

6

NOTES  
ON  
THE EPHESIANS.

BY  
*GORDON FORLONG.*

---

London:  
JOHN F. SHAW AND CO.,  
48, PATERNOSTER ROW.

[1874]



## NOTES ON THE EPHESIANS.

---

**P**ASTORS and teachers who have the oversight of flocks must often consider—"What is the subject especially suitable at the present time?" "What does *this* flock require?"

And in order to answer satisfactorily we MUST consider the evils of the day we are in, and we must know also the keynotes of the Epistles.

If the work of God the Father is little known, the pastor will naturally dwell much upon EPHESIANS.

If the work of God the Son is little understood by his hearers, he will involuntarily turn to COLOSSIANS and HEBREWS.

If the work of God the Spirit is neglected, he will press home the Epistle to the GALATIANS.

If the joy of the suffering servants is required to stimulate the love and the courage of true servants, he will readily choose PHILIPPIANS. And if he feels it is his call to rouse the pastoral spirit of others, and to teach those pastoral duties that belong to overseers of the flock, he will not fail to choose the Epistles to TIMOTHY. But we must not wander from our subject.

Ephesians, like all the Epistles, has many great

and blessed features besides the one especially referred to above. It is an Epistle which ought to be very precious to Gentiles as distinguished from Jews. It gives to the Gentiles, or nations, their rank and position.

It is not the Gentile "door" of entrance that we find opened by Peter in Acts xiv. 27: "And when they were come, and had gathered the Church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the DOOR of faith unto the Gentiles." Peter has the blessed privilege of opening the DOOR, but the servant, or as we would say, I suppose, the Gentleman Usher, who announces the RANK, is Paul in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

The Epistle does indeed demand great consideration from us, because it often announces to us the fact that it is written and revealed to GENTILES. (Chap. ii. 11, 12; iii. 6, 8.)

The late Dean Alford has drawn attention to the word "Ephesus" in the first verse, and mentioned that some ancient manuscripts omit the word "Ephesus;" thus leaving it to be inferred that this Epistle may, perhaps, be addressed to the whole Church at large.

And some good Christians have founded upon this, and actually taught others, that the Epistle to the Ephesians is to ALL saints directly, and not to Ephesus at all. But the title of the Epistle, "TO THE EPHESIANS," is in all the best manuscripts, so that we are obliged to consider it written, in the first place, to the EPHESIANS; and, in the second place, to the GEN-

TILES; and, in the third and last place of course, for the benefit of all saints. But observe the primary purpose of each Epistle carefully, or we will not see the great leading lines of thought which the SPIRIT has wished us to discern in EACH Epistle.

The first chapter rarely obtains the very careful critical examination it ought to receive.

Two classes of persons are spoken to, and each is separately addressed.

The Epistle does *not* begin by saying, YE Ephesians; neither does it apply all these glorious deep Electing Truths to "YE" EPHESIANS.

The first eight or ten verses talk not about the Gentile Ephesians—they talk about "we;" not "ye," but "we."

The first twelve verses are about another class altogether, *not* about the Ephesians. A superficial reader would at once apply them to the Ephesians, but they are not about them at all, and could *not* be specially applied to them by any accurate critic.

The "we" in the first verses applies to those who first HOPED\* in Christ, who HOPED in the Messiah before ever He came. The "we" refers to the OLD Israel of God, who EXPECTED Him in days of old.

But had these early saints this blessed "adoption"? It was especially their own. "Adoption" was their native air: "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the 'ADOPTION,' and the 'GLORY,' and the Covenants." (Rom. ix. 4.)

\* Our translators have said "trusted," but this is an admitted error, as even the margin of a Bagster's Bible will show you. The word is HOPED, and refers to HOPE, not FAITH.

But did they really SEE these things by *faith*? The saints did, and the SINNERS, like Christendom in our day, saw NOTHING. What says our Lord? "MANY prophets and RIGHTEOUS MEN have DESIRED to see THESE THINGS that ye see, and have not seen them." They BELIEVED in their appearing, CONFIDENTLY looked for them, but saw not.

Years ago, I for one was wont to read these truths in a very different light. I shut out the Israel saints of old from all our present promises. I was taught to believe that WE were the men, and they were our mere shadows; that Abraham would yet be in an inferior position to ourselves. I saw little light in the Old Testament, because I had never really studied it; and I laid it down as a PRINCIPLE that the 'old godly saints were Jews, and therefore they were "Jewish;" that they did not see Christ clearly; that they had no RANK with us; that the gift of the Spirit was a new thing—to US only—and had nothing to do with Abraham's blessings or children; and that in the glory we should have Abraham, in a modest way, under our feet; and we should be the "Bride" alone, without any Old Testament Jews amongst us. The "CHURCH," I thought, was the glory of Christ, and IT had the first place.

In my simplicity at that time, I knew hardly anything of OLD TESTAMENT truth, and I little knew that our pet watchword, "the Church," was a thorough Roman Catholic word, quite unknown in the original Greek. The only word known to God is the word "congregation," or, as some desire it to be, "assembly;" but it is in point of fact literally "con-

gregation," because where God the Spirit quotes from the OLD Testament He uses the word which represents congregation in the Old Testament. If it is made "assembly" in the New, then we are obliged to make all the passages translated "congregation," "assembly" in the OLD ALSO.

Oh for power to take God's thoughts at any cost! It is not pleasant to be brought down from our pet pedestals; it is not pleasant to discover that our schools of thought are FALLIBLE.

It is quite possible to say we belong to NO denomination, and yet be denominationally under the strictest leaders of our own school of thought. The converse is also true: we sometimes meet with Christians who are theoretically very strict in holding to their own sect, and yet practically very frank and open-hearted in admitting all the failings of their party.

But why are those great, deep, and enlarged views of God's mind and character found in the first chapter to the Ephesians, especially as they are not, in a primary sense, spoken of the Ephesians?

1st. This Epistle exalts God throughout; and it is the Epistle of the Father—His DEEP and glorious purposes. His FOUNDATION plan is set forth, if I may so speak, in the first chapter; His UNION plan is recorded in the second chapter; and His deep Gentile deliverance is the subject of the third chapter.

2nd. This Epistle is NOT written to a great nation. Ephesus neither grasped external power, like Rome; nor intellectual superiority over the world, like Greece.

The Spirit is writing to a small but influential city, and to a people whose minds, like the minds of all

small communities, require to be enlarged ; He therefore leads out their thoughts far beyond their confined conceptions ; He leads them back into the depths of bygone ages, and thus destroys all the petty, diminutive views they NATURALLY formed of God and His gospel deliverance.

This also is a lesson to any of us who address "SAINTS" in small towns and villages. We should strive to enlarge their ideas, and give them, both as regards LOVE and WISDOM, broad and expanded views of God's glorious plans ; LIMIT them, however, ENTIRELY by the WORD. If you trespass beyond the pastures marked out by God, remember your BROAD ideas are stretching over Satan's dominions, and his broad lands and views. The Bible is our TITLE-DEED ; we claim NOT ONE INCH BEYOND ; and the poetic souls who feed on pastures NOT in God's word are feeding on Satan's pastures—sweet to the NATURAL taste, but DEADLY POISON to the soul.

If we witness FOR GOD, we must remember we are only to be God's echoes ; we are, like rocks, to send back to the world around us the echo of the truths that have come from HEAVEN to us, and rung upon our OWN hearts. We are to endeavour to be bright reflectors of the glorious rays of light which shine into our souls from God's word ; and we ought to show NO LIGHT but God's light, and acknowledge that there is NO NATURAL light in man, that naturally man is dead, HIS light is darkness, and HIS end is death eternal.

But we attack darkness with light ; we let the rays



of the Sun of Righteousness in upon the dead soul, and we touch the dead man with the sword of the Holy Spirit—the word of God—and, lo, the Spirit gives life, light, and liberty.

All glory is given to God the FATHER in this Epistle; not that the work of the SON or the work of the SPIRIT is ignored, but the leading note is glory to the Father. The deep PURPOSES of the Father are therefore revealed, and the apostles especially appropriated to the “WE” of the first twelve verses, the blessings which belonged to the early saints who “FIRST HOPED” in Christ, as we said in previous pages.

The Ephesians therefore are introduced to us personally for the first time in verse 13: “Ye also;” and the YE in this verse is emphatic in the Greek. And if I may be pardoned one other reference to the original Greek in the same verse, I would say that the construction of the passage relative to the “SPIRIT” implies in the original more than a mere influence—it implies a PERSON; the SPIRIT as a person sealing them through faith.

Then listen to the apostle bursting out in prayer for the Church, the very breathings of the Holy Ghost Himself. The “Faith” and “Love” which he hears of and commends, he does not doubt it; he does not shake their faith by questioning the Spirit’s work in them. He talks of their faith and love to SAINTS—not a mere party, or school, or sect, but to all saints; and gives thanks to God, whilst he prays they may have a deeper KNOWLEDGE of God. “The eyes of your HEART having been enlightened.” Our

translation says "understanding," but the three best manuscripts all read "HEART;" and it is a deeper truth. The heart is the moving power, the head is but the machine that carries out the purposes of the heart; and it is by the HEART that we know God, and the "hope of His calling," and the exceeding greatness of resurrection power when He raised Christ from the dead.

Do we pray sufficiently for this full knowledge of resurrection power which we have in Christ? and do we always remember that we are resurrection ones, risen ALREADY WITH HIM, and having His power in us?

We found LIFE at the cross of Christ, but we did not find POWER there. In Christ risen, not in Christ dead, lay power. The resurrection note was never sounded until Christ was risen; and only those in the Old Testament who were taught of the Spirit understood resurrection power. "All power," says our risen Lord, "is given to me in heaven and on earth. GO ye therefore." This was His risen word, not His dying word.

It was not until the THIRD day that light appeared, as we read in the first of Genesis; it was only on the THIRD day that Abraham got Isaac returned to him alive. (Gen. xxii.) On the third day Jacob escaped his bondage and was safe. On the third day Pharaoh lifted up the chief butler out of the prison; on the third day appeared God's power on Sinai. (Exodus xix. 11, 15, 16.) And it was not until Moses was dead and the third day past that the children of Israel could cross the waters of death in Jordan. Let the name of

Jesus be put in the place of Moses, in the first chapter of Joshua, and it reads like a New Testament verse. "Jesus my servant is dead; **NOW THEREFORE** arise, go over this Jordan," the place of death, "unto the land which I **DO GIVE**." (Josh. i. 2, 11.)

Moses was the figure of Christ, who carried not the mere tables of the law, but the "grace and truth" of the **LAW**, for that is the connection in the first chapter of John. He must die, burdened, like Moses, with the sin of others. "For the Lord (says Moses) was wroth with me for **YOUR SAKES**." (Deut. i. 37; iii. 26; iv. 21.) Resurrection power was to be seen **AFTER** His death on the third day. "Pass through the host (says Joshua), and command the people; for within **THREE DAYS** ye shall pass over this Jordan."

And when Jordan is passed, it is not a dying Saviour that is found, but a risen, powerful one. "Behold there stood a man over against Joshua, with his sword drawn in his hand." And now Christ speaks to him as a captain, or as we may read it in the original, "Nay, prince of the host of the Lord, am I **NOW** come." Aye, **NOW** come. Death is passed, Jordan has been dried; we are now over it, and, as the Lord's host, we engage with the nations of the world.

Listen to the voice of death in Isaiah xxvi. 14. They are mourning over the dead, and the prophet laments all the labours and inabilities of Israel. But what saith the Spirit of God to the prophet? "**THY DEAD SHALL LIVE; MY DEAD BODY** shall they arise: awake and sing."

Leave out the words in italics which mar this

beautiful passage. The cry of despair is answered by "AWAKE and SING," ye that dwell in dust; ye are my dead body, and as my dead body ye shall arise. We have not a passage in the Bible setting forth the resurrection of Christ's body in a clearer way as the POWER of His saints.

And did not David proclaim it clearly and tell it clearly when we are told in Acts ii. 31, "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ"? And we all know that not until Jonah had risen, and his three days were past, had he resurrection power. It was after the third day that Jonah triumphed over Nineveh. But I need not multiply examples. I only give these in order to remind all our hearts that we are resurrection ones. We are not to consider ourselves poor fainting ones, waiting for the crucifixion of our Lord: we are risen ones, gifted with the power of God the Holy Ghost, and marching on to conquest, with our Captain before us carrying His drawn sword.

This brings us to the last verses of the first chapter of Ephesians: "He is the *head* over all to the congregation,\* which is His BODY."

There is no room for the thought that the "congregation" belongs only to the New Testament saints. His BODY is the body in Isaiah xxvi. 14, and all saints belong to the body of Christ; He is the new Man, or the new "Adam," if we read it as it would be read by a Hebrew apostle—an Ephesian became by faith a "fellow-citizen with the SAINTS" (Eph. ii. 19), a member of the "Church," which includes saints "in

\* Literally, "congregation," not church.

the wilderness" (Acts vii. 38), and saints in all ages.

We are wont to say that there are only two classes of persons—saved and unsaved; but this Epistle goes far deeper into truth.

We are taught that there are—

Two HEADS or PRINCES	. c. 1-22; ch. 2-2	} Luke xi. 18; John xiv. 30.
Two Families of CHILDREN	. c. 1-5; ch. 2-2, 3	
Two POWERS	. c. 1-19; ch. 2-2	
Two SPIRITS	. c. 1-13; ch. 2-2	
Two WILLS	. c. 1-11; ch. 2-3	
Two EFFECTS	WRATH c. 2-3; Gal. 3-10	
	LOVE c. 2-4; ch. 2-17	
Two WALKERS	. c. 2-2; ch. 2-10	

We might enlarge this list; but even these heads will show how broadly the line is drawn between Christ and Satan, and between saints and sinners.

The second chapter tells the Ephesians WHERE God found them, what SOCIETY they were in, what moral and spiritual state they were in.

Their state is contrasted with the RICHES of God and the LOVE of God. And again the WE and the YE are prominently referred to in verses 10 and 11.

In verse 10 it may read, which God before prepared, or did afore time prepare, that we should walk in them. You have the same thought in Isa. xxvi. 12: "Thou hast wrought all our works in us."

The YE in verse 11 is emphatic in the Greek, showing clearly again that the contrast between Jew and Gentile is still kept steadily in view.

The Spirit is carrying the richest and fullest bless-

ings in His hand as He comes to "ye Gentiles;" but He will not allow them to occupy a wrong place as they receive them—they must take the LOWEST place.

"Ye were literally 'apart' from Christ, alienated from the citizenship of Israel," strangers to ISRAEL'S covenants and hopes, but NOW nigh; for He is OUR peace who hath made BOTH one.

Observe, not "Israel" alone, nor "ye Gentiles" alone, but BOTH ONE. Mark these two last words; they are the leading thought of the second chapter—"twain one," verse 15; "both one," verse 16; "we, the *both*" literally, verse 18.

But some have conjectured that the BOTH means only Jew and Gentile in Christ's time and the apostles' time, and does not include the OLD saints; but does verse 12 include the old saints, and their "promises," and "covenants," and hopes, or not? No one will deny that the twelfth verse includes the ancient saints of Israel.

Turn now then to verse 19; and into what citizenship is the Holy Ghost introducing "ye Gentiles"? He tells them they are no longer strangers, no longer foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints; not merely with the apostles, but the godly citizenship of "Israel" (verse 12); as Israel and the "SAINTS" of God without any distinction.

He, as the new Man, or new Adam—for Adam means "man"—makes both "Israel" and ye Gentiles "one." Ye are no longer strangers to the "citizenship of Israel," no longer FOREIGNERS; ye are now one with the "saints" of Israel.

Read alongside of this the parallel passages in Galatians: "That the blessing of ABRAHAM"—mark! it is Abraham's blessing—"should come on the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the SPIRIT through faith." (Gal. iii. 14.) "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, according to the promise." (Verse 29.) "Now we, brethren, AS ISAAC WAS, are the children of promise." (Ch. iv. 28.)

The general reader will pardon me pressing these points closely; but having been once entangled in the thought, that we who live after Christ are the great and glorious congregation, and that father Abraham and the "citizenship of Israel" held quite an inferior place, I am anxious that my young readers especially should see their way out of the mists and confusions I fell into. Certain UNSCRIPTURAL words, such as "the church," "the dispensations," were continually urged, instead of the plain verses of Scripture expounded just as the Lord has written them.

The last thought I shall press now is that precious one in verse 20, "Ye are BUILT."

Do you observe the figure here? It is that of a BUILDING. Look at your feet now. Upon what do ye, Ephesian Gentiles, stand? Upon the "APOSTLES." Look now BELOW the apostles. Upon what do they stand? The "PROPHETS." Look now below the prophets. Upon whom do they stand? Upon one CHIEF CORNER-STONE, and one alone—Jesus Christ Himself.

"In whom ALL." Why "all" here? Because truly, actually ALL SAINTS are only one house. God says "MINE HOUSE" in Numbers xii. 7; the house Moses

was a servant in was "mine house;" and so here it is the household of the "new dispensation." No, nothing of the kind. The household of "FAITH." We are now citizens with all God's SAINTS, and one in the household with those who belong to FAITH, and most assuredly in the house which holds the "FATHER of the faithful."

Beloved reader, let me, in conclusion, ask you, Are you inside this HOUSE? Do not reply you are doing what you can. Enter the house first, and work afterwards; enlist first, and fight afterwards. "He that believeth shall not come into judgment," says the Judge. "He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him," no matter what he says or does.

Before we leave the second chapter in this our short sketch, there is one precious thought presented at the end of it—"ALL the building groweth unto an HOLY TEMPLE."

Our blessed Lord appropriated to Himself the figure or type of the temple, impressing in a remarkable way that His BODY was the temple. (John ii. 21.)

This again connects well with the stones of the temple as representing saints—stones cut out of the world's wild quarry, carved, moulded, and fashioned, to make up the Lord's BODY. He was the corner stone, FIRST laid, and then came the prophets—Abel is reckoned the first of the prophets (Luke ii. 50, 51)—the apostles next, and "WE," and "ye also," last, and now on the surface of the earth.

If we turn to our ENGLISH Bible, we do not see the temple so strongly brought out in the Old Testa-



ment as we might have seen it, had our translators been as deeply impressed with the thought of VERBAL INSPIRATION as they ought to have been.

The TEMPLE, as the saints, is set forth in various parts and in various ways.

The PILLARS of the temple in the Old Testament clearly represented the saints of God who bore the burden and heat of the day in which they lived; and an apostle is called a pillar in his day. Psalm xlv. 15 should read, "They shall come as the king's temple." Psalm cxliv. 12 records that the sons and daughters of the saints were the similitude, or the resemblance, or figure, of a "TEMPLE;" "that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as CORNER STONES, polished, the similitude of a TEMPLE."

NOTE.—The tabernacle in the Old Testament was connected with the temple in Jewish teaching; but yet they represent different aspects of truth. SOOK-KAH (or Succoth) is often translated tabernacle, but is properly "BOOTHES;" and in this connection see Amos ix. 11—the "booth of David;" and so the reference ought to be in Acts xv. 16—it is the feast of the ingathering in the seventh month which is here set forth, and Neh. viii. 17 shall be again fulfilled. MISH-KAHN is literally the tabernacle and the inside of the tabernacle. "OH-HEL" refers generally to the outside covering of the tabernacle, and means sometimes only "tent;" and Colenso, by failing to understand these points, has written some very absurd objections. This last corresponds to NAOS in Greek. The Hebrew word for temple, HEH-CHAH, closely resembles the Chaldean word, and we may consider them synonymous.

In Jeremiah vii. the Jewish Pharisees and formalists were distinctly claiming for themselves that they were the Lord's "TEMPLE." As a doctrinal truth they knew it, just as godless formalists might claim to be saints. Their CLAIM, however, proves that in

Jeremiah's day it was well known that true saints WERE the temple of the Lord. God's words to them are these, "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The TEMPLE of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are THESE."

But 2 Cor. vi. 16 brings it out still clearer. There we are called the Lord's "temple"—"ye are the temple of the living God"—but upon what ground? Upon the foundation and the ground that the old saints stood upon, *not* upon new ground. God quotes His words in Exod. xxix. 45, and Lev. xxvi. 11-13, to show that they of old were His temples; for He dwelt IN them, and walked IN them.

But our English version does not bring this out as it ought in Exod. xxix. 45. It ought to read, "I will dwell IN the children of Israel;" and Lev. xxvi. 12 ought to read, "And I will walk IN you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people."

God the Spirit shows in 2 Cor. vi. 16 that the old saints WERE temples, and God lived IN them, and walked in them, and we are only temples, even AS they were. I might go on further to prove that the saints in all ages knew that the Lord was in them, and they were "in the Lord;" for again and again they proclaim such words as these: "IN the Lord have I strength." But it is unnecessary. It is perfectly clear that the Lord was IN them, and walked IN them, and that they, one and all, made up this one glorious temple.

Let us now glance at the third chapter of Ephesians before entering on the manhood of saints.

The first three chapters refer only to infants—mere babes in Christ. The after chapters are written to those who grow, and have grown, and who are soldiers and warriors.

Christians, who are generally ministered to out of the first few chapters, should remember that they are only treated with the milk of the Word; that they are *not supposed* to be capable of walking or acting. The first chapters of many epistles are written only to babes, and the doctrines enunciated are true of all babes in Christ, whether they know it or not. But the after teaching belongs to those who are able to walk with God, and who resolve to be both good and able soldiers. All attain to the first chapters, but few attain to the last ones; and it is sad to know that many of God's children are in some places again and again and again reminded of their heavenly birth, and of its precious doctrines; but close practical teaching, and warnings, and exhortations, founded upon the after chapters, rarely given. And yet these practical injunctions are one third longer in Ephesians than the doctrinal truths.

I do not dwell upon the evils that arise out of this narrow mode of teaching. Of course it produces pride, self-sufficiency, wilfulness, disobedience, and all that is unlovely in dealing with other saints. Such a disciple may say, "I am sitting with Christ in heavenly places, I am a temple of the Holy Ghost, I am not in subjection to ALL THESE precepts;" but he is evidently a temple filled with SELF, and in most perfect subjection to SELF, and he will produce thorns and briars.

In the third chapter Paul proclaims the stewardship—not dispensation literally—of the grace of God which is given to him. He comes to the Gentiles, or the nations, with a blessed revelation—one well calculated to cheer up the tribes of earth that had heretofore seen only the high rank given to Abram's race.

An eminent ancient philosopher records that his nation knew nothing about the gods. All we really know, he says, we have obtained from the Jews.

Paul is now enjoined to show that the revelation made in these days to apostles and prophets,\* gave to the Gentiles, or the nations, the high place of being "joint-heirs," and of the same body with Israel. Remember the previous verses in chapter ii.—"both one," "twain one," "we the both" in verse 18—and we see in a moment the high place the Gentiles are placed in.

This joint-heirship with Israel we nowhere find in the Old Testament. It was a mystery not cleared up until Paul received this revelation. The call of the Gentiles was shown very clearly in early days. Gentile blessings were often dwelt upon; but the Jews were never told that Gentiles would be "JOINT-HEIRS;" and nowhere do we trace the fact that when Christ came His body—which was to be by nature Jewish, and by grace to represent the Jewish saints, as in Isaiah xxvi. 19—that His body was to embrace GENTILES as well as His own favoured people.

\* Note the word "prophetees" in the New Testament is applied to Judas and Silas in Acts xv. 32, and even to a heathen speaker in Titus i. 12; and Philip had four daughters which did prophecy. (Acts xxi. 9.) It means only speakers or preachers; we cannot limit it to prophesying in the vulgar acceptation.

Some have taught young believers to read the sixth verse as if it said that the "CHURCH" should be a joint-heir with Christ; but this is a self-evident fallacy, and supposes the young disciple to be exceedingly ignorant. The statement in the sixth verse is *limited* to Gentiles. It is not proclaimed to Israel or to the Jews. They are not told that they belong to the body; they knew that centuries before; but the wondrous truth is that "GENTILES" are so placed now; and in verse 8 the apostle again refers to it: "Unto me . . . is this grace given, that I should preach among the 'GENTILES' the unsearchable riches of Christ"—"RICHES" that cannot be searched, set forth NOW among the GENTILES. And to what end? "To make all the congregation see what is the fellowship of the mystery which hath been hid in God."

I read it the "congregation" rather than "men" in verse 9. Our translators had not observed the 10th verse when they inserted "men" in italics. The "congregation" is the one both to receive the information and to make it "known."

Do we see in the two cherubs, as they hung over the mercy seat, with wings expanded for flight, and their eyes on the blood, do we see, I say, a shadow of Israel and the nations, Jew and Gentile? Both belonged to the body of the mercy-seat, and wings betoken power and action, as we see in the Book of Daniel.

Observe also the cherubim\* on the vail. They are

\* The word cherubims is a mistake; cherubim is plural, the singular is cherub.

both wrought on it, and when it is rent the cherubs are rent with it. That vail was His body, we are expressly told, and that body comprised more than one. Did this hidden mystery ever occupy the imagination of the Jews, or did they venture to put it aside as a matter of no moment?

I dare not say that the cherubs were a shadow of the mystery. If they were a shadow, the shadow was never seen. There are arguments that are in favour of the above view, and there are points that may be urged against it. Let the reader ponder the subject at his leisure.

Who does not hear the voice of the Holy Ghost in the concluding prayer of this chapter—its deep, deep spirituality? It appears to drag down "riches" and glory, and with the "might" of the "Spirit" fill the believer's "INNER man;" that Christ may take up His residence in your heart—not be a sojourner, but a dweller, that your roots might go down deep into the love of God.

That being deeply rooted, ye Gentiles may be able to comprehend with ALL saints the breadth, length, depth, and height of the love of Christ, and experimentally "KNOW" what passeth knowledge, that YE might be filled with all the fulness of God.

What a prayer! How it overwhelms the soul! Truly this is opening one's mouth wide, and asking great things. What greater thing could any saint ask?

The spirituality of a man is better known when he opens his mouth to pray than when he opens his mouth to preach.

Manufactured prayers and spiritual prayers are two very different things. A very advanced Christian told me once that he found it exceeding difficult one day to discern the true mind of one who was most anxious to be thought an established Christian. He doubted his Christianity altogether; but his knowledge was so great, and his answers so good, that he felt as if he could form no opinion at all. Suddenly he asked his professing brother to kneel down with him and pray. He knelt down, uttered a few dry sentences, and my friend felt immediately this man is never accustomed to speak to God. My friend then and there prayed for his conversion. They rose, and he soon left the room. Years afterwards they met, and that man then proclaimed that his first serious convictions arose as they once knelt together in prayer.

Reader, are you accustomed to listen to God the Spirit as He tells you glorious truths in the Word? and, Reader, are you accustomed to converse with God IN CHRIST?

The first note of the fourth chapter changes the scene at once from DOCTRINE to PRACTICE. We now enter on the WALK of the believer, and this is the first proof of absolute infancy being past. We BEGIN to WALK.

What a glorious balance of truth there is in the Scriptures! The DOCTRINES are as high as heaven, yea, and as deep as hell, and their roots are spread everywhere: they sink into the mind of the child of God, and furnish him with first principles, eternal motives, standards to measure all by, subjects for

meditation deeper, higher, and holier than the mere philosopher can even imagine.

We turn from mere nature to nature's Maker ; from the mere worldly machinery of the earth to the THOUGHTS and ideas of the Great Maker of all. We pass from things themselves to the CAUSES of things, and from the sad, sinful, tangled web of this lower scene we look upwards, and we see into the mind of God ; and we look downwards into the mind of Satan as shown in God's word, and we see all the reasons and all the causes which first led to earth's calamities, and which still operate and destroy the fair face of nature, and hasten blind men on to perdition.

We look into our own present "high calling" also, and we know that in God's mind saints are NOW in "the heavenlies" with Christ, even whilst in the body here. "NOW are we the sons of God," called into distinct union and fellowship with God and Christ.

Blessed and glorious truths ! Shall we let them go, and then try to work ourselves up to this extraordinary pinnacle of glory, glory already, through GOD'S TRUTH, our own ? Never ! Let us REJOICE and be GLAD. (John xvii. 22.)

But shall we, on the other hand, like the pampered, spoilt heir of a great inheritance, grasp our inheritance, and reject all its responsibilities, powers, privileges, and duties ? Are we to be infants all our lives ? or is TALKING about our rank to be the labour of our manhood ?

I remember once conversing with a poor lunatic, who fancied he was the emperor of Russia. He was



perfectly happy. He fancied that the park around us was his own private grounds, that the servants I saw about were all his retainers, and that he had uncontrolled power.

The active labours and duties of an emperor he was altogether free from, because he was a maniac, and he lived in the clouds.

Do not some Christians appear to live as that poor maniac did? Their birth, their high calling, the love of God towards them, occupy their entire time; they appear to be old dwarfs lying in their cradles, and never even to have attained to the energy of boyhood, not to mention the vigour of manhood.

Oh, may the Spirit of God stir up our souls as we ponder over the last chapters of Ephesians! They call upon us to walk, and they tell us how we are to walk; and they also call upon us to arise and prepare for war and action in this wicked world; they furnish us with weapons, and command us to use them.

Why are we on the very threshold of going forth commanded to go with "ALL LOWLINESS, meekness, forbearance," &c.? Ah, the Spirit knows how the thought of our high rank before God lifts us up; He knows that we can even go forth upon the foundation of grace and instantly dishonour grace. *Pride* is human NATURE'S natural air. Eve drew in, at Satan's will, one breath of it in Paradise, and we have all breathed it ever since. We may have all knowledge, and yet pride, like a terrible frost, may freeze us up. We may be full of precious doctrinal truths, and yet pride may drag us through the filthiest pools of malice, hatred, and envy. Pride is a terrible

tyrant. He enters into the congregation of God, and spares neither friend nor foe.

“Learn of ME,” says Christ; “for I AM meek and lowly;” not I try to be, but “I AM.”

In the third verse we are NOT told to make the unity of the Holy Spirit; it is already made by the Spirit in all God’s children. The unity is an established FACT, whether it is known or not; the Spirit has made us ONE with every child of God. We are children of one family, whether we acknowledge it or not; but the Spirit tells us to endeavour, or, literally, “giving diligence, to keep” the unity in the bond of PEACE, as distinguished from keeping the unity in perpetual conflict with saints.

But it is the SPIRIT’S unity, and we must not compromise the Spirit’s TRUTH for peace, else we shall be making a godless unity, and calling it the Spirit’s. How, then, shall we retain the bond of peace among *true* saints, if some truth of God is at stake among dear saints? See now the value of the first warning —“All lowliness, meekness, and forbearance;” for, alas! we generally send this Christian clothing to the winds when controversy begins, and we arm ourselves with high minds, coats of mail, and hard words; or, alas! we sink down, and let the truth of God fall altogether; we flee from the field, and leave victory to the enemy. Grace alone, and much prayer, can make us spiritually MINDED and spiritually FAITHFUL.

How does this same apostle meet errors among the Galatians? When GODLESS men tried to take away gospel liberty, the apostle tells us, in Gal. ii. 4, 5, he

“gave place by subjection; NO, NOT for an HOUR.” So should we meet “false brethren,” deceivers; but in the eleventh verse of the second chapter Paul had to encounter evils that Peter was nourishing and spreading; and did he see it right to keep up the unity of the Spirit by yielding to Peter, or by openly resisting his errors? “I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.”

Peter had been caught again in his old snare. He denied our Lord because he feared men, and now he “feared them of the circumcision,” and he compromised truth. Paul knew Peter to be a “pillar” of the Church; but he saw the pillar leaning to the one side, and he thought it was high time to speak out, and he was right. He thus was “giving diligence to keep the unity of the SPIRIT.” There would be few errors if they were crushed when they first begin to bud.

But if the apostle had LACKED lowliness, meekness, and forbearance, what MORE would he have done? He would have cut off Peter from the whole Church of God; he would have cut off all Peter’s friends, and denied his epistles and his EVERY FUTURE ACT; he would have sown an endless crop of carnal weeds, and would soon have found himself at the head of a petty sect of carnal saints, full of fine spiritual words, but carnal plans.

The fourth chapter also introduces us to the “gifts” that are in the congregation. An apostle is a gift, a prophet is a gift, whether he is received or not; evangelists, or, literally, “gospelists,” pastors and teachers. The world may scorn these gifts given by Christ, but they are too valuable to be reckoned up by the world.

The congregation even may at a time despise and dishonour God's gifts ; but they are Christ's own gifts notwithstanding ; and the man who realizes his call, and sees seals set by God to his ministry, must NOT WAIT until the congregation of Christ admits his gift. "If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless," says the apostle Paul, "I am to you ; for the seal of of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord."

The congregation of God have in all ages been SLOW to follow the Lord, and been hasty in following their own perceptions. Old Samuel loved the appearance of Eliab, and set his heart upon appointing him, and would have left David alone. God constrained him to take David. The high priest despised the testimony of Amos (Amos vii. 13, &c.), and ordered him away ; but the man of God answered the man of form with bold, true words, and proclaimed still his unpleasant truths. Jeremiah suffered terrible things at the hands of the priests and the Levites ; but he knew God's call, and spoke bravely. The apostles even after the Pentecostal shower would have arrested Paul if he had not proclaimed his call from the Lord in unmistakable words, and with great boldness ; and the apostles would even have caused the Lord to arrest one brave worker, who in the name of Jesus was preaching and labouring ; but our Lord reproved the whole Apostolic Church, and stood by that one, although he WOULD NOT visibly FOLLOW the apostles, and laboured altogether apart from them ; nay, more, the Lord lay down the principle that "he that is not against us is on OUR part." They did not deny that labourer's doctrine ; they did not deny his gift. The

whole question was this: he desired to labour altogether apart from them and their oversight, and the Lord approved of his course rather than theirs.

Now, why so? Because the Lord saw that those dear saints intended to keep gifts and appointments among themselves, and they desired the power of saying, "THAT man is not acknowledged yet by US, and, therefore, that man is wrong."

But all the gifts of the fourth chapter are given by the Lord ALONE. "He gave"—not we gave—some apostles, some prophets, or preachers, as this may mean (see former note), some evangelists, pastors and teachers; and, therefore, the man who claims to have the gift from the Apostolic Church truly puts himself out of this verse; he is clearly not God's gift, only a man's gift.

If the apostles had at once acknowledged and confessed the mission of the one in Mark ix. 38, it would have been well for themselves, and would have shown their grace; but failing to acknowledge, it had no evil effect whatever upon the one they "forbade." The Lord blessed him, and the Lord reproved them. The power he had was SPIRITUAL, and they could neither give it nor WITHHOLD it. The one who is sent by the Lord is dependent upon the Lord alone, and answerable to his OWN Master; and if Paul had fallen under the authority of the apostles when they at first feared him, or if this man in the ninth of Mark had closed his lips and walked after the apostles when so ordered, he would have led us to question whether he had ever been sent by God as either an apostle or an evangelist.

The congregation of God ought to acknowledge when they hear sound doctrine and see seals; but if they fail to do so they will be reprov'd and suffer loss; but the gift of God remains the gift of God, acknowledged or unacknowledged, and God's sent ones are sure of realizing His power and His blessing if they will only walk in all lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, and forbearance, and yet with all boldness and faithfulness as God's sent ones.

When the Temple of Solomon was preparing, no preparation was heard, the stones were being moulded and fashioned at a distance, and each one arrived **READY MADE** and prepared, only awaiting its time of being built in.

Builders rarely begin to build until almost all the building material has been gathered together; piles of stones or piles of bricks will be seen in a spot long before they are used.

Long ere Christ appeared, long ere Christ the foundation-stone was laid, God's building materials had been collected and prepared; many had yet to arrive, but a goodly host were there before.

Who was laid upon Christ the day that He died? Was not Abel, Abraham, Isaac, and all saints who had gone before Him? Abel was laid there by **FAITH** at the beginning of the world, but not in **FACT**. In point of **FACT**, their burden was only borne by Christ the day that God laid "our transgressions" upon Him; but God received them all in faith long ere that, and gave to them faith's merit and faith's rank.

No one, in point of **FACT**, had been borne by Christ

until He died. "Upon this ROCK,\* *i.e.* upon myself, I SHALL build my Church;" and upon the great burden-bearing day in Calvary God laid upon Christ every stone, past, and present, and to come.

The Epistle to the Ephesians embraces, therefore, the whole building—"WE" who "first hoped," "ye" later Gentiles, ye, built upon apostles; apostles, built on prophets; and prophets, built upon Christ, the foundation-stone.

Then come the gifts that Christ had purchased on His ascension, and the purposes which these gifts were to work out.

Now what are the purposes set forth in chap. iv.?

1st. That the saints may not be tossed about, washed away by great tide-waves in the sleight of men, and in cunning craftiness "UNTO the SYSTEMATIZING of ERROR," as we may read it. This is the great tide-wave to be avoided, the great and dangerous undercurrent which is ever liable to carry away, especially young saints.

It was discovered not long ago that there is a strong undercurrent in the Black Sea, acting so powerfully that it even can be made to drag a ship forward against the wind. And do not MEN'S undercurrents often drag saints against the word and breathings of the Holy Ghost?

God's gifted ones are intended to warn against all such impulses, against all such popular influences,

\* Even ancient authors like ST. CYRIL, ST. CHRYSOSTOM, AMBROSE, ST. BASIL of Seleucia, and ST. AUGUSTINE, never allowed the Roman fancy of Peter being the rock to obtrude itself; but even a Roman Catholic SCHOLAR would know it is absurd, as Peter is one gender in the Greek, and the rock is another.

that every member of the body may speak GOD'S TRUTH in love, and that the whole body may be compacted by means "of every joint of supply," according to the effectual working in the measure of "each single part" or each ONE.

How slow we are to learn that God never reckons us in the CROWD, that neither saints nor sinners will stand before Him in a confused mass; all are INDIVIDUALLY, PERSONALLY examined. He who framed the eye of the smallest insect as carefully as He framed great globes, examines all minutely; and never will He allow you or I, reader, to cover ourselves with a great denominational cloak, and get under the wings of great men's names, when we stand before Him.

Every joint of the body must answer for itself; the great Leader must not say, "My followers obliged me to concede points that were unscriptural;" neither must the little one say that it could not resist the errors of its leaders. God is rich unto all who look unto HIM.

In the fourth chapter our old Adam nature is talked about as that which we must "put off," and the new Adam nature, even Christ, as that which His saints must "*put on.*"

The list of old Adam's clothing is worth being recorded—

1st. Putting away (lit.) "THE LIE." This embraces all the lies that the Father of Lies has taught us. Lies about God in judgment and God in grace; lies about man's sin, and lies about Christ's atonement and our pardon.



2nd. WRATH, although anger against sin, has its place, as in Mark iii. 5.

3rd. No room, no place, no quarter to be given to the DEVIL. Let us offer no compromises to Satan ; let us forbid him even when he would DO GOOD. Christ forbade the devils even to proclaim Him. We are very liable, like the Roman Catholics, to contend for a little compromise of good in order to attain to more fancied good ; but will God the Spirit take the help of an evil spirit ? And does Christ or the Holy Spirit REQUIRE ANY actual assistance ? Will they not cast out our allies, and destroy our work. "WOE to THEM that go down to Egypt for help," says the Holy Ghost.

4th. Let him that stole steal no more. Can the Christian steal ? Aye, that he can, if he is not prayerful. He may steal another's fair fame, and take it to himself. He may in his business steal away even the business of a brother in Christ, and take it to himself. He may steal away his employer's time, and appropriate it to himself. This is a wide subject ; I will not enter upon all its branches. Whatever we touch that is not truly our own is stolen property.

5th. Let no old Adamite corruption come from our lips ; no evil jest that may give birth to evil thoughts ; no covetous word that may corrupt saint or sinner ; no world-pleasing that may please the worldly hearer and nourish the weeds we are bound to destroy ; no tampering with the truths of Scripture ; no attempt to parry a painful truth of Scripture by a mirthful jest or amusing anecdote. I have heard this often done by those who knew that in all sobriety as in

Christ's presence they could not avoid the truth. This is corruption in a terrible sense.

6th. Grieve not the Holy Spirit ; grieve not the One who drew us, and who feeds us with heavenly manna now.

7th. Let all BITTERNESS of spirit, WRATH, ANGER, CLAMOUR, EVIL-SPEAKING, and ALL MALICE be put away. These are the robes of Old Adam ; these are the robes of Cain, and the robes of Esau, and the robes of Balaam ; let us put them off, and be done with them for ever.

And in place of them our words are to be TRUTH. We are to "labour" and to work not only for self, but in order to give to those who need. Our mouths are to build up others in the faith, and to "minister grace;" and we are to be KIND, TENDER-hearted, and FORGIVING, even as—whom? As the prophets? No. As the early saints? No. As some dear teachers or pastors have taught us? No: AS GOD.

Wondrous word, wondrous standard set forth as "God in Christ," or for Christ's sake hath forgiven.

Be ye therefore IMITATORS or followers of God, as dear children, is the wondrous note of chap. v.; and walk in love, offering ourselves thus up to God as living sacrifices, never even requiring to NAME the terrible sins of the world, knowing that wolves in sheep's clothing, who talk of faith and live in sin, have "NO INHERITANCE" in the kingdom of God, that is the burden of verse 5. Their inheritance is in the kingdom of Satan.

The "fruit" of the vine hangs upon verse 9; and saints have "no fellowship" with darkness, their order

is "reprove" sin, as John the Baptist did; and of vile, secret sins it is a "*shame* even to speak."

Walk as wise ones, redeem this evil time, and understand our Lord's will. It is His will that we should be filled with the Spirit, and drink in that Spirit, even as carnal worldlings would drink in wine and enjoy IT; and as wine prompts the song of the drunkard, so the Spirit is in this connection to prompt the song of the saint, and our hearts are to sing and make melody to our Lord.

The word of God recognizes no license in the relationship of life. God has Himself made these relationships, and He enjoins submission. The wife may be a saint, but she is to submit to a husband who is an heathen. She may be wise and intelligent, and he may be foolish and perverse, but she is to submit to her husband. Even as the congregation submits to Christ, the wife is to submit to her husband. She may understand much that he is ignorant of, but she is above all as regards him to understand that her right place before God is submission. He perhaps never exacted obedience from her in their early days, and now her trials may be greater, his word may be unreasonable. But the child of God must take the place she has chosen in all good faith, and she is wise if she does it "HEARTILY as unto the Lord;" for that same Lord can change the mind of a cruel or heartless husband, and her prayers will have power when they ascend from the place of submission. To resist is to resist the ordinance of God, and to grieve the Spirit of God.

Now, contrasted with this spirit of submission, the

command the Lord gives to the husband is "LOVE," because love will allow no unkind rule, and the husband's mind is drawn back to the love of Christ. How did Christ RULE? He gave Himself, He suffered; He endured through love on behalf of an evil wife; He won her heart by paying a terrible penalty for her; He toiled and laboured that she might sit as a queen and be crowned.\*

It appears strange that our translators should have read the twenty-first verse of the fifth of Ephesians as "the fear of God," when all the leading MSS. do unquestionably read "in the fear of CHRIST."

But why is Christ introduced here, and not God? Examine the context, and the answer is apparent. The Spirit is talking about Christ the husband, and the "congregation" as the wife. "I speak concerning Christ and the Church." But is the wife expected to have "fear" as regards her husband? Would it be consistent with the position of help meet? God considers it so. Read 1 Peter iii. 2:—"Your chaste conversation coupled with FEAR;" and Ephesians v. 33 is virtually the same in the original, "And the wife that she FEAR her husband."

The FEAR of Christ will guide us in construing this kind of fear. We fear to offend those whom we love much; we love them deeply and sincerely, and true

\* It is not the "Bride" that is given to us in Ephesians; it is the married wife, and the wife who has long been married, and perhaps in difficulties been sorely tried, so that the early love of her husband is supposed to be but cold. The Bridegroom would not be commanded to love.

love naturally makes us FEARFUL lest we should err and offend those whom we love.

It is not the slavish fear of danger, but the holy fear of offending and grieving; and we ought to nourish this feeling as regards Christ. We ought to put ourselves into the place of implicit obedience, and fear lest our obedience falls short, or lest we should GRIEVE the Spirit of God by words or by walk unbecoming our husband Jesus.

The husband's honour and character are in a measure in the hands of the wife; and her husband's rank, character, and wisdom are at stake. He will lose or gain by the conduct of his wife. He will be reckoned superior by strangers if her walk and conversation correspond with his character and position; and he will be reckoned by the world as inferior if she shows unworthy or evil features of character. Therefore a holy wife who loves her husband will be fearful lest she should walk in a way that will call forth reproof rather than commendation, and that will also lower her husband in the eyes of others. "I speak," says the apostle, "concerning Christ and the Church." But he applies it also to the relationship of marriage, and urges upon the husband especially *love*, a love like Christ's. God's word never sets small, apparent points right, but goes always deep into the roots of conduct. The husband may have all the polite externals of affection and love. Books recommend only these; God goes to the root. God would have us dig out all the roots of evil and plant holy love in their place, and thus produce, not the world's hypocritical affections in manner and style, which are weeds only,

but Christ's holy, true, self-denying love in their place.

In the sixth chapter of Ephesians, at the fifth verse, holy fear is again set forth before servants.

Such injunctions are altogether opposed to mere nature. Nature lives upon high-growing shrubs—pride, self-sufficiency, envy, evil-speaking, and fancied self-interest; God feeds His children upon heavenly food.

The NATURAL servant would raise his or her head contemptuously at the thought of FEAR and trembling as regards a master or mistress; but God's children know that they do it to the Lord, not to the master on earth. They see the type and figure; they see God's arrangement in it, and for the LORD'S SAKE they wish to obey the Lord; they wish the smile of the heavenly Master, and they feel it is their place often to suffer even for well-doing, and to serve, "not with eye service, as men-pleasers; but as the SERVANTS of CHRIST, doing the will of God from the heart." (Chap. vi. 6.)

I would fain take up many other points in the fifth and sixth chapters, but time fails me, and we hasten on to the close of the sixth chapter.

I have already said that the first three chapters deal only with infants: all saints, worthy or unworthy, are found in the first chapters. Their call from God places them in the early chapters, apart altogether from their bold or faithful walk.

All are children, but all are not men in Christ Jesus; all are members, but all are not soldiers; all are chosen and beloved, but all are not "friends" and true-hearted labourers. Some, like Lot, dishonour

their call; some, like Lot, are found living on the wrong side of the camp, and obliged to be dragged out of the enemy's land before the storm of wrath comes down.

Can children be children without armour? Perhaps so. But can soldiers be soldiers without armour? Certainly not. Soldiers are not infants; and God does not speak to mere infants in Ephesians vi. 10 when He says, "Finally, brethren, be strong in the Lord." We are to rest fully in *His* strength and in HIS power. But are we to do no more? We are to put on the **WHOLE** armour of God. To win souls? Nay; to enable us to **STAND**. But is not standing a very simple matter? We think it is so, and therefore, like children, we fall.

The **ORDER** is, "Be strong."

The **MODE** of carrying it out is by putting on the whole armour.

The **REASON** why it is required is because Satan **WILL** wrestle with us, and principalities **WILL** wrestle, and the world's rulers **WILL** wrestle with us.

Putting on the **WHOLE** armour is therefore indispensable, if we intend "to stand:" we enter **GOD'S ARMOURY**.

Then come the details of this armour; and we must examine these details minutely, if we mean to put the armour on.

Observe, first, it **IS** God's armour; it is not our own. 2nd. It is armour against evil spirits; not mere armour against the world. 3rd. We cannot "stand" even without it. 4th. We must wrestle with evil spirits after we have put it on.

When we look around the world as it appears to the young, untried believer in the sunshine of prosperity, we hardly fancy that we are viewing a great battle-field. We know as a point of doctrine that it is so, but practically we appear to be mere on-lookers at a great review. Churches and chapels and great religious gatherings keep up a kind of fancied opposition to the world, the flesh, and the devil; but is it REAL? Are congregations actually taught that Satan is the God of THIS world? that luxury, pride, dress, and fashion are actual enemies? and is Satan spoken about as a personal enemy, and are his wiles and deceits exposed?

If these enemies are boldly challenged in your hearing, young believer, thank God, and take courage. But in many places it is not so. And there we see the "WILES" of the devil. He cries, Peace, peace, and silence. He is steadily undermining all our fancied outerworks; and whilst men are rearing great cathedrals, and building stone and lime up to heaven, Satan is calmly and coolly laying great, broad, deep mines of infidelity below all man's outward religion, and preparing to scatter it all far and wide.

The wonder of our day is that outward religion is growing so wonderfully on the surface, and that infidelity, like a great mine, has left to it no roots whatever.

I speak not of true godliness, I speak of the widespread profession which lies really in many places only deep enough to be covered over with a good deal of music, gowns, drapery, and candlesticks, &c.

Many thousands of hearers and many hundreds of



preachers will, ere long, awake to find that it was only a popular review they were attending, that the real battle was being fought under the surface, and that all they fancied to be religion has been scattered to the winds. We live in searching days, and mere profession will take to itself wings and fly away as soon as the storm appears; and appear it will, dear reader, before long.

Satan is laying down fresh batteries daily against every individual doctrine of God's, and mere professional actors will flee away as soon as actual fighting commences. Satan is attacking

The inspiration of the Scriptures,  
 The atonement of Christ,  
 The doctrine of the new birth,  
 Eternal punishment and eternal life,  
 The work of God the Holy Ghost,

and many other truths of God, and do you think that men who have never tasted of the heavenly gift, who have never felt their heavenly call, who are not REALLY TEMPLES of the Holy Ghost, and who KNOW that they are not, do you imagine these men will ever, in their UNARMED state, stand to fight against Satan's soldiers? They know not HOW to defend these points, even although they are willing; they would yield outerwork after outerwork, and admit in the end that they CANNOT stand their ground, even although self-interest will in many cases urge them to assume the defensive.

Let us examine this armour in detail. 1st. Truth round the loins. (Eph. vi. 14.) The true soldier of Christ winds round his loins something more than

mere theology, he winds the WORDS and the TRUTH of God around his loins; his opponent will find that the VERY WORDS of God are his strength and his support; and God's soldier cares not for the abstract generalities which the mere professor wears, and which Satan soon casts to the ground. The "TRUTH" of God is the WORD of God (see John xvii. 17, and Luke xii. 35; compare also Ps. cxxxviii. 2, and 2 Cor. vi. 7); but it is not the mere words only, it embraces all the excellencies and merits that are found in these words; yet God's very words are to God's soldier the exact expression of the mind of God, so that in holding them he is holding to the very mind and the very thoughts of God, and God is engaged to command and support His own true-hearted soldiers.

Secondly. The thorax or breastplate of righteousness is worn by all God's children. God's true soldiers are not fighting in order to get a breastplate of perfect righteousness; they are already perfectly righteous; they possess the righteousness of faith. They have not believed only unto salvation, but they have believed unto RIGHTEOUSNESS. (Rom. x. 10.) "They HAVE attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith." I use the very words of Scripture in Rom. ix. 30, and they are *not* following after it to obtain it—they stand before Satan with a breastplate of perfect righteousness on. The thorax consisted of two parts; it covered the whole region of the breast, and it also covered the back; therefore the heart of God's soldier beats under perfect righteousness.

Satan can lodge frightful darts in the heart of the

unconverted. He can ask such how they ever dare stand before God without perfect righteousness; and the earnest Romanist, Ritualist, or Moralist, hurries away from the field to gather fig leaves, or works and wears himself going about to make meritorious rags in which he may stand; but God's soldier presents to Satan a heart covered over with merits not his own, with righteousness admitted and already acknowledged at the throne of God, and boldly worn by FAITH (faith's soldier) at God's own command. Oh, how Satan must hate that breastplate! It is invincible. Every inch of it wrought by God on Christ, and worn, not by our glorious head, Christ, but by His body, the saints, His bones. Compare Lev. viii. 8, and see the high priest wearing the Urim, the light, and the Thummim, the integrity or perfection upon the breastplate; and observe our Lord clothing His own body as a figure of His own people with this very breastplate in Isa. lix. 17.

Thirdly. God's soldiers are not standing upon this poor, vile, sinful world, liable at any moment to be upset by what they see and feel; they are shod with the foundation of the gospel. Their whole standing is inside the gospel; they pretend to stand upon nothing else.

Satan can upset the moralist and the deist by reasons infinitely more potent than they can bring forward. Satan can make short work of man's natural logic, and he reckons man's capacities at a very low figure. See him pretending to play with a reasonable deist, and you see a Bengal tiger playing with a little dog, or a lion playing with a poor blind mole. Satan

can convince the mere moralist that he (Satan) does not even exist; he can pamper his vanity and make the God of the Bible appear black, and evil appear good; and he causes his blind votary to stand, like Eve, upon his own sight, his own judgment, and his own pleasure, and he works the wires of his heart as easily as a telegraph clerk works his wires. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory (lit.) should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) Observe, Satan cannot put out the gospel-light, any more than he can cause the sun to cease to shine; the gospel goes on shining in the world; it illumines the whole of God's word, and that book is more widely circulated, said one of our greatest booksellers in his evidence before a committee of the House of Commons, "more widely circulated, we consider, than all the books in the world put together." Satan's effort to cast gospel-light out of the world is vain; but Satan **BLINDS** the **EYES** of his followers, lest they should read and believe.

God's soldiers stand only inside of God's gospel shoes. Satan appeals to their mere reason and to their worldly perceptions in vain. They know that they cannot step out of God's gospel and trust to their judgments, their logic, their senses, frames, and perfections, and Satan in vain tries to conquer saints who stand only inside the gospel shoes. He may bring before us the saddest tidings; he may proclaim the most frightful enormities practised, or about to be practised; he may tell of persecutions such as saints

have ere now endured ; but nothing affects the gospel news. The good news of the gospel remains upon our feet as our sure foundation, our rock amidst the storm. He may urge upon us our great unworthiness, he may remind us of hosts of early sins, but the gospel shoes are only made more precious ; and the need of the gospel and its fitness for us is only made clearer and clearer as we see the depths of sin and sorrow in the world.

But the unarmed sinner, the unsaved one, the poor soul whose feet are not in the gospel shoes, is terribly shaken by Satan, and driven to despair. Compare the following passages when considering the gospel shoes : Redemption was confirmed by a man plucking off his shoe and giving it to his neighbour. (Ruth iv. 7.) Our kinsman (Christ) has given it to us as a testimony ; see to it that we never cease to use it as good soldiers.\*

Fourthly. God's soldiers have a shield that no mere moralist, no mere professor, has ever put on. His saints take "over all" the shield of FAITH ; faith laughs at impossibilities and remembers God ; faith sees in nature's laws only so many tools made by God which can at any moment be destroyed, arrested, and made again by the living God.

The natural man's heart reverences and adores the great laws of the universe ; the saint only adores God and the laws as his temporary tools. The unconverted philosopher admires and reverences mankind

\* Compare also Song of Sol., chap. vii 1 ; Isa. lii. 7 ; Luke xv. 22 ; Deut. xxix. 5, which latter figuratively represents not only the gospel shoes, but the robe of righteousness.

and man; the saint pities and desires to help poor, fallen mankind and sinful man. The one exalts and extols human nature and human power; the other mourns over human depravity, and can sigh and cry over the misery man is now causing, and is likely soon to reap. (Ezek. ix. 4.)

Satan finds the one man unarmed and an easy prey; he finds the other armed with faith and able to defy his devices. The shield of Goliath was like the shield of man's judgment and a man's fancied ability, moral and intellectual; but it was of no use. Young unconverted men often fortify themselves, as they suppose, against sin, and evil, and error, by pondering over men's wise books, and gathering reasons against that which causes danger; but few such know that the mental faculties are only the servants of the heart, the tools of the affections. The intellectual abilities of a man are always subservient to his heart's desires, and unless the heart is won to Christ the machinery will never endure trials. Pride and self-righteousness may grasp the reins of passion, and rule, overbear, and restrain; but these are only chief robbers ruling other robbers. The den is still a den, although a chief Pharisee may be chief of the den.

Satan casts at God's soldier fiery darts; he presents terrible temptations; but the saint meets them with the words, "I have FAITH in God." You will be swept into the vortex of sin; "I have faith in God." Better men than you may be lost; "I have faith in God." Do you not feel sin in you? "Yes; but I have faith in God." Do you believe almost all men wrong, and only a few right? "Yes; because I

have faith in God." But will it be of any use to you when you are weak and dying? "Yes; I have full faith in God." But poverty and trouble are coming upon you, how will you feel then? "I shall feel faith in God." But if your Christian friends all appear to give up your religious fancies, that will shake you? "I shall have faith in God." But if your father and mother forsake you, little one, you will be cast away and lost! "No; when my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." I have faith in God, "being CONFIDENT of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in me will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 6.)

Satan only loses his time firing at the saint who presents the shield of faith to every dart.\*

The shield of faith keeps one from looking at secondary causes. Faith sees Satan in all evil, and Christ in all good. Shimei cursed David as he went up in his day of distress; but David saw the Lord, and took it as from the Lord. Job did not see the Sabeans and Chaldeans as the causes of his trouble; he saw the Lord, and he held up against Satan the shield of faith. Paul does not say "the prisoner of Rome," but the "Lord's prisoner." Faith casts down all secondary causes, which weary and try the natural man. Faith takes the place as God's appointed place, and gets quit of all the fiery darts and the petty

\* Compare Psalm lxxxix. 18, and read it literally, "our shield is of the LORD, and our King is of the Holy One of Israel;" also cxxxviii. 7; 1 John v. 4; 2 Sam. xxii. 31; 2 Tim. iv. 17; Gen. xv. 1; Isa. xxxvii. 14, 17, 34, 35; Ps. xviii. 30; Ps. cxliv. 2.

troubles which men endure, who are always mourning over secondary causes, and fancying positions God has not placed them in. Faith knows NO disappointments; unbelief is never free from them. Satan burns, irritates, and inflames the hearts of sinners with fiery darts. Saints can quench each dart with faith.

Fifthly. The helmet of salvation is boldly worn by God's soldiers. Jonah knew he had greatly erred, but he told the seamen to cast him into the waves, and they would have peace. He had no fear as to the result; he had the helmet of God's salvation on his head. The three faithful ones went into the great furnace at Babylon; they knew the result must be good, salvation was on their heads. Daniel knew that the den of lions contained hungry and fierce animals; but he had faith in God, and he entered the den of lions with the helmet of salvation on his head. Elijah knew that the heart and power of Ahab was little better towards him than the heart of a lion; but he went forth to meet him, and he challenged all the prophets of Baal, confident of one thing, that he wore the helmet of salvation. The apostles braved the whole heathen world, and defied death and all its torments, confident that they wore the helmet of salvation. Luther and Knox encountered revived heathenism like a wolf in sheep's clothing; but they knew that salvation was theirs, that, come sorrow or sunshine, victory was certain, and they felt as soldiers ought to feel, prepared to encounter the enemy, come when and where he pleases. A messenger, it is reported, once rushed hastily into the presence of Alexander the Great, and said, "The enemy are very close



to us." "In that case," said Alexander, "we are very close to them." These men fought for a corruptible crown, we for an incorruptible. Their hopes were dashed to the earth the moment their mortal bodies gave way; we only to rise to reign the moment our bodies are parted from our spirits. Did not Micah know that his head was cased in the helmet of salvation when he said, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise"? (Micah vii. 8.) Did not David know it when he said, "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth His hand"? (Ps. xxxvii. 24.) And then he adds, in verse 39, "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord: He is their strength in the time of trouble." Did not Job, in his sea of troubles, know the Lord's helmet of salvation when he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. . . . Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold"? Did not the apostle Paul wear it when he said, "Therefore we are always confident . . . We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home (lit.) with the Lord"? (2 Cor. v. 6.) Did not erring Peter wear it when he said to the "strangers" in Pontus that their inheritance was "reserved in heaven for you, who are KEPT by the power of God through faith unto salvation"?

The helmet of salvation\* makes him sure of final victory. His arms may be lost, and his limbs also; but a mortal blow from the enemy he never can re-

\* Compare Isa. lix. 17; 1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 8; Heb. x. 35; 1 John v. 13, 19.

ceive. It is not life he has received from Christ, it is ETERNAL life, everlasting life; and he KNOWS it from the word of God. (1 John v. 13.) This soldier meets Christ with his life insured; he enters the burning pile as a fireman, his eternal life insured. Imagine the wrath of Satan and the weakness of Satan against such a soldier. Satan parades death before him to frighten him; but he "swallows up death in victory" (Isa. xxv. 8), and cries "O death, where is thy sting?" Now, reader, hast thou taken this helmet of salvation? If thou art God's child, take it. Thou art commanded to take it; thou art disobedient if thou dost not at once take it. The world threatened the apostles, and how did they answer? They gave to the Lord the threats, even as Hezekiah did, and they took to themselves the "boldness." (Acts iv. 29.)

Sixthly. And now, reader, let us lift up the one weapon of offence. All the others may be called negative weapons. They are powerful in defence, but they will not avail us in attacking the enemy. Now we lift up the weapon which attacks Satan, the world, and the flesh.

Our foes are spiritual: let us remember that our weapon is spiritual. The word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, will not carnally slay any individually; it will not carnally destroy any nation; it will not outwardly and bodily cut down any idol; it will leave the great images standing long after it has cut down the hearts that worship them.

The foe that feels the sword of the Spirit is the commander-in-chief of the enemy's camp. His followers often are unconscious of danger even when

Satan knows that one of his great citadels has fallen : every shot of the word of God goes direct against SPIRITUAL evil. Men of the world will often in their ignorance mock at the mad courage of a man like Luther, who translated the whole of the New Testament himself, and preached in a way that made Satan tremble. Satan saw noble heathen buildings and lying doctrines reeling at their very foundation as Luther levelled God's word at them. Knox trampled Romanism under his feet as he carried the word of God along. These men mowed down whole forests of bad doctrine with a SCYTHE, even the word of God. The proudest heathen temple and the hardest oak of superstition has not a chance when opposed to the word of God.

These men knew also how to whet the sword of the Spirit with spiritual power. They never filed down its sharp edge in order to please worldly hearers, as fashionable preachers often do ; they gave it as *men* ought to give it, and not as imbeciles give it to an imbecile flock ; not in the timid way that Mr. Doubting and Miss Unbelief would speak it ; but they cast it on the waters as boldly as a sailor would cast a life-buoy to save a sinking comrade. It never enters into the sailor's imagination that the life-buoy will sink ; and Luther never reckoned on the WORD FAILING ; he only reckoned that Luther was not casting it boldly enough.

Eve ought to have met Satan with God's word ; but she used her eyes, her taste, and her own judgment instead. She ought to have answered every temptation with the words, "God hath said." Noah

met the world's falsehoods with God's truth, and defeated all. Moses had no other weapon to wield against Satan in the desert, than the word he had received from God. And our blessed Lord lifted the sword of the Spirit against Satan every time Satan attacked — "It is written," "It is written," "It is written again." If Adam and Eve had not despised that weapon, they would not have fallen. Cain also despised it, and fell into Satan's hands.

And now, in conclusion, listen to the Christian WARRIOR in fellowship and communion with God in prayer. Praying always with all prayer and supplication—thanks, praises, prayers, and supplications—all are expected, all are required. No good GENERAL allows his communications, his connection with his supplies, to be cut off. No Christian soldier will allow anything to arrest him in holding fellowship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. He requires new and fresh spiritual supplies every day—the old manna will not suffice. He has boundless resources to draw upon, and he is commanded to draw out of their fulness. Joshua, who was a type even of our risen Lord, fell into the snare of the Gibeonites because he asked not counsel from God. Prayer brings down glorious showers upon our dry and weary souls. We are in the desert, but the rock is close to us. Speak to it, and there shall be floods on the dry land; smite it not,—it has been smitten already; speak to it, and it gives forth abundantly.

But, in order to speak well in danger, let us re-

member that there IS danger; that this is an "evil day;" that we have sin in our old corrupt natures yet—not merely lurking there, but ready to burst forth. Let us remember the evil one also, who goeth about as a roaring lion; let us remember that "the god of this world" and "the prince of this world" is Satan; and let us mark the last link of the armour—"Watch." Watch for answers to prayer? Nay; I think the watching goes further than that. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." The apostolic army was asleep when they ought to have been wide awake. And has not the same sleep come over saints in Great Britain now? Is not our Lord being betrayed in our land by those who profess themselves to be Christians? Are they not delivering Him over to the Romanists and to the infidels again? and do not thousands of true saints seem sound asleep? They know NOT the times; they hear NOT the waves that are rising against our island.

"Watch and pray," says our Lord in Mark xiii. 33, 35. He has "left His house," He says, and "gives to EVERY man his work." Are we doing it? He has "commanded the porter to watch." Are we watching? Do we see what Satan is doing? Faithful preaching has been in many, many parishes. Is this on the increase? Our Bibles have filled the land, and our children have enjoyed great outward and visible Bible privileges. Is the question to be NOW mooted, Shall the name of Christ ever be heard in our public schools? Are we watching? are we armed, I ask? and are we using our glorious armour?

Listen to one of the last notes struck by a brave-

hearted soldier, whom I knew well—one only too soon removed, we would say in our ignorance—one who sometimes preached thirty times in one week, often seven times a day. Seven times a week would kill off some of us at once; but he preached seven times a day. Listen to his dying notes; and they were experimental ones; for he had a great fight of affliction at first. Near and dear ones all sprang forward to prevent him from witnessing.

*THE PILGRIM'S HYMN.*

HINDER me not—I am passing on  
 To my Saviour's great white judgment throne,  
 And I dare not linger 'mid that false band  
 That must stand ere long at my Lord's left hand,  
 Nor rest those eyes upon earth or them,  
 Which have gazed on the New Jerusalem.

Hinder me not—for my Saviour's blood  
 Has sealed me a child of the living God,  
 And I bear His cross on my pilgrim breast  
 As I journey on to my Father's rest;  
 And that cross is weighty, and I am weak,  
 And I have a kingdom and crown to seek.

Then hinder me not—but if one true heart  
 Shrink not this day from the pilgrim's part,  
 Come, shoulder the cross, and tread the road  
 That was trod of yore by the Son of God,  
 And press with me, where from heaven afar  
 Shines the bright beacon of Bethlehem's star.

Now hinder us not—Away, away!  
 Round us the Spirit's breezes play,  
 And the Lamb's own life-blood has marked our path,  
 The blood that extinguished the curse and wrath;  
 And His angel guards are about our track:  
 Woe, woe to the pilgrim who dares look back!

Hinder us not—we are heavenward bound,  
And we dare not rest on enchanted ground ;  
For behind is Satan's black flag unfurled  
O'er a death-doomed race and a flame-doomed world,  
And beneath us the devil's jibe and jeer  
O'er the frantic souls that are perishing there.

Hinder us not—there are beasts of prey  
And fiends of hell in our onward way ;  
But before us is Zion's heavenly height,  
And seraph forms of immortal light,  
And Jesu's face of incarnate love  
Smiles sweetly down from that home above.

Hinder us not—night breaks amain,  
The morn is dawning—farewell to pain !  
Lo ! brighter and brighter they rise in view,  
Those pearl-built gates of celestial hue !  
Shout ! shout in triumph ! 'tis past—'tis past—  
The eternal city is won at last !

DICKINSON.

