

The Vision
OF
The Glory of God.



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THE VISION OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

IN the trust that the Lord will, for His own name's sake, give me much reverence of spirit, while treading upon such holy ground, I would give forth to the Church what I believe to be a true, though feeble and imperfect, interpretation of the awful yet beautiful vision described by the prophet Ezekiel (chapters i. and x.), and its connection with every other revelation of visible glory recorded in Scripture. It is not, however, with the desire of producing a skilful interpretation, by which the mind might be amused or interested, that I do so, but because it is clear to me that it involves most important principles both of judgment and conduct; and, if rightly understood, would enable many a saint to detect error and darkness in his path, and to turn from that which is set aside, by the verdict of God, for dishonour and death, "to see this great sight;" so often partially, but so soon to be completely and perfectly revealed; as it is written, "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah xl. 5).

The renewed, and therefore emboldened, spirit of the saint is called into present intimacy with this glory; not only the moral glory made known to us in the face of the Lord Jesus, but the grandeur, holiness, and majesty soon to be revealed to sight; for "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10—12); and it is, indeed, one of the special acts of "the Comforter" "to take of the things of Christ," (the things concerning His glory; for He saith, "All things that the Father hath are mine,") "and shew them unto us—to shew us things to come" (John xvi. 13—15).

All serious thought of God's glory is painful to the flesh; for "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at

all;" whereas the flesh is but darkness, and in it is no light at all; and light and darkness cannot meet in fellowship. "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty," is His name and character; whereas we "are carnal and sold under sin." Might, power, and majesty, belong unto God; but "all flesh is grass, and the glory of it as the flower of the field;" for the sun of God's glory is "no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth" (James i. 11). The new creature in Christ Jesus can alone have fellowship with it; the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus can alone enable us to gaze on it with an undimmed eye, and with a happy and fearless heart.

Thus the glory of the Lord was made known to Daniel (Dan. x.);—"His body was like beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude;" and the effect on him is thus described by himself:—"There remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." The hand of the Lord then touches him, and he is set first upon his knees, and then upright; but still "he stood trembling, and set his face toward the ground, and stood dumb;" but when the voice of the Lord was heard in grace, saying, "O man greatly beloved, fear not, be strong; peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong;" the ready answer is, "Let my Lord speak, for thou hast strengthened me."

In the vision of similar glory given to Isaiah (Isa. vi.) we see the same results:—"I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple; above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory: then he said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" But when the living coal from the altar had touched his lips with the blessed word, "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged;" he was prompt to

answer the Lord's call of "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" by "Here am I, send me."

At mount Tabor, when the glory of the kingdom was revealed in the person of its King, who was transfigured before His disciples, and that "visage, which was marred more than that of any man," did shine as the sun, and His raiment became white as the light, and the majesty of the voice of God was heard, "they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid." And in after days, when the glory of the same Lord was revealed yet more distinctly to one of those very disciples, "he fell at His feet as dead" (Rev. i. 13—18). But, as at Tabor, Jesus had touched them, and said, "Arise, be not afraid;" so also at Patmos, He laid His right hand on John, saying, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death:" and thus strengthened, he could give heed to the voice "as the sound of many waters," in collectedness and joy of spirit, and bear away the messages of love and warning to the Churches: and yet more, when the voice of the trumpet called him up to heaven, "*immediately he was in the Spirit.*" and so could stand beside the dazzling throne before which the elders bowed, either to weep or to rejoice, in fellowship of heart with all that was revealed there. He was in the Spirit, and that glory is the Spirit's home.

In the vision before us (Ez. i.) this is repeated. "This," says the prophet, "was the appearance of the likeness of the Lord; and when I saw it, I fell upon my face;" but the voice that spoke to him said, "Stand upon thy feet, and I will speak to thee; and the *Spirit entered into me* when He spake unto me, and set me upon my feet."

The knowledge of God's glory, then, is answered thus by man. All he may have boasted in as comeliness in the flesh is turned to corruption; he learns by it his own weakness, poverty, and uncleanness; he is cast into the dust, and can only say with a trembling heart, "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; *wherefore I abhor myself*, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job xlii. 5, 6). But herein may we rejoice, that grace can then come with its message of joy, "to fill the hungry and empty with good things," to set us upon our feet, that we may have fellowship with the glory which

has humbled us, and even to make it communicable by us to others.

The visions made to Isaiah and Ezekiel, which cast them to the dust as men, and taught them to know in power the solemn truth, "All flesh is as grass," became graven within them; and out of their trembling, yet strengthened hearts, came forth those mighty utterances of everlasting truth, which were the bringing in of all they had seen to bear in destruction upon the pride of Israel and the nations, and the declaration of the triumphs of the grace they had known. "For as truly as I live, saith the Lord, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Numbers xiv. 21).

Daniel was strengthened to tell the burthen of sorrow and then of joy which remained to his own people; and John (the Church's Daniel) was the messenger of all that eventful tale of woe, and yet of surpassing triumph, which was to be the history of the bride of the Lamb, from the day of His absence till they are crowned together "in the day of His espousals, and the day of the gladness of His heart."

If, therefore, the flesh has still vigour for its own pursuits; if the world has still power to charm us, defiled as it is; is it not because we have not yet seen, or that we abide not in the glory of God's presence? When the prophets saw these wonders, surely they needed nothing else, except as they could use it in service to the glory they had seen. When John had seen the throne, and Him that sat on it, and had heard the harpers, and the new song of the Lamb's exaltation, what was earth to him? Surely nothing, save as the place of his tribulation and patience; and this is the privilege of every saint, to know that glory in spirit, and by judging all present things in the light of its permanent and surpassing excellence, to be enabled "to count them but dung;" so that not only flesh should lose its comeliness in our eyes, however naturally attractive, but all that is adapted to it, "the lust of the eye and the pride of life,"—all that the "god of this world" has to give, to keep the heart away from God, should be turned into corruption before us; for this is the sure portion of it all; all, all that is of man, when the glory of the throne of the Lamb breaks in upon this sinful world, when its utmost beauty, "the grace of the fashion

of it," will wither and fade before the burning radiance of the light of God's glory in the face of His Son, then shining as the sun in its strength.

In the unfeigned hope that many will enter into the truth of these prefatory remarks, by having communion with the revelations themselves, through the Spirit, I would go on to the explanation of that in Ezekiel, *as the representation of the presence of God in administrative government on earth*, and therefore never revealed, indeed never existing, till a fit place had been raised for His presence among His own separated people.

Jehovah had called Abraham to Himself, and watched over him with tender care; He was equally the God of Isaac and Jacob, and His eye was never removed from their circumcised children; but until His arm was raised in power for their rescue out of Egypt, He had never been openly declared to the heathen as their Guardian. As far as the world could discern it, there was no evidence of God's *direct* interference with any thing on earth till then, except in judgment. It was true that the cry of Israel in their bondage had risen up unto Him, and He had not ceased to remember His covenant with their fathers; and "He looked upon them, and had respect unto them:" but the world cared not for that; it knows God only in His acts; and until they were seen in judgments upon Egypt, neither His love for Israel, nor His faithfulness to His promises, were known or regarded. Israel's deliverance was, however, to make God known; and so "That ye may know that I am the Lord," was the message to Pharoah: and further, they were delivered into a condition, in which, as separate to Him, God might exhibit Himself, through them, to the world; and so they were led forth by the glory of the Lord into liberty in the wilderness, that the glory might eventually dwell among them in the nearest fellowship. The cloud and fire went before them to the mount of God in the wilderness; and there Jehovah came near unto them, and spoke unto them, but they could not then bear Him so near unto them; and they said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die;" for they were dismayed by the glory of His presence. But God answered their weakness in mercy; "and the law was ordained in the hands of a Mediator" (Gal. iii. 19).

The sacrifices were also immediately appointed, as typically foreshewing the love of God in setting apart a sinless substitute for man's sin, and the holiness of God finding no answer in man, but in His death. The tabernacle erected for God's dwelling-place was sanctified for Him also by the sprinkling of blood; and then it is said, "There will I meet you, to speak there unto thee; and there will I meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory; and I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God" (Exod. xxix. 42—45). The gradual approach of man to his God to be blessed, and God to man to make him a blessing, may be distinctly traced in what follows, in accordance with this declared intention of the Lord.

The presence or visible glory of Jehovah was either accompanied or surrounded by a cloud; and this cloud was the sure token of His presence, enfolded as it were within it, or very near to it. It was first made visible to Israel as guiding them on to the Red Sea, and through it (Exod. xiii. 20—22; xiv. 19, 20, 24)—as their rereward also in their danger, and out of which, it is declared, the Lord looked when He troubled the host of the Egyptians. The glory itself is noted as first made visible to them when the manna was given (Exod. xvi. 10); yet still *afar off*, though hovering round them, and leading them on; but it was not until the event before stated had taken place, where the cloud rests on the mountain, and the people are led to the foot of it, that they learn what man is slow to learn, "that our God is a consuming fire," and that all flesh must be destroyed by His presence: the scene described there is man's humiliation before the holiness of God, as I have before briefly shewn in the history of the prophets; and man's only answer to that holiness in God's own gift of love, the blood of the holy victim (Ex. xxiv. 6—8; Heb. ix. 18, 19); and then as sanctified by that blood, boldness of access to the glory which had but just caused them "exceedingly to fear and quake." Before the shedding of the blood sprinkled upon the altar and the people, none dare touch the mountain (Heb. xii. 20, 21): but after this "went up Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the Elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel, and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire-stone, and as it were the body

of heaven in clearness." And as the evidence of their boldness in His presence, it is said, "And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand; also *they saw God, and did eat and drink.*" And into yet nearer access was the typical mediator called; for he was folded up in the cloud with the glory of the Lord as it abode upon Mount Sinai, which the cloud covered six days; "and the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mountain, in the sight of the children of Israel." It was this glory, thus for the first time described to us, that afterwards came yet nearer to all the people dwelling in the midst of the camp of Israel; at times visible to all Israel, but always, until grieved away by their sin, dwelling between the cherubim in the most holy place in the golden tabernacle, to be consulted by the anointed high priest, as the channel of God's wisdom and love to Israel. The cloud was always visible to all Israel, as hovering over the camp by day and by night in the wilderness, as the sign of God's presence within the tabernacle; but when the glory was grieved away, as though it were the chariot of the Lord, it enfolded the glory and hid it, and rolled away at the bidding of Him who was within it. Its first entrance into the camp of Israel, as its dwelling-place, is recorded in Exod. xl. 33—35. After the golden mercy-seat or propitiatory is set up, the priests cleansed and anointed, "according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, and so Moses had finished the work." The cloud then covers the tent of the congregation:—"And the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation." And then again, after the cleansing of the people (Lev. ix. 23, 24), when "the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people; and there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat; which, when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell upon their faces."

In this consisted the strength and value of Israel, that they were thus made, as a people, a vessel unto honour, sanctified to contain the treasure of God's glory; their high and holy prerogative was the fulfilment of the promise,—*"I will dwell among you, and walk among you; and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people."* And it was in the understanding of this, that Moses pleaded so

earnestly, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence; for wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." (Exod. xxxiii.) When Abraham was called out to receive the promises of God, it was said to him by the Lord, "I will bless thee, and make thy name great;" but to this was added, "and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed;" this has clearly never been fulfilled in Abraham personally, nor indeed in his seed, whether natural or spiritual; but surely it will be (for the gifts and callings of God are without repentance) when they are able to sustain the glory of God's abiding presence, that He may act through them in blessing to others. To this was Israel called in the manner I have shewn; they were chosen out of the nations, and set on high, not only to be blessed by their own happiness in the favour of God, but to carry about with them in the wilderness the golden tabernacle, and its holy and gracious inhabitant; and afterwards, in the land of their rest, to have His presence ever with them in the "exceeding magnificent temple;" and so to exhibit the blessing of His presence to the world, that all nations might turn to Him from their gods of wood and stone; as it is written, "My house shall be a house of prayer for all nations." And in this they failed; for they sinned, and the glory departed, and the vessel was broken. To the same place, though in a far higher sense, is the mysterious and spiritual Israel called (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; 2 Cor. vi. 16). And the day is not far distant, when it will be seen to be true in both, in the triumph of God's grace and power; for "the Scripture cannot be broken."

After the Lord had thus taken His place in the midst of His people Israel, His name and character were of course developed, according to the circumstances that called them forth. In their journeying through the wilderness, He was known as their Guide and Shepherd, though oftentimes smiting them in righteousness, and turning away from them in sorrow. All the glory afterwards unfolded, and yet to be more fully so, was doubtless always in the cloud which declared His presence; for "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,"—"The I AM,"—"The Lord God Almighty, which is, which was, and which is to

come." But every event in Israel's history brought forth, in broader and more distinct features, His attributes and His purposes. Thus, in tracing Israel's perplexing history of that day, we see Him as their Shepherd opening heaven for their food, when earth was barren, and bearing them on eagles' wings in His love ; yet we shall see too, how often He hid His face from them in wrath, and how constantly He was thrown upon the remembrance of His own covenant ; though for the fathers' sakes He never left them, but always went before them. The glory, however, soon departed from the tabernacle to the cloud : and in every instance, I believe, where He exercises wrath against them, the glory is seen coming, not from the tabernacle, but the cloud, as though He had been previously grieved, and driven from the place He desired to dwell in, by their sin ; and only continued with them in long-suffering till He was provoked by their rebellion to vindicate His holy name, as still present with them, by chastisement and judgment. " But He, being full of compassion, destroyed them not ; yea, many a time turned He His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath. He remembered that they were but dust ; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again " (Psa. lxxviii. 38, 39).

When coming into the land, the glory of the Lord takes the part, seen soon after by Joshua, and made known to him in these words, " Nay, but as Captain of the Lord's host am I come " (Josh. vi. 14). The changed circumstances of Israel revealed the Lord, not any longer as the tender and vigilant Shepherd only, but as the " Lord mighty in battle." Having " rolled away the reproach " of His people in circumcision by the banks of the Jordan ; having sealed in this sign His own gracious forgetfulness of the forty years' sin and shame, He leads them on to victory. The overflowing waters of Jordan stand up in a heap, and are still till the glory moves on ; the proud walls of Jericho fall before it, " for the ark of the Lord compassed the city ; " and though grieved and driven away by the sin of Achan, as promptly returns at the cry of repentant Israel ; and all the might of Canaan is quickly subdued in righteousness, by the power of the glory of the Lord dwelling in the midst of His consecrated people.

After the death of Joshua, they served the gods of the nations ; and though in remembrance of His covenant, the

glory still continued among them in long-suffering and sorrow, yet was Israel subjected, for their sin, to the nations which had been so easily subdued by them while they were walking in obedience. But as the glory still "dwelt among them," whenever they cried unto the Lord in penitence, He arose in their behalf, and "delivered them out of the hand of all their enemies." It was not till the iniquity of the priesthood had polluted the sanctuary, and that even this was unregarded by Israel, *except as oppressive to themselves* (1 Sam. ii.), and little cared for by those who feared Him, that "He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men, and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hands" (Psa. lxxviii. 60, 61), and "I-chabod" was written upon Israel (1 Sam. iv. 21, 22).

It was during the continuance of their distress and bondage to the Philistines, consequent on the loss of their strength and glory, that they were tempted, in forgetfulness and disregard of the cause of their calamity, to cry out to Samuel, "Give us a king to judge us" (1 Sam. viii. 5, 6). They turned not in sorrow to their God; they did not look for the return of the glory on which alone their strength depended; but they sought, by complying with the customs of other nations, to gain equality with them, at least in worldly strength. They did not reject Samuel personally, but his mode of government; thinking that a kingly rule, in its pomp and apparent energy, would obtain for them the prosperity they needed. In this they rejected God; they cared not, in their unbelief, for that glory, the presence of which was their only real security; but gave up the preëminence of blessing it always ensured to them, *and were content to be as others*. The Lord in His mercy endured this too, and brought (as He always must, or evil would overcome Him) good out of their rebellion, and fulfilled His own purpose in setting up that Royal Throne, on which His own KING will surely sit to rule in righteousness in that day, which will be as the "morning without clouds, as the clear shining after rain." (2 Sam. xxiii.)

When the ark of the Lord was fully restored to its place in Israel, it was to be the glory of a kingdom. The Lord had chosen and anointed their king. His grace had triumphed over their rebellion; and David, as a type of the true "Beloved," brings back the ark, to accredit and

set forth Israel as God's kingdom ; and, therefore, the next chapter to that which describes the return of the ark (2 Sam. vi.) is the prophetic announcement of "the offspring of David" (Rev. xxii. 16), to sit upon that throne for ever, as it is quoted by the Apostle (2 Sam. vii. 14; Heb. i. 5), "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a son;" and, from thenceforth, the glory revealed that which was seen by the prophet on the hills of Moab, and which is yet to be seen by all in its alone worthy fulfilment, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel; THE LORD GOD IS WITH HIM, AND THE SHOUT OF A KING IS AMONG THEM" (Numb. xxiii. 21).

The throne, however, in its true glory, was not established, even typically, in David, but in Solomon his offspring. His wisdom, and prosperity, and reign of peace were the partial exhibition of the blessings yet to be revealed on earth, as declared in the 72nd Psalm; and not only so, but as building the beautiful temple, he stood to foreshew the great Solomon, or "Man of rest," of whom it is said, "Even He shall build the temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne" (Zech. vi. 12, 13). The throne of Solomon is also called "*the throne of the Lord*:" "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king, instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him" (1 Chron. xxix. 23).

Though the ark, therefore, had been restored, and the Lord was with Israel again, and had given them rest from all their enemies; yet it was not till it was brought in solemn triumph, and placed in the beautiful habitation prepared for it by Solomon, that the full favour of God is marked to Israel's throne, as it had been before to the wandering camp of His flock in the wilderness. "For it came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one to make one sound, to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, saying, For He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever; that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; *for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God*" (2 Chron. v. 13).

The glory thus revealed, I believe to have been seen in full vision by Ezekiel—the kingly glory of Jehovah. The

same attributes of God were of course always in the glory ; for it was His presence, and He is from everlasting to everlasting : yet the blessing of kingly government, as that in which God could, and will therefore yet more fully manifest Himself in the day of the Son of man, had not been previously known ; but from the moment the glory of the Lord sanctioned the throne of Judah, that kingdom became the care of Jehovah ; and as every gracious intention toward man on the part of God failed in man's failure, till the Son of man came as claimant of every blessing ; and by never failing, secured for himself and for others every place of authority and blessing delegated to man ; and, among others, this last revealed to us, that of king ; and as Son of man, the offspring of David, and the lion of the tribe of Judah,—He will one day prove, that nothing that God has ever sanctioned can be set aside, except by a higher and further gift ; and that if earth is ever to be blessed, it will be by the righteous dominion of His Son, “ who will bear the glory and sit upon His throne : ” “ for the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David ; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of His kingdom there shall be no end ” (Luke i. 32, 33).

From this period of the return of the glory, till the scattering of Judah under the judgments of that sad word, Lo-ammi, no further or fuller revelation of God was made to them. As directly dealing with Israel, though it were in wrath, it must have been in this character ; and, therefore, it is plain that the vision of Ezekiel is the revelation of His kingly glory ; the glory of the throne, which will one day be revealed in the sight of all ; as it is written, “ And the Lord shall be king over all the earth ; and in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one ” (Zech. xiv. 9).

From the day of Solomon, as in every other instance, Israel gradually fell away from its privileges and blessings. Sin had grieved the Lord, and He ceased to stand forth actively in their behalf, or He would have justified their sin in the sight of the world. The glory, doubtless, soon left the temple, but not Israel. In the cloud, it still hovered over the throne and land of Judah, and was ready to answer every cry of penitence, putting forth instant power to destroy or discomfit the enemies of His people.

Though the staff Beauty was probably soon broken, yet Bands was not, till Judah was dispersed (Zech. xi.); and around the remnant still the glory spread its covering wing in sorrow, destroying the Assyrian in answer to the cry of Hezekiah—making a wall of chariots and horsemen between the hosts of Syria and the prophet—following the weary Elijah to Horeb, and at last the companion of the mournful captive by the river Chebar; for earth and an earthly throne were its care, till heaven was opened, and a further glory revealed there.

It is in this place the vision is brought before us. We have traced the glory, from its first appearance to Israel as a nation on the plains of Succoth, going forward in triumph to lead that oppressed people to the beautiful inheritance promised to their fathers, down to its faithful and gracious companionship with the captive prophet, sitting and weeping by the rivers of Babylon. Ample are the details of man's sin and God's mercy to be collected from this long course of time and events; and rich is the profit to be gathered by him that hath ears to hear; but I can only now seek in humbleness to interpret the features of the vision itself, and then to follow it in its future course; and both are replete with instruction and interest.

The characteristic form of each living creature was that of a man (Ezek. i. 5):—“*And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man:*” as at the outset marking the whole vision to represent the essential attributes of God, as revealed in the Son, in whose form or likeness man had been created; and therefore, of necessity, the only form in which perfection could be expressed. The wings, feet, and different faces, mark, I believe, in detail, the attributes of Jehovah in action or manifestation, but all under the control of the master-form—that of a man; as showing it to be the glory of “the only-begotten of the Father, who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; who is before all things, and by whom all things consist” (Col. i. 15—17).

The faces are first noted in detail (verse 6); and “the face of a man” (verse 10,) has the pre-eminence given to it, not as confirmatory of what is previously shewn, but as marking all the distinctive features of this last and best of God's creatures to be in the glory, not imperfect, limited, and broken, as we judge of it, but perfect and unrestrained

in exercise ; and is thus a symbol of mind, reason, intellect, knowledge, discernment, &c. &c., and in the exercise of which, when subject to the Spirit of the Lord, we have that communion with God to which no other creature can be called ; “ for who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him ? but we have the mind of Christ ” (1 Cor. ii. 16) ; and the character of the little horn, with “ eyes like eyes of a man,” probably has the same meaning, although it is descriptive of great wickedness (Dan. vii. 8). The face is always expressive of the character ; and thus “ the light of the knowledge of the glory of God ” is made known to us “ in the face of Jesus Christ,” as declaring all the unseen moral glory of the Father, while manifest in the flesh. Action is expressed, as it is in this vision, by symbolic members of a body, such as hands, feet, &c. ; but character, only by the face, and this is too simple a truth to need more proof.

The second face is that of “ a lion,” which denotes majesty, terribleness, strength, dignity ; as it is written, “ A lion, which is strongest amongst beasts, and turneth not away for any ” (Prov. xxx. 30) ; “ The king’s wrath is as the roaring of a lion ” (Prov. xix. 12, xx. 2). It is said of David, “ And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion ” (2 Sam. xvii. 10) ; of the Gadites, that they were men of war, that they were fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains ” (1 Chron. xii. 8, Amos iii. 8).

Lions were the emblems of the strength and dignity of Judah’s throne (2 Chron. ix. 17, 18, 19), the sign in its standard, and the name and title of its only true king—“ the Lion of the tribe of Judah ” (Rev. v. 5).

The third is the “ face of an ox,” which equally expresses power ; but used in patient persevering labour, strength subjected to bear burdens. When spoken of God, it is expressive of long-suffering, or continued and patient exercise of power in subjection to love : “ Much increase is by the strength of the ox ” (Prov. xiv. 4) ; “ able to bear burdens ” (Psa. cxliv. 14, marginal reading) ; “ used to tread out the corn ” (Deut. xxv. 4, Hosea x. 11). Like every other attribute of God, as exercised among His people, it is used in their behalf when obedient, and for their trial and chastisement when disobedient ; thus His

patient love is subject to all their infirmities, and is exercised in bearing the burdens of care and sorrow, when those burdens are cast upon His love in humbleness; for it is written, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psa. lv. 22). But the same power is used in separating the chaff from the wheat, as in treading out the corn; and therefore there is, doubtless, direct connection between the feet and this attribute of God, as the hands are in connection with the man's face; the hand being able, as a skilful member, to give expression by its cunning, in a thousand ways, to the varied thoughts and intelligence of man's mind; but not so the feet, though they are as useful in diligent and laborious service.

The fourth is "the face of an eagle," marking quickness and power of sight, and almost equal rapidity of action; and with which the wings are connected, as the hands with the man, and the feet with the ox. With reference to quickness of sight, the symbol of the eagle cannot be doubted; and I would only quote the Scriptures descriptive of this attribute in our God:—"His eyes were as a flame of fire:" "I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins:" "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do:" "Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike unto thee:" "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth, to show themselves strong in behalf of those whose hearts are perfect toward Him." The rapidity of the eagle's flight is noted in its emphatic history in Job,— "She seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off; and where the slain are, there is she" (Job xxxix. 29, 30). And when David would describe the power of Jonathan and Saul, he says, "They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions" (2 Sam. i. 23, also Deut. xxviii. 49, Job ix. 26, Obadiah iv., Prov. xxx. 19).

The feet express judgment on the earth, whether in the Church, which is now the only place of judgment (as separating the chaff from the wheat), or in the world in the latter day, when the Son of man cometh to *tread* the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God; as it is written, "I have *trodden* the winepress alone, and of the people

there was none with me; for I will *tread* them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment" (Isa. lxiii. 3). And when the remnant of the Jewish people have power given them against the nations gathered round Jerusalem, it is said, "Arise and thresh, O daughters of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron, and thy *hoofs* brass, and thou shalt beat in pieces many people" (Mic. iv. 10—13); and again, "For behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch; but unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as *calves of the stall*: and ye shall *tread* down the wicked. . . in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. iv. 1—3, Psa. cviii. 13). That "they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass," probably denotes imperviousness to defilement while treading on that which is defiled and defiling; and is a strong corroborative proof of the whole vision being but a symbolic description of the essential glory of the Lord, as the feet of the man appearing to Daniel (Dan. x.), and the Lord Jesus to John (Rev. i.), are described nearly in the same words: in the one, "His arms and His feet like in colour to polished brass;" in the other, "His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace."

Wings are invariably denoted in every description of the cherubim, and declare, I believe, rapidity of action; or I may perhaps say, wherever connected with the cherubim, that they describe the instantaneous action in heaven, consequent on the will of Jehovah: they are further symbols of the standing of every thing in heaven, as having power to do the will of God; and thus a difference is marked between them and the wheels, inasmuch as one expresses the character of heavenly speed, the other, of *earthly*; and this the careful reader will see, in the evident division made in the chapter at the end of the 14th verse: the wings only are described till then, as exhibiting the swiftness of obedience, or the instant expression of God's will, as "*the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning*;"—and the wheels are then spoken

of as distinct from the body of the vision, and yet in unity with it; "*for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels:*" now as the wings denote rapidity of obedience in heaven, so do the wheels on earth, being severally the emblems of speed in air or earth; and the difference is probably distinctly marked in the 19th verse, where it is said, "When the living creatures *went*, the *wheels went by them*; and when the living creatures were *lifted up* from the earth, the wheels were *lifted up*." The wings were doubtless used to lift up the living creatures, and then the wheels became useless, and were lifted up too; but when they moved on the earth, that is, "*when the living creatures went, the wheels went on their four sides, and turned not when they went.*"

There are several visions of the glory of God, but in one other only are the wheels mentioned; viz., that of the throne of the Ancient of Days:—"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool; His throne was like the fiery flame, and *His wheels as burning fire*" (Dan. vii. 9). And their being so specially noted here is strongly confirmatory of this interpretation of their meaning; for the whole previous prophecy is a description of the dominion exercised on earth by the four empires included in the Image, during the casting of the throne of Judah down to the ground (Psa. lxxxix. 44); and the vision describes, as I believe, the judgment of God, in which He declares all men unfit to rule but Him, "who loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and whom He therefore anoints with the oil of gladness above His fellows;" saying, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre" (Psa. xlv.): and having delivered the throne to Him as alone worthy of the trust, all the power and glory is brought into the world by the Son, to execute the Father's judgments; "for He has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." (John v.) And the thrones *of the world* (Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome, &c.) are cast down, "and the kingdoms of *this world* become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. xi. 15; Psa. lxxxix. 20—27; Psa. cx. &c. &c.); in a word, it is the same glory seen by Ezekiel, which, in following its course, we shall see has now left the earth, returning to it again to abide for ever.

It will be seen, that though the throne described by Ezekiel is above the firmament, its action is below it; that is, on the earth; for the unity is not broken by the firmament. The Spirit of life, as coming from Him that sat on the throne, filled the living creatures and then the wheels; "for the Spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels." The whole vision is constituted in this unity; and on it depends its energy and rapidity of action, the instant and unimpeded answer to the will of Him, whose life was in it all, as the spring and power of its movements; and the completeness of unity between the will and act is thus beautifully stated:—"*And they went every one straight forward: whither the Spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went;*" which doubtless describes analogously the unity of that mysterious body, instinct with but one life, which will be the "fulness of Him that filleth all in all;" and will perhaps yet further teach us indirectly what we pray for when we say, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

The colour of amber, "with the fire and brightness round about it" (i. 27), as being the appearance of Him that sat on the throne, again identifies that appearance which was in the throne above the firmament, with the living creatures below it; for the same description is given of them in the 4th verse. Again, the moving of the wings and wheels (verse 24, and iii. 12, 13) is described as "*the voice of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech as the voice of an host.*" In the 43rd chapter of this prophet, 2nd verse, this is said to be "*His voice.*"—In the vision in Daniel, (Dan. x.) "*the noise of His words like the voice of a multitude.*"—In the Apocalypse, (Rev. i.) "*His voice was as the sound of many waters:*" thus clearly marking the action of the living creatures and wheels to be descriptive of power consequent on, or coincident with, the utterance of Him who sat on the throne. "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of Majesty." (Psa. xxix.) And in Rev. xix., where a voice from the throne calls for praise, as I understand it, to the Almighty Father, who has given the Son both His throne and His bride, the instant and universal answer, the responsive chorus, is described in its power to be as the voice of the

Lord of glory, "as the voice of a multitude, as the voice of many waters, as the voice of many thunderings" (Rev. xix.); and is but the proof how fully in that day the Church of God will be informed with the life of its Head, and how their innumerable voices will be but one voice, and their innumerable thoughts and deeds but one; and that, the mind and will and consequent act of Him "who sitteth upon the flood, yea, who sitteth king for ever.."

The voice from the throne, as heard by the prophet (i. 25), was in mercy and grace, and not in power—the voice of God in communion with the weakness of the creature; and so when He was thus speaking, "The living creatures stood and let down their wings." And this is more distinctly seen in the 3rd and 10th chapters. In the 3rd, while the Lord is giving the burden to the prophet, all is still; but when He ceases, it is said, "I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from this place; I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures, that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing" (chap. iii. 12, 13); and in the 10th, where the humiliation of the Lord is denoted, the living creatures are again seen standing with their wings let down.

The throne, being "in appearance as the sapphire-stone" (i. 26), identifies it with the glory seen on Mount Sinai—"And they saw the God of Israel, and there was under His feet as it were the paved work of a sapphire-stone" (Exod. xxiv. 10).

"The brightness, as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain," is another symbol which connects the whole vision with the earth's destiny; but as it is also seen in the vision when transferred to heaven, it will be better briefly to speak of it when considering it there.

"The likeness, as the appearance of a man on the throne," will not be doubted by any, I believe, to be the likeness of the only-begotten Son, ever manifested thus as the pattern of man's beautiful form, and into perfect conformity with which the Church is predestinated to be changed in the resurrection (Rom. viii. 29); "for our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile

body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 20, 21).

And having thus briefly, and doubtless very imperfectly, stated what I conceive to be the meaning of the varied features of the vision, which in its completeness is the representation of the glory of Jehovah, ruling on earth as King, I proceed to follow it in its course, from which the instruction that I seek to give may be easily gathered.

It is seen by the river Chebar, as appearing to Ezekiel for the remnant's sake that were in sorrow and captivity, and thus showing the care of God over Israel to the last. "The holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation, our holy and our beautiful house where our fathers praised thee is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste," was the mournful song in their bondage; but in all their affliction the Angel of the covenant was afflicted too, and the throne of God followed the course of the captive to the plains of Babylon; but alas! before the word of the Lord proclaimed the future triumph and blessing of Israel, it revealed further iniquity and more grievous desolation. The sin of His people is shown to the prophet in the light of the glory; he is led by it step by step, and the darkness is gradually opened before him, from national wickedness to the idolatry of the priesthood in the courts of the Lord's house, and even to the very recesses of the sanctuary, that He might see "the wicked abominations done there," and learn the reason why the glory should altogether depart from Israel, "that I, saith the Lord, should go far off from my sanctuary."

The return, but ultimate departure of the glory altogether, is that which is predicted and described most carefully up to the end of the 11th chapter.

The promises of God were made to Abraham and to his seed; and the children of Abraham could not cease from being God's people till that seed came, in whom all the promises were secured.

The promises of God, as detailing the glory of the house of Judah, were made to David's offspring; and David's lineage, therefore, could not be broken, nor the national standing of Judah, as sufficient to bear witness of this, be destroyed, till that offspring had come.

In the fulness of time He did come, and His title to both are carefully traced in His genealogy in Matt. i. ; but as the last promise revealed had distinctive reference to David's throne, He is marked from this chapter onward very constantly in this character. Truly He was "Immanuel, God with us;" but when first worshipped in the manger as God (and it would have been idolatry had not that helpless babe been Jehovah), the wise men from the east came, saying, "Where is He that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him." He publicly laid claim to His throne when He entered Jerusalem, according to the word of the prophet Zechariah; and over His blessed head, in death, was written His accusation—His declared but rejected claim,—"**THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS**" (Matt. xxvii. 37).

It is not stated in the Scriptures when the Shekinah left the temple after it had entered it to sanction the throne of Solomon; it is, however, probable, that it did so in the reign of Uzziah; and I judge thus from the vision in Isa. vi. which is so evidently a vision of the throne of God over the mercy-seat in the temple, and the message given to the prophet, announcing its definitive departure on the rejection of the Lord Jesus, which is stated in the latter verses of John xii. as parallel with that quoted only in the other Gospels: "Behold your house is left unto you desolate." It still, however, as I have before shewn, hovered round the throne and land of promise, but did not return at the building of the temple after the captivity. That temple had not the Shekinah; and, indeed, Israel saw it no more till its last return in the person of the King, when they were lost in blindness; for "the veil was over their hearts," and "they saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him."

In the 9th and 10th chapters we have, as I believe, a simple statement of this last return of the glory to Jerusalem and the temple, before it leaves the earth altogether. The throne, the living creatures, the wings, and the wheels are seen motionless by the side of the temple;—"they stood on the right side of the house;" but the throne is vacant, for the glory of the God of Israel leaves its place over the cherubim, and goes to the threshold of the house of the Lord. It never, however, goes further; the cloud

fills the house, as it had done in the days of Solomon, but the court only is filled with the brightness of the glory of the Lord (chap. x. 4). Now, this could only have been fulfilled when the Lord of glory left His place on that throne; humbled Himself to learn the sin and sorrow of Israel, by going Himself through the midst of the city, coming in grace to speak a "word in season to him that was weary;" coming to the threshold, and then to the inner court, of His own house, but never entering within the veil: for He could only have entered there to be worshipped as God. And when He declared Himself so, they said He blasphemed,—never sitting upon the throne; for though He declared Himself their king, they said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." The one Son—the Heir—came to the Father's vineyard, but was cast out and slain. The glory is then described as returning from the inner court to the threshold, and lingering there, as did the Lord when rejected; weeping over the devoted city and temple, and saying, "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thee unto myself, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not:" and "then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims, and the cherubims lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight" (ver. 18, 19), as the Lord then said, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate; for I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, until ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" (Matt. xxiii.) The glory is then seen by the east gate, with the king enthroned again (ver. 19); and in chap. xi. 23, on the mountain which is on the east side of the city—that is, Mount Olivet, where the Lord retires immediately as He passes sentence on Jerusalem, and whence He afterwards ascends in the cloud; for "a cloud received Him out of their sight," as that which had always enfolded the glory. In the first number of the "Christian Witness," this scene is opened progressively, in a paper on the last chapter of Matthew's Gospel, to which I would refer. It appears to me that the scene described in the 24th of Matthew, is that which is specially noticed here,—the Lord's leaving Jerusalem by the east gate, taking with Him the little flock—the sealed remnant, who had sighed and cried with Him over Judah's abominations,

and on Mount Olivet describing to them the approaching desolations of the beautiful city and temple,—the fire, or judgment of God, coming forth from between the cherubim—the sword, the relentless hand of man to be let loose on them by the command of Him who sat on the throne, who was “the executor of righteous judgment,” as well as the guardian of His people; and giving them also a full prophetic statement of the trouble and sorrow of which the earth was to be the victim, as consequent on the departure of the throne of God, and its being left to misrule; till the return of that throne—the rebuilding of “the city of the great King,”—and His sovereignty of “righteousness and peace.”

When the wings are spread, and the vision of glory *mounts up from the earth*, it is written, “As for the wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing, O WHEEL!” They were perfect in peace, beauty, and speed, in unity also; for though four wheels, yet was it said of them, “O Wheel!”—filled also with the spirit of the living creatures; for “to the place whither the head looked, they followed it.” But their use had ceased; for the throne was mounting up from the earth, on which they had run in swift and happy obedience; and in sorrowful lamentation that any part of that exquisite chariot of glory should be laid aside as useless, and as though the full history of disaster that earth would be subject to, as thus forsaken, was seen and known by the voice that spoke—it was said in the hearing of the wondering prophet—“O WHEEL!”

The prophets sing only of earthly sorrow and earthly glory; and when Ezekiel’s harp had told in saddest strain the departure of the throne (as Zechariah also the breaking of the staff-bands), it bursts forth in continued prediction of woe on Judah and every nation to the end, with only occasional interruptions of joyful hope, till Gog and Magog are slain on the mountains of Israel, and the city and temple rebuilt; and then, breaking forth into full triumph, it bears witness to the return of the glory, the departure of which had been not only the first theme of its sorrow, but the cause of all the judgments that follow. Thus he tells of Israel’s and the earth’s sad loss:—“Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims; and the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth

in my sight" (x. 18, 19). And thus he tells of Israel's joy and the earth's blessing:—"Afterward He brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east; and, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east; and His voice was like a noise of many waters; *and the earth shined with His glory*. And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. And He said unto me, *Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever*" (Ezek. xliii. 1—7). The burden of every prophet closes in similar triumph—the return of the glory of God in the person of the Lord Jesus to earth—the consequent deliverance of the travailing creation and creature into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and His universal sovereignty of peace and blessing.

But where is the glory now? where is the throne now? *It is set in heaven*; and the interval between its departure from the earth and its return, contains the history of the dominion of misrule on earth; for earth is forsaken of its rightful Lord. Earthly blessing was once the portion of righteousness; it was the gift of God to those He loved, for the presence of God sanctioned it to His favoured Israel. But even then, as the special gift of God, it was limited to Canaan, and its olive yards and vineyards; and Canaan now is sterile and barren, and earth has no other land of promise. We have traced the glory leading the hosts of Israel to that fair land of milk and honey; we have seen the glory established there; and then the early and latter rain duly fell, and it abounded with its fat pastures and luxuriant crops. Where are the rains from heaven, and the fatness from Judah's hills and valleys now? They are gone, and earth has ceased to be the place where righteousness is rewarded; for the Gospel of Jesus Christ reveals no earthly glory as the prophets do.*

* There is an almost universal hope in the Church of an outpouring of the Spirit and the conversion of all men, which is, alas! comparatively but an earthly and carnal hope. It is gathered from the prophets; and their theme is Jewish and earthly glory only. I say comparatively, for the kingdom of heaven is revealed by the Gospel, and that declares the Church's hope to be heavenly glory and the Father's kingdom, even the glory which the Son had with the Father before the world was. I do not say there will not be an outpouring of the Spirit—surely there will; but the Church is called into a dispensation beyond the Jew; and, therefore, the power of the Spirit, that gathers back outcast Israel and dispersed Judah, will deliver the saints into

There is a land of promise now—there is a Canaan now; but it is not on earth, but in heaven: and the place of the Church now, with reference to this inheritance of reward, is analogous with that of Israel in the wilderness. The glory has forsaken the earth; and while earth is thus left in the power of the enemy, and used by him to alienate the saints from their home, the Apocalypse reveals it to us in heaven, and there we must follow it in its course. That which is seen below the firmament by Ezekiel mounts up above it; and the 4th chapter of the Revelation describes it as “set in heaven.” The very distinct agreement, in almost every feature, is too plain to be misunderstood. The vision is indeed the same, only under different circumstances, and in a different place. The throne is filled by Him who had become incarnate, and who, in His resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, had carried into that glory the nature He had rescued from the lord of death, as triumphantly declared by Stephen: “He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (Acts vii. 55, 56).

There are, however, some differences in the features of the vision; and as they confirm the previous interpretation, I mention them. There are no wheels; and the life which had been extended to them is limited to the living creatures. While the glory was on earth, the wheels had symbolized its speed there, and “the Spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels;” but it has ceased to exhibit the sovereignty of God as exercised on earth; and, therefore, there are no wheels in the heavenly vision, as not needed there.

Again, the wheels were full of eyes; but here the living creatures only are marked as containing the eyes: “They were full of eyes before and behind;” as though the quickness of God’s sight, and His universal cognizance of all

their resurrection-glory in the kingdom of the Father. Though the Spirit were poured out, mortality would remain. The prophets reveal a glory in which mortality is always recognized; not so the Gospel, it tells of immortality and victory over death:—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to *His abundant* mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet. i. 3, 4).

things, had been in the wheels or outworks of the glory when it was on earth, but were now gathered back as ceasing to rule there. The four faces of the living creatures, instead of sixteen, probably marked a similar truth; that is, less ample manifestation, because it was no longer on earth.

The rainbow is the only feature of similitude between the two visions that I would notice; because it is the sign of earth's destined blessing under the sway of Him who has redeemed it, and who is now revealed as sitting on the throne of the Father (Rev. iv.) The earth was linked to man's destiny, and, therefore, cursed for man's sake when he fell into sin, and both alike were thrown under the dominion of Satan; as it is written, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Gen. iii. 17).

God had created it for His pleasure, and pronounced it good, and gave it into man's care; but sin separated man from God, and with him the earth: and as Satan obtained the ascendancy and lordship over the man, so also over the earth which was man's. In redeeming the one, the Lord Jesus, of necessity, redeemed the other; for if God's creation was implicated in man's curse, surely also in His blessing. As the second Adam, the Head and Lord of the new creation, He is now bringing into the possession of endless life with Himself the Church, or second Eve; and when she is presented to Him as "faultless before the presence of His glory," as fully conformed to Him in the resurrection, so will their dominion over the earth be renewed as the dwelling-place of righteousness: "For He that sitteth on the throne" will say, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. xxi. 5). Now, I would say, with reverence, that Satan's claim over man, and over the earth, God could not gainsay; for it was but in the execution of the sentence against sin that Satan obtained his awful power; and that none but He who has taken away that power, by receiving to the full the wages of sin, could stand in the place of the world's Restorer. The beauty and blessedness of the creation of God was spoiled by sin; and it passed over as it came out of the hand of God, with its order, constitution, law of life, &c., unbroken into the hands of Satan; with this difference only, that death interrupted the individual course both of man and beast,

and green herb. But the order of creation was not broken by this, for others lived in their place : and this is, in fact, the standing of creation still. Every thing that lives, naturally, is under the curse and lordship of Satan—man, and beast, and herb, with all the harmony and beauty of their creation-state, as described in Genesis i. and ii.—all are delivered by sin into Satan's hand. The resurrection of Jesus is the assurance to the believer, that the power of Satan is broken ; and while His death is the acknowledgment of Satan's right, and His submission to it, and the necessary end of all that is from Adam, His resurrection is the assurance, that man is again set up as lord of a new creation, on which Satan cannot put his hand. And what, then, is the full evidence of this, but that as the second Adam, the quickening Spirit, He does now give eternal life to those who are given Him of the Father ? And, therefore, "if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a *new creature*"—the spirit is renewed in righteousness ; and thus having the first-fruits of the Spirit, he will groan for "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body, together with the travailing creation, as waiting for the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. viii. 19—23). The power of the quickening Spirit renews into a lively hope, breaking thus into the old creation, which is under death ; and therefore gives assurance, that it will soon come, in yet greater power, to rescue the body also from its present subjection to sorrow and death, and then to "make all things new," as altogether rescued into life and blessing from the dominion of Satan. The present power of the second Adam is, however, only exercised on the soul that is brought into life. All that is of the old creation is still under the active rule of Satan, and will be till the "coming of the Son of man ;" whether it be on the bodies of the saints in sickness, weariness, or death (which is His greatest triumph), or the natural beauty and order of the world around us. Now, the Deluge, or destruction of earth by water, is but a type of the reality of the cleansing it will yet undergo ; as baptism by water is but a sign of the necessity of the baptism by the Holy Ghost, or by fire : it went into death, and came forth into newness of life. And "then Noah built an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar, and the Lord smelled a sweet savour." And it was this which

brought from God all the blessings of the subsequent promises, of the surety of which the rainbow was the sign:—"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a token of a covenant between me and the earth: and the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth" (Gen. ix. 13—16).

I need hardly say, that the burnt-offering could only have been of value as representing that which was indeed of sweet-smelling savour unto God (Eph. v. 2), and in answer to which all blessing comes; and that the rainbow, which circles the throne of God, is the token of earth's blessing, and the renewal of all things, in answer to that blessed sacrifice—the sign of the redemption of all things from the hand of their present cruel lord. The death of Christ in the sight of all was the apparent end of the creation's hope of restoration,—His resurrection, the security of it; and thus the rainbow is revealed as a part of the glory of the throne of God, on which now sits the Redeemer both of man and the creation: and therefore the assurance to faith, that all things are given into the hands of the Lord Jesus; and that when the throne seen by the saint now as set in heaven is revealed to all, and comes into the world, all that is now for a little season of long-suffering under the iron hand of Satan will be delivered. The 4th and 5th chapters of the Revelation reveal, I believe, the glory of the Father, and Jesus sitting on the throne of the Father; the glory of the Son, as Lion of the tribe of Judah, and Bridegroom and Redeemer of the Church; and the glory of the holy angels;—all that will be hereafter in full exercise, shewn now in heaven to those who are called in the Spirit to hear and understand the words of that blessed book; not now in exercise, but seen as secured in Him who sitteth on the throne,—Jesus receiving from the Father glory and honour, constituted Head over all things, sitting at the Father's right hand, *expecting* till His enemies are made His footstool (Ps. xc.), as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and lawful King over all the earth; yet "*couching down, lying down as a lion, as a great lion; and who shall stir him up?*" (Numb. xxiv. 9).

All this is now hidden: it is the province of faith to be

guided by it: by-and-by it will be revealed to sight; but oh! woe, woe to those who have received this book and know not these things. They are called to be guided by faith in that which is so revealed; and if they are not, they must live in error, and its revelation to sight will be terrible to them. The life of the saint, the joy and the hope of the saint, must be hidden too; for is it not with Christ in God, out of the world where Christ is, and in the new creation not yet established in power? If Jesus were exercising universal rule as second Adam, all things would be restored. If He were exercising His authority as King, He would put on His many crowns, and tread down all rebellion. Oh! how strange that saints should speak of earthly kings and rulers, and other powers of this world, holding their authority from the new creation's Lord and earth's King; carrying us back to the Jewish state, which has ended in death, for their proof of this. Many have ruled on Judah's throne, as foreshewing in type the antitype of all things that have been appointed of God; but "they continued not by reason of death." There were kings and priests thus ordained of God to declare the coming of the great King and Priest; but He has come now, and all things have ended in death, though so appointed; and now there is no other king to sit on God's throne, and no other priest to minister in God's temple. Oh! the saints are returning to Judaism, and the flesh, and the world, which God has set aside in death, and dishonouring the resurrection of Jesus. There are no mimic representations of realities now; there are no patterns now. The Lord of life is the dispenser of realities: when He gives, He gives life and power, and acts perfectly in every office. He is the minister of life, and does not set His name to any thing now but His Church; and, therefore, the only power from Him now reaching the earth is thus noted in this vision, as the seven eyes of the Lamb that had been slain, sent forth into all the earth (Rev. v. 6).

In the Apocalypse, "the things which are," alone mark the character of the power now exercised by the Lord Jesus; and they have exclusive reference to the Church. The first three chapters open this to us. In the first, He is seen as the High Priest, not within the veil appearing before the Father as Intercessor, but without, as minister-

ing in the holy place; walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and trimming the lights, that they may burn continually. And those seven candlesticks represent, I believe, not the Churches of Asia only, but the complete Church as under the guidance of the High Priest, under every aspect in which His ministry can be exercised unto the end. The world has nothing to do with that ministry, but the Church only. The High Priest carries the mitre, the ephod, and urim and thummim, and they are for the Church. In this vision He has no crown, but subsequently He puts on His many crowns, and then He will rule the world—first in judgment, and then in peace and blessedness.

“The things which must be hereafter” bear upon the world as well as the Church; they represent that which will be revealed to all—the dominion of the Lord Jesus over the world, when He comes “in the Father’s glory, His own glory, and the glory of the holy angels.” These things are now hidden from the world, and revealed only by the Spirit to the Church. “The things which are,” are on earth, and that which is done in the Church can be seen by the world; but “the things which shall be hereafter” are now in heaven, and known only to those who enter within the veil in spirit, as “hearing the words of this prophecy, and keeping those things that are written therein.” The seven-sealed book is, indeed, the world’s history opened to heaven and the Church by the Lamb; it strikingly denotes His interest in the world, but not His dominion over it: indeed, it is not in any way the exercise of the Lamb’s power, but rather a revelation from the Father, in gift to the Son and His saints, of the way in which the Father would bring to pass His own purpose of giving all things into the hands of the Son of His love, in reward for His service; as it is written, “Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool;” and, therefore, the book is wound up by shewing the manner and certainty of this subjection of all things to the Son, when He comes forth in His glory.

The vision is thus descriptive of the glory of the Father, with the Son of man as the world’s Redeemer enthroned in it; the acknowledgment by the Father of His title to all things, for “the Lion of the tribe of Judah *prevailed* to open the book,” and the consequent joy of the saints

and angels, and the whole creation; and then the book thus opened, with the following visions, details the world's evil, the Church's apostasy, and the sorrow and travail of the chosen and faithful bride; terminating in the joy and triumph of the Lamb coming forth as King of kings, with His delivered saints following Him in their unspotted bridal garments. And then will this vision of most ample glory come again into this world to scatter away all evil by its brightness. The heavens will be opened in the sight of all, and that which is now known only by those who are taken out of the world into heaven to see it will be seen by every eye: "for the Son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," and then will "the Lord reign, and the earth rejoice. Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory." (Psalms xcvi. xcvi. xcvi. and xcix.)

The instruction to the saints to be gathered from this is in accordance with the whole New Testament; for it invariably identifies them in Spirit rejoicing with their Lord, as glorified "in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was;" and in the flesh, and in the world with His outcast and sorrowful condition, putting them into the place of sorrow, as saying, "Avenge me of mine adversary."

It testifies of their identity with Him in the Father's presence, as raised with Him:—"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God;"—and thus reveals the glory which has left the earth and is set in heaven, as their present home, and its future return in the sight of all as their hope. "When Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 1—3).

This is the mystery of this dispensation, the interval when God's King is absent from the earth, and evil exer-

cises its royalty in His dominion ; when the Lord Jesus sits not on His own throne, but the Father's, and when earth would be left entirely to misrule, were it not that God is pleased to grant it continuance in some measure of order for His saints' sake. The government of the Lord Christ is now exclusively that of "Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" (1 Pet. ii.) As Priest, He is ministering that Spirit of life and glory which calls us to groan and travail in hope—that Spirit of promise which is but the earnest of the incorruptible inheritance purchased, but not redeemed in power (Ephes. i. 14); and there is no other allowed standing to a saint, but as a child of hope, having no place in this world, but in the world to come ; and never to have his joy fulfilled, till the Lord with whom he is identified in God's abundant mercy (both in present rejection and suffering and future glory), possesses His ; now a stranger in a strange land—living in a world of death—a new creature in the old and doomed creation.

I desire to speak carefully and advisedly ; and well assured I am, that no earthly honour, power, desire, or hope will stand as allowed by the word of God to the saint. It is all directly contrary to the glory which the Spirit reveals ; for that is the throne on which the Lamb sits in His rejection by the world. As far as the world is concerned, it is the time of His rejection. And where are His saints now ? Are they rejected too, as in Spirit entering into fellowship with Him in His glory ? or are they rather justifying present power and honour in the world as Christ's, and as held in submission to Him ? All know how calamitously these questions must be answered. What do we see, but on the one side reeds shaken by every wind, and on the other those who live delicately in gorgeous apparel and king's courts ? and why is this ? Is it not that the high calling of a saint is unknown and unregarded, and the flesh left to its own natural and necessary preference of present things to future ? But alas ! alas ! this evil state is argued for, and not lamented, and the garments of almost all are defiled and spotted by the world and the flesh (James i. 27, Jude 23).

I would ask those who are "the elect of God, holy and beloved," to weigh well what is asserted in the Scriptures as to the position in which the Son of God has stood and is standing for the purpose of shewing forth the Father,

and blessing the helpless creature. He is both God and man. To man He reveals God; and to God he stands as taking the creature's most pitiable place, and in it giving a full answer at all times to the will of God. When He became incarnate, He stood as the winner back from the hand and power of Satan of all the creature's forfeited blessings. He has won them back,—He has bound the strong man armed, and taken away the armour wherein he trusted. He has taken away "sin by the sacrifice of Himself;" and as all forfeiture was because of sin, the creature in Him stands as the inheritor of blessing. In this place the Lord Jesus as Son of man now stands: He is admitted to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and into the same glory He carries His Church (John xvii. 22—24). He claims earth's dominion, the fair land of Israel, and Judah's throne, and receives it all from the Father in reward of righteousness, as the Holy Man, in whom God can and will fulfil all His richest purposes of blessing. The Lord Jesus is not now God only, but God and Man in one person, revealed in the resurrection as receiving "long life, even for ever and ever," from the Father, and every other blessing the Scriptures declare to be the purpose of Him who is love to bestow. Therefore it is that the Father is regarding all things with reference to this. He has glorified the Father; and the Father's work is now to glorify Him. He therefore looks at the world *now* as the place out of which the bride of His beloved Son is to be gathered; and He will by His Spirit gather that bride out from among the living and the dead, and give her to His Son, to be the Eve in His paradise—the queen on His throne—the richest and brightest glory of the inheritance He has won. In calling any out of the world, He affiances them to His Son, to be one with Him in thought, desire, and hope now; and eventually to be glorified together with Him in His glory.

God orders the world now with reference to the gathering out and perfecting of the saints, and to make all things tend to the shewing forth of the Son's glory, whom it is His delight to glorify, in recompense for His sorrowful service to Him. Kings, magistrates, states, and principalities, are ordered by Him (the Father), directly where He is owned, indirectly where He is not, for the furtherance of this one object; holding the world by them in a

measure of order till its iniquity is full, and the bride of the Lamb perfected, both in number and suffering. And it is this the Apocalypse opens. The Father giving to the Son a revelation of His purpose concerning the earth, and the exercise of His power in it, till the time comes when it is given to the Son as its only rightful Ruler; and this revelation the Son sends to His bride to cheer and comfort her in her tribulation, and to shew her how sure the inheritance is. *The Father has not yet given the world to the Son for government.* Day by day He gathers the members of His bride out of it, and gives them to the Son for His tender care and guidance (and the method of His government is taught in 2nd and 3rd chapters). The time, however, is hastening on when He will give the world to the Son too, as that which He has won; and then will He come, with the bride which has been given to Him in this mysterious interval of long-suffering, to cleanse His inheritance of its iniquity. He will put His many crowns on His head, and tread down all His enemies under His feet; set up His throne in righteousness, and "gather out of His kingdom all that offend, and all that do iniquity." Can any gainsay this? Where then are the saints? Are they holding the world, and saying, they hold it of God? Surely He holds it but to deliver it to the Son for judgment: He orders it for this. It is His purpose to put it all under the Son's feet. *To receive any thing from the Father now in real blessing cannot be short of deliverance out of the world to the Son's care, that we may not have part with that which He will speedily deliver to the Son for judgment.*

The only place of blessing now on earth is the Church, where the Lamb governs and leads as a Shepherd by His Spirit, till the day of His appearing as King; and the Church's home is the city of the living God. As having come to that city, "and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and the general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant," what ought to be the saint's course and conduct on earth? surely "to keep himself unspotted from the world;" to "lay up treasure in heaven;" "to forsake all, and follow Jesus;" "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer;" "waiting for the hope laid

up for him *in heaven*" (Col. i. 5); "reserved in *heaven* for those who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time," when "the Lord himself shall *descend from heaven* with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God;" and then "those who are troubled will have rest with Him, when He shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels." "For the *heaven* must receive Him *until* the "times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began."

For this "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth;" because "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." For this "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now;" and not only so, but for this "ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body" (Rom. viii. 19—23).

The revelation of the glory in heaven is closed, in promise that it will quickly be seen by all, and fully realized by the saints. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly:" the only true answer to which in the faithful bride is, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus:" for then will the full promise of the Father be received,—then will the saint "apprehend that for which he is apprehended of God in Christ Jesus,"—then "will he know even as he is known," seeing, not through a glass darkly, as now, but "face to face;"—made like unto the Lord of heaven, "bearing the image of the heavenly," for "he shall see Him as He is" (1 Cor. xv. 49, 1 John iii. 1, 2).

Then will the long absent glory return from the east to the earth and to the temple (Ezek. xliii. 2); then will that temple be the house of prayer for all nations (Isa. lvi. 7); and then will the throne be seen with its wheels again, as the sign of earthly power and dominion (Dan. vii. 9, 14). "The Lion of the tribe of Judah" will roar and spring to its prey (Isa. xxxi. 4). "The tabernacle of God will be with men, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. xxi. 2, 3),—the purpose of Jehovah fulfilled, "As I live, all the

earth shall be filled with my glory" (Numb. xiv. 21),—"the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xi. 18). And the marriage of the Lamb will come, and His wife be ready (Rev. xix. 7); for it will be "the day of His espousals, and the day of the gladness of His heart."

Heaven will be glad, and rejoice, and sing "ALLELUIA! FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH; AMEN,—ALLELUIA!"

Earth will echo back its answer of joy:—"The LORD REIGNETH; let the earth rejoice. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for He cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world; and the people with equity." (Psa. xcvi. and xcvi.)

The Father then will commit all judgment unto the Son, and "all men will honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John v. 22, 23); and then shall "every knee bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and EVERY TONGUE WILL CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER" (Phil. ii. 10—11).

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