

BRIEF MEDITATIONS
ON
PASSAGES
OF
HOLY SCRIPTURE.

By J. G. D.

“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.”—Ps. ^{xix.} 14.

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FRAGMENTS

ON

PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

EXODUS XII.

THIS chapter is very precious, not only as exhibiting so clearly “Christ *our* passover,” (1 Cor. v. 7, 8,) but also because it so clearly distinguishes two things which, though inseparably united, are perfectly distinct—the work of Christ *for* us, and the work which, having found peace through faith in His blood, I am called to. The confounding of these two important parts of God’s truth leads to that wretched feebleness of faith, and want of confidence in the love of God, which necessarily tends to unfruitfulness, and unfaithfulness in conduct. I must first know and believe the love of Christ to me before that love can become the constraining principle it ought to be in

every word and action of my life. I must know that I am a child before I can love and obey as a child. This is always God's order. He saves in order that we may obey. The law says, "Do and live;" grace says, *Believe* and live—live and do, (see Rom. xii. 1, 2; Eph. ii. 1-10; Titus ii. 10-14, iii. 3-7; 2 Tim. i. 1-9.) In this chapter we have this order blessedly shown. In chap. xi. there is the revelation of coming wrath; in chap. xii. the answer to the important question, What must I do to be saved from it? (see Heb. xi. 28.)

In the 5th verse Christ is presented to us as the Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot; in ver. 6, as slain for us, redeeming us by His own precious blood, (see 1 Pet. i. 19;) and then, ver. 7, there is the sprinkling of the blood and the confession of our faith in it, (Rom. x. 9, 10 :) for the blood was to be sprinkled *outside* the door, in the sight of scornful Egypt. Here, then, was *salvation*. However guilty, however weak in faith the Israelite might be who had sprinkled the blood, there was no judgment for him, because the Lamb had borne the judgment, the blood had blotted out the sin, "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him." In this transaction I have no part—it is a thing between God and Christ alone. God provides the Lamb, Christ gives Himself for us, and there is remission of sins to every one that believeth. God says, ver. 13, "When *I* see the *blood* I will pass over you." If our souls believe this, there is rest, and peace, and salvation. Then,

upon this, we keep the feast, feeding upon Christ as the Lamb slain, (ver. 8, 9,) and find His flesh meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed, to our souls. This is a feast, one that God has provided for us, which, though in Egypt, (though not of Egypt,) we ought to keep with joy; and thus it will be if our faith simply rests upon God's testimony concerning the value and efficacy of the blood. But here comes in *our work*, (ver. 11, 15-20.) We are to eat it as strangers and pilgrims here, looking for the coming of the Lord; and also with *unleavened* bread, purging out the old *leaven*, mortifying the flesh, cleansing ourselves from everything that is inconsistent with our character as our Lord's redeemed people, and feeding upon the unleavened perfectness of Christ. May the Lord give us *practically* to know these things. May He give us perfect rest and peace through the knowledge that Christ *our* passover *has been slain*, that we are *justified* by His blood, and that now we have only to keep a feast on what our God has so freely and graciously provided for us. Let us gird our loins for service, and as pilgrims; let us cleanse ourselves from all which savours of Egypt and the flesh. Let us look for the coming of our Lord, and seek to be approved of Him when He comes: not to be *saved*—that we are, however feeble our faith is, if we have but touched the hem of His garment—but to be found faithful, diligent, obedient servants, to whom He may say, "Well done." May we not be ashamed before Him at His

coming. May our work stand the fire which shall try it in that day; and we not be saved merely as by fire, but as those that have an abundant entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Remember these two titles, *Lord* and *Saviour*. They are distinct yet inseparable, and express what I wish we may all have grace to realise, grace to follow Jesus through that shame and sorrow into which faithfulness and obedience must ever lead; for surely that law of discipleship is not lowered, is not changed, (John xii. 25, 26; Luke xiv. 26.) I would just refer to another passage which will also convey what I mean—Lev. xiv. The law of the leper's cleansing—I need not say who the *leper* is—from ver. 3-7, is the *priest's* work, with which the leper has nothing to do except getting the blessed effect of it. The priest provides the sacrifice—one bird typifies the death, the other the resurrection of Christ—sprinkles him with the blood, and pronounces him *clean*. Then the leper's work begins, (ver. 8, 9.) During the seven days (which, I believe, always represent things done or experienced on earth) he cleanseth himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, looking forward in hope to the eighth day, (signifying resurrection,) when he was to be presented by the priest at the door of the tabernacle. As applied to the whole Church, Eph. v. 25-27 sets this forth. We know ver. 25 as *done*; ver. 26 is the *practical* cleansing

(the water representing the sanctifying effects of the Word as applied by the Spirit, see John xvii. 17) going on *now*; ver. 27, that which Christ will do on the eighth day—the *Lord's day*—when, as we see, (Rev. xix.,) the marriage of the Lamb shall have come, and his Wife have made herself ready. Observe, faith rests on what Christ has done. He has died and risen, and through His seven times sprinkled blood we are pronounced *clean*. This leads to practical cleansing, (ver. 8, 9,) in hope of the eighth day, when our Priest shall present us to the Father, without wrinkle, or spot, or any such thing. May we, through the power of the Holy Ghost, more and more experience the power of these truths in our souls.

EXODUS XIV.

The Lord's first purpose is His own glory, to make His name known. His name is His glory, (Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19.) His name is displayed in two ways; 1st, In His enemies; 2^d, In the objects of His grace and love.

Israel had found a shelter from the wrath of God under the sprinkled blood of the Lamb, while Egypt had been exposed to the sword of the destroying angel. The Lord had delivered Israel out of the hands of Pharaoh. The fiery cloudy pillar had led them out of the land as the redeemed of the Lord. But Pharaoh pursued them, and they had to learn

another lesson. They had to learn the mystery of death and resurrection, as the real power of deliverance from Pharaoh.

They had to be baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, (1 Cor. x. 1-3.) *Then* they could sing, "Thou hast led forth Thy people whom Thou hast redeemed," (ver. 1-4.) The Lord directs their journey; He does it in a strange way to the flesh, but it was the right way. The blessedness of walking in communion with God is that He opens to us His ways and makes us know His *end*. He makes us acquainted, too, with the devices of the enemy. Pharaoh will say "They are entangled." "I will be honoured on Pharaoh." How important for us to know this, that every knee shall bow to Christ, all *shall* honour Him. How blessed is it for us willingly to *honour* and to know *God*, not in judgment but in His loving-kindness to us, (ver. 5-9.) Pharaoh pursues. The thought of his heart was, "Why have we done this, to let Israel go from *serving us*?" This is Satan's device, this his purpose in all his pursuit of us, that we should *serve him*. God has said, "Let my people go that they may serve me." Pharaoh says, "No." He pursues after them, has all the power of the world with him, all its energy and glory; he comes up with them at Baal-Zephon, and what does he find? Israel full of cowardice and fear, because of the *evil heart of unbelief*, (Ps. cvi. 6 12.) *He saved them for His name's sake*. Their flesh fell in with Pharaoh's own purpose, "Let

us alone that we may serve the Egyptians." Our flesh is always on the side of Egypt and Pharaoh. Unbelief always leads to murmuring and bondage, but God is the God of *all* grace. He dealt with them for His name's sake. Here is our comfort. It is not on the ground of what *we* are, but of what He is. For His own sake He deals with us. Otherwise He would have given them up to the Egyptians.

EXODUS XXV., XXVI., XXVII.

The description of the tabernacle, that striking type of our Saviour, we find in Exodus xxv. xxvi., xxvii. Although the Antitype has appeared, the consideration of this blessed subject must ever be one of deep interest and real profit to the soul of the believer, to whom it is indeed the figure, the shadow of good things to come, although it was done away by the appearance of Jesus, the *Substance*. To the child of God, however, even the Shadow is precious.

Before we dwell at large on the minute description of the tabernacle, its courts, and furniture, which were *all* typical of Jesus, it may be well to retrace God's dealings with His people, as recorded in the previous chapters of Exodus.

From the 1st to the 12th chapter we find the children of Israel still in Egypt and in bondage—a true picture of the unconverted soul still in bondage to the world, feeding on its "leeks and onions,"

labouring for that which doth not profit. Yet at the very hour when God seemed to the eye of sense to have sent Moses to add to His people's sufferings, (Exod. v. 22, 23,) He was preparing a mighty deliverance for them. In chap. xii. we read of the sprinkling of blood and departure from Egypt. In this work they had *no part* themselves, neither did God call them to any active service. It was simply and entirely *God's* work. We are told in chap. xiii. 18, that "God *led* His people," and that He went before them, "by day in a pillar of a cloud to *lead* them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light." Chap. xiv., they are brought through the Red Sea, (type of baptism,) and they see the destruction of their enemies; but still *entirely without their instrumentality*. It was still *God's* work *alone*, (ver. 31.) It was not till the children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea, and were come into the wilderness, that they could sing the song of redemption. They could *then* say, "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth Thy people whom Thou hast redeemed," (chap. xv. 13.)

It was only in the wilderness that they were fed with manna from heaven, and water from the rock. It is only in the wilderness the child of God learns to feed on the heavenly manna, and to drink the spiritual drink from the Rock, Christ. Having been thus fed, they were ready for *active service*. They were called to fight with Amalek. So the child of God, having been fed on the bread of life and drunk

of the living water, is prepared for conflict, and is called to contend with temporal and spiritual foes. Chap. xix., we find them approaching Mount Sinai, and there they are first recognised as God's *worshipping* people. There the law is given, and there, as we read in chapters xx., xxi. xxii., xxiii., were delivered to the people laws and ordinances, which, "IF a man *do*, he shall live." Until now the dispensation had been all of *grace*, but now God, wishing to prove to man his total inability to save himself, gives him His perfect law, and makes salvation to rest on a condition—"IF ye will obey my voice," (Exod. xix.) Here, for the first time, do we see that awful word "if" interposed between God and man. The people, ignorant of their own utter weakness, exclaim, (ver. 8,) "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do!" while Moses, not trusting in the flesh, exclaims, "I exceedingly fear and quake," (Heb. xii. 21.) Before speaking more particularly of the tabernacle, I would just notice the three positions in which Moses is presented to us.

First, chap. xix. 25, we see him standing among the people as their *teacher*. Secondly, in chap. xx. 21, we behold him acting as mediator between God and His people. Lastly, chap. xxiv. 18, we view him *with God* in the Mount. *Here*, then, God gave directions for making the tabernacle, which was so strikingly to prefigure Jesus and His work.

The tabernacle was to consist of two rooms, the Holy and the Most Holy place. The court as well as the

tabernacle typified *Christ*. The court, His work on earth; the tabernacle, His work in heaven. The whole of the wood used for the construction of both, as well as for the furniture, was shittim wood—the *willow of the desert*—a beautiful type of Him who sprang up as a “root out of a dry ground,” (Isaiah liii. 2;) therefore a figure of Christ’s human nature. The curtains of fine twined linen, round the court, (Exod. xxvii. 9,) represented His spotless righteousness. The entry into the Holy of Holies and of the tabernacle, was directly opposite the gate of the court, and it was made of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen. In studying the types, it is important to remember that *blue* always represents the heavenly character of Jesus; *scarlet*, either His kingly office, or as our Sin-bearer; *purple*, as the *two* blended in one; and the *white* linen His spotless righteousness. Jesus says, “I am the way,” and “no man cometh to the Father but by me.” It is vain for man to attempt to worship God in any but His own appointed way, for in so doing he can neither be accepted of God, nor can he see the beauty and perfection of Christ’s work of salvation. Thus, had the Israelite refused to worship in the way *God* had pointed out, he could not have been accepted. He *must* enter the court *by the gate*, and once within, he was looked upon as one of the Lord’s own redeemed people, who had been saved by the sprinkling of the blood from the bondage of Egypt, and who now came to offer to God burnt-sacrifices—as one who had it in his power

to offer to God something that would be acceptable to Him, an offering of a sweet savour to the Lord, (Lev. i. 17.) Why was this? The whole court was typical of Christ, of His work on earth. The hangings of fine twined linen which surrounded it, were figurative of His spotless righteousness. The Israelite, standing in the court, was viewed by God as the *blood-sprinkled sinner* standing before Him in the spotless righteousness of Jesus. Christ was the Paschal Lamb which had been slain to redeem him from Egypt. Christ was the gate through which alone he could enter to present himself before Jehovah, and now Christ alone was his "righteousness." Arrayed in Him, he could stand without fear before God. Having passed the gate, he proceeded on to the altar, which lay immediately before the gate. It was made of *shittim wood*, horns were upon the four corners, and it was overlaid with brass. A network of brass with four rings in the corners was to be made for it, and upon this was offered the burnt-offering. All that belonged to the service of the altar was made of brass. As we are told in Hebrews xiii. 10, we have here again a type of Christ as the *Offerer*, He who offered the offering. We have already seen that acacia or shittim wood typified His manhood. Brass was typical of His *divine nature as seen by man* during His sojourn here below. This could be dimly discerned by man, "the eyes of whose understanding are darkened, so that he cannot understand the things that are

spiritual." The horns were emblematical of *strength*, and the *power* of Christ's sacrifice, (Ps. cxviii. 27.) As the Israelite looked on beyond the altar, he saw a laver of brass, standing between the altar and the tabernacle, (Exod. xxx. 18,) made of the brazen looking-glasses of the women who assembled at the gate of the tabernacle. Here the priests were to wash their feet and hands before they entered the tabernacle, or ministered at the altar before the Lord, "that they die not." The priests at their consecration were washed all over, and having been once washed, they were only required to wash their hands and feet when they presented themselves before the Lord.

Having considered the court and all it contained as a type of Christ's work on *earth*, we will proceed to examine the description given us in Exodus xxvi. 15, of the tabernacle and its furniture, which prefigured His work in *heaven*. It was to be overlaid with gold, which always typifies the *divine* nature of Jesus. Thus the shittim wood overlaid with pure gold represents the glorified humanity of Jesus Christ as God. The sockets of silver, (ver. 19,) for the boards were made, *not* from the free gifts of the people, as was every other part of the tabernacle, but from the redemption money which every Israelite had to pay for the ransom of his own soul. The poor and the rich gave alike, (Exod. xxx. 11-16.) So the pardoned sinner bases his hopes on Christ as his sure foundation, whose precious blood is the

alone ransom, and procures his redemption. The *same* price is paid for all who believe. *All* have an equal interest in this *sure foundation*, and can rest in a risen and glorified Saviour as a proof of acceptance by the Father. Over the tabernacle were placed four coverings. The *outside* one was of badgers' skins, (Exod. xxvi. 14.) How precious a type is this of Jesus on *earth*, as seen *of men*. "There is no beauty that we should desire Him." To look at Him in any other than His own appointed way that He has opened for us "through the veil, that is to say, His flesh," is indeed to view Him without "form and comeliness." The *world* cannot see beyond the badgers' skin covering, and therefore He has no loveliness in their eyes. Had the Israelite looked at the tabernacle from any but the *side God had appointed*, he could *only* have seen the *badgers' skin*. The unbeliever looks but at the *outside*. The believer can look through by faith into the Holiest! This covering was exposed to all weathers, heat, cold, and rain. So Jesus humbled himself, and through suffering was perfected as the Captain of our salvation. "He hid not His face from shame and spitting." He was smitten on the head with a reed. He was buffeted and struck with the palm of the hand. He was no stranger to hunger and thirst, and had not even where to lay His head.

The second covering was of rams' skins dyed red. Its natural colour was not red, but it was dyed. So

Jesus, "who knew no sin, was *made* sin for us." Here we have a type of *sin imputed to Jesus*. Though so pure and spotless, by the imputation of His people's sins He was made a curse for us, and bore all the wrath of God against sin, that "our sins, though as *scarlet*," (double-dyed,) "might be as white as snow." The third covering was of goats' hair, perfectly white—a beautiful emblem of the "Lamb, without blemish and without spot." In ver. 12, 13 we see that this covering was to hang down a cubit and a half in *front* of the tabernacle. This was the only one that was to do so. Precious indeed is the thought contained in this type. The worshipper could look towards the Holy of Holies from the gate of the court, and there *see* this spotless covering hanging down before it. Thus, when a sinner has by faith entered by Him who is the gate, (John x,) we can look through by Him into the *holiest*. The Israelite could only have seen the *badgers' skin* had he entered the court by any other way than that God had appointed; but entering in at the *gate*, he could see this covering of goats' hair *alone*—"Jesus, the *Lamb* of God which taketh away the sin of the world." In studying the types, we must ever remember that *drapery* represents *character*. The fourth covering was made of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen. This covering is always called *the* tabernacle, (Num. iii. 25, iv. 25; Exod. xxvi. 1;) the others being termed the coverings of the tabernacle. *This* covering represents Christ's

heavenly character by the blue, His kingly and sin-bearing character by the purple and scarlet, His purity by the fine twined linen. * Thus we have here Christ in all His offices. It was made of ten curtains, forming two parts of five curtains each, both joined together by taches of gold. These curtains formed the ceiling of the Holy place and the Holy of Holies, which were separated by the beautiful veil of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen.

In the Holy of Holies stood the ark, made of shittim wood, overlaid with pure gold within and without, (Exod. xxv. 10-21.) The mercy-seat was above, upon the ark, and inside the testimony was placed. What a wondrous type of Jesus! The law (which Moses at first feared) was placed *inside*, typical of Christ, who kept the law for us. The ark and the mercy-seat cannot be separated. The one is the *power* of God, (Ps. cxxxii. 8;) the other is the *grace* of God. It was from the *mercy-seat* God gave His commands, and it is *there* grace is obtained to fulfil them, and mercy in case of failure. *Here* the believer may come boldly, (Heb. iv. 16,) and hold communion with his God. We read in Gen. iii. that the angel who stood at the gate of Paradise had a flaming sword in his hand, but there was no sword in the hands of the cherubim. The flame had been extinguished by the *blood* sprinkled on the mercy-seat, (Zech. xiii. 7.) The ark went through every difficulty *before* the children of Israel; so has Jesus passed through every trial before His people. The

ark always led them towards heaven; and does not Jesus lead His people to look away from earth and to set their affections on things above? In Num. xiv. 44 we see that, after the Lord had told the people not to go, they disobeyed and were overcome. But the ark went not with them. If Christ, as the *power* of God, is not with us in our temptations and conflicts with the world, the flesh, and the devil, we shall, like the Israelites, be "smitten and discomfited;" for Jesus said, "Without me ye can do nothing." As the ark passed through Jordan, so the believer is buried and raised with Christ. Jesus was baptized at Bethabara, (or house of passage,) which is supposed to be the same place that the ark went through the water. In the Holy place we find the candlestick of pure gold, (Exod. xxv. 31.) In John, Christ is especially represented to us as the *light-giver* and the *life-giver*; but man, loving darkness rather than light, refused to recognise Him as such. In John viii. we see the Jews could not unite *grace* and *the law*. They appealed to Jesus, who "stooped down and wrote on the ground" as if He had said, "I am not now come as a judge, but I am here to *humble* myself for *sinners*." The light of Him who came to die for *her* sins shone in her heart, and when asked, "Hath no man condemned thee?" she was enabled to say, "No man, *Lord*." Had the Jews taken the *place* of the poor woman, the light of Jesus would have entered their hearts; but they went out one by one, and *then* Jesus said, "I am the

light of the world." The branches derived their light from the centre shaft; so believers draw their light *from Him* in "whose light alone they can see light," (John xii. 36.) As soon as we believe in Jesus we become branches. The fruit and flowers are supposed to be the same as those which blossomed on Aaron's rod. The tongs were to remove everything which hindered the light burning brightly. So everything that prevents our light shining should be cut off and cast away. The description of the table of Shewbread we get in Exod. xxv. The crown of gold was typical of the glory of Christ in heaven, (Heb. ii. 9.) There was also a border of a hand's-breadth round, which was to secure the loaves from falling off as they journeyed through the wilderness. Frankincense was to be put on the loaves, typical of the merits of Jesus.

All the vessels had rings and staves, to show they were for the *wilderness*, where the Israelites had no fixed resting-place.

EXODUS XXIX.

Let us seek to meditate together on one of the varied glories which Jesus, our blessed Lord, has given unto His people. That word, "The glory which Thou hast given me, I have given them," tells us of our *fellowship* with Himself in glory. How wonderful that we should have fellowship with the Son of God in anything. But this is our

portion, the portion His *grace* has given us, and into which our souls should seek daily to enter more, that we might know the love wherewith He loves us, and be constrained by it to live more to His glory.

Exod. xxix. gives us an account of the consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests unto God. Aaron was the *High-Priest*, but not the only priest; he had fellows with him—not strangers from other tribes or families, but his own children, his own family were priests with him. In this he is the type of our great High-Priest, Jesus, the Son of God. He is ever the One that has pre-eminence; but He has *fellows* with Him—the children which God has given Him, those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, (Heb. ii.) Every believer is now a priest; the new-born babe in Christ is a holy priest, a royal priest, (1 Pet. ii.; see Rev. i. and xx.)

This chapter tells us *how* we are fitted to stand as priests before God. The sin-offering puts away our guilt; in the sweet savour of the burnt-offering we are accepted in the Beloved, and in the rām of consecration “filling the hands,” we find not only the blood by which our hands, ears, and feet are *sanc-tified* to God, but that which we can ever present unto Him, and feed upon together with Him.

This is the sacrifice our God would ever have us presenting unto Him—the peace-offering, the excellency of Jesus; what God can feed upon, and what He has given as the food of our souls—the shoulder,

the symbol of strength; and the breast, the symbol of love. The love and strength of Jesus are the daily food of the priests of God. From ver. 38 to the end, we have the continual burnt-offering, the firstling spotless lamb, offered morning and evening as a sweet savour to God, on the altar of burnt-offering, with its meat-offering and drink-offering. This was presented at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, ("where I will meet with you,") the meeting-place of God and His people Israel, (ver. 42, 43.) On the ground of this, God dwells among the children of Israel as their God. This was Israel's peculiar blessedness, "Jehovah was their God." They had God with them in the world.

We see this again exhibited in Solomon's temple, (1 Kings viii. 27.) There was a real visible manifestation of the glory of God in both these instances. His manifested presence was in the Shechinah, on the mercy-seat. But God had richer grace and glory yet in store. In Emmanuel, "God with us," God manifest in the flesh, the Word incarnate dwelling among us, we find a new temple set up—the Temple of the body of the Lord Jesus, in which God indeed dwelt. There the Glory has found its eternal dwelling-place; there, indeed, is the true temple, the true house of God.

But more than that; as purged by the blood of Christ, as accepted in the Beloved, believers are the temple of God. He dwells not only *among* them, as with Israel, but *in* them. We are an habitation

of God through the Spirit. We have the reality of all these types and shadows, blessed as they were. Christ is our Lamb, slain in the presence of God. Christ is our Temple, in which God dwells in all His fulness, bodily; and we, too, are temples of God, in whom He dwells by the Holy Ghost. By and by, we shall be in the heavenly temple, and serve Him for ever and ever. Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. It is as we get acquainted with God and His dear Son, that our souls grow in peace and strength. The knowledge of *ourselves* is the knowledge of sin and misery. The knowledge of God is the knowledge of *love*, and *strength*, and *joy*. Seek to know Him more; to know Him in His Son, and by His Word.

LEVITICUS IV.

THE SIN-OFFERING.

VER. 2: The occasion of it. A soul sinning against any of the commandments of the Lord. This is *sin*, anything *against the will of God*; it is against God Himself, (Ps. li. 4.) Its essential character is *lawlessness*; self-will setting itself up against God.

Alas! we have little apprehension of the horrible nature of sin, how it looks in the sight of God. The world thinks lightly of it; and oh, how many of God's children think lightly of it too! How many, *through the deceitfulness of sin, get their hearts so hardened as to think it savours of legality to deeply mourn over and be broken-hearted on account of sin.* But *this* is the terrible, hateful character of sin, that it is against God.

Romans i. shows us its evil against God, as the great and glorious Creator of all things. Chap. ii., *sin* as against His law, which is holy, just, and good. But how aggravated is the sin of those that have known and tasted His grace and love, who have seen it in the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion, the death and burial of the Lord Jesus Christ. Surely in them sin is more inexcusable than in any others, and more hateful. Surely in them should be more abundantly the broken and contrite heart which God will not despise.

That word '*any*' is important. *All* the commandments of God are pure and holy; the renewed heart desires to have respect to *all* His commands. The breach, the forgetfulness of *any*, is grievous to a true-hearted child of God.

Now supposing a child of God is guilty of any sin, what is he to do? Is he cut off from communion with God? Practically he is, until there is restoration and forgiveness. But the Lord has provided for his need: that Lord against whom he has sinned,

has provided the sin-offering whereby he can *come* to God. "These things write I unto you that ye sin not, but if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is (*ἰ λαομὸς*) the propitiatory sacrifice for our sins."

Thus He is presented to us in this chapter. The 51st Psalm is the experience of the soul that brings this sacrifice. Ver. 3, "If the priest that is anointed;" this was the high-priest under the law; our High Priest knows no sin, but His people are anointed priests also, and how often do they sin, and need the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus. The "If the priest," is so like "If any man."

Of course a *priest* sinning was of deeper, more aggravated guilt than one of the common people; he therefore brought a bullock, they a kid, in case of sin, setting forth a deeper sense of sin and apprehension of guilt, and consequently of the power of the sacrifice. The bullock is the emblem of *diligent* service, of Christ as the faithful, diligent, laborious servant of God. The shedding of His blood must take place, or there could be no *remission* even for the sin of a child of God. This has been done once and for ever in Christ; but the daily presenting of these sacrifices meets the need of our souls in their actual experience before God. He has presented His own blood and has *sat down*, having, by one offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and we daily, *hourly*, find our need, and consequently the value of these our sacrifices, "without blemish;" the perfectness of Christ.

Ver. 4: "*He* shall bring, *He* shall lay, *He* shall kill," the personal *appreciation* and *appropriation* by faith of the sacrifice. "Who bore *my* sins, by His stripes *I* am healed;" so this sin of mine caused the death of Christ, His death atoned for it, or it could never have been forgiven: here see the deep, fearful character of sin, see it in the death of the Holy One of God.

Ver. 5-10: The presenting of the blood, and burning of the fat upon the altar. The sin-offering had the character of the peace-offering here. The blood that flowed for our sins made *peace* for us. The offering that took them away was a sweet savour to God.

Ver. 11, 12: The rejection of Christ as bearing our sins.

LEVITICUS XIV.

Most necessary is it to learn the inseparable connexion on the one hand, and the perfect distinctness on the other, of those truths which relate to our acceptance and our service. The first being entirely the work of Christ for us; the other, the work of the Spirit in us, in which we are called to co-operate. The confounding of these things has led to that want of peace and confidence in God's children which we see so continually around us, and to consequent unfaithfulness, causing them to work *for peace*, instead of from love. It is as "pronounced clean" through

the efficacy of the seven times sprinkled blood, that we are commanded to cleanse ourselves, (Lev. xiv.) It is a sorrowful and very humbling work the cleansing of ourselves; very mortifying to the pride of our hearts to find all our ways, and natural comeliness, and our very selves, too, all defiled by the leprosy of sin. The flesh profiteth nothing before God. This is the sorrowful lesson we are now learning during the seven days of the present dispensation; but the remembrance of the love of our High-Priest, of His finished work, of His sweet assurance that through it all who believe "are made clean," and the joyful expectation of the eighth day, the Lord's day, when He shall come again, and present us faultless in the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, will sustain and encourage us to persevere. These two things, the death and the coming of our Lord, we should endeavour ever to bear in mind. Both are most blessedly connected in the Lord's Supper. The first tells us of His finished work and perfect love: that *we are clean*. The second is what we ought to be longing and *preparing* for: seeking to *be* and to *do* now, what we shall wish to have done when He comes. May the Holy Ghost teach us these things in practical sanctifying power, leading us to walk in the world as a redeemed people; not of it, even as Christ is not of it, but separate in all our principles, and desires, and ways, from that which, like the flesh, "is enmity against God," (James iv. 4.)

LEVITICUS XVI.—*The day of Atonement.*

The revelation in this chapter is consequent upon the death of the sons of Aaron, (ver. 1.) The Aaronic priesthood failed as soon as it was set up; the sons of Aaron were scarcely consecrated, before they offered strange fire unto the Lord, and judgment broke out upon them. The memorial of this failure was intended to be perpetuated by the command that Aaron should not go at all times into the Holiest of all, but only once a year. It was a perpetual memorial of the failure of that priesthood which stood only in meats, and drinks, and carnal ordinances, to secure blessing; and it turned the eyes of those who were taught of God to look for that faithful Priest whom God Himself would raise up, who should do according to that which was in His heart and in His mind, (1 Sam. ii. 35,) Jesus the Son of God, made a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. How blessed is it to mark the ways of our blessed God! Man's failure, while it humbles us, only makes way for the display of His own wisdom, grace, and love in Jesus. Man's failure in paradise makes way for the promised seed; the failure of the Aaronic priesthood for the priesthood of Him who is such a High Priest as becometh us, "able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him."

This chapter is especially referred to in Heb. ix., x., as unfolding the present exercise of the priesthood of

our Lord within the vail, until He appears to them that look for Him the second time without sin unto salvation. It is a most full and blessed chapter, giving us in type a revelation of the power and value of the blood and priesthood of Jesus, in reconciling to God the Church and Israel, the heavenly and the earthly things and places, as they will be displayed in the dispensation of the fulness of times, (Eph. i. 10,) when everything that has been defiled and marred by sin shall be brought back into joy and blessing, in and by Jesus. All this is taken up in this mystic day of atonement. It was the most solemn of all Israel's feasts; indeed it is not called a *feast*, though recorded amongst the feasts of Israel, (see Lev. xxiii. 26-32.) On these feasts work might be done, but no servile work, nothing that had the character of bondage or servitude in it, inconsistent with the joy and gladness of these feasts of the Lord; but on *this day*, (ver. 28-30,) not *any* work was to be done. It was a SABBATH, a day of perfect REST. The passover, the feast of weeks, the feast of tabernacles, were all seasons of joyfulness and praise, but this was not the character of this day. Two things marked it, it was a day of *affliction* and a day of *rest*. The soul that did not afflict itself, and the soul that did *any* work, were to be cut off from the people, (ver. 29-31, compared with chap. xxiii.) Brokenness of heart in remembrance of our uncleanness, as well as perfect rest of soul in the knowledge of the efficacy of the blood to make atonement, that we might be clean from all our

sins before the Lord, are the feelings which the spiritual understanding of this day of atonement will produce. "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced and mourn," (Zech. xii.), is the literal accomplishment, yet future, to Israel of this day. We through the Spirit can enter into and understand it now.

The first stage is in ver. 4. Aaron puts on holy linen garments; not his glorious priestly garments, but holy garments without any display of glory. Here we have the incarnation of our blessed High-Priest—His holy human nature as born of the Holy Ghost. No outward dignity and glory, but intrinsic holiness. We must observe throughout in this chapter, it is not the *high-priest* that is spoken of, but *Aaron*. "Speak unto Aaron, thy brother," (ver 2.) It is not the official dignity, but the holy person, the precious blood and work of Jesus that is presented to us. It is not until we come to ver. 24 that we get Aaron in his robes of glory and beauty. We have Jesus making reconciliation for the sins of His people.

The second stage is the preparation of the sacrifice, (ver. 3-5.) This was the whole character of the life of our blessed Lord. From His incarnation to the cross, it was the preparation of Himself as a holy, spotless sacrifice to God. 'Satan might try Him, but he had nothing in Him. Man's hatred, man's evil, only brought out the perfectness of His grace and love. "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Such was the nature, the character

of this spotless Lamb of God, of whom God could say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Observe that there are different sacrifices appointed for Israel, and for Aaron's house, who typify the *Church*. In the latter case, a bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. All these sacrifices typify but the one same perfect sacrifice of Christ; but this distinct mention of them is intended to teach us the distinction between the Church and Israel, the heavenly and the earthly people of God; though the same blood will bring both into their distinctive spheres of blessing. This appears to be taught us in John xi. 51, "Jesus died for that *nation*, and not for that nation only, but to gather together in *one* the CHILDREN OF GOD that were scattered abroad." There is a difference also in the value of the animals offered in sacrifice. This must be carefully observed. There is no difference as to the value of the *Sacrifice* before God—His estimate of it is always the same, infinite and divine; the value of the animals may represent OUR estimate of it, which greatly varies. Those for the Church are of far higher value than those for Israel—teaching us, I judge, the higher and more enlarged estimate of the value of the sacrifice of Christ, which it is the Church's privilege to enter into. One other point is worthy of remark, that the sacrifices for Aaron's house are mentioned previous to his putting on the linen clothes, whereas those for Israel are mentioned afterwards. As I believe nothing is casual or without meaning in the Word, I expect

instruction here; and I think this is intended to teach us that all the Church's blessings are from *before* the foundation of the world—thus Christ is said to be “the Lamb that was ordained *before* the foundation of the world,” (1 Pet. i. 20,) whereas Israel's are *time* blessings. I know not if this is taught us in Rev. xiii., “The Lamb slain *from* the foundation of the world.”

The third stage is the slaying of the sacrifice, (ver. 6–11.) This is a solemn thing. Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission. “The wages of sin is death;” and unless the blood of God's spotless Lamb be shed, unless He pour out His soul unto death, there can be no atonement made for sin. This is what every sacrifice that was offered up proclaimed. It told of the sinfulness of sin; the holiness, the justice, the wrath of God against sin; that nothing could put the sin away but the *blood* which maketh atonement for the soul. It would not have been enough *for us* that Jesus was the Holy One of God, that He could say, “I have glorified Thee on the earth,” that no blemish or spot could be found by the searching eye of God in Him. As man, having kept the law, He had right and title to enter into life by it, to all the promises made to man under it, an individual claim to all the blessings and dignities which God had covenanted to righteousness. His obedience gave Him a title to all that man by disobedience had lost. But this would not have availed for us. He *loved* us. He wished for companions in His

glory, to fill heaven and earth with blessed and happy witnesses to His power and love; and, therefore, He gave Himself as the sacrifice for our sins. "*He died*, the just for the unjust; He was made *sin* for us, who knew no sin, and it pleased the Lord to *bruise Him*."

Aaron kills the bullock for the sin-offering for himself and for his house. "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree." Here we learn the hatefulness of sin, the holy judgment of God falling on the head of His holy and beloved Son, and that blessed One drinking the cup of wrath that was our due, that He might put into our hands the cup of salvation.✕

The fourth stage is *the presenting of the blood*. This was in His resurrection. We know that, having through the eternal Spirit offered up Himself to God as the sacrifice, He rose again from the dead. ✕The resurrection, whilst it proved His victory over all the power of the enemy, whilst it declared Him to be the Son of God with power, was also the triumphant proof that the justice of God was satisfied, that the enmity was slain, the sins He bore completely and for ever put away, buried in His grave for ever. "He who was delivered for our offences, was raised again for our justification."

It was then that He entered upon His heavenly Priesthood. Whilst upon earth He was not a Priest. He had no sacrifice to offer, no place of ministry suited to His dignity as the Son of God. He could not offer up

the blood of bulls and goats, or minister in the worldly sanctuary : First, therefore, He offers up Himself as the victim, and then as the risen Saviour, the first-begotten from the dead, made a High-Priest, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life, according to the oath of God, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," He enters into the more perfect tabernacle, into heaven itself, by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption, (Heb. vii.-ix.) Aaron takes the censer full of burning coals of fire, his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and goes within the vail, and the cloud of incense covers the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony ; after which he sprinkles the blood of the sin-offering upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat. This was accomplished in Jesus when He went up to God. We see the cloud of incense with the blood. ✠ Not only did the blood make atonement, not only did it give *rest* to them for whom it was shed on earth, not only did it satisfy the justice of God, but it also gave Him unspeakable delight and joy. God was *delighted* as well as satisfied. ✠ God's delight and our rest and joy are secured by the same perfect and blessed work. We may indeed mourn when we look on Him whom we have pierced ; but when we enter into God's thoughts concerning the sacrifice of Christ, when we go into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, we see the cloud of incense covering the mercy-seat, a savour of rest and joy to God and to our souls. It is our blessed privi-

lege not merely to stand without and see the blood shed there, Jesus pouring out His soul unto death upon the cross; but to follow Him within the vail, and smell the sweet fragrance of the incense which is always ascending up before the mercy-seat. "He gave Himself for us, a sacrifice to God, of a *sweet smelling savour*." † The sprinkling of the blood upon the mercy-seat represents the work of Christ towards God; it was sprinkled *upon* it and *before* it. Thus we have secured access to the very presence of God. † The throne has thus become a throne of *grace*—the *mercy-seat*. The blood gives and secures our entrance into the holiest of all. The seven times sprinkling denotes the accomplished and perfect efficacy of the atonement by the blood.

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

THE Book of Numbers divides itself into three parts. The first ends with chap. x.; the Lord ordering His camp, their statutes, services, and march. The second in chap. xix.; the failure of the camp; the controversy about, and the settling of, the priesthood; and the ordinance of the red heifer. That is, their failure and consequent loss of Canaan, and sentence to wander in the wilderness; but provision made in grace to sustain them there. Then we have

the third from chap. xx. to end, showing us that the flesh was the same flesh still, full of murmuring and rebellion against God; but that He was the same God too, *the God of all grace*, making mercy to rejoice over judgment.

Chap. xx. Another Meribah, (see chap. xvii.,) but the smitten rock still gives out its water, here it is said "abundantly." In chap. xxi. we have *sin met with the brazen serpent*, and afterwards "*the well of water*;" connected as are John iii. and iv.; Num. xxii., xxv. Another Amalek, not meeting Israel with *open* enmity, but with wiles: Balak seeking to have a curse rest on those whom God had blessed. God turns all into blessing, whether it be the malice or the power of the enemy.

Balaam's blessing takes up four things. The first, (chap. xxiii. ver. 710,) Israel's blessedness as the peculiar, separated people of the Lord, "the people shall dwell *alone*," (ver. 9.)

The second, (ver. 18-24,) that there is no repentance, no change in God, no reversion of the blessing by any power of man,—sin, the *only* hindrance to blessing, being completely put out of His sight, (ver. 21.)

The third, (ver. 1-9.) 1. The *goodliness* of Israel, as the people of God, (ver. 5, 6.) 2. Their multitude, (ver. 7.) 3. Their power, (ver. 8, 9.) 4. The channel of blessing to others, (ver. 9.)

The fourth is the triumph of Israel, in connexion with Messiah, over all the power of the enemy in the *latter* days.

Chap. xxviii., xxix. *The feasts of the Lord.* This is what the Lord's heart is set upon,—these “feasts of fat things and of wines on the lees well refined.” The Lord speaks of them in Lev. xxiii., Num. xv., but here He orders all the sacrifices which should be *His bread*, for a savour of rest unto Him at all seasons. How blessed to know that *His rest* is connected with *our joy*. We feast with Him on what affords *Him* a savour of *rest*.

NUMBERS XI.

Up to this chapter the Lord's dealings with Israel had been in *grace*; the ordering of the camp—the service of the Levites, &c. Henceforward *failure*. This chapter presents the failure of the camp, and of Moses; chap. xii., failure of Miriam and Aaron; xiii., xiv., of the spies and of the army; xiv., of the Levites and of the sons of Reuben; xx., failure of Moses and Aaron, for which they were shut out of the land. All teaching us the badness of the flesh, that it is all vanity, and that continuance and steadfastness are alone in God. He is *the Rock*. His work is *perfect*. Blessed is the man that trusteth in *Him*.

Ver. 1–3. Complainers,—the fire burned among them. Ver. 4–9. The complicated sin of unbelief, lust, looking back upon Egypt, and despising the manna. 1. UNBELIEF. “Who shall give us flesh to eat?” Moses fails here, (ver. 13.) He had to learn, “Our sufficiency is of God.” 2. LUSTING. This is

the character of the flesh ; it is always lusting after something besides God. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit." "The lusts of other things entering in choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" these are the things we have to watch against. 3. LOOKING BACK TO EGYPT. "We remember," &c. Faith *forgets*, counts all loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. 4. LOATHING THE MANNA. "Our soul is dried up," &c. (ver. 4.) This was like Esau despising his birthright. It was profaneness. They would give up the glory of being God's chosen and redeemed people for the leeks and onions of Egypt.

Ver. 10. The kindling of the Lord's anger. Ver. 11-25. The failure of Moses. In unbelief he asks, "Where shall I get flesh to feed this great multitude?" He sunk beneath the burden of them, not realising "*our sufficiency is of God.*" The *manna* was a type of Christ, the true bread, which cometh down from heaven. It was their portion for the wilderness. Christ is OURS. We have left Egypt, and *God* sets nothing before our eyes but Christ. How many turn from Him as loathing this light bread.

There are no less than three descriptions of the manna, to show how inexcusable they were. Exod. xvi. 31, its taste was like wafers made with honey—sweetness ; Num. xi., like fresh oil—freshness ; Ps. lxxviii. 23-25, the bread of the mighty. What we want is to *value* and feed upon our portion.

NUMBERS XIX.

The Books of Leviticus and Numbers are full of the deepest practical instruction. The first speaks of the sacrifices and the priesthood; the second, of the sorrow, failure, and chastisement of the wilderness; in our experience we need both. We are in the wilderness, there learning the sad and sorrowful lesson of what is in ourselves; but as priests of the Lord we belong to the tabernacle, its holy places, its sacrifices and services are all ours, to teach us the rich and blessed grace of our God and Saviour. Redemption is not the subject of these books; that we find declared in the Book of Exodus. We there see the state of bondage in which Israel was held; the pride, power, and cruelty of their oppressors; the blood that averted from them the sword of the destroying angel, which cut down the first-born in Egypt; and the arm of the Lord becoming glorious in power, dashing in pieces the enemy. The 15th chapter is the song of redemption. Israel could stand on the borders of the Red Sea and sing, "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth Thy people which Thou hast redeemed; Thou hast guided them in Thy strength to Thy holy habitation." But in Leviticus, we have the sanctification of the redeemed one; and in Numbers, the ordering of Israel's camp, and the trials and failures of the wilderness. In Num. v., we find that every leper, every one that had an issue, and whosoever was defiled by the dead, was

commanded by the Lord to be put without the camp of Israel. The camp was the place of His redeemed people, in the midst whereof His tabernacle stood, and God dwelt. They were the objects of His choice and love. They were a holy people unto the Lord their God. He had chosen them to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that were upon the face of the earth. It was in GRACE He had redeemed them, but it was to HOLINESS they were redeemed. He would not suffer defilement in the camp, in the midst of which He dwelt; nothing that was unclean or unholy might abide in the presence of the Holy One of Israel. The unclean must be put *without* the camp. The ordinance of the Red Heifer was God's provision for defilement by the way.

NUMBERS XXX.

The wife is, as the type of the Church in her relation and subjection to Christ, to be subject to her husband in everything that is not disobedience to the Lord. Vows are not allowed in our dispensation, which places us, in type, either as children in the Father's house, or as the wife in subjection to her Husband, (compare Num. xxx. 2, with Matt. v. 33,) having no will, no power, no property of our own, because we are so wholly, so entirely the Lord's.

DEUTERONOMY.

DEUTERONOMY is not an historical book, but a commentary by the Holy Ghost on all that had taken place in the wilderness from Egypt unto the plains of Moab. It is addressed to them a few days before they were led over by Joshua into the land of their inheritance. Just before Moses goes off the scene, and Joshua comes on, he is led by the Spirit of God to rehearse all God's ways with Israel, and Israel's ways towards God. There are two great lessons taught us in Deuteronomy — Israel's failures and God's faithfulness : judgment and mercy. We learn them in the cross ; we also learn them individually and experimentally. God always links the two together. If He chastens the child in judgment, still He does it in mercy. *There is great danger in overlooking either.* "I will sing of judgment and mercy ;" but mercy rejoicing over judgment.

Deuteronomy concludes with a song of judgment against Israel, and yet of witness of mercy for Israel — mercy and judgment. Israel *quite forgot* Deuteronomy and their need of mercy. The Lord Jesus quotes Deuteronomy. The rehearsal here is to show Israel's failure and God's faithfulness. Israel got the land by *grace*; after all the failure in the wilderness, just as we shall get to glory by and by.

THE REST.

When we all reach the rest that remaineth for the children of God,—self-abasement at our own folly and failure, wonder and praise at the unfailing care, and forbearance, and love of our God filling our hearts,—it will be our joy to sing, “Thou art worthy,” (Rev. v. 9.) The Book of Deuteronomy is deeply interesting and instructive in this view. It was addressed to Israel before they passed over Jordan to enter into the promised land that flowed with milk and honey, after all the trials, sufferings, and journeyings of the children of Israel through the wilderness. Moses reminds them of all they had passed through, their experience of themselves and of the Lord their God. He bids them *remember* (chap. viii. 2,) all the way which the Lord had led them, tells them the reasons of His dealings with them, and His end: “To humble thee, to prove thee, to know what is in thine heart; to do thee good at thy *latter end*.” Then in chap. ix., he shows them that the land was theirs, not for their righteousness, for they had ever been stiff-necked and rebellious, but *because the Lord loved them*, (chap. viii. 6–8.) Is not our history similar? On our own part we find nothing but failure. We prove our own weakness and folly, but we also learn the Lord’s faithfulness and love. His very chastenings tell us that He is our Father, (chap. viii. 5; compare Heb. xii.,) and when we reach the rest, surely it will be the cry of each one of us,

“Not unto us, but to Thy name be the praise.” We have not yet reached that rest, we are not yet through the wilderness. Perhaps many a weary mile of trial and tribulation we have yet before us; but the fiery pillar will lead us, the Manna will fall around our tents, and the Rock with its living streams will quench our thirst, so that, though in the wilderness, we shall never hunger and never thirst, (John vi. 35.) May we not get weary. May we never, through an evil heart of unbelief, turn back to Egypt, or lust after the leeks, and onions, and flesh-pots of this wretched world; but feeding on the living bread, and drinking of the living water, may we testify to the world that we count all but loss compared with Jesus; and that ours is the blessed soul-satisfying portion even now, much more when we reach the mansions our Lord is preparing for us in the Father’s house.

JUDGES XVI.

DELILAH represents the world. Samson is a type of the saint so long as he preserves his Nazarite character. Only sin and love of the world make us weak. If we are weak, it shows we are not walking as Nazarites. The world at first sends us

to sleep. The character of the Church now is blindness and weakness, (ver. 21, 22.) Ver. 30 represents Christ's triumphing over His enemies by death. Samson presents two things—Christ as the perfect Nazarite, and the Church as the one with failure.

1 SAMUEL.

SUBJECT OF THE BOOK.

THE Sanctuary and the Throne, the Priesthood and the Kingdom corrupted in the hand of *man*, and removed by judgment. God's Priest and God's King brought in as the only resting-place of the soul. Jesus, the Son of God, God's King, to hold the immovable kingdom; and God's Priest, to hold the untransferable priesthood.

Chap. i. Divine power, on the proved incompetency of the creature.

Chap. ii.-iv. Corruption, and judgment on the priesthood. Ichabod written on Israel.

Chap. v. The triumph of the Lord over the gods of the Philistines.

Chap. vii. Israel's repentance and restoration.

Chap. viii., ix. God rejected. Man's king set up and removed in judgment. *God's King* set up, (chap. viii.) Israel's blessing was to have God for their

King. "The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." "*God* brought them out of Egypt, (Num. xxiii. 21.) This they will confess in the day of their recovery. "The Lord is our *Judge*, the Lord is our *Lawgiver*, the Lord is our *King*, He will save us," (Isa. xxxiii. 32.) "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty." Their glory was not to be as *the nations*, because their God was with them, (Exod. xxxiii. 16; Deut. iv. 7; Num. xxiii. 9; Lev. xx. 23-26; Deut. vii. 6.) But Israel would none of Him. They reject the Lord for Saul: Christ for Cæsar. "We will not have this man to reign over us;" "and the Lord gives them up to their own heart's lusts, and to be filled with their own desires." "They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works," (Ps. cvi. 35.)

THE BOOK OF JOB.

CHRIST is *God's perfection*, (see Lev. xxii. 17-25.) No measure of gift, grace, or devotedness can make a saint *God's perfection*. Even Paul must say that he was not perfect, (Phil. iii. 12-14.) Job is called (chap. i. 1) perfect and upright. He is a blessed example of one filled with grace, wisdom, and fruit, excellent and comely in the sight of God; but in

chap. xxix. we see him taking complacency in the fruit he bore, rather than in God, through whose grace he bore it: his mind turned to himself, instead of *judging* himself in the sight of God. It is all JOB; what *he* was, what *he* did, what people thought of *him*; it is all *I*, not *God*.

In chap. xl. 4, and xlii. 5, 6, he is brought into God's presence; all His boasting is over—"I am vile, I abhor myself." Here was the end of God's chastening of Job, the end of his suffering Satan to deal with him as he did; to teach him to know himself in the holy presence of God. God often has to deal thus with His children, to teach them only to GLORY IN CHRIST, to rest in HIM who is God's *perfection*. The law required something from man in the flesh—it said, "Do and live." The gospel is the ministration of righteousness and life. All our completeness is in Christ. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" "we are made the righteousness of God in Him." That is the present possession of the saint. All His fulness and righteousness are ours, made ours by God, (1 Cor. i. 30.) We cannot have part of Christ, or part of the work of Christ. A whole Christ is ours. Hallelujah!

THE PSALMS.—XXXIX.

“WHEN Thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity.” Here is God’s estimate of man—vanity! *All* flesh is grass; its goodliness and glory only the flower of grass. The wind has only to blow upon it, and it is gone. Every man at his best estate is altogether vanity!

This is the lesson taught us by the man to whom God gave wisdom and knowledge, riches and honour, such as none other ever had, (2 Chron. i. 12,) in the Book of the Preacher—“Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, *all* is vanity;” all that is “*under the sun*.” Blessed be God, *our* portion is not here, nor hence. We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. We are not from below, but from above. We have died with Christ, and left behind us all that the world is seeking after; we are risen with Him, and the things *above* the sun are ours; our present portion is where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

What are God’s thoughts about us, about all who believe in Jesus? As to what we are in the flesh naturally, we have only to turn to the cross of Christ to learn what God thinks of us. The bitter cry, “Why hast Thou forsaken me?” the curse and wrath of God

borne for us by Jesus, teach us that God's estimate of us is, that which Christ *for us* was vicariously made—*sin*, only fit to be judged, forsaken, and to have shame and wrath poured upon us. What does God think of us now? ‘“*As He is*, so are *we* in this world.” *That* is our standing. We stand before God in all the perfectness, and holiness, and acceptance, and glory of that blessed One who is at the right hand of the Father, just as on the cross He stood before God in all the fearful responsibility of our guilt, our sins and iniquities laid upon Him. Oh, how slow of heart are we to believe this! Satan knows that the power to separate us from the world, and to make us happy in God, is our faith, our knowledge of the *grace* in which we stand, and of the glory for which we hope; and he, therefore, seeks to dim our views of our standing, and to lead us to question the *love* which has not only saved us from the wrath to come, but loves us even as it loves Jesus. But there is no other standing, no intermediate place. If I have believed in Jesus, I am *in Him*; if in Him, “quickened, raised up, and made to sit in heavenly places in Him.” It is no measure of attainment that brings me there. It is *union*, living union; as truly having the life of Christ in my soul, as my finger has the life of my head. As true, of course, when I first believed as now, and as it will be in heaven. The manifestation of this life, which is *practical* holiness, is just in proportion to the crucifixion of the flesh, and denial of self. This is the

lesson of John xv. Without Christ we can do nothing. No fruit from the flesh, or from ourselves. Fruitfulness is from Christ *living in us*, as the vine lives in the branches. The Lord teach us *to live*. Seek to walk as a child of God. Dishonour not the grace given to you by taking any lower standard than the character and ways of Jesus. Let your eye be fixed on Him. Looking unto Jesus is victory over self, the world, and everything.

PSALM LI.

This Psalm may be considered an exposition of what Paul calls sorrow according to God ; such as He approves. Sorrow arising not merely from the sin leading to pain, loss, contempt, hell, but from its being committed against a holy, gracious God, (ver. 4.) Sorrow which leads *to God* in confession, and seeking forgiveness.

PSALM LXXXVI.

The cry of the *servant of the Lord*, (ver. 2, 4, 16.) This place Christ took, (Phil. ii.) He took on Him the form of a *servant*, and was the empty One, the poor and needy One. It is our place, as having the mind of Christ. He filled it in divine perfectness, and yet was made sin for us. We fail in it. This Psalm suits our need.

Ver. 1. God's ear is sought by His poor needy one. Oh, how precious a thought it is that our God not only humbleth Himself to behold the things done in heaven and earth, but He bows His ear to the cry of His needy ones.

Ver. 2. The first cry is for *preservation*. "Preserve my soul." He that is poor and needy, and knows *his own utter weakness*, and *the power of the enemy*, feels his need of being *preserved by God*. One of the sweet titles of the Lord's people is, "preserved in Christ Jesus." In Him alone are we safe. How precious are the promises of preservation which we find scattered through the Word of our God. God, as our hiding-place, preserves us from trouble, (Ps. xxxii.) His loving-kindness, (Ps. xl.) His mercy and truth, are engaged to preserve us. The Lord preserveth the faithful, (Ps. xxxi,) all them that love Him, (Ps. cxlv. 20.) He forsakes not His saints, they are preserved for ever, (Ps. xxxvii. 28.) He preserves from all evil, our going out and coming in, (Ps. cxxi. 7, 8.) It is this care of God that we so need to trust in, and to cast ourselves upon.

His plea is, "*I am holy*." One whom God has separated for Himself from this evil world; therefore Satan hates, the flesh lusts, and the world rages, and we *need* to be kept by the mighty power of God.

The second cry is, "*Save thy servant*." Save (not from wrath, that is not the thought here, but from *evil*,) from the power of the enemy without and

within. "*Thy servant*:" this is evidently the character in which this Psalm looks to God.

The plea, *that trusteth in Thee*. It is a blessed thing when we really trust in God; when we have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead. One thing always characterises this confidence when *real*—there is peace. God has promised to keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon Him, because He trusteth in Him. So that whenever this peace is wanting, there must manifestly be some self-confidence or self-will not subdued, and a measure of distrust in God. "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him," (Nahum i. 7.)

The third cry is for *mercy*. "Be *merciful* unto me." Just as we realise what Christ was as the servant of the Lord, and see our own failure as compared with Him, we shall feel our need of *mercy*. It is remarkable that when Paul addresses Timothy or Titus, who have special places of service in the Church, how he desires for them not only grace and peace, but *mercy* also. When we think of the infirmities, shortcomings, pride, ignorance, and folly of all our holy things, we feel we need *mercy*, mercy that endureth for ever and ever, daily to meet our need. But the joy of the Lord is our strength, therefore the next cry is, "Rejoice the soul of thy servant."

PSALM XC.

Faith ever begins with *God*. Whatever we look at in faith is seen in His presence. What time is, what man is, are seen *there*, and nowhere else; and this is blessed, that, however humbled we are in the sense of our vileness and weakness in *His* presence, we find that presence the blessing of our souls. This characterises this Psalm. It begins with God. 1st, What He by grace is *to us*, the weak, tried, feeble ones described afterwards; and 2dly, What He is in Himself. 1st, He has been our dwelling-place, the unchangeable One. Generation after generation has passed away, but He has been the same throughout—the dwelling-place of His people. 2dly, What God is—"From everlasting to everlasting" God (Heb.) "The strong one." Being brought-thus into His presence as *our* dwelling-place—the strong One—we learn what man is, and what time is also. Man is turned to destruction, (Gen. iii.) "Dust," &c. 1st, His weakness—his instability—sleep—grass—his sinfulness, (ver. 8.) 2dly, What time is—one thousand years but as yesterday—our days as a tale—seventy years. Then we have the *prayer* founded on all this.

THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH.

ISAIAH especially takes up the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In chap. vi., *His glory*. God presenting His purpose first. Chap. vii., viii., ix., His incarnation, His person, Emmanuel, God with us. Passing over intermediate chapters, after hearing God's estimate of the flesh in chap. xl, "All flesh is grass," we have the Virgin's Son, Emmanuel, presented to us as *the servant of Jehovah*, (see Phil. ii.) God's blessed announcement of Him, (chap. xlii. 1-9,) "Behold." Chap. xlix., His reward. What a wondrous reward; the joy not only of gathering Israel, but of being a light to the Gentiles. Chap. l., His experience from *man*, as the faithful witness of God—shame, spitting. Chap. liii., His sufferings as man, from God, on account of His faithfulness to man. I have read this as showing us the portrait of Christ as *the servant of God*, as one who had *a single eye* and *but one Master*, (Matt. vi.)

JEREMIAH XVII. 5-14.

THESE verses are very sweet, because turning us away from creature strength and confidence, to trust alone

in the living God. In Jeremiah ix. 23, 24, we find the Lord, by the prophet, rebuking man's pride and vain glory. The 24th verse is three times quoted, in 1 Cor. i. 31, iii. 21; 2 Cor. x. 17., in different connexions. Self-glory, in the first; glorying in others, in the second; and glorying in our works and labours in the last. All this is set aside by that blessed word, "Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord." "*He* is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Here we may glory; safely, happily, eternally glory; but nowhere else. All else is vanity; all other glorying is *sin*. He only is worthy. He will not give His glory to another.

THE GOSPEL OF ST MATTHEW, III.-V.

MATT. III., John, the minister of righteousness, goes into the wilderness, and calls people into the wilderness after him. Matt. iv., the Minister of Grace goes into the wilderness alone, as the Captain of our Salvation, fighting our battles, and then comes forth in grace, healing all that were oppressed by the devil, whom He had overcome.

At the end of chapter iii. we have the *anointed servant*. It is the fulfilment of Isaiah xlii. 1, lxi. 1. This is always His place, as the One who had emptied Himself and taken the form of a *servant*.

As *servant* He is captain of salvation, chap. iv.
 As *servant* He is minister of grace, chap. iv. 12,
 to end. As *servant* He is teacher of His people, chaps.
 v., vi., vii.

John the Baptist and our Lord both use the word *repent*; but this word has a very different meaning according to the lips that utter it. In the first case it was, Repent, and *do* works *meet* for repentance; still putting them under the requirements of a broken law. In the other case it was, *Repent*, and come to me and *live*. It was grace. Chapter v., we have gone to Christ as poor sinners, and are healed; here He gives us heavenly instruction, ver. 15–26. If I am not cultivating habits of grace, I shall find the Lord has a controversy with me. It is a different thing to let the light of heaven shine upon people, to taking them into the place of light itself. Matthew v. is the coming in of light from above upon their circumstances; in 1 John i. we are set in the position from which light comes. Light does not change. Light is always light. But there is characteristic light. Law required conformity, which was light. So does *grace*—light of poverty of spirit, &c.

ST MATTHEW V., VI., VII.

I have been thinking much lately on Matthew v., vi., vii., as containing the principles on which the children of God are to walk amidst the evil of this

wretched world. Oh that I had them stamped upon my heart, and carried out in my life and conversation. It appears to me that this blessed sermon may be divided into four parts. The first, from ver. 3–12, describes the character of the disciples of Christ, and their privileges—Blessed are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted for righteousness' sake, for Christ's sake. The second, from ver. 13–15, their standing and responsibility in the world—the salt of the earth—the light of the world—the city set upon a hill—the candle set upon a candlestick—followed with the admonition, "Let your light," &c. The third division I subdivide into three parts: the first, from ver. 17 to end of chapter v., describes our walk *before men*; the good works which they are *to see*, that they may glorify our Father which is in heaven: the second, embracing the whole of chapter vi., gives us directions regarding our *service to God*—this is to be *in secret*—unto our Father which seeth *in secret*: the third, our service in the Church, to preserve love in it: judging a brother is forbidden. Ver. 1–5, To preserve its purity, it is warned against extending fellowship in holy things—ministry and worship to the world—the misplaced charity, the wretched disloyalty to Christ so common in the present day,—concluding with a warning against false teachers, with directions for discerning them. The whole discourse ending with a solemn warning

against the mere formal profession of religion, the calling Christ "Lord, Lord," and not doing the things which He says. If you carefully study this discourse, you will see the wonderful wisdom, and depth, and unearthliness of all its parts: how it meets all the errors into which the Church has unhappily fallen; to act upon it would indeed call for constant self-denial and mortification of the flesh, and render "the doers of Christ's will" what He was Himself, hated and despised by the world, because we should so testify by our conduct that its works are evil. I feel deeply humbled, whenever I look into this blessed portion of my Master's Word, at my carnality and want of spiritual wisdom and grace; and then how sweet it is to turn to John xv.: there we find the true secret of fruitful obedience: it is the *abiding in Christ*. Our unfruitfulness arises from our unbelief, our want of looking unto, and walking with Jesus. It is not simply because we are weak, and utterly unable to do anything good of ourselves—that is what our Lord takes for granted, and most decidedly affirms; "*Without me, ye can do nothing:*" but it is our evil heart of unbelief which causes us to depart from the living God, and then there is nothing but barrenness of soul and life. There may be still the form of godliness regularly kept up, but there is no *power*; there may be the name and profession, but the life is wanting. Now the only way to get out of this formal, wretched state is *the abiding in Jesus*, and the having *His words abiding in us*—then we

shall bring forth much fruit. We both know what it is to feel coldness of heart and restlessness of spirit on account of our following Jesus *afar off*, instead of imitating the example of the blessed Paul, "Forgetting the things behind, and reaching forth to those that are before;" and we know the blessed remedy for it too. Is it not to sit at the feet of Jesus, and listen to His gracious words, and ponder them in our hearts? and how suited are His counsels to us when in such a state of mind, (Rev. iii. 17, 18.) Is it not to go with Him to Gethsemane and Calvary; and there, learning something of the height and depth and length and breadth of that love which led Him to redeem us with His own precious blood, anew to present ourselves as those that are not our own but His, as living, joyful, willing sacrifices to our God?

ST MATTHEW VI. 10.

"Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." The fulfilment of this prayer will be as the days of heaven upon earth. Self-will is essentially in the creature *sin*. No one has a right to have an independent will, that is, self-will, but that Holy, Eternal, Blessed One, our God, whose essential character is *Light* and *Love*. Subjection to the will of God is holiness. Those subject to it exhibit His character. They walk in the light, as He is in the light. They dwell and walk in love. Angels did their own will, that is, they acted contrary to light and love. God

spared them not. Man did his own will. He sought to be as God, independent of God. He has subjected himself to shame, ruin, death, and eternal misery. The Lord Jesus came from the bosom of the Father, saying, "I delight to do Thy will." His meat and drink when He was here were to do the will of Him that sent Him. In Gethsemane His holy, broken-hearted prayer was, "Not my will, but Thine be done." "He was *obedient* unto death, even the death of the Cross." "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

The mind of Antichrist is, "The king shall do according to *his own will*, and shall exalt *himself*." Every act of self-will is of the spirit of Antichrist, is the working of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. "He that doeth the *will of God* abideth for ever." I know scarcely any subject of so much importance at the present time as the urging on the consciences of the saints the duty of diligently searching the Word of God, in order to *prove* what is that good and acceptable and perfect *will* of God. There is so much religion, so little obedience, and so little godliness. We so little know the joy and blessedness of setting the Lord always before us, and of bringing *His will* into all our domestic, family, and social relationships. How soon would religious controversies end if God's children, instead of disputing about the excellency of this, the necessity of that, or the expediency of the other, would diligently, prayerfully, with singleness of eye, and uprightness of

heart, seek to know and do the will of their Father in heaven.

ST MATTHEW XI. 28, 29.

What quietness and peace it gives when God's love is believed and rested on, and His will is everything to us. Jesus not only said, "Come unto me, and I will *give* you *rest*," but "learn of me, and ye shall find rest to your souls." In Him we find perfect confidence in His Father's love, and perfect submission to His holy blessed will. He could, therefore, say, "I *delight* to do Thy will, Thy law is within my heart," though that will led Him, for all our sakes, to the shame, sorrow, and agony of the Cross. May we learn of Him, and then no circumstances of sorrow, or trial, or suffering, would ever hinder our perfect peace, our calm quiet rest in God. How we see this in the walk of our Blessed Master. Such calm self-possession, such dignity; the garden of Gethsemane and the judgment hall are remarkable displays of this. Isaiah l. is the key to it all. Wherever there is not the resting of the soul in the *love of God*, and the rejoicing in God's will, we shall ever be acting from the excitement of circumstances and feelings, and then there can be no rest of soul.

ST LUKE VI.

It is a solemn thought that the Son of God has been into this world, and was rejected, spit upon, and crucified! It is the very same world we live in now. It is deeply important to know what the real character of the world is, or we shall shrink from the cross. There are three things to be learned from this chapter: 1st, How can we obey commands beyond the strength of nature? The miracle of the withered hand teaches us. The right hand represents *power*, (Phil. iv. 13.) Jesus commanded the man to do that which he had no ability to do, but power accompanied the word—this is the difference between *grace* and *law*. The man did not reason, but obeyed. “Work of *faith*,” (1 Thess. i.) “The obedience of *faith*,” (Rom. xvi. 26.) Anything I can do in the strength of nature is not this—the weaker we are *in nature*, the better able to yield the obedience of *faith*—nothing is too hard for the strength of Jesus. When we get into the glory, we shall not regret having borne the cross of Christ, (Phil. i. 29.) Everything is either done in the strength of nature, and is worthless; or it is done in the strength of Jesus, and is the obedience of faith. Why did Peter fall worse than the other disciples? Simply because he had more confidence in the flesh. The others said they would follow Him, but they ran away when the trial

came; better so than to follow Him to the judgment hall in the strength of nature, (Ps. lxxi. 16-18.)

2d, Our place in the world as the followers of a rejected Master. A little company are gathered round Jesus, *this* their distinction, they were *gathered to Christ*; not their knowledge, they had but little, but they *followed* Jesus, (John vi. 68, 69.) What did they gain? **REPROACH.** What were their present circumstances? The Lord so poor, He had no bread to give them; they did not, like the multitudes, follow Him for the loaves and fishes, but from love to His name; and He espoused the cause of His poor ones against the scribes, who accused them of breaking the Sabbath. He brings in David, the anointed king though Saul had the kingdom, as type of the present time. Let us not be surprised at reproaches or losses for Christ's sake.

3d, The character which becomes the followers of Jesus, (ver. 20-49.) Surely all who believe in Jesus hunger now, are poor, and weep. What believers want to learn is to look at every thing with the *eye of faith*. The very things *God* calls good and sweet, the world and the flesh call evil and bitter: let us believe *God's* report. To those who have their portion *here*, Jesus says "Woe, woe." (Ver. 27.) The Lord teaches us how to act towards the world. What are we left here for but to be His representatives on earth? Paul wrote an epistle to the Corinthians, but tells them to be *God's epistle* to the world. Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world." There is no collective light now, but indi-

vidual light we are still called to exhibit. Had God stood on *His rights*, He would never have given Christ to die for us, and we must have been lost for ever; but no. He acted *in grace*, and graciously leads us to do the same. A Christian has to do with nothing but *impossibilities*—the fall of Jericho was by *faith*. God loves His enemies, and says, “My children, go and do the same—do good unto ALL men. Judging others is the world’s principle—let it not be ours. Jesus has borne *our* condemnation; God has not judged us; let us not put ourselves in the judgment-seat with regard to others. Two things always constitute an act the Lord can delight in, viz., *faith* and *love*. Ver. 39, applies to ministry. (Ver. 40.) Let us not seek to be *above* Christ. We are never to *seek* love, but always to *show* it—this is grace, (ver. 41, 42.) A mote is a splinter. If I am walking in the presence of God, I see faults in others, a little outbreking of the flesh, but *in myself* a whole *body* of sin and death, a *beam* of flesh—in them only splinters—the Lord would have me see them not as a judge but as a physician, (Gal. vi. 1.)

ST LUKE XIII. 3.

How blessed is the word *repent* when understood in its scriptural sense—the soul turning from self and sin and ruin to Him whose arms are opened wide to receive back with joy every one that will come unto Him. Luke xv. shows us what God means

when He calls *all* men everywhere to repent. All have gone into the far country. We have sought happiness in a world which, in mercy as well as in judgment, He has stamped with vanity and death; where men "spend money for that which is not bread, and labour for that which satisfieth not," there the grace of our God meets and brings salvation to us. He *beseeches* us to be reconciled to Him. He goes beyond, far beyond, the parable. In the case of the prodigal son, he goes back to his father; but in the Gospel God comes to us, where we are, and as we are; tells us of His love in giving His only-begotten Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and beseeches us not to perish, but to turn to Him and live. The message of the Gospel is as though God did *beseech* by us: "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." How joyful is the welcome we receive! None but a Father's heart can enter into it. The fatted calf is killed, the best robe brought out. Not only is there the full forgiveness of all past sin and folly, but our God says, "It is meet for us to be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found." Death and ruin are in the far country; life and joy in the Father's house.

What a God have we all sinned against—so full of love, so rich in mercy, so ready to forgive! A just God, and yet a Saviour. In the cross He teaches us how holy, how just, how terrible are his judgments against sin: the curse that the Incarnate Son of

God bore tells us what we are and deserve in His sight, but that cross, while it condemns the sin shows us God's love to the sinner. To believe this love, to receive this Saviour, is *salvation*. Thus alone can the soul find rest and settled peace. I look at the cross, and can there bear to learn something of what I am in God's sight, what *God thinks* of me; for that which tells me of the vile and awful hatefulness of my sin, tells me that God has *so loved* me, a poor, ruined sinner, that He gave His own Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

THE GOSPEL OF ST JOHN, I.-XIII.

THE 14th verse of John i. is the exposition of the whole Gospel, just as the 1st verse of Matthew i. is the exposition of Matthew. In the first three verses we get what Jesus "WAS;" in the 14th we get what he "WAS MADE,"—the Creator who made all things "was *made flesh*." In the 19th Psalm we read, "The heavens declare the glory of *God*;" but we look in vain to the heavens to learn what THE FATHER IS: it was Jesus, the only-begotten *Son*, who *declared Him*. The first thing needful ere God and man could dwell together is, that sin should be put away. This we get in ver. 29, "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD," &c.

"Christ and sin," (Rom. iii.,) we get here. God provides the Lamb, Christ bears the sin, the sinner has only to *look on!* See Exod. xvii. 6. All was done *in the sight* of the people. If I sent a poor woman a five pound note by my child, the woman would not stop at the child, but would say, Now I know what — is; his love and kindness, &c. He sent the gift. Thus we learn by Jesus what GOD is. "*By Him we believe in GOD.*" This is blessed—Jesus hath *declared* HIM. In chap. ii. 24, we get what MAN is. Besides sin being put away, there is the badness of our nature; and in John iii. we get this provided for. Rom. vi. is the exposition of this chapter. Here we have Christ, and the flesh. Not only must atonement for sins be made, not only must the *Lamb of God* bear them away, but man's nature must be condemned; he must have a new life ere he can even see the kingdom of God. He must be born again, and in order to this Christ *must* be lifted up. Here it is not the Lamb of God, but "*THE SON OF MAN, must be lifted up.*" Christ was made in the *likeness of sinful flesh*, that sin might be condemned in the flesh, (Rom. viii. 3,) and the righteousness of the law be fulfilled in us. The knowledge of this is our power for sanctification. In the next verse Jesus says, "God so loved the world as to give *his only begotten Son,*" but "*the SON OF MAN is lifted up.*" When I feel within the rising of the flesh, I should look to the cross, and there I see my *nature* lifted up between heaven and earth, condemned and crucified

in the Son of Man, and I should "reckon myself as having *died* unto sin," in spite of all I feel to the contrary, (Gal. ii. 20.) What is the difference between the cross and the altar? In the *altar*, we see the victim slain, and the blood making atonement for *sins* committed. In the *cross*, we see the sinner himself accursed and slain. In Leviticus we see the victim brought to the altar by the man who had committed sin, the guilt transferred to it, the blood shed, and atonement made for the guilty one: this is John i., Rom. iii. But in Deuteronomy xxi. 22, we read, "If a *man* have committed a sin worthy of death, and *he* be to be put to death, and thou hang *him* on a tree," &c.; here we get the cross, and Rom. vi. and John iii. So that, looking to the cross, we can say, "I have been crucified with Christ;" it is a matter of *faith*, and not of attainment. By substitution, God has executed judgment upon *me*. *Because* I have *been* crucified with Christ, I am to crucify the flesh. This is a matter of attainment.

ST JOHN I. 14.

"The Word was made flesh."

It is very important to remember, in reading the Scriptures, that while one of the blessed purposes of our God is to bless us, His *great* object in creation and redemption is the glory of His Son. He is the centre and the end of all the counsels and purposes of our God. They are all intended to display His excel-

lency and His glory. This is opened to us in many direct testimonies of the Holy Ghost in the Word. I instance two of them—in Col. i. and Eph. i.—which are remarkably full. In Col. i. 16, we find that all things were created *by* and *for* Him, as well as subsist by Him; and in Eph. i. 9, 10, we find that, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, all things which have been marred and separated from God by sin, either in the created heavens or the earth, are to be gathered into one in Christ, the Reconciler as well as the Creator of all things. It was for this end that He who was “with God, and that was God,” became flesh, that by His death He might make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring back into blessing everything that had been defiled and marred by sin. This great mystery was the subject of the earliest revelations of grace made to man after he had fallen. In Gen. iii. 15, when creation had been ruined, He was promised, as “the seed of the woman,” the Son of man, who should bruise the serpent’s head, and bring back creation from the bondage of corruption. In Gen. xii., when Abraham was called out of a world that had rejected God for the open worship of Satan, Christ was promised, as the seed of Abraham in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. To David, the chosen and anointed King of Israel, He was promised, as his Seed who should sit upon his throne, and “have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.” The prophet Isaiah revealed that He should

be the Virgin's Son, Immanuel, God with us. When He was born at Bethlehem, He was the Heir of all these various glories—the Seed of the woman, creation's Heir and Restorer, the Seed of Abraham in whom the nations were to be blessed, and the Heir of David's throne, the King of Israel. But the world knew Him not, Israel received Him not—they rejected and crucified Him; but the Father raised Him from the dead, and said, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." In the meantime God is gathering out of the world, by the testimony of Jesus, a people for His name, who know, love, and serve Him now, during His rejection by the world, and who are to be the sharers and manifesters of His glory at the day of His appearing. Of this the two epistles referred to speak. They declare not merely that the Church is saved by His work, blessed and perfect as that is, but that she has oneness with His Person. He is her Head; she is His body. He, the bridegroom; she, His bride, His wife—the object of His delight and love, and the sharer of all His glory. How wondrous is our blessing! We are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ. The dispensation of the fulness of times will be the manifestation of all that Christ is, of all that the Church is by virtue of its union with Him. He will then take the power and glory which are alone His due, and, as Son of Man, Son of David, Son of Abraham, and Son of God, reign with His Church in glory.

May our hearts be more fixed on the *Person* of our

blessed Lord, while rejoicing in the full salvation His work has obtained for us. May His love, His Person, be our chief and present joy and glory. May it be said of us, not only that we believe though we see Him not, but that "we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Oh what a gift is He, the gift of God ! How precious are the two receivings in John i. ! First, we receive Him : He gives us power to become the sons of God, and then, out of His fulness, we receive grace for grace. We learn day by day as we live by faith upon Jesus, and the Holy Ghost teaches us, by taking of His things, what are the riches of wisdom and grace and glory that are in Him, a little of the meaning of that glorious truth, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and we are complete in Him." We never need look outside or away from Jesus for anything we need. All fulness is in Him. How miserably foolish and childish to the soul that knows Him, and lives by the faith of the Son of God, all the religiousness and ordinances of the flesh appear ! What we *are in Him*, and what we *have in Him*, and what *He is to us*, is the Divine lesson which enables us to go on our way rejoicing.

ST JOHN I. 16.

More faith is what we want. All we need is supplied in the fulness of the grace that is in Jesus. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him.

We want *faith* to abide in Him, and to *receive* out of that fulness. It is only as we receive that we are able to render back again any joyful service of praise and thanksgiving.

ST JOHN X.

The character of Jesus as our Shepherd, the blessedness and security of His sheep, and what their character should be. It is a blessed emblem in which the Holy Ghost delights to present our blessed Lord to us, awakening our souls to sing, in contemplating it, that sweet psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." In John x. the Lord speaks of His love and of His power as the good Shepherd of His Father's sheep. His love led Him to empty Himself of His glory, and to lay down His life for the sheep; His power was manifested in resurrection, in taking up again the life which He laid down, and communicating that life to all the flock which he purchased with His own blood. How blessed is that verse in Heb. xiii. 20, "The God of *peace*, which brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep," &c. He met all the power of sin and death and Satan on the cross, and in resurrection triumphed over all that was against us, not only delivering us from the wrath we have deserved, but associating us in all the glorious fruits of His victory. Because He lives who was dead we live, being quickened together with Him,

raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly places, to the praise of the glory of the grace of God. How blessed it is to know that Jesus has given to us, who believe in Him, *eternal life*. To realise that we are in His hands who was wounded and pierced for us, and in the hands of the Father who gave us to Him, how full our security! We were as sheep going astray, but by His grace we are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, (1 Pet. ii.) Our character as sheep is sweetly told us in ver. 27: We *hear His voice* and follow *Him*. Contrast this with ver. 5. We hear the voice of Jesus speaking to us in his Word: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Let us search it, meditate on it, praying for the teaching of that other Comforter who dwelleth *in* us, and whose blessed office it is to take of the things of Christ and show them to us. Let us *follow Him*. If He leadeth us out, He goeth before us, and we may quietly and peacefully follow Him, though the paths He leads in are all contrary to the ways of the world and the flesh. Matt. x. 16-42 shows us our character and portion as the sheep of Christ in the world, and John xiii. our place in the Church. The lowest place in the world: the lowest place in the Church. In the one, not to think it strange to be hated of all men, and called Beelzebub, if we confess His name, and wear the livery of His household; in the other, girding ourselves with the towel to wash the feet of the saints. Such was the place our Lord and Master took, and it is enough for the servant to be as his

Master. There is another word we must not pass over—"I *know them*." He knows me, my conflicts, trials, infirmities, failures, exercises of soul, sins. He knows me if I am cleaving to His side, seeking to be faithful, diligent, obedient, counting it my joy to suffer with Him, and to confess Him in a world that rejected and crucified Him. He knows me, all I need, all the varied necessities of my soul. With such a Shepherd I need not fear, I need not want. The Lord give us confidence in our Shepherd's love and power and care, and grace to hear His voice and follow His steps!

Jesus not only says, when speaking of the qualifications of the Good Shepherd, "He lays down His life for the sheep," but he adds, "I know my sheep." He knows you—not only that you are His, given Him by the Father, and purchased by His blood; for whose safety and blessing He in His grace became responsible to the Father as His Shepherd; but He knows your frame, your history, your sin, your wants, your state—knows it in the same infinite love and grace that brought Him from the Father's bosom to die for you. There is deep comfort in this for our poor sensitive hearts. We cannot hide aught from Him, and would not if we could. No. He knows and understands it all, and can meet it all in His abounding grace and patient love. But this is not all. There is a word of His in that chapter which lately has been very sweet to me, as showing the generous confidence the Lord has in His sheep, and

how much He makes of their confidence in Him, poor and feeble as it is. You have, I doubt not, dwelt with delight on the generous grace that, in John xvii., makes so much of that confession of his poor disciples, when they said, chap. xvi., "By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God;" compare chap. xvii. 7, 8, 25. But this was in speaking to *His Father*. Now, in John x., He is not speaking to the Father, neither is He addressing His disciples. He speaks to His enemies and theirs. They were saying that He was mad, that He had a devil; that He was a blasphemer, because He said that He was the Son of God. What comforted His heart at this hour? We know that He always had the comfort of His Father's presence and sympathy, save in that solitary hour when "He was made sin for us who knew no sin;" but, besides that, the faith of a poor sinner, (Matt. xv. 28,) the love of a poor sinner, (Luke vii.,) were joy and refreshment to His spirit. Yea, we know that it was His meat and drink to do His Father's will while He taught the woman of Samaria. We see it also here, when He tells His enemies, "You are not my sheep, and you therefore do not know me; but *my* sheep *know* me; *they* value me if you do not; they hear my voice if you stop your ears." The "hard sayings" were, in the ears of Christ's sheep, the words of eternal life, (chap. vi. 60.) They believe and are sure that Jesus is the Son of the living God, and they find Him to be so the centre of their hearts, that the wide world has no other place for them. "Lord, to whom shall

we go?" Let us honour this His confidence in us by singing, with unwavering hearts, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

ST JOHN XI.

How sweetly does the 11th of St John's Gospel open to us the heart of Jesus, showing us what He is with whom we have to do, even One who can not only help us, but can also feel for and with us; One who, in all our afflictions, is Himself afflicted. This chapter appears to me, in the three positions in which we find Christ connected with Mary and Martha, to present to us typically, in the two first the present circumstances of the Church, and in the last its future blessedness and glory, when "death shall be swallowed up in victory." The first thing we see in this chapter (ver. 1-16) is Jesus absent, and, whilst absent, those whom He loves in sickness and in sorrow. If He were present, Lazarus would not die. He could have caused that even that man should not have died, (ver. 37,) but He was away, and his sickness terminates in death, and the grave receives the body of the departed saint, and his sisters weep and are sorrowful. Is not that the very picture of the Church now? As to bodily presence the Lord is absent; He is gone away, and there is no manifested exercise of His power to save His people from trial and sorrow. - Those whom Jesus loves are sick and dying and sorrowing, and thus shall it be until

He comes again, who will turn our sorrow into joy, (John xvi. 20-22.) But they have comfort in their sorrow; they carry it to Jesus,* (ver. 3,) and that brings in, as a *present* thing, His sympathy and consolation, (ver. 17-38.) He presents Himself to Martha as "the Resurrection and the Life," gives her the assured and blessed hope, "Thy brother shall rise again;" and while Mary has the blessed privilege of pouring out all her sorrows at the feet of Jesus, His tears flow with hers—"Jesus wept." "Behold, how He loved him!" And is not this our *present* portion? Is not Jesus, though not yet present as to manifested power, with us in sympathy? (Heb. iv. 14-16.) Do we not know Him as the Resurrection and the Life?—as the One who has, through death, destroyed him that had the power of death? Does He not say, Thy husband and thy father shall rise again—"of all that the Father hath given me will I lose nothing, but will raise it up again at the last day." "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." We may send to Him in our sorrows, weep at His feet, and be assured He weeps with us. There is yet one other thing which should comfort us, and that is the intercession of Jesus in our behalf in the Father's presence. We learn from verses 41, 42, that He was at the time praying for His afflicted people, and we know (Heb. vii. 24, 25) "He *ever liveth* to make *intercession for us*." But from verses 38-45, we have quite another scene presented to us—the manifested power and victory of Jesus over death

and the grave. It is no longer intercession but praise, “*I thank thee, Father;*” no longer gloomy sorrow, but *the glory of God*; no longer sickness and death triumphing over the friends of Jesus, but “*Lazarus, come forth,*” and the dead hears the voice of the Son of God, and he comes forth. Have we not here an earnest of that hour when Jesus shall appear who is our life, and “we shall appear with Him in glory,”—when He shall raise these vile bodies and make them like His glorious body,—when we shall not only, as the Jews, *see* the glory of God, but be heirs of that glory, and have that glory revealed *in us*? (Rom. viii. 18–22.) It is for that day, when shall come the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body, that we now groan within ourselves; when they that are Christ’s (see 1 Cor. xv. 23) shall be raised at His coming, and shall be for ever with the Lord, (1 Thess. iv. 13–18.) Oh, let us long for that day; true, it is for us *individually* better to depart and to be with Christ; but if our hearts long for the deliverance of the creature from the bondage of corruption, (Rom. viii. 18–23,) for the manifestation of the sons of God, the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the glory of Jesus, we shall long for that day. Truly the night is far spent and *the day* is at hand, then shall all our trials cease, and we shall be for ever with the Lord.

ST JOHN XII. 26.

“If any man serve me, him will my Father

honour." Oh! how the heart rejects honour, in any shape, from that world which rejected and crucified our blessed Lord, when the only object is to serve Him. We cannot receive honour, much less can we seek it from one another, when under the power of His constraining love we seek to serve Him. Otherwise it is self-service, in a subtle form. But it is His love, known and enjoyed, that *alone can* deliver us from selfishness of this most horrid kind, self-seeking, self-serving, self-honouring, even in the very things that outwardly appear to be service to Him.

The Father loves to honour those who serve His Son, but it is honour that the flesh does not covet nor discern; fellowship in drinking of His cup and being baptized with His baptism here, and in His glory by and by. There is much sorrow in seeking to serve Him now. The state of His dear flock, the selfish, worldly, unbelieving condition of those who are His, so little response to anything which concerns His glory. Oh! one needs to be abiding in His love to tend His flock, and minister to His saints, in this dark and cold and evil day. But He is worthy! Let us seek a deeper sense of His worthiness, that we may be willing to be spent for others for His sake.

JOHN XV.

I have been much struck in reading this chapter, by observing how tenderly the Lord seeks to lead His saints into fellowship with Himself in fruit-

bearing and in glorifying God. What was His object here, His joy here? Was it not to glorify the Father? (ver. 8.) This He sets before us as an object. He tells us that then His joy would remain in us, and our joy would be full.

It is joy to sing the song of redeeming love, to know that this blood has washed us from our sins and brought us nigh to God, that it is our title to glory; but *fulness of joy* consists in having fellowship with the Father in His love to Jesus, in glorifying Jesus, and in fellowship with Jesus in His love to the Father, and glorifying Him.

In ver. 12, 13, He seeks also to lead us into fellowship with Himself about the saints; that we should love one another, as He has loved us.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, XVII. 30.

“THE goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.” When God commanded sinners everywhere to repent, it was the sweetest word ever sent to a ruined world. Before this, He had allowed the world to go on its own way, given over to a reprobate mind; but now, Christ had come and died for sin, and had risen from the dead, and God sent His servants, *witnesses themselves of the grace they preached, to ALL and EVERYWHERE; not only beseeching them*

to repent, (2 Cor. v.,) assuring them the Father's heart was yearning over them, His arms open, the fatted calf and the best robe, music and dancing, awaiting their return; but *commanding* them to repent; making it an act of obedience to believe His love, and to receive forgiveness, grace, and glory through and in Jesus. Were there ever two such sweet commands as formed the basis of Paul's testimony? (Acts xx. 21.) God commands you to *repent*, for there is joy in heaven over every sinner that repenteth, (Luke xv.) God commands you to believe, for "he that believeth hath everlasting life."

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THE first anxiety of the soul, when awakened by the Holy Spirit to see its wretchedness and misery, is, "What must I do to be saved?" We are then led to the cross, and there we find Christ reconciling us unto God by His own blood, and thus preaching peace unto our souls. We learn in the cross the desperate evil of sin, and God's righteous estimate and judgment of it; but we learn it *in peace*, and in the blessed security of God's love. We see Him providing in His wondrous grace and wisdom and love the sacrifice that should put away our sins, so that He can righteously say, "Their sins and

their iniquities will I remember no more," and we can say, "Being justified by faith, we have *peace* with God." Nor is this all. It is, indeed, that which at first gives us peace as sinners; but then we begin to learn God's love to us as *saints*—as those who are justified by the blood of Christ. We find that that same blood gives us access into the holiest, and enables us to stand before the throne in glory, (Heb. x. 19, and Rev. vii. 14.) Our present position, therefore, as believers in Jesus, is most blessedly set before us in the five first verses of Rom. v. "Having been (Gr.) justified by faith, we have peace with God," &c. The great object of this epistle is stated, chap. i. 16, 17, "To reveal the righteousness of God by faith." In the three first chapters, therefore, he first proves the necessity of such a righteousness. In chap. i. 18, he declares the solemn truth, that however lightly man might think of sin, the wrath of God was revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; he then proceeds to shew that this was the character of *all* men of the Gentiles, (ver. 19–32,) who were without the law; and of the Jews, (chap. ii., and iii. 1–19,) who had the law. God had not left Himself without witness to the Gentiles. The things made declared His eternal power and Godhead, (ver. 19, 20;) the things given (Acts xiv. 17,) declared His goodness; for, as we read in Ps. xix. 1–6, "The heavens declared the glory of God; there is no speech nor language where their voice was not heard; their line went out through all the

earth, their words to the end of the world ;” therefore they were “ without excuse, because that when they knew God by the things made, they glorified Him not as God ; neither were thankful for the things given ; in their reasonings (Gr.) they became vain ; in their hearts, darkened ; in their wisdom, fools. They did not choose to retain God in their knowledge, and therefore *God gave them up.*” Such was the history of the Gentiles from the division of the family at Babel,—one sad history of folly, darkness, and sin. But there was one nation which God had taken into covenant with Himself when the world had proved its apostasy from Him—a nation to whom He had given a holy, just, and good law, a land flowing with milk and honey, and whom He had constituted His witness upon the earth against the idolatry and ungodliness around them. The 26th chapter of Leviticus shows us the privileges and responsibilities of this favoured nation, to whom He said—what was never addressed to any Gentile nation—*“I am the Lord your God.”* Fruitfulness, (ver. 4, 5,) peace, (ver. 6,) victory over their enemies, (ver. 7, 8.) His tabernacle amongst them, (ver. 11, 12,) would have distinguished them from the nations around, had they been obedient to His voice, (see Deut. iv. 6–8.) Here was another trial made of man, under the most favourable circumstances in which he could be placed ; for what nation was there so great that had God so nigh unto them as they had in all things which they called upon Him for. Now the Jews, when

the Lord came amongst them, valued and boasted of these privileges — that they were Abraham's seed, that God was their Father, (for to them pertained the adoption, earthly, of course,) and the giving of the law and the promises, (Rom. ix.) See Rom. ii. 17, 18. They were called Jews; they rested in the law, made their boast of God, &c. But were they better than the Gentiles? This is the question which the apostle takes up and answers. "No, in no wise: all, whether Jews or Gentiles, were under sin, as it was written in their own law," (chap. iii. 10-19.) "Though they made their boast of the law, through breaking the law they 'dishonoured God.'" Read carefully the apostle's statements, and you will then enter into his conclusion, (chap. iii. 19, 20,) that every mouth is stopped—all are guilty; and that by deeds of law (Gr.) no flesh can be justified in God's sight, seeing that by law is the knowledge of sin. (*Law*, without the article, is generally used in the original when the apostle would state an abstract principle—the *law*, of course having a definite reference to that given to the Jews, under which Gentiles never were.) Here, then, we have the result of God's trial of man, in the Jew who had the law, and in the Gentiles—all alike guilty, and without excuse before God—fully proving that no flesh could be justified by works of law. How, then, could man stand before God? He must have a righteousness. If God justify, it must be in a manner that will prove not only His grace, but His justice and His righteousness, and

that is what the gospel reveals—the righteousness of God without law by faith of Jesus Christ, (read carefully ver. 21–26.) The righteousness of God by law says, “*Do* and live;” the righteousness of faith says, “*Believe* and live,” (read chap. x., which more fully opens out this.) God in law demands righteousness *from* us; in the gospel, presents righteousness *to* us, (observe ver. 21.) This righteousness was witnessed to in the law and the prophets, every sacrifice spoke of it; but it is *now manifested*, for Christ hath died, and God hath now set Him forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood. Again, ver. 25, 26 teach us how different the standing of the believer now is as to confidence before God, from what it was previous to the shedding of the blood of the New Covenant. Their sins were remitted through the *forbearance* of God—ours through His *justice*, who believe in Jesus. They could hope in the Lord, because there was mercy; we can joy in God, (chap. v. 2.) How blessed is it when we can simply believe and accept that which God, in His grace, has provided for us in that gospel which is His power unto salvation of every one that believeth, and remember it is as *sinner*s that it is addressed to us. God is no longer trying the flesh, as He tried it in the Gentiles and in the Jews before Christ came; its utter failure has been proved; all have sinned. There is no difference—that all have come short of the glory of God, is the very ground on which God directs us to Jesus as the only refuge, the sure salvation for the

lost and ruined. In the latter verses of Romans iii. all boasting *in the flesh* is shown to be utterly excluded; that all, whether Jews or Gentiles, were on the same level, and that it was one God who could justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. In chap. iv. the apostle shows, in the case of Abraham, one who lived before the giving of the law, and in one who lived after it was given, that this has ever been God's mode of justifying the ungodly; proving also that the two saints in whom the Jew most gloried, one who was "their father," and the other the sweet Psalmist and king of Israel, stood before God on the same ground of grace as the vilest sinner does. The sinner, the forgiven sinner, is the *blessed* man, (ver. 4, 5.) Such are the marvellous riches of God's grace and love, that it is the sinner, only the sinner, who can learn what *grace* is, for such only are the fit subjects of grace. Then, after showing (ver. 23-25) that Abraham's faith and justification are a pattern of ours, in Rom. v. 1, 2 he shows the present standing of the believer in Jesus—what is in Christ true of the feeblest saint.

1st, He has *peace* with God; 2d, He stands *in grace*, having, through Christ, access unto God; 3d, He rejoices *in hope* of the glory of God. Like Israel redeemed by the blood of the Paschal Lamb, our present position is in the wilderness, where we learn God's grace in the manna and the living water, and the fiery cloud guiding us safely through all the

dangers and difficulties of the way, and where we rejoice in hope of the rest and the glory, when we shall have come out of the great tribulation, and stand before the throne for ever. That is our *hope*, not redemption, we *have* that, but the glory. Till then the wilderness is our position ; (ver. 3–5 ;) but in that we can glory too, because God's love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us.

ROMANS I.—VI.

Chap. i. The moral condition of the Gentiles without the law.

Chap. ii. Of the Jews under the law, through breaking the law in which they boasted, dishonouring God.

Chap. iii. The universal guilt met by the blood—the blood which maketh an atonement for the sin.

Chap. iv. Justification, and the inheritance by faith and promise—not by works.

Chap. v. The standing of the believer ; peace with God through Christ ; access into grace ; hope of the glory of God ; present sufferings ; but the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost ; the sustainment of the soul under the sufferings. Ver. 10. Union with Christ the second Adam in life and righteousness, contrasted with union with the first Adam in sin and death.

Chap. vi. Power of deliverance from sin the result of union with the *risen* Jesus. We have died with

Him who died unto sin, therefore we are dead to sin, and are so to reckon ourselves.

We are quickened with Him who is risen from the dead, and are in the power of that life which is, *under grace*, to live to God.

As dead, sin is not our master; we should therefore not yield our members to obey its lusts. As risen and alive to God, we are to *yield our* members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Willing service, (see 1 Chron. xxix.)

ROMANS V. 1-4.

There are four things noted in Romans v. 1-4, in the description of a Christian.

1. Being justified by faith, he has *peace with God*.
2. He stands in grace: taken up in chap. vi.
3. He rejoices in hope of the glory of God.
4. He glories in tribulation, &c.

One great source of weakness and failure is losing sight of the *hope*, not distinctly apprehending the object of it, "the glory of God." We are saved by hope; the hope of unseen but eternal realities. The inner man is renewed, by looking at the things which are the objects of promise.

ROMANS V. AND VI.

There are three fearful exhibitions given to us in the seven first chapters of this epistle of the state of

sin, death, and condemnation in which the Spirit of God beholds us in our natural condition, and they are stated in the order in which we practically, when under the teaching of God, learn them ourselves. The first is our actual sins, our practical evil, which is dwelt upon in the four first chapters. The second, our original sin, as the children of the first Adam, which is the subject of chap. v. and vi. The third, sin in our *nature*, the old man, the flesh, of which the apostle speaks in chap. vii. and viii. Here is the sad and fearful picture which the Spirit of God draws of man, even in his best estate. In all his wisdom and glory and righteousness he is nothing before God but practically, originally, and in his very nature, a poor, wretched, dying sinner. Happy, most happy are we, if we have learned to estimate ourselves according to God's judgment of us; if our mouths are shut, and, instead of justifying ourselves, we wait to hear what the grace of our God speaketh to us of Jesus, the salvation of every one that believeth.

In the third and fourth chapters we have the grace of God justifying us from all our *sins* through faith in the blood, and the blessedness of him "whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered," and thus we have peace with God, (chap. v. 1.) This is the first thing our souls need to learn, that which gives peace with God, and it is the *blood of Jesus*. He "hath made peace by the blood of His cross." It is the looking at our sins in all their hatefulness

and extent, and then looking at Jesus delivered for them, bearing them, bruised for them, descending, as made sin for us, into the lower parts of the earth, but risen again for our justification, that gives us peace with God. How beautifully was this taught by our Lord in John xx. They had seen Him smitten of God, heard Him cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken *me*?" but He meets them as the One that was risen from the dead, that had triumphed over everything that was against them, and as the messenger of peace He stands in the midst of His brethren, (compare Heb. ii. 11, Ps. xxii. 22, John xx. 17,) and shows them His hands and His side, and says "Peace be unto you."

But this is not all our deliverance or our blessing. We have sinned, and come under the power of death through our union with the first Adam; and we learn that we are brought out of all our misery into life and glory through union with Jesus the second Adam. This is what the Church generally has lost sight of, and hence its worldliness. It is not seen that the Church has its existence consequent upon the death and resurrection of Christ its Head; that its calling is heavenly; its birth of God; its life Christ; its inheritance all that He is heir to as the first-born among many brethren; that it has passed from death unto life, from darkness into light, from Satan's power into the kingdom of the Son of God's love; that it is no more of the world than Christ is of the world; that its blessings are not earthly, but

spiritual in heavenly places; this is your standing before God. You are in Christ the *risen* Saviour. All that Satan, and death, and judgment would do against you as a sinner, Christ the Righteous One has borne and triumphed over. He has carried you through it all; and it is your blessed privilege to stand where Israel stood, upon the borders of the Red Sea, your enemies destroyed, the world left with its bondage and its flesh-pots alike behind you, the freed servant of God, and to sing the song of redemption. But then there is the wilderness before us. That is what the world becomes to us when we know what union with Christ really means. Before we reach our home, we must go through tribulation. Being justified, we have *peace*. We stand in *grace*. We *rejoice* in hope of the glory of God. But it is added, "We glory in tribulations also." Compare this with 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. How little have we learnt yet what this means! How unlike are we to 1 Cor. iv. 11-16! How truly do 1 Cor. iii. 1-13 and iv. 7, 8, describe the present state of the professing Church! We all need chastening and rebuke. How wondrous is the grace that bears all our manners in the wilderness, still giving us His Spirit for our guide, the manna for our food, and the living water from the smitten rock. In *grace* we stand.

ROMANS VIII. 30.

One thing strikes us here, the intimate connexion

between grace and glory. Some put in another link. We should perhaps have said, "Whom He justified, them He also sanctified; and whom He sanctified, them He also glorified." But God leaves this link out purposely, because we are so apt to attach some thoughts of our own services and doings to glory, whereas God attaches it to *the blood of the Lamb*. Thus, in Rev. vii., "They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore (and for no other cause) are they before the throne." This attaches such infinite value to the finished work of Christ. The sinner that only touches the hem of His garment, receives that instant justification, righteousness, and eternal life. He is at that moment as *meet* for glory as if he had been for years the most devoted saint. The great object in the glory is the Lamb of God. When in glory, we shall look back to the cross.

ROMANS VIII. 32.

If we kept in remembrance that "He spared not His own Son," what an answer would it be to all the accusations of the enemy, all the exercises of conscience, and all the questionings of unbelief! "He spared not His own Son." Here is the evidence of His love, the measure of it, the certainty of it. Here can the heart and mind and conscience repose. *He is Love*. He spared not His own Son. He will order *all* things for me in the same love that *spared not Him*. This

not only produces submission: it gives such rest of soul, such joy. It is not only fellowship with Him who said, "The cup which *my Father* hath given me, shall I not drink it?" but it is, "Father, glorify thy Name." If you are in a hotter furnace than hitherto, One like unto the Son of God will be with you in it, and enable you "to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" in His love, His compassion, and sustaining grace.

I CORINTHIANS I. 30.

CHRIST is *really* made of God unto us, "Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." All the preciousness which God knows to be in Christ belongs to each believer now. The glory will not add anything to us, but it will manifest what we have already, are already, and what Christ is to us already. We shall then all minister Christ to one another, see Christ in one another, and reflect Christ to one another.

We are not Christians by what we renounce, but by what we receive. We receive Christ as the gift of God, righteousness as the gift of God, eternal life as the gift of God; and this is one of the works of the Holy Ghost, "We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are

freely given to us of God." Everything is a free gift. God gives these things to the vile and undeserving, to show that it is all of the riches of His own grace. We only renounce what the natural heart craves after, because we have something so much better. Why do we renounce our own righteousness? Because we have a better in the righteousness of Christ. Why do we give up the honour of this world's rank? Because we are "born of God," and are made "kings and priests" unto Him. None is so high as a believer in Christ. His is indeed a "high calling," called up to God and the Lamb to be associated with them in their own glory. The natural man has death and judgment before him,—the saint, life, immortality, and glory.

2 CORINTHIANS III.

I HAVE been reading 2 Cor. iii., and have been much humbled, I trust, and at the same time am feeling more desire to be an able minister of the new covenant. In chap. ii. 14–16, Paul had been rejoicing and giving thanks for his success as a minister of the gospel of Christ. His course through the world was one scene of triumph; *always* and *everywhere* the savour of Christ's knowledge had been made manifest by his ministry; there was success *everywhere*, both in them that were saved and in them that

perished—to the one, a savour of life, to the other, of death. Then came the question, “Who is sufficient for these things?” The next chapter is the answer. But, first, in ver. 17, he speaks of his own character in contrast with the many as the minister of God. “We do not adulterate it;” human wisdom, eloquence, learning, doctrines, and commandments we do not mix with it to suit man’s taste, but “as of sincerity” (*ειλη*, light of the sun, Gr. *κρίνω*, to judge) our motives, conduct, may be held up and judged of as in the sun’s light.

“As of God.” We are *of God*, said the apostle; he that knoweth God heareth us. As those that were not of the world, but *of God*, born of God, sent of God, servants of God, he spoke, “In the *sight of God*,” not as men-pleasers. If I please man, said Paul, I should not be the servant of Christ. Not as pleasing man, but *God*, who trieth the heart, (1 Thess. ii.) All his labours were done as in *His* sight, under His eye. Lord, teach me this! And, again, “Speak we *in Christ*.” The common standing of every child of God is in *union with Jesus*. When the Holy Ghost came, it was that we might know that He was in the Father, and “He in us, and we *in Him*,” (John xiv.) This is common to all saints; nothing can touch it: it is our secure and eternal portion: but as regards fruit-bearing and service, Christ says, “*Abide in me, and I in you*.” This is the thing essential to *service*,—this abiding as a branch in Christ the living vine *by faith*. It is the life of faith; (Gal. ii.) and when

we thus abide *Christ lives in us* practically. Here was the secret of all Paul's service. Weak, poor, helpless in himself, he abode in Jesus, in His strength, riches, wisdom, and might. Thus he spoke *in Christ* as one with Him, and therefore all his service and success was the *proof* of Christ's speaking in *him*, (see 2 Cor. xiii. 3.) Here was Paul's sufficiency for *His* service, and here is our sufficiency. If it be preaching the gospel, or bearing pain, trial, sickness, &c., the least and the greatest thing, there is no sufficiency anywhere but *in Christ* received by abiding in Him by faith.

In the four first verses of the next chapter he tells the Corinthians that they were his letter of commendation as the minister of Christ: *Christ's letter*: those who saw them *read Christ*: they were Christ's epistle of commendation to the world. To the end of the chapter we get the ministry of the New Covenant contrasted with the law.

NEW COVENANT.

Spirit,

Engraven on heart.

Life,

Righteousness,

Glorious, excelling, and
remaining.

OLD COVENANT.

Letter,

Engraven on stones.

Death,

Condemnation,

Glorious,

but done away.

In the next chapter the apostle teaches us the character of the *ministers*: death working in them, that

life may work in others. But I cannot enlarge. I only desire to be more emptied of *self*, and to know more what dying with Christ means. I feel as if I knew nothing. Blessed be God, grace saves us, and not attainment. If we apprehend any thing, it is only what is already *ours*. We apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Christ Jesus.

GALATIANS VI. 12-15.

THE blessed truth of a sinner's justification before God, only and solely by the work of Christ on the cross, is not the only truth taught us by the cross of Christ. The cross is God's standard for everything. Every self-justifier is a condemner of God. He who pleads for any moral good in the flesh after the death of Christ, charges God with injustice. When once a believer gets off this, that in the flesh there dwelleth no good thing, though he cannot finally fall, there is no saying how far he may get off from the truth. There is no man who goes hand in hand with the world, (ver. 14,) who does not justify the world in its crucifying of Christ. They that mind earthly things are enemies of the cross of Christ, (Phil. iii. 18, 19.)

Nothing is more sad at the present time than to see how Christians forget that, when they know the power of the cross as to justification, they ought to go on confessing the cross all along.

To delight in free justification in our own souls brings on us no cross, no trial : it only brings peace. We meet God preaching peace to us through the very act which declares man's uttermost guilt ; every sinner must learn the cross thus *first*, but is then, as a disciple of Jesus, to show what the cross is in practice, in word, and in action. The cross has declared the flesh to be utterly lost, past remedy, incapable of receiving spiritual blessings—man's utter failure as a creature. In it we learn God's judgment of the flesh, that it is past remedy. Are you walking in the power of this, or do you act as if you believed the lie of the men of this world, that man can be improved and made a glorious creation in the sight of God ? God's judgment of it is, not to improve it, but to pour out His wrath upon it. There is nothing so hard as to give up the flesh as good for nothing.

EPHESIANS I.

Two things qualified Paul to be the eminent witness for Christ which he was. First, in his own person, he was an example of the *grace* which he preached to others. He could say to the vilest sinner, "I was viler than you ; I was a blasphemer, &c., but *I obtained mercy.*" After contrasting in 2 Cor. iii. the ministry of the law with the ministry of the New

Covenant, he says, (chap. iv.,) "Therefore, seeing we have received this ministry, as *we* have received mercy, we faint not." No condition of soul in others, or vileness in ourselves, ever makes us faint, because we have tasted the depths of mercy ourselves, and the ministry of mercy is committed to us.

Secondly, he could not only speak of the *grace* that could pardon, but he had been the witness of the *glory* into which grace could bring the sinner.

Paul's first knowledge of Christ was when he saw Him shining in the glory above the brightness of the sun, and Christ said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me?*" and he learnt that Jesus was *one with the saints on earth*.

These two things he bore testimony to. If he met a *sinner*, he could point to the blood, and say, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." If he met with one trusting in that blood, he could point to the glory, and say, "That is yours."

EPH. I. 18.

This was his continual prayer for them, that they might know the heights of glory to which God had brought them. Is this the subject of your prayer for yourself and God's children? Some stop with the hope that they are saved, but does God's word desire you to stop there? The weakest faith, if resting on the blood of Jesus, saves; but it is strong faith which glorifies God. Abraham could rely on God's

word, in spite of all that he knew about himself. God's word was more to him than his experience and knowledge of himself. His dependence was on Him that cannot lie. We glorify God when, in the deep consciousness of our vileness, we rely on God's word and trust in the blood of Jesus. God desires that His children not only should have peace, but that they should abound in hope. God uses hope, not in connexion with salvation by the blood of Christ, but in connexion with the glory promised to those who *are saved*.

What is meant by God's "calling?" (Eph. i. 18.) This word "calling" is made use of in every Epistle, (Rom. i. 6, viii. 30, ix. 24; 1 Cor. i. 2; Gal. i. 6; Phil. iii. 14; 2 Thess. i. 11; 2 Tim. i. 9; Heb. iii. 1; 2 Pet. i. 10.) It does not mean the outward call of the gospel, but it is the secret call of God to the soul. Just like that Abram knew, when God called him out of Mesopotamia, (Isa. xliii. 1.)

The call of God implies the entire ruin of everything out of which we are called.

If God calls, it is out of ruin into blessing, out of death into life, peace, joy, glory.

When God opened our eyes to see our need of Jesus, and His suitability to us, it was God's calling of us. What is the proof that I have heard the call? Simply that I have come to Christ. No one ever came, except as God drew him there. What is linked to the calling? "Whom he called, them he also justified; whom he justified, them he also glori-

fied." It is blessed to see how the blood of Jesus and the glory of God are connected.

In Rom. ix. 23, 24, when speaking of God's glory being displayed in us, he tells us it is on "vessels of *mercy*." You say, "I am so vile;" how could you be a vessel of mercy if you were not vile? They don't say, they don't sing, but *cry*, and with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God, and to the Lamb," (Rev. vii. 10,) that every angel might know that they were there simply as *saved sinners*. That will be our boast in the glory.

1 Cor. i. 9. Who can comprehend what that means? Paul was addressing a church in which there was a great deal of evil, and the first thing he does is to set them in the place of blessing, where the grace of God had put them. He writes, "God is faithful." What infinite grace is God's! He knows how to recover our souls. Whenever a child of God becomes worldly, it is because he has lost sight of the calling of God. If he realised the glory to which he was "called," the world would be nothing to him.

2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. The gospel is God's voice made effectual in the hearts of them that believe. Col. iii. 4. There is our calling. There is a glory which Christ had as Son of God, before the foundation of the world, which cannot be communicated; but the glory given to Him as Son of man He gives to us. Col. iii. 15, is a practical thing now. Do you say, "How little do I know of this?" Mark, we are *called* to it.

EPHESIANS II.

The second of Ephesians sets before us all that we were naturally. I know no more fearful description of the entire ruin and wickedness of man than the three first verses of that chapter. Ver. 11, 12, add to this fearful picture of what all are morally, whether Jews or Gentiles; our standing as Gentiles in the flesh. "Without Christ," "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," "having no hope, and without God in the world." We ought to *remember* this. We shall fully understand and ever remember it in the glory. We shall never forget how vile, how worthless, how utterly lost and helpless we were when God looked upon us polluted in our own blood, and said unto us, "*Live.*" The remembrance will only make us more truly to understand the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of our God, and to sing more loudly, "Salvation to our God, and to the Lamb."

In ver. 4-7, we have the source, the means, and the end of our salvation.

The first is the greatness of God's love. We may trace all the varied streams of life, glory, and blessing up to their blessed source, "*God is love.*" Never let us forget this. It is blessed to take up one by one the wondrous results of that love; to ponder over those spiritual blessings, those riches of grace and glory, described in chap. i. 3-14; but we lose our chief joy if we do not ascend up above them all

to God himself, to Him who is rich in mercy, and, for His great love wherewith He loved us, "has blessed us with all these spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

The means of our salvation is next taught us. Union in life and glory with the risen Jesus, the Head of His body, the Church. "God hath *quickened* us together *with* Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

In chap. i. 19, 20, the Church is taught to learn the greatness of God's power to them that believe, in quickening Christ, dead because of our sins, under the sentence of judgment that was our due, and in raising Him as the Head of the body, the Church, to His own right hand, where, having done all for His friends, He *sits* expecting till His enemies are made His footstool. This same mighty power which quickeneth the dead has been put forth in all who believe, making them partakers of the risen life of Christ, as truly as they were naturally partakers of the sinful, dying nature and life of the first Adam. "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," and hath one life. Nothing but this could really deliver us from our misery, and bring us into blessing. No improvement of man's nature could do this. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" let it be ever so cultivated, civilised, and moralised, it is the flesh still: flesh in which good does not dwell, that profiteth nothing, in which we cannot please God. "*All* flesh

is grass." We needed something new ; a new nature, a new life, before we could please God ; and that is what we have by virtue of our union with the Second Adam. We are partakers of His divine nature and of His life. "That which is born of the Spirit is *spirit*."

EPHESIANS VI. 16.

The fiery darts are darts dipped in the fire of hell, — accusations of Satan. Christ could say, "Thine arrows stick fast in me," (Ps. xxxviii. 2.) These arrows came from God. There was no shield of faith for Jesus. The sword smote the Shepherd, the arrows entered into His soul. But there are no arrows now in the hand of God against us ; every fiery dart comes from the wicked one. There is no judgment, no condemnation, no accusation from God, who *justifies us*, though there may be the rod of correction. The *Just One* now justifies us, because of the blood of Christ in which we trust. The *wicked one*, transforming himself into an angel of light, now accuses ; he is "the accuser of the brethren day and night before God." How are we to overcome ? "By the *blood* of the Lamb," (Rev. xii. 11.) By taking "the shield of faith, wherewith we shall be *able* to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Nothing can resist this shield, because it brings in God's truth against Satan's lie, (Ps. xci. 4 ; see Gen. xv. 1 ; Deut. xxxiii. 29 ; Ps. iii. 3, cxix. 114.) But the word "quench" implies more. It applies to the

word "fiery;" darts set on fire of hell. How can the shield of faith quench these darts? Faith has reference to the *blood*. Our shield is dipt, as it were, in the blood of the Lamb; and that precious blood, which has quenched every dart from the hand of God, enables us to quench all the fiery darts of the enemy. Rom. viii. 31, is using God as our shield against Satan's power. Ver. 35 is our song of victory.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 6, 7.

It is carefulness which prevents our abiding in peace, and God invites us to cast it all upon Him. Thus we learn how to get rid of the care that would destroy our joy, and hinder our peace.

We burden ourselves, and dishonour God, when we do not obey this gracious word of love, "Casting ALL your care upon Him, for He careth for you." God *cares* for me; His eye of love is *always* on me; He knows the weakness of my nature, the malice of Satan against me. He numbers the hairs of my head. He is ALMIGHTY, and He says, "Be careful for *nothing*, but in *everything*, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." It is not that we shall not have trial and tribulation, we *shall* have much to exercise our souls; but let us leave our desires with Him,

that He may overrule all things according to His own *love* and *grace*, and the peace of God shall keep our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ; that peace of God which nothing can disturb, neither our weakness nor the wickedness of Satan, which no circumstances can ruffle. His peace shall keep our hearts and minds. God desires that nothing should touch our peace. May we be living above all circumstances with the God of peace, into whose presence Jesus has brought us. "With thanksgiving." God not only delights to have our thanks, but nothing enables us to cast off care and difficulty so much as thanksgiving. "He that spared not His own Son"—*here* is where our confidence springs. We have ten thousand other causes of praise, but *always* THIS; nothing can touch the peace of our souls if we are resting on the finished work of Jesus, (John xx. 19.) What were the circumstances of the disciples after our Lord's crucifixion? They were full of trouble, terror was all around them: if they looked into their own hearts these must have upbraided them; they could have no confidence in one another, for they *all* forsook Him and fled; Peter denied Him with oaths and curses. When Jesus appeared in their midst, did He upbraid them? He showed them His hands and His feet; He had died for them; the God of peace had raised Him from the dead, and He came from His Father and their Father, and said, "*Peace* be unto you," (Rom. v. 1, Col. iii. 15, 1 Thess. v. 23, Heb. xiii. 20, Phil. iv. 7-9.)

COLOSSIANS.

THE Epistle to the Colossians is one of the richest pastures that God in His grace has prepared for our souls. Our blessed Lord promised that when the Comforter should come, His people should know that He was in the Father, we in Him, and He in us. See John xiv. 20.

The Epistle to the Ephesians takes up "ye in me." We are "blessed with all spiritual blessings *in Christ*," (Eph. i. 3;) "Chosen *in Him* before the foundation of the world, (ver. 4;) "Accepted *in the Beloved*," (ver. 6;) "*In Him* we have redemption," (ver. 7.) In Him, we have obtained an inheritance; in Him, we are sitting in heavenly places, and it is the blessed purpose of His love to show, in the ages to come, the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us *in Christ Jesus*, (Greek.)

Such is the portion of the Church, as *in Him* who has loved and given Himself for her.

The Epistle to the Colossians appears to take up the other blessed truth, Christ's union with His people *down here*. We look up, and see Christ, the Head of His body, sitting in the Heavenlies, and thus learn what the glory and the portion of His Church is, and what our walk here ought to be, as united to Christ above. But Colossians teaches us the fulness of the Head for us *down here*, in our present path through the wilderness. The Ephesians, the glory of

the Church, *His body*. The Colossians, the glory of Christ, her *Head*. Therefore, in chap. i. 12-21, we have the unfolding to us of the various glories of the Son of God's love. He is the image of the invisible God; the first-born of all creation. Then, (ver. 18,) His relationship to His Church; the Head of the body, the first-born from the dead; in all things He has the pre-eminence.

In chap. ii. the application of our union with Christ in *death*. In chap. iii., of our union with Him in *life*. Oh, to realise these truths more, for it is only as we do realise that we have died, and are risen with Jesus, that we can really walk as those who can say, "It is not I that live, but Christ that liveth in me."

COLOSSIANS II., III.

The standing of the Church is in life—united to Him who is our life. This is the subject of the second chapter of this blessed epistle.

Everything now in the Church takes a resurrection form. Our Redeemer is a risen Redeemer; our life is a risen life; our hopes are resurrection hopes; our coming inheritance will be in resurrection too. Necessarily so, for the whole creation system is under the sentence of death. Life and honour were both forfeited by the fall—the heir and his inheritance; that is, man and his earth fell under the curse; so that if our life and honour be regained, it must be in a resurrection form, for the integrity of the Divine

government requires the sentence of death to be executed, and not to have it as a vain and impotent threat.

Consequently we do find that the threat, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," has been executed in the gracious Representative of His people on Calvary, for "He, through death, destroyed him that had the power of death." Death was judicially executed on that blessed One. Calvary, then, tells us of the perfect remission of sin; it shows us the sentence of death fully executed on Him who was alone able to sustain the mighty stroke; and thus it cleanses the conscience, and gives peace and assurance to the soul. The life we then lead is a risen life; it takes its distinctive character from Jesus' risen. The life of a saint is not the life of one created, but of one redeemed; not of one immediately fashioned by the hand of God, but of one who has passed through the mysterious process of death and resurrection. The strength of this life depends upon our apprehension of it being firm and secure. We have a life stronger than death—a life that has been redeemed from the power of death—a life derived from the everlasting Vine that flourishes in the courts of our God.

Ver. 10.—Our completeness in the risen One who has won His way from death and the grave to the headship of all principality and power.

HEBREWS IV. 16.

OUR God and Father is sitting upon the throne of *grace*, the mercy-seat. It is *there* that He meets with and speaks to us, His poor but blessed children. The precious blood of the Lamb is sprinkled *upon* it, and *before* it. A new and living way through the rent vail of the flesh of Jesus is opened for us, and there our faithful and merciful High Priest bears our names upon His heart, and "ever liveth to make intercession for us." We are not under law; it is not from the thick darkness and clouds of Sinai that our God is speaking to us; that was the ministration of death and condemnation. But we are under *grace*—grace that reigneth through righteousness—grace that hath much more abounded than all our abounding sin. Our God is the God of *all grace*. He who came from the Father's bosom to reveal the Father was "full of grace and truth;" and it is to the *throne of grace* that we are entreated to draw nigh by the blood of Jesus, "that we may obtain *mercy*, and find *grace* to help in every time of need." Is it not a blessed thought that the throne of grace is set up on purpose for the poor sinner? Angels may learn with wonder and delight the wisdom, the grace and glory of God in the sacrifices, the altars, the priesthood, and the mercy-seat; but it is the poor sinner that needs all these things, and for him they were ordained. Our God has planned and provided

all *for us*. The blood is *for us*, the altars *for us*, the High Priest *for us*, the mercy-seat *for us*, for our joy and blessing, and for His own joy and glory. What had the self-righteous Pharisee to do with the temple? Everything there spoke aloud of *sin* and *grace*. It is the poor lost and guilty sinner that needs grace, and such are we. Let us go, then, and inquire at His temple—let us hear Him speak to us from the mercy-seat. Surely He will speak peace to our souls. Turn to Lev. i. 1, compared with Exod. xxv. 21, 22: God is speaking in that blessed gospel of the work and Priesthood of Jesus from off the mercy-seat. Then turn to those chapters wherein God is speaking to us from the mercy-seat of *our sin*, but in *connexion* with the *trespass-offering*, (see Lev. v., vi., vii.) The trespass-offering presents Christ to us as bearing those defilements that would have cut us off from communion with God; (ver. 1–4;) our failures and shortcomings in the holy things of the Lord, (ver. 14–19;) and our trespasses against our neighbour, (chap. vi. 17.) How rich is the *grace*, how wonderful the wisdom and ways of God! How marvellous the displays in and through Christ of His spotless holiness, and infinite and perfect *grace*! His justice in condemning sin in Him who was made sin for us, though He knew no sin; His love in pardoning and accepting the poor sinner through the sacrifice of His Son. Our very sin only serves to bring out His holy and perfect love, which has provided Jesus as the Sin and Trespass-offering to bear it and

put it away for ever. Oh, what deep need of *holding fast* grace, not letting go our confidence, the *beginning* of it, when first, as poor guilty sinners, we trusted in the blood of the Lamb! Nothing can be, must be added, whatever the after practical attainments of the soul in devotedness and service, to that *beginning* of our confidence. "That I may be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," is the object before the apostle's soul to the end. This is remarkable. The Lord give us to rest simply on His Word, and to cease from our own feelings.

· HEBREWS XI.

This chapter speaks not so much of the faith by which all that believe are justified—though, of course, that is included—but rather of faith leading to service and obedience, in hope of the recompence of reward. We have in verse 1 the definition of what faith is, and in verse 2, that the elders obtained a good report by it, which it is the object of this chapter to show as the ground of the encouragement and exhortation in chap. xii. 1-3.

We have, then, the *practical* working of faith shown: 1st, In recognising God as the Creator of the worlds, the invisible things of Him, even His eternal power and Godhead,* from the things seen and made, (see Romans i. 19, 20,) in opposition to the unbelief

and idolatry of the Gentiles which it condemned. Read Rom. i. 19 to end. 2d, Faith, in Abel, in *acceptable worship*, condemning the self-righteousness and unbelief of Cain. The worship is not that of Eden, *i.e.*, of a *righteous* creature coming to God in righteousness—this Cain, in the pride and presumption of his heart, attempted—but of a sinner coming to God by blood as the *God of grace*. 3d, Faith, leading to service in the midst of evil, in Enoch, godly in the midst of ungodliness. Compare Jude 14, 15, which gives us the character of the age in which Enoch lived and walked with God. 4th, Faith, in Noah, fleeing from the coming wrath and condemning the world, showing in building the ark that the world was under judgment. Our only wisdom and safety is to flee out of it. 5th, Faith, in Abraham, (ver. 6–16,) obeying the call of God, leading to separation from earthly and natural associations of country and kindred, and to the stranger and pilgrim character, in hope of the heavenly inheritance: all true of us, if children of faithful Abraham. See 1 Peter i. 1–5. 6th, Faith in God as raising the dead, (ver. 17–19,) exhibiting his confidence that in *resurrection* all God's promises should be fulfilled to the Seed of promise—*i.e.*, *Christ*, and those that are Christ's—therefore Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. See Gal. iii. 16, 29. 7th, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, (ver. 20–22,) all proved to have walked in faith of things unseen and hoped for. 8th, Faith, in Moses, not breaking ties of nature, as in Abraham, but re-

nouncing the glory, (ver. 24,) the pleasures, and riches of the world, (ver. 25, 26,) for association with the despised people, in their affliction and their shame, "having respect to the recompence of reward." 9th, Faith overcoming the fear of man, (ver. 27.) 10th, Faith keeping the passover, (ver. 28.) Compare 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. 11th, The mighty deeds of faith, (ver. 29-35,) suitable to the character of the dispensation in which they lived. 12th, The sufferings of faith, of those of whom the world was not worthy, showing us the portion of righteousness in a world of evil. And then, having considered this great cloud of witnesses, our eyes are turned to *Him*, in chap. xii. 2, in whom, as every other grace, so *faith* had its perfect work—whose character was, even unto death, "*He trusted in God.*" Compare Heb. ii. 13 with Ps. xxii.; xl.; Matt. xxvii. 43; Isa. l. 7-9. "*Looking unto Jesus,*" as the leader (or captain, ἀρχηγον) and perfecter (τελειωτης, translated perfection, vi. 1) of *faith*. The "*our*" in italics is not in the original, and spoils the sense. May we have more of this precious faith; leading us, like Abel, to worship; Enoch, to serve; Noah, to condemn the world; Abraham, to live as strangers and pilgrims; Moses, to renounce the riches and honour of the world, and to cast in our lot with the despised people of God. May we be counted worthy to fight the good fight of faith, out of weakness to be made strong, and thus, more than conquerors, to suffer that we may reign with Christ, when He comes, as joint-heirs with Him; and may

that little word, "looking unto Jesus," "considering Jesus," be the one character of our life. *Lord, increase our faith.* (Heb. vi. 12.)

HEBREWS XII. 2.

How happy should we be if we, as Jesus did, "set the joy before us" that awaits us in our heavenly home. How it would kindle love, animate hope, and strengthen faith. How lightly should we esteem the pleasures and honours of time, if we kept those of eternity in view. How cheerfully should we travel through the wilderness if we meditated more on the good report which our Joshua has given of the promised land. Alas, how often are we discouraged because of the way! I have learned a few lessons since I have felt the cold wintry blasts of this country. I find, when I am cold and shivering, I don't stand saying, "I wish I were warm, alas! how cold I am." This would be all well if I were so poor and destitute as to have no fire to run to. Much less do I think I must make myself a little warmer first, and then go to the fire; but I hasten there as fast and get as close to it as possible. Oh, how happy should we be if, whenever we felt our hearts cold and dark, instead of being content to sit still and complain of our state, or seeking to warm ourselves with sparks of our own kindling, we went at once and basked in the bright and reviving beams of the Sun of Righteousness. I have seen more and more lately that "looking unto

Jesus" is the way of life, peace, and holiness : looking to Him in His life, His death, His glory—on the cross and on the throne. I have been generally contented, alas, with looking at Him like the women afar off on Calvary, as suffering as a sacrifice for sins ; and have seldom beheld Him, as our Melchisedec at the right hand of the Father interceding, and ruling all things in heaven and earth for the good of His body the Church. I believe this is one cause of the low standard of the faith, and consequently of the holiness of the Church at the present day. Oh, that the Lord may draw our hearts heavenward, leading us to contemplate the glory of Jesus. This knowledge it is that purifies the soul, strips the world of its tinsel, and makes all things appear loss. It is only with the cross in view and the crown, that we can form a right estimate of the precious and the vile, and go on our way rejoicing.

1 PETER I. 12.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

How everything is fixed on this. God's mind ; Satan's mind ; the mind of angels ; every one's mind that is not stupefied by sin. Everything depended on it. God's glory—whether Satan was to have his own way—everything depended on the

Cross. What must angels have seen in the sufferings of Christ? Whom did they see come down from heaven? The One who created all things, who sustains all things. For whom? For creatures that insulted, hated, spit upon, and crucified Him. These are the things the angels look into, wondering to see the Lord of glory in such a state. They witnessed the agony of His soul in Gethsemane, when they came and ministered to Him. The angels are learning the *meaning* of all this, all the mind of God in it, the marvellousness of God's grace in it: so strong, so full, so persevering towards, not holy persons, but sinners. They saw Jesus entering into the very case of those that rejected Him, bearing Himself all the burden of their sin. Angels could understand *righteousness*, the exercise of righteous judgment upon the guilty. But this was a *new-thing*. The world cannot understand *grace*, though it can understand righteousness. This is the religion of the world, but it will not do for sinners, they want not to be sustained but *saved*. Nothing could meet the case of sinners but something that would put away their sin, blot out their guilt. This was provided in *grace*. This was new altogether, *grace to sinners*. It is in His dealings towards *us* that angels have to learn what God's grace is. Our blessedness is not to learn it abstractedly as angels, but experimentally towards *ourselves*. The world acts on the principle of righteous dealing towards righteous persons, and *vice versâ*, but grace is the very opposite to this. Grace is to-

wards unrighteous persons, (Rom. 'iii.) They must be saved, but how? (2 Cor. v. 21.) This was a new thing altogether, the taking the sinner out of his condition by bringing the Lord of glory into it. Angels had to learn, by man's treatment of the Lord of glory, the character of those He came to save, in their success against Him! Judgment executed against Him! The way of wickedness triumphing against Him, the Lord of glory crucified! Let the wisdom of the world despise the Cross, but where can they find such an exhibition of Divine grace and love as in that Cross? We learn in the very wickedness and success of sinners against Him the extent of His love. Angels could see in the death of Christ man's sin and God's glory; Christ having love enough to lay down His life for those who were base enough to take it away. Where could they see anything like this? *Sin* like this, *love* like this? God giving His Son, He laying down His life for those who hated Him. Nothing in heaven could show love like this, yet they for whom it was done "wagged their heads." Never will there be in eternity anything which will so display God as the Cross of Christ.

1 PETER V.

Remember that God "*resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble.*" This is one of the first principles of His government. As long as your soul continues broken down before Him, in self-

abasement and dependence, you will find "He giveth more *grace*," but as soon as our poor foolish hearts either get wearied with this dependence, or think something of themselves, we learn the meaning of that word in Jeremiah, "Cursed be the man that putteth his trust in man, and maketh flesh his arm; and whose *heart departeth* from the Lord, he shall be like the heath in the desert." On the contrary, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is, for he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, neither shall cease from bearing fruit."

How conscious am I, after the little experience I have had in the divine life, that my dangers and barrenness have arisen, not from my weakness, but from some self-confidence or vain-glorying. He is jealous of His own glory, jealous over the affections of His children. If, trusting in His love and leaning on His grace, we are humble but happy, the abundant grace, instead of puffing us up, is fruitful in many thanksgivings unto God. The Lord teach us more truly to glory in infirmities, and in being nothing. Be not discouraged by your own weakness, your own deficiency in natural abilities. Do not murmur at being what the Lord has made you. You will find a subtle pride at the bottom of all that. It is not by great natural abilities that God is glorified. He chooses whom, and what, and where He pleases. He works as He pleases, in a way to bring to nought man's pride, and to teach us to glory only in

the Lord. Much that goes for power and wisdom in the professing Church will be found, in that day which will try all things, to have been weakness and foolishness before God, (1 Cor. i., ii., iii) “It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.” Whatever is of human energy, will, wisdom, or power, though it may make a fair show in the flesh now, and attract much estimation from those who have little real spiritual intelligence, will be found to be stubble and wood then. Therefore, cast yourself wholly upon God. Read His Word on your knees. Be watchful against departure in heart from God. Seek *inward* conformity to the mind and character of Him who has redeemed you by His blood, and He will use you *as it pleaseth Him*.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JOHN.

GOD is Light, God is Love—light in which there is no darkness, love in which there is no defect or failure. It is our blessed privilege, as washed in the blood of Jesus, to walk in the light, in communion with the Father and the Son, and thus in feelings of joy, (1 John i.) It is also our blessed calling to dwell in the love whence Jesus came to be the propitiation for our sins, and whither He has gone that we might dwell with Him in the bosom of the Father for ever.

God has revealed Himself to us as love in 1 John iv. 7. The Divine nature is love; ver. 9, 10 is the manifestation of this love towards us; ver. 13 is another manifestation of the love "He hath *given* us of His Spirit." The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, has come, the seal and witness of this love, and of the inheritance which our God has prepared for us. But in ver. 17 (see margin) is the *perfectness* of love, that which gives boldness in the day of judgment. "*As He is, so are we in this world,*"—one with the risen Son in life, love, and glory, (John xiii. 21–23.) Thus our God, who is love, looks at us in Jesus. This love of His to us casts out fear: if we have any fear, it is because we are *not perfected in love*. Here should our souls dwell. While our wretched flesh, our old Adam nature and life, seeks earthly things, things under the power of death and corruption, *here* our new man, our new life, our new nature, finds its dwelling-place, and its holy, untainted joys, (ver. 19.) Having learnt this love, we love our God. His love begets love in us, and the expression of that love is towards our brethren, His dear children, (ver. 11, 12; 1 John iii. 16–19; v. 1, 2.) It leads also to holy, happy obedience. Are you dwelling in His love? is it your *home*? God himself is the strong habitation whereunto we may continually resort, and "God is love." Alas, how little do we dwell in God! Hence all our failures in love to others; and if love fails, all else is worthless, (1 Cor. xiii.) This love is not of the flesh, natural love; but it is divine, spiritual love,

that seeketh not its own, that esteems it more blessed to give than to receive, to serve than to be ministered unto; of which the person, words, and ways of Jesus are the manifestation and pattern. Remember, in all your trials, all your sorrows, temptations, services, that God is love; that His bosom you may rest on, His arm lean on, His wisdom and counsel depend on.

1 JOHN I.

This chapter teaches us the hindrances to communion, and the way of its restoration if lost.

What saints are called unto is, "Fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ:" the enjoyment of this is "fulness of joy." But this fellowship can only be enjoyed as we are walking in the Light, as we are following Him who is the Light. Any indulgence of the flesh, any walking in darkness, hinders the fellowship; for "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." But if we walk in the light, then there is not only fellowship with the Father and the Son, but with *one another* also; and "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Observe—it is not that we have no sin while we are walking in the light, or that we are without the consciousness of it, but the very contrary. If I am walking in darkness, my soul may get into that deadened, hardened state in which David's was when he needed the message of Nathan to arouse him with "Thou art the man." The light makes manifest the

evil: the more light, the more the holiness of God is known and sought after, the more the sin and evil of the flesh are felt and abhorred. We see this in Job's case. He had heard of God by the hearing of the ear, and then we find him justifying himself; but when his eye saw God, he abhorred himself in dust and ashes, (chap. xlii. 6.) Again, in Isa. vi., the vision of the glory of the Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts led him to cry, "Woe is me! for I am undone." He learnt more fully to apprehend grace, and the value of the sacrifice then. The coal from the altar of burnt-offering touched his lips, and his iniquity was taken away and his sin purged. So it is here: the walking in the light will so clearly manifest the evil that is in our hearts, that we shall learn more fully to apprehend the value of the *blood*. How blessed are those words, "*His Son!*" The blood that cleanseth us is the blood of the only-begotten Son of God, which He provided in His love to us, and which He has given and accepted as an atonement for our souls. "It cleanseth," not here *hath cleansed*, which is true as regards the full justification of the sinner; but a present act, *cleanseth* us who are the children of God, seeking to walk in the light, from ALL sin.

Walking in the light will make the throne of grace most precious to us. The discovery of sin, instead of keeping us away, will drive us *there*, where the righteous Advocate ever pleads for us, and the precious blood ever speaketh peace, (chap. ii. 1, 2.) It will lead to *confession*, (ver. 9,) to *real* confession, to

self-aborrence, and yet to further discoveries of His grace and love.

How blessed those words "faithful and just to *forgive*," not to condemn. It would be unfaithfulness to His promise, and injustice to the blood of His own Son, if He did not forgive those who, in reliance upon His word and that precious blood, come into His presence confessing all their failure and their sins.

Our God is *just* to forgive!

A just God and yet a Saviour!

We can give thanks at the remembrance of *His holiness*! Hallelujah.

· 1 JOHN IV. 9, 10.

You are in heaviness through trials, but do not question His love who spared not for you His own Son. The Cross is the answer to all these questionings. There God *has manifested* His love. He has commended it towards us "in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Our sins hindered not His love to us; they only brought out His love. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent *His Son* to be the propitiation for *our sins*." Why should our sins lead us to doubt that love? Why should the trials and afflictions appointed by the faithful care of our heavenly Father lead His child to question His care, His love? Abhor yourself as much as you can, you cannot do so more than you

deserve; still God is love, and He has given us *His Son*. We should never question our Father's love, if we kept our eyes upon the Lamb of God; if we saw Him bow His head under the weight and condemnation of our sins, and then saw Him risen, and at the right hand of the Father *for us* in the glory. It is sin, deep sin to question the love of our God. It is as much a work of the flesh as any other sin. It is Satan whom you must resist, and the flesh that must be crucified, that lead to desponding and ungrateful thoughts of God. Resist them by the Word of God. Resist them by the Cross of Christ. Resist them by the blood of Jesus. Seek to overcome by the blood of the Lamb.

1 JOHN IV. 16.

Love is not an effort. It is the willing, easy, flowing forth of the affections towards one whose love we know, and whose character and ways are lovely in our eyes. Why is it there is so little love among the saints of God towards Jesus? Why is there such difference in the feelings of our hearts; at times some entering into and answering to the love of Jesus, and at others such coldness and deadness, such drowsiness of spirit and selfishness of conduct? The reason is this, we are not *dwelling* in His love; we are more like sinners looking to Him, and running to Him at seasons for peace and deliverance, than realising that we are His Bride, His members, His brethren; to whom His generous and rich

love has given not only all things, but His own blessed *self*. It is while we meditate upon *Himself*, while we trace His steps, learn His *character*, His love, His holy devoted obedience to the Father, and while, in fact, we are pouring out the name of Jesus as a precious ointment, that we learn to love and to delight in Him, not only because He loved us, but because of His own perfect and infinite loveliness. Only we must take the place His grace has put us in, in order to get acquainted with Him. We must *enter* into His banqueting house. Do not, in false humility, stand without, but as one that is saved by grace, is made nigh, yea, made one with Himself, listen to His voice, sit at His feet, and hear *all* that He has to tell you of His love. Do not fear to *believe* all. Do not say "I am black," and therefore He does not love me; for though black in yourself as the tents of Kedar, He has made you comely as the curtains of Solomon.

1 JOHN v. 20.

The great fact that faith rests upon is, "*We know that the Son of God is come.*" We look around us and see that the whole world lieth in the wicked one. On every side of us *sin* reigns, and *death* reigns by sin. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together. The bondage of corruption, physical, moral, and spiritual, extends throughout the earth. And if we contemplate the little world within us,—if we

look back upon the past, if we look at the present in the light of God's presence,—we *groan*, burdened with a body of sin and of death, and sorely harassed by the temptations of the adversary. “The whole world lieth in the wicked one.”

But while all this is solemnly true, one ray of light, or rather the Sun of Righteousness itself, has risen; the true light is come, and now shineth, though the darkness comprehendeth it not: “*The Son of God is come.*”

How many questions of deepest interest arise here. First, Who is this Son of God? Secondly, Whence did He come? Thirdly, Why did He come? Fourthly, How did He come?

First, Who is He? Let us turn to the first chapter of this epistle. The titles there given Him are—*The Life—The Eternal Life—The Word of-Life*, (ver. 1, 2,) *His Son Jesus Christ*.

In the fourth chapter we have the name which especially declares His relationship to the Father—“*His only-begotten Son.*” This is His glorious name, the name that sets forth His Divine relationship to God. Other names may declare His Divine attributes, powers, glories, offices; but this reveals to us His mysterious relationship to the Father. “No man knoweth the Son but the Father;” but faith receives the testimony, worships and adores.

In John i. He is called “*the Word*,” a title given to Him as the revealer of the Father, the Life—the Light; but the 18th verse shows us who it is that

bears all these glorious names—"the *only-begotten* Son, who is in the bosom of the Father." This name, "the Son"—the "only-begotten Son of God"—is the very climax of the grace and the glory of the gospel. When, for instance, the love of God is most highly commended to us by the lips of the Lord Jesus himself, this sets it forth—"God so loved the world that He gave *His only-begotten Son*."

The same in Rom. v. : we see how this blessed name of "Son" is there introduced as the climax of the manifestation of the Son of God. It is said, "Christ died for the *ungodly*"—for sinners, (ver. 6, 8,) but the *enemies* are reconciled by the death of *His Son*.

Observe, too, the emphasis in Rom. viii. When the wondrous part of the incarnation is dwelt upon, we read of "God sending *His own Son* in the likeness of sinful flesh." And when the cross is spoken of, or rather the proof *by the cross* that God is for us is declared, we read "He that spared not *His own Son*, but delivered Him up for us all." The Epistle to the Hebrews is based upon that *Son*, (chap. i. 2.) The Apostle, the High Priest, the Captain of our salvation, the Mediator of the new covenant, the Sacrifice, the Altar—this is what gives them all their infinite value, and their infinite glory—*the Son* is all these for us.

REVELATION I.

GRACE and peace, the Church's abiding portion, our needed daily portion, from the three persons of the Trinity; "from Jesus, the *faithful* witness," what He was when here; "the first-begotten," what He was in resurrection, as Head of the Church; "Prince of the kings of the earth," what He will be when He comes with His many crowns; each believer will be one of His crowns of rejoicing in that day!

The mention of His titles awakes our praise. "Unto Him that *loveth* us," (Greek.) Jesus is the same yesterday, for ever, and to-day. We so fail to realise that He is the same *to-day*. We want Him *to-day, now*, in *this day's* sorrows, trials, temptations from within and from without; from our bodies and from our souls; and He is *the same*. Oh, how blessed this! To read what He was when He healed, pitied, comforted, forgave, and say all this He is *now*. He *loveth now*, as He did when He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.

"He *washed* us from *our sins*." This was what we so needed, polluted, guilty, miserable as we were; "and, oh, the miracle of grace," as Watts sings, "*in His own blood*." Jesus can say, "Love is *strong as death*." He has also given us glory, made us partakers of the glory the Father has given to Him.

Is He the King of kings? He has made us *kings*.

Is He the Great High Priest? He has made us "*priests unto God.*" Well may our hearts ascribe glory and dominion to Him for ever and ever! Amen.

But the mention of His name not only leads to praise, but awakens the desire to see Him. "Behold He cometh with clouds; even so, Amen!" How blessed this: First, to look at His Person, then at His love, then at His work, then at His gifts, and then His appearing. "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Amen!

DISPENSATIONS.

THE first dispensation of God was to man unfallen in an unfallen world. God had dispensed the blessings of creation to him. God had constituted him, under Himself, the head and ruler of the works of His hands: everything was very good, and God could bless all, and rest in His works. This was a trial of the creature in its perfectness; he was tempted and fell. He subjected himself, his children, everything God had entrusted to him, to sin and ruin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;" and since then, as the apostle teaches us, (Rom. viii. 19-23,) "the whole creation has been groaning and travailing in pain." "Cursed is the ground for thy

sake," &c. Here was the end of the first dispensation. God had given blessing, man had failed, and then came judgment;—"the Lord drove out the man;"—but, before judgment was executed, *prophecy* of redemption and deliverance, by the grace and power of the Lord, came in to sustain them in hope amidst the desolation and ruin around them; and, observe, prophecy points always to the times of the restitution of all things, the dispensation of the fulness of times, (compare Acts iii. 19–21 with Eph. i. 10,) when Satan shall be bruised, and *God's* results be manifested, and not as now hidden, save only to faith. We, by *faith*, know that Christ has triumphed in the cross over Satan, but Satan's head has not been bruised yet, (Rom. xvi. 20.) He is still the god of this world, the deceiver of the nations, and the accuser of the brethren, (Rev. xii. 9, 10,) going about seeking whom he may devour, (1 Pet. v.) But then he will be bound, cast into the bottomless pit, bruised under the feet of the risen saints, who shall (see Rev. xx.) reign with Christ a thousand years, till he is loosed for a little season out of his prison. Thus you will see that the prophecy first given awaits its manifested accomplishment in the dispensation of the fulness of times. The history of the first dispensation is the history of all, except that those which succeeded it were with man as *fallen* in a fallen world, and the purpose of God in all was the same, namely, to show man his utter inability in creature strength, in his own resources, to hold any blessing

entrusted to him, or to regain any that he had lost; in order that man might cease to glory in man, and glory alone in that Son of man who is the blessed Son of God, whom God hath made strong for Himself, (Ps. lxxx. 17, compare cx. 1.)

The second dispensation reached to the flood. It was the trial of man's strength, who had sought to be as God, whether he could undo the mischief and ruin he had brought on himself. There was a remnant according to grace that walked with God in this fallen earth; Abel believed the promise of the woman's seed, and was rejected and slain in that world, as the saints, if faithful, have ever been. Enoch prophesied (see Jude) of the Lord's *second* coming *with* ten thousand of His saints; and Noah condemned that world by building the ark. But at last the earth became so corrupted that God poured out His judgments upon it in the flood.

The third dispensation I believe still continues. Gen. viii. 20, and Gen. ix. embody the principles of it. It is a dispensation founded, not upon man's faithfulness, but upon God's *promise* through sacrifice. Man's heart was still as evil, but the Lord smelled the sweet savour, and therefore, instead of smiting again everything living as He had done, He has given man fruitful seasons, (Gen. viii. 22,) dominion over the earth, (chap. ix. 2,) flesh for food, (ver. 3, 4,) reserving the blood, that is the life, to Himself as a constant testimony to man that his own life was forfeited; and then there was also. (of which there appears no

trace before the flood) the power of government, even to the taking away of life, put into man's hands, in order that the earth might be governed for God, and not filled with violence as it had been before. Noah himself was the first witness of the failure on man's part of this dispensation;—he abuses the fruitful seasons, and shows how unfit man is to govern when he governs not himself. Thus we see everything fail at the very outset. If we look a little further, (chap. x. 8–10, compare xi. 1–9,) we see power in man's hands used for his own glory instead of God's. Nimrod is just a type of "the mighty ones of the earth," and Babel, the beginning of his kingdom, built "to make them a name," the representation of the power, glory, and pride of man used against God;—Babylon in the Old and New Testament being always the name for worldliness, for that which is great and lives deliciously in the earth. The sin of man at Babel was the cause of the division of men into nations as we now see them,—the memorial of our sin and shame. But this judgment and the judgment of the flood were alike soon forgotten, and shortly after we find the apostasy of the nations from God as described in Rom. i. They gave the glory due to God to idols; they worshipped devils instead of God; and but for the interference of God in sovereign grace in the call of Abram, himself an idolater, (Josh. xxiv.,) God would not have had a witness for Himself on the earth.

This made room for a new dispensation, viz., the

“calling of God” out of an evil world, by His sovereign grace; those called being the witnesses for God against the world that had rejected Him. It was the choosing one nation in the *flesh*, and constituting them witnesses against the Gentiles. It was, in fact, the only *national* dispensation ever recognised by God. To Abraham the promise of blessing had been made in grace, it depended simply on the faithfulness of God; it was not of works, but entirely of promise: but we find in Exod. xix. that Israel, in the folly of their hearts, took upon themselves, on the condition of their own obedience, in law, what had been freely given to Abraham by promise. Here was another dispensation, the legal,—another trial of man in the flesh, resulting in utter failure and ruin. The law was found to be the ministration of death and condemnation—it was weak through the flesh, and brought as many as were of it under the curse. In Exod. xix. 4–8, and in Deut. xxviii., are to be found the principles of this dispensation. The blessings depended on *obedience*; “*If ye will obey my voice,*” then “ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation,” &c. Observe, the blessings promised in Deut. xxviii., and in other places, are *earthly* blessings, in their bodies, stores, wars, &c. They had, which the Gentiles had not, (see Eph. ii. 11, 12,) “God with them in the world;” they were called by His name, (Deut. xxviii. 10, compare Isa. lxiii. 18, 19;) He fought their battles; their land,

their city, their temple, their laws, were all His. He was their Lawgiver and their King, and their responsibility was, by obedience to Him, and their consequent prosperity and blessedness, to teach other nations "how blessed was *the nation* which had the Lord for *its* God." At first the priest was the maintainer of their communion with God;—in 1 Sam. ii., iii., we find the entire failure of the priesthood, *Ichabod*; and then in Samuel God raises up a prophet to testify against the failure of the priest, and as the medium of communication between God and the people.

They then (1 Sam. viii.) reject the Kingship of God, and we have another dispensation introduced, the kingly dispensation,—Saul being the king of man's choice; David the type of God's King in suffering, and Solomon of God's King in rest and glory. I need not say how all these different offices have failed in man's hands, at the very outset. The people, with Aaron, made the calf while Moses was in the mount; two of the sons of Aaron were cut off (Lev. x.) as soon as consecrated; Solomon in his old age fell into idolatry;—all alike teaching us to look from man to the true Priest and Prophet and King, even Jesus.

I pass on until our blessed Lord—the woman's promised Seed, Abraham's and David's promised Son—appeared, full of grace and truth, among men. John the Baptist, the greatest born of woman, was His forerunner; him they killed; would they receive God's Son? This was the last trial of the world. They

had rejected God as Creator, though the heavens declared His glory, and the firmament His handiwork, (compare Rom. i. 19, 20.) They had broken His law given to the Jews, (Rom. ii. 23,) beaten and wounded the servants He had sent to receive the fruit of the vineyard, but He had one Son, and He said, "What shall I do? I will send my beloved Son, it may be they will reverence Him when they see Him;" (Luke xx. 9-16;) but they cast Him out and crucified Him. Had they received Him, He would have gathered their children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. He would have sat on the throne of David His father. He would have brought in the times of the restitution of all things. But they would none of Him, and He said, with tears, "Ye shall not see me henceforth TILL ye shall say, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.'" "Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." They said, "Away with Him, crucify Him;" and the Father said, (Ps. cx. 1,) "Sit Thou on my right hand, *until* I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." *There* Jesus now is, in heaven, and the world is proved, by the rejection of Him, a lost, evil, hopelessly evil world.

And here OUR dispensation begins. It is a *heavenly, spiritual* dispensation. Read Eph. i. and Deut. xxviii., and observe how entirely contrasted and dissimilar the principles and blessings of the Jewish and Christian dispensations are,—the one national, carnal, earthly; the other spiritual and

heavenly, "blessed with all *spiritual* blessings in *heavenly* places in Christ Jesus." The Jews had a high priest who had infirmity on earth; ours is passed into the heavens, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Their place of worship was a worldly sanctuary; ours is the holiest of all, through the rent veil, where Jesus is. Their sacrifices could make nothing perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; ours has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. They had weapons of carnal warfare; ours are spiritual. Their enemies were flesh and blood; ours are wicked spirits in heavenly places. They were the circumcision in the flesh; but we (of course I write of the saints of God) are "the true circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." The manifested blessings in earthly things, which they received in reward of their obedience, proved them, before the world, to be the chosen people of God; the proof to us is, *the world's hatred*. The Church is *not of the world* at all, any more than Christ is; its Head, its life, its blessings, its citizenship, are all in heaven, and its worship and ministry are all in the power of the Spirit. The world, not having the Spirit of God, cannot serve or worship Him, (see John xiv. 16-19;) it is not of God; its friendship is enmity with God; it knows not the sons of God, but hates and despises them. Satan blinds the eyes of the children of this world, and leads them captive at his will. Here, then, is the character of

our dispensation. The cross of Christ, while it was salvation to the Church, proved the world lost, at enmity with God, and under Satan's power; and the Church was called out of it as a separate, peculiar, spiritual people,—the witnesses for their despised, rejected Lord, against the world; the partakers of His sufferings, as hereafter of His glory. I need not say how total the apostasy has been; the tares have been sown, while men slept, among the wheat; the grain of mustard seed has obtained the power and glory of the earth; the three measures of meal have been leavened with corruption,—*all is leavened*. Compare Dan. iv. 10–12, Matt. xvi. 6, 1 Cor. v. 6–8, and Gal. v. 9, with these parables, and you will see how unsound the general interpretation is of them; for the parables of the kingdom of heaven really give us the history of that which calls itself Christendom, *i.e.*, Christ's kingdom, from its setting up in purity until His appearing. The Lord prophesies of apostasy and judgment, and man has understood Him to speak of gradually spreading prosperity and blessing. We are now in the last and perilous times of the Church's history, and let it be remembered the peril is not persecution, but the *form* of godliness without its *power*, (see 2 Tim. iii.) The minds of many of the Lord's children are awakened to see this, and they, in obedience to Him, seek to walk as those that are risen with Christ, looking for His appearing. The apostasy of the dispensation has chiefly arisen from walking by the principles of the Jewish dispensation,

instead of remembering that we are partakers of a heavenly calling, that we have done with the world, are dead and crucified to it, are chosen and called out of it, and have to walk as strangers and pilgrims in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. God's purpose now is, not to mend or improve the world, but to gather out of it into heaven those that are to reign with Christ at His appearing. The next dispensation will be the manifesting of the real blessing and glory of every office and dispensation that has failed in man's hand. Under the Son of man creation will be restored, (Rom. viii. 19-23, Acts iii., Isa. xi., Ps. viii., compare also Heb. ii.) In the Seed of Abraham all the nations, (not, as now, an election out of the nations, Acts xv. 14, Rev. v. 9,) as nations, will be blessed, (Ps. lxxii. 17.) The Son of David shall sit upon David's throne, and judge His people righteously; then shall be shown the blessedness of kingly government and rule, and men shall have, what in vain for hundreds of years they have been seeking after, good government. Ps. lxxii. and Isa. xxxii. exhibit the character, principles, and government of God's King, (Ps. ii. 6.) All nations shall serve Him; Jerusalem will be the centre of the earth's government and worship, and the nations shall assemble there (see Zech. xiv.) to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. But there will be a Priest too,—a Priest upon His throne according to the oath, a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. He will come forth, His enemies

(Ps. cx.) being subdued, His people (*i.e.*, Jewish) made willing in the day of His *power*, to bless man from God, and God from man. In Ps. cx. we have Christ's present session at the right hand of God, then the day of His *power* and of His *wrath*, ver. 3, 5, compared with Rev. xi. 17, 18; vi. 16, 17; xix. 11-21. *Our* place in this dispensation is fellowship with Jesus in His power and glory; heirs of God, *joint-heirs* with Christ, (compare Zech. xiv. 5, Rom. viii. 17-19, Rev. i. 5, 6, ii. 26, 27, iii. 21, v. 10, xx. 4-6, &c.) Our place will be in the New Jerusalem which cometh down from heaven, which, I believe, will be so connected with, and yet distinct from the earth, as the holy place was with the court of Israel where the altar stood, and that again connected with the court of the Gentiles. Jacob's vision, referred to by our Lord, (John i. 51,) contains a type of this, and I believe all those psalms refer to it which speak of the heavens in connexion with the earth. "Let the heavens rejoice," (Ps. xcvi., &c.)

THE WORD OF GOD.

It is very useful to have a general idea of what *especial* doctrine or truth each portion of the Word of God treats. Perhaps the following hints may not

be unacceptable. Each of the Gospels has its distinct character and office.

St Matthew sets forth the glory of Christ as Messiah, Son of Abraham, and Son of David; and His rejection by the Jews under these characters—the first verse being the subject of the Gospel. Of course, the same truths are recognised everywhere; but I speak of the principal object or scope of the Gospel.

St Luke, who wrote to Gentiles, traces up Christ's genealogy to Adam, and presents Him especially as Son of *Man*.

St John, again, sets forth His divine glory as Son of God, in connexion with the Church or heavenly family; chap. i. 14 being the subject of this Gospel.

St Mark sets Christ forth as the servant of God, (Isa. xlii.) and of man's need, (Phil. ii.) In all these characters He was the rejected One, the Crucified. The world knew Him not, it slew Him; but God raised Him from the dead.

The Acts is the Gospel of the *risen* Jesus; the gathering out of His body the Church from the world, in the power of the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

The Epistles are His instruction to the Church thus gathered out.

Romans, the great doctrines of the dispensation.

1 and 2 Corinthians, God's method of ordering His Church by His Spirit.

Galatians, justification, and the promise of the Spirit, *by faith*.

Ephesians, the glory of His body the Church, as quickened, raised, and sitting in heavenly places *in Christ*.

Colossians, the fulness and glory of the Head of the Church.

Philippians, the Church cast upon God.

Thessalonians, the doctrine of the Lord's second coming, and its practical effects.

Timothy and Titus, the qualifications of the official members of the Church, and their work.

Hebrews, the Person, Offices, and Work of Christ, as Apostle, High-Priest, Mediator, &c., in heaven; hidden from the world's sight, but revealed to *faith*, at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty of heaven.

While Paul dwells upon the roots, James writes of the *fruits* of faith, as the *evidences* of its being the faith of God's elect; works are the test of faith *before man*.

Peter, the present sufferings and coming glory of the Church.

1 John, righteousness and love the tests of discipleship.

Jude, the apostasy of the present dispensation, and exhortation to the remnant.

Finally, the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and coming glory.

I have found the knowledge of these things greatly

help me in studying the Scriptures, and it is to them I commend you, as containing in them the full manifestation and revelation of the mind, will, and wisdom of God. Nothing would I desire to see in the Church so much as an entire subjection of heart to the *Word of God*; this will be our only wisdom and safety in the trying, sifting times which are coming on the Church.

Let us consider some of the uses of the Word of God. Oh, for a deeper delight in it, for he that meditates therein day and night is the one that grows like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.

First, It meets us as *sinner*s, as the "Gospel of the *grace* of God." It proclaims "Christ crucified." It cries, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." It tells of the *source* of all this grace to us, "God *so loved* the world that *He gave* His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What words of love are these! they reveal the *heart* of God. We have been the prodigals, the sinners, the enemies—those that have turned their backs upon our Father, and our Father's house; but His heart still yearns over us, His love pursues us into the far country, His only-begotten, His well-beloved, is the messenger of His grace to us. He came from the Father to reveal Him to us, to declare that "God is *Love*."

And that no barrier might remain, He took our sin and laid it upon Jesus, and commends all His deep and unutterable love to us in that most wondrous word, "When we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Thus His Word meets us after the Son has come, after the sin has been borne, the work finished, the sacrifice accepted, and peace made by the blood of the cross. The risen Jesus sends forth the gospel of His grace to sinners everywhere,—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Here we find peace; in the gospel we acquainted ourselves with God, and we can say with thankful hearts, “We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.”

By this Word received as the incorruptible seed into our hearts we were born again, (1 Pet. i. 23–25,) and became of that chosen generation, that royal priesthood, that peculiar people, whom God has called out of darkness into His marvellous light that we should show forth His praise.

Secondly, Being born again the soul needs nourishment. The new-born babe in Christ has a new spiritual life. This needs its own proper food, and God has provided this in grace for us in “the sincere milk of the *Word*, that we may *grow* thereby.” The reason why there is so little growth among God’s children is, there is so little feeding on the Word. So few can say with Job, “I esteemed thy words more than my necessary food;” or with Jeremiah, “Thy words were found,

and I did *eat* them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Hence the leanness of the souls of God's children, for we live "by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God," (Deut. viii. 3.)

Thirdly, We are not only God's children, called to feed at His table, but we are called to *serve* Him, to have the mind of Him who, though He was the Son of God, became the *servant*, and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and for this we need the word of instruction.

The Father's table is the place of nourishment, there we feed on the fatness of His house, we get strength for service. But there is the school of God too, where we learn to serve, where we are instructed in our Father's counsels and will concerning His children. We are *disciples* as well as *children*. And how full the Word of our God is here. All Scripture is ours. "It is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be *perfect*, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," (2 Tim. iii.)

If the third of John, the testimony of man's ruin and need, and of God's provision and love in meeting it in the cross of Christ, speaks to us as sinners; if the sixth of John tells us of the living food of our quickened souls, of His flesh which is meat indeed, and His blood which is drink indeed; chaps. v., vi., vii. of Matthew teach us how to walk as the *disciples* of Jesus. He sits upon the mount, we listen to His

words of grace and authority, and learn how to walk down here as lights in the world, to our Father's praise and glory.

But we are not only learners, we are called to be "*doers of the Word.*" How beautiful the order of Ps. cxliii. is! It is the cry of the *servant* of the Lord,—of one who, though so conscious of his failure and shortcomings that he humbly cries, "Enter not into *judgment* with thy *servant*, O Lord," can still in the integrity of his heart say, "*I am thy servant,*" (ver. 12.)

In ver. 8, he desires to begin the *morning* with the *loving-kindness* of God,—to be fed with the manna, the morning portion of his soul; here is our *strength* as well as our song. He next desires to *know* the *way* wherein he should walk; here is the *disciple*, the one that seeks to be *acquainted* with his Father's way. "If I have found *grace* in thy sight," said the servant who was faithful in all his house, "show me now thy way;" (Exod. xxxiii. 13;) and when we *know His way*, do we not find everything around us so contrary to it, and in our flesh so opposed to it, with the power of Satan and the world so arrayed against us if we desire to walk in it, that we feel constrained to cry in the sense of our own weakness and danger, "Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies: I flee unto Thee to hide me?" (ver. 9.)

Then we can say, "Teach me to *do* Thy will; for Thou art my God; Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness," (ver. 10;) and how sweetly

this psalm follows the order of God's dealings and teachings in the New Testament.

The prodigal must not serve as a *hired* servant, he must not work for his bread. If he serve, it must be as a *son*, in the spirit of liberty, and not in the spirit of bondage. His Father's kiss is on his cheek, his Father's arms are round his neck; the best robe, the fatted calf, the music, and the dancing, cause him to know his Father's loving-kindness, before he knows and does his Father's will.

And how sweetly does the Spirit of truth teach us the same things in the Epistles to the saints of God. Look at Romans; the eight first chapters reveal to us the loving-kindness; chaps. ix., x., xi., the counsels of our God, and then we are exalted by His *mercies* to prove the good, and perfect, and acceptable *will* of God. But oh, what hearts ours are! how slow to understand His blessed perfect ways of grace and love to us, so worthy of the God of all grace, and so full of blessing to us, as pardoned sinners and accepted worshippers, whose sins are covered, and into whose hearts the Spirit of His Son has come, crying, "Abba, Father." Well might the apostle pray that the saints at Ephesus might be strengthened, according to the riches of His glory, with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that they might be able to comprehend with all saints the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, (Eph. iii.)

But, fourthly, There is another thing we need in

this evil world and evil day. We are not only children, disciples, and servants, but we are also called to be good soldiers of Christ, to war a good warfare, to fight the good fight of faith; we have "to wrestle against principalities and powers, against wicked spirits in heavenly places;" we need *weapons* for our warfare, weapons for defence, as well as weapons for aggression. Our God has provided these also for His saints.

All are furnished by Him: the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith; and He has given us the exhortation, "Put on the whole armour of God," (see Eph. vi. 10-18; 2 Cor. x. 4, 5; Rom. xiii. 12.)

How strikingly does Ps. cxliv. follow the one we have been meditating upon. If Ps. cxliii. gives us the experience of the *servant*, the following psalm gives us the confidence of the good *soldier* of faith: "Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." This is aggressive warfare. But he adds, "My goodness and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and He in whom I trust." Here is our *defence*: "His *truth* is our shield and buckler." We need not be afraid of the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day. Our shield of faith is able to quench *all* the fiery darts of the wicked. "The sword of the Spirit is the *Word* of God;" Satan cannot stand that. "*It is written*," was the weapon used by the Captain of our salvation. "*It is written*,"

is *our* weapon also. Let us use it in simplicity of heart and dependence upon God, and we shall find that word fulfilled, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the *word* of their testimony." These were the weapons of those blessed ones who loved not their lives unto the death. The *blood* silenced Satan as the accuser; the *word* overcame his wiles as the serpent; though as the dragon he might persecute them unto death, their very death was victory! The time would fail to tell one-half of even the little I have known of the manifold uses of God's most blessed Word. Well might Paul commend the Ephesian elders "to God, and to the *word* of *His* *grace*, which was able to build them up."

Is this world a *dark* place? His Word is a "*light* unto our feet, and a lamp unto our path," (Ps. cxix. 105.) The sure Word of prophecy is that whereunto we do well to take heed, as to a *light* which shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, (2 Pet. i. 19.) Do we need warning and admonition? "These things happened unto them for ensamples, but they are *written* for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come," (1 Cor. x.) How gracious is this provision! We can read of Lot's worldliness, and the misery which it brought upon his house; of David's, of Moses', and of Hezekiah's falls; and say, "By them is Thy servant warned." Our God has even uncovered the blemishes and faults of His most precious servants, that we might learn what the wiles

of Satan and the weakness of the flesh are, and not fall into the temptations of the enemy.

And do we need comfort and hope in the path of trial and of faithfulness? We read that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have *hopé*," (Rom. xv.) So that *all* things are indeed *ours*; things past, things present, and things to come. The patience of Job, the faith of Abraham, the singleness of heart in Caleb,—all tell out lessons full of instruction and blessing. And above all, the record of all that *Jesus* was—the Man of sorrows, the tempted, the sufferer; made like us in all things but sin, that He might be a faithful and merciful High Priest for us—such as became poor, weak, needy, sinful ones as we are. Yes, this is the greatest glory of the Word. It speaks of *Jesus*—the Son of man, the Son of God.

He could say, "Search the Scriptures, they testify of *Me*," (John v. 39.) No wonder that the hearts of the two disciples journeying to Emmaus burned within them, while He talked with them by the way, and opened to them the Scriptures; when, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning *Himself*," (Luke xxiv. 27,) the woman's Seed, the bruiser of the serpent's head, (Gen. iii.) The ark of God, (Gen. vi.) the Lamb God would provide, (Gen. xxii.) the blood sprinkled on the door-posts, (Exod. xii.) the fiery pillar, (Exod. xiii.) the ark, the

mercy-seat, the altar, the sacrifices, and the priest, (Exod. xxv.-xxviii. ;) the manna, and the smitten rock;—all spoke of Jesus—all shadowed forth the varied glories and the fulness of Him whom God has made our *all*. May we prize this blessed record more, and under the teaching of that unction “which is truth,” learn daily more of the excellency of the glory of Jesus. I could add more, but I now end with that prayer of the psalmist, “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law,” (Ps. cxix. 18.) Amen and Amen.

THE END.