christ!" he would say; "Oh! the brightness of Christ!" One could almost have said he beheld literally the glory

of the Lord, from the sense he seemed to have of His beauty. He suffered much, but nothing dimmed his joy from first to last, and one morning as he lay upon his bed, he just turned to his son, who was sitting by the fire, and said gently, "James, remember the Lord," and then passed to his rest without a struggle.

We shall meet again; but while Jesus tarries, I rejoice to think of one whom I still sometimes think I can hear saying, "Oh! the brightness of Christ!"

Dear reader, can you join your voice to his, and say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day"?

HE had not long been with us, but a few Sundays. I remember him well, both in the School and at the Gospel Meetings, as he would gaze at me with such attention and sweet interest. We had a little feast for the children on the last day of the old year, and then for the first time his seat was empty, and I heard that he was very ill and wished to see me. During the evening I went down to his house, but he slept peacefully and I would not wake him. I called again on Monday, and found him in a bad rheumatic fever, brought on by exposure to the weather, and though lucid betimes, for the most part he was raving. "Ah, sir," said his mother, "he does nothing but call for you; I am so glad you are come." Presently he was calm, and his mother told him I was there. "Mother," said he, "give me the cakes," and the dear child reached me a handful—the best thing he had. I hastened to take advantage of his lucid moments. "Dear T——," I said, "do you believe Jesus loves you?" "Oh, yes," he said, "indeed I do." "And do you believe God has forgiven you *all* your sins?" "Ah, yes," he said, "I have no doubt He has." "And you would like to meet Jesus, would'nt you?" Oh, yes," he said, "I would indeed like to meet Jesus." I said no more, I felt I could leave him to the Lord to do with him what seemed good in His sight. I walked

with his uncle home. "Oh, sir," said he, "it drew tears to my eyes when he asked me, as soon as I came in, to kneel down and pray with him."

He died on Wednesday, and they say his end was beautiful. His schoolfellow and playmate was with him to the last. He never ceased to press him to be a good boy, and to attend the meetings. At length he said, "Arthur, Arthur, don't you see the angels all around the bed, and here is one close to me, and he's beseeching me to come;" and he sank back saying, "Glory, glory, glory."

"Ah," said his poor mother the day of the funeral, "I can't sing, but I can weep for joy."

Dear reader, can you look death calmly in the face and say, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." "He made peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. i. 20), for sinners—for thee. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." We have access by faith into present grace, and can rejoice in hope of future glory. (Rom. v. 1.)

# THE FATHER'S HOUSE, OR THE FAR COUNTRY: WHERE ARE YOU?

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DEAR reader, has the important difference between these two places ever struck you, as you read the fifteenth chapter of Luke, and have you ever asked yourself the deeply solemn question, To which do I at this moment belong? I can assure you it must be either to one or to the other. As your eye rests upon this page, you either are (in title) an inmate of the Father's house, or a denizen of the far country.

Let me unfold the story to you a little (vv. 11—24), and I think you will say that my assertion is a true one. Two people are prominent in the picture, the father and the son; and their ways at the beginning of their history are set before us, as well as their ways at the end—if end there may be said to be. They are together at the beginning of their history, and together at the end, but, as we shall see, on a totally different footing. Apparently when first introduced to us, there exists peace and harmony between them. "A certain man had two sons;" but soon the element of discontent appears, and the son desires that his share of the property shall be placed under his immediate control, that he may no longer be restrained by his father's will, but be able to gratify his own. The father, though well knowing what will happen, will not deny his request; he is satisfied that he should learn his own helplessness, and this

arrived at—the riches of *his* grace, and the resources of *his* love. Thus it was love in reality that allowed the waste and separation for a time, that they might be joined together again on a new and wondrous footing, and that for ever. “He divided unto them his living.”

Where discontent exists, and self-will is at work, it will not gratify itself in the presence of one whose perfect goodness only condemns and restrains it, and therefore, ere many days were out, the foolish wanderer gathers all together and takes his journey to a far country. Yes; not merely to another country, but a *far* country, as far away as possible from recollections that might accuse the conscience or thwart the will of one who had strayed from a father whose love had never changed, and whose heart longed to go forth to his absent son. I doubt not, like David in old time, he “mourned for his son every day” (2 Sam. xiii. 37—39), and wept in secret over the separation, and the causes that led to it. How sad is all this; the father’s heart bleeding for his son. The son in distant scenes and amid profligate associations, forgetful of his love and regardless of the pain he caused; for not only was the scene of his ways distant, but the ways themselves were riotous and profligate—the result of a will unbridled, and natural desires let loose. All his substance, all that he had brought from his father’s presence, is soon wasted away; all the best things of nature, his health, his strength, his natural blessings; and when the moment of trial comes, he is found to have nothing to meet it. His period of pleasure was over; he had misspent his time, his means, his everything, during the bright day, and now that the dark day has set in, he has no secret

store, no corn laid up, like Joseph's, to fall back upon, and want, in all its deep distress, sets in on one who now experiences, for the first time, what it is to be away from a father's resources and a father's care. While he had plenty, no doubt he had many friends, but he is found alone now, and in his extremity seeks support from the first prop he can find, the citizen of the far country. Who *this* was few can doubt, one who had been before him in his estrangement from God, and was not merely a wanderer, but a *citizen* of that far country, one who had determinately settled down at a distance from his Creator, and lived regardless of Him. Does he invite him to his table? Does he even make him a servant in the house? One would have thought that even pity demanded something for one who had so evidently seen better days, but was now so hopelessly miserable; but pity he has none, mercy he has none for poor fallen man; he will make him a slave, and a slave of the most humiliating description. Without a shelter for his head, or a meal for his poor hungry body, he sends him to feed the swine, though actually starving. The shells of corn were their portion, and scanty though the fare, he would fain have made them his, in his dire extremity. What a sorrowful picture! His funds all gone—his pockets empty—his body pained with hunger—himself the devil's slave. Dear reader, may not you trace our history here? Have we not, as we cast a retrospective glance at our past history, much here that reminds us of it, and speaks to our consciences of discontent indulged in, self-will gratified, time wasted, health abused; eyes, hands, and feet all used in days gone by in ways for which a Creator God neither designed nor

formed them. "Where art thou?" was God's question to Adam (Gen. iii. 9), and it may well be a question to you at the present moment. The one of whom we speak is now at a distance from God, sinning openly in that far country, reduced to utter helplessness, and the devil's slave. What a truthful picture of every one that knows not God, that has not obeyed the truth as it is in Jesus; and yet, all the time the father's heart is beating with a love peculiar to himself, the father's soul is yearning after his long-lost son, the father's eyes are straining to catch one glance of him in the distance on his journey homewards.

The turning point has come at length; discontent has met its reward; self-will has run itself out, and the wanderer has found, by bitter experience, that there is no home like his father's, no companionship like his, and nowhere love like there. "He came to himself." Oh what a tale this tells! What remorse was here; yea, what repentance, what bitter herbs, what deep self-judgment! What a humbling review of his present position as compared with former happiness. What a sense of his folly, when even the hired servants of his father's house had plenty, when he, a son, once entitled to that place, was starving! But, oh! how sweet the thought that led to this reflection, that the father's heart was there, and that the father's nature was itself all love! The thought of his love gave him courage to arise and go; but then he remembers the holiness, the light of his father's nature, and the deep, deep character of his own sin; and thus, face to face with a God of Light, though drawn by a God of Love, he knows not the fulness of that love, and understands

not how *the cross* has enabled that love to flow out with perfect consistency, although the light is pure as ever, and thus prepares himself to take a servant's place, measuring the father's grace by his own deservings, and not by its infinitude. Better, no doubt, to come that way than not at all; and surely to turn the back upon the devil and his country alike, and turn his face towards the father and the father's house, was in itself a wondrous conquest over self, and half the battle won.

"He arose and came." One can almost think one sees him—pallid, careworn, stripped of everything—shoeless, in rags, scarce a vestige of his former self remaining, but yet he came, and found—what? Reproof? No! A servant's place? No! What? Why, the most royal welcome that a father's heart could plan, or a father's hands could carry out. Long had the craftsmen wrought to weave the first of robes; hard had the workmen toiled to forge a ring suited to the father's presence; diligently had the artificers wrought to have the shoes of honour ready; and carefully, long ere he returned, had the calf been fattening in the stall to fill the hungry wanderer; but more than all, long, long had blind unbelief, like some mighty rock, dammed up the course of the pent-up stream of the father's love that filled his soul. The decisive moment had arrived; the back was turned on self and self's past history, and now the father's eye is strained no longer; compassion has its fullest exercise, distance must no longer separate love from its object. It cannot walk, that were far too tedious, it must *run*, to give the fullest welcome to the one who surely least deserved it. There was no mention

now of the hired servant's place: right, surely, that the heart should relieve itself of its burden of guilt, and tell out its tale of sin; but the arms enclasping the neck, the kisses imprinted on the brow, told in language stronger than words that a son's place was his, and that for ever. What an answer was there to his sad confession! All the house are summoned to do him honour. Not merely the robe, but the *first* robe so enriches him, that not even a trace of former wretchedness remains. But love will not only caress and clothe its object, he must be graced with ornaments suited to the father's glory; and not only that, but, in token of the perfection of his at-homedness, the shoes are made to encase his weary feet, and then not merely is the outer man invested, but the fatted calf (as characteristic surely, in its way, as the first robe) is prepared, that the father now no longer fasting while he mourned for his son, and the son no longer starving through his absence from his father, may together enjoy that which gives them infinite satisfaction and perfect happiness. And we may be sure of this, that great as was the joy of the servants in beholding the joy of the father and the son together, great as was the joy of the son at the perfection of his welcome and grandeur of his reception, it was all as nothing compared with his deeper joy in finding the smile of love ever and anon beaming down upon him, and the deep joy of the father, as he gazed upon the lost one found,—the dead one living and in his presence. "And they began to be merry." Who can tell the end? We have but, as it were, the first gleam of the ray that, traced to its source from the centre of the dazzling sun, is the dawn of the day of glory that will be spent in the presence of our God

Himself and the Lamb, when the Holy Spirit will for ever lead our hearts to sing the praises of the Father's love as known in Jesus.

Dear reader, can you say this history is mine? and I, a poor starving wretch, have come to Jesus to find my sins forgiven and forgotten, my Father's arms around me, the righteousness of God my own, the graces of the Spirit given to me, the Father's house my home, Christ the food of my soul, and hallowed intimacy with Father and Son my portion, and that for ever!

# FIRE! FIRE!!

TO THE INHABITANTS OF —\* AND ITS VICINITY.

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DEAR FRIENDS,

I AM personally a stranger to most of you; but, inasmuch as it was my lot to be present in your town during the late most deplorable accident, by means of which three persons well known to most of you lost their lives, I cannot let the occasion pass without writing you a letter, in the hope that God may use it to your blessing.

I feel sure you will agree with me that nothing happens *by chance*. The infidel may lose sight of the fact that all things are traceable to the hand of God, but the professing Christian cannot, he knows his Bible too well for this; and you are of that number. He reads therein that not a sparrow falls to the ground without its Creator's cognizance, that not a drop of rain falls upon the scoffer's field without the assent of Him who made both fields and rain, and that not one ray of light illuminates the sinner's home without permission of Him who set the sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night (Matt. v. 45, x. 29). May we not, then, learn from this that the fire in — was not the result of mere chance or accident, but the accomplishment of

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\* Written on the occasion of a calamitous fire which occurred at Newtownlimavady, during the visit of the writer there. Several lives were lost at the time.

some of the unsearchable ways of God. "He doth not afflict willingly or grieve the children of men" (Lam. iii. 33) we may be sure, for He has said it; and though the sudden and fearful calamity may seem to us an arbitrary act on His part, we may be assured that, as some of us may have sung—

"Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face."

With regard to those who have been so suddenly removed, I do not desire to say anything. You were personally acquainted with them, I was not; and I feel sure you have been trying to remember what was of Christ about them, rather than the contrary; and you have sufficient confidence in God that He removes *none* until he has presented to them an opportunity of learning Him in His own dear Son. He who is Love could not consistently with Himself act otherwise. Judgment is "His strange act" (*i. e.* foreign to His nature, Isaiah xxviii. 21); and though He does most unquestionably give "over to a reprobate mind" those who persistently refuse the advances of mercy (Romans i. 28, Luke xv. 25—32), yet He is too loving ever to launch into an eternity of misery those who have never had the opportunity of learning Him. His sovereignty none can question, and who can dispute our responsibility? May not this, then, set our minds at rest as to those who have gone, and leave us the more free to think of those who are left behind, even ourselves.

I am not of course aware whether you have ever thought so, but you probably are as well acquainted as I am with the fact that there exists in the popular mind an impression that sudden catastrophes are God's

righteous judgment on those who are the victims of them, or, in other words, that it would not have happened had there not been a very good reason for it, unknown perhaps to us, but well known to God. This is, I say, as far as my observation goes, a popular mistake, and a mistake of very ancient origin, and, as I hope to show, a most mischievous one, taking its spring, I doubt not, from the devil. I find its existence in what men say (and I think wisely) is almost the earliest book of the Bible—the book of Job. I find it re-appearing in the day the Lord Jesus walked this earth, and you, I doubt not, have encountered it in the present age. You have read the sorrows of Job, that saint of patriarchal days. His oxen, his asses, his sheep, his camels, his servants, and his children alike, almost in a moment, were removed from him, and his body likewise became the subject of a sore disease (ch. i. ii). You have heard from your childhood of Job's comforters, and perhaps have understood the drift of their arguments. I would, therefore the more freely remind you that they are an illustration of what I have said as to the popular idea that calamities are the consequence of the concealed or open wickedness of those upon whom they fall. One after another they accuse Job of wickedness. See what Eliphaz says (ch. iv. 7, 8; xv. 4, 6; xxii. 5—23); Bildad (ch. viii. 6—20; xviii. 21); Zophar (xi. 6—14; xx. 5—19). He was in reality more righteous than they, for God had said of him what He never said of them, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth (He does not say in heaven), a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" (chap. i. 8.) But they, taking advantage of his

misfortunes, assumed that his trials were the result of hypocrisy and wickedness, and calmly sat in judgment upon him. Their Pharisaic "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou" (Isaiah lxxv. 5), did not, however, escape the righteous judgment of God. His wrath was kindled against them, and a sacrifice only availed them to escape being dealt with for their folly (ch. xlii. 7, 9). They had mistaken the ways of God. He was not *at that time* openly governing the earth, or avenging Himself on the wicked, or they, even more severely than Job, would have suffered. He was then, as now, allowing wickedness to pass on apparently unnoticed (save, of course, in His children), gradually ripening up for the day of judgment, when each and all shall receive the fruit of their doings.

A similar mistake would seem to have been made by those who, in Luke xiii. 1, told Jesus "of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." His answer detects and exposes the current of their thoughts, and applies, as ever was His custom, the moral teaching to their consciences. "I tell you . . . except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." Occupation with the fate of others had led them to take the eye off themselves, in the mistaken notion that the Galileans' sins had provoked their judgment; but the Lord's words recall to them the necessity of taking the beam out of their own eye before they presumed to cast the mote out of their brother's eye (Matt. vii. 1—5).

And now, to descend to modern times and present occurrences, do you not agree with me that God would have us each learn a lesson from the sad calamity that we are only too familiar with? What to *avoid* we surely

learn from the book of Job; what to *do* we, with equal certainty, may learn from the gospel of Luke. In the one the prominent feature is the "folly" of Job's friends; in the other, the wholesome admonition of the Lord Jesus. May I, as your sincere well-wisher, ask you each solemnly, before God, as you read this,

*Have you Repented?*

Has the sad calamity of February 20, led you to consider your ways in the presence of God, and to ask yourself, Were God to visit my house in the sudden and summary way that He did those of my fellow-townsmen, were I amid the stifling fumes and burning rafters *this* night roused to find myself on the eve of being ushered into the presence of the "Judge of all," could I calmly say with Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace;" with Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" or with Paul, "I have a desire to depart, and be with Christ; which is far better?" (Luke ii. 29; Acts vii. 59; Phil. i. 23.) It is useless to say that God will not remove His *children* thus suddenly. It may have been so in the case before us; I trust it was. It is, at all events, now well known that in that fearful accident on the London and Holyhead railway, not long ago, many were His children. To His dear children, then, who may read this, may I say—under the possibility that God may remove you with equal suddenness—Are you walking as those who are living wholly and entirely for eternity? Are your ways at the present time worthy of Him who loved you, and gave Himself for you; or have you relapsed, after the first joy of your conversion, into the sinful follies and foolish vanities of

the world, whose doom is rapidly approaching? He has loved you, and washed you from your sins in His own blood; made you kings and priests unto God and His Father (Rev. i. 5, 6). Can you look up into His face as you read this, and say, "I believe I am walking as Christ would have me walk—doing what He would have me do—worshipping where He would have me worship—abiding in Him as He would have me abide. My one thought to glorify Him, as His own thought was to glorify His Father." Do not, I beseech you, turn away from this, and cast it aside unheeded. Surely, now that we have heard "the Bridegroom cometh," we should, if ever, be ready, "with loins girded about and lights burning. . . . like unto men that wait for their lord" (Luke xii. 35, 36). You have been loved, washed, given the highest place in dignity and the nearest place in access. Surely, then, He who hath done all things well, has a right to expect of you a walk worthy of Him who has called you by glory and virtue. "Crucified to the world," can you live for the world? (Gal. vi, 14). "Risen with Christ," can you but live Christ? (Col. iii. 1, Phil. i. 21). Baptized into His body (1 Cor. xii. 13), can you hesitate to take your place amongst those who refuse association with all who are not members of His body, "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?" There, and there only, can He meet you; for it is only to those *gathered* in His name that His presence is promised. God the Holy Ghost is the gatherer, and He most assuredly will only gather on Scriptural principles, and the only Scriptural principle of gathering is the Body of Christ (Matt. xviii. 20, Eph. iv. 1—4).

Let me then beseech you, ere you lay this down, if you are God's dear child, to judge yourself as to whether, having been made meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, you are at the present moment walking worthy of the Lord unto *all* pleasing (Col. i. 10, 12). Were the Bridegroom to come to-night, would He find you identified with those who, though a feeble, are yet a true expression of the Church of God, the Body of Christ?

And now, dear *unsaved* one, may I turn to you? May I entreat you to consider how deeply solemn is your position? You cannot but admit that the sentence, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," applies to you (Rom. iii. 23); and is it not evident that to have come short of God's glory is to be on the road to an eternal hell? The glory of God is now the goal set before the sinner, and, should he fail to reach it, there is no other place but the lake of fire,—so that you must be, at the present moment, either an heir of glory or a sinner who has come short of it. Surely this must strike you as a most critical position, and one of the utmost jeopardy. Were you cut off by fire; or by any other means that God may make use of this night, you would spend millions of years in the lake where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. Are these facts, or are they fables? You cannot deny that I speak the truth. What a solemn position, then, is yours at the present moment; not knowing the instant that God may call you, and utterly unprepared! Death were comparatively nothing were it not for the judgment following (Heb. ix. 27); there every one of us shall give account to God, and woe betide the soul that knows not Jesus

then. Need I say God's children have no cause to fear (1 John iv. 17); but you have, dear unsaved one, solemn, solemn cause. The sins of your lifetime in all their hideousness, as seen by God, exposed and brought to light, and for yourself, accordingly Rev. xx. 11—15, is but your portion by nature. Are you not convinced of the necessity of being ready for that day? Can you let the solemn warning that you have had, pass unheeded? May I assume that you would like to be ready for the day of judgment, and now proceed to set before you how God can give you even "boldness" for that time?

Jesus told you to "repent," or, in other words, judge yourself in the presence of God. You have perhaps measured yourselves with your fellows and found yourself better than they. This may be possible and probable; but have you measured yourself with God? Have you ever thought how these little sins that are as nothing in the eye of man are glaring and flagrant in the eye of the One who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity (Hab. i. 13). Comeliness before man is but corruption in the presence of God (Dan. x. 8); and even the one that was perfect and upright, so that there was none like him in all the earth, abhorred himself and repented in dust and ashes, confessing himself vile when he came to measure himself with God (Job xlii. 5, 6). Can you hold fast your uprightness in the presence of the light of the glory of God? Job could not, Isaiah could not, Daniel could not, Peter could not, Paul could not (Job xl. 4, xlii. 5, 6; Isa. vi. 5; Dan. x. 8; Luke v. 8; Acts ix. 4). Surely you too must take a sinner's place in the presence of the "Holy, holy, holy,

Lord God Almighty." To do this, not merely with the lips but from the heart, is true repentance. What next does Jesus tell you? Believe the Gospel! Yes, believe the glad tidings then, that when man was hopelessly, irreclaimably, irretrievably lost, Jesus came both to seek and to save him; became Man that he might live as man's example and die as man's substitute; bear to its utmost requirement the wrath due to man's sin and demanded by a righteous God. In His day this was yet to be accomplished; in *our* day it has been done; and in the presence of the throne He sits, as "the purger of sins," the One who glorified God on earth, and *finished* the work He gave Him to do.

This, dear reader, is the Gospel—the glad tidings, the reception of which gives you peace with God, present access into the favour of God, and the hope of future glory (Rom. v. 1, 2). I repeat, if you, simply as a convicted sinner, receive the message sent you by God, the testimony of the Holy Ghost that Jesus was delivered for your offences, and raised again for your justification, you have the witness of the word of the living God for it that all your sins are forgiven, you are accepted with God, and are an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ (Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. viii. 17). Now, do not turn aside and say, "It is too easy; there is more than this required." God requires *nothing* from you but simply to believe on His Son as your own Saviour; not merely to believe *about* Him—this I doubt not you have always done—but *on* Him, as the One who died for you. Will you not, then, even now believe with your heart unto righteousness, and make confession with your mouth unto salvation (Rom. x. 10). Do not suffer Satan to

persuade you that you must feel it. "He that believeth (*not* he that feeleth) on the Son hath everlasting life" (John iii. 36). Now, can you not, as you read this, say, "I do believe on Jesus that He died for me; I see His death has satisfied God for my sins; I am free, therefore: I have everlasting life too; I am risen with Him, for my life is life in resurrection. His own risen life, His peace, His joy, His love,—all, all are mine; and, best of all, I can call His God my God, His Father my Father. What happiness is this! Is it not? And then to glorify Him in our walk and conversation; to say, "Lord, not my will but thine be done."

Well, dear friends, I have done, and it only remains for me to apologize for having trespassed on your time so long, and to sign myself,

Your Servant, for Jesus' sake.

## HAVE YOU PEACE WITH GOD?

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“I AM expecting my sister and brother at the meeting to-night,” said Miss H—— to me. “I have long been praying for her, and trust the Lord may have a word for her; will you join your prayers with mine, and if possible get an opportunity of speaking to her personally.” “Most assuredly I will,” I answered, and did not forget her both before and at the meeting. The subject was John xx. A risen Christ Himself announcing peace, and shewing the basis of peace, the wounded hands and side. I kept my eye upon the person next Miss H., making sure it was her sister, and felt certain that there was a word for her; and as the company dispersed, I went up to her quietly and said, “Have *you* got peace with God?” She coloured up, and, turning from me, hurried from the room as fast as possible. She evidently felt the power of the question; but could not conscientiously reply to it.

“I am so sorry my sister was unable to come,” said Miss H—— a few moments after, “I am sure that address would just have suited her!”

“What,” I said, “you don’t mean to say that the person sitting next you was not your sister—I made sure that it was, and felt the Lord was speaking to her through His word, and actually went and addressed her personally ere she left the room?”

"No, that was not my sister; that was a perfect stranger to me."

I felt, I own, a little disappointed, but thought, perhaps, I had some lesson to learn, and had been more anxious about one than I should have been for all the rest.

However, I went home, and next day went out to visit; and at one house was glad to learn that a young person had been so arrested through the word at the meeting that she had passed a sleepless night, and was most anxious to see me. She presently came in, and to my joy I saw the very person I had seen and spoken to the night before.

"Oh," she said, "I am so glad to see you; that question you put to me as I left the room last night has rested on my mind ever since. I felt so ashamed at not being able to answer it, and yet I knew I could not truthfully; for I have never had, and have not now, true 'peace with God.' I believe that Jesus died, and died for me, and that through Him alone I must be saved; but to say that I *have* peace is quite impossible, I know I have not got it."

"Well," I said, "I am glad then, very glad that I spoke to you; and now shall I tell you how you may have peace without a cloud, or doubt, or fear?"

"Do, please," she said quite anxiously, "for I am miserable, and shall be till I get it."

"Well," I said, "the Christ I spoke of yesterday, as we read in Col. i. 20, has *made* peace by the blood of His Cross; and now, just as in John xx. he announced *Himself* peace to His disciples, He now, *by the Holy Ghost*, proclaims it to you, to all, and the moment you

believe in God as the One who raised Him from the dead, who was delivered for your offences and raised again for your justification, this peace is yours, you are justified by faith and have peace with God (Rom. v. 1). God announces to you that He has raised, and glorified, and seated at His right hand, the One who made peace for sinners by the blood of His Cross, in token that He is glorified and satisfied with respect to the sinner's sins; you, by believing in God in this character, set to your seal to His acceptance of His Son's finished work, and thus, the peace that He has made becomes your own, and you have peace with God. It is not, you will notice, *peace of mind*; this is quite another thing, and one which is the consequence of *peace with God*, and fluctuates continually as the soul walks with, or apart from God; but 'peace with God' is a thing that never changes. It is what Christ has made, and, because He is changeless, is like Him unalterable—and though your appreciation or enjoyment of it may rise or fall in proportion as you maintain your fellowship with God, nothing can touch your portion thus secured to you by God's own precious Word."

"Oh," she said, "I think I see it; I have been trying to *feel* peace within, while I should have been in simple faith resting on God's acceptance of the finished work of Jesus. I see it now quite clearly. I believe in God, who raised up Jesus; and, through faith, the peace He made is mine. I have settled peace with God. Oh! how I thank and praise the God that has accepted Jesus, and the precious Saviour that died to make my peace with God! . . . ."

Four years have passed since then, and still she

stands a blessed monument of God's free grace—apart from the world while busily engaged in it, and rejoicing week after week to be amongst those gathered to the name of Jesus, whose privilege it is to shew His death until He comes again.

Dear reader! as your eye rests on this page, can you from your inmost soul say, "My peace, too, is made; for Jesus is my peace, and He it was who made it on the Cross of Calvary, and now His own peace ('my peace,' John xiv. 27) fills my soul, as I pass through a world of trouble to the rest that remaineth for the people of God"?

# THE DÆMONIAC.

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MARK v. 1—20.

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FOUR things we notice in the primal state of the dæmoniac; four things his subsequent condition teaches. He had “an unclean spirit;” he dwelt “among the tombs;” “no man could bind him;” he was miserable (verse 5). But through the word of Jesus such a mighty change takes place that he is found “sitting”—“clothed”—“in his right mind,” and praying to “be with him.”

What can more simply point us to our own condition before Christ is known, and to our common portion when the light of the knowledge of the glory of God has shined in our hearts?

His absolute subjection to the power of Satan must first demand our notice. Not merely did a spirit influence him, but one of an unclean character, and so intimately was he bound up with him or them, for they were legion, that sometimes he, and sometimes they, would answer Jesus’ question. “What is thy name?” he says; “*My* name is legion, for *we* are many,” they reply. “And *he* besought him much that he would not send *them* away out of the country.” What a solemn picture, dear unconverted reader, of your natural condition! Do not imagine this was but an exceptional case—on the contrary, he is but too true a representation

of each unconverted one that the world contains, for so the Scripture tells us in Eph. ii. 2, "In time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." The "prince" referred to is the devil; the children spoken of are those who, "like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears," have not obeyed the Gospel of God's Son.

But more than this, he dwelt amongst the tombs; the scene of death was his abode, he lived amongst the corpses. And does not this remind us also of the state of all by nature? What is this world but a scene of death? the valley of its shadow? and what are we, according to our natural state—but "dead in trespasses and sins," and "alienated from the life of God." Our natural life was forfeited through Adam's fall, and though in full enjoyment of all this life's vigour, in the sight of God we are "dead because of sin."

And then again, "no man could bind him," not but what their pains to do so were frequent and ingenious; "fetters," and not only fetters had been tried, for "chains" were plucked asunder by him, but still, in spite of all, he had proved untameable, and past their power. And is not this what men are doing towards their fellow-creatures? Forgetful of the fact that God, for at least 4000 years, had tried all needed remedies to reduce the human family to submission, and found them past control and unimprovable, men full of natural wisdom now are trying every art and scheme of ingenuity to bring about the same result, forgetful all the time that they themselves are especially degraded in the sight of God (Rom. ii. 1). Like a story

I once heard of an insane inmate of a lunatic asylum, who took a visitor round the wards, expatiating on the sad propensities of his fellow-lunatics, apparently quite ignorant of the fact that he was one himself. So with the wise-headed ones of modern times. Their minds are big with schemes to remedy the excesses of their fellow man, but each expedient only proves more utterly useless than the last, while they themselves are all the time as much beyond control as those whose cause they take in hand. No chains, no fetters, can restrain the natural heart of man. The source is bad, and must give vent—and does from time to time, in even the most moral—to its propensities.

And then his misery is evident by both his haunts and his employment. In the place of solitude (Judges xi. 37) and in the place of death, he is found unhappy, restless, and wasting all his rage upon himself.

How like the unconverted! Peace they know not—rest they have none—their unpurged consciences make them uneasy, they fear their fellows' company sometimes, and yet they dread to be alone and quiet, lest the thought of sins unpardoned, and a soul unsaved, should, ghost-like, haunt them, and drive them to despair.

What a sad picture is an unconverted man, when the fair part of formal religion and decent morality is stripped off, and he is seen unmasked, as God always sees him, in the full intelligence of his condition.

But Jesus is at hand, soon to work a change, as manifestly blessed as his present state is manifestly terrible. He had come across the Jordan, bent on a mission of mercy to this man, a sweet foreshadowing of

His present ways of mercy towards each sinner in the universe. He stood there, full of love towards him, as He stands just now, quite close (how close, perhaps, they scarcely consider) to those who need Him, in His boundless mercy, gracious as the God whose form He bears—who dwells in Him—but how completely He is misunderstood! The man beseeches Him not to torment him! And is not this the way with many now? Fear, only fear, inspires them as they think of God; they dread to meet Him. And why is this? Just simply, because they are thinking of their own deservings rather than of His nature. Their consciences condemn them, for they know the guilt of a lifetime's sins is on them; they know that wrath is due because of this; and, therefore, they can only think of God as an angry judge, whose judgment they have earned. But Jesus stood there not to judge, but to rescue from Satan's power that poor man. And Jesus now is ready, not to judge, but to save the world. It is true, of course, that moment after moment brings the judgment day nearer, and woe betide the soul that is not ready when it comes: but at this present moment, Christ stands, on behalf of a Saviour-God, to seek and save the lost; and to this man He shewed His mercy, and He has the same to shew to all that own their need of Him and trust Him.

And now observe the means He used to set him free. Not one demand was made from him—no prayers—no tears—no act of charity. All was done by Jesus, and by Jesus only; and the instrument he used was just the Word and nothing else. He had said, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit," and Jesus gave them leave. At His word the devil is discomfited

and flees away, and the man is clean delivered from his grasp. And thus He too, delivers Satan's captives now. Dead in sins—held subject by his power—untameable, and consequently wretched, we receive his testimony, we set to our seal that God is true, and we are free. He has said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 14, 15). We believe that the Son of man was lifted up for us upon the Cross, He died and rose again, we therefore know that we shall never perish, but that we possess eternal life in Him. Thus Satan's bonds are burst for ever, and we are Christ's freedmen.

His change is evident to all! his fellow-townsmen flock around, and find him sitting, no longer restless and a wanderer. How simply does this point us to the state of those who know the grace of Jesus. "Quickened together with Christ, raised up together, and made to *sit* together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 6). Our place is according to the riches of God's mercy, beyond the reach of Satan, in the nearest place to God, and in the One most loved of Him. Nothing less would satisfy His heart than this. And this is the present portion of each who rests on Christ as his Saviour.

And he is likewise "clothed." And so are we, not merely occupants of a *position* worthy of the love of God, but fitted *morally* to take that place—in every manner suited to be there. Once clothed in sin, we now are clothed in Christ as our righteousness. He met, by being made sin for us, God's utmost claims in

righteousness against us, and now we are "made the righteousness of God in him." Our state is one of righteousness before God, and He has us in His presence in full consistency with all the claims of His nature. How blessed is our place, and how precisely suited to the love that gave it to us!

But more than this: his neighbours find him in his right mind who once was quite astray. And we, too, in our changed condition, have a mind in keeping with our new position, and the state that is our position. We "have the mind of Christ." Once we fulfilled the desires of the flesh and of the mind, now, as the conscious possessors of eternal life, we have a mind commensurate with our standing in the new creation, and become thus capable of enjoying the things of God—the things above—and hence are told to set our *mind* (Col. iii. 2, margin) on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

And need we wonder that he prayed Him to be with him? How natural that he should, who owed his all to Jesus. And can we be surprised when souls who know the grace of Him who paid our ransom and now lives on high, are longing "to depart and be with Christ;" are crying, as He unfolds His glories as "the bright and morning star," "Come, Lord Jesus," Come! Presently we shall be with Him where He is. Surely none can wonder that our hearts are longing for that time, and wish even now that it was come.

But observe what Jesus says to him, "Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." And surely this, beloved, has a voice to us. The Lord

is absent from the scene of our deliverance, but in His absence, and until He come again, He would have us as His witnesses, the living monuments of all His grace and mercy; and this not only in the outer circle of our worldly business, but in the inner sphere of our domestic interests, before our friends and family. There, for the most part, tests of the most searching character are ours; there the flesh is oftentimes more tried than in the wider circle of the world, but at our own fireside would Christ be glorified by us. Seen in us, and nothing else but Him seen in our mortal bodies, till His voice calls us away to display Him perfectly in bodies like His own. (1 John iii. 1, 2.)

Dear reader, may this portion be yours until the Lord shall come!

## THE THREE ISSUES.

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WE read in Numbers v. 1—4, “ And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp . . . every one that hath an issue. . . . Both male and female shall ye put out; . . . that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell. And the children of Israel did so.”

We read in John xix. 34, “ But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there-out blood and water.”

We read in Mark v. 25—34, how Jesus not merely healed, but made perfectly happy, a woman that in the very midst of Israel had had an issue of blood for twelve long years. On these *three issues* I propose to say a few words.

First as to Numbers v. The reader is not unacquainted with Israel's history. How God, remembering His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had taken His people's cause in hand, and redeemed them, by blood and by power, out of the land of Egypt. The blood of the paschal lamb had sheltered them; the “ crystal walls ” of the Red Sea had been their safeguard; while guided by the cloud, sustained by the corn of heaven, and refreshed by the stream that flowed from the smitten rock, they journeyed onward towards their rest, the land of Caanan; and how a special code of laws was

given to them, enforcing on them both the claims of God and the rights of their fellow-creatures; and of this code the precept I have quoted forms a portion. Based on the fact that God was in their midst, it demanded that there should be the absence of defilement, suited to His glory, and insisted that the subjects of the disease referred to should be put away, removed from association with Jehovah and His people. *He* was there in all the absolute purity of His nature; diseases such as these were of necessity defiling, and who were their subjects it mattered not—young or old, rich or poor, male or female—they must not stay among the people set apart in holiness for Him. The most unsparing judgment must be exercised towards them—inexorable in its character, immediate as to its execution.

But one may say—These things of bygone times do not concern us now, and Abraham's race has long ceased to be God's favoured people, and Gentiles are not subject to the law of Moses. Assuredly I grant that "not my people" is the brand upon the Jewish nation, and it is doubtless true that the precept I refer to was not given to Gentiles; but, for all this, the Scripture sets before us a *principle* of deep importance for the soul's consideration. As we know, the cloud that shrouded the glory of the Lord, descending in the book of Exodus (ch. xiii), is seen to ascend in Ezekiel's pages (ch. xi), and the earth no more remains Jehovah's dwelling-place. But though the scene of His display is altered, who can say that there is variation in His character? "I am the Lord, I change not," He has written; and though the heavens now contain Him, we must remember that His holiness is still the same, His purity unaltered; and if a

heavenly company and not an earthly people are grouped around Him, not one can be admitted there who, in their personal character, do not resemble Him whose glory they are called to share. It is, of course, quite true that God has changed His mode of dealing; and now the weakness and infirmities of nature are no hindrance to our access to Him, and one that *really* has an issue may approach as readily as one enjoying life's full vigour. But there is defilement now, as then, that He rejects; it bars the way to, and He pronounces it as unfit for His presence. This uncleanness is not, alas, exceptional, but common to the human race at large. No one escapes; and none are therefore fit to stand before Him. *God* remains the same, in the pure unsullied happiness of His holiness, while *the world*, defiled through sin, is separated from Him by a sentence not less binding, not less stringent, than the law of Moses. No one can say, I come not under the sentences—"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" "There is none righteous, no not one." And such expressions must at once preclude the possibility of anyone imagining that they do not show the ruin of the human family—its estrangement from a holy God. God's ways with Israel, then, are but a type of His present dealings with the world. He absolutely refuses intimacy with the defiled by sin, or right of access for those who still lie "dead in trespasses and sins," whose sins are yet upon them. The instance of the "friend" who had not on the "wedding garment" may well deter all those who would intrude unfitted into His presence, who demands a fitness corresponding to Himself and His nature (Matt. xxii. 12).

Weigh well, dear reader, I beseech you, this most solemn truth, and ask yourself the question, Are you yet prepared to join the circle round the throne of God?

But now let us consider an issue of another character, of a higher order. Not now a stream that made its subject quite unfit for all association with Jehovah and His people, but every drop of which bears its fragrance up to Him by whose will it was shed at Calvary; and not to Him alone its preciousness is known, but to His people also—though of course in far less measure—the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, possesses value of an ever priceless character.

Man's day had run its course; by every test applied to him, his utter worthlessness was only made more apparent; and now a God whose mercy knows no bounds, comes in in peace, and in His Son provides the suited remedy to man's need. Four thousand years of ever increasing wickedness had made it necessary that every claim of His holy nature should be met by the death—the life-blood of a sinless victim. Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins; and God could not consistently forgive one single sinner, unless a substitute stepped in to take his place, and meet the claims of His throne against him. For this the blessed Son of God came down from heaven; for this He took a human form; and having in every way proved Himself capable of taking the victim's place, He dies to meet God's every claim, and the sinner's every need. From Him there flows a stream that both makes peace with God, and takes away His people's sins. God's claims are met, and He can count as purged, all who stand before Him on the ground of the blood of Christ that

cleanseth from all sin. Thus the way is open for the universe to come and share the blessings of the heavenly circle around Him. So perfect is the value of the blood of Jesus, that those washed in it can approach to God and stand before Him, not merely fitted to be there, but capable of enjoying, in its fullest way, His presence.

But you may say, dear reader, I am quite aware that Christ's precious blood alone can cleanse me, but I am unable to appropriate what He has done, to take advantage of His finished work.

If this be so, the illustration of the woman in Mark v., will shew you, in the plainest way, how you need no longer for a moment be uncleansed, or uneasy at the thought of drawing near to God.

Her case was one, as is evident, of nature's weakness and disease, but all these works that Jesus wrought when here on earth are but a sample of His operations now, in introducing sinners into blessings of a far higher and more privileged order. Her body was made whole, her soul set perfectly at rest before Him. He would have us now, not only free from sin and all its consequences, but in the fullest way capable of enjoying Him in whom we get our blessings. Diseased—a sufferer—beyond the human aid—penniless—how simply she foreshadows what we all must own ourselves to be as seen of God, by practice and by nature. Is it not sadly true, that when we enter this world we are sharers of a nature that is corrupt and wicked to its very sources, in its very roots? What a description both the Old and New Testaments give us of the heart of man (Jer. xvii. 9, Matt. xv. 19), and *all* have hearts like these, our common legacy from our great forefather,

Adam; and our ways, too, are in consequence in keeping with our nature, "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit;" "There is none that doeth good, no not one." These are God's words about us; who can gainsay them? And then we are, in consequence the sufferers: feeling what we are, and knowing in some measure what we have done, we vainly try by human props and remedies to shake off the torture of an evil conscience, and attempt to remedy, by arts of man's devising, the evils that we know unfit us for the presence of a holy God. Who has not, like Cain, tried human religion? Who has not, like men in later times, tried schemes for moral and for social improvement? And who has not, at one time, had the thought, that by strict adherence to religious formulas, and a careful abstinence from all the grosser sins that stain humanity, they may perhaps find mercy in the day of judgment? But who can say, in spite of all these remedies, that the sting of conscience is removed, and that not one shadow of a doubt or fear comes across their mind as they look onward to *that day*? In spite of all their human remedies they are sufferers still; and then, at last perchance, their means and energies all come to an end together, and like this woman, they discover themselves to be without resource and penniless. Surely the state of such is most desirable, and far better than that of those who still prefer their human refuges to Jesus.

Is her condition yours, dear reader? and are you, like her, thoroughly convinced both of your own need and your own utter helplessness? Surely if it be so, there is hope for you.

And now, observe her conduct,—she heard—she came—and in the press—and touched His clothes, the hem of His garment. What a sense she had, poor woman, of His value—of His preciousness! The stories of His grace, His power, His loving kindness, had met her ear; at once she recognized One far superior to her former helpers. “Healing others, surely He can be my healer too; doubtless, such is the savour of His person that His very garments must be permeated by it. Difficulties shall not hinder me, my case is far too urgent.” And she pushed through the crowd, and in simple, but in blessed faith, she touched the border of His raiment. Would to God there were more like her! Would to God that souls would see not only their own utter need, but see, in Christ, God’s rich provision for their need, and come—in spite of every difficulty, every hindrance that Satan will not fail to put across their pathway—to Him!

Dear sinner, take example by her, and come with child-like faith to Jesus. He has shed His life-blood for you. Your sins, though scarlet, shall become as snow; though red like crimson, shall appear like wool. She touched His robe! You turn your eye to Him who now sits in the midst of the throne; you see the Lamb once slain on Calvary, you believe He died for you, He satisfied a righteous God for you, and you are cleansed at once from all your sins!

Immediately, not the issue, but the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she knew it was so. What blessed truths are here! Immediate conversion—the root of sin reached—and the instant consciousness thereof. Observe these things; she had not to go home,

to pray or read; upon the spot she got what she required, and more than she had thought of. And so with sinners now; they come to Jesus; put their trust in Him, and rely on His finished work. The instant this is done, His finished work is theirs, and they are counted free before their God,—their sins removed, their condemnation gone (Isaiah liii. 6, 1 Peter ii. 24); and not merely does this freedom extend to what they *have done*, but to what they *are*. Our old man is crucified with Him; the body of sin destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin (Rom. vi. 9). The Cross is not merely the end of the believer's sins, but of himself, in the sight of God. He reckons himself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord; and this he has the conscious knowledge of through the Scriptures. He rests not on the sandy foundation of his own feelings, but on the solid basis of the written word of God that cannot change (1 John v. 13). But His mercy does not cease with this; for Jesus would not let her go until she was fully capable of enjoying Him, and had become an open testimony for Him. Up to this she had been "behind him;" now His love compels her to come "before," and tell Him all the truth of how He had healed her body. And then with words of sweet affection He encourages her, and sends her forth in peace—a testimony to all around of both His power and His mercy.

And is not this His way with us, beloved? He would have us not merely in the new creation, but in the calm enjoyment of the privileges belonging thereunto—as *worshippers* towards Him, *witnesses* before the world—He would have us at His feet adoring

Him whose love and mercy we have proved, praising and blessing Him in whom all fulness dwells, and passing through the crowds that know Him not, the monuments to all, of grace that met our need far more abundantly than either we asked or thought of.

Dear reader, can you say, through grace, that this place is yours, and till He comes to make you a worshipper and the witness of Him and for Him in the heavens, which place, though feebly, you occupy already? The well of water (John iv.) day by day ascends in praise to Him; while the "rivers" (John vii.), in their grateful testimony, bear His name to those around, who see reflected in you the Christ who died to save, and now lives to intercede for, and will come again to receive you to Himself in glory!

## ABSALOM.

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WE read that "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope." (Rom. xv. 4.) And therefore, we shall not do wrong to surmise that something more than a mere historical record is to be found in the account the Spirit gives us of Absalom's sin, and Absalom's pardon. Let us briefly glance at the record of it in 2 Sam. xiii. 14. A deliberate murder had been committed, and this in the highest quarters; for Absalom, King David's son, had slain his brother Ammon; still of this crime the shameful sin of Ammon was in no way a justification. Absalom had transgressed the law of God, and as a murderer must endure its fullest penalty. (Jer. ix. 6; Num. xxxv. 31.) To save his life he fled to Geshur, and there remained beyond the reach of the sword of justice, though none the less deserving of its stroke. His father loved him still, and he was deeply moved at parting with his son. "The soul of King David longed to go forth unto Absalom;" "David mourned for his son every day." But love and parental affection must not be gratified at the expense of the law of God, on the basis of which his throne subsisted, and therefore an impassable barrier exists between the father and his erring child.

For three full years his son remained in banishment; but Joab was alike the friend of Absalom and of David;

and Joab was a man of more than ordinary craft and cunning. So Joab sends to fetch a wise woman from Geshur, makes her feign to be a mourner, and sends her to the king with a form of words in her mouth. She comes and tells her story: how in her widowed helplessness, her sons had fought together and one had slain the other, and now the avenger of blood demands the murderer's life, and thus she ceases to have one stay upon this earth—her soul is quenched for ever.

The king, no doubt, perceives the difficulty, for his answer is indefinite. "Go to thy house, and I will give charge concerning thee." But this will not suffice. She perseveres to gain her point, volunteering to clear the king and his throne of charge, and take it on herself and her father's house. But he knew full well that the law demanded the guilty one's death, and that he could not set it aside; and so he answers, "Whosoever saith aught unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more." But this was not what she wanted, and the third time she pressed her claim, until he says: "As the Lord liveth there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth."

Her point was gained at length. The righteousness of the throne was nullified with respect to *her* son. Why not with regard to *his own*. And while she reproves him as to this, she beautifully utters a statement of what is true for all as to their state before God, and what is His provision for them. I need not tell of how the king discovers the hand of Joab in the scheme; of how he issues the command to bring the young man Absalom again; of how he is brought first to Jerusalem; and then in due time allowed once more to see the

king's face, and receive the longed-for kiss of peace; but I will proceed at once to the application.

Dear reader, are you aware of the fact that a fearful, cruel, and uncalled-for murder was committed in this world some 1800 years ago, and this on One against whom no charge whatever could be brought, even though the utmost efforts were made to prove Him guilty. And moreover, that not merely the guilty and unintelligent were the guilty perpetrators of it, but the highest in the land, the most religious and intelligent. Jesus, the Son of God, entered this world, of which you and I are now inhabitants, some eighteen centuries ago. He came not, like Ammon, on a mission of foul shame and wickedness, but to show what love and mercy, kindness and compassion, grace and peace were, to a world that long had groaned beneath Satan's sway and thralldom. But mankind as a mass, not merely the brutal, ignorant Roman soldiery, but King Herod and Pontius Pilate, the Roman governors, hand in hand with the chief priests, the scribes and elders, were joined against Him, and though none could find a cause of death against Him, foully murdered the only righteous, only innocent Man the world had ever seen. On the world, thus represented as to every class of its inhabitants, still rests the guilt of the blood of the Son of God, the spotless Jesus. Of this world, this system thus opposed to God, this blood-stained company, you and I, dear reader, having a place by nature in it, and of it, form a part, and consequently are amongst the banished from the presence of the throne, and are thus inhabitants of the "far country," far off from God. Of Him, King David is a figure, and if the righteousness of the

law of Moses was the basis on which the throne of Israel's king was made to rest; what shall be said of the inflexible character of the righteousness that is the changeless characteristic of the throne of God, "the righteous Lord" that "loveth righteousness"? (Psalm xi. 7.) "God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it; or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. xxiii. 19.) His fiat has gone forth; His sentence has been long pronounced—that the world is under the guilt of the murder—the rejection of His Son, and that eternal death—the lake of fire, is the portion of all who refuse His testimony concerning Him. (John xvi. 8, 9; viii. 24; Rev. xxi. 8.)

David might forego his righteousness, and thus be robbed of his crown, but God can never change. "He will by no means clear the guilty," and woe betide the soul that stands before Him, unpurged from the guilt of Christ's rejection that still rests upon the world, that planned and carried out His murder!

But God is Love as well as Light; and though as Light He must condemn all those that dare to come before Him, unfitted for His presence, He still as Love, mourns over every sinner, and longs to go forth to them, even though their guilt has raised a barrier that they cannot venture to climb over. What love so deep as His? What heart so big with tenderness. How sweetly, as we read the life of Jesus, do we find the breathings of the soul that felt, as none could feel, man's crime, and bore it on His Spirit, before He used the remedy. "Himself," as we know, "took our infirmities, and bore our sickness." (Matt. viii. 17.) He "sighed"

in the presence of disease, the consequence of sin, "sighed deeply," as His people's unbelief was manifested (Mark vii. 34; viii. 12); He wept tears of sadness over the unrepentant city (Luke xix. 41); groaned and wept tears of sympathy and sorrow as He felt, by Lazarus' tomb, the full cause and effect of the misery that Adam's fall had brought upon the human family. What indications of the love of God are these—the depths of His compassion! And be assured, dear reader, the same heart of love yearns over *you*, longing, in spite of all your guilt and sins, to draw you to Himself, and make you His.

And surely, we may say, that though we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person, but doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him! Joab and the woman of Tekoah were together the intercessors between David and his son, and we are not without a mediator likewise, a "daysman" "to lay his hand upon us both." (Job ix. 33.) The murdered one—the Christ of God, is our Mediator, and the world's sin is but the occasion of the manifestation of the love of God—His rich provision to meet the claims of His righteous throne and our need. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.) He, at the cross, has poured out His soul unto death. He, the innocent, has taken the place of the guilty. He has made peace by the blood of His cross. He has satisfied every claim of the throne of the righteous Lord, and now the way is open for every sinner in the universe to come to God, and

to find, not merely pardon, but eternal life; and more than this, both peace and conscious sonship, and a place in company with Christ Himself.

No sooner was Joab's point gained, than he was sent to bring the young man Absalom again. No sooner had Christ ascended, as a lasting proof of His finished work (John xvii. 4, 5) than the Holy Ghost descends to tell the sinner that a Holy God is satisfied, and now, that "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43); that "All that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xii. 39). Oh! dear sinners, as you read this paper, why should you not receive this message of love, and believing on Jesus, know that all your sins are gone, and gone for ever? But Absalom had life, as well as pardon, and so have we, who cease to rest on aught we say or do, on prayers or works, however numerous or specious, and simply—only lean on the finished work of Christ. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John iii. 36). "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John v. 13). How plain these texts, and comforting to those that know their need, and come to Jesus. But the kiss of peace was Absalom's too. And we are not without the consciousness of peace with God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). "He is our peace" (Eph. ii. 14). The peace that Jesus made at Calvary, that changeless, lasting peace is ours, the very moment we believe in Him, who by His blood has met the claims of God with respect to sin. And *settled* peace it

is, because that He has made it. *Our peace of mind may change, but not our peace with God. It varies not, for He who is our peace is changeless.* And then, as Absalom once more resumed his place as son, and his seat in the King's palace, so we too have a sonship of a higher order, and a place prepared where Jesus and the Father dwell. Our pardon granted (1 John ii. 12), and life bestowed (John v. 24), and peace subsisting (Rom. viii. 6), the Holy Ghost is sent to seal His work, and make our bodies His temple. And thus, we are enabled to draw near and take the children's place, crying "Abba Father!" (Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 15.) Absolute distance—ours by nature, is exchanged for conscious nearness, and without a cloud we may walk in hallowed fellowship with the Father and the Son, in whose presence is the fulness of joy. And then to crown it all, we are told that presently Christ shall come and take us home to see Him as He is, and behold His glory (John xiv. 2, 3; xvii. 24). And thus, the highest place accorded to men will be our position soon; till He comes, the Spirit tells us of Him, and leads us still to say, in answer to His voice—"Behold, I come quickly," "Amen! even so come, Lord Jesus."

Dear reader, can you say, Thank God, this lot is mine? I once was far off from God, stained with the guilt, like all the world beside, of the death of God's Son; but now, through God's tender mercy, I can say, that pardon, life, and peace; the children's place and a heavenly home, is mine, and this because my Father loved me. Jesus died for me, and the Holy Spirit makes me sure of it, first through the word announcing the glad tidings to me; and next, bearing

witness with my spirit that I am one of the children of God.

If you have never thus received His testimony, I beseech you now to believe in Jesus as your Saviour.

NOTE.—Extra pages, \*109, \*110, \*111, have been added, as this paper on “Absalom” only came to hand when this volume was almost completed. It has been reprinted from the “*Californian Evangelist*,” published at San Francisco.



# SHORT PAPERS.

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## SYNOPSIS OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MEN.\*

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IT is of much importance to the Christian who studies the Bible, to have some leading waymarks to help him to understand the character of God's dealings and ways with mankind, during the different dispensations and periods to which certain leading features distinctly apply.

For the want of such waymarks to guide the simple Christian, he is unable to see the true application of certain Scriptures, and thus the ways of God, so clearly defined in His word, are so mixed together that the force and beauty of the word is, in many cases, blunted, and the knowledge of God and His ways lost, to a greater or less extent. It is with a view to the elucidation of these ways, and to be otherwise helpful to the student of Scripture, that the annexed plan has been drawn up.

The first division of the main column will be found to be marked

### PARADISE.

The duration of this period, the time of man's

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\* See Diagram at end of volume.

innocence, was, as we know, sadly short. Adam and Eve, once happy in having "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth," were soon driven out from the presence of God, to till the ground from whence they were taken. (Gen. i. 26—iii. 24.)

Death was the penalty of their transgression (Hosea vi. 7, margin), and they too soon earned it. Their expulsion from the presence of God marks the commencement of the period designated on the plan as

#### THE WORLD AFTER THE FALL.

Of this time, Genesis iv.—ix. gives us the history. It began with the murder of "righteous Abel," by his brother Cain, and it ended in the earth's being "filled with violence." Upon this fearful scene the judgment of God, in the shape of the flood, descended with awful suddenness, sweeping away to destruction "the world of the ungodly."

The translation of Enoch (as marked upon the plan), who "walked with God," and "prophesied saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints" (Jude 14), is a remarkable feature of this otherwise dark and miserable period.

#### THE WORLD UNDER NOAH

characterises the next portion of the world's history. "The waters were dried up from off the earth;" "the Lord" had "smelled a sweet savour," and now He blesses Noah and his sons, establishing His Covenant

with him, and with his seed after him, and with every living creature that was with him, setting His bow in the cloud as a token of His Covenant with all creation, that He would not any more destroy the earth with a flood.

“Three hundred and fifty years” (Gen. ix. 28) elapse from the flood to the death of Noah. The families of himself and his three sons had overspread the whole earth, and “by these were the nations divided in the earth” (Gen. x. 32); thus

#### THE WORLD DIVIDED INTO NATIONS

characterises the next division of the plan. During this period man endeavours to make a name for himself, and create a common centre, independently of God, by building the Tower of Babel; but this rash attempt is met by judgment, in the shape of the confounding of their languages, and their consequent dispersion abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Abram is now separated from the universal confusion and idolatry into which the world fell after the flood (Josh. xxiv. 2; Deut. xxxii. 17; 1 Cor. x. 20), to walk as a pilgrim of faith before the Almighty God; and becomes thus the vessel of the promises, and the root of “the olive tree.” (Rom. xi.) And now, inasmuch as the world is divided into two distinct classes, *the elect family of God and the nations of the world*, a line, commencing at A, and terminating in a column to the right, appears on the plan. As will be seen, this column continues until “the promises made unto the fathers” are fulfilled, in Millennial blessing.

The next event marked upon the diagram is the transfer of Joseph to Egypt, sent beforehand to preserve the lives of his father and his brethren. (Gen. xlv. 5—8.) Soon the house of Jacob, in all seventy persons (Gen. xlvi. 27), follow him, and, soon after, the elect family become slaves in the land of Egypt. But, inasmuch as they continue to retain their separate character in the eyes of the Lord, they are still marked separately on the plan.

The "four hundred years" of Gen. xv. 13 at length come to a close. The Egyptians are judged, and the chosen nation is brought with an high hand out of Egypt, to take their place apart from the nations of the world, or, as we read in Ps. lxxx. 8, *the Vine* is brought out of Egypt.

At this time, *the Glory of the Lord*, as shown on the plan, descends in the pillar of a cloud, abiding with the people until they are carried captive to Babylon, when it departed.

#### THE AGE OF LAW

now commences, that Covenant being given from Mount Sinai.

The Bible is now principally occupied with the history of Israel. Their wanderings in the wilderness, their sojourn in the land, first under Joshua, then under the Judges, and then under Samuel—the first of the line of prophets (Acts iii. 24), successively pass before the reader. But at this period *a Crown* will be found sketched upon the right hand column, marking the time when Israel, forgetful of their rightful sovereign,

Jehovah, desire "a king . . . like all the nations." (1 Sam. viii. 5.)

Saul (the people's king), David (the man after God's own heart), and Solomon, in succession reign over the Lord's inheritance; but in the days of Rehoboam the kingdom is rent asunder, on account of the idolatries of his father Solomon (1 Kings xi. 10, 11), and ten tribes become subject to Jeroboam; two only, Judah and Benjamin, retaining their allegiance to the Royal House of David. The column, therefore, on the plan that represents the Jewish nation now becomes divided, and if the two divisions are followed out, it will be found that they are not re-united till Christ, the true heir to the throne of David, reigns in Millennial glory.

Elijah's rapture to heaven is the next remarkable feature in the history of Israel; and this is succeeded by the judgment of God on *the ten tribes*, on account of their fearful idolatry. Under Hosea, their last king, they are carried captive to Assyria, and are dispersed amongst the nations, and from thence they have never returned. That God will yet deliver them, and make them, with Judah, "*one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel*" (Ezek. xxxvii. 22), is a fact apparent from many passages of Scripture. (See Isaiah xi. 11—16, xxvii. 12, 13, lxvi. 20; Jeremiah iii. 18, xxiii. 6, xxxi.; Ezekiel xx. 33—44, &c.) And in this confidence, Paul (Acts xxvi. 7) speaks of the "*twelve tribes*" as "*instantly serving God night and day,*" in hope of the fulfilment of the promises made unto the fathers. They are still, therefore, although lost sight of amongst the nations, marked with their distinctive line on the plan.

Judah now solely occupies the place of responsibility toward God; but at length, after about 130 years further trial, her idolatry also reaches its culminating point, and she is delivered over into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. (2 Chr. xxxvi.) And at this period, as shewn upon the plan, *the Glory of the Lord* that had accompanied them from Egypt takes its departure (Ezekiel xi. 23), and the throne of the world becomes the possession of a Gentle king. (See Daniel ii. 38.)

#### THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

therefore commence. During this period the Jews, though the servants of strangers (Jeremiah v. 19), still retain their tribal character, and are therefore marked separately on the plan. From the prophet Daniel we learn the history of the four great Gentile Empires, under the figure of four great beasts—Babylon, Media and Persia, Greece, and Rome. But in Ezra and Nehemiah we read that during the dominion of the Persian Empire, certain remnants went up, the seventy years of Jeremiah (ch. xxv. 11) being accomplished; to rebuild, first, the house of the Lord, and afterwards, the city and walls of Jerusalem. Their re-establishment in the land will be found marked upon the plan, and there they remained, subject to Gentile supremacy until the advent of their Messiah, during the reign of the fourth (Roman) empire. A line right across the plan marks His advent into the world, a second line of similar dimensions denotes His crucifixion, and the arrow points out His ascension to the right hand of

God, where He now is set down (exercising His priestly office meanwhile), during the formation of "the Church, which is his body," by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, who now descends, as the arrow on the plan indicates, from heaven; and thus

#### THE PRESENT PERIOD

commences. The little band of faithful ones who followed the Lord while upon the earth are now separated from their Jewish connexions, and brought into the Church, then being formed, which is henceforth represented by the column at B on the right. And the Jewish nation is now scattered, and Jerusalem destroyed at the hands of the Gentiles, whose "Times" are still running out their course. Inasmuch, however, as God has not "cast away his people" for ever, the Jews are designated on the plan by another line within the main column at C, to the right of that by which are represented the ten tribes, and as still separate from the Gentiles, though among them; and they remain "a nation meted out and trodden down," until the time comes for them, under the shelter of some maritime power (Isaiah xviii.) to return to their own land; where, as Zechariah tells us (ch. xiii. 9), God "will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

In the meantime, the Church of God, as *the Cross* on the plan indicates, has the place of suffering and rejection that her Lord occupied while on earth. "Turned to

God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10), she walks as a pilgrim and a stranger through the world, sharing the patience of Christ, until His parting promise, "I will come again and receive you unto myself" (John xiv. 3), is fulfilled. At length, the shout which announces her descending Lord is heard, the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ rise first, then those who are alive and remain are caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so to be for ever with the Lord. (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) This event will be found duly marked on the plan.

#### THE GREAT TRIBULATION

now ensues. Five points specially characterize this period:—

1. A remnant of both Jews and Gentiles are marked for preservation and preserved (Rev. vii.), the remaining portion of the Jews receiving the Antichrist.

2. A final testimony is given to the world as to the sovereignty of God, and the coming kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Babylon is overthrown.

4. The full development of evil in the persons of the Beast and False Prophet takes place.

5. The judgments of God reach their climax, so far as *the quick* are concerned, in the overthrow of the nations, and the final destruction of the two instruments above named.

1. God's care for His people at this time is remarkably

plain from the Scriptures. The prophets, Matthew, and John, in the Apocalypse, all speak of it. Jeremiah says (ch. xxx. 7), "It is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it."

Isaiah (ch. xxiv.) draws a vivid picture of the desolation of "the land," "the earth," and "the world;" but (ch. xxvi.) he adds the "song" of victory of the preserved remnant.

Daniel, whom the Lord quotes in Matthew (ch. xxiv. 21), calls it "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time, and (he adds) at that time thy people shall be delivered" (ch. xii. 1).

The Lord says (Matthew xxiv. 22), "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

And in the Apocalypse we find that, though some of the Jews are seen as martyrs on the opening of the fifth seal (ch. vi. 9—11), and others are subsequently slain, yet that before the fearful judgments under the Seventh Seal, the trumpets and the vials are poured upon the earth, a perfect number of "the tribes of the children of Israel," and "a great multitude . . . of all nations, kindreds," &c., are seen marked for preservation, and preserved to take their place in the earthly kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ (ch. vii.).

2. The final testimony is then given.

In Revelation xi. 3, He says, "And I will give power unto my *two witnesses*—(an adequate testimony, according to the Jewish law, Deut. xix. 15)— and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." And in Matthew xxiv. 14, we

read that the "Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a *witness* unto all nations, and then shall the end come." And if we then turn to Revelation xiv. 6, 7, we find an "angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." This testimony to the God of creation is world-wide, whatever may be the instrumentality employed.

The result of the reception or rejection of this testimony will be found in Matt. xxv. 31—46. For when the kingdom is established, and "the King" sits "upon the throne of his glory," those who have received the witnesses enter into all the blessings of the earthly kingdom then set up, while the doom of those who have rejected them is final.

3. Babylon is overthrown—evermore a name connected with wilfulness (Gen. x. 10), self-exaltation (Gen. xi. 9), idolatry, apostacy, and violence (Daniel iii.). We find her in Rev. xvii. 5, 6, described as "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth (idols, 2 Chr. xv. 8): drunken with the blood of the saints, and of the martyrs of Jesus."

Secure, as she thought, in the place that she had usurped instead of the true Bride of Christ, the Church of the living God; sitting as a queen, unwidowed, and expecting to see no sorrow, she now becomes the subject of the judgments of God. (Rev. xviii. 8.) And the very potentate over whom she exercised her in-

fluence (ch. xvii. 3), and the very kings who were beguiled by her trickery, combine together to carry out the will of God in her overthrow (verses 16, 17). Lamentation on earth (ch. xviii.), but joy in heaven (ch. xix. 1—10), follow the downfall of Apostate Christendom.

4. During this time, too, the full development of evil takes place. Satan having been cast out of the heavenlies, and knowing that he has but a short time (Rev. xii.), gives his power and strength to the head of the revived Roman empire; who, in open enmity against God and His people, by his warlike exploits, excites the wonder and the worship of the whole world. (Rev. xiii. 1—10; Daniel vii. 8, 20—25.) The duration of his power is three and a half years, the centre of its display the seven-hilled city, Rome. (Rev. xiii. 5; xvii. 3, 9.)

At the same time, the False Prophet is used of Satan to deceive those that dwell upon the earth, by means of the "signs and lying wonders" which he has power to do, in imitation of those of the Lord Jesus (Acts ii. 22). *Jewish* as to his origin (Dan. xi. 37), *religious* as to his character (a prophet), he plays into the hands of the prince above named, and with him sets God at defiance, and persecutes his people, the remnant of Judah (Daniel xi. 36—39, 2 Thess. ii. 3—12, Rev. xiii. 11—18); while, at the same time, the apostates of the Jews have received him as their Messiah. *He is the Antichrist.*

5. The Church was told in Rev. iii. 10, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall

come upon all the world, to *try* them that dwell upon the earth.

This testing time now takes place. Imperial conquest, war, famine, pestilence, confusion amongst the governing powers of the earth under the Seals (Rev. vi.), are succeeded by loud calls to repentance through the seven Trumpets (Rev. viii., ix.), and they, in turn, are followed by sharp, decisive judgments under the seven Vials, in which are completed the wrath of God against the inhabitants of the earth. (Rev. xvi.) Of these judgments, the closing scene is the battle of Armageddon, in which the Beast and the False Prophet, with the kings of the earth and their armies, are found arrayed against the King of kings and Lord of lords. The heaven now opens, and Christ descends, as shown on the plan, followed by His armies. His triumph is complete. The Beast and the False Prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire (see plan), and their armies are slain with the sword that proceedeth out of the Conqueror's mouth—His word. (Rev. xix. 11—21.)

This closes the period of "the great tribulation," which, as the plan shows, is endured by *Judah in the land*, where she is dealt with for her rejection of the Messiah, and by *Israel amongst the nations*, where she is dealt with for her idolatry. (Zec. xiii. 8, 9; Ezek. xx. 33—44.)

#### THE MILLENNIAL AGE

now commences. *Two* things specially characterize this period. *The Kingdom of Christ has come, and the reign of Satan is over.* Christ has come forth from heaven (Jude 14). His feet have stood "upon

the mount of Olives" (Zec. xiv. 4)—see plan. He has "trodden the winepress alone" (Isaiah lxiii. 3). He has gathered the remnant of the ten tribes from the four winds (Matt. xxiv. 31). He has judged the nations (Matt. xxv. 31—46) all in His *David* character; and now, like *Solomon*, He sits upon His throne in peace. The *earthly* Jerusalem, the centre of His government and earthly glory; the *heavenly* Jerusalem, the centre of His grace and heavenly glory.

*Satan*, on the contrary, "the Dragon, that old Serpent, which is the Devil," is consigned to the bottomless pit, and there he is restrained during the whole of the Millennial age. All the blessings of this remarkable period flow from these two events. "The Church, which is his body"—Israel—and the Gentiles, now, as the plan shows, occupy their respective positions in the kingdom. Babylon having been overthrown, *the Bride of the Lamb*, the true wife, is now seen descending (for we must ever remember that her calling and her position are *heavenly*, not *earthly*, Eph. i. 3, &c.) out of heaven from God, in the form of the Holy City, the new Jerusalem. She has the glory of God. No temple is needed, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of her. The vessel both of glory and of grace, the nations walk in her light, while the tree of life that grows in her streets heals their diseases. (Rev. xxi. 9—xxii. 5.) She, too, has her inner *joy*, as well as her outward *glory*. The time has come for her to see her Bridegroom face to face, and to know Him even as she is known (1 Cor. xiii. 12). She is with Him where He is, and beholds His glory. (John xvii. 24.)

*Israel's* cup of blessing, too, is filled to the brim.

The unconditional promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. xvii. 4—8, xxvi. 3, 4, xxxv. 9—12) are at length fulfilled. The nation has re-appeared in her ancient territory (Ezek. xxxvii.), and the new Covenant is established with the people (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34). Jerusalem, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth," is safely inhabited, and the people are all righteous (Isaiah lx. 21). They too, have their special joy, for Christ having come forth to bless them as Melchizedek (Gen. xiv.), now sits "as a Priest upon His throne," and "bears the glory" (Zec. vi. 13).

The *Gentiles* also "rejoice with his people" (Rom. xv. 10). The Mountain of the Lord's House having been established on the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, *all nations* flow unto it. And many peoples go and say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths," and out of Zion goes forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and He judges among the nations, and rebukes many people; and they beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation does not lift up sword against nation, neither do they learn war any more. (Isaiah ii. 2—5, and compare Zec. xiv. 16.)

The *Assyrian*, the last opponent of Israel, having been destroyed upon her mountains (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.), "the knowledge of the Lord" (Jehovah) now for the first time covers the earth, "as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah xi. 9.)

Finally, *Creation*, long groaning and travailing in pain together through the fall of the *first*, is now

delivered to share the liberty of the glory, under the *second* Adam. "Everything that has breath" praises the Lord, "the mountains and hills break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field clap their hands." (Ps. cl. 6, Isaiah lv., and compare Romans viii. 19—22, Ps. viii., Isaiah xi. 6—9, Rev. v. 13.)

### THE LITTLE SEASON

succeeds to this most blessed time. It is Satan's final effort to recover his lost position as "the god of this world," and it is the final separation of those who have life and those who only yielded "feigned obedience." (Ps. xviii. 44, margin.) Loosed out of his prison (as Rev. xx. 7—9 tells us), he goes out to deceive the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, to gather them to battle, in number as the sand of the sea. Led on by him to destruction, they go up on the breadth of the earth, compassing the camp of the Saints about and the beloved City. But their overthrow is the immediate consequence. They are devoured by the consuming fire of God out of heaven, and their leader, the Devil that deceived them, is cast into the lake of fire, where the Beast and the False Prophet are, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever. The arrow on the left hand side of the plan marks his descent into the lake of burning.

To this *the final judgment of the wicked* succeeds. He to whom all judgment has been committed (John v. 22) sits upon the Great White Throne. Before His face the earth and heaven flee away (compare 2 Peter

iii. 10—12), and the time of the dead is come that they should be judged (Rev. xi. 18).

The sea, death, and Hades empty themselves of their contents, and every man is judged according to his works. The Books of Responsibility tell out their tale of sin, while the Book of Life is searched in vain for the names of the wretched victims of this fearful judgment. They pass away into the lake of fire. The arrow to the left, the books to the right, of the plan, point out this time. To this succeeds

#### THE ETERNAL STATE.

In this, all time distinctions of Jew, Gentile, &c., are lost. It is described as "the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter iii. 13). In it the Church retains her identity (having been God's eternal purpose) as "the tabernacle of God" (Rev. xxi. 1—8). "God" is "all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28).

The Mediatorial Kingdom of the Lamb, during which he, as "King, shall reign in righteousness," has passed away, and the time has fully come for "the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 19). God Himself dwells among men, and the former things are passed away. Amen!

## THE POWER OF NEGATIVE TESTIMONY.

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WE have numerous instances in Scripture of those who, with noble faith, stood forth in the face of numerous adversaries, to testify for God and triumphed; such as Moses, when single-handed he came down from the presence of God from Mount Sinai, and, in splendid zeal for his Master's glory, stood in the gate of the camp, and said—"Who is on the Lord's side?" Or such as Elijah, who, when iniquity had reached its culminating point in Israel, confronted all the prophets of the groves, and the prophets of Baal, and received at God's hand a magnificent answer to his faith and courage.

Instances such as these may well be termed "Positive Testimony." For in the energy of the Spirit they stood forth, and were victorious in whatever circumstances they were placed.

There is, however, another character of testimony that the Word of God unfolds to us, which, I think, may not unsuitably be termed "Negative," seeing it is rather *the refusal* to take part in anything that is not of God, than a positive triumph over the enemies of God. In it faith may not be exhibited in so bold a character. But yet a faith that is very precious to the Lord; and what He surely has a right to expect from each of us. We may not have the energy of a Gideon, or a Paul, to push our "pound" in the world, and gain ten pounds "by trading,"—but the feeblest and the

weakest may, by refusing to consent to the ways of the "world which lieth in the wicked one" (1 John v. 19), give our money to "the bank," that when He comes He may receive the same with usury. (Luke xix. 11—27.)

Let us ponder for a little on a few of the many instances in Scripture, as to the nature and power of "Negative Testimony."

We have noticed the testimony of Elijah in the face of the worshippers of Baal.

Cotemporaneously with him, we find honourable mention made of "Seven thousand in Israel; all the knees which have *not* bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath *not* kissed him (1 Kings xix. 18). It was a time when iniquity abounded. Ahab was on the throne of Israel, and "did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that went before him." He had married the daughter of Ethbaal, King of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him; and as if to put a crowning point to the wickedness of that time, the Spirit of God records that in his days, Jericho, the city of the curse, was rebuilt, and Joshua's prophecy concerning it accomplished (1 Kings xvi. 34; Joshua vi. 26).

The altar of Baal was conspicuous in the idol's temple which Ahab had built in the royal city, and the prophets of the Lord were at the mercy of a ruthless queen; while Jezebel's table was the resort of the votaries of Baal. The altar of the Lord likewise was broken down.

At such a time as this, the Lord turns with satisfaction to the seven thousand who had not joined the crowd of Baal worshippers, nor rendered the customary sign of homage to a Gentile idol.

The king, the queen, the court, the people, all had gone aside from the worship of Jehovah, but yet these seven thousand—the perfect number—maintained their place of negative testimony, and consented not to a false religion, or the apostacy of a corrupt people. I do not say they had the magnificent energy of Elijah; but their quiet, unpretending, patient testimony against the current evil of the day, had its own weight in the sight of God, and carried its own power, and, more important still, it went up as a sweet savour to the Lord, who had “reserved” them to Himself; He was glorified in them.

Let us now turn to another scene—Jeremiah in his 15th chapter says (verses 16 and 17), “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts. I sat *not* in the assembly of mockers, *nor* rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation.”

The scene is now laid in *Judah*. Israel had passed into captivity; and the Lord’s long-suffering in sending to them “messengers, rising up betimes and sending,” had almost come to an end with respect to Judah also. And yet, though the sin of the people was such that the Lord had nothing for *them*, but “the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy” (chap. xv. 3), He has still a solitary witness, who having esteemed the words of Jehovah’s mouth “more than his necessary food,” and conscious that he still bore the name of the Lord God of Hosts, would *not* sit in the assembly of the mockers, *nor* share their joy, while all was in confusion and idolatry around.

Filled with indignation at the apostacy, he sat alone (yet "not alone"), and maintained his place of *negative testimony* against the nation that had so sadly fallen from its place as Jehovah's witness to the nations around.

God was glorified in Jeremiah, though Jeremiah was 'in derision daily;' mocked of "every one;" put in the stocks; cast into a prison and a dungeon. The Spirit of God takes pleasure in recording that he sat not in the assembly of mockers, nor rejoiced; that he sat alone because of God's hand.

Another scene now passes before us. Both Judah and Israel had gone into captivity, and the palace of the King of Babylon had become the abode of certain of Israel's children, princes of the house of David.

It was not now the voluntary idolatry of an apostate people, that tested the faith of those whose hearts still beat true to Jehovah, but the enforced homage, under pain of a cruel death, to an image of gold which the king had set up in the plains of Dura.

Forgetful of the "God of heaven" that had placed all things under his control (chap. ii. 37, 38), he had, perhaps in imitation of what he had seen in his vision, made an universal centre of worship, and thus, independently of God, sought to exercise a universal control over the religious feelings of his subjects on pain of instant death.

Most refreshing is it to turn aside from this sad scene of Gentile apostacy (another testimony to the universal ruin of man), and witness the faithfulness of the "children" who would *not* obey the mandate of the king.

In vain the musical instruments sounded ; in vain the Chaldeans accused, and the king threatened : “ O Nebuchadnezzar, we are *not* careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, Oh king ; but if not, be it known unto thee, Oh king, that we will *not* serve thy gods, *nor* worship the golden image which thou hast set up (chap. iii. 16—18), was their answer ; and they preferred the burning fiery furnace to a breach of the first commandment of Jehovah.

Surely there was a power in testimony such as this ; not perhaps with the “ positive ” character attaching to it, as when Daniel “ prayed and gave thanks before his God,” *with “ windows open towards Jerusalem,”* in defiance of the restriction recorded in chap. vi. But God was unquestionably glorified in this, the *negative testimony* of these three faithful children of Judah.

The book of Esther affords us still another instance of this character of testimony. The second monarchy—the breast and arms of silver—had succeeded the kingdom of Babylon—the head of gold—and the king Ahasuerus “ reigned from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces.” While Haman, a descendant of Amalek—the inveterate enemy of God’s people (Gen. xxv. 22 ; xxxvi. 12 ; Exod. xvii. 16 ; 1 Sam. xv. 33)—was the king’s prime minister. At this time a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, of the tribe of Benjamin, sat in the gate of Shushan the palace. Now the king had specially commanded that all his subjects should bow and reverence Haman, in professed subjection to the man whom the king

delighted to honour. "But Mordecai bowed *not, nor* did him reverence."

Great as the king was, and vast as were his dominions, Mordecai yet remembered that his obedience to the king must be subservient to what he owed to the Lord; and he absolutely refused to do honour to the hereditary enemy of his people—still, though in disgrace, the people of Jehovah.

Twelve months the prime minister cast the lot, and then obtained the king's favour and consent to destroy the whole race of the Jews. The decree was written and the posts sent out, with the sentence that they should be slain; but still the faithful Mordecai retained his place of *negative testimony* for the God of Israel.

I do not dwell upon the story, beautiful though it is, of his fasting and prayer; of how Esther was encouraged by his faith; and the people were delivered, and their enemies slain. But I desire to show how that the Lord's glory was accomplished by the patient testimony of His servant, who preferred death to disobedience, to what, although not an actual command, he well knew was the general tenor of the mind of God.

Let us now briefly turn to the standard set up for the instruction of the Jewish remnant in the latter days. (Ps. i. 1.) "Blessed is the man that walketh *not* in the counsel of the ungodly, *nor* standeth in the way of sinners, *nor* sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

Here again do we find the same principle: only *One* has as yet fulfilled it, but He went far beyond it; for, as we know, the path of Christ went far beyond even this. But still God expects that in the latter days there will

be those to whom the *counsel* of the ungodly will have no charm—to whom the sinner's *way* will be the way of death—and to whom the scornful's *seat* will be a place that leads to "judgment."

We cannot question that in "the time of Jacob's trouble," God will have an "elect" people who will occupy the place of *negative testimony*, and accomplish, by refusing to consent to the evil around them, His purposes of glory in their walk and conversation.

But meantime the Church of God is instructed to occupy the same position, and in the touching epistle that shines pre-eminent among the seven to the Churches, we find the same privilege entrusted to us, and the same responsibility impressed upon us, at which we have briefly glanced, in the various scenes that have come before us.

"To the angel of the Church in Philadelphia write,—These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast *not* denied my name." (Rev. iii. 7, 8.) Here again we find that *negative testimony* obtains honourable mention from the Lord.

We are but a "feeble folk" (Prov. xxx. 26; Neh. iv. 2), but the Lord is pleased to recognise us as walking in obedience to His word (John xvii. 6), and as not denying that precious name, by which He has unfolded Himself to us (for a name is the expression of what He is) as the Holy One who is intensely separate from evil,

and the True One that is of necessity the contrary of everything that is false and hypocritical.

He has bestowed upon us a life, "which after God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness" (Eph. iv. 24); and it is our privilege to follow the instincts of that life, sustained by the Holy Ghost, in refusing association with everything that is contrary to Him who is holy and true.

The corruption of Thyatira may surround us; the deadness of Sardis may be side by side with us; and our feeble testimony may produce the nauseous lukewarmness of Laodicea: but be it ours, with that true love which abides in the light (1 John ii. 10), to patiently and yet scrupulously reject everything that savours either of unholiness or falsehood, as contrary to His name!

The hereditary and successional religionists may, and will assert their claims; but, "gathered to His name," we must *not* disgrace, but in quiet dependence on Him, maintain our place of *negative testimony* until He comes, the crown of our hopes, who shall bring us to a place where we shall exchange our position of utter weakness, for one of perfect strength; and where we shall go no more out, who are cast out now; and where we shall be publicly owned as His, who are now scarce allowed to belong to Him; and where our association with Him here will meet its full reward in our association with Him there. He has said, "I come quickly;" our hearts respond, "Amen. Even so. Come, Lord Jesus."

## THE KINGDOMS.

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A FEW words on the difference between the various kingdoms mentioned in Scripture might be found useful to some. We have the *Kingdom of God*, Matt. xii. 28; the *Kingdom of heaven*, Matt. xxv. 1; the *Kingdom of the Father*, Matt. xxvi. 29; the *Kingdom of the Son of Man*, Dan. vii. 13, 14; the *Kingdom of the Son of His love*, Col. i. 13; the *Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Peter i. 11; Heb. xii. 28.

You are introduced to the first named in connection with the Lord when upon earth; for in answer to the Pharisees' demand, "When the kingdom of God should come?" He answered them and saith, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, lo here, or lo there, for behold the kingdom of God is within you," or as the margin reads it, "among you" (Luke xvii. 20—21). One has well described it as "The exhibition, or the manifestation of the ruling power of God under any circumstances"—and, in the person of His Son, God was manifesting His ruling power at this time; God was there in Him.

It is also spoken of as existing at the present time, for in Rom. xiv. 17 we read, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" and again, in 1 Cor. iv. 20, "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."

In these cases, the ruling power of God is again exhibited, not in the Son, but by the Spirit, who, through His presence on earth, produces in *those that believe* practical righteousness, peace, and joy; and in His *servants* power to correct evil where needed. In Christ, then, during His time on earth, the Kingdom of God was to be seen; by the Spirit now. The Kingdom of God was the circle of Christ's workings previous to His being received up into glory. Now, it is the circle of the Holy Ghost's workings. Scripture would seem to teach that in Christ's day none but He could be *in* it, for though "among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist," yet, "he that is least in the kingdom of God, is greater than he" (Luke vii. 28).

The Kingdom of God then was confined to Christ Himself in His day, though every man was pressing into, or towards it (Luke xvi. 16), waiting, as it were, till the Holy Ghost's descent should open the door for them. This took place at Pentecost, and then the new creation entitled every one to enter (John iii. 3—5). And thus the ruling power of God, exhibited only in Christ when on earth, is now manifested in those whose bodies have become the temples of the Holy Ghost.

So far as to its divine or proper form. The name however, is applied in Scripture to what the divine thing has in man's hands become, what we know by the name of Christendom. The "tree" and the "leaven" (Luke xiii. 18—21), give us its outward dimensions, and its internal condition. Outwardly, what was but a grain, a small thing, at Pentecost, has become a huge

overgrown mass that shelters even the devil's emissaries; while internal evil and corrupt doctrine has permeated that which was the people's food. What a description of Christendom, and yet how accurate!—a vast system, but rotten within.

Thus Rom. xiv. 17, 1 Cor. iv. 20, describe the present inward or divine aspect of the Kingdom of God: Luke xiii. 18—21, its external or human condition.

“The kingdom of Heaven,” or literally *of the heavens*, differs from the kingdom of God, and yet, in some respects, resembles it. As we know, the name is only used in the Gospel of Matthew; and this is readily accounted for by the fact that to this Evangelist belongs the task of commending the truth to *Jewish* consciences, and amongst other things he proves that the kingdom foretold in Old Testament writings was that which the Messiah proposed to introduce. He therefore calls it the kingdom of the heavens, because that name coincides with the description given of it in the Law, Psalms, and Prophets.

Israel was taught to lay up the Lord's “words in their heart, and in their soul, and bind them for a sign upon their hand, that they might be as frontlets between their eyes—that their days might be multiplied, and the days of their children, in the land which the Lord swore unto their fathers to give them, *as the days of heaven upon earth*,” (Deut. xi. 18—21). It was said of David, too, that his seed should “endure for ever, and his throne *as the days of heaven*.” (Ps. lxxxix. 29.) And likewise it is said of the power of the Gentiles, that it should continue till the time that they should know “*that the heavens do rule*.” (Dan. iv. 26.)

Hence we may trace throughout the Old Testament, allusion made to a time when God's will would be "done on earth" (as the prayer which the Lord then taught His disciples expressed it), "as it is in heaven" (Matt. vi. 10).

This time the Baptist came to introduce the Messiah, and therefore announced (Matt. iii. 2) that "the kingdom of the heavens was at hand." Jesus Himself (c. iv. 17) makes the same statement; but instead of His claims being submitted to, they hold a council to destroy Him (c. xii. 14), and consequently the kingdom of the heavens assumes a *mysterious* form (c. xiii. 11). The mystery being, that it should be a kingdom with an absent king, a thing unknown in history—the king being rejected.

The 13th chapter presents the kingdom of the heavens to us in six different ways. But before we say a word as to these, we would direct the reader's attention to ch. xi. 11—12, which seems coupled with c. xvi. 19, to give us light as to the time when the kingdom commenced.

John Baptist was not in it, blessed as was the position he occupied. The door was not *thrown open*, though Christ was on the throne, until Peter unlocked it on the day of Pentecost, and then "the violent" (those really in earnest) reached the goal that they had been seeking for since the days of John the Baptist. Thus, then, it could not have been said the kingdom of the heavens is "among you," neither could it be said, "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God, and the kingdom of the heavens are distinct and different. The one existing while the

Lord was on earth—the other commencing on Christ taking His seat on the Father's throne. The latter opened by a human instrument—the former inaugurated by Christ Himself. In certain points however, they resemble each other; both having an outward and an inward, a human (as one may say) and a divine form. As to the outward form, the same similitudes are applied to each—the “mustard seed” and “leaven”—as to the inward, we have in the one case the thing formed by the Holy Ghost, and in the other what the thing formed comes to. Outwardly then, the kingdom of the heavens is like a tarefield, a tree, and leaven. A mixture of the Lord's and Satan's people—that mixture grouped into a huge wide-spreading system, powerful outwardly, internally corrupt; such is Christendom of the present day. But to faith there is an inner or divine form which the kingdom takes, and this is seen in separate pieces composing “a treasure” precious to God; and in a thing whose oneness and purity reminds us of the excellence of the Church of God as seen of Christ; and in a form of separation from evil that shews us that God delights not in the mixed company of the first three parables, but in companies gathered apart from the surrounding corruption. These latter are the kingdom of the heavens from God's side. Thus, then, the kingdom of the heavens proper is, the rule of the heavens upon earth—the days of heaven—the Lord hearing the heavens, and the heavens the earth. (Hosea ii. 21.) This, however, was refused by man, and consequently, now the days of heaven upon earth are seen by those to whom it is given, to exist in a mysterious form until Messiah comes to bring

in the times of restitution of all things with the trumpet of Jubilee.

The kingdom of the heavens thus was openly offered by the Messiah at His advent—refused, and therefore commenced in a mysterious way on His ascension, and is running on during the present time, and will exist after the church's removal until the millennium commences, when it will take its proper form, but will be known partly as the kingdom of the Father, and partly as the kingdom of the Son of man.

These both commence and end simultaneously. The kingdom of the Father relating to things *above*, the kingdom of the Son of man to things *below*.

For the former, the Jewish remnant pray when they say "Our Father . . . thy kingdom come." They will be gathered as the wheat into the barn, and will as "the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. xiii. 30, 43.) A heavenly people; their reward is in heaven in the scene of their Father's dwelling. The kingdom of the Father is for the heavenly people. The kingdom of the Son of man for the earthly. The 8th Psalm explains this,—as Son of man He takes the Lordship of all below, the place that Adam lost. As Son of man He executes judgment (Matt. xiii. 41). As Son of man He welcomes into His kingdom the blessed of His Father—the sheep who satisfied His hunger, quenched His thirst, clothed His nakedness, and cheered Him in sickness and imprisonment (Matt. xxv. 31—46). An earthly people, they have been counted worthy to "stand before the Son of man" (Luke xxi. 36).

Thus the millennial "world kingdom of our Lord and

of his Christ" (Rev. xi. 15) has a heavenly and an earthly aspect—the one embracing only glorified saints, the other, including the earthly ones, having eternal life, but not glorified as to their bodies. The one is the sphere of the Father's glory, the other the scene of the rule of the Son of man. Both will alike cease when He delivers "up the kingdom to God even the Father." (1 Cor xv. 24.)

It remains but to notice "the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. i. 13), and "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. i. 11.)

These are quite distinct in their characters from those we have already mentioned, and give us rather the thought of *position* than *display*. The one refers to our present place, the other to our future glory.

They are more to be felt than described, and are only mentioned each once in Scripture. Christ has a present kingdom, the Christ whom the world refused to own as king. One which the Father's love bestowed on Him the Son of His affections, and into this we who have believed have already been translated. It is the region of blessing of which Christ is the centre, and Christ in the most excellent way as Son of His Father's love; we may enjoy it though we cannot describe it.

The other is *before* us, and a blessed contrast to the things that are "fading away" around us. It is everlasting, and we shall share it *with Him*, and His desire is that we should enter it, as one may say, full sail—as Paul when he said, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown

of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give." (2 Tim. iv. 6—8.) May it be ours, then, to add to our faith all these things that 2 Pet. i. 5—7 contains, so that not merely an entrance, (we are sure of this as those who are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father",) but "an *abundant* entrance be administered unto us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Amen.

## A WORD ON CHRISTMAS.

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THE children of Issachar obtain honourable mention of the Lord, in that they "had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chron. xii. 32); and surely to "rightly divide the word of truth," and thus understand "what the will of the Lord is," is our happy privilege in the present day (2 Tim. ii. 15; Eph. v. 17).

Let us refer for a moment to Luke ii. 1—14. The fulness of time had come, and God had sent His Son into the world. And the eternal Son of the Father was manifested in the form of a little babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, because there was no room for Him in the inn. Was it a wonder that the angelic hosts should shout for joy; He had not taken on Him the cause of angels (Heb. ii. 16), but still, for the first time beholding the Son of God—God manifest in the flesh—they could not withhold their suited acclamations, but with one joyous note of praise they say (for angels never sing), "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

How suitable to the time this chorus, and how worthy of its object! He had come—the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person, and yet the lowly carpenter's son—to tell out the love of a heart whose depth He alone could fathom (for wno could disclose the secrets of the Father's bosom but the Son

who lay there from all eternity?), and the scene which He had selected wherein to display this boundless love was one in which everything that God the Father was in Himself had been for centuries belied and misunderstood—where sin had entered and run its course unchecked and apparently (save by occasional judgments) unnoticed, and where Satan had obtained complete possession of the human mind. Thus grace had triumphed over sin, and thus God in Christ had risen above the ruin of an apostate world, and shown Himself superior to the evil of man's heart, and the only too successful devices of the Devil. Surely God was infinitely glorified in this, and most suitably did the angelic strain commence with "glory to God in the highest," for what could bring more glory to God in all that He was in His own excellency, than the presentation of His Son to a world whose rejection of Him was only too plainly evidenced in that there was "no room for them in the inn." Presently a cross and a grave should still more distinctly manifest the world's estimate of its Creator and its Saviour.

But not only did the advent of Jesus into the world unfold most fully the character of a God of love, but it was the proof that He was ready to establish peace upon the earth where at the time all was ruin and confusion. Jerusalem had ceased to be the throne of the Lord, so long chosen to put His name there, and a Gentile Emperor was in possession of "the glorious land," and amongst his subjects, numbered God's ancient people Israel.

But the presentation of God's Son to the world was the dawning of another day upon the earth, and He

had come to establish peace, and to usher in the time when men should "beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks," when nation should not lift up sword against nation, neither should war be learned any more (Isaiah ii. 4). The millennial glory of the King of Peace and King of Righteousness was about to replace Jewish slavery and Gentile oppression, and the knowledge of Jehovah to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Well then might angels add—"on earth peace"—to their meed of praise in honour of the only begotten Son of God.

But not only was the earth the special object of its Creator's mercy at this time, but its inhabitants were before Him also as the express objects of His goodness and blessing. He had come to reveal Himself as One whose "delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. viii. 31). Well may we wonder at this, for man had fallen, and the human race had alike sinned and come short of His glory, but such is grace. He had come to rise above the evil of man's heart, and to take His place as the head of the race whose cause He took in hand, and to reduce them with a firm yet loving sway to that obedience, that they owed to Him as their Creator and their King—as "King of Nations." The world will yet own Him thus, Rev. xv. 3, 4 (for "saints" read "*nations*"), and He had come to take this place, and by the removal of Satan's power to show His good pleasure in mankind, and to claim, at all events, if not their affection, their homage as their rightful Lord and Sovereign.

Most suitably then did the angel host celebrate His approach as reflecting not merely the highest glory to God, and introducing peace into a scene of confusion

and ruin, but as evidencing that the goodness of God was such, that although the carnal mind was enmity against Him, He could in the fulness of His love, still have His delights in the sons of men.

Such was the angel chorus on the occasion of the birth of the Son of God, the Saviour, Christ the Lord.

How sad that we cannot stay here a little longer, and close our eyes to all that happened subsequently. But we must not refuse to speak when the Holy Ghost has directed our attention to another scene.

Some two and thirty years had rolled away, the babe of Bethlehem had become the full grown Man; He had encountered at the outset of His ministry the bitter enmity of those who should have owned Him as their Messiah (ch. iv. 29), and now utterly rejected of the Jewish people, can but tell the "band of men whose hearts God had touched," the "little flock" that followed Him, "Suppose ye that I am come to give *peace on earth*? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for *from henceforth* there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three" (Luke xii. 51, 52).

What a solemn change is here. The sweet current of God's love abruptly checked by the only too obdurate barrier of human unbelief, and the proffered "peace on earth" displaced by hopeless division, and that of a kind most calculated to try the best affections of the natural man. Oh! why was this? Why did not the world bow at once to the sway of her Creator and her King, and give Him that place that was His right and His due? Alas! for the world and the world's inhabitants. Still God was infinitely glorified, but *peace on*

*earth* was gone till the time when, fearful judgments having been poured forth, "the wolf will dwell with the lamb and the weaned child shall put his hand upon the cockatrice' den" (Isaiah xi. 6—9), and God's good pleasure in men can only be carried out in another and a better way, not to the world as at first proposed, but to an elect company, whom He, not willing that any should perish, in grace puts forth His power to save.

"*Peace on earth,*" this measure of the angel's chorus is indefinitely postponed, and now to the faithful there is naught but strife, and that of the most trying kind.

But is this all? Is variance on earth our only portion? Oh, no! our blessed God has put a new song into our mouth, has compassed us about with songs of deliverance.

We turn to the 19th chapter of Luke, and we find "When he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord, *peace in heaven* and glory in the highest" (ch. xix. 37—38). What a change is this, and of what a blessed nature! It is the full unfolding of the believer's portion now. Division on earth, but peace in heaven. It is not now the angelic chorus that we hear, it is the disciples' strain of joy. Both are equally true, but the unbelief of man culminating in the entire rejection of the Son of God has made a change, and now *heaven* is the scene of God's delight in men, and the only place where *peace* exists.

The manger of the inn at Bethlehem had led the way

to the Cross of Calvary, and a crown of thorns and a reed in the right hand was all that a world "that lieth in wickedness" would accord to Him, whose right it was to wear the crown of kingdoms, and to wield the sceptre of the world's supremacy.

But the crown of thorns has been exchanged for the crown of glory and honour (Hebrews ii. 9), and the blood poured out on Calvary's summit has been sprinkled on the throne of God; *peace* has been made through the blood of His cross (Col. i. 20), and He who made it sits at His Father's right hand, waiting till His friends are gathered and His enemies are made His footstool, and in the meantime "peace in heaven" is the ever blessed portion of those who have "power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." We can rise above the scene where a man's foes are those of his own household, remembering the words of Him who said, "These things I have spoken unto you that in me you might have *peace*. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33).

From "henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2 Cor. v. 16). We celebrate not His birth into the world, but His death out of the world, while we adore Him as our present object in glory, and wait and watch and long for Him to come again to receive us unto Himself, to be with Him where He is and to behold His glory.

# THE KOHATHITES.

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NUMBERS iv. 1—15.

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WALK and service are the characteristic features of the Book of Numbers; access and worship those of the Book of Leviticus. In the former the instructions are given "in the wilderness" (ch. i. 1). In the latter "out of the tabernacle of the congregation" (ch. i. 1). The place is suited to the subject. Again, in Leviticus the Priests are especially in prominence; in Numbers the Levites take the lead.

Of these, the family of Kohath come first in order; but before drawing attention to their special line of service, it may be well to notice the peculiar place given to the family of Levi amongst the children of Israel.

When the other tribes were numbered they were omitted, but appointed "over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it; they shall bear the tabernacle and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle" (ch. i. 50). And again—"Bring the tribe of Levi near and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the

tabernacle. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they shall be wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel." And again—"I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the first-born that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine; because all the first-born are mine; for on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the first-born in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord" (ch. iii. 6—13).

Thus the Levites had certain things in common with the children of Israel their brethren, and certain peculiar and especial privileges entrusted to them. With the children of Israel they had been redeemed by blood and by power—the blood of the paschal lamb had sheltered them—the "crystal walls" of the Red Sea had been their safeguard; but distinct from them they are *especially* the Lord's, being taken instead of the first-born of Israel whom He had spared, and unlike them also they are *wholly* given to Aaron, the High Priest, to minister to him, and to exercise their service in dependence on him. In the accomplishment of their service they were nearest to the tabernacle, and the tabernacle and its contents were their peculiar charge. Are there not even now amongst the Lord's people, all of whom have part in the death and resurrection of Jesus, those whom God has especially selected for Himself to be near Him, to be "wholly given" to

Christ, and to exercise their service in dependence on Him alone?

To return to the family of Kohath: "Their charge shall be the ark, and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister, and the hanging, and all the service thereof" (ch. iii. 31). And again, "take the sum of the sons of Kohath . . . from thirty years old and upward, even until fifty years old; . . . this shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation about the most holy things" (ch. iv. 2, 3, 4). The Gershonites had the charge of the tent, with its coverings and the hangings for the doors. To the Merarites were entrusted the boards, the bars, the pillars, and the sockets; the one bearing the framework, the other the covering of it; but to the sons of Kohath alone was it given to carry "the most holy things"—all the inner furniture of the tabernacle. And thus their trust, in all its beautiful detail, is mentioned first as of first importance. And we may here remark that when the princes make their offering in ch. vii., whereas two waggons and their oxen are given to the sons of Gershon, and four waggons and their oxen are given to the sons of Merari, *none at all* are allotted to the Kohathites, "Because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders" (v. 9). Too precious were "the most holy things" to be exposed to the rude shaking of the waggons. The gentle, steady shoulders of the sons of Kohath, from thirty to fifty years old, men of maturity, must bear them with all the delicacy of which they were masters. (See 1 Chron. xiii.—xv. 2.)

May we not say that even now, not only amongst the people of God, the whole company of the redeemed, but also amongst those whom He has drawn apart in special nearness to Himself, there is an inner circle to whom the Kohathite service had been intrusted—those of decision, those of maturity, those to whom the Lord can commit that which most concerns Him—the glory of the person of His Son? Not that the sons of Gershon and Merari have not posts of honour too, and work that required activity and intelligence, as the one set up the framework and the other covered it over; but to the Kohathites alone belonged, as we have seen, this inner line of service, the charge of these “most holy things.”

“And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of testimony with it, and shall put thereon the covering of badgers’ skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof” (ch. iv. 5, 6).

It was *on the journey* that their services came into requisition, for we know from ch. ix. 17, it was “When the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents.” And *Aaron* was the one at whose hands they received their charge. He took down the vail, he covered the ark therewith, he laid over it the badgers’ skins and cloth wholly of blue, and he put in the staves thereof. It remained for them to carry through the wilderness what he entrusted to them. The same order is observable with the table,

the candlestick, and all the other objects of their charge. This has all its precious and peculiar signification. God's saints are on the journey now, labouring to enter into His rest—the "rest that remaineth" (Heb. iv. 11). Jesus guides them in their pathway (Ps. xxxii. 8); and as they travel on, He who is their High Priest above commits to them what He would have them carry for Him through the wilderness. What this burden is, this precious Scripture tells us.

The *Ark* comes first in order, made, as we know from Exodus xxv. 10—22, of shittim wood and gold, and covered over with the mercy seat and cherubim of glory. Here Jehovah dwelt: as He says Himself, "There I will meet with thee and I will commune with thee" (v. 22)—a fitting type of the One in whom God should yet draw nigh to man, and through whom He should reveal Himself (John i. 14—18). *Jesus, the Son of God*, is here before us, God manifest in the flesh; and thus the veil is next referred to as the covering that immediately enveloped the Ark. Of its materials, Ex. xxvi. 31 informs us, and Heb. x. 20 as to its signification. The *human form* of Jesus is by this unfolded in all its varied beauty—heavenly origin, kingly position, human glory, personal righteousness, and the One to whom all judgment has been committed—being depicted by the blue, the purple, the scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work, with cherubim. Next to this the badger's skin is placed; and knowing, as we do, how often animals in Scripture are used to represent *character* (Matt. x. 16), we have no difficulty in seeing that the Spirit of God would bring before us here the watchfulness of Him who, by the word of

Jehovah's lips, ever kept Himself from the paths of the destroyer (Ps. xvii. 4). Although the Son of God in all the fulness of His glory, He was not unmindful that the prince of this world stalked abroad, and therefore was always on the watch to baffle his designs. But over all we find "a cloth wholly of blue," and sweetly are we here reminded that although the utmost vigilance was necessary in the presence of the evil one, yet before the Father He was ever "the Son of Man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13), the celestial colour evidencing this more eloquently than words.

But this was not the only trust of the sons of Kohath. "And upon the *table of shewbread* they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread shall be thereon: and they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof" (vv. 6, 7). The *structure* of this table we learn from Ex. xxv. 23—30; its *freight* from Lev. xxiv. 5—9. Formed of gold and shittim wood, before the Lord it ever bore the memorial of the chosen nation in all its primal order. They might fail and did, until "the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through them;" but still the twelve cakes of two tenth deals remained, with pure frankincense, before the Lord, the special portion, too, of Aaron and his sons.

What that table did for Israel, Jesus does on high for us, and humbling as it is to contrast the so-called Church of the present day with that set up on earth at Pentecost, still we can rejoice to think, that the Son of God ever maintains before His Father, a

memorial of that "one pearl of great price," for which He stripped Himself of His Messianic glory. Twelve was the symbolic number for Israel; "one loaf" expresses the unity of the Church of God (1 Cor. x. 17). The heavenly covering enshrouds the table, fitly pointing to His personal glory; on this was placed the "continual bread," with its accompanying utensils, and then the *scarlet* covering, to tell of glory in connection with man (2 Sam. i. 24), the people of His choice, and over all the *badger's skin*, as suited to the character of Him who knew so well the craft of Satan, and the way to meet it (Luke iv. 1—13). The exceeding fitness of the cloth of blue between the table and its freight, cannot fail to strike the reader, as well as the difference of the order of the coverings, when the ark was in question; the *special* place occupied by the ark as the throne of God will at once account for the difference.

The *Candlestick* comes next. "And they shall take a cloth of blue and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuff-dishes, and all the oil-vessels thereof wherewith they minister unto it; and they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put it upon a bar." Of the form of this we read in Ex. xxv. 31—40, of its use in Lev. xxiv. 2—4. Of purest gold, and with branches perfect as to their number, from evening unto morning, did Aaron order the light of it before the Lord continually—as if to tell us, that from the evening of this world's darkness to the morning of the day of glory, a Priest after another order sustains in His own person a light for His people, the espoused ones of His choice, in the presence of His

Father's throne above. The Son of God, then, the light of His people, is before us, and the clothing is of blue and badger's skin—to shew that, heavenly to God and to faith, to man and to Satan He is vigilant and wary.

“And upon *the golden altar* they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put to the staves thereof.” As to the construction of this and its special use, Ex. xxx. 1—10 gives us ample information. Formed of gold and shittim wood, it stood before the vail, and morning and evening it sent up its cloud of incense in the presence of the Lord, attended to by the same one that dressed the lamps of the golden candlestick—a beautiful and simple figure (see Rev. viii. 3, 4) of Him who, lifting up His hands like the evening sacrifice (Ps. cxli. 2), “ever liveth to make intercession for us.” The Lord Jesus is depicted to us here, and still heavenliness within and watchfulness without, characterise Him.

“And they shall take all the *instruments of ministry* wherewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put them on a bar.” What these “instruments of ministry” were the Holy Ghost has not been pleased to particularise, but we have sufficient before us to lead our thoughts to Him, who “came not to be ministered unto but to minister.” As the eternal Word, His ear was opened ere He left the glory to do the the will of God (Ps. xl. 6—8). As Man He took a servant's form (Phil. ii. 7). As a Servant, He spoke of Him who “wakeneth morning by morning, who wakeneth mine ear to hear as the

learned" (Isaiah l. 4). And when His time of earthly service was completed, "they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her" (Gen. xxix. 20). Like the slave of Ex. xxi. 5, 6, He becomes our servant for ever. He serves us now, according to John xiii. He will serve us, according to Luke xii. 37. The instruments of ministry give us then, the thought of the Son of God in His *servant* character; and, again, the glory of the heavens, and vigilance for earth, in figure envelopes Him.

"And they shall take away the ashes from *the altar* and spread a purple cloth thereon, and they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, even the censers, the flesh-hooks, and the shovels and the basons, all the vessels of the altar, and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins, and put to the staves of it." The description of this we find in Ex. xxvii. 1—8; the use of it in Ex. xxix. 38—43, with other passages, teaches us. Morning and evening throughout the year, did the sweet savour of the lambs of the first year ascend before the Lord, a continual burnt offering—so evidently designating the lasting character of the sacrifice of the "Lamb without blemish and without spot," "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." The Son of God, God's Lamb, is here before us, and enshrouding that which points Him out to us, a *purple* covering—as if to say that at the moment when He was most contemptible in the eyes of man, before God and to faith He shone out in all the brightness of His kingly glory. Well chosen, though done in unbelief, was the inscription of Pilate; blessed was the testimony

of the dying thief—"Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy *kingdom*." The offering, and yet the King is set before our gaze, but covered over to the eyes of man with that which tells of how, while *rejoicing*, he knew how to *beware* (Phil. iii. 1, 2).

Such was "the burden of the sons of Kohath"; and we can well conceive with what solemn care they received their charge at the hands of Aaron, and the honour they felt was conferred upon them, in their being allowed to act for him in the charge of the most holy of all the holy things. And what a strange sight must it have been, and one so incomprehensible, save to all that were in the secret, to behold this company of men, bearing through the wilderness what was so glorious within, but so repulsive without, and yet withal of such deep significance.

May it be ours to seek to qualify ourselves for this Kohathite service. The mere fact that we are saved is not sufficient, for all Israel was redeemed, as we have seen; neither is it enough to be wholly the Lord's, for the Gershonites and Merarites, as we have noticed, were this. Those only are represented by the Kohathites who "set the Lord always before" them, whose appreciation of the Lord in all His varied excellence is such, that they desire none else but Him: their hearts are satisfied with Him. He is the one delight of their souls. Their one thought is to please Him, until they are with Him where He is, beholding His glory; precisely as their joy in Him increases, their representation of Him here will be manifest to all.

# HOW DO YOU WORSHIP?

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JOHN xii. 1—11.

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SHE came not to hear a sermon, although the first of Teachers was there; to sit at His feet, and hear His word (Luke x. 39) was not her purpose now, blessed as that was in its proper place. She came not to make her requests known to Him. Time was, when, in deepest submission to His will, she had fallen at His feet saying, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died" (John xi. 32); but to pour out her supplications to Him, as her only resource, was not now her thought, for her brother was seated at the table. She came not to meet the saints, though precious saints were there, for it says, "Jesus loved Martha . . . . and Lazarus." (John xi. 5.) Fellowship with them was blessed likewise, and, doubtless, of frequent occurrence; but fellowship was not her object now. She came not after the weariness and toil of a week's battling with the world, to be refreshed from Him, though, surely she, like every saint, had learned the trials of the wilderness; and none more than she, probably, knew the blessed springs of refreshment that were in Him. But she came, and that, too, at the moment when the world was expressing its deepest hatred of Him, to pour out what she long had treasured up (v. 7), that which was most valuable to

her, all she had upon earth, upon the person of the One whose love had made her heart captive, and absorbed her affections. She thought not of Simon the leper—she passed the disciples by—her brother and her sister in the flesh, and in the Lord, engaged not her attention then—"Jesus only" filled her soul—her eye was on *Him*—her heart beat true to *Him*—her hands and feet were subservient to her eye and to her heart, as she "anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair."

Adoration, homage, worship, blessing, was her one thought, and that in honour of the One who was "all in all" to her; and surely *such* worship was most refreshing to Him.

The unspiritual (v. 4) might murmur, but He upheld her cause, and showed how He could appreciate and value the grateful tribute of a heart that knew His worth and preciousness, and could not be silent as to it.

A lasting record is preserved of what worship really is, by the One who accepted it, and of the one who rendered it.

And now, dear reader, is this your mode of worship; or do you on the Lord's day go to hear a sermon, say your prayers, meet the saints, or be refreshed after your six days' toil?

Oh! if every eye was on the Lord alone, if every heart were true to Him; if we were each determined to see "no man . . . save Jesus only," what full praise there would be! Not with alabaster boxes now, but our bodies filled with the Holy Ghost—a stream of thanksgiving, of worship of

the highest character, would ascend in honour of the blessed One that now adorns the glory as He once adorned the earth. Be it ours thus to worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Amen!

## “BETWEEN THE TWO EVENINGS.”

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EXODUS xii. 6—MARGIN.

MATT. xxvi. 17—xxvii. 61 ; MARK xv. 47—xvi. 12 ; LUKE xxii. 7—xxiii. 56 ; JOHN xiii. —xix. 42.

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“THE evening and the morning were the first day,” Gen. i. 5 tells us; and this mode of reckoning time prevails throughout the Old Testament, and retains its place in the New also, as the above passages plainly indicate to us. From 12 to 12 our time ranges. The Jewish day was from 6 to 6 of our time, and commenced at 6 P.M.

This prefatory observation is the key to the order of events, that took place on the most eventful day that this world ever saw or will see.

It was “the first day of unleavened bread when they killed the Passover,” that Christ our Passover sat down “at even” with His disciples. The day had commenced, and the memorial of Israel’s redemption from Egypt was partaken of by Him who effected that redemption, and who was, ere many hours were over, in His own person, to fulfill the act which that redemption had so long and plainly pointed to. It doubtless took some time to prepare the meal, and before it was partaken of (*δείπνου γενομένου*—supper being come—John xiii. 2), we learn from John xiii. that the washing of the disciples’ feet took place, and therefore we are not

surprised to find that "*night*" had set in, when Judas left the supper room. (Verse 30.)

The blessed instruction of John xiii. 31—xiv. 31, follows; and then, "Arise, let us go hence," tells us that the supper room is left by all, and on the way the truths of chaps. xv. to xvii. are unfolded. Thus the night wore on, and now the Mount of Olives is reached, and Jesus prays while the sorrowful disciples sleep. "What, could ye not watch with me *one hour*?" (Matt. xxvi. 40) gives us a clue to the duration of the prince of this world's temptation, though those words were uttered after the Lord's first return to His disciples; and presently the "*lanterns and torches*" (John xviii. 3) tell us that darkness still prevailed.

He takes the martyr's place now, presently to exchange it for the victim's, and, as a lamb to the slaughter, He is led into the high priest's house. Here He was for some time detained, for "about the space of *one hour*" elapsed between the last two occasions that Peter's faith was tested (Luke xxii. 59), but at length the crow of the cock that awakened poor Peter's conscience, bears its testimony that *the morning* was approaching. "As soon as it was *day*" (Luke xxii. 66), He was arraigned before the chief priests and elders. Brief indeed was their mock trial, for "when the *morn- ing* was come" (Matt. xxvii. 1), He is brought before Pontius Pilate the governor. With sad rapidity He is tried, sent to Herod, returned, tried again, and condemned to death; for at the "*third hour*" (Mark xv. 25)—nine o'clock of our time—He is nailed to the accursed tree. Till 12 A.M., by our reckoning, He occupies the martyr's place (how blessedly able thus to

sympathise with those who are made conformable to His death !), and then becomes the victim. "When the *sixth hour* was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the *ninth hour*." Nature veiled her face in sympathy. God and Jesus must go into the question of sin alone. The doom of the earth was sealed. This darkness tells us these things.

"And at the *ninth hour* Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani,' which is, being interpreted, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.'" All was now over. The cup of wrath was drained to the dregs, and Jesus passed into Paradise, to be with His Father until the moment for His resurrection arrived.

Yet three hours of this eventful day remained for the interment of His body; and "when the *even* was come" (Mark xv. 42), Joseph of Arimathea begged the body from the governor, and laid Him in the sepulchre; and thus these four-and-twenty hours of unequalled importance closed, and the Sabbath-day ensued.

Well may we pause and worship as again and again we trace its eventful history !

## THE TEMPLE.

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ALTHOUGH the Books of Kings give us the public history of God's government of Israel, in the Chronicles we rather find the history of His ways in grace; all is told out in Kings, while in Chronicles only those sins are mentioned which exalt the God of all grace—yet, when we come to look at the two books in their typical aspect, we shall find that the Books of Kings surpass the Chronicles, in that the former points us to heavenly, the latter to earthly things.

Of this principle the two descriptions of the various buildings erected by King Solomon are a striking illustration. Each have their own peculiar place—each their especial signification.

Let us briefly glance at the description of each, and at their typical bearing.

There can be no question as to whom King Solomon points when we read in Zechariah vi. 12, 13, "Behold the man whose name is The Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne." It is *Christ*, the son of David. Joined with Him do we find King Hiram, and he likewise (how common are these double figures in Scripture!) points us to the One that "shall rise to reign over the

Gentiles," and in whom "shall the Gentiles hope" (Rom. xv. 12). As head of Jew and Gentile, Jesus builds the temple of the Lord.

Cedar trees, fir trees, great stones, costly stones and hewed stones, were the materials needed for the work. *Jehovah* is the first thought of these united kings, and "the house of the Lord," therefore, is their first design. Compact, and in unison as to its proportions, adorned with porch and windows "of narrow lights," it is surrounded by chambers, the structure of which does not encroach upon the proportions of the house, seeing that their beams are dependent on "narrowed rests" round about.

This carefulness with regard to *the Lord's* dwelling-place is further brought specially before us when we read that the house "was built of stone, made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building" (1 Kings vi. 7). How suited this is to the calm and dignified repose of the One who, when "a great and strong wind rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; . . . and after the wind, an earthquake; . . . and after the earthquake, a fire," was neither in wind, earthquake, nor fire, but in the "still small voice" (1 Kings xix. 11, 12). Compare also Rev. viii. 1.

"The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir," says the Song of Songs (chap. i. 17); and well chosen were those trees which represent creation's fairest produce (1 Kings iv. 33) and this earth's fertility (Isaiah lv. 13), to adorn the home of Him to whom

earth and creation alike owe their existence. "Carved with knops and open flowers," creation does its best to do Him honour, while the unseen stones tell us of beauty outwardly and strength within (verse 18).

As in the Tabernacle, so in the Temple, was there the holy of holies, the oracle, where the ark of the covenant should have its place; but, unlike the wilderness habitation, no *veil* is here to shroud the glory of Jehovah, but merely a partition formed of doors of olive tree and chains of gold, with which most precious and lasting material the whole house was also covered. When we learn from Rev. iii. 18 that gold signifies Divine righteousness, in contrast to human wretchedness, the wondrous suitability of this is evident, as well becoming the house of the "righteous Lord," that "loveth righteousness" (Psalm xi. 7). The unvarying accompaniments of the throne, the cherubims, come now into prominence, and their very material, like that of the doors, seems to tell us that the One in whom all the *promises* of God are yea and amen (2 Cor. i. 20) is now enthroned in glory; they are made of *olive* trees (Rom. xi. 17).

But the accomplishment of promises and triumph over the king's enemies ever go together (Luke i. 51—55, 71—74), so we find the "palm trees" too brought in to tell of *victory* (Rev. vii. 9); and what a beautiful combination must it have been when "all the walls of the throne round about" were carved with figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers within and without, and the floor was "overlaid with gold," and the doors of olive tree were adorned with "carvings of cherubims and palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid with gold," and the two folding doors of fir tree were

“covered with gold fitted upon the carved work” (verses 29—31). How sweetly does it remind us that righteousness and promise, victory and creation’s blessings, can now be blended together in perfect harmony.

Seven years was the house in building. Perfection in spiritual things gives a period to the formation of the house. How could it be otherwise with the work of such a Workman?

But though first in order, and rightly so, was *the House of the Lord* built, there is yet another structure that occupies King Solomon; and though there may not have been the same energy in exercise as when the house of the Lord was in course of construction, yet in due time *his own* house was completed.

Next in order comes *the house of the forest of Lebanon*, with its porch of judgment, its pillars and its windows, denoting, doubtless, government characterized by firmness and perspicuity—ever the features of the throne of God. (Rev. iv. 6, 7.)

And lastly, private affections have their place as well as public government; and Pharaoh’s daughter, whom he had taken to wife (a bride culled from the world, for Egypt is ever a type of this world’s glory), is not forgotten, and a house is erected specially for her who is the object of his love.

Durability, and that of the choicest kind, is evidenced in all these structures by “costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping . . . stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits.”

And now we pass from the various (beautiful in their variety) structures themselves, to their internal fittings and arrangements.

And first in order come the "two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece," with their "two chapiters of molten brass," and "nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work," and these adorned "with pomegranates," and "lily work." And these were erected in the porch of the temple, or house of the Lord; and when erected, duly entitled, "He will establish," and "In him is strength."

How eloquently do these, standing as they do at the entrance to the dwelling of the "Most High, possessor of heaven and earth," tell of the power and stability of the throne of Him who governs man righteously, yet inseparable from graciousness. And this again consistently with the purity of His nature.

The brass, the pomegranates, and lily work are blended together in perfect unison.

If the pillars bear witness to the power and stability of the throne, the sea, which comes next in order, testifies to the holiness of Him who sits upon it. And though the oxen with their faces every way, may tell us of the patience that bears with evil throughout the universe (Matt. v. 45), yet "the brim thereof . . . wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of *lilies*," and the "bases of *brass*," with their "borders" of *lions*, and oxen, and *cherubims*, and the "*wheels*," and the "ledges . . . graved with cherubims, lions, and *palm trees*," most assuredly remind us of the purity found to perfection in Him—His righteousness, that demands it from those who approach Him—His power

in dealing with those who disregard it—His government in favour of the righteous, and against the wicked—the rapidity with which He carries out His purposes, and the victory that must follow when He has taken in hand the case. The lavers, the shovels, and the basons, conclude the work of this widow's son of Naphtali, whose father was a man of Tyre, a simple figure of Jew and Gentile.

But of what inferior order was his work to that of Solomon, for it is not without a purpose that the Spirit of God has recorded that *Solomon* built the house of the Lord—His own house—the house of the forest of Lebanon, and even that of Pharaoh's daughter; but to *Hiram* were entrusted the lesser work of pillars, sea, lavers, basons, shovels. Cast of "bright brass" they might be, and without weight, but no one but Solomon must build the house or construct the vessels of *gold* that remain yet to be spoken of. For the house of the *Lord* were they, and of material suited to His glory. The altar, the table for the shewbread, the candlesticks, with their suited flowers, lamps and tongs, the bowls, the snuffers, the basons, the spoons, the censers, even to the hinges for the doors, were all to be of *gold*, and all to be the work of *Solomon*. How careful of His glory is the God who has thus recorded with minutest accuracy the material and structure of every thing that He has ordained to surround Himself, from the house to the hinges of the doors!

Let us now turn to the Book of 2 Chronicles, chap. ii. At once the difference strikes one. "Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the Lord, and an house *for his kingdom*." It is not so much the

person of the dweller that is here before us as the dominions of the King—the earthly kingdom rather than the heavenly home. And this difference is manifest throughout. In Kings no *site* is named; in Chronicles, the Mount Moriah at Jerusalem is specially designated as the place of the Lord's selection.

And yet King Solomon takes an interest in it, and builds it, seeing it is for Jehovah, sweetly reminding us of Christ's attention to His Father's interests, whether heavenly or earthly. It has its glory too, "garnished with precious stones for beauty, and the gold was gold of Parvaim" (chap. iii. 6); but yet "the veil" is there (verse 14), telling of distance and imperfect access to the throne. The altar, too, of brass (chap. iv. 1), the lavers wherein to wash the offerings, the sea for the priests to wash in (verse 6), remind us that we are not by any means on the same exalted ground we have already gone over from the Book of Kings; for whatever the privileges of the earthly subjects of the millennial throne of the Son of Man, they can in no way be compared to the higher order of privilege accorded to the heavenly saints.

I must leave the reader to draw his own conclusions from the comparison of these two accounts, merely adding a word as to the typical import of the various buildings as other Scriptures would seem to unfold them to us. As we have observed, in Kings we have rather the public government of Israel; in Chronicles, God's ways in grace; but in the former, types of heavenly things; in the latter, types of earthly ones. This, by attentive study, can be easily ascertained.

May we not then expect in the one the heavenly glory

of the Father and the Son to be set before us; in the latter, the earthly glory of the Son of Man.

The house of the Lord, *with its chambers*, may surely tell us of the Father's house with many mansions (John xiv. 2). There He dwells in the atmosphere of love peculiarly His own. The love of His Son has formed this place for Him, and not only for Him, but for those whom the same love has been pleased to gather around Himself—the companions of His glory, the sharers of His home. He has His own peculiar home, but immediately grouped around Him are the "chambers," the "place" that the Son has gone to prepare for us.

But the Son, as well as the Father, has His own peculiar glory; as "Son over his own house" (Heb. iii. 6), the circle of His interests, the sphere of His attentions. He thinks of us, He cares for us, He meets our every need; and in connection with this peculiar place, this place of special preciousness to us, He builds "His own" house.

But more than this, there is the house of the forest of Lebanon, with its porch of judgment, reminding us that public sway will be the portion of Him to whom every knee shall yet bow and every tongue confess. From the heavens He must reign till He hath put all things under Him (1 Cor. xv. 25—27). It therefore tells us of the glory of Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

And lastly, this fourfold picture is completed by the house of Pharaoh's daughter, telling us that whatever may be the joys of the Father's home, the sense of the care of Him who rules over His own house, the grandeur of the time when saints will follow in the train of the King

of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Bridegroom still will not permit the Bride to forget His precious love, that love that proved its fullest measure when He *gave Himself* that He might sanctify, having cleansed her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish. Truly this is love, "strong as death," that "many waters cannot quench."

It remains but to notice the scene of His *earthly* rule, the house of His kingdom. Jerusalem will yet be the throne of the Lord. Represented there, no doubt, He will be by the Prince of the house of David, but the earthly Jerusalem will be the scene of His government, as the heavenly one will be that of His grace and glory.

How happy to have one's portion *there!*

## THE MOUNTAIN TOPS.

KNOWING, as we do, how much *the place* has often to do with the truths unfolded in Scripture, it cannot be without interest to observe some of the scenes that *the tops of the mountains* have witnessed, both in former times and in the latter days of New Testament revelation.

How blessed, for example, to take one's place on Ararat's summit at the moment when the force of the waves of judgment was abated, and the ark, with its precious freight, is at length able to rest in safety; and the dove can be sent forth to return with its olive branch, to tell of peace and happiness once more; and then to learn, by means of this wondrous scene, the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and its blessed results to those who make Him their ark of refuge.

Dear reader, can you say this portion is mine, and I can see that every billow of the judgment that was rightly due to me has rolled over the head of that precious One that came to be my ark of safety, and now in resurrection He has borne me up and placed me beyond the reach of condemnation? I can look back and say, The time of wrath is over, and the time of peace and happiness has come? The Holy Ghost bears witness to me of this? And I can now erect my altar and send up the incense of praise into my Father's ears; whilst His bow in the cloud tells me of security as eternal as

Himself? Surely it is well to ponder this ere we pass on to the not less interesting scene of Genesis xxii.

The time had come for Abraham's faith to be tested, and God demands his only son from him. How beautiful to see the un murmuring, unselfish surrender of his all to the will of God—his patient journey, his simple faith, and Isaac's willing obedience to, and childlike acquiescence in his father's will. One scarcely knows which to admire most—the simple trust of Abraham, or the docile willingness of Isaac. We know the story, how, when given up to God, the respite came, and henceforth Isaac is a resurrection child. But how much more precious does this scene become, when we regard it as a truthful picture of God's willing surrender of His only begotten Son, and that blessed One's unshrinking submission to His Father's will. From the eternal God no demand was made, but He surrendered Him unasked. On the eternal Son no hands were laid, but He came to do His Father's will. Not three days alone, but three and thirty years did their journey last, and then to find no respite from the stroke of judgment. Not the less painful for the one to inflict than for the other to endure. But love sustained both Father and Son, and together they return to us as witnesses that eternal happiness is theirs' who own the Lamb of God's providing.

If we have in any measure apprehended the meaning of the mountain scenes already glanced at, we shall not be afraid to go with Moses to the top of Sinai (Exodus xix), and hear the blessed revelations God had to make to him. He was beyond the reach of the voices and thunderings and lightnings that made the people tremble. He was with God and in His presence at perfect ease.

How blessed, then, to hear type after type unfolding the glories and excellencies of Jesus, and to learn in the light the shadows, that certainly though dimly, point to Him that was yet to come. Was there a slave whose devotedness was such that, when his period of service was completed, would not go out free, but in love to his master, wife, and children, remained a slave for ever? Jesus was the one alluded to. For our sakes He took a servant's place; and in perfect love, His earthly service over, devotes Himself to our cause though absent from us; and when He comes again, will not even then remit the patient exercises of His heart in our behalf. (John xiii., Luke xii.)

The ark, too, has its tale to tell of the glory of His person; the manifestation of the Godhead; the One in whom all fulness pleased to dwell; where mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other; while the table of shewbread and candlestick speak respectively of the glories of His perfect humanity in connection with His people, and the light He ever bears on their behalf during the time even of their grossest darkness. Not less do the tabernacle and veil tell of His glories as God manifest in flesh, whether seen as Messiah, Son of Man, or Son of God, or in all the varied graces ever displayed in Him; while Aaron's clothing and appointment not less plainly unfold to us a Priesthood of a higher and a heavenly order; and the incense altar and the laver of brass likewise speak of Him who ever liveth and maketh intercession for us, and while He does so, sanctifies us by the washing of water by the word. Surely this is a blessed mountain scene, and one that well repays a visit

of less brief duration than that we have just accorded to it.

Let us pass on now to another place, and stand with Baalam and Balak on the high places of Baal (Numbers xxiii., xxiv), and hear what God has to say concerning the people of His choice. Peacefully they were resting in their tents below while God and Satan were waging war concerning them above. Satan had failed to hinder their departure from Egypt, and now He will not suffer them to enter the land without a contest; but, as is ever the case, his opposition only tends to bring out more fully the counsels of God's grace on their behalf. Separated unto God were they, beyond the reach of Satan's power, taken out from the masses of the human family, to be a peculiar people, an holy nation unto Jehovah. Perverse had they been in all their ways and abundant in their transgressions, but a God of perfect love can yet refrain from beholding iniquity in Jacob or perverseness in Israel. Beautiful to Him likewise were they, as seen in their pilgrim character, grouped in all the perfect order of His own arrangement; and possessed of hopes of which the world knew nothing, no less than the coming of Him, whose sceptre should rule the universe until all enemies were subdued under His feet. How blessedly does this fourfold prophecy concerning Israel suggest to us our own position in the sight of God. The special subjects of Satan's hostility, but the peculiar objects of the Father's care. We, too, are a people separated unto Him; chosen in the Son of His love before the world's foundation. He can see us from the heights of His own counsels and maintain our cause accordingly. Of us, too, is it said, "Who shall lay

anything to the charge of God's elect, it is God that justifieth, Who is he that condemneth?" for "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified." Our standing is not less certain than our calling, and this, blessed be God, not by our works, but because of the purpose of Him that calleth. Then, too, we have our beauty and order in His sight—accepted in the Beloved—the expression to principalities, and powers in heavenly places of the manifold wisdom of God, we are seen as the Epistle of Christ—known and read of all men; and this, until the promise dear to every one of us is fulfilled, and the hope of our hearts, the bright and morning star appears to change our mourning into gladness, and the tears of midnight into the day-beams of His own presence. Surely the "top of the rocks," the "high places of Baal" are well deserving our attention, whether as unfolding the privileges of the ancient people of God, or as revealing in figure our own more favoured heavenly calling.

Let us pass on to another and a different scene. The days of Israel's prosperity have passed away. Moses and Joshua, David and Solomon, have gone to their rest, and the people's testimony had been less and less apparent for the Lord, though His love for them had in nowise lessened; and though Ahab's wickedness exceeded that of all his predecessors, still the Lord had preserved a witness in the person of Elijah. And now the moment had come (1 Kings xviii.) to test the people's faithfulness, and Elijah stood alone as the representative for God on Carmel's summit, in antagonism to the 450 prophets of Baal, and the 400 that eat at Jezebel's table. What a scene it is! Like Moses on a former occasion

(Exodus xxxii.) he thought only of Jehovah's glory. Having gained strength "in the sanctuary," he is calm and confident when "in the sea," and before all Israel he rebuilds, and according to the due order, the ruined altar of the Lord; and a blessed answer did his faith receive, for Jehovah maintains the honour of His name, and the sacrifice is burnt to ashes, and once more the people bow their hearts in the presence of the display of the Lord's majesty. Surely this picture too, may bring before our minds what God expects of us in the present day. It is true, alas, that collective order has been displaced by admixture with the world and consequent failure in testimony, but only the more brightly to display the tender mercy of God in the faithfulness of the twos and threes that He has gathered around the person of His Son. They, too, have learned that the secret of power without the camp must come from constancy within the veil, and thus, too, their strength in God, they are not afraid to confront the masses that swell the ranks of a profession that is fast ripening into open apostacy. They too, can own no altar but the Lord, and no circle of unity but that of the "One body" joined by "One Spirit;" and they also have found out the truth of the Lord's faithfulness, and know not merely that their sacrifices are acceptable, but that Jesus, according to His word is in their midst; and, thus encouraged, they stand their ground as in the place of testimony for Him until He comes again to bring them to Himself in glory.

But not only is the Old Testament rich in mountain scenes of varied interest and instruction, but the New likewise contains its own unfoldings of everything that

feeds the soul and fills the heart. Take for example the transfiguration scene on the Holy Mount. What can be alike more beautiful and instructive than this? No longer types and shadows are before us, and saints and holy men of old are the principal actors in the scene, but *Christ Himself*. God manifest in flesh is now the central figure in the picture. Clothed in robes of kingly beauty, white and glistening, the sun itself is the only light that can be found wherewith to compare His glory. He is seen as the world will yet behold Him when He reigns in triumph as the Son of Man. Neither is He alone; for talking with Him, also glorified, are seen two heavenly saints, whose history indicates to us that they typify those who will share His heavenly glories. One had passed through death to be with Christ, the other was translated direct from earth to heaven, and now they are seen in company with Jesus to foreshadow the vast company of heavenly citizens that, when He comes, will rise together to meet and reign with Him (1 Thes. iv. 15—17). Peter and his fellows, too, beholding but not sharing the glory, with equal certainty depict to us the earthly company who will behold though not enter into the happiness of their more privileged forerunners. No wonder, with their Jewish instincts, they trembled as the well-known cloud was entered by the Lord and His companions—a blessed indication to us of how we shall not merely *share* His glory as Son of Man, but be privileged also to *behold* His glory as the eternal Son of God (John xvii. 22—24). While until He comes we have the Father's voice to tell us that His beloved Son (and not Moses and Elias) is the One whose person is to fix our eye, and whose

word is to attract our ears, and thus secure our obedience.

What a different scene is now before us as we ascend the Mount of Olives with the Man of sorrows and His disciples. The Prince of this world driven away and worsted from the temptation in the wilderness, will now appear again, to try and draw through fear of death God's faithful Son from the path that led to victory. Sorrowful, even unto death, amazed and very heavy was He, as he knelt and fell upon His face in prayer, and so great was His agony as He offered up His supplications with strong crying and tears, that His sweat was as it were drops of blood falling down to the ground. His disciples might sleep under the weight of their sorrow, but He continued agonizing, whilst still perfectly submissive to His Father's will. Well might He suffer, and because of suffering pray, when thus bereft of earthly comforters, an angel only strengthening Him, while yet in perfect communion with His Father, Satan thrust upon Him all the fearful consequences of the position He had taken as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. The martyrs, and still worse, the victim's sufferings in utter separation from God, rose up before Him in all their fearful intensity, and hence the deep—and the more deep because of His absolute perfectness—exercises of soul He passed through. At length the conflict ceases, the cup is taken from the Father's hand (John xviii. 11), and held fast in faithfulness until the moment came to drain it to the bottom. What scenes of interest are these, and how worthy of our deepest study!

But Calvary, too, demands our notice as Jesus once

more is seen the central figure of the landscape. Rejected of men, deserted by His disciples, yet in patient love He treads with unfaltering footsteps the lonely road that led to death and judgment. The tears of the sympathizing women; the indifference of the populace; the scorn of those in authority; the insulting conduct of the brutal soldiery, and the blasphemy of the unrepentant malefactor, alike fail to move that One whose perfectness was only more distinctly visible, as the pressure from without became the more intense against Him. In calm dependence on His God and Father, though feeling most intensely, and the more intensely because divinely, all that was against Him, yet completely superior to it, He can tell the women of their danger; He can pour out His soul in intercession for His murderers; He can breathe words of comfort to the dying thief; He can think of His mother's lonely heart, and entrust her to His loved disciple; and, then, God's righteous judgment over, can commend His spirit to His Father's care. Truly this, of all the mountain scenes we have glanced at, is one of deepest moment.

But once more the Mount of Olives, so often the blessed Lord's resort while here, and witness to so many occasions of interest, comes before us, as the place whence He ascended to His present place of glory; and surely here, too, we may pause a little to note what passed at that eventful time. Again and again had He appeared to reassure the hearts of His faltering disciples during the forty days that intervened between His resurrection and His departure to His Father's throne, and now the moment had come for Him to take His leave of them. Then, as ever, was His people's cause

His care. Assured they were that His absence should only pave the way for a far higher order of blessing than they had hitherto enjoyed. Henceforth the heavens should be opened to them, and the Holy Ghost should dwell within them, to fill their souls with Him whose person now garnished the heavenlies as He had before adorned the earth. Henceforth Messiah's kingdom should, as to their thoughts, be merged in the far superior glory of the Son of Man's dominions, whilst they themselves should take their place as those, and we with them, who form a portion of the mystic man, the body of Christ, the church of God, the bride. Surely then, though His departure must cause a blank that His return alone could fill, there was in the measure of blessing accorded in exchange for what they had renounced, far more than enough to compensate for their apparent present loss. A cloud received Him out of their sight, but soon a present Holy Ghost becomes their Comforter and ours, and fills our souls with the unnumbered glories of the Son of God.

But one more mountain scene I propose to turn to. It is that unfolded in Rev. xxi. 9—xxii. 5, where the bride, the Lamb's wife, is seen descending in all her given glory as the Church of God. How beautiful she is, and what a contrast to that which bears her name at present. The title of affection is conferred upon her, and affection towards the One whose blood has cleansed her. Her name is peace, as with heavenly features, and of God's creation, she is seen descending. His glory is hers, and now no want of singleness of eye obscures her light, but inaccessible to evil, yet with ready welcome to those who can make good their right to enter, she is

Christ's Epistle, known and read of all men; the display to heavenly principalities and powers of God's manifold wisdom, while the centre of God's government of Israel. Man's building now no more disfigures her, but God's workmen's labours have their place in her foundations, whilst divine proportions answer to divine admeasurement. Eternally glorious, the characteristic features of the new man (Eph. iv. 24) are seen in her ways and throughout her internal structure; whilst from her foundations to her gates the precious stones and pearls bear testimony to the fact that she is *now* God's own reflection (comp. Ezek. xxviii), and dear as ever to the heart of Christ (Mat. xiii); and, best of all, no temple now obscures the unveiled glory of creation's, patriarch's, Israel's God, and our Jesus, but they are seen as our centre, and at the same time light and glory. The Holy Spirit too, is there, issuing forth, in unhindered streams of blessing, while the ever fresh productions of the tree of life take the thoughts away from man's to God's own paradise. Service will then be in blessed contrast to all our efforts now, while the Master's presence, and His open recognition of them, and a share in His dominion, will be the eternal portion of all whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. How refreshing to turn away from the weakness and failure everywhere around to such a scene as this, and answer as the Bridegroom tells us, "Surely I come quickly"—"Amen, even so; come, Lord Jesus."

"THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY IS  
UNDERSTANDING."

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PROV. ix. 10.

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THERE are few readers of Scripture but have observed with pleasure, the position enjoyed by "the servants" in the well-known marriage scene at Cana of Galilee; and perhaps some of us have connected the privilege enjoyed by them, with the deeper intelligence of the restful Mary, as compared with the dulness of her more active sister Martha—and again have linked therewith the place that seemed so natural to "the beloved disciple," in the 13th chapter of John, in contrast with that which the more energetic Peter occupied at the supper table.

It was their *nearness to the Lord* that gave these "servants" more intelligence than even the governor of the feast. It was the consciousness that she had a sister at home that lived *nearer to the Lord* than she did, that made Martha call Mary to explain the truth that was beyond her comprehension, saying, "The *teacher* is come and calleth for thee." (John xi. 25—28.) And it was the fact that John *was* actually leaning *on the Lord's bosom*, at the moment when He made known that the traitor was amongst them, that led Peter to beckon to him that he should ask who it was of whom He spake. The time will shortly come when we "shall

know, even as also " we " are known," and to the part of Scripture which speaks of that day I would briefly direct the reader's attention. It is evident, as we open Rev. iv. 4, that the great time of separation to God has taken place, and the saints now on earth, with all their predecessors, are in glorified bodies in the presence of God, and of the Lamb. Under the designation of the " four-and-twenty elders " do we see them. The number expresses their completeness—the name gives to them their representative character. Not one is missing of the thousand of saints that from Adam downwards have been born of God, and have been translated on the coming of the Lord. Their robes point to their priestly character—their crowns to their kingly position. The threatening character of the throne does not disturb them, but the moment the glory of the Creator God, or redeeming Lamb is celebrated, we find them in the fullest activity of praise.

But this is not their only portion of blessedness. A challenge to the universe has sounded forth as to *who* is worthy to open the book of God's counsels and loose the seven seals thereof. And even John is at fault now, and in his weakness, weeps. But there are those who are in the secret. Children of the light and of the day are they, and their conscious *nearness to the Lord* has resulted in the unfolding of His counsels to them, and these on a subject surely unspeakably precious above all others that the heart of God has to reveal. *They* can tell the sorrowing prophet to dry his tears, for that the King of the royal tribe, the very source of him who, in old time, had suffered and triumphed, had, by means of His mighty victory, not achieved without suffering even

unto death, won the right to open and unfold the counsels of God, even though sealed up with sevenfold security. Their absolute and perfect separation to God had resulted in this intelligence, not merely for their own enjoyment, but with power to communicate it to others. And again do we find this wondrous privilege before us in the 7th chapter, and not less intelligent are they as to the identity of the white-robed multitude, than as to the person and achievements of the Lamb.

Thus far for *heaven*—but upon *earth* the same principle will prevail. To most of us the scene between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba is happily familiar, and to not a few, the typical as well as the actual force of the passage is discernible. On the former let me for a moment dwell. The application of 1 Chron. xvii. 13 to Christ in Heb. i. 5, leaves no doubt that *He* is in figure before us when King Solomon sits upon the throne of his glory; and a comparison of Ps. lxxii. with 2 Chron. ix. removes every difficulty as to the application of the Queen of Sheba in type, to the Gentiles that will come to yield their homage and devotion to the Son of Man, when there is “neither adversary nor evil occurrent,” He reigns as King of Righteousness, and King of Peace. What, then, is the result of the nearness of approach to Him? “She communed with him of all that was in her heart; and Solomon told her all her questions, and there was nothing hid from Solomon that he told her not” (*vv.* 1, 2). Of course, the intelligence of those above is of a higher order than that of those below. But whilst we contemplate with joy, what will be our glory when, with the Lamb above, it is at least our privilege to understand the blessedness of those below,

when from time to time they come to render homage to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? With them, as with us, the principle holds good that intelligence will flow from *nearness* to the source of light and understanding.

The question then most naturally suggests itself:— If, in the scenes that are before us, there will be this gracious provision of our God for the blessing of His people, is there no means whereby we may *even now* anticipate that time, and enjoy, while here, what will be our eternal portion in the brighter days to come? And does the Scripture teach us nothing on this score, replete as it is with counsel on every subject that we need?

Beyond all question we have the fullest instruction on this head in all parts of the Word, and to some of this I would briefly call the reader's attention.

In Gen. xviii. 17—21, Jehovah says:—"Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? . . . . And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." Whence this condescension, and whence this confidingness of the Lord?

The whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And they had said, "Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. . . . . And the Lord said, . . . . "Go to, *let us* go down, and there confound their language, that they may not

understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city” (Gen. xi. 4—8). From this scene of confusion, God, obliged to show mercy on whom He would show mercy—for all deserved to perish—had called Abram apart. Each link with earth was broken. Country, kindred, and father's house had lost their claims in obedience to the word of Him who said, “I am the Almighty God; walk before *me*, and be thou perfect” (Gen. xvii. 1). Lot might choose the well-watered plains of Sodom, but the presence of the Almighty God had superior attractions to Abram, and he henceforward determined to look only for that “city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” And well was he rewarded. While Lot was vexing his righteous soul from day to day with the unlawful deeds of Sodom, Abram was holding sweet and blessed communion with the Lord. His separation from surrounding evil, in obedience to His call, had resulted in unclouded intimacy, and He draws aside the veil to unfold His counsels as to judgment. What a wondrous scene it is, and how precious to see that there was one, at all events, on earth to whom God could tell His mind, and thus provoke to intercession! He will have his place amongst the four-and-twenty elders, and thus on earth his walk corresponded to his position there.

But he is not alone in this path of special blessing. Moses equally shines out as the friend of God, as a glance at Exodus xxxii.—xxxiv. will prove. Abram had separated from civil disorders; from religious evil Moses turns away. His attitude is very fine. Before

God he is zealous for the people; before man he thinks only of God's glory. And in the deepest sense of what was due to this, he takes the tabernacle and pitches it *without the camp*. The camp, he knew, was a scene of defilement. God and defilement, he was aware, could not combine, and, therefore, he took new ground for the dwelling place of God, and most precious did the Lord set His seal upon his faithfulness. "And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and talked with Moses. . . . And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (*vv.* 9—11). What an instructive scene is this, and how full of encouragement! To hold communion with the Lord there must be absolute separation from what is contrary to His nature; but when this is insisted on, there is no limit to the revelations of Himself.

But it is not only in the palmier days of Jewish history, that this important principle found its response among those to whom the Lord was everything, but even when the sun of Israel was set, and the times of the Gentiles had ensued, do we find it taking expression in the person of such an one as Daniel the prophet. Isa. xxxix. 7, had had its fulfilment, and Daniel and his companions were chosen to adorn the court of the king of Babylon. But change of circumstances and altered scenes do not, to the faithful, disturb the written principles of the word of God; and, mindful of the Nazarite vow of Numb. vi, these children set themselves apart for God, and refrained from Gentile luxuries and heathenish defilement. (Daniel i.) The

grace that had given them power thus to rise above the lusts of nature, now bestows upon them their suited reward, and we find, “As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” (v. 17). Separate from natural evil, as Abraham had been separate from worldly, and Moses from religious defilement, most blessedly does God reward them for their faithfulness. We are all familiar with the next chapter—how the king dreamed a dream, and then forgot it; how none of the wise men of Babylon could in any measure aid the king’s too treacherous memory; how death was pronounced on all; and then how God came in, in love, and in answer to the prayer of Daniel and his companions—revealed the secret in a night vision, and thus preserved their lives, and drew forth their heartfelt adoration. Surely we may say this revelation was the result of their *nearness to the Lord*, and this the consequence of the refusal of surrounding evil!

And not alone in the Old Testament do we find the illustrations of this deeply important principle, but also in the New. Christ had entered on the scene, and as the Shepherd of His sheep, and passed through the lawful door within the precincts of the Jewish sheep-fold. Born at the appointed place, coming at the very time that Daniel’s prophecy foretold, of the proper stock—a rod of the stem of Jesse—He had fulfilled in every way what the Spirit of God had pointed out concerning Him; and welcomed heartily by those who, like Simeon, occupied the porter’s place, and were therefore on the watch, proceeds to gather the sheep around Him—

self and lead them forth. One by one they heard Him; one by one they followed His gracious leadings, and exchanged starvation, bondage, condemnation, for the blessings of salvation, liberty, and pasture. As sheep, they were the objects of His care; but He has a higher title for them:—"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you *friends*; for all things that I have heard my Father I have made known unto you." What a place of blessedness was theirs! No doubt it had cost them something to follow Him. The fishermen had left their nets, their fathers; the man whose eyes were opened had forfeited his Jewish rights; but what they had received had more than repaid them for all they had left behind. *His* friends—the friends of the blessed Son of God—and *His* secrets—the outflowings of the Father's heart towards Him—this was their portion, the portion of those who, through the knowledge of His excellency, had left the worldly, the religious, the domestic circle, for Him. (See John ix.)

But not only when the blessed Lord was here did the rule of which I speak find its example in His followers, but even now, while He is absent at His Father's right hand, do we find an illustration of the same. The Ephesians were not only "saints," but "faithful in Christ Jesus" (ch. i. 1), or, as we may say, not only set apart, as all saints are, by the action of the Spirit of God quickening their souls and thus attaching them to Christ, but they had faithfully maintained (through grace, of course) the position they had assumed. And this expression is the more striking if we contrast it with 1 Cor. i. 9, where the Holy Ghost can only speak of the

faithfulness of *God*. As we know from the Acts, these men of Ephesus had come apart from everything, through the presentation of God's Son; for, Judaism on the one hand, and heathenism on the other, were alike renounced for the superior claims of Christ in glory; and now, though apostolic energy was absent, they still retained their place as saints and faithful ones to Christ.

The sheep had been drawn around the person of a Shepherd present with them. These had been gathered to an absent Christ, but still to One who, true to His word, is ever the centre and present in spirit to those who are gathered on Divine principles. And what do we read about them? That God “Had abounded towards them in all wisdom and prudence, having made known the mystery of his will, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him” (ch. i. 8—10). What a blessed portion theirs, and ours, who are gathered together now on similar principles! Our *nearness to the Lord collectively* (as was *individually* the case in John xv.) has resulted in His leading our hearts on to the time when all His counsels as to Christ will have their fullest completion and display. That is indeed, and rightly, called the dispensation of the fulness of times. Times there have been, no doubt, of varied interest and blessing. Adam had his time, and Noah his. Jew and Gentle times ran and are running out their course. The fulness of time (Gal. iv.) was seen when Jesus trod the earth, and the Church's day exists at present. But in all of these

there has been failure of more or less intensity; and, therefore, it is that God, who is ever careful of His own glory, has appointed a day, and named it "the fulness of times," wherein every single one of His former displays will be made good in the person of that Son whose object now is, has been, and ever will be, to glorify the Father. He will reign as the second Adam, the Head of all creation; He will govern the world in righteousness, without the fear of failure, like His predecessor, Noah; He will write His laws in His people's hearts, and sit upon the throne of David; He will rise to reign over the Gentiles, and in Him shall the Gentiles trust; He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe. It is to these blessed counsels as to the future glory of the Son, that the Holy Ghost would at present introduce those whose privilege is to be not merely saints, but, faithful in Christ Jesus. And surely this is a high and holy privilege; and we should see to it that neither worldly interests, nor religious contamination, nor the joys of nature, creep in to mar the sweet and happy intercourse that is ours, through fellowship with the Father and the Son. In glory, hindrance there will be none to our intelligence, and consequent enjoyment. Here it is only through constant occupation with the Son, and watching lest the Spirit within be grieved, that our *nearness to the Lord*, and consequently intimacy, can be maintained. The Lord give us to lean on His bosom, to sit at His feet—to identify ourselves so thoroughly with Him, that He may be free to tell us whatever He sees we need for comfort, joy and blessing!

## OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

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THE selection of the apostle James to write this epistle is marked and evident. "The Lord's brother" (Gal. i. 10), he takes the place the Lord Jesus occupied whilst upon the earth (Matt. v.—vii.), in enforcing *practical godliness* upon the remnant, who in the midst of the nation believed. In the Lord's days the nation was still recognized, here the "twelve tribes" are addressed; parts, therefore, of this epistle apply to the unbelieving Jews, parts to the disciples who had faith. The study of Acts vi. 7, xxi. 20, helps one to understand the mixture of Christianity and Judaism that prevailed in the apostles' days, a condition of things that came to its end when the Romans (about A.D. 66) destroyed Jerusalem. Then the temple worship ceased, and Christianity became more decidedly heavenly in its tone. Godly walk *in the midst of Israel*, then, is the subject of this epistle, until the call came in Heb. xiii. to go "without the camp" ere the judgment of Jerusalem should come. It is an epistle of much use in the present day, seeing that Christendom is very like what Judaism was, and is likewise on the eve of its judgment. We do not get here the full unfolding of the privileges of the Christian though some of them are touched upon; this is suitable to an epistle leading us out of Judaism into Christianity. "The Lord Jesus Christ" is spoken of (ch. i. 1); "the crown of life" (ch. i. 12);

“the new birth” (ch. i. 18); “the salvation of the soul,” “the law of liberty,” “the Father” (ch. i. 21, 25, 27); “the kingdom” (ch. ii. 5); “the presence of the Holy Ghost in the church” (ch. iii. 1); “in the Christian” (ch. iv. 5); “the Lord’s death and coming;” “the church” (ch. v. 6, 7, 14): but beyond these there would be little to make us suppose that Christianity had come in, or that Judaism was passing away. We are then on transitional ground, the Jews still recognized as a nation, and the exhortation embracing both them and the Christians amongst them, though the latter are primarily before the apostle’s heart.

Verse 1. The apostle, though the Lord’s brother, does not take that place, but styles himself “a servant.” Like Paul (Acts xxvi. 7), he has the twelve tribes before him, and assures them that trial is now a cause for joy and not depression. Had they been in the land, and perfect in their obedience, they would have needed none; but now trials are sent to detach them from earth, and therefore are to be valued. Under these trials patience was to have her perfect work, and if they knew not how to act, reference could be made to God for wisdom; but faith must characterize the asker; if not, he could receive no answer, but would be a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Christianity might improve the circumstances of some, lower those of others; but, whatever the result, it should, like the trials, be a cause for praise, and trial would not last for ever, but for those who endured through it, there would be the crown of life in the coming kingdom.

Verse 13 speaks not of trials which come from God, but of temptations that spring from the natural heart.

These result in death, which is the wages of sin, to those who pass away without repentance. From God comes every good and perfect gift; He is the Father of light, unchangeable; we are the fruit of His love (the first of the new creation), and should be ever attentive to His voice, slow to use our own; slow to anger, seeing His righteousness, His ways, are not affected by it. The salvation of the soul is His object, as the Father of light, and this He accomplishes by the Word. We are begotten; let those who are not so judge themselves, and receive the Word of Life, and see to it that their practice is according to the truth received. Some might be stony ground hearers; others, by looking to the law of Christ—which is liberty to the new nature, and perfect as containing all the will of God—would be blessed in their deed. The fruits would be seen in attending to those whose earthly props are gone, and walking apart from all that would defile in the world.

Chapter ii. Under the law, riches were a mark of the Divine favour (Deut. xxvi.); but now that Jesus is the Lord of *glory*, pure religion and undefiled would consist in recognizing the rich *in faith*, and the heirs of the *kingdom*; in the *synagogue* (not “assembly”); therefore, there should now be no such distinctions as heretofore. Even the royal or *excellent* law, the law of Moses, conveyed this thought. It still retained its place, though the law of liberty is the standard of obedience to the Christian. God in His mercy rejoices against judgment (judgment is His “strange act”); those who are unlike Him in this towards their brethren can expect no mercy (see Matt. xviii. 23—35). The royal law teaches us to love our neighbour as ourselves;

the law of liberty, that we should lay down our lives for the brethren.

Pure religion and undefiled would be also seen, not in the mere hollow profession of faith, but in the practice of it. Abraham gave up his son, Rahab her country. In both, Jew and Gentile faith was evidenced by works, and these works were exactly the opposite to those of the natural man. We are justified before God by faith (Rom. iv. 2), before man by works. It does not say "shew God," but "shew me." The absence of fruits betrays a soul no better off than that of the devils. The study of Genesis will shew that righteousness was counted to Abraham some thirty years before he was justified by works.

Chapter iii. The assembly is here contemplated, as the synagogue was in chapter ii. Both were thus at the same time owned of God. The sins of the tongue are in this chapter first spoken of collectively, then individually. "Be not many *teachers*" tells us that the liberty of the Holy Ghost had become licence amongst them, as in 1 Cor. xiv.; for "in many things we offend all," we should read "for we all often offend." The language of this chapter shews us that the apostle has both believers and unbelievers before him. It searches the heart and traces things to their source, distinguishing earthly from heavenly wisdom. The order of God's wisdom shews us that peace can never be at the expense of purity. It begins with what He is, just as pure religion contained unspottedness from the world; and thus the pure in heart would be peacemakers, and would peaceably sow their fruits of righteousness. (Compare Matt. v. 3—9.)

Chapter iv. Here the unbelieving are evidently before us,—disciples would not be addressed as “adulterers,” &c.; lusts are exposed as the source of all that is evil, but separation to God is insisted on, as in ch. i. 27, iii. 17. Verse 5 reads more simply: “Do ye think that the Scripture speaketh in vain? Does the Spirit that dwelleth in us lust to envy?” That is, that the Scripture shews the sources of things truly, and the indwelling Holy Ghost never produces the envy that was amongst them. They should approach God in a due sense of their humiliation, receive suited grace from Him, and live in daily dependence upon Him.

Chapter v. Riches were a snare to many; he shews their uselessness in the last days when the Judge was at the door. Covetousness was not their only sin;—the death of Jesus, the Just One, lay at their door; He had never resisted them. Patience is to characterize the remnant; for them the Lord would come. Job had been patient, though sorely tried, and had seen the end of the Lord. In these trials they were not to “curse God and die.” (Need I say an oath before a court of justice is not here alluded to.) The Lord *answered* when adjured. (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64.) In affliction we should pray; in joy sing the psalms of the Holy Ghost’s leading; in sickness call for the elders, and, as in Mark vi. 13, get them to anoint us. This command is of course obsolete now, seeing we have no elders in the absence of their proper appointment through apostles or their delegates. Sickness is here seen as an instrument of God’s government of His children. The accuracy of the Word is seen in the following exhortations. It does not say, “Confess your faults to the elders,” but to

“one another.” Help is often derived by saints talking individually together over their temptations, and learning from one another the way to avoid them. There is no such thought as a priest here, or even a class leader. Job gives us the example of patience, Elias of prayerfulness. It is interesting to read about the latter in 1 Kings, the confidence of his testimony to Ahab, and the ground of this confidence as here explained,—we must get power in the sanctuary ere we can stand in the presence of the world. It is comforting, in the absence of elders, to notice how far one person’s faith will prevail. Practice should prevail as well as prayer, and this with reference to one another; not the saint but the sinner (and a saint is never in Scripture called a sinner) is before us; he is saved from death, and *his* sins removed out of God’s sight for ever. The saints’ sins were spoken of in verse 15, the sinners’ in verse 20,

The allusion to Elias and Job is striking: the former represents the faithful at all times who stand alone for God, and especially at the time of the tribulation, and the allusion to the three-and-a-half years carries on our thoughts to the time of the end. Job gives us the experience of saints at all times, and especially that of the Jews at the time of the tribulation, thus shewing that this epistle may, like Hebrews, have a double application—both to a heavenly and earthly people. It is not a church but a remnant epistle, and the only one addressed to the saints. It occupies the place of Jonah in the Old Testament; he addressed Gentiles when Jews were the subjects of God’s favour; James addresses Jews when Christians are nearest to the Lord. It holds an interesting and remarkable place in the Book of God.

## ETERNAL THINGS.

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“AND God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” (Gen. i. 26 ; ii. 7.)

From the above well-known passages we learn the facts concerning the origin and formation of man. As to his body it was made of the dust of the ground ; as to his life it was the breath of the Lord God Himself. He became a concrete being ; what is external is derived from below, and what is internal from above. Both these parts, however, are *formed for eternity* ; as by the hand and by the breath of the Eternal God.

We know his subsequent history. Permitted to be tested of God, he gives way under the trial, and the path of obedience and blessing is changed for the place of transgression and the curse, and both soul and body, internal life and external form, are forfeited to God. Not that they cease to be eternal, his body remains eternal as before, the life equally so ; but instead of an eternity of blessedness, one of unmitigated misery is his—a necessary consequence of defection from a God whose love towards man was ever perfect as it was infinite.

God intervenes in mercy, however, and the coats of skins (righteousness founded on bloodshedding) are the evidence to Adam of what God will do, while the

revelation as to the seed of the woman, leaves such an impress on his soul that he calls his wife's name "the mother of all *living*." God had quickened his soul, it was purified through faith in the Word, and now will the man in his concrete form become the inheritor of eternal blessedness, though a blessedness of a higher order than that which he lost. His body is eternal still, though subject to suffering, disease and death, as the consequence of sin, and will be glorified. (Romans viii. 11.) The life has been purified through faith in Him who was to come, and thus entitled to possess and fitted to enjoy the eternal inheritance of the people of God.

And so with some, but, alas, not all of the rest of the of the human race, the descendants of Adam and Eve. They, like their ancestors, one and all, are possessors of an eternal body and eternal soul. They are born into this world in a similarly concrete condition; their bodies are eternal—eternal their existence. Some, Cain-like, reject grace and die unrepentant (as far as we know) like him; others, Abel-like, through faith are accepted according to the value of the sacrifice, and like him are purified as to their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit. And thus the human family is divided into two great classes, those who will spend their eternity in the new heavens and new earth, and those who will have their eternal portion in the lake of fire, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Differences no doubt have ever existed as to the blessedness of those who in the days of their life here, through grace have found mercy, and will exist in the days of their life hereafter; and equally so, differences have ever existed, and will ever exist, as

to the condemnation and misery of those who have rejected the testimony presented to them while on earth; but in every case their portion has been an eternal one, whether believed in and enjoyed, or understood and not avoided.

Before the flood men were held responsible for God's testimony in creation, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." (Rom. i. 20.) After the flood, God's providential ways told equally of His existence, "in that he did good and gave rain from heaven, filling hearts with food and gladness." (Acts xiv. 17.) Prophets too were not silent; Enoch told how "the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." (Jude 14.) Noah preached "righteousness" for six score years. (2 Peter ii 5; Gen. vi. 3.) Traditions also existed and were carefully treasured up—the great age to which men lived favouring their preservation—of varied import and diverse bearing; men could speak of the seed of the woman that was yet to come. Abel's blood still told out its story, and reminded the human race of his "better sacrifice." Thus the world had an abundant testimony, till in later days the law and the prophets were given, and Jehovah's name and Jehovah's acts sounded far and near amongst the Gentiles, until the time when Jewish testimony ceased, saving in the remnant, and Gentiles were brought into more direct communication with "the God of heaven." (See Daniel.)

Thus all had their opportunity. God's providential

mercies, making "his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sending rain on the just and the unjust," still continued. Traditions, as man's days, through failure, were shortened, were embodied in books—the testimony of law and prophets was superadded—manifestations of power were accorded to the Gentiles, until at last *the Son* is born into the world and God is manifest in the flesh. Who has not heard of His name? Born in the very centre of the people, whose fame as the people of God was world wide. Making His appearance at the time when the Roman empire had reached its culminating point of glory and celebrity, during the "golden age" of Augustus, and in one of their most valued colonies, His name has not only been stamped with the pen of eternity in the Book of God, but heathen authors record His existence, and heathen idolators, still upon their deities name that name which evidently points to Him. The prophets had foretold His coming glory. His forerunner had announced His advent and the nearness of the kingdom of the heavens. He Himself preaches and shews the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. Thus in the wide circle of the world and in the inner circle of the land of Israel was there abundant testimony. But this was not all. *The Cross* paves the way to a new era of things. The end of Judaism and man in the flesh, it is also the basis on which God can consistently with His nature, send forth a message of peace and pardon to all who will come to Him. No longer is Jesus "straitened," but peace being made by the blood of His Cross, He can send the Holy Ghost to tell of the righteousness of God in salvation to sinners, throughout the universe. Still

the testimony of God's providential mercies continues to the heathen; still the testimony of promise, law, and prophets continues to the Jew, while the gospel of "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" sounds out far and near to the favoured circle of Christendom; men are responsible everywhere, and possessed of eternal bodies and eternal souls, must spend eternal days in the eternal heavens, or eternal hell!

No doubt "that servant, which knew his own lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes," and, "he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes" (Luke xii. 47. 48); or in other words, the ignorant heathen, of the present day, are less responsible, and will be less severely punished than the proud professing Christian; for as there are differences of degrees in glory, so will there be deeper degrees of misery in hell, but one and all are responsible, and will be judged accordingly.

And this is not the only testimony that God will give. Ere long the Lord will come, and then the testimony of His grace will cease, and those who have heard and rejected it will be given over to "strong delusion that they should believe a lie;" but to those who are in ignorance, the Lord, who is "not willing that any should perish," will send "the everlasting gospel" to tell of what He is; "the gospel of the kingdom" to tell of what is coming; never leaving Himself without a witness. Every corner of the earth is reached that all may be without excuse. And this, too, will give place to the manifested glory of the Son of man, which for a thousand years will be openly seen in

the heavens, so that even those who are *untouched* by the wondrous sight, cannot but "yield feigned obedience" unto Him. Thus, until the day of the final judgment of the wicked, when Christ, as God, will sit upon His throne, and the Books will be opened, not one single being of Adam's race will have been without a testimony of some kind or other, of greater or lesser privilege, or more or less responsibility; none will be able to say, "No call reached me; I am unjustly condemned." From Cain's day down to the present time, those who have left this world without God and without Christ, as to their spirits have gone down to hades—the place of prior and minor torment (Luke xvi. 23), while their bodies have crumbled into dust, though still dust that is *eternal*; and from the present time down to the days when the great white throne is seen, they will similarly be disposed of, be they who they may—Barbarian or Jew, Heathen, professing Christian, or unbelieving Gentile. In that day body and soul, by the power of God, shall come together again, dust and spirit, life and the vessel that contained it. "Being clothed" they are "found naked" (2 Cor. v. 3); the "man" that "has not on the wedding garment" is cast into "outer darkness" (Matt. xxii. 11); the "evil servant" is cut "assunder" (Matt. xxiv. 51); the "wicked and slothful" one is also "cast into outer darkness" (ch. xxv. 30); the "cursed" "goats" "go away into everlasting punishment." (v. 46.) "The dead, small and great"—from every clime, of every age, of every station—pass away from the face of Jesus, and spend their eternity in the lake of fire, which is the second death, and "be tormented with fire and brimstone, in

the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" where "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever" (Rev. xiv. 10, 11). "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix. 48). Possessors of eternal bodies, and eternal souls, ages on ages of unutterable misery are theirs, the "weeping" for sorrow, and the "gnashing of teeth" for rage, because they loved darkness rather than light, and rejected the testimony accorded to them, whatever that testimony may have been.

How different to trace the history of those who, through mercy, on the ground of the sacrifice of Christ, and on the principle of faith, have their eternal portion where the former things are passed away, and righteousness dwells in the new heavens and the new earth.

Adam, as we have seen, "called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all *living*." "Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." "Enoch walked with God, and was translated that he should not see death." "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." "Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." Many a thousand more besides, whose names are passed over in silence in Scripture, are nevertheless inscribed in the Lamb's Book of Life. Repeatedly do we read that the blessing was not confined to the line of promise, but that the "branches ran over the wall," and Rahab and Ruth, and many another testify to the grace of God, who had His own from "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," so that Peter could announce the principle

that "in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him" (Acts x. 35). Varied was their intelligence as to God, but until a risen Christ brought in "life more abundantly," they were quickened by the Holy Ghost, and thus received a new nature. Adam, and the "just men" from his day till that of Abraham, knew God as the Lord God, as the Creator who had brought them into relationship with Himself. The fathers could rejoice in the sustaining care of the Almighty God. "The Israel of God" enjoyed the blessedness of knowing that though their fellows were unfaithful, Jehovah changed not. The remnant in Daniel's day, when the glory of the Lord of the whole earth had ascended up from the Mount of Olives, still reposed in the mercy of the God of heaven, until the name of Father first fell from the lips of Jesus and was declared to the disciples. It remained for us to be allowed the unspeakable privilege of conscious "sonship" by the Holy Ghost dwelling within us—for the new nature with its heavenward instincts and breathings from Adam's day till the resurrection has been succeeded by the gift of eternal life and the bestowal of the Holy Ghost crying "Abba Father"—and the line of blessing in the upward side of these eternal things will not cease with us—for though the sealing of the Holy Ghost is peculiar to the present time, and ceases when Jesus comes, yet the remnant between His coming and His manifestation both of Jews and Gentiles will have life from God, and consequently heavenward drawings and Divine enjoyments; and when the kingdom has come the Jewish people, as we know, will "be all righteous," and the Gentile "sheep" go "into life eternal." The

Spirit, too, will be poured out "upon all flesh," in those days of "the latter rain," not of course to the same *depth* as at present, but in far *broader* extent.

Then at length comes the day when all enemies are subdued under the feet of the Christ of God—when the heavens and the earth which are now, shall have passed away, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up—when Death and Hades (their occupation over) shall be cast into the lake of fire, when the painfulness of separation ("no more seen") is over, when tears and all the fruit of sin are gone for ever, when righteousness is not merely a passing stranger but *dwells* in the new heavens and new earth, when the bride, the Lamb's wife, has come forth in all the freshness of her bridal glory as the tabernacle of God, in that wondrous scene where God is all in all—the Church the tabernacle of God surrounds Him—the spirits of just men made perfect are in attendance, the innumerable company of angels the General Assembly celebrate His praise. Men, no longer Jews and Gentiles, but men for the eternal earth share in the blessings of His presence, and God Himself is with them, and their God. What a wondrous scene it will be, and how blessed that those who, having passed from eternal death into eternal life through faith in the Son of God, can even now, by anticipation enjoy these eternal things. Life eternal, as we know, is theirs—eternal redemption—an eternal inheritance too is spoken of, and everlasting habitation, a glorified body likewise, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens, with an eternal weight of glory to displace the sufferings of this present time. How rich is our portion, and how from moment to moment we should praise and bless the One whose

heart gave us His own eternal Son as our portion, both now and for ever, and, ere He comes to receive us unto Himself, and change the body of our vileness that it might be fashioned like unto the body of His glory has also given us the gift of the Eternal Spirit to open the heavens to us and reveal to us the glories and preciousness of that blessed One, in whose presence it will be our happy portion to spend eternity.

May it be ours as we think of these things, to remember in prayer, and by every effort in our power to rescue those, whom we know are fast hastening to an eternity of woe! Amen.

## THE COMING OF CHRIST: THE DAY OF CHRIST—AND THE DAY OF THE LORD.

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A CASUAL observer might not at first sight recognise any distinction between the days spoken of in the heading of this paper—but we are not to read Scripture in a careless way, but seek rightly to divide the word of truth, and the more we do so, the more the wondrous harmony and beauty of God's ways will entrance our souls. That there is a distinction I think will be plainly seen, if we patiently compare passage with passage together.

For a simple reason the "coming" of Christ is never mentioned in the Old Testament, and for a similar reason silence is there also preserved as to the "day" of Christ.

They are both truths consequent upon the revelation of the Church of God, and the Church of God was never revealed, from the book of Genesis to the book of the Prophet Malachi. As the epistles abundantly testify, it was a mystery hid from ages and generations, not even in the Scriptures, but in God, until revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. iii. 5, 9; Rom. xvi. 25, 26; Col. i. 26).

In Old Testament times the circle of God's interests was the Jewish nation. The Lord's portion was His people, Jacob the lot of His inheritance (Deut. xxxii. 9); and it was only on their determinate rejection of His

Son, both on earth and from heaven, both in the person of Jesus and by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, that God falls back upon His own counsels kept secret since the world began, and builds the Church upon its rock, the Son of God (Matt. xvi. 18). The building of the Church commenced at Pentecost, it will terminate at the coming of the Lord; then the Jews will again be reinstated in their former place in God's favour, and once more become the circle of His interests, until they are established in their own land—the land of Canaan—according to the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. No wonder, then, that we may search the Old Testament in vain to find one word about the coming of Christ, seeing that this truth essentially belongs to the Church of God, which we know on Divine authority was hid in God, till the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, learned it from the teaching of the Spirit. But though the Old Testament is silent, the New Testament writings abound with instruction concerning it, and to this I would briefly turn the reader's attention.

The Gospel of Matthew, as being first in order, contains a sweet picture both of the way this truth was in early years enjoyed, and also of its revival of late years amongst us. I allude to the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. xxv. 1—13). No one that reads this parable carefully will deny that it presents to us a picture of the history of the Church from Pentecost till the moment the Lord arrives.

There is a going forth at the beginning, and a going forth at the end, with the slumber of centuries between; and in this, Church history confirms the Scripture. At the beginning, the coming of Christ as presented by the

Apostle Paul (1 Thes. iv. 15, 18), drew forth many from Judaism and Heathenism, and to wait for God's Son from heaven. There were, as now, the real sheep of Christ, and also the professors—it was a truth generally accepted then that the proper hope of the Christian was the return of Christ in person to receive His own unto Himself (John xiv. 2, 3), and believer and professor alike went forth from their surrounding antecedents professedly to wait for Him. He tarried, however, and while He did so, all, alas, went in again to slumber and sleep; we are not told where, but are led to infer, as Church history abundantly proves, that the world's attractions proved too strong for even the people of God, and the hope of the Lord's return was lost for centuries. But grace sent forth the cry again—*when*—there are those now living who can testify, and from that day to this, the scene described in verses 7, 9, has been illustrated in Christendom by the calm dignity of those who, apart from the world, are patiently waiting for Christ, and the uneasy bustling activity of professors, “ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth;” ver. 10 remains to be fulfilled, Christ has but to come, and then we who are His, shall go in *with Him* to the marriage to be “for ever with the Lord.” Clearly then this passage would set before *the day of joy*, the coming of Christ, and of this *Mark* also speaks (ch. xiii. 34, 37), not with a view to giving us a dispensational picture as we find in Matthew, but rather to impress upon us the necessity of constant watchfulness—“Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning, lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.”

How graphically he brings it before *us* to whom the porter's place is given. He has placed us near the door, and unceasingly vigilant He would have us be, lest His "journey" over, He finds us sleeping in the world's ways.

*Luke* likewise is equally distinct in his directions as to the coming of Christ (ch. xii. 35, 40). The affections must be kept in order, and our testimony marked and decided, and soon the time of watchfulness will be exchanged for the time of rest, when He who is our servant for ever (Ex. xxi. 5, 6) will Himself come forth and make our cup of joy run over in His own presence.

And where this will be the Apostle *John* informs us, in the Father's house, where He is (ch. xiv. 2, 3), where we shall behold His glory which He had before the foundation of the world (ch. xvii. 24). In the Acts of the Apostles the truth of the coming of Christ is not prominently before us, seeing that that Scripture does not present to us doctrine, but a record of facts; ch. iii. 20 may however be referred to with interest. The Epistle to the Romans, likewise, having for its prominent subject justification by faith, hardly leads us up to this point. The person, however, who comes is referred to in ch. xi. 26, and the results of His return in ch. viii. 17, 25. The Corinthians, with all their disorders, seem to have still held fast the hope of it (ch. i. 7); and the manner of it, the Apostle takes the opportunity of unfolding to them in connection with the false doctrine as to the resurrection that prevailed amongst them. Chapter xv. 23, 51, 54, is most explicit as to this. He comes—all will not then be asleep (that is, have died); but all "they that are Christ's" will be caught up to meet Him then—in a moment shall be changed, and death swallowed

up in victory. Here, for the first time, we get what 1 Thes. iv. more fully unfolds to us, that some will be removed without passing through death at all. 2 Cor. v. 4 confirms this, "not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." In Galatians (it has been well said) we are on too low ground for the coming of Christ; in Ephesians on too high a platform. In the former, the condition of the churches would not have rendered the return of the Lord desirable; in the latter, the Church is seen already seated in the heavenlies in Christ.

Philippians fills up the picture of 1st and 2nd Cor. In them the mortal puts on immortal clothing; in this it is a body like Christ's body that is our portion (ch. iii. 20, 21), well may we rejoice that "the Lord is at hand" (ch. iv. 5). Colossians refers to our manifestations with Him, but still would have us remember we have a hope laid up in heaven (ch. iii. 4, 1, 5). Thessalonians has the subject as its prominent feature—whether as the proper expectation of the newly converted (ch. i. 9, 10), or as the time when the labourer's joy in the presence of the fruit of his labour will be no longer checked by Satan's hindrances (ch. ii. 18, 19), or as the comfort for those who are weeping over departed friends (ch. iv. 13, 18). Hebrews tells us it is the time when salvation in its fulness will be ours, and that our time of patience is but a little while (chs. ix. 28, x. 37). James instructs us as to the necessity of patience, illustrating his remarks by comparing us to husbandmen who wait for the precious fruit of the earth, and yet assuring us that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh (ch. v. 7, 8). Peter tell us of the grace to be brought unto us at His appearing (ch. i.

13), and further shews us how dim the lamp of prophecy becomes, even though illustrated by the vision of the kingdom, compared with the hope of the return of Him who is the Day Star, held in the heart (2 Peter i. 19). Jude commits us to Him who will "present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (ver. 24); and John in the Revelation first of all shews us how, in the Philadelphian condition of things, the hope of the Lord's coming is revived (ch. iii. 11), thus confirming what has been said in Matthew xxv.; and then leads us on by the presentation of "the bright and morning star" to cry "Come Lord Jesus." And thus throughout the New Testament Scriptures we find *The Coming of Christ* set before us in various aspects, but invariably in such a way as to produce *joy* in the heart of those that are true to Christ. His last words are "Surely I come quickly," our response is "Amen; even so, come Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 20).

Quite distinct from this is *The Day of Christ*. It, we shall find, is invariably connected with responsibility, as the coming of Christ is invariably connected with joy. Again, inasmuch as it is the responsibility of *the saint*, and not the responsibility of *the world*, we shall not find it referred to in the Old Testament, though ample reference is made to it in the New. It is doubtless synchronous with the day so often mentioned in the Old Testament, but having reference to reward and not to judgment, bears a different name, and is, therefore, quite distinct in its character and purpose. It is some years (perhaps  $3\frac{1}{2}$ ) after the coming of Christ, already spoken of, and may be said to be the *heavenly* side of the same day that as *the day of the Lord* has to do with

*earthly* things. This a careful examination of the Scriptures will amply show.

We will again begin with Matthew's Gospel, and in chapter xxv. we find the man who had travelled to a far country on his return reckoning with his servants. He had delivered to every man according to his several ability, and on his return expects each to render account for that which has been entrusted to him—the faithful are rewarded—the unfaithful (no doubt more than 1000 years later; Rev. xx.) punished. Here we have what happens *subsequent to* His return, as under the parable of the virgins we had the return itself. *Luke* opens up the same subject, giving us the amount of the reward, as Matthew had given us the amount of what had been entrusted to them, but again here the return is not the prominent thought, but what follows it. He had received the kingdom (ch. xix. 15), and dispenses the rewards according to the diligence of those who have served Him during His absence. In the Epistles, likewise, this time is always spoken of in connection with our behaviour, just as the Coming is always spoken of in connection with our hope; 1 Cor. 1, 7 for instance, as we have seen, gives the hope, ver. 8—the responsibility—they *waited for* the Coming—they should be blameless (not in the day of the Lord) but “*in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

So in *Philippians*. The apostle was confident that He which had begun a good work in them would perform it until *the day of Jesus Christ*, and he desired also that they should be sincere and without offence till *the day of Christ* (ch. i, 6, 10).

In *Thessalonians* the same. In connection with joy,

as we have seen, is the Coming; but in connection with walk and ways, it is the day or appearing of Christ (ch. iii. 13, v. 23).

So in *Timothy* and *Titus*, where walk and ways rather than privilege are before us; it is His manifestation with His saints and His reward for them, rather than His Coming for them that is presented to us. (1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 8; Titus, ii. 13). *Peter* also refers to this day, and in connection with reward (1 Peter, v. 4). *John*, as to the day when we shall be publicly owned as Christ's (1 John iii. 2); and in this sense we find it throughout the New Testament—the Day is that of the saint's *responsibility*; as the Coming is the time of his *joy*.

The Lord will have come for His people—He will have rewarded them according to their works—He then manifests Himself with them, and then the “Day” of the Lord ensues.

# THE LAVEN.

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EXODUS xxx. 17 21.

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EVERY one interpreting the Old Testament by the light of the New, must be struck by the singular beauty of some of the figures therein contained, and the marvellous accuracy with which each component part fits into its fellow. Like a Chinese puzzle, looked at in its separate compartments it has no attraction, but carefully put together it makes a whole of perfect harmony.

Among these types the Laver occupies an important place, and deserves our closest scrutiny. Let us, then, trust to the Spirit's aid to interpret it for us.

Three things arrest our attention concerning it—its materials, its position, and its use.

*Brass* was its *material*, and as we further read, brass of the finest quality, for ch. xxxviii. 8 tells us that "the looking glasses of the women" were given to construct it—and, as we know, in the east it was customary for the mirrors to be made of metal.

Its *position* was between the tabernacle where Jehovah was pleased to dwell, and the altar where Israel were allowed to approach to offer sacrifices.

And its *use* or purpose was for the priests (and the priests alone) to cleanse away any defilement or impurity that might adhere to their hands and feet in passing

between the altar and the tabernacle to worship, or between the tabernacle and the altar while serving.

Thus, then, most suitably, the Laver is of brass, as if to tell us that the washing in it must be according to the righteousness of the One who "loveth righteousness"—and the looking glasses would also point us to the fact that the Laver is not merely to judge all that needs removal, but that it detects also the impurity by its unsullied lustre. Thus the priest was ever reminded of God's claims, and could not pass with defilement undetected.

The position, too, was most suitable. The priest's office kept him continually passing to and fro between God and the people, and the people and God. Towards the one he acted in the capacity of a servant—towards the others as a worshipper; how natural then that ample provision should be made that all that might hinder him in worship or service could be purged away, so that he might be clean who bore the vessels of the Lord (Isa. lii. 11).

Lastly, the Laver was for the *priests* to wash their hands and feet in. They were the privileged class; the congregation could draw no nearer than to the brazen altar, and to these alone belonged the privilege of making use of the brazen Laver. Their hands might be soiled through touching the offerings, or from other causes; their feet defiled by the sand of the court, but to meet their need God had provided the pure water of the Laver so that they might ever walk worthy of Him who had said, "Be ye holy for I am holy."

May we not learn a lesson from each of these things. In the first place, the use of metals in the Scripture is

of much interest and beauty, and gold, silver, brass, and iron are found frequently to be used both in the structure of the tabernacle and temple, and in the symbolic language of prophecy. The ark was overlaid with pure gold—similarly the interior of the temple—similarly the head of Daniel's image. The sockets on which the tabernacle rested were of silver, as also the breast and arms of Daniel's image. The altar of burnt offering was of brass, as also the belly and thighs of the image already referred to. Its legs were of iron and clay. Thus we shall find that that which was of Divine origin exclusively was of the most precious metal, whereas when man is brought in, the metal is of baser character, though what is of God, of course, remains the same. Rev. iii. 17, 18 gives us the key to the meaning of *gold*. What can make the wretched, miserable, poor one rich but Divine righteousness—the gold tried in the fire? Gold then is the righteousness of God. Brass is evidently inferior, and yet has that in it that tells of a righteous God. May we not say that *brass* then is righteousness dealing with responsible man—thus the Son of Man, Rev. i. 15, is seen with feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace, as if to say that where he touched the earth or dealt with man, His claims were according to the righteousness of His nature.

When we come to the arrangements of Solomon's Temple, we find that *the Laver* is replaced by a molten sea, and that the material of this also was brass, the *position* also between the dwelling place of Jehovah and the place where Israel approached to offer, and this also was for the priests to wash in (2 Chron. iv. 2—6).

There are, however, in the construction of this sea,

some points that demand our notice. It was supported on twelve oxen, these turning to each of the four quarters of the globe, and the brim of it was "like the work of the brim of a cup with flowers of lilies."

Three points here are added to what we have already noticed. The basis on which the Laver rested was formed of oxen, they were twelve in number, and the brim of the sea was of lilies, and lilies in full bloom.

From the ox we get the thought of patience; from the number twelve, perfection; from the lilies, purity; and this of the most perfect kind.

One of the four characteristic features of the cherubim, the symbols of God's judgment and government, is the ox (Ezek. i., Rev. iv.), showing that it combines patience with power, intelligence, and rapidity of execution. Twice in the New Testament is the minister of God compared to an ox (1 Cor. ix.), and twice in the Scriptures is patience enjoined on the minister of God, as almost the first among his qualifications (2 Cor. vi.; 2 Tim ii. 24). Thus the oxen give us the thought of patience, and because twelve is ever the perfect number of things on earth (twelve patriarchs, twelve tribes, twelve apostles)—we have the thought of patience, and that in perfection. The lily, at once too, gives us the thought of purity, and its flowers remind us that such purity is of the highest order and most complete display.

Thus all is in character—righteousness that must detect and deal with defilement, seeing its purity is of the highest order, and yet the dealing is with the utmost patience and with perfect graciousness, and on behalf of those whose privilege it is to worship and to serve.

We will now turn to Rev. iv. 6, where, in that heavenly scene, we find "before the throne a sea of glass like unto crystal;" and to ch. xv. 2 where we see also in heaven a sea of glass, at it were, mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name, stand in the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

At once the meaning of this strikes one. The water was for earth, the glass for heaven; the water cleanses away defilement here, there the glass reflects God's unsullied holiness, where defilement cannot approach. So perfect is the work of Christ, that the redeemed who come out of the great tribulation (as the mingled with fire signifies), can *stand on* the sea of glass, and, as it were, challenge its perfect purity to detect one spot in them. Blessed thus to pass from earth to heaven and find the sea there; but that which is the emblem of fixed purity is contained in it, and its purpose not to fit the saints to worship or serve, but to reflect and display their perfect fitness, through the work of Christ, both to worship and to serve for ever.

In old time those who used the Laver had sung the song of Moses, now those who stand upon the sea sing the song of Moses *and the Lamb*.

FAR back as the eye can reach I look, and I see nothing but God's Eternal Son, and how magnificent is His description: "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" (John i. 1, 2). Eternal in existence, distinct in person, Divine in nature, His "goings forth (Micah v. 2) have been from of old, from the days of eternity" (margin). And again, "The Lord 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 waters; 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 fountains 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 (margin, brought up in love, or, the nursling of his love), and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him" (Prov. viii. 22—30).

How beautiful is the description—the depths, the fountains abounding with water, the hills, the mountains, the heavens, the clouds above, all have their glory and end to the praise of Him who formed them; but there was One, the object of His Father's eternal delight, who takes precedence of them all—Jesus, the Son of God. He was “before all things” (Col. i. 17); “that eternal life which was with the Father” (1 John i. 2). Himself, “the mighty God, the everlasting Father” (Isaiah ix. 6).

This One God has given to us; His first begotten, His “only begotten” Son; He was made flesh; He tabernacled among us, and those who beheld His glory have declared Him unto us as He was manifested to them—the One in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father. He then has been manifested to us as He walked through the world, displacing everything that hitherto engaged the heart as if determined to reign alone there. Let us briefly trace His footsteps as delineated in part of the gospel according to St. John (chs. i.—iii.) He first enters upon a scene of perfect earthly joy, the marriage feast of Cana, and finds it transitory and valueless; their time had run out, but He proves that in Himself are to be found resources that at once are permanent and satisfying. Religion next gives way before Him, and the splendour of the Jewish temple is shown to be profanity in His presence who is greater than the temple; He is the true temple now for faith (John ii. 19, 21). In ch. iii. He introduces eternal life and the kingdom of God to the astonished master of Israel. In ch. iv. He leads on the woman of Samaria to know that He was the dispenser of that new spring of water that should

lead her soul out in worship in a way that neither Jerusalem or Gerizim had witnessed.

In ch. v. the ministration of angels at the pool of Bethesda gives place to the superior power of the Son of God. In ch. vi. the manna, and in ch. vii. the feast of tabernacles are equally superseded. The bread of life being presented in Him, and the gift of the Holy Ghost through Him to all who will.

NOTHING can be more important for the Christian than to have clear thoughts as to *the law* impressed upon his mind, and to this end a right understanding of Romans vii. is most helpful and necessary.

In it we get the law spoken of in connection with man in three distinct ways. First, as his husband—this, of course, only applies to the Jew, for to him alone was the law given (ch. ii. 14)—this point is contained in verses 1—6; next, as that which applied to man reveals to him the state of his heart, verses 7—13; next, as that which, although the delights of the renewed soul (ver. 22), yet so completely overcome him in its deathlike embrace, that he has to cry out in agony for a deliverer, verses 14—25. Let us consider these three portions of this important chapter.

Verses 1—6. He addresses those who are intelligent with reference to God's dealings respecting the law of Moses, appealing to their understanding, as to the condition in which the law had dominion over man. They would all agree that man, alive in the flesh, such as Israel was when the law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator, were those to whom the law belonged. Arguing from this basis, which no one would dispute, he next adduces the case of a woman who could not legally be dissociated from her husband until death had severed the link between them; should

she marry during his lifetime she would be an adulteress; should he, however, die, his death would set her perfectly free. He now applies his illustration.

The Jewish believer had been married to the law, and when in the flesh was subject to its control and power, but because every believer is accounted of God to have died with Christ, he has passed out of the condition ("in the flesh") in which the law was to control him, and in resurrection is attached, married to an entirely new husband, even Christ raised from the dead. Union with the first husband had only provoked the flesh to commit sins, the due reward was death. Union with the second husband necessarily results in bringing forth fruit to the praise and glory of God.

The marginal reading of ver. 6 makes the sense plainer. In the illustration the apostle uses, the husband dies—in reality we die.

You ask me what do the Scriptures teach as to a woman's position? I reply, they give us the fullest information as to what she ought to be according to the mind of God.

Let us trace her pathway in a few of them, and seek what lessons we may learn from that which the Spirit of God records concerning them.

To begin at the very beginning—the woman's *conversion*. As an illustration of this let us turn to Luke vii. 36—50. The Lord was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, but He had meat to eat that the Pharisees knew not of—for it was His Father's will that day to give forgiveness—salvation—peace, to a poor lost sinner. The woman of the city had discovered her need, and learned that Jesus was the only one to meet it. She thought not of the Pharisee's house; she reasoned not as to who they were that reclined around the table, but in the energy of her faith—and faith evermore derives strength from necessity—she comes to the One who would in no wise cast her out, and in deepest sorrow, yet, in deepest adoration for the person of the One that filled her soul, she bestowed upon the Lord, only in a more excellent way, the attention that the discourteous Pharisee had neglected, and washes with her tears His wearied feet, wipes them with her hair, kisses them with holy affection, and anoints them with the precious oint-

ment she had brought to spend on Him. What was this but the worship of a soul that had just made Jesus her all in all, and found in Him a fountain open for sin and uncleanness? Washed in His blood, she stands before Him to hear from His lips the blessed truth that her sins (He knew them all) were forgiven—that she was saved through faith in Him, and that now she might go forth from His presence in perfect peace. Oh, what an encouragement this gives to the poor penitent, who like her, finds her sins a burden too heavy to carry, and has not yet responded to His message, “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest” (Matt. xi. 28).

We will leave her now, forgiven, saved, and at peace, and turn to another scene. Not now a weeping sinner, but a worshipping saint; not now does the alabaster box express the devotion of a heart that is just learning Jesus as its Saviour, but rather the worship of a soul that apprehends His rejection by the world, and determines to share it with Him. Turn to Mark xiv. 3—9, and we find another woman before us—a different person, and in different circumstances—not now a nameless sorrowing penitent in the Pharisee’s house, early in the Lord’s ministry on earth; but Mary, the sister of Lazarus, as John tells us, in all the intelligence of one who had learned the Lord’s mind, and knew how to do the right thing at the right moment, in the Pharisee’s house, and six days before the Passover. What a contrast between the two! and how much in favour of the latter. Surely we may say the one resembles the crossing of the Red Sea, the other the passage of the Jordan. In the one, one recognises the grateful action of

a heart that has just learned the value of a dead and risen Christ; in the other, we see the worship of a soul that discerns that Jesus has no place in this world, and therefore renounces all association with it. If at the Red Sea I learn that through a dead and risen Christ I have burst through Satan's chains, and can sing the song of victory; at Jordan I learn that I am inseparably identified with a heavenly Christ, and therefore I renounce the world and prepare to enter on the heavenly joys and conflicts, that become the portion of one, who before the world has testified to her identification with Christ, whom it had rejected.

Such was Mary. Instinctively she felt that the circle of hatred was becoming narrowed round her adored Jesus, and therefore she felt that the time had come for a deeper expression of her thorough identification with the One who had engaged her heart. Long had she "kept" the precious ointment (John xii. 7), and now just at the moment when the high priest's palace was the scene of a deep-laid plot to murder Him, the leper's house became the scene of her adoring homage, and identification with the One for whom the world had nothing but a tomb. They are about to crucify and bury Him she said—henceforth, earthly fragrance has no charms for me; I bury all I have on earth with Him. She brake the box, and poured it on His head. The disciples might murmur, and Judas reprove, but her gracious act met the approbation of the Lord, and if He approve, who shall condemn? Surely we may learn from this, that not merely should we be consciously forgiven, saved, and at peace, but that the Lord delights in that thorough expression of identification with Himself,

in His rejection by the world, that we find so sweetly portrayed before us in Mary of Bethany.

Another phase of a woman's place we find before us in her history likewise. In Luke x, 38, 42, her sister and herself are before us, and Mary again obtains sweet commendation from the Lord.

Perhaps the lesson of the previous parable (Luke x. 25—37), was as yet unknown to Martha, and she had not learned that Jesus was a departing Christ, and that the world would henceforth be but an inn (no certain dwelling place) to one who had learned His grace and kindness by the wayside. At all events we find her in connection with a house and serving, while her sister was in connection with Christ, and sitting at His feet. Ah! you will say, but the work of the house must be done. Quite true; and surely, "not slothful in business," applies to this, but it is everything to do the right thing at the right time. He had renounced His Messianic rights, His earthly place, and was on His way homeward. Was it not, therefore, more suitable, and in the spirit of the time, to be like Him, houseless, and like her too, resting and feeding on His word; as He evermore fed upon His Father's Word. Martha's trouble might have passed unnoticed had she not complained, but then the Lord puts things on their proper footing, and brings out what in His eyes was the "one thing needful." And thus we learn the simple, wholesome lesson, that whatsoever may be our employment, whatever our duties, we must still give the Lord the first place, His claims are paramount, and to sit at His feet and hear His word is more pleasing to Him than the most stupendous feats of service, however benevolent their object.

By the Word we learn obedience, but obedience and dependance are twin sisters, and must never be separated; and, therefore, the Spirit is careful to record to us how a woman sat and heard, and also how a woman prayed. Chapter xviii. 1—8 gives us this faith again, which gained strength from necessity, and enabled her to rise above the judge's profanity, and never cease to plead until her request was granted.

We, too, are thus encouraged to pray and not to faint. Have we no adversary to contend against? In our heavenly conflict we wrestle not against flesh and blood (like the Jews in Canaan), but against principalities, against powers, against wicked spirits in the heavenlies. Or in the wilderness we have to do with the devil going about like a roaring lion. With such a foe we cannot afford to faint or be weary, but must wait on the Lord to renew our strength. Each one has their difficulties to meet—each one their varied trials. Your trials may be from without, and you may be learning that a mother-in-law shall be divided against her daughter-in-law, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law (Luke xii. 51—53). Some may be from within—the thoughts of the heart (Matt. xv. 19); but whether from without or within, we have need to pray without ceasing; and if our own hearts are at rest and our pathway smooth, to intercede for that which is nearest the heart of Christ, His Church. And it is not an unjust judge we have to do with, but God, who, as judge of all the earth, must do right (Gen. xviii.), and will surely do for us far more abundantly than either we ask or think. The woman should be both obedient and dependant.

## MEGIDDO.

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IT may not be without interest to mark the place that this locality holds in Jewish history, and to inquire how the scenes that have been already enacted there are a figure of those still future.

I am not aware that it is in any way referred to previous to Judges v. 27, from which we learn that it was a part of the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, and that they failed to drive out from it the Canaanites, contenting themselves with making them pay tribute. So far as to its locality.

But ch. v. 19 of the same book further teaches us that Megiddo was the scene of Israel's triumph when at their weakest moment. "The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo."

Oppressed on account of their evil doings at the hands of Midian for twenty years, their cry of distress is heard and answered, and God raises up a woman to be their deliverer ("the weaker vessel," 1 Peter iii. 7). A woman urges on the hosts of Israel to victory, and a woman is made the instrument, in God's hand, of destroying Sisera, the captain of the king of Hazor's army. "God subdued" on that day the kings of Canaan before the children of Israel, and the beautiful song of Deborah and Barak celebrates His triumph.

Here then, Megiddo is mentioned as the scene of Israel's triumph under the most adverse circumstances.

The next time we read of it (passing over 1 Kings iv. 12, where it is mentioned as the possession of Baana, one of Solomon's twelve officers, and ch. ix. 15, where it was evidently of such importance in the eyes of the king, in that, along with other places, he raised a levy to rebuild it) in 2 Kings ix. 27, where it is the scene of the death of Abaziah, king of Judah, at the hands of Jehu, the instrument raised up of the Lord to punish him for his unholy alliance with Jehoram, king of Israel. Thus we find the very scene of Israel's triumph over their enemies become the scene of God's judgment in His faithless representative.

We now turn to 2 Kings xxiii. 29, where we find it once more the scene of the death of the king of Judah—Josiah. Regardless of Pharaoh-nechoh's warning, he persists in going up to fight against him, and is slain in consequence of his temerity. The lamentations of Jeremiah are the result of the death of the righteous one whom God had taken away from the evil to come. (Isa. lvii. 1.)

Here again, the scene of Israel's triumph is the scene of the mourning of all Judah and Jerusalem, 2 Chron. xxxv. 20—27.

We next turn to the book of the Revelation: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather

them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. . . . And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon (the *mountain of Megiddo*). . . . And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These were both cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with his flesh."

Here we find the place of sorrow once more the place of victory. "The time of Jacob's trouble" is ended, and the Lamb executes summary judgment on His enemies, the oppressors, too, of His ancient people, previous to establishing them in their own territory, according to the promises made unto their fathers.

But the deep repentance of the people must pervade their blessing, and thus we find subsequent to the destruction "of all the nations that come against Jerusalem to battle" (Zec. xii. 9), the promise, "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for her only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadad-

rimmon in the valley of *Megiddon*, and the land shall mourn."

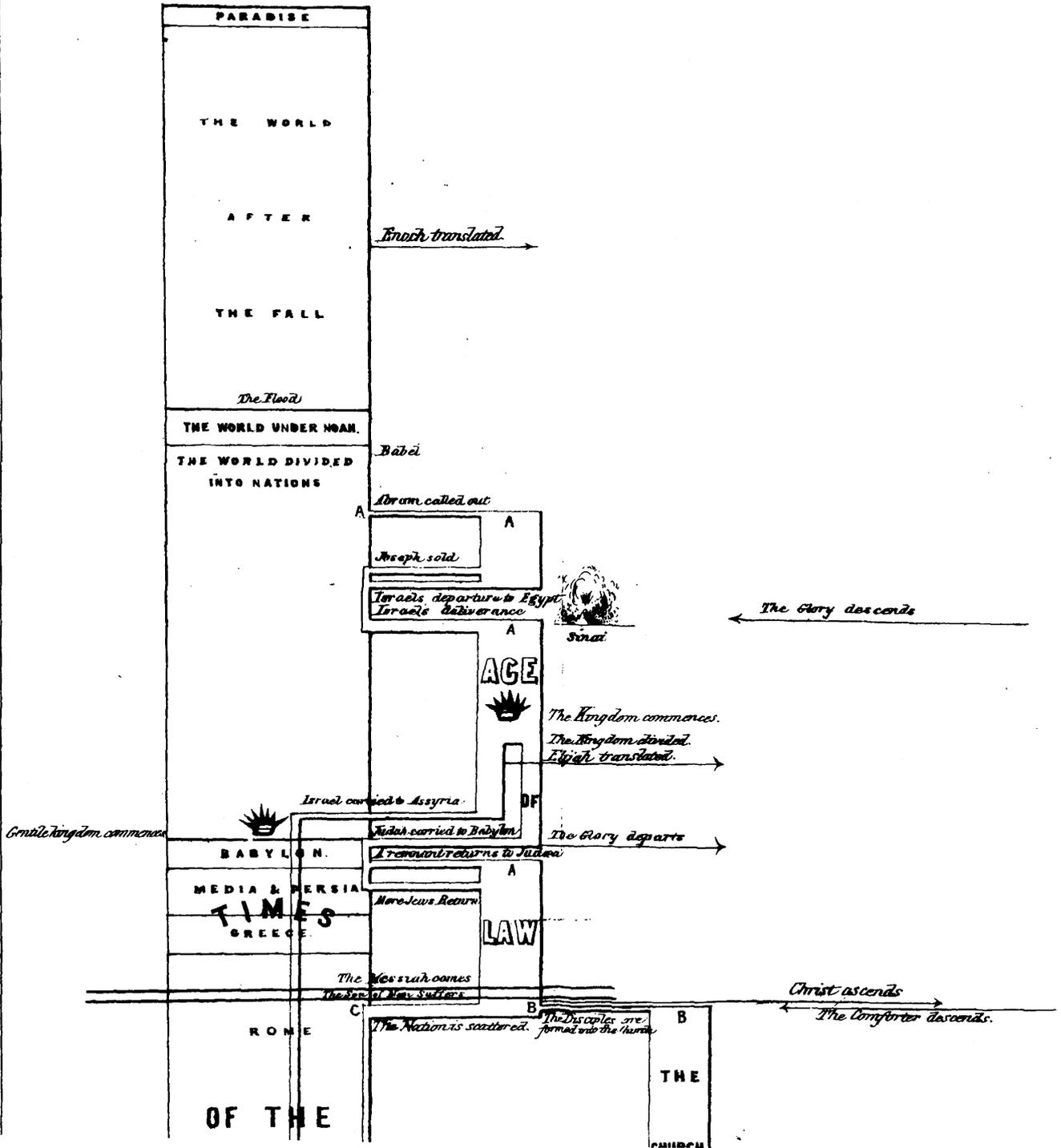
Here then, Megiddo is once more found in connection with the mourning of Israel for her slain but triumphant King.

The two ways then in which Megiddo is brought before us in the history of Israel will yet be reacted in time to come.

At Megiddo Israel has triumphed over the nations, and sung her note of victory. At Megiddo she will, in her King, yet triumph over the nations likewise, and raise her note of praise.

At Megiddo, again, she has mourned for her slain king; and at Megiddo there will yet be heard the voice of lamentation for Him whom she had pierced, but whom God has exalted: "When one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? And he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." (Zech. xiii. 6.)

# ETERNITY



BABYLON.  
 MEDIA & PERSIA  
**TIMES**  
 GREECE.

*The Roman returns to Judaea*  
 A  
*Here Jews Return*  
**LAW**  
*The Messiah comes*  
*The Son of Man suffers*

ROME C

**OF THE**

**PRESENT PERIOD**

**GENTILES**

C

*The Nations scattered.* *The Disciples are formed into the Church*

B

**THE**  
**CHURCH**  
 †  
**ON**  
**EARTH**

*Christ ascends*  
*The Comforter descends.*

*The Beast & False Prophet perish*

**THE GREAT TRIBULATION**

*The Ten Tribes Return*

**THE GENTILES**

**ISRAEL**

**MILLENNIAL AGE**

**IN BLESSING.**

**IN**  
**CANAAN**

*The Jews Return.*  
*Olives*  
*Judgment of the Nations*  
*The Lord appears*  
*The Church removed*  
*The Meeting in the Air*  
*The Lord descends*

**SATAN BOUND.**

**THE**  
**CHURCH**  
 ✨  
**IN**  
**GLORY**

*Satan cast into the Lake of Fire*

*The little Season*  
*Whoever was not found written on the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire*

*The White Throne*

**THE HEAVENS AND EARTH ARE NEW.**  
**THE ETERNAL STATE**  
**THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN**  
**GOD IS ALL IN ALL.**