COLLECTANEA

COLLECTANEA:

BEING SOME OF THE SUBJECTS CONSIDERED

AT

LEAMINGTON,

ON 3D JUNE AND FOUR FOLLOWING DAYS

IN THE YEAR

1839.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

It may be necessary to say that the Papers making up this Book having fallen into the Publisher's hands some little time since, it was thought well to put them into print, both because they contain truth, and also because of the interest that attaches to them from the date (1839) at which the meetings were held.

Being put into print at this date (1882), it is impossible for those who uttered the Words to revise the Notes. What is printed here is but part of the MSS.; thus the name "COLLECTANEA" is perhaps the *truest* one for the Book, it being simply a *Collection* of *some* of the subjects considered.

EDINBURGH, *December 1882.*

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COLLECTANEA.

The Heavenly and the Earthly Jerusalems.

WHEN we find Christ spoken of as King, in connection with the bride, I believe it to refer to the earthly Jerusalem; while in the Revelation, I look upon the Lamb's wife as the heavenly Jerusalem; and in these there are different characters of blessedness. There are two principles in the character of God,—righteousness and grace; grace does not give up righteousness; but when the demands of righteousness have been provided for in Christ, it comes forth in the character of *grace*. Jerusalem was intended to have been the place of righteousness, therefore when iniquity was found in it, it was cast off. In Isaiah lx., describing the state they had been in, the Lord says to them, "I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders." There was *power*, maintaining the seat of righteousness in Jerusalem. But the Lord sends the King of righteousness to them to establish their guilt, and having done this, brings in His grace. Addressing the Gentiles, Paul says, "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through

their unbelief: even so have these now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." They did not believe in the Gentiles' mercy, and are therefore made the subjects of mercy. In Revelation xxi. and xxii., we see the Church set in a place exceedingly blessed. Grace is the character of the heavenly Jerusalem. There we see the Church associated with Christ in blessing, and it is in anticipation of this future blessedness that the Church should now witness to the grace of God. I know of nothing more instructive, than to take the description of the heavenly Jerusalem as that which should be the state of the Church now in the energy of the Holy Ghost. I see the saints then *living in* righteousness; there is no need of power to secure it. "The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." It is much better than paradise, there was no such thing there, as we find shall be here,—the leaves of the tree of life for the *healing of the nations.* Instead of there being anything to defile our feet, and needing continual washing, the place where we are walking shall be righteousness. The street of the city was of pure gold, as it were transparent glass, representing purity, and the same as the laver in which the priests washed; we shall stand upon righteousness, we shall walk in righteousness. The nations will discern in us the glory and the grace of Jesus. "There shall be no more curse," nothing but blessing. It is a profitable thing, beloved friends, for us to bring the light and glory of the future dispensation into all the circumstances of our present condition. Thus it has been in all past dispensations. Those who had faith in them, did not rest on the things they had, but looked out, and brought in the

energy of the future things. And thus it is now with us. Faith puts forth its energies, grasps the coming glory, and this gives us strength in the circumstances in which we are.

Psalm cxlv. seems to be a conversation, as it were, of Messiah's with the Jewish remnant at that day. They had learned what God was in all their distress. They had learned themselves to utter the memory of His great goodness, and to sing of His righteousness, and therefore to give forth to others the character of God. And this is just what the Church should be doing now. The Church is Christ's letter of recommendation to the world, even as the Church at Corinth was Paul's epistle of recommendation. When sin came in, life was misery, and therefore God kept man from putting forth his hand, lest he should take of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever. But now the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. The glory of the Church is the consequence of His grace. When a person is the object of another's love, the desire is that that love should be manifested before others ; and thus does our Lord display His grace and love to the Church, and thus we find Him saying, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one : I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Very blessed this. He exhibits His love to the Church in the Father's love ; a beautiful representation of this we have in the story of the prodigal. We are told, that when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him. But when he brought him into his house, he brings forth the best robe and puts it on him, and puts a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet ; he adorns him, that he

may display him to all *as his son.* The first thing that is made known to our hearts in our discovery of ourselves as sinners, is the love of Christ. It is then the love of Christ that we see ; as the Shepherd, who came to seek and to save that which was lost ; as the one through whom we have obtained redemption, even the forgiveness of sins. But when Christ comes forth to display the Church to the world, He does not speak of Himself, but it is the love of the Father. He makes the Church the witness of his *Father's love.* The source of this love I do not speak of.

The Church was taken out of the second Adam. Speaking of the Church, we find the language of our Lord in Psalm cxxxix., "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect ; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Having washed and sanctified the Church with His blood, He presents it to Himself. He has divine delight in doing it. The Church is the Lamb's wife, because He has suffered for it, and the force of love cannot be brought out without suffering. There is nothing but the knowledge of this union that raises us up above all other good into communion with God. It is in the Church that God is displaying all the glory and variousness of His wisdom and power. So we find in Eph. iii. 20, 21, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory *in the Church* by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." The Church is set up at the head of all dispensations and ages, because it is set up in Christ.

Before we get the revelation of God as the Father, He revealed Himself first as God Almighty, and next as Jehovah. To the Jews He was known as Jehovah; to the Church as Father, as in 2 Cor. vi. 17, where He says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." But we often find the saints miserably doubting their sonship. Now the character of God in this dispensation being that of Father, if we do not know Him thus, we know nothing. We find Abraham knowing God as the Almighty; and when we can enter into the power of the previous dispensation, we can depend upon Him too as the Jehovah; but in the dispensation yet future, we shall know Him as Lord God Almighty as well as Father. In Revelation xxi., we see the saints in all the blessedness of familiar intercourse with God. In the first eight verses, there is nothing about the Lamb; it is all God. I quite agree with our brother as respects the nature of Messiah's kingdom, though I differ from him as to its duration. There is a difference to my mind between a king reigning in righteousness, and an earth wherein *dwelleth righteousness.* Where there is the *dwelling* of righteousness, *power* cannot be needed to preserve it. Now in that day when God will be all in all, there will be no need of a mediatorial securer of blessing. I conceive the time of millennial power to be analogous to Noah power, and that when God will be all in all, Christ will be in the place of Adamic power. In Revelation xxi., we have the tabernacle of God *with* man. Now we have the angels saying at the incarnation of Jesus, "Glory to God in the highest, and *on earth peace*, good will toward men;" but on His entry into Jerusalem, which showed forth

His coming in His kingdom, the song then was, not peace on earth, but "peace *in heaven*, and glory in the highest." As to the duration of Messiah's kingdom, the passage in Heb. x. 12, is only meant to show forth the work of Christ as high priest. He sits down, because He has finished it; and not the high priest on earth getting up, and getting up continuously; and that is all that the expression *for ever*, I believe, refers to. The same is implied in verse 14th, "By one offering he hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified." We have in Revelation xxii. 5, the promise that the saints shall reign for *ever and ever*; and yet it is said in Revelation xx., they lived and reigned with Christ but a thousand years. Thus I think the particular character of Christ's kingdom merges into the eternal perpetuity of it, and this is not giving it up. So I think, in a blessed sense, the Lord is King for ever and ever, though not as controlling and restraining evil, but reigning in righteousness. The passages to which our brother referred in Ezekiel xxxvii. 24-28 and 1 Cor. xv., do not, I believe, relate to Messiah's kingdom at all; do not refer to Psalm cx., but to Psalm viii., in His character as Son of man, when He shall have dominion on earth as *Man*, as the second Adam. The power of judgment also belongs to Him as Son of man. "The Father hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The title to this power of judgment and dominion belongs to Him now, though he has not yet taken it; if He had, He would now execute judgment. The world does not acknowledge His title, but His Church does; and there is the difference. Psalm cx. is not actually as to the question of reigning, but refers to

His right of supremacy. Now in 1 Cor. xv., it is not that the kingdom is put down, but He lays aside all rule, and authority, and power. There is a difference too between the Father's putting the enemies under the Son's feet, and the Son's putting them under His own feet. It is clear, if He is using death to destroy His enemies, there must be enemies to be destroyed; and then He drops the general question of death, because the ungodly do not put on incorruption. I understand by 1 Cor. xv. 28, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost will be all in all. The kingdom of Christ will not be taken away in the sense that the other kingdoms are taken away. "The Lord God will 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." At the period referred to in the beginning of Revelation xxi., there will be the heavenly glory shining upon the earthly glory. But Messiah's kingdom is a distinct thing. The exaltation of man's will above God's was first set up by Satan in paradise, and it has been going on ripening ever since, and will bring in the apostacy, which will end in the judgment. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! for thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God." Satan here is persuading the head of man's will that he is still in heaven, though he has just been cast out of heaven. The first man exalted himself, the second man humbled himself. "*Wherefore*, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." The character of the Lord's coming in judgment, will be as the man from heaven to destroy this wilful king; but this is not the establishment of Messiah's kingdom. There will be something at this time that will draw out the hearts of

the Jews after Christ, and keep them from antichrist, and show them what a desperate thing they have done in crucifying Messiah. The Assyrian stirs up antichrist. When the Assyrian is destroyed, the indignation for a very little while shall cease. Then Christ associates Himself with Israel, and begins to secure His kingdom. Then comes the going forth of His gospel, which will be the fulfilment of the words in Matt. xxiv. 14, &c. Then comes the scenes of Matt. xxv.; Christ having secured His kingdom by the judgment of His enemies, universal peace is established. Then the heathen shall know that the Lord does reign in Zion, and that He is sitting upon the throne of His holiness. While men are planning and forming schemes for themselves, God looks at the stock of nations from the beginning. We see the beginning of all the glory and schemes of the nations of the world set up in Babel; and that is what God looks at. Almost all the nations have been brought up under two heads. The children of Israel were planted in the midst of the family of Ham. It is remarkable, that all the nations mentioned in dependence on the Eastern power, are now getting into that state; and those mentioned as connected with antichrist, are connecting themselves with Western Europe. The king of the north, I judge to be Turkish Asia; the king of the south, Egypt. In the establishment of Messiah's kingdom, I would refer you to Isaiah xviii. All the actions that were connected with Israel were placed on either side of these rivers of Ethiopia; there was no nation beyond these. These nations at this time will be standing up, not against the land, but against the Prince of princes.

The saints who are in the heavens, are not the instruments of vengeance; they are clothed with white robes,

and not in real garments. I judge that the Jews will be the Lord's associates in judgment, as we read, "Judah is his horn in the day of battle." The ground on which a saint stands never can change, so long as God is the same; let it develope itself how it may, God is known in it. It is very important in every dispensation to have certain principles clear and distinct. The fellowship of the saints with God may vary in form, but it is the same in principle. The basis of this fellowship is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Therefore the standing of the saints cannot vary. This is the revelation that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. But when you come to the form of the standings of the saints on earth, we find them differing in character and essence. The millennium, as regards the saints on earth, will be judicial; *now* in grace. The Jewish economy was not of grace, but law. The Church cannot depart from its standing with God, and therefore cannot have to do with a judicial economy, which must have reference therefore to an earthly people. The word that formed the Church was, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." The Church is the calling of those whom the Lord has called out. In the Lord's dealing with the world, there is of necessity a manifestation of those who are saints and who are not. Now the Lord speaks of the Church as being light in the midst of darkness; and therefore, to speak of an invisible Church, is at once asserting its apostacy. The Lord intended the Church to have been as a city set on an hill. God had a purpose about the Jews, but they failed too. A dispensation may be cast off, while those who have the principle of life in them cannot be. The Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself not for that nation only, but that He "might gather together *in one*, the children of God which were scattered

abroad." Of this the Holy Ghost in the Church was to be the power of testimony, but the Church having failed in her responsibility, the world will not believe the grace of God that has appeared unto all men, which was the proper character of this dispensation; and God is *now* securing righteousness by the secret association of the saints with Christ, and by their testimony against the evil around them. During the millennium there will be no fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, and therefore the saints now have by far this advantage. The trial of their faith is much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, and shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. This makes a most essential difference as to the standing of the saints now and during the millennium. Again, a man that is taught of God knows that all flesh is bad, he is made a partaker of the Divine nature, and this shows him what the other nature is. *Now*, the whole creation is made subject to vanity, but then it will not; it may be *liable* to vanity, but it will not be *subject* to it. There will not be the constant dominion of Satan over it. The fact is, that now in our fallen nature, we are holding the world under the power of Satan; but then, the more a saint is blessed, the more he will honour God. I believe there will be an enjoyment of creation then, when it will not be subject to vanity, that we have no idea of. The trees that God gave Adam for blessing, he made use of to hide himself from God. When Christ takes the earth, the saints will be able to flow forth in all the fulness of joy, ministering to the good of everything, and entering into all the joy of that word, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." That will be a dispensation of righteousness. Now I have to watch, watch, watch; but then there will

be no temptation to sin, there will be the full tide of unhindered blessing.

As to the fitting position of the saints, we find the Lord continually speaking to us according to the claims of the dispensation that we are in, and not according to our apprehension of it. But our power of speaking about it must be according to the measure of our own faith. The posture of the saints at this time, I believe, should be in heaven, should be in the knowledge of their redemption, and saying, "We shall reign with Christ." How far the body may hinder us, is a distinct question. Inasmuch as I am not yet in the redeemed body, I should be waiting for glory. In proportion as I am like Christ, I shall have joy. The object of my hope will then be, "when I shall see him as he is, then I shall be like him." Now, says Paul, I do not want to be unclothed, but to be swallowed up of life. Having the resurrection life in his soul, he reaches clean over everything that would come between; and this is the fitting posture of the saints. "We which are alive and remain, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air." The Apostle was not looking for *death*, but to be caught up. Paul and Peter required an especial revelation to know they were to die. I know the kingdom and glory to be mine. What is the difference then between dying and not dying? all that I see is, in waiting *here* or waiting *there*. It is better to wait with Christ there than here. Christ is waiting, and to be joined with Christ in waiting, is just the link of power. All the value of the knowledge the saints can get, is by applying the facts of the glory to the circumstances in which we live. The fact of the upsetting of all things here just makes me say to them, I am not a debtor to you. *By the word of the Lord* all things first had their existence, so all things

are kept by the word of the Lord. I was brought out of the world by the same word. The present position of the saint is suffering, therefore he is looking for that which is to deliver him from suffering, and that is the coming of the Lord Jesus. Dear friends, I say when these things begin to come to pass, that we know will come on the earth, do not be frightened. "Look up," says our Lord, do not look down, but "look up, for your redemption draweth nigh." The Lord give us power to look up! But while I believe the saints should be looking up, I believe also that the position of the saints should be one of thorough deep humiliation. "Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many; and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool: and ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall," &c. (Isaiah xxii. 9-14). Yet, beloved, though these things are so, though our house is pulled down, though our glory is gone, still what the Church has to do now, is to be looking for the Lord.

Revelation xxii. 7-17.

I BELIEVE that which greatly keeps us from the strength of our joy, is our ignorance of the utter ruin of man. Not merely should we be acquainted with the evil into which the ruin has brought us, but also with the ruin itself. The moment that this ruin came into the world, everything went wrong. Not only has man gone wrong, but all his activities have gone wrong also. Now Christ has provided for us a way wherein the activities of the *new man* have their exercise. This is our own proper and peculiar portion; to have the mind of Christ, and to be brought into fellowship with God. But for the enjoyment of this, it is essential that we should be introduced into a knowledge of the complete apostacy of our own natural will. The purpose of God for His children is, that they should be associated with Him in *His own joy*, and to this end we must know Him. Now, the main sorrow of Christ's life was man's ignorance of God. God was never understood; but the poor sinner understood Him much better than the self-righteous pharisee. Jesus came forth from the bosom of the Father, having the knowledge of His mind, knowing that God loved the poor sinner; not merely the sinner's joy in being blest, but God's joy in blessing him; and this is the joy in which God would have us to be associated with Him-

self. Another most blessed truth is, that we should be associated with Christ in *His sufferings*, "That the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter i. 7). There is a little verse in this chapter which shows the Church's tendency to depart from a knowledge of its nearness to God. The first departure of the Church from God, is a departure from the knowledge of its fulness in God and nearness to Him, its *conscious sonship with God*. If I am *one* with Christ, I must be *as* He is. If I have anything at all, it must be what *He has*—what He is. There is no medium between being nothing in ourselves and being everything in Christ. If I have no title of my own, if I am nothing but wretchedness in myself, and have no natural understanding of God's goodwill to man, where is my claim? Therefore true humility is the knowing what I am *in Christ*. So the moment I say, I have not *all* the favour with God that Christ has, I come down to the flesh. The moment I say, I am not *as* Christ, I lose the knowledge of my glory *in Him*, and I stoop down to the flesh. This we see in John, when he fell down and worshipped the angel. Here was that voluntary humility and worshipping of angels which the Apostle warns us against. Had John remembered the glory he had in Christ, he would not have done this; for, "as he is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17). The Church's portion is as the washed, and cleansed, and glorified one in Him. Christ has presented us to the Father without spot or blemish, and now He is the faithful witness in heaven, as He was on earth, making known to us the Father. Through Him then I know perfectly what God is. I know that *His* love does not

wax cold because of our coldness. I know that His heart is not hardened because of our sins. I know through the risen Jesus what I am,—sitting in heavenly places, that death has lost his power for ever, and that the very life of God is mine. Jesus says, "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." All the folly of David, all the apostacy of his seed, could not alter this truth,—God would be the sustainer of the blessings that He had promised. The morning will come, when that blessed light which was shut up in Christ will be unfolded, and the saint now enters into the hope of that day. When this light breaks forth, *then* will be the full display and understanding of this light, then will be the full enjoyment of it. Now we say grace is a blessed thing, but it must bring sorrow. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." Then will be the full effulgence of light without sorrow. The Spirit and the bride therefore say, *Come.* It is most blessed to see the Spirit taking up His place with the Church in her sorrow, having sympathy with her in her sighing, and making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Well, He who now enters into the Church's sorrow, has fellowship with her in her hope, takes up the word and says, Come. The Spirit and the bride say, *Come*, because the desire of Jesus for the Church will then be satisfied. Jesus must have joy in his own fulness now, but His satisfied joy will be the expression of this fulness in the Church; and the time when this will be expressed with unhindered blessing, is on the revelation of Him to whom the Spirit and the bride say, *Come.* The moment the delight of God in dealing with us is understood, then we have association with Him, and say, *Come.* This is what we ought to be doing. But this is not all. If the

day-star is risen in our hearts, we shall say, "Let him that is athirst come." If we have discovered that this is a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, we shall say, "Whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely." The soul, entering into the fulness of the life of Christ, will go forth with the cry, *Whosoever* will let him come. But there is always defect in the invitation, if we have not entered into the power of Christ's love, and into His delight in bringing to the poor sinner the way of return to God. The Church should be an helpmeet for Christ. But how can she be so, if she cannot enter into His heart? and if we do this, we must do it in *sorrow*. He is the master of the house, and we, the servants, must be as the Master. In the Gospel of Luke we see Christ as the *man*,—the anointed man. We see Him in works, giving proofs that He was the sent one, doing the will of Him that sent Him. But when the leper said to Him, "If thou *wilt*, thou canst make me clean;" this necessarily brought out the sovereignty of the Godhead,—"*I will*, be thou clean." God never comes in with comfort to the flesh, but He breaks down the flesh, and then there is comfort to the spirit. Thus it was with Hezekiah; thus it was with Paul, and he had the sentence of death in himself that he should not trust in himself but in God, who raiseth the dead. The flesh must utterly be crumbled down, that we may be drawn up to the confession that God is all and in all. The flesh has no part with the sympathy of God. Glory indeed is our portion; and Jesus says to the Father, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, as we are." But with the flesh, its place is to be *nothing*. The purpose of Christ for His Church is, that she should be a conscious co-operator with God,—the expression of His love and

fulness. When we know anything of God, when we know the misery of the flesh, then we desire it should be nothing. It is said, "He that humbleth *himself* shall be exalted." Not he that *is humbled*, but he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted. In this theatre of Satan's power and the world's pride, to be the servant of all, I say this is the greatest proof of exaltation. We cannot do this in the flesh; but when we get a new nature, when we learn the glory of Christ, we can do it; then, and then only, can we humble ourselves.

The Word of God, and the Knowledge of it.

WE must bear in mind that all truth is the Spirit's teaching. I doubt if any can attain truth intellectually. There is a vast deal of truth taught now, which was hidden even from the greatest saints in the previous dispensation. As to the first question, — It is a solemn thing, I feel, to talk of the value of that which God has given. We get the expression of God's love in everything that He has given; and it is a solemn thing to be questioning on the value of this and that. I believe the value of Scripture knowledge to be everything. I believe the understanding of Scripture to be a subject of vast importance. It is not that God's mind reveals merely a fact, but it is God's mind in that fact that we have to do with. I see the Apostles failing in this, with respect to the resurrection, in their going to the sepulchre after our Lord had risen; which proved, that though they had believed His words concerning the fact, they had not really entered into the mind of God in the matter. What is stated about the Church, is not only that there are things given, but that "ye *may know* the things that are freely given to us of God."

The resurrection happened before many eye-witnesses, but they had not the mind of God in the fact. The word to Abraham was, "Shall I hide," &c.; but the Church

has it upon a larger ground than Abraham, it has "the mind of Christ,"—"an unction from the Holy One." The spiritual mind discerneth all things. A most extraordinary prerogative and place of blessing the Church is put into, it has the power of judging all things. I am not now speaking of the measure of attainment, but of the principle. The world can judge of *evil*, and so much the better, as they can keep a watch upon us; but they cannot judge anything about God. My knowledge must be essentially divine, that which belongs to God; for when I say I know all things, it must be from communion with God through the Word. The world may gather the elements of natural knowledge, but the Christian has the key to the whole, because he knows God. We must recollect, dear friends, that the Church is not merely a sacred body, but that it is left in the world to be a witness, and how should it be so without the Word? how could we know how to answer Satan, if we have not the weapon our Lord used against him?—"*It is written.*" The Lord Jesus had come into the world as a servant, and when Satan assaulted Him, He directly applied the Word to the circumstances in which He was placed, and so must we. It is not enough to know the Word, but we must bring that to bear on circumstances. These circumstances may be perfectly contrary to those of others. The circumstances of Isaiah with Hezekiah, and Jeremiah with Zedekiah, were directly opposite, but knowing the mind of God, they were enabled to act. This is what the Church of God has to do, and we have the Word to guide us under the different circumstances in which we are placed. We have an instance, as our brother said, in the case of Nathan; and David ought to have known, by the revelation of God's mind concerning him, that it was not at all in God's heart that he should build the

temple. It is a great mistake that good desires are a safe guide. It is well that we have them, but we should not carry them into effect till we have consulted the Lord. I believe the saints often think a thing is good to do, make up their minds to *do* it, and then ask God's blessing upon it. The energy of faith sets men going. After a time faith gets cold, and that which is merely of man decays, and corruption comes in. The principle of subjection to the mind of God just leads us to this: What does God say about it? No truth is of any avail that does not come directly from God. I do not speak of instrumentality; God may use a child if He pleases, but then we shall know it to be from God. I believe it to be one of the happiest things, our dependence upon one another for blessing, God thus comforting the hearts of His saints by knitting their hearts to one another. But the flesh takes advantage of this, gets lazy, and we lose sight of individual responsibility. Individual search keeps the soul alive, and open, and healthy, to receive the influences of God's love. God has made every individual responsible that He does not admit evil. How can I get responsibility but from God? I must either give myself implicitly to it, or, if I judge conscience at all, it must be by the testimony of God's truth. There is no possibility of connecting tradition and conscience. The conscience is God's link with man, and therefore Satan tries to get between the conscience and God. The Word tells us there is peace in the blood; Satan steps in between, and seeks to destroy the power of the blood. Again he steps in, trying to destroy the consciousness of sin. You have an instance of the conscience being a link in John iv. Jesus spoke important truths to the woman of Samaria, but the moment He touched her *conscience*, she said, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a

prophet." Scripture is God's blessed weapon on the conscience. It is possible to have a blinded conscience, as in the case of the Pharisees. The tradition of washing the hands may be apparently trifling, and perhaps some would have said it was unnecessarily wounding them, when Jesus answered and said unto them, "Well did Esaias prophesy of you hypocrites," &c. The tradition, our Lord knew, clothed man with respectability. A man's hands might be washed, and his conscience remain untouched. It stepped in where God had the supreme right. "Laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men." Bring me a commandment of God; I get God's authority. "Full well," our Lord adds, "ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may hold your own tradition." Take all classes of men, and what do they like? *their own* tradition. He sums it up, "making the Word of God of *none effect* through your tradition which ye have delivered." The Word designates tradition as man's, not God's.

There is always sufficient in the Word to lay bare man's tradition. The worst evil has a religious character. I ask any one, Can he say what temptation will come upon him to-morrow? and has he Scripture to answer Satan with? Our Lord placed Himself as a servant in the midst of the ruin of man. He answered Satan in a manner suited to His circumstances. Satan brought forward those Scriptures which related to our Lord in power. Jesus did not come for that, He did not come to be ministered to, but to minister, and therefore said, "Man lives by the word; by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live." Did the Word come when man was in a state of innocence? No, it came in grace, when he was ruined; when *death* had come in, the Word of God came, as a *living* Word, to meet all man's

ruined circumstances. Jesus repelled evil, but He *touched* it at every point. I say the saint cannot carry the life of God, without his having this body of light with him. There is nothing that can carry a saint rightly through the world, save this divine thing. "Man is become as one of us."

The Lord says, "He would have you simple concerning evil, and wise concerning that which is good;" and, beloved friends, this is what Scripture knowledge brings us to.

A saint may pass safe through all the evil of the world, because his heart is full of God; and how is he to get that, but through the Word?

Beloved, we do not really believe that we are brought into the family of God. I say the Church of God are children. As the Son knows the Father, so are we brought into communion; and how can we have this but in the knowledge of His mind? There is no other knowledge or way of glorifying God, but through the knowledge of His mind.

When the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the object of my love, it is impossible but that I must like to know more of Jesus. When is it that a soul is lifted up? I say it is when he is beholding the glory of Jesus. It carries us into the fulness of the Father's love in Christ. The moment that Jesus becomes the fulness of our hearts, I say, *then* Scripture becomes as honey to our mouths; every word comes with savour, because it testifies of Him.

Is it of value to know Jesus well? then that is the value of Scripture knowledge. It brings in a light that flows around the presence of God. I believe that the secret of not valuing the Scriptures, is that the person, the glories, the excellencies of Jesus are not prized.

The glory of Christ is what God has set up in competition with everything else in the world. Wherever we get the Spirit's teaching, we look up, and take the lowest place. It is impossible for me to see a thing in God, without seeing self as nothingness. When intellect is at work, I am under the power of my mind, and not in subjection of soul to something above it; it is always in being lowly I get up. All real progress and attainment is, when we feel something better and higher than ourselves. The sense of Divine love takes the place of self. "If any man thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know." God will not say to us, Here is a soul equal to mine; we will talk about it together. But He must bring our mind into subjection to His, and then He can have communion with us.

Revelation i.-xx.

IT is most manifest, and should be among us a subject for praise, the progress that has been made in the understanding of this book (Revelation). The importance of giving heed to the prophetic word bears two characters, not only as regarding things to come, but we find also there is such a thing as the day-star arising *in your hearts* (2 Peter i. 19). Now Peter had *seen* the glory, and this was not the result of statements of prophecy. The first thing that we must do, is to look at the day itself, to fix our eyes on the glory itself; this at once reaches all prophecy, and fixes it on the heart. Peter had beheld the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ in the glory, and that was the thing that occupied his heart. The *power* of prophecy is the laying bare the things that are carrying on according to the course of this world, and takes them into judgment. If I know the judgment is coming, and that the tares are to be burned, I shall not have anything to do with the tares. We find our Lord referring to Isaiah's vision of the glory in John xii. When Isaiah had seen the glory, evil was brought out, and he exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isaiah vi. 5). And when the unbelief and hardness of heart in the Jews is spoken of, we read in John xii. and 41st verse, "These things said Esaias, *when he saw his*

glory, and spake of him." Thus it is, dear friends, that the effect of beholding the glory, is to bring us to a consciousness of our position; and thus we should bring the glory of Christ to bear on our circumstances.

The grand moral importance of giving heed to the prophetic word, is in separating us from this present evil world. Prophecy is a light which God holds up to the saints, that they may not only see the things which are, but see them as God sees them. Prophecy teaches us, that God will judge the world in power; and it is for us now, knowing this, to judge morally what God will judge judicially.

Prophecy is also the expression of the object of hope to the Church. "We are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." The expression, "coming of the Lord," is rather ambiguous, and involves two things. There is the coming of the Lord *for* His saints, and there is the coming of the Lord *with* His saints; and these two facts we get in the Epistles to the Thessalonians. The testimony to the world of a fact, should never be confounded with the intelligence about that fact.

Now, as to the resurrection of the dead, all that I can say to the world about it is, there is a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. But when I speak about the Church, it is quite another thing; then I say, the Church is raised by the *power of union* to Christ. I would say to the saints, "If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you." Thus the resurrection of the saints will be just a consummation of that already wrought in them. I see the same principle with reference

to the Lord's coming. The Thessalonians were turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven; and this is the true standing of the saints.

Now, while I admit the broad fact of the coming of the Lord, yet when I come to investigate this truth, I find a peculiar thing connected with it, and that is the gathering of the saints to Him. The catching up of the Church is the witness of the complete justification of the whole body, and the world has nothing to do with it. One thing is quite clear, when the Lord comes, His saints will come with Him.

The spirit in which we should come to the prophetic word, I should say, is in order to be better taught about the Lord Himself, than by speaking much about it. Judgment cannot be the subject for my *affections* to rest upon.

But there is one thing connected with the coming of Christ, and this present evil world, which may give me joy, and that is, the stream of love and mercy flowing in to stop the tide of misery and wretchedness that exists. I can love to see Christ, but I cannot love to see antichrist. So we find the Thessalonians were troubled; but Paul writes to them, "Why should you be troubled about the *day of the Lord?*" You will be caught up first; what have you to do with "the day?" The Church's separation from the world puts it into the place of prophecy. When Isaiah saw the glory in the temple above, he was laying the basis of his prophecy. I see Peter, the apostle of the circumcision; I see Paul, the apostle of the uncircumcision; and I see John, in the isle of Patmos,—all sustaining the Church in coming down from the glory to testify the hope of the Church in prophecy.

The book of Revelation has nothing to do with the

Father and the children ; it is not the Father guiding and teaching His children by the Spirit, but Christ sending the Revelation to His servant John by an angel.

The glory of the Lord Jesus is here presented to us as standing in the midst of the Church. John was to write the things that are, and the epistles to the seven Churches were evidently of this character. In chapters iv. and v. we get a mystical synopsis of the whole thing. The throne was seen, and the whole result brought out. I do not acknowledge "the mystery of God" to be the gathering of the saints ; the mystery of Christ and the Church, as we find in the Epistle to the Ephesians ; but "the mystery of God," I believe, to be the gathering together in one all things in Christ, and put under His power, as the Son of man.

In chapter iv., we have the Spirits before the throne ; in chapter v., we get the Lamb taking the book ; then we get the whole thing brought out in chapter vi. There is a clear difference between the Church of God caught up, and those suffering on earth during the time of antichrist, and caught up too. In Matt. xxiv., I do not see anything about the Church ; it is entirely Jewish testimony. The gospel of the kingdom, that shall be preached to all nations for a witness, I see to be Jewish too. Their preaching was to be about that which was future ; it was the gospel of the kingdom that was coming in power, that was to be established in righteousness. I believe the commission in Matthew xxviii., "Go ye therefore and teach all nations," was Jewish, and has never yet had its accomplishment in its particular form ; and Matthew assumes the Jewish position in the kingdom as their right, and therefore speaks of the going *out* to the Gentiles, and has never therefore yet been accomplished. Instead of the twelve apostles accomplishing this commission, that

was expressly given to them, God raises up another apostle to go to the Gentiles; but the literal command, in its primary character, will be accomplished too.

In chapter vi., we get the cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost not thou avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Here we find the object of their hopes was not to be up there. Then, again, we have in chapter v., "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us unto our God kings and priests, and they *shall reign* over the earth." Here some had got the fulfilment of their expectation in being before the throne; but there was still a *shall*, which was the object of other's hopes. In chapter v., we have the grand announcement of the whole thing in full blessing. But these saints in chapter vi. are taught to wait till another class of martyrs shall be killed. What is the answer to this cry? The powers of heaven are shaken; the sun became black; the moon became as blood; the stars fell unto the earth; and the heavens departed as a scroll. A process of preparatory judgment in God's hand is going on, and just introduces the occasion for the Lamb's coming forth. What in the meantime is the situation of the saints above? All things are getting ready there, and all getting ready below, for the marriage of the Lamb, and the descent of Christ and His Church.

In chapter vii., we find the saints have got a step higher, they are not under the altar, but before the throne; they are interesting themselves in the concerns of the throne, and they have got their white robes. Before the closing of the whole scene, we find judgments coming down upon the earth in answer to prayers. Before the seventh trumpet begins to sound, we get the development of the final iniquity; they did not own God to be the God of

the earth, but worshipped devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. In the last half of Daniel's week, the abomination of desolation is set up, but the saints are taken up first. The beast out of the bottomless pit kills the witnesses. This was to be no time of testimony, but a time of vengeance. Our Lord's command was, "When ye see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains." Your testimony is ended. This testimony ceased the last three and a half years. The coming of the Lord is for the destruction of antichrist. And then when the Lord associates Himself with the Jews, He begins the judgment on the earth. The announcement of the seventh woe brings in the close.

In chapter xii., we get the woman, the man-child, and the great dragon. The man-child is taken out of the way; the woman is left to the consequences of weakness. It is perfectly clear that Christ, in the first place, is to rule, but the saints are to be caught up too. Christ cannot be manifested without His body, and therefore the saints are caught up. After they are caught up, Satan, having lost heaven for ever, rages on earth for three and a half years. The effect of this is, that the woman flees into the wilderness (Jesus told them to flee to get out of the way of Satan). In chapter xiii., we get the thrones given to the beast. I do not believe that the beast is antichrist; for I do not believe antichrist will ever have his deadly wound healed, which the beast had; but I believe it to be the Roman empire in its last form, strengthened with the new power.

In chapter xiv., we get the Lord reaping the earth; but first we get the connection of earth and heaven.

Mount Zion, I believe to be the place of *royal grace* on the earth; and we find Christ in association with a suffering people upon the earth. Then goes forth the gospel, for the day of His judgment is come. The next thing we get, is the announcement of Babylon's fall, and the judgment of all those who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. In verse 13th, where it is said, "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Here we have not the saints that are caught up, but those *who die on the earth.*

In chapter xv., we get another sign,—all those that have suffered coming into holiness through judgment. Then we find the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony opened in heaven, but none could enter in. Now the time was come for the filling up of the wrath of God, and "the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God; and none could enter into it till the seven plagues were fulfilled," which we have in chapter xvi.

Chapter xvii. 5, is, I believe, properly ecclesiastical. Here we find the woman, or great Babylon, riding the beast at her own will; but immediately after, we have the destruction of this Babylon, all her glory and splendour gone, and she become the habitation of devils, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird and beast. The ten horns hate the whore, and agree to give their power to the beast. Thus the corrupt system of the earth is turned into a diabolical one.

Then in chapter xix., we get the Church married to the Lamb. When everything was prepared, and the earth was made ready, the Lamb comes forth and displays his wife. He comes forth as a warrior, at the head of the heavenly army.

In chapter xx., we get the thrones of judgment. John saw here three classes of persons, — all these three reigning with Christ a thousand years. The remaining chapters will come into the question for to-morrow,—The glory of the Church, and the blessing flowing out of her. The Church is set in grace,—grace is our grand characteristic; and even when joined with the Lord in glory, grace will still be the distinctive character of the Church.

2 Samuel xxii., xxiii. 1-7.

DAVID here retraces what specially marked out the path of the Lord Jesus Himself; also the judgment upon the condition of the failure of all on which man's hopes stood. That which primarily struck me in this passage, was the remarkable contrast between the song of David after he had done with Saul, and the song of David after he had done with himself; and it is remarkable that the Spirit of God has so placed them in juxtaposition here. In the first, there is exultation, victory, thanksgiving; in the second, the result of all is just this—"Although my house be not so with God."

The path of the Spirit of grace is always the path that Jesus took here; getting nothing in the world, but going on nearer and nearer to God. It is remarkable how in this Psalm the Lord Jesus is in Jewish circumstances, justice, judgment, and such like. We find at once here all that which is so fully true of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is here; and connected with this, we find most remarkable allusions to the whole history of Israel.

The next thing is, he goes on till he sets the Lord Jesus Christ as being avenged of His enemies, and having been made the head of the heathen. The history of Israel, looked at by the Spirit of God, is identified with the history of Christ as in Acts xxiii. In these last

words of David, it is the God of Jacob, the Rock of Israel. In the 4th verse, he speaks of that one who should reign in peace over man; that true Solomon was what he was looking for. There must come in one with the power of judgment also to exterminate this evil, verses 6 and 7.

I would trace some traits of what David was up to the time of his contending with Goliath. We see in him the one forgotten of man, taken up of God (1 Sam. xviii.). Just the contrast with Saul; he the strength of the flesh, a goodly person, head and shoulders higher than the people, and so on; but all the strength of the flesh. What we specially see in David up to this time, is his humility and forgetfulness of himself, and his simplicity of faith in doing the Lord's work as a matter of course. There is no boast about it. He kept the sheep; well, it was his duty to keep the sheep, and if a lion or a bear come amongst them, of course it was the shepherd's duty to send them away or to slay them. And it is here I see the power of faith,—the full consciousness of the Lord's working with him, and doing these energetic works with simple reference to duty.

While the energy of faith was found in Jonathan, there was a great deal of blessing accompanying the career of Saul. Wherever he turned, he vexed his enemies; and though he had been in a certain sense rejected, we find, for the sake of Israel, the Lord blessing him.

When David came to the camp, he had learned—not from what he saw around him, but from his own secret communion—the faithfulness of God. There was no other thought in his heart, and therefore he is astonished. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy *the armies of the living God?*" He identifies the glory of God with Israel, and, in the simple consciousness of His faithfulness and power, he knows that no uncircumcised

man can have any power against Israel. There is no question about it; *he knows* that the same God, who helped him to slay the lion and the bear, will help him to slay the Philistine also. And afterwards in the character of David, I find the consciousness of weakness, the consciousness of infirmity; never thinking of taking vengeance against Saul, never (except in one instance, and he got well chastened for it) acting without consulting God. He always felt that he was in conflict with a power that he could not set aside; he had no strength, but in God, to put down any, though they may persecute him even to death. No matter who comes against him, whether Doeg the Edomite, or anybody else. Jonathan, if it could have been so (but it could not, because God had a faithful remnant even in the camp of Israel); I say he had no strength, but in direct simple reference to God in every circumstance. Therefore he says, "Shall I go down to Keilah?" The Lord says, "Go down to Keilah." "Shall I go up to the Philistines, wilt Thou deliver them into my hand?" God says, "Go up, I will deliver them into thy hand." In the cave of Adullam, what a company they were; but in the cave of Adullam was God's King, God's Prophet, God's Priest; and there was God's power, God Himself was with him.

When Jacob comes before Pharaoh, he blesses him; he is identified with the power of blessing, because he is identified with God. Beloved brethren, if we are seeking God's glory, we shall not want to justify ourselves. I do not mean that we should have this feeling, "I do not care for it; what do I care?" but, as Peter says, "*doing well, suffering for it, and taking it patiently.*" This was the picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, and should be the picture of every saint. But now the day is coming upon Saul, when he has the terrible consciousness that the Lord

is not with him. But, not to dwell upon this, Saul dies, and David takes the power, and after this we find him acting in the strength of the flesh, not waiting upon the Lord, not consulting Him. About building the house, it was a good thought, but he did not consult the Lord; and in bringing up the ark, though it was not a bad thing, he had not consulted the Lord about it, and the Lord breaks forth upon him; and it was only the sovereign mercy of the Lord that kept him from fighting against Israel, because He turned the hearts of the Philistines against him. And again, in numbering the people, and in the case of Uriah; wherefore the sword never departed from his house.

We have a lovely character of David up to the time of his taking the kingdom; he was a man after God's own heart, and now, not like Saul,—beginning in the flesh, and ending in the flesh,—but the man in whom most precious grace shone, though the blessings, that were the result of faith, were too great for the faith that brought them to bear. And this is a most amazing warning; and the only thing to do, is to be always going down, down, to the Cross. And now, I ask, is there a single heart, that has the Spirit of Christ in it, that does not say, "Although my house be not so with God?" Can we say God's house is such as it should be, for God to be satisfied in it? There is truly the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; but should we be contented with the ruin and evil that is now in the house? Surely we would not say that there is a covenant ordered in all things and sure, and that Christ's glory is a thing of no consequence. And, beloved friends, we look forward to the coming of the Lord; that is what brightens the heart, it is that upon which our affections *can rest*, as a scene and sphere of blessing where all our associations

shall be pure and happy. Then the order and condition of the world shall come down from God, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; even as life comes to us individually from Jesus now, so to the world then; and then all things will take their place in their proper relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Eph. i.); Head over all things to the Church, &c.; Israel, the Gentiles; and then all men shall call Him blessed. There is the sphere of blessing, and it is He Himself that is the thing manifested; and we are to look for no blessing apart from Him who is the centre of it all. The great characteristic of that day, is the blessing coming down according to God's mind. God is the centre of blessing, but He has not shut Himself up from us; *God is love*, and it flows out from Him through one another.

David looked not for the setting right of his house then, but he looked beyond, for the morning without clouds, and so must we. The Apostle Paul said, "All seek their own," even in his time. See how soon his house was not so with God. Well, I say, we want something; we want not only to have the Lord Jesus Christ as the object of hope, but to see Him in the display and unfolding of the glory, in heaven and in earth, of which He will be the centre, and the thoughts of God's heart finding their rest in that glory.

I would close now with one practical remark, which I would urge upon you, and it is, that the effect of all this should be to throw us back into the first part of the history of David. Here we find David's heart in sympathy with the sufferings of Christ's heart; and oh! beloved friends, though we are called now to have fellowship with His sufferings, yet *a little while*, and He shall compass us about with songs of deliverance.

134th Hymn.

The Dispensations and the Remnants.

A DISPENSATION is any arranged dealing of God in which man has been set before his fall, and having been tried, has failed, and therefore God has been obliged to act by other means. Man was good for nothing; but in order to bring out the variousness of Christ's glory, and the resources we have in Him, man was put into these different circumstances. It was not simple promise, because this rests solely on the faithfulness of the promiser. Further, when we talk of a faithful remnant, there has been a remnant without a close at all. There has always been a dispensation, and always immediate failure, and consequently there has necessarily been a remnant all through. Joshua, Caleb, the seven thousand,—always a faithful few, who were just the exhibition in that sense of the Father's work. This is a very serious question, because it supposes that we are at the close of this dispensation. The responsibility is most important, but yet simple to them that understand, and plain to them that keep knowledge; and the Lord has said, "He that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness." The question supposes, that there has been a certain body in contrast to others; that there has been failure; and then that some should be faithful at the close, when judgment comes in. There has been one in every dispensation. If darkness had set in, it brought out the

character of those who did not sink with the darkness. And then, beloved friends, our duty is not only faithfulness in ourselves, but most especially grace; the faithfulness is called for with reference to the evil, but our proper position is grace towards those who are in the darkness.

We find when the golden calf was made,—the first manifestation of this,—Moses takes the tabernacle of the congregation, which was not yet set up, without the camp. Joshua stays there, but Moses goes back to the people. Joshua, the type of the captain of salvation; but Moses had another character to bear, and in studying this, we shall find our position as a remnant. Before the proper dispensation of God, we get the world before the flood; not exactly a dispensation, but a body of men left, in a certain sense, to themselves. There was testimony, as in Enoch and Noah, but no dispensed order or system by which God acted as governing the earth. We find even in this, that God acts in the grace of His own character. Noah was a faithful witness; in him was the great principle, though this was not strictly a dispensation. Adam had not, before his fall, taken his character as head of the first-Adam family; so Christ, till after His resurrection, did not take His place as head of the second-Adam family. "The Lord said unto Noah," &c. (Gen. vii. 1; vi. 8, &c.), two things, "Thee have I seen righteous;" and, thou hast "found grace." The earth was corrupt, and there came the flood upon it; then the remnant was called out. To this faithful remnant, He communicates the result of His looking upon the earth,—as He did to Abraham respecting Sodom; so, before He destroys Babylon, He communicates His mind to His Church, or chosen ones. Another thing as regards the close of this dispensation is, that it does not come till

all remedy is impossible; till then, God never acts in judgment; till then, He never destroys what His hands have created. At this time of Noah, all remedy was impossible, all flesh had corrupted itself; and it is not only that God knows all remedy is impossible, but He never acts till He has justified His own conduct,—towards the Amorites for instance.

In the Jewish dispensation there were always those that were to be saved; *sōzomenoi*, the same as in Acts ii. 47. The contrast is constantly put between the remnant and others in the prophets, &c. As regards this dispensation, it is just the same truth as regards the Jews (Rom. xi.) out of the ten tribes, seven thousand preserved; so of the Church, if we take the epistles of John or Jude, we see evidently this faithful remnant, but under different circumstances, and placed in different positions, those in whom the Lord has proved His grace and faithfulness. As regards the remnant in Israel, they refused to go along with the evil around them. This precedes service,—God *found* Noah faithful; Lot showed love to the world, it was all selfishness; He chose Sodom, and then his righteous soul was vexed; and we read, God *remembered* Abraham, and *delivered* Lot, &c. There will, I believe, be some coming out lame and weak, who have brought upon themselves sorrow of spirit, not having done as Caleb did, followed the Lord fully. There are many who will doubtless be saved so as by fire, but there will be some found faithful; so that in every dispensation the faithful were the remnant all through. At the beginning it was not so. Israel, the Church, were set in blessing, but evil came in, and then the faithful remnant. And it is not only faithfulness in the world, but faithfulness in the failure of what God had established to be faithful in the world. Failure now was

not of the same grossly evil character as the breach of the ten commandments, but sin against the higher blessing, which is worse. The apostacy began in the time of the apostles. In John and Jude the same corruptions were there, and it was of those that Enoch spoke, who declared the judgment of the Lord. The real place of faithfulness is in the remnant that judges the dispensation, and not in the dispensation itself; more spiritual judgment is required now. It was so from the time of John (1 John iv. 1). This is most important, for it was not in the corporate power of the dispensation. It is important to connect the remnant all through the dispensation with those who will testify at the close. By the spirit of prophecy, God has always wrought deliverance, and consequently brought in something future for the saint to cling to. In Noah no mediation, but always afterwards; like the Lord Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, the heart yearning over those upon whom judgment is coming. It must be the spirit of grace, and the spirit of intercession accompanying it. So in the Psalms, "*How long*, O Lord; for ever?" This respecting the wicked, the spirit of prophecy saying, "*How long?*" He might have brought in some new thing, as in Habakkuk, but now He knew this was impossible. Isaiah vi., the character of Ahaz was such, that God knowing what was coming about, saw what support the remnant would require. The first thing required, is the perception of the glory of God, —I may say, of the Lord Jesus Christ (John i. 18). The first effect of this, is the consciousness of one's own condition,—not the Church apart from Him,—but it always begins here, in the seeing of one's own condition. So Gideon (Judges vi. 28), first throwing down the idolatry that was there. Isaiah says, "Woe is *me*;" not Israel, but himself; then his lips are touched, and he becomes

a witness of God, he pronounces judgment on the people; and immediately the spirit of intercession says, "How long?" There then came a development of the Lord's dealings in answer to the prophet's intercession. The same thing takes place exactly in Habakkuk, and in Moses about the golden calf. We get first the spirit of prophecy, then the remnant found faithful; then the necessity, as a positive present thing, of bringing in some hope; then the faithfulness of the remnant proved at the close of the dispensation. The very fact of their being called out into a place of testimony, is the painful proof that all is evil around. And whatever love, whatever intercession, all that we can say, and all we can desire, will never alter the judgment of God. Jeremiah had wept and prayed for Jerusalem, but he was still the testimony that Israel had failed, and they could not bear it. Moses said, "If not, blot *me* out of thy book." Paul desired to be an Azazel for the people, but the testimony was against them, and must be where there is righteousness. But our place is grace, our proper disposition is the testimony of grace; our place was righteousness before testimony, as Noah, Lot, Nathanael, the Lord Jesus Himself, then grace. The Father's work has always been grace. We are found in the place of righteousness, and the practical power of our conduct will be the testimony of righteousness; and troubles, reproach, &c., will always accompany it, but our privilege is to carry along grace. Moses interceded, because he identified God and the people; but there is something more, he had anticipated grace, and he takes the tabernacle afar off out of the camp. He then gets into special communion with God. God speaks to him face to face, he takes the veil off. There is the spirit of intercession, in the remnant going out without the camp. Joshua abode there; when Moses had to in-

quire, he went there, but returned to the camp afterwards. We ought to have such thorough assurance of our communion with God, and nearness to Him, that we may be able to go into the camp without fear. It might have been questioned what right he had to do so; we have no revelation spoken of, but he had certainly the secret of God (Exodus xxxiii.). It was not a bit in order, neither the staves, nor the boards, nor anything else, but he had the secret of God, he had God's mind, and could go into the place before the tabernacle was set up. We have not got the tabernacle either, because it is in glory, but we have the spirit of grace, and know the tabernacle above; and that is just our proper position, and not to go and put the tabernacle back again into the camp. In Jeremiah xi., the Lord was weary of their repentance. He speaks to the prophet as if he were Jerusalem. This was the character of the Lord Jesus, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me," and Psalm xliv. Jeremiah sat alone, not going on with the people; yearning over them, but not going on with them; verse 17, "For thou hast filled me *with indignation.*" He says, "Do not go to them, let them return to you;" have nothing to do with the bad fishes, gather the good into vessels, separate the precious from the vile; "and thou shalt be as my mouth; they shall fight against thee, but thou shalt not fight against them." Never mind that your righteousness is not found out, never mind the discontent at the tabernacle being removed; if you are talking with God face to face, do not be surprised that those in the camp do not hear what you are talking about; never let your good be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. We are not to justify ourselves, but to commit ourselves to Him who judgeth righteously; as in the case of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

Moses was the meekest man; then God comes in. God will take care to justify us, wherever there is the spirit of meekness. He will tell our character, as He did that of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is painful to the flesh. Let us give a reason, of course, of the hope that is in us, but always have it to God. The power of our duty is in communion with God; and where He has recorded His name, He will meet and bless, that is, "where two or three are gathered together in His name." The only possibility of being faithful is, by doing as Moses and Isaiah did,—seeing the glory, and communing with the Lord face to face. We may have trial, as Jeremiah had, but our position is to testify of grace; and let us not be surprised, if others do not understand the fulness of the grace that we have been taught; and oh, beloved friends, we shall always have plenty of reason to be humbled.

The Aaronic priesthood was evidently a provision of mediation without any reference to judgment, and this is our proper place now, not the Melchisedec priesthood yet; because we follow Christ, we have fellowship with it in spirit, but all our service is according to the Aaronic priesthood. This is what Christ stands in as to service,—in *order*, He is after Melchisedec; in chap. ix (Heb.), altogether after the analogy of the service of Aaron. Melchisedec priesthood (Gen. xiv.), that great sovereign title of God, Most High, and Possessor of heaven and earth; this is the character for blessing, and thus the Lord Jesus Christ comes to be the priestly centre of all blessing. It is a priesthood of blessing and praise; no sacrifice then, the value remains, but it is a priesthood of blessing; not the maintaining of the communion and priesthood of a people who are passing through a world contrary to God, as the Aaronic priesthood does. But in one sense we are not to consider the Melchisedec priest-

hood a higher than the Aaronic,—it is the king acting as priest,—and our place is as kings with Melchisedec, we reign with Him. The place of the Church always is going on to perfection; when the Melchisedec priesthood is spoken of, it is perfection, not intercession for our imperfection, but perfection in unity with the Lord Jesus Christ. "As he is, so are we, in this world,"—not as He *was*,—that we shall never be, but as He *is*, associated with Him in the Melchisedec priesthood, His life ours,—neither beginning of days, nor end of life. Jesus takes His place by this of mediator of blessing, not intercession. I do not say there will be none, but this is the special point, as in Eph., Col., &c. As regards the Aaronic priesthood, we get the Lord Jesus Christ, the present mediator for the Church; there is the discernment between clean and unclean, offering of sacrifice, teaching the statutes, while the written Word of God is our only guide. We are in the place to learn the mind of God, that we might teach the statutes, and they will be according to the written Word.

We should recognise the two principles of union and mediation. Besides His mediation for us, between the two parties, as Aaron, He has, in His own person, all the promises of God; and if I am in Christ, I get the promises too; I get them in union with Him, all the promises of God, &c. (or the difference between righteousness and priesthood). I get righteousness as being united to Him, it is already settled, and then I am in the presence of God righteous, as He is righteous,—accepted *in* the beloved, righteous in His righteousness. But besides this, I have mediation to maintain my communion, because of what I really am; the blood was a token, but was soon forgotten; but this was all before the Red Sea. Pharaoh, and the Canaanites,—very different types of

Satan. Israel were slaves to Pharaoh, but were conquerors of the Canaanites.

Covenant is not promise; *diatheekee*, is just covenant, —anything revealed for all. Unless we can tell what it is to have nothing, and yet possess all things, we cannot understand covenant. All arises from the union of the Church with the Lord Jesus Christ; everything is mine,—glory, resurrection,—everything. There was no covenant made with man,—a mere sentence passed upon Satan; the covenant is with the Lord Jesus Christ. To Abraham, a promise, which is confirmed to the seed in the accomplishment of obedience,—and the obedience of Christ is ours. "In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed," Acts iii. Paul says, "Not of seeds, as of many," &c.; the true seed was Christ, the true Isaac, the laughter of heaven and earth. It is only in the Spirit, and by the Spirit, that we enter into this, because it is all in heaven. Israel could have no blessing, but in Jesus; no covenant, old or new, independent of Him; whatever blessing we get, it is in connection with Him. In Matt. the blood of the new covenant is spoken of as "shed," not the new covenant made. Whatever promises there may be, they are all in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of God by us.

Wherever we cannot speak as the oracles of God, we should be silent; nothing hinders light to our souls more than playing with unascertained truth. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word."

The Bride of the Lamb.

THE Lamb's bride is distinctly the heavenly Jerusalem, the heavenly companion of her Lord, quite distinct from Messiah's kingdom. Jerusalem is the earthly counterpart of the Lamb's bride. In our thoughts about these things, I feel that we do not keep the earthly Zion distinctly in her right place. In tracing her history as the centre of Messiah's kingdom on the earth, we see that she is to be lifted up in a very especial way, to catch the glory of the heavenly bride. The earthly Zion will be lifted up, as a royal diadem in the hand of her God; glory will be her covering, and the nations will be coming up to worship at Jerusalem. Thus a heavenly link will be established between them. It will not be then, "the gospel of the *grace* of God;" but, the gospel of the *glory* of God. We can trace the bride from Genesis to Revelation, till we get her as the heavenly thing in glory, and that closes the book of God. In the description of the heavenly city, we find everything is perfect, everything that can delight the hearts of the saints. To take a right view of you, beloved, I should come forth from the counsels of God, and this would be a Pisgah view. It is blessed to get a Pisgah view, or glimpse of the glory. It was such a view as this that Paul had, when he exclaimed, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

&c. I judge, beloved, that the history of the family would not be a suitable conclusion to the whole book of God. I feel there are parts of God's Word that are passed over, and I do feel a sort of secret pride to vindicate the neglected parts of the Word of God, and to rescue them from the dishonour done to them. Often have I found that out of these parts have come especial sweetness; and that by being pressed upon, and bruised a little, have become the most precious grains in the granary of God. What we get in Rev. xxii., is not the *family* taken home, but the manifestation in full of *God's Work*,—the law manifested man. The Lord Jesus Christ was the manifestation of the Father and the Son. But at the last, we shall have the manifestation of the Church's glory in connection with the earth. I see three pathways to glory. The first path of the Church, will be upward to meet her Lord in the air; her second, will be into the Father's house, there to be presented to the Father, and there she will be married; her third path, will be to come forth with Jesus as her Lord and her husband, to enter with Him into the possession of His glory. The golden city, I judge to be the place of the kings and priests. It is the place out of which the light goeth forth; it is the dispensation of blessing. All that goes out of it will be blessing; all that comes into it will be blessing. The people walking in it, will walk there with all the consciousness of their royal dignity, Now we never find God, when He brings out any new thing, sacrificing that which He had brought out before. We see Him taking with Him, as He travels on through each succeeding dispensation, carrying the light of that which is past into that which is to succeed it. And thus, beloved, will it be with us, as we travel with our Lord into the different paths of glory, we shall not leave anything behind. When we enter with Him

into the golden city, we shall not lose any of the home joys of the Father's house. I was much struck with what our brother said, of the beautiful picture that is given to us in the little story of the prodigal of the mind of our Lord. As when the father brought his son, and presented him in his house, he adorned him with his best things; so, when the Lamb presents His bride before the world, there is no ornament that He has that He will not adorn her with; there is not a bit of glory and beauty of His own that He has not put on her. And yet it is not her beauty that He loves, so much as *herself*. He cared not for her rags and her defilement when He loved her. He scanctified and cleansed her, with the washing of water by the Word, because He loved her. I do believe this to be the deepest thought, beloved, that you can have. He loves you, not because of the grace you may have, but it is *yourself*. He calls us mother, sister, brother. His love for us engrosses every form of affection, also the nearest ties of relationship. He loved the Church, because He had ever put a bit of beauty on it. The whole scene closes with the Lamb getting up on the throne. When the people are got ready, and the scene is made ready, then you have the kingdom. As to the Jewish remnant, I believe they will pass through a great deal of preparatory discipline, and a great mass of Scripture is taken up with describing this preparation, so careful is God in His discipline of the Jews. In Psalm xliv. we read, "For thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter." In the first book of Samuel, we get Saul made the occasion of displacing David; in the second book, Absalom is used by God for the same purpose. In the first instance, we see David as a martyr, suffering for righteousness; in the second, as a penitent. And so it is in this way, under the type of David, that the

remnant will be so sweetly exercised. When David was suffering under Saul, there was no comfort that his soul did not lay hold of, everything that could link his soul with God, knowing that he had a right to it all. But when suffering under Absalom for his sins, he knew he had no title to consolation, and put it all beyond him for the present, till the Lord had restored him to favour. Let us then be prepared for all this variety in the Psalms,—in some pleading righteousness, in some confessing sins, in some expressing confidence in God. If then we have the character of the remnant, let us have the testimony of a good conscience, and there is no height or depth that we shall not fathom, because we have confidence in God. It was in the time of David's sin and sorrow, that we see more of his confidence in God. If, like David, we have sinned, we must, like David, return to our first works, and travel up the mount in sackcloth. I believe the establishment of the kingdom is in preparing the remnant. We find the people getting ready by a process of most blessed discipline, and then we find the scene closed by the destruction of the enemies. The eye of the gazing disciples followed their Lord up in the air, but could not pierce the cloud; but in Psalm cx. David did pierce the cloud, and saw the Lord on the throne. When the disciples asked our Lord about the *time* in which He would restore again the kingdom to Israel, He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." He instructed them in the character of His coming, though not about the time. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Now in this Psalm we find it written, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, *until* I make thine enemies thy footstool." The structure of this little

Psalm is quite perfect. The first verse carries Adam (man) up to the throne of God. Then we find God pledging Himself to Adonai, and telling him from 1–5 what is provided for him. In verse 5 it is written, "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath," &c. "He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up the head." He engages to remove every hindrance, and to bring Him into the inheritance. It is beautiful, the prophet looking up and seeing the Lord on the throne. Beloved, all we want in travelling up to these is unshod feet, and sure I am that there is no limit to the height we may get at. Get yourselves but *unshod*, and I say it is a base fear that would keep you from taking these journeys. We see that it is the Father who gives the title, and the Son takes the power. It is not that the Lord Jesus has *now* begun His judgment of His enemies. He has not yet put them under His feet; but He is waiting in grace, and the word now is, "The longsuffering of God is salvation."

As to the duration of Messiah's kingdom, those words in Psalm lxxii., "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun,"—I think the Spirit defines here *how long* His kingdom will continue, "as long as the *sun;*" that is, till the heaven and earth shall pass away, and God will be all in all. We are here, beloved, to help one another's joy in the discovery of truth; and though there may exist little differences in our views, they need not cause a ruffle.

Will the standing of the saints differ? The *earthly* saints will, I judge, walk in all the power of the recovered affections of human life; but this is not the character of joy that will be known by the Church. It is not that we undervalue natural affections now,—for it is a sin to be without them,—but we are not

henceforth to know any man after the flesh; but with the earthly people in the kingdom, there will be an enjoyment of all these affections. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. When the apostacy among the Jews came in, it was no longer, "Blessed art thou," &c., but rather, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." As to the fitting posture of the saints, I should say if we are children in the Father's house, let us encourage the affections and temper of children; if we are the bride, let us be waiting for the day of our espousals. The day of the wedded pair is not yet come; let us therefore be waiting for it; and, beloved, it is no pain to us in parting, to know that we may go forth and acquaint ourselves more with Jesus, and to show forth more of the attractive beauty of our Lord.

Joshua iii.

THE Book of Genesis begins with man created in *uprightness;* then comes the fall; then God's remedy for that, in the promise of Jesus and in His election of a people. In Exodus, we see His actual deliverance of His elect out of Egypt. In Leviticus, there is the exhibition of the priestly character, and the institution of sacrifices to meet the daily need of His elect people. In Numbers, we get their trials and failure in the wilderness. In Deuteronomy, after the experience of Israel in the wilderness, we get God's relief for their failure in His own grace. It is beautiful to me to see God's grace witnessed to; and the order of these books to my soul is most blessed, as setting forth Moses, Aaron, and Joshua, in their typical character and action. Moses is represented as the redeemer and kinsman of *the heir*, doing his redemption work; but we want Joshua to redeem the *inheritance*, and bring the heir into it. This we find in the Book of Joshua, which therefore closes the action of God. Between the time of the redemption of *the heir* out of Egypt, and the redemption of *the inheritance* out of the hand of the Amorite, we have the wilderness; and it is here that we have sympathy with Israel, not in Egypt, because the blood had delivered them actually out of it. We do not know Canaan fully yet, because we are not yet

brought into the land, and this gives us sympathy with Israel *in the wilderness.* The more we act as redeemed ones, the more we shall know this to be the wilderness, and be like Israel, who were taught that all their resources lay in the hands of the blessed God, and that when they get into the land they might not forget the wilderness. They learned the grace of God there, just meeting them in their necessity ; and wonderful to say, they learned their own glory there, *there* they became the priests of the Lord. We, like them, beloved, are learning our joy in the wilderness, and teach our glory in this apostate world. We learn our glory by the Holy Ghost, our oneness with Christ, the hope that takes us up to heaven. There are two lessons that the wilderness has to teach us,—*grace* and *glory ;* and our happiness is to learn them. When Israel came to the banks of Jordan, there was a *new thing.* Joshua had now to deliver the inheritance out of the hands of the enemy, and God meets him, with the gracious expression, "As I have been with Moses, so will I be with thee." It is a blessed thing for us that God only knows Himself as meeting our necessity. When Israel was in the furnace, God knew *Himself* in the burning bush ; thus choosing the insignificant bush, which we might suppose would be easily trampled upon, or consumed, to prove His strength perfect in their weakness. It was unconsumed, and therefore they were unconsumed. When they wanted guidance, He knew Himself in the cloudy pillar going before, and directing them in their path. And when they came to Jericho, He knew Himself as the man of war. Thus we see God knowing Himself, and making Himself known, according to the circumstances of their need ; and under whatever circumstances of danger or difficulty we may find ourselves, let us take for our especial comfort the assurance, "I will never

leave thee, nor forsake thee;" so that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me." And whatever our necessity may be, we shall find Him in all His anxiousness proving that He has never exhausted His resources, or the faithfulness of His love. Now I see that the waters of Jordan must be parted, and this could not be done till the *feet of the priests* had touched the waters. The Red Sea was parted by the simple shepherd's rod of Moses; but another power must act on Jordan. It waits for the *holy priesthood.* And we, beloved, are just waiting for our own fulness, till the holy priesthood of the Son is completed, then shall the waters part hither and thither to let the Church of God go up into the Father's house. We do not know exactly what was *Joshua's* purpose in sending the spies into Canaan, but doubtless the Lord and Joshua were in co-operation here, though undoubtedly the *Lord's* thoughts overpassed Joshua's. It is *the Lord's* thoughts we have to do with. There was a little circumstance to be transacted before Israel could enter the land, before Jericho could be destroyed, and this was the saving of a poor sinner, the harlot Rahab. And it is for such work as this, the testifying of God's grace to sinners, that we are left here. Our proper joy is, waiting to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; but if He tarries, to rejoice that the delay of our joy is to bring the grace of God to poor lost sinners, accounting that the long-suffering of God is salvation. Such should be the position of the saints, either looking for the approach of glory, or else for the outward path of testimony to sinners through the blood. It is written, that they came to a harlot's house named Rahab and lodged there. She had heard that the Lord was with Joshua; upon this her faith rested; so she received the men, disobeyed her king,

and sent his messengers back with a lie. Rahab, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of her house. Surely fear may be a base root, but the Lord will not despise it. She confessed their hearts did melt with fear, when they heard of the Lord's dealings with Israel; wherefore she says, "I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: and that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee." There was another reason for faith, she had faith in the word of the men, and she wished to save her family as well as herself. I know not what made Joshua choose these men, but certainly they were beautiful men; they were firm representatives of the camp of God; they needed not to go back to Joshua to know his mind; they carried the thoughts of Joshua with them, they knew his willingness to save. And we, like them, carry the thoughts of our Joshua with us, and are not afraid to pledge the grace of God to the poor sinner. Indeed, beloved, these were fine men, their graces were as large as their desires. "Our lives for yours," they answered. She binds the scarlet line on her window, and was just as safe in the devoted city of Jericho as she could have been in the heart of the camp, or under the banner of Joshua. The scarlet line to her was as the blood-sprinkled door, or the city of refuge; and as the blood of Jesus puts us to rest, and enables us to sit and sing of redemption, so it was with her, she knew no fear. Like Noah in the ark, she was now above the billows that were round her, and could

think of the grace that had saved her. When the grace of God had just brought in the one that had faith, they entered the land. Now, beloved, these are the paths in which we should move ; either waiting to be taken up, or going here and there seeking poor Rahabs, to tell them that there is salvation in Israel, pledging the mercy of God on His own eternal faithfulness. Oh may we in spirit know more of the upward path to glory, and of those outward paths of mercy and blessing to poor sinners.

The Knowledge of our Present Standing.

MANY of you here, beloved, have not perhaps been travelling up with us, into the knowledge of our present standing, and therefore up to the present time have perhaps been strangers to the conclusions we have been brought to. But being brought into a blessed oneness in the knowledge of the Father, and oneness with the Son,—one with Him who is on the throne, one with Him when He comes to be glorified in His saints,—we have been led on in further discoveries of truth. If we have felt one time more a moment of interest than another, it is now that our minds are directed to the question, Whether we have a right to expect to be taken up into our glory without any intervening contingencies? The Word of God in this, as in everything else, is the only abiding rule for all our hearts and judgments; and here I would add a word, which is one of much comfort to my own soul, that we carry within us "the seed of God," and the wicked one toucheth it not. We carry also another character of glory with us, and that is, "the mind of Christ." Yet this is hindered by the flesh, and with the darkness that remaineth in us, therefore we have need to stir up one another. Still, through our want of perfect intelligence, we must expect to find differences of judgment. If I hear anything from the mouth of my brother which shakes my judgment, I must try it by the Word.

The whole dispensation may be said to be one great day,—"Knowing that it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." We do not understand our position in Christ aright, if we do not see that the presence of the Holy Ghost in us gives us the character of those who have entered on "the day." "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Only look out, beloved, and you will see the light breaking through us, in the chamber windows, and it becomes us to arouse one another, knowing that the day draweth nigh. The Scriptures tell us that we are in the last times, and this gives us an identity with our brethren, though they lived hundreds of years ago. We find in 2 Tim. ii. 18, &c., that the error of "the resurrection" being "passed already," brought out that *great house.* The Church was getting down from her high standing, and acting as if she were entitled to use all the things around her, and to be kings already; and I believe the Lord will find the great house, with all its impure furniture, when He comes. The Book of the Revelation I judge to be a book of judgment. In this book we learn about God. In John we learn the Father. I do confess I love the atmosphere of my Father's house; I love to dwell on the Father's character; yet I believe we have also to learn *God.* The lesson given us now to learn, is the patience of Jesus Christ in God, and this is to be learned in communion with the Father; and what we have to do, beloved, is to look into such a revelation of Jesus Christ as God has given us. We find in what different ways the energy of the Spirit led Jeremiah and Ezekiel. While Jeremiah was weeping *among* the ruins, we see Ezekiel standing *above* them; and when Jerusalem was no longer fit for the glory of God to rest on it, he sees with joy the cherubim departing from it, and ascending up to the

throne in the temple above. In the Book of Revelation I judge, beloved, that we get not the weeping Jeremiah, but the triumphs of Ezekiel. In chap. i. we get our Lord as the Priest in the sanctuary, walking among the candlesticks, not with the golden oil, but with the snuffers, to see if they will burn, and if not, to judge them. Having put the candlesticks on their responsibility, He comes and says to them, "Give me an account of your stewardship;" or as when God said, "Adam, where art thou?" So I believe the candlesticks have been tried; they could not answer the challenge, and therefore were judged unworthy of their place. What should we do in such a position? We should humble ourselves, and not rejoice as if all were right. And though we may see here and there a little to be thankful for, yet to feel that the Church is a broken thing. Chapters iv. and v. form a preface to the second scene of judgment. In chapter iv. I judge we get the throne of Him to whom all, by right of *creation*, belongs. We see the rainbow, which was the sign of God's covenant *with the earth*, round about the throne. "Out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices." In chapters vi., vii., and viii. we have the power by which this is to be effected. Let us now turn for a little to Psalms xxiii. and xxiv., which, I believe, bear the same relation to each other as the Gospel of John does to the Book of Revelation. Psalm xxiii. beautifully harmonises with the Gospel by John, and describes the Shepherd by the way of goodness and mercy leading up the Church into the Father's house. Psalm xxiv. is altogether of another character, and represents the Church as led up into the holy hill, or the golden city. The question is, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place?" Who shall be found worthy to take the place of dominion on

the earth that Adam forfeited? It was God's good pleasure to set up an image of Himself in Adam, and He has set it up again in Christ. We find a question very similar to this in Rev. v. 2, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" Who shall stand as the image of the blessed Creator on the earth? Just as John's Gospel leads us up to the Father's house, so I judge that the Book of Revelation prepares the way of the Church from the Father's house into the golden city. It is that which I believe governs the whole of the actions of this book, the inheritance got out of the hand of the enemy, and made ready for the Church to enter upon and shine forth in all the glory of the golden city. In chapter iv., in the elders, we get ourselves. Then the cherubims, these we always see attendant upon the pleasure of God, always fulfilling His mind and will. We see them executors of His wrath in the Garden of Eden, standing with the flaming sword. Again we see them shadowing the mercy-seat. These cherubims were made out of the *matter* of the mercy-seat, showing their reflection of the mind of Him who sat between the cherubims, as it were delighting and searching into the secrets of the mercy-seat. We get them again in Ezekiel. The temple was now become a defiled place, where the Spirit of God could find no rest, and what do we find the cherubims doing? Not, as before, delighting in the mercy-seat, but doing His holy pleasure, and stretching out their wings to throw over the devoted city. The Lord has two thoughts of glory for His saints,—the first is, that they should be co-heirs with the Son; the second is, their entering into the place of true joy and glory; and then we shall see the angels opening their ranks to let once defiled sinners go in, and they must surround us, as they now surround the Lamb. The Lord's title to the king-

dom we see in chapter v. is settled *in heaven*, and the next thing is, the action of the Lord. He takes the book. We find two voices owning the power as lodged in Jesus, and saying that all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. But the moment that *God* owns it, *all* will be compelled to own it too. And this is the way that God settles everything in righteousness. The Church is now made the witness for the displaying of this truth, as we find Paul writing to the Ephesian Church in chapter iii. 10, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." In chapter v. of Revelation I see the angels having learned the lesson, and following in the train of the Church. When the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders, sing the new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made them unto our God kings and priests," &c., then the angels join, saying, with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." I believe the Church to be taken up at some undefined moment between chapters iii. and iv. When we perceive the truth of the martyred remnant among the Jews, we get a key to much that would be otherwise unintelligible to us. The Church, I believe, to be taken out of all the transactions in judgment of this book after the third chapter. The Church of God, beloved, is a very tender and delicate plant, and we should take care how we mix her up with the political revolutions of this world. When we speak of her, it should be in a very gentle, delicate way. We never find the elders stepping down to the earth, but

always surrounding the throne ; though we see them at times coming forth in peculiar expressions of their joy, as in chapter vii., when they beheld the multitude redeemed with the blood of the Lamb. We get them again in chapter xi. coming forward to express their joy when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, saying, "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come ; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." And again, in chapter xix., was heard the voice as of a great multitude, coming out of the throne, saying, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Thus we find that while the elders are always happy, yet there are times when they know particular elevations of joy ; and this, beloved, is very sweet, they are always round the throne engaged in this joy, and in that intelligence. I judge the Revelation to be like the Book of Joshua,—taking the inheritance out of the hand of the enemy, and this goes on from chapter vi. to xix. The Lord will not take up Israel till the fulness of the Gentiles is come in. Then we get the judgment of the earth. I do not believe that the Church will have anything to do with this judgment on the earth, but the Jews, as it is written, "In Judah were the instruments of his power." I believe we get in Enoch and Noah types of the Church and Israel ; while Noah was preserved through the judgment, I find Enoch was taken out of it. In the opening of chapter vi., I believe we are standing much in the same position as the disciples were in Acts i., for signs to Jerusalem. The seals govern the action of the whole book, and I believe an answer to the disciples' question in Matt. xxiv. 3, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the age ?"

This chapter of Matthew, I believe, the Church has nothing to do with. We do not find the mercy of God exhausted till the end of the Book of Joshua, and so it is not till we get to the Revelation that we see the Church as the heir, the bride of the Lamb, taken up into the golden city. I believe this book to be just the Joshua of the New Testament. In chapter xix. we have the marriage of the Lamb. I judge the marriage takes place in the Father's house. No doubt He will by and by come down to the earth, but that is not what we have to do with, beloved. We look for His touching the *air*, and for our being caught up to meet Him; the trumpet will sound, not for our meeting Him in Jerusalem, but *in the air*. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will *come again*, and receive you unto *myself;* that where *I am*, *there* ye may be also" (John xiv. 2-3). And do not we know that He went to the Father's house? I see that there are two pathways to glory,—first, when the Lord comes to meet us to receive us *to* Himself; the second, when we travel *with* Him from the Father's house into the golden city. Thus, in the same way, we see our Lord Himself making a pause after His resurrection, before he ascended to the Father. In chapter xix. we first get the marriage, and then the Church preparing to take her stand in the glory. In chapter xx. we find her in the kingdom, as it is written, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." They shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. When the kingdom comes, the ladder will take its proper place, the top will be set in heaven, the bottom of it on the earth, then

will be seen the heavens open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. Do you not delight, beloved, in the thought of all submitting to the sceptre of righteousness in the hands of "the Beloved?" It is not only the throne of God, as in chapter iv., but here it is the throne of God and the Lamb. All is now contributing to prepare the throne, not for Him who created all things, but also for the Lamb. Then it will be universally declared who is *the worthy one;* then will be sung that song of triumph and of joy, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." Above everything, beloved, let our hearts be right with the *promises* of God. Let it be our joy to be for ever and ever by the side of Him, who gave up everything for the love that he had to the Church. It is to such a one that we are betrothed. The time of the marriage is not yet come; this is the time of our betrothment, the season in which we may be occupied in learning one another, in learning all the devoted ways of that love to get us for Himself. It is not that we are the bride of a glorious King, but we are nothing less than this, "*The Lamb's bride;*" and may our hearts, beloved, be unceasingly breaking out, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Deuteronomy xxvi.-xxxiv.

THERE is one thing we must remember in God's dealings with His people, that is, that we have reached God. We are far gone, and upon the ground of this the gospel comes in to tell us what God is, beloved; and on our part, the thing to be proved by us is, that we have reached God. We find that, having God, we have everything, a fulness to supply every emergency. What thought had a Sadducee of God? No right thought at all, beloved. So the Grecians at Corinth (1 Cor. xv.), "Some have not the knowledge of God, I speak this to your shame." When the Apostle was expressing the state of the Gentiles in Ephesus, it was "without God and without hope in the world;" and in 2 Thess. i., "them that know not God." There, again, he charges them with simple abstract atheism; and why so? Because the gospel is such a provision for all man's necessities, that it brings in God; and where does His glory shine, but in the face of Jesus Christ? so that whosoever does not believe the gospel, rejects God. And these two are so intimately connected, that He cannot reveal Himself without revealing the ground of our hope. God is love, and it must be so. The gospel comes, not to bring ourselves to our view, but to bring God; and faith, whether it be weak or strong, gets this blessing. God forbid that anything should be said that could check the poorest and weakest saint! What does faith do? Why, it just presents God to Himself, just presents to God His own remedy, nothing of ours. Christ crucified and Christ risen was preached to Adam, and Abel believed

it; and all religion in the family of God has been the same from that day to this; and God will own no principle of religion but this, from that day to the endless ages of eternity. But Cain would not take God's remedy, but chose his own; Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness; and when Abraham in Gen. xvi. had fallen into Cain's state, the Lord reveals Himself to him in chapter xviii., "Walk *before Me*, and be thou perfect." And what do we find? He falls upon his face and worships God. And what can we do, beloved, but fall down before God, and tell Him what He is Himself; and nothing will give the soul a graceful ease in its movements towards God, but this simplicity of faith. In delivering Israel, the Lord only knew Himself, and in His own grace delivered them; but at Mount Sinai we find Cain-work again, but still God rises above it; and however the people throw themselves into the fires of Sinai, He cannot but act in grace. In connection with these things, in Deut. xxvi. 1-11, we see the covenant that put God and the people together. Now, beloved, nothing can exceed the blessedness of that; there is not a religion of grace under the sun but this. The principle of every religion of human nature is, "Thou art a hard and austere master;" but here are the people worshipping God, by bringing the full basket to present to Him of what He had given them. And on the same principle, beloved, we come presenting Jesus to God; it is not the first-fruits of the land, it is only to come acknowledging "a Syrian, ready to perish, was my father," in the simple consciousness of His love, and that is worship. Beloved, I know no other principle of worship than this, to bring the full basket, to say "a Syrian, ready to perish, was my father;" but Thou hast brought me to Jesus, Thou hast brought me to a land

flowing with milk and honey, Thou hast given me Jesus. And now as to the verses following this,— 12-15,—we must come, as Israel did, with clean hands to compass His altar, we must not regard iniquity in our hearts—(Pilate washed his hands, but there was iniquity in his heart); we must be able to say, as Israel did then, "Look down from Thy holy habitation," chap. xxvii. From henceforth to the close of the book, we have a beautiful exhibition of what God is; and oh! beloved, how blessed it is to know that we have reached God, and done with ourselves. Well now, we have the ten words inscribed upon the tables of stone; but where are they put, beloved? They are put at once, without trial, upon the mount of curse, and it comes as a warning that the result of the trial must be a curse; as the Apostle says, "All that are under the law are under the curse." · But the Lord has taken His stand (in principle, I mean, of course) upon Mount Gerizim. He speaks of nothing but grace, of nothing but blessing. In Heb. ii., while the law was the thing ministered, let the angels take it, let Moses take it; but when it is grace, the Son takes it, the Spirit bears witness to it. Where does the law come from? from His *hand;* but the gospel comes from the depth of *the heart* of God. The only begotten Son, who is in *the bosom* of the Father, hath declared it; and while my conscience stands in company with the throne of God, my heart, my affections, stand in company with the bosom of the Father. Chapter xxviii. was just Gerizim and Ebal in another style. In chapter xxix., and onward to xxxii., there is a great transition. It is the thoughts of God, as it were, passing from the law unto grace, and it gleams forth here and there, but not distinctly. It was an awkward thing to get grace into the hands of the Legislator, but we do here and there get faint traces of it. The pillar of the

cloud was one of the expressions of the grace of Him who was carrying them through the desert; it stood in company with the manna, the ark of the testimony, and all that was the expression of grace. In the song of Moses, mercy rejoices against judgment; but there is another note to be heard, beloved. In verses 42 and 43, the Lord shows what His plan is. Let Moses and the law go to Mount Ebal, He takes His place upon Mount Gerizim with the pillar of cloud for His companion. The gospel, beloved, is God dispensing Himself, giving Himself. In chapter xxxiii., the earthly people are brought into the inheritance and blessed. If you travel through this 33d of Deuteronomy, it is all blessing. Compare this with Genesis xlix.; Dan has recovered his place, so to speak, he has leaped back from Mount Ebal to Mount Gerizim; the fruit of this song, mercy rejoicing, against judgment. Did you ever mark in that lovely song of Hannah, beloved, it is the Lord that is the theme of her song? So here, so Samuel, it is Ebenezer, it is a witness to the Lord; and so it will be to eternity, beloved. You may enjoy the glory you are brought into, but you will celebrate nothing but the blood that brings you there. In the last chapter, we get Moses, who lost the land, who died on the other side Jordan, brought up to an elevation beyond all that passed the banks of Jordan. He is taken up as the representative of the heavenly calling of the Church. It was his own want of faith that kept him back, but out of the eater we find meat brought forth. He lost the earth, it is true, but he got the heavenly glory. May the breathing of our hearts be, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee." Then, though flesh and heart fail, we may still say, "God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

The Glory of the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.

PERHAPS no one subject is more replete with blessedness than the glory of the *Bride*, the *Lamb's Wife.* Whether we look at the grace that first brought us into it, or whether we look at the unfoldings of this love in the glory of the marriage; however we look at it, it is just marvellous! We are left in astonishing wonder. It is just, dear friends, as we become familiar with it, just as attention is directed to the sources, the springs of the joys of the bride, that we shall not only see the amazing joy that belongs to her, but we shall see ourselves cut off from the world. And this is why it is peculiarly blessed to my own soul, to trace this love where it rises, and to follow it to all the glory that it leads to. It fills me with wonder! The source of Jewish glory was *in time.* The Lord made himself known from time to time to the prophets. When He came to Moses, He spake thus:—"I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." As *this* God, he came to send them out of Egypt. He divided the nations among them, and gave them Canaan (as He had promised) for their possession. Still, His love to them was altogether *in time.* They could not go back further than Abraham. The covenant with him was the highest bond of Jewish blessing, and was still in connection with earth. Eph. i. shews us that the foundation of *our* joy

and blessing is much deeper. It takes me up into the bosom of the Father; it shews me that in Jesus we have the spring of all the Church's blessing; it shews me that the Church is infinitely beyond anything connected with *time*. We read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Now when I trace up, dear friends, the line of blessing belonging to the Church, I find that it has its rise, not in Abraham, but in God Himself. These are things especially blessed to my soul, to know that it is altogether divine, altogether heavenly. In the book of Genesis, we shall find everything there moulded with the eye of God resting on the glory of the Church in Jesus,—the mind of God overruling everything in Creation, which was to be gradually tenfolding the riches of Redemption. First, we see Adam out of his sleep, representing a state of weakness and humiliation, getting a helpmeet for him. Here, my beloved friends, we have the blessed action of God. Who dictated to Him the form of creation? It was His own mind, and it was to represent the glory of Christ and the Church. But when we get to Gen. ii., we find enough to make us silent with amazement. There we see God shewing forth to us the beauty and glory of His own grace. In Heb. ii. we read, "he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." All this riches of grace came out from the Father. We are told that Abraham sent for a wife for his son Isaac; this God did when He gave the Church to Jesus. When the time for the marriage is come, and for which we are waiting, how wonderful will be our portion, beloved! The most glorious thing of all will be the *person of Jesus.* Is it not so, that the thing the wife values above all else that she has, is the person of her lord? She shares

with him in all that he has,—his possessions, his house are hers; but she does not rest her affections on these. She knows that she has them, but she is *the wife;* and it is that which gives joy to her heart. This love is beautifully unfolded to us in Solomon's Song; there are the daughters of Jerusalem, but there is one above these. It is *her* beauty that he wonders at. I think I see Adam set forth as the *strong* one, while she is the *beautiful* one. Now the glory of the Bride is, that she has the person of the Lord. The joy of the Church, as the Bride, is, that she will be *like Him*, and see Him as He is. There will be no loveliness in Jesus then that she will not have too. His name will be written on her forehead. She will be no longer in disguise. All the moral glory, and moral beauty of her beloved, will be hers. We shall then be altogether like Him, and be able to know all the glory of Jesus. Where do we now read the Father, but in the face of Jesus? God hath now given us the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. But it is when we *see Him*, that we shall be like Him; not as he was once, His visage marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men. There will be nothing then to hinder the going forth of all the fulness of the Father's love. We see Jesus not making much of His own love, but shewing out the Father's. I do judge, dear friends, that we ought to know our proper portion, and that is, the person of Jesus. I agree with what has been said about Messiah's kingdom. I believe that if we can realize the glory of the Bride in connection with present humiliation, we shall find that it will separate us from everything here. Our glory comes down out of God, and has altogether to do with the person of Jesus, and this cuts us off from every thing earthly; this will just lift us up altogether, and give us power over all

circumstances. It is only as we realize the power of the glory, that we shall be able to remedy the things that are wrong; and it is by realising the power of our union with Christ, that we shall separate from the world, and this will unite us to one another. If we look at our beloved friends as forming part of the glory of Jesus, I am sure that we could not suffer any thing to come in to separate us from each other.

Truth Learned in Communion with God.

THERE is one thing that binds our affections to all the family of God, the knowledge that we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. But as to this *knowledge*, when we come in the power of the Spirit, we do not look at truth save in connection with God. The value of truth is, that I get it in communion with God. The basis of this dispensation is Jesus and the resurrection; and I say, beloved friends, that it is only as we get into the power of this that we can know the power of communion with God, and grow in the knowledge of truth. The Lord met Peter, and gave him a commission; He met John, and gave him one; and He gave Paul a commission too; but I see a distinct character in each of them, though they were all given in the resurrection life. To Peter He says, "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs," especially directing him to look to the house of Israel. Paul's commission was based on the resurrection too, but he was to be a witness of something further still; Jesus at the right hand of God, was the truth he was called to be a witness to. Then our Lord seems to send John on a new commission, also based on the resurrection, but a new commission, and one that went still deeper; it was based on the *love of God*. And so it is, beloved, the more we find out the guilt of man, the more we find coming out the depths of the grace of God. Little did the Jews think, when they crucified

Jesus, that they were striking their shafts into the bosom of the Father. When the Lord manifested Himself to John, when banished to the Isle of Patmos for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus, standing *in the midst* of the seven golden candlesticks, the object that John was first struck with when he turned round, was the *person of Jesus.* Then we have the effect of the presence of Jesus on John, the beloved disciple: "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." And then we get something, which to my own soul is peculiarly blessed. Jesus stretches out the pierced hand, and says unto him, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." Nothing changes the *first and the last.*

I do not think the epistles to the seven churches are given to us as a guide for discipline. We see throughout the addresses the gradual progress of evil, and in the midst of surrounding declension the Lord seems to direct the faithful ones to Himself, as one in whom they will find a position *suited* to their need. He comes forth to tell them, that though lost in everything that was outward, they had their portion in Him. The Lamb *is* the Head of the Church, He is the one in whose heart the Church dwells; but I see Him in chapter iv. as the Lamb in *the midst of the throne.* In chap. vi. I see saints not in glory, but "the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held," under the altar, crying to the Lord to avenge their blood on them that dwell on the earth; and it was said unto them, that they should rest for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed, as they were, should be fulfilled. I judge the four first seals to be providential trial, and not judgment. The Church cannot be in the judgment; and until I saw the truth of

the *remnant*, I thought otherwise. In chapter viii. we find Jesus standing at the altar exercising the office of High Priest, in intercession for His saints. And in the same chapter we get the pouring out of the judgment, which is a proof that the Church cannot be in them. But we do read of saints being on the earth at that time. The Jews could not be called *the saints* now, but after the Church is removed, they will then be the saints. There is one thing that I have been especially struck with, and that is the importance of remembering that it is the mind of God we have to learn, which we cannot do from isolated portions of Scripture, but from the united testimony of the Word. I see nothing that stands between me and the Lord's coming *for me;* and come when He may, I have the certain knowledge of having Jesus, and with Him of having *all things*.

A few Words on the Scriptures.

THE Scriptures are the means by which God speaks to our consciences. They speak judgment on all around. The knowledge of them brings us into new things, into a new place. They give us the mind of God; our God providing the fulness of His own mind to detect the evil that is around us. They lead the saints on in their circumstances here. "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). When truth comes from the Spirit, it is truth *in Jesus*, glorifying Christ; truth *set up in Him*, and that is truth. The child of God can rest on it. The character of the Spirit's teaching is, *Jesus risen*. When we get into the truth of Jesus set in heaven, we never lose it (Eph. i. 18, &c.). This is a standing thing for a child of God never to lose, and that is the Spirit's teaching. The power of this truth enabled the apostles to witness against apostate things, and brought them into the hope of future things.

IN the close of Matthew xii., we find our Lord passing condemnation on the generation of the flesh. Though He had before been subject to His parents, yet now, having taken a new standing, and being in new

standing and circumstances, He looks at the new family and says, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." The new thing that we get into now is, in principle, the "whosoever." Matthew xiii. brings out all the principles of this. We get the mystery connected with the field, and we get the children gathered out of it; and here we see the double character of mystery. We get first Christ and the Church in it, and we have Satan's working too; and that is what is going on in the field in connection with the present dispensation. One is set up in the *resurrection*, connected with the mercy of God; the other is set up in the flesh, and therefore cannot get beyond the flesh. It is the *other side* of the flesh, that our Lord begins the parable of the sower. The word was planted *in them*, it was quickened in them, the word communicated life to them. The parable of the sower brings out the grace of God, and the enemy's effort to neutralise it. But the disciples had no intelligence about it. They had not got beyond the flesh. When our Lord spoke to them about the cross, they were offended, they did not know what they were brought into. They did not understand then the love of God to the sinner, as meeting him in all his misery; they did not know anything about the resurrection. The word of the risen Son of God gives nothing to the flesh, tells the saint to mortify it, and brings him beyond it. The word to the Church at Smyrna was, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Here was the grain of mustard seed. It was sown, but it grew badly; it grew into a great tree. The Son of man would not rest in it, but the birds of the air lodged in the branches of it. Now they could not have lodged

in a grain of mustard seed, but they could in a great tree. This was a warning given to the saints, not to rest in it. The parable of the woman hiding the leaven, I believe to be parallel with the woman in Zechariah v. These parables, I do not think, are preceptive, but prophetic. It is the Lord telling His disciples what the enemy would do. The treasure which the man found and hid, I believe to be the children of God; they get their resting-place, their names are written in the Lamb's book of life. He hid them; the field was not hid, but the treasure found in it. Satan may try and spoil the field, but our comfort is He "knoweth them that are his," and the Lord's own are hid in a hidden place of blessing. In these parables therefore we get two things,—the Lord's working, and the development of the working of Satan. Let us beware of everything of Satan's working; we see much of it in these days. Temperance, for example, is a good thing, and the children of God are to be temperate in all things; but if there is an association for temperance, set up in the flesh, and the name of the risen Jesus is not in it, then it becomes a bad thing. Judas could not get any fruit from his intercourse with Jesus, because he did not get beyond the flesh.

Is the Honour and Power of this World any part of the Endowment of the Saints, according to the Word?

I FEEL this question to be one of immense practical importance. When the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, the Jews — as they had done before, when they said to God, "All that thou hast said unto us we will do"—asked Jesus, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? Man flatters himself, that all that is necessary for him to know is, what *he ought to do*, and he will do it. Jesus did not flatter them, but said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." There are a very large number of believers in the world, who do not at all recognise their position before God. There are very many of whom it may be said that they are not unbelievers, and yet by their position in the world cannot be addressed *as Christians*. The Word of God does not recognise them as in a Christian position. This should show us the importance of not being in a position to intercept the Word when it speaks, but to be able to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;" and of so walking, as to be discerned by the world as those who are not of the world.

There are some also who think that because they are Christians there can be nothing unchristian in their posi-

tion. While nothing can alter a believer's relation to God, there may be many things in his positions which the Scriptures cannot recognise. I confess I can think of no other relations scarcely, in which the Word of God recognises the Christian, than the natural ones,—as husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, master and servant. It is possible that we may be in a position of hostility, like our Lord, "When I am for peace, they are for war." I might suppose that the relation of subject and prince being recognised in the Scriptures, we ought to take part in the power of the world; while others may go to the other extreme and fall into a fearful mistake, that if it were wrong for a Christian to act as a sovereign, it must be wrong for him to act as a subject. Paul, in his epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2), exhorts them to make "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority." While we are in this world, we are commanded to submit to the powers that be. But as to the saints themselves being those powers, is another thing. Surely none would say they wished to abide where God's glory must depart; and God does not abide in the high, easy, comfortable places of this world. All that is in the world a Christian is called to give up. Is the honour and power of the world any part of the endowment of the saint according to the Word? I must broadly answer, No. The answer to this last question would be brought into a very narrow compass when we read those words, "They are not of the world, *even as* I am not of the world." We find the Jews wanted to make Him a king, but He pointedly rejected it; and I cannot see any opening or authority in Scripture for a Christian to say, *Our Lord* had nothing to do with the honour or power of the world, yet I may. Again, when one came and acknowledged

Him as Master and Lord, and said, "Speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me," Jesus answered him, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" I believe it to be essentially wrong to touch anything of the mechanism of this world. I do not want to go into all the depths of the question, but all I have to do is just to ask, What did Jesus do? and upon that ground I safely take my stand. Who is the highest person in the rank of this world? The Scriptures tell us Satan is; and therefore the higher I get in the world, the nearer I get to Satan. Jesus is at the bottom of the ladder, Satan at the top; and I would ask those who desire the high places in the world, "Is it best to sit nearest Jesus or Satan?" I have never seen any good from a saint's association with the world's glory. Our work is *in the Church*, yet while we cherish the Church of God, we should remember to pray for those who are in the world, who are not yet manifested. It is a most wicked thing for the child of God, who knows he is in a wrong place, to ask, How shall I do God's will in my own way? The language of our hearts should be this, that He would cast down imaginations, and every thing (high) that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. It is not for a believer to choose his own place, and then ask God to show him what to do in that place. Again, there is often a fear of bringing the light of truth really to bear upon our position. One great practical difficulty, so to speak, is, having dug at the foundation, to go no deeper. God would say, Go very deep; but we say, We have not man's leave to go deeper. The question with us should not be, Where will these principles lead us? but if they are *of God*, let them lead to the Antipodes, let them take us out of the world, what matters that?

Dear friends, what the most ignorant wants, is honesty ; it is a single eye that we so much need, if we shrink, as I believe many do, from an increase of light. Oh, dear friends, let me warn you that that is a fearful darkness which is brought on by a man's own disobedience and rejection of the light. There are two things I desire for the saints,—that we may be guarded from the knowledge that puffeth up ; and if we do get more perfect knowledge, that we may with the knowledge get more honesty.

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