

THE
GLORY OF CHRIST:
ILLUSTRATED IN HIS CHARACTER AND HISTORY,
INCLUDING THE
LAST THINGS
OF HIS MEDIATORIAL GOVERNMENT.

BY GARDINER SPRING,
PASTOR OF THE BRICK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK,
AND AUTHOR OF "ATTRACTION OF THE CROSS," "THE MERCY SEAT,"
"FIRST THINGS," ETC. ETC. ETC.

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James M. Paton
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Miss Lucy A. Paton,
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THE GLORY OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

So far as it respects its influence upon men, the great object of Christ's coming into the world was to elevate them to *moral rectitude*. There is a higher good than mere enjoyment; something more valuable than the pardon of sin, and deliverance from the wrath and curse; else would there have been no such revealed conditions of salvation, and no such sacrifice as the humiliation of the Son of God. Infinite goodness would make men happy, but not at the expense of holiness; it is a holy happiness which it seeks to bestow. In the final issues of his government, God cannot tolerate an unholy happiness.

When we speak of holiness, we speak of that which God most loves. His own character is "glorious in holiness." Seraphim and cherubim cover their faces with their wings when they pro-

trate themselves at his throne, and say, one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!" Such a being, from his nature, must be the support and guardian of holiness on the earth. This world can give riches, pleasures, honors, dignities, crowns; but it cannot give holiness. The sons and daughters of men are pilgrims to the Holy Land; but they cannot enter it unless they themselves are holy. There is no such thing as a happy hereafter, unless it be a holy hereafter; nor is there any crown of immortality unless it be "the crown of righteousness." They themselves must be consecrated temples, sanctified by precious graces, and adorned with the beauties of holiness. Though formed for blessedness, they must forever be banished from God's presence if they remain defiled with the pollution of sin. Their title to eternal life was not only extinguished with their innocence, but the gates of heaven remain forever barred against them unless there be super-added to the expiation of the Son of God, that divine arrangement by which they are born anew to a spiritual life, not of corruptible, but of incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth forever. Every principle of the gospel illustrates its supreme and immutable regard to *holiness*. The wondrous and eternal purpose which originated it; the doctrines it reveals, its promises and its threatenings, its institutions and means of grace, are all designed

to purify and elevate the moral character of men. It would render them not merely the objects of the divine compassion, but of the divine complacency. It would fit them for that holy world where they shall be purified from all that is debasing, and the glorious Redeemer shall present his church unprovable, without blemish and without spot.

Hence the Scriptures speak of the Dispensation of the Spirit, of the Ministration of the Spirit, and of the Spirit of Christ as dwelling with men ; and of the work of the Spirit as glorifying Christ.

We propose in the present chapter, in the first place, to speak of the *work itself* which the Spirit of God performs.

The *work of the Spirit itself*, in carrying into effect the gracious purposes of the Redeemer is not limited to any one effect, or series of effects in the human mind. Besides giving to the world the divine Oracles, and recalling to the remembrance of the inspired penmen the facts and truths which these Oracles contain, it is his province, in the first place, to *awaken the attention* of this thoughtless and slumbering world to the truth of God. There is no fact more discouraging in the history of a preached gospel, than the utter listlessness with which it is heard. Men's thoughts are absorbed in other things ; "their heart goeth after their covetousness ; the sower soweth the word ;" but the seed falls on the barren rock, and is choked by the

cares and pleasures of the world. Men will listen to a popular preacher, and be in admiration of his eloquence ; while the *truth* he utters has no charms for their unthinking minds. We are told that, "The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended to *the things* which were spoken of Paul.' No sooner is this listlessness dismissed, and men begin in earnest to attend to *God's truth*, than there is reason to hope that some salutary impression is made upon their minds. *This* is the work of God's Spirit. It is he who unstops the deaf ear, and makes a passage for the first ray of heavenly truth to penetrate the dungeon mind.

It is his work, in the next place, to *convince of sin*. There is nothing of which men know less than their own wickedness. The Saviour says of the Holy Spirit, "He shall convince the world of sin." The power of the Holy Spirit is always superadded to the truth, when the truth shows the sinner his true character and condition. When the mind is merely awakened to attend to the truths of God's word, the effect of this awakening is ordinarily no more than to excite alarm, and give rise to some few self-righteous efforts to escape the coming wrath. Under this excitement, men become reformed in their outward conduct ; return to the neglected duties of religion, and indulge the expectation of pleasing God by going about to establish their own righteousness. They have very

superficial views of their own sinfulness, and therefore do not feel their need of an interest in the atonement of the Son of God. But when the Spirit of God sets home the truth, shows them "the plague of their own hearts;" makes them see that they are dead in sin, and that their own righteousnesses are as filthy rags; their apprehensions of the wrath to come are painful realities, and often too heavy to be borne. Their state of mind is not unlike that of Paul, of which he says, "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, *sin revived*, and *I died*." The law condemns them; and they feel that they are without hope. "The arrows of the Almighty stick fast within them, the poison whereof drinketh up their spirits." They are self-condemned, and all their false refuges are swept away. Most of all do they feel condemned for not repenting and believing the gospel. "When he the Spirit of truth is come, he shall *convince the world of sin*, because they *believe not in me*."

It is the work of the Spirit, in the next place, to *regenerate the soul*. That great and governing principle of human conduct, the love of God, which was lost at the fall, is restored to its rightful throne in the heart only by the Spirit of God. Give the sinner this, and it changes his whole character. Old things are done away, and all things become new. He is brought out of darkness into God's

marvellous light. His understanding is illuminated, and he sees the things of the Spirit of God in their reality, their nearness and beauty. This is emphatically true of the method of salvation by Jesus Christ. The time was the Saviour of men was to them as "a root out of a dry ground, having no form, or comeliness that they should desire him." But it is not so now. He who "commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ." In their view, he is now "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." They fall in with the method of redemption by his cross; are clothed upon with the "righteousness which is of God by faith;" give him all the glory, and only desire to know more of him, and to be more like him. They are "born of the Spirit;" they are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

Sanctification is also another work of the Spirit. It is he alone who progressively purifies the soul and fits it for heaven. This is one of the most important and beautiful offices which the Spirit of grace performs, and in which he himself so much delights. We read of "the love of the Spirit;" and it is in this hallowed work that his love is so delightfully made manifest. He not only takes the soul from its deeply imbedded pollution, and transforms it from the rude rock which it was by

nature ; but burnishes it, and gives it its diamond lustre, and makes it sparkle on the brow of its heavenly Prince. All Christians are "sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Whatever means are necessary to this end, the providence of God prepares, and his Spirit consecrates. That sweet attraction of the heart to heavenly things, by which the eyes are turned away from beholding vanity ; those delightful aspirations so often breathed in the closet, "O God, thou art my God ; early will I seek thee ; my soul thirsteth for thee ; my flesh longeth for thee ;" those sacred festivals of the mind in which it feeds on the bread which came down from heaven, and where every pious thought is invigorated, every devout affection enlivened, and every hope cheered, are all the fruit of the Spirit.

In the last place, it is the high and peculiar work of the Spirit to perform the office of the *Comforter*.. "If I go not away," says the Saviour, "the Comforter will not come ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Delightful work is this, and delightfully befitting the lovely nature of him who thus proceedeth forth from the Father and the Son ! Delightful thought it is, that that vivifying Spirit, spoken of by the prophet, who directs and animates the ministering cherubim in their attendance upon the throne of the Most High, should take up his abode in the hearts of his often dejected and sorrowing people on the earth ! Here

he dwells, like the Shekinah in the Temple, filling their hearts with his light and love; creating a fire and a smoke in every dwelling-place on Mount Zion; making her Sanctuaries glorious with his presence, and like the cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, guiding and comforting his church through the wilderness. It is because taught and encouraged by him, that the individual Christian, perplexed and desponding, harassed by enemies, agitated by fears, and chastened by afflictions, is so often heard to say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance, and my God!" It is because he is her refuge and solace, that the church of God, in her associated character, when oppressed and disheartened, and passing under the cloud, and through long nights of darkness, and trial, has been buoyed up by bright expectations, and has found light arising in the midst of the darkness.

The four emblems by which the Spirit is set forth in the Scriptures, are *water*, the *dove*, the *wind*, and *fire*. Soft and gentle as the refreshing showers, meek and retiring and easily grieved as the fluttering dove, balmy as the breeze, and glowing with heavenly fervor as the flame on celestial altars; this Commissioned Comforter dispenses his heavenly grace, gives the people of God an earnest

of their inheritance, and seals them to the day of redemption. The *Son of God* no longer dwells with men. He has gone to return no more, until he shall come in the clouds of heaven to judge the world. He must have returned had not the Holy Spirit come in his place, to act as the great representative of Christ upon the earth, that his church might not be with the present Deity, nor the world without this Witness to the truth.

Such is the work of the Holy Spirit. All the religion that ever was in the world, and that is now and ever will be in it, is the effect of his power. No awakening, no conviction, no conversion, no sanctification and comfort are *genuine*, unless they are the work of the Spirit. There is as wide a difference between those awakenings and misnamed revivals of religion which are the result of human machinery, and are got up by the measures and management of men, and that well-instructed, noiseless, humble, and deep-toned piety which is the fruit of God's Spirit; as between the rushing tempest which rent the mountains, and the still small voice which made the prophet wrap his face in his mantle. The Spirit of God never counterfeits. There are abortions and monstrous births in "that which is born of the flesh;" that "which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Our next object is to show that this great and divine agent is THE MESSENGER OF JESUS CHRIST.

Although the power of the Spirit was enjoyed by the church of God under the old dispensation, and cheered and refreshed her pilgrimage, and was often revealed in the holy land; yet was it the great promise to the new dispensation. There were early predictions, not a few, that looked forward to this dispensation of the Spirit with a cheered and cheering vision. Isaiah spake of it in the glowing imagery of "pouring water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground;" and often spake of it with his own characteristic and sublime rapture when he predicted these latter days. The prophet Joel spake of it in more simple, and not less instructive language. "And it shall come to pass afterward, saith the Lord, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." All classes and orders and ages were to be partakers of the blessing; sons and daughters, old men and young men; and "upon the servants and handmaidens in those days will I pour out my Spirit."

The New Testament, as we have already seen, repeats and confirms these promises. Not more certainly was the promise of the incarnate Son the great promise of the Old Testament, than the promise of the Spirit is the great promise of the New. Before his death the Saviour made frequent mention of the Spirit's advent. After his resurrection, and as the time was drawing near when he was about to ascend to his Father, he renewed

the promise, and told them that the time of its accomplishment was near. In one of his last interviews with them, "he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait *for the promise of the Father*, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Most gloriously was the promise fulfilled. Ten days after our Lord's ascension, and fifty days after that memorable day of the Passover when he expired on Calvary, and when the day of Pentecost was fully come; that wondrous event took place which is recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The Holy Ghost descended both in his miraculous gifts and his converting power upon the souls of men. We would that time were allowed us to dwell upon the details of this narrative, for it is one of the most interesting in the sacred record. It was at the hour of prayer in the temple, on the morning of that memorable day which commemorated the giving of the law on Sinai, now made more memorable, not by proclaiming it in thunder, but by inscribing it in the hearts of men. It was the day consecrated in Jewish history to the annual offering of the first fruits; now more emphatically consecrated by the first ingathering of the gospel harvest. It was one of those three days in the year

on which all the Jews were obliged by their law to come to worship at Jerusalem and in the temple: and well was it selected, if for no other reason than to give publicity to this first triumph of Christian truth, this successful commencement of the "ministration of the Spirit." Here again, as at the passover, and on the day of the crucifixion, Jews from Asia, Africa, Europe, the islands, and all parts of the world where they were dispersed, were assembled to become the witnesses of this great fact, subjects of this divine influence, and to bear the tidings of the new doctrine, the new dispensation, and the descending Spirit. The risen Saviour did not intend that this vast multitude, who had so lately demanded and triumphed in his crucifixion, should depart from the city so lately desecrated by his blood, till they had seen these new wonders of his power, and not a few of them had washed in that fountain which their murderous hands had opened, and had become thus qualified to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Wonderful was the spectacle. We can form no just conception of it without representing to our minds his expectant disciples assembled "with one accord, in one place," bowing with one heart before the mercy-seat, lifting up their souls to God, and imploring him to put honor upon his Son Jesus, by fulfilling the promise, and causing the Holy Ghost to descend. These holy men had

been bound together by the strongest ties of love to their Master, love to his cause, and love to one another. They were now bound by welcome, yet most solemn responsibilities ; for they had already received the command to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." They were about to separate, with the view of fulfilling this high commission, but were detained by this one command: "Tarry ye in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father." Burning as their hearts did burn to enter fields already white to the harvest, they could not go without the Holy Spirit. They needed both his miraculous and his sanctifying and comforting power in order to qualify them for their work, and sustain them in their fiery trials. And there they were in prayer, expressing their earnest desires, pleading with God, with no dubious and vacillating faith, but with humble and strong and confident expectation, that the promise of their ascended Master would be fulfilled, and that "God would glorify his Son Jesus" by such wonders of his power as this earth has never before beheld.

"And it came to pass, while they were praying, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The promise was fulfilled. The multitude were held in profound admiration. And while some of these millions

scoffed, and others were held in doubt, these men of God, no longer oppressed by their own faint-heartedness, and no longer shutting themselves up in secret chambers for fear of the Jews, went forth undaunted, and carried the message of the great salvation to their assembled countrymen. Even in the presence of the Sanhedrim, who had but seven weeks before put Jesus to death, and in the presence of the scoffing millions, who circulated the rumor that his disciples came and stole his body while the guard slept, they testified that Jesus was the promised Messiah; that with wicked hands they had crucified and slain him; that God had raised him from the dead, and that now repentance and remission of sins was preached in his name to all nations.

The consequence was, that the Holy Spirit which was with the apostles, fell also on the multitude, so that under the preaching of a single discourse by Peter, three thousand were converted in a day. It was a rich day to the apostles, to the infant church, to the world; and a rich and glorious day to Jesus Christ. It was a new day in the history of God's grace to the sons and daughters of men. Thus it was that Christianity began its course. And thus it continued during the apostolic age. Immediately after this, five thousand more were made the subjects of converting grace. And then here and there, hundreds, until the gospel

had free course, and was glorified throughout the Roman empire. It was "the ministration of the Spirit;" nor will it cease until men shall be blessed in the God of Israel, and all nations shall call him blessed.

Our last and principal object is to *illustrate the glory of Christ in this mission and work of the Spirit of truth and grace*. This illustration we can best present by the following distinct thoughts.

In the first place, *the work of the Spirit furnishes additional proof of the great facts which form the sum and substance of Christianity*. We have made this deduction from premises before stated; and the evidence here culminates to its highest point. We need not go beyond this, in order to prove that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of men. This was the last prediction which he made while on the earth; next to his death and resurrection, it was the great prediction. Christ himself did not go beyond this, in order to satisfy the faith of his apostles, and substantiate his claims to the confidence and obedience of the world. He told his disciples to *wait* for the fulfilment of this prediction; they did wait; and when the Spirit came, they girded on the whole armor of God, and went forth. This was the only piece of their bright panoply which remained to be buckled on; with this sword of the Spirit, so burnished, they addressed themselves to the con-

quest of the world. The Christ *had come* whom their Scriptures foretold; at the predicted time, from the predicted seed and origin, and in the predicted place. According to the same series of prophecies, he was God and man, and the Great Prophet who came in the power of Elias, and confirmed his mission by signs and miracles, which demonstrated that God was with him. They had seen him, as the same spirit of prophecy foretold, poor and despised, betrayed by one of his disciples, mocked and derided, and crucified for the sins of the world. They had seen his garments divided and the soldiers cast lots for his vesture; honorably buried, risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven. The Holy Ghost had not yet been given, "because Christ was not yet glorified." But now they saw that he was faithful to his promise, and sent the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

This was the argument on which they relied for proof of the divine origin of Christianity. This was the argument of Peter on the day of Pentecost, and the argument of Stephen before the Jewish Sanhedrim. These were the facts, the most of which the Jews denied; and which, after the descent of the Holy Spirit, the apostles proclaimed in their hearing, and in the place and under circumstances, the very last to be selected by impostors. It is worthy of remark, that they did not go first to Antioch, nor to Ephesus, nor to

Rome; where, from the superstitious habits of the people, it would have been an easy matter to have introduced a false religion, and where the ignorance of the people of events in Judea and Jerusalem, would have rendered any detection of their fraud impossible. But, in obedience to the direction of their Master, they "began at Jerusalem;" in the very courts of the Temple, and in a presence the most appalling in the world, if they had been impostors; because these were the men who had been the crucifiers, and who, if there had been anything in the form of connivance or fraud, not only had the best and only means of detecting the deception, but who had a deep interest in confounding the deceivers before the world. Yet three thousand of these very men, on the first presentation of these great facts, bowed before the majesty of truth, and professed their faith in that Saviour, whom but fifty days before, they had nailed to the accursed tree.

These were the proofs, also, with which they afterward went to the Gentile world, to combat its philosophy, its idolatry, its wickedness; overturn its altars, and subdue it to the obedience of the Christian faith. And this completed series of facts, constitutes the argument in favor of Christianity at the present time. It is in few words, the great *moral argument*, arising from the effects of Christianity on the minds of men. We have nothing more to

utter in its behalf, than to demonstrate these facts; on these, with the concurrent and immense interests and responsibilities they involve, rests our appeal for the Saviour's honor, and the salvation of men. We say to the boasting infidel, see for yourself these great facts in the history of Jesus of Nazareth, and then mark their influence upon the character of men. What has human philosophy or human legislation accomplished in this agitated and convulsed world, compared with the elevating and reforming influence of these great facts? We make our appeal to the living masters of the Jewish law, and ask them to tell us what Judaism is worth, and what it is more than a worn-out system, breeding nothing but obduracy and disappointment; a rigorous, exclusive, and unmeaning system, if it terminate not in him who "was to come." Go to India, to China, to Persia; inspect the combined influences of other religions, and all the influences which this earth ever has known, or now knows; and what have they done in restoring the race from the moral malady to which sin has subjected them, and in regenerating the world, compared with those living and actuating realities, the truth and the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

In the second place, the work of the Spirit *gives efficacy to the work already accomplished by Christ's death and resurrection.* Had the world been left

without any other divine agency than the death and resurrection of Christ, it had been left dead in trespasses and sins. Something more was necessary, than that the Son of God assume man's nature, die on the cross, rise from the dead, and ascend to the right hand of God. Experience, observation, and the Scriptures instruct us, that with these great facts before them, men will not come to him that they might have life. They are not influenced by these facts, as they ought to be influenced; nay, without superadded influences, they are not governed by them at all, save in so far forth as they restrain the wickedness of the unrenewed heart, and exert a moralizing and elevating power on the social intercourse of Christian lands. Men everywhere, even where these facts are known, are still under the dominion of a blinded understanding, an erring conscience, and a heart that is desperately wicked. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and they have loved darkness rather than light." "In them, that is in their flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." They are thoughtless and indifferent to the claims of the gospel; unconcerned alike about their sins and their salvation; blinded by the God of this world, bowing in his temple, and sacrificing at his altars, rather than turning from these dumb idols to serve the Living God. It requires more than the mere gospel offer, and the proclamation of mercy in the Saviour's

name, to lead them to repentance, however urgent that call, and aided even by extraordinary dispensations of divine providence. It is not the force of truth alone, nor the most persuasive and cogent inducements, that awaken, convince, regenerate, sanctify, and comfort the soul, and fit it for heaven. They were not those influences, on which Christ himself placed his dependence, for the introduction, and extension, and prevalence, of his religion on the earth. "Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God giveth the increase." Presumptuous hope! to look for the conversion of men except to a power that is higher than human, and more effective than any of those truths which the great Author of Christianity has committed to men, in the mere outward ministrations of his gospel.

Indispensable, therefore, was it to the success of the gospel, and the saving effects of Christ's death, that, in addition to the facts which terminate with his ascension, there should be this great consummation, the descent of the Holy Spirit. "He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification." Here the *immediate* influence of his great Propitiation terminated. His priestly office is a department by itself; it affects the law and government of God, and has no proximate efficacy in renewing the sinner's heart. This belongs to another department of the method of redemption,

and is reserved for the Spirit of grace and truth, into whose hands the Father and the Son have committed it, that he, with them, might share the equal honors of man's salvation. The Saviour himself left the world, that he might send down his Holy Spirit to dwell with men, and rear that beautiful superstructure of holiness, the foundation of which was laid in his Atoning Sacrifice. He would not have ascended to the Father but for this; but would have remained on the earth, and here established his kingdom in the hearts of men by his own mighty power, and thus established his claim to the office both of Mediator and Sanctifier. He *did* return to his Father's throne, but it was to send the Holy Spirit; not, indeed, "to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness," but to bear testimony that the Son of God has accomplished this great work; not to add to the perfected atonement which Christ has made, but to bear testimony that Christ is approved and accepted in what he has done; not to detract from the work of Christ, but to be heaven's messenger, crowning it with honor, testifying to the understanding, the conscience, and the heart of men, that there is salvation but in him, and drawing them to him, by the cords of love. God is still upon the earth, not in the person of the Father, nor in the person of the Son, but in the person of the Holy Spirit. He is

the appointed and honored Representative of Christ in the world and in the church; taking of the things of Christ and showing them unto his people; subduing their hearts unto himself, and extending his kingdom. He gives efficacy to the peculiar work of Christ, by making it efficacious on the hearts of men; by driving them from their refuges of lies, and sweeping away one hiding-place after another, till they are glad to take refuge from the raging storm of divine wrath, at his cross. He gives efficacy to it by striving with them and overcoming them, till they consent to be saved by Christ alone; by banishing their fears, and giving them the assurance that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. And need I say, that it is thus that the Saviour triumphs, and that in the eye of God, and angels, and men, he is glorious in the ministration of the Spirit. Has he any greater glory, than in thus verifying the declaration, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me!"

Once more: the work of the Spirit alone enables us *to form some just estimate of the blessings which Christ bestows*. Not until he ascended up on high, did he sit down upon his mediatorial throne, and give gifts to men. It was his coronation day; and his accession to the kingdom was marked by the bounty of a Prince, such as this world never saw. His disciples did not at

first comprehend the full import of the promise, that he would send the Comforter; their views were obscure and indefinite. This one thing only did they comprehend, that it was some *great blessing*, because he had told them it was more desirable even than his own blessed presence. It was to introduce a new and spiritual dispensation; was to effect great changes in them, and in the men who were their associates; to transform the world, and to change the whole course of the divine government toward fallen men. They were gifts purchased by his own precious blood, and worthy of the price; gifts that would prove his right to the dominion to which he was exalted; that would abundantly gratify his benevolent heart to bestow; and in bestowing which he would take possession of "the joy that was set before him, when he endured the cross, despising the shame."

What were these gifts? They were to arrest the progress of millions, who, under the full sunlight of a revealed Christianity, were treading their way where peace and hope never come, and where sin and the curse hold their uncontrollable dominion. They were to break those chains of sin and death, and give the liberated captives the liberty of the sons of God. They were to make them a peculiar and holy people; peradventure the wonder and the laughing-stock of the world; peradventure the victims of torture and death;

but a holy people, destined to be more, and still more like their divine Master, and at last received to those holy mansions where sin never enters, and where are imperishable honors, and crowns of rejoicing for every sinner that repenteth.

Yes, they were gifts for men. They were to make his people *willing* in the day of his power. Wondrous thought, and still more wondrous grace—*willing*! Willing to be what? to do what? to escape what? to enjoy what? Willing *to be* the friends of him who as far excels all other friends, as heaven exceeds earth, and eternity time, and God creatures; to be pardoned and justified subjects; to be clothed with the pure robe of his righteousness, comely through the comeliness which he puts upon them, and luminous through the light with which he decks them as with a garment. Willing *to do* his will, who governs by no usurped authority, and whose right to command none can deny; whose commands secure the approbation of every conscience, and who has made abundant provisions of grace to help in the time of need, and strength according to their day. Willing *to escape* the burden of their own guilt, and their Maker's curse, the everlasting shame of wickedness, and the unutterable groans of everlasting anguish and despair. Willing *to enjoy* God's presence and favor, to love and praise him, to behold his glory, to reflect his image, and drink of

those rivers of pleasure which flow at his right hand.

Yes, they were to make this people *willing* in the day of his power. Again I say, wondrous thought and grace! It is not the character of men to be so blind to their own well-being, as to require to be *made willing* to enjoy earthly good. It is in relation to higher and spiritual blessings only, that they are the slaves of this guilty and miserable infatuation. It is even so. Their reluctance to be made truly and forever happy is absolutely invincible by any power short of the omnipotent energy of the Holy Spirit. And in this consists the greatness of the blessings he imparts. It is immense graciousness, and gracious immensity of blessing.

It adds not a little to this bounty that this work of the Spirit is *perpetual*. The day of Pentecost commenced a series of wonders, and was the pledge of those divine influences, which, however various in measure, shall never be intermitted until time shall be no more. The Saviour has departed; but the Comforter will never depart. He will continue to instruct, convince, convert, and sanctify the sons and daughters of men until the last heir of glory is gathered in. There is no substitute for this influence. 'It will be as continuous as the work of redemption. And though it will not always descend in unwonted richness, it will

ever be descending. No more than God the Creator abandons the world he has made ; no more than God the Redeemer retires from the great work of making all things subservient to the church of which he is the Head ; will God the Sanctifier resign the interests of his sacred office, and leave it unoccupied, or in other hands. It would be a darker day than this world has ever seen, if the divine Spirit should ever take his leave of men. Individuals may be thus abandoned of God ; but his church—nay, this guilty world will never be thus abandoned. “As for me this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord ; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, from henceforth and forever.” Just before his crucifixion, the Saviour said to his disciples, “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you FOREVER.” The dispensation of the Spirit is a perpetuated dispensation to the end of the world. Wherever Christ’s ministers go in his name, the Spirit is with them. Where two or three are met together in his name, the Spirit is with them. Wherever the great congregation assembles to worship him, the Spirit is with them. If there be a community or a man on the face of the earth, whose condition is more to be deplored than that

of any other, it is the community and the man who is utterly abandoned of God's Spirit. We hope never to see such a community or such a man. We believe there are few such men. Living under the dispensation of that condescending and gracious Comforter, whose benignant influences penetrate all orders of men, and hover over the path and the pillow even of the most thoughtless and giddy, we dare not relinquish the hope that the most deaf may yet hear the voice of God, and the most benighted open his eyes upon this great glory of his risen and princely Son.

Beautiful is that glory which belongs to the Son of God in his wondrous ministration of the Spirit. His name is written on myriads of minds that are thus transformed by his life-giving power. His voice breaks from the cloud, when it descends in copious showers, and gives verdure to the mountains of Zion. It whispers in the breeze, speaking not only *to* man, but *in* man, and insinuating his sacred influence into the very centre of his soul. There is not one of these renovated and illumined minds in which his light does not shine brighter than the sun, making them all reflect his glory. And when, in after and latter days, this light shall be steady and strong, and the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as the light of seven days; how will his glory which was concealed in the veil of man's

nature, and eclipsed in Calvary, break forth and overlay every dwelling-place, and make it a tabernacle of the Most High; every temple and make it the "Holy of Holies;" every mountain and valley, and deck them with heavenly beauty; every wilderness, and every dark and subterraneous cavern where the wickedness of man has been secreted, and make them glitter for that day in which he shall make up his jewels.

How obvious is it, on a summary review of these observations, that *the Holy Spirit is the hope of the world!* The promise of the Spirit was Christ's promise; and it was like him, worthy of him, and the fruits of it are the matured fruits of this Tree of Life. Ages, and places, and men on whom this blessing most effectually descends, are the marked ages in the history of the church, distinguished spots on the face of our favored globe, the favored individuals of our fallen race. The Apostles were scoffed at, until the descent of the Holy Ghost. The ministers of Christ, in every age, have spoken, and now speak to no better purpose, until the Spirit be poured from on high. Look over the world, and the land in which we live, and even on these favored churches where God's power and glory have been seen in the Sanctuary. What have they been when the Spirit of God was in the midst of us? what have they been, what are they now that the Spirit descends so sparingly? This

is the influence we want. We have Bibles, we have Sabbaths, and sanctuaries, and ministers; our great want is more and greater outpouring of the Spirit from on high. The Holy Spirit is the hope of the church, and the hope of the world. The external machinery of God's church is complete; we want now the sacred fire to set it in motion. Nothing but God's omnipotent Spirit can safely direct its course, and give it the impulse that shall carry it through the earth. Never will another beam of light dawn, unless he bids it shine. Never more will there be an awakened thought, nor a pang of conviction, nor a penitential tear, nor a peaceful hope in Christ, nor an emotion of spiritual comfort and joy, nor a successful effort for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, unless he gives it. "All these worketh that self-same Spirit."

Yes, he is employed in this holy work still. He is now working in men to will and to do. And this is your hope. This gracious Reformer and Comforter meets the sinner in his deepest and most dire necessity. He gives him what he needs, because he makes him willing to receive the great salvation. He cannot come to Christ without the power of the Holy Spirit; but he can ask, he can seek, he can humbly knock at the door of heavenly grace, and will not be sent away empty. God gives his Holy Spirit to them that ask him. The

promise is sure, "Then shall ye find me when ye search for me with your whole heart."

Let this truth be appreciated. It is no easy task for the sinner to resist the tenderness and importunity of the Spirit of truth and grace. To all the dispensations of God's providence, all the truths of his word, all the checks of conscience, the ascended Redeemer is adding the appeals of his own Spirit. Wait not for them; for they are with you. Long has the Spirit of God been striving with you. From earliest childhood, he has been repeating his invitations, his remonstrances, his convictions. You have no such friend. Only do not grieve him. "Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for the name of the Lord is in him," and he has come to show you his great glory.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN THE CHARACTER OF HIS FOLLOWERS.

THE time was when the human nature, like the angelic, bore the impress of its divine original. The perfect production of the artist indicated his excellence and skill. The stream was clear, and discovered the purity of the fountain. But man is no more what he then was. His "carnal mind is enmity against God;" nor is it until he "puts on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness," that he "shows forth the praises of him who hath called him out of darkness into his marvellous light."

This is the high privilege of all the followers of Christ. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." His highest honor is to honor Christ. That the Son of God should be glorious in himself and in all that he has done, is a thought that commends itself to reason, to conscience, to piety; but that he should be glorious in the character of his followers, welcome as the thought is, is one which does not find so ready access to

our minds. It is a wondrous manifestation of the divine condescension, that a creature of yesterday, born in sin, should be allowed to cherish so lofty a purpose. "Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man that is a worm, and the son of man which is a worm!" Yet nothing short of this fulfils man's spiritual and immortal destiny. This affecting truth bursts upon us from every utterance of the divine oracle, from the progressive developments of divine providence, and from the inward teachings of the divine Spirit. It is among the perpetually-augmenting glories of Christ, that he "is glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe." He is glorious in the character of his followers, in that they give him the throne, and cheerfully acknowledge his authority over them; in that their character is but the reflection of his own; in that they are his witnesses in this ungodly world; and in that they live to advance the interests of his kingdom and promote his glory. Let us dwell a few moments on each of these four thoughts.

Christ is glorious in the character of his followers in that they *give him the throne, and cheerfully acknowledge his authority over them.* Every creature in the universe needs to be governed; not excepting the "angels who excel in strength." Nothing would be more unstable than this world

under the control of a capricious monarch, or under any other than his *one* empire who is "Head over all things to his church." Even under such a head, what faction, sedition, treachery, disloyalty, and rebellion on the part of the great mass of mankind! The humors and tempers of men are the sport of their passions; the world is a scene of tumult, so that, instead of living in peace and order, and by their subjection doing honor to the King of heaven, every man is his own monarch; and the world we live in bears the marks of desolation and anarchy.

It is in such a world that he who styles himself the "Prince of the kings of the earth," has not only set up his throne, but subdued unto himself a "willing people in the day of his power." By nature, just as depraved and rebellious as other men, and just as much disposed to complain of his laws, they have learned to award him the honors of universal empire, and to take their proper places at his footstool. On that memorable day in which he first made his spiritual conquest over them, and when, as sinful and guilty rebels, they first drew nigh to God with hopes of pardon, it was through him, as the exalted Mediator, and by faith in the blood of his cross. They were "reconciled to God by the death of his Son;" but it was with penitence and shame for their former disloyalty, with self-renunciation and self-abasement, and

with unconditional submission, not less to his *authority* as their lawgiver, than to his *mercy* as their Redeemer. These were the indispensable terms of their mutual reconciliation. The very end of their reconciliation, was "that they might walk in his statutes, and do his judgments and keep them;" their obedience is the test of their reconciliation. True religion consists in a renovated character, controlled by those high-born principles, which, while they are the main-spring of spiritual affections and emotions, possess the vigor and efficacy to govern the life, and show their strength only when they constrain its subjects to make the will of Christ their joy. His yoke is easy, and his burden is light, because his sceptre is a right sceptre, and such as every right-minded man loves to obey.

The very acts of obedience which he requires, are themselves joyous, and productive of inward blessedness. If it costs self-denial to obey, there is happiness in the self-denial; the love of Christ makes the service delightful. Nor do his followers engage in it unpardoned, and staggering under the curse; but with the embarrassments of a legal condemnation thrown off, and cheered with the light of their Heavenly Father's countenance. Although they are sanctified but in part, and do not always find a heart within them that is pliant to the authority of their Master; yet is their strength according to their day, and there is grace to help

them in the time of need. There is an eye above them that inspects all their inward struggles, and observes all their outward conflicts; and there is a voice, too, that cheers and comforts them. Many a time does their heart turn away from the fickleness and imbecility and deception of earth, to his all-gracious and stable throne, and rejoice that their divine Lord and Prince is not only qualified to rule, but to defend and enrich them. All power is his; his are the riches of the universe. "Dominion is with him," and greatly do they rejoice.

And is it too much to say, that those whose minds and hearts have been graciously schooled and disciplined into this conviction and these sentiments, do him homage? Do they not speak for him and hold in check this rebellious world? Are they not the guardians and defenders of his rightful and royal prerogative? Is it not his honor to have a loyal people in this world of anarchy and wickedness, and one so full of dishonor to "the monarchy of heaven?" Bound to him by cords of love and recorded vows, they rally round this unearthly fabric of his power; and though, like his exiled and captive people of old, they may be "men that are wondered at," they are his "peculiar people."

Our second thought is, that Christ is glorious in the character of his followers, in that whatever is

excellent in *their character is but the reflection of his own*. The moral desolation of the world is fitly represented in the Scriptures, by the earth shrouded in darkness. It is all gloom, imperishable gloom. There is no sun, no moon. Not a star twinkles in the sky. Not a light is to be seen in the habitations of men. Imagine yourself standing in the midst of such an impervious night and then see the curtain gradually drawn up. One black cloud after another rolls away, discovering here and there a pale star, then a bright planet, then some clustered galaxy, and then the full moon walking in her brightness. Yet all these bright orbs shine in borrowed splendor, and do but reflect the light of the great Central Sun. So the light reflected from the church of God on the earth, whether from a single star, or a brighter planet, or from more faint and congregated twinklings of the milky-way, is the light of heaven. It is not uniform; "one star differeth from another star in glory;" yet is it luminous, and its brightness indicates its source. If there be those who think and say that there is wonderfully little of this resemblance to the character of Christ among men; while we confess there is too much truth in this remark, we at the same time affirm, that what there is of true religion in the world, consists in this resemblance. We do not inquire how strong or how faint the resemblance is; and only say,

that be it ever so faint, it is still a resemblance to him. Be it so that it is faint, and often marked with dark shadows; blot it out, and the world is all darkness, Egyptian darkness, darkness that may be felt. Even the imperfect holiness that is found among men, is a beautiful object; the most beautiful under the sun. We could hold up before you the character of many a Christian man and woman among the living, that would at once be recognized as a beautiful, though not a spotless character. The severest and most fastidious moral critic in the world, would be slow to deny that the true church of God, with all its blemishes, possesses a beautiful character. “Out of Zion, *the perfection of beauty*, God hath shined.” “Thou wast *exceeding beautiful*,” and thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty; for it was perfect, through the comeliness which the Lord God had put upon thee.”

This reflected character of the Lord Jesus in his followers is not a little for his own honor and glory. He has undertaken the great work of redeeming his people from the power of sin; and when their renewed and sanctified character is contrasted with what it once was, who is there that is not constrained to honor him *for* what he has done, and *in* what he has done? We look at the church of Rome, at the time when their “faith was spoken of throughout all the world,” and compare

it with the same individuals whose nauseous character is described in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans. We look at the licentious, debased, and polluted Corinthians, and then at those same Corinthians, "washed and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus;" and while we love and honor *them* for their piety, it is not the persons themselves whose character is thus transformed, that we so much think of, as that Lord Jesus, by whose grace they were thus beautified, and whose reflected glory they show forth. Could we unroll the catalogue of all those holy men and women, so many of whom were stars of the first magnitude, and so many more of whom whose light was less resplendent, but not the less lovely and attractive; and could we add to these those untold myriads of infant minds, born in sin, but made pure and bright by him that "maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning;" and could we then bring before you the names of those now on the earth who were once as notorious for their wickedness as they now are more or less illustrious for their piety, we should furnish some adequate illustration of the glory of Christ in the character of his followers. The moral hemisphere is lighted up with these reflections of his love and power.

"Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patins of bright gold;

There's not the smallest orb that thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim."

Yet all this celestial harmony is but an echo ;
and these brilliant lights in the vault of heaven
shine by rays from the Sun of righteousness.

If from such a survey, you take the map of the world as it now is, and trace those lands where the national character and government and laws and literature and customs are formed by the degrading and brutalizing influence of Paganism, the iron sceptre of the False Prophet, the delusions and tyranny of the Man of sin, and those prolonged triumphs of Oriental philosophy over reason and conscience and moral virtue, and contrast them with the civil, social, religious, and moral condition of those favored nations where Christianity exerts her appropriate influence ; can it be difficult to decide in which the Prince of life is exalted ? Is there not in this survey, both of individual and congregated and national character, an intuitive perception of the Saviour's glory ? Does it not strike the eye as clearly as the rainbow when it spans its arch over against the cloud ? What is Christianity but Christ revealed ? What is its appropriate influence, but Christ revealed to the mind and heart ? And in what consists its true glory, unless it is in the fact that where it is thus ascendant, millions of intelligent and immortal

beings, in the solitude of their retirement, and in the noise and bustle of the world; in the depression of their grief and in the tranquillity of their joy; in the secrecy and publicity of their devotions; in the rectitude, truthfulness, and benignity of their deportment toward God and their fellow-men; manifest his glory, who is "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The most difficult graces and virtues which the disciples of Christ are called upon to exercise, are those which respect their relations to their fellow-men. Many are they who cheerfully engage in acts of piety and devotion toward God; it costs them little to pray, and praise, and hear his word. But to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly; to practise the duties of kindness, forbearance, meekness, forgiveness of enemies, beneficence, self-control, and self-denial; to be just, truthful, diligent, honest; these are the duties which most honor our divine Master. The Scriptures largely insist on the importance of these relative obligations, in our intercourse with our fellow-men. "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals." "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." These duties are spoken of by the Saviour as the great evidence

of a living and operative faith at the Last Great Day. "In as much as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." We cannot be profitable to God, as we can be profitable to our fellow-men. We cannot *serve* him, but we can serve them. We cannot do good to him, but we can do good to them. External religious rites are a very cheap religion. We may perform them all, and yet be covetous men, proud, malicious, envious, revengeful, and voluptuous men. True godliness honors Christ in the family, as well as the closet; in the world, as well as the church; never does it shine in more attractive beauty, than in the very heart of the world, and living, breathing, in the midst of secular employments.

The image of Christ, though faint, is there; it is Christ in the soul. Their weakest emotions of love, their faintest beamings of hope, their very lisplings of prayer and praise, are beautiful and heavenly because they are so full of Christ. Much more is he glorious in them when they "come to excellent ornaments," and the rigor and constancy, and uniformity of their character are in more close and bright resemblance to his own. There is nothing in this inferior world in which Christ himself so much glories, and which he has done so much to restore, elevate and ennoble. He calls them "his treasure;" and

anticipates with joy the day when he "makes them up as his jewels." None triumph in their bright prospects so much as he; and none but he could paint them in such glowing imagery as he has done, when he says to them, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the *glory of the Lord is risen upon thee*. For behold, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the people; but *the Lord shall arise upon thee*, and HIS GLORY shall be seen upon thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the *place of my sanctuary*, and I will make THE PLACE OF MY FEET GLORIOUS." Nor have they themselves any more devout exultation, than when they declare, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

Our third thought is, that Christ is glorious in the character of his followers, in that *they are his witnesses in this ungodly world*. Errors and sin have no need of witnesses; they are too deeply imbedded in the human heart to require testimony. Nor has there ever been a period of time, since the days of righteous Abel to the present hour,

when there were none on the earth to bear witness for the King of truth and grace. They have often been "a little flock;" but they have borne their testimony, and like righteous Abel, "being dead, they yet speak." Sometimes their testimony has gathered strength with the widening and rapid current of time; then again it has been alternately accumulative and diminished; and then, like the waters of the ocean, it has become diffused and dispensed itself over the earth in clouds.

If you inquire *of what* are they the witnesses; I answer of the truth and power of Christ and his gospel. Many such witnesses the Saviour has now on the earth; and though they may be of different preferences, and polity, and names, they all unite in bearing testimony to the truth of Christ. His church is a witness-bearing church. They are witnesses to his being and character; to his deity and incarnation; to his life and death, to his resurrection and ascension. They are witnesses to the equity and binding obligation of his law, and to the hallowed influences of his grace; themselves living epistles of its excellence known and read of all men. When the scoffers' tongue slanders the doctrines of grace as conniving at immorality and wickedness, the Saviour can point to all his true followers and say, "These are my witnesses," who have been taught to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present

evil world." True Christians are practical preachers of the gospel, demonstrating in their own lives its elevating and purifying tendency. They are witnesses of its preciousness; of the pleasures it gives above all the pleasures of sin. They are witnesses of the high privilege of access to God and sweet communion with things unseen; they are witnesses of the equanimity which arises from trust in him, and from a mind subdued and regulated by the graces of the Spirit; they are witnesses of the comfort which the Saviour's presence imparts, of the rest which he gives in the time of trouble, in the midst of this fluctuating and agitated world; they are witnesses of clear and sunlight prospects when the wilderness is dark, and of springs of joy in this dry and thirsty land where desolated blessings and blasted hopes so fearfully mark the Destroyer's path. They are witnesses to the truth of his promises and the value and preciousness of his ordinances. They are witnesses for his Bible; witnesses for his Sabbath, his Sanctuary, his ministers, and his saints. They are chosen, called, and faithful witnesses. They are sworn witnesses, and consent before God, angels, and men, that "God should help them," as their testimony is true or false. They are competent witnesses, even though they may not be learned. They are credible, convincing, and unanswerable witnesses; and where their testimony is disregarded,

they are condemning witnesses. They are witnesses for the Saviour and judge of men against Satan, sin and the world. They are continued through every age of time ; and just so far as they are his followers, the testimony he calls for they give.

Every true Christian in the world is Christ's witness. Whether he occupies a throne or a dungeon, his heart and his voice are lifted up for his once suffering and now exalted Master. The poor Negro who is washed in the blood of the Lamb, the frozen Greenlander whose heart is warmed by the love of God, the brutalized Hottentot, the treacherous Hindoo, and the lewd and sanguinary worshipper at the shrine of Juggernaut, who have been turned from dumb idols to serve the Living God, are as truly witnesses for Christ, as the favored Missionary of the Cross who first bore the glad tidings of great joy to their degraded lands. That Christian mother, and that believing child, bear witness for him as truly as Paul before Nero ; or Luther at the diet of Worms ; or Calvin by his Institutes ; or Zuingli on the battle-field ; or John Knox in the Castle of St. Andrews ; or the persecuted Church of Scotland by her Solemn League and Covenant ; or Thomas Chalmers when he led out the Church of Scotland free.

There have been noble witnesses for Christ in *ages of darkness*, and when wickedness triumphed, and the witnesses were clothed in sack-

cloth, and sealed their testimony with their blood ; but that child of poverty and prayer who is overheard giving utterance to her faith and submission in the almshouse, is as truly, though a more humble witness for him, as the martyr at the stake. Great and extraordinary trials and conflicts call for great sacrifices ; nor will the providence and grace of God fail to raise up witnesses fitted for such scenes ; yet must it not be forgotten, that it is amid the ordinary scenes of Christian life, where watchfulness and prayer, faith and patience, and toil, uncheered except by heavenly influences, that the believer's testimony exerts its appropriate and powerful and abiding efficacy.

It is no small matter to live and die, bearing witness before angels and men for Christ and his truth. More especially is the Saviour honored by this testimony when the witnesses are few, and dishonored for their testimony. When wealth and pride, fashion and power frown upon the Christian ; when to be allied to Christ is to dissolve the charm of other alliances and the believer stands alone ; then it is that the exactions of the gospel are urgent, and a strength of no ordinary faith is called for in order to take up his cross cheerfully. The temptation was strong for the twelve disciples to symbolize with the impiety of Jerusalem and Rome ; and it was this that gave their testimony value and importance. When iniquity

abounds, and error unfolds her gorgeous and Protean standard, and those even from whom better things are expected fall away; it is no feigned regard to the Redeemer's honor, that verifies his truth. Noble was the answer and the testimony, and it shall travel wherever this gospel is preached, 'Lord to whom shall we go but unto thee? thou hast the words of eternal life, and we know and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God." How many millions have lived and died bearing this testimony! That *death-bed* testimony, how precious it is! and how many pallid lips have uttered it! and how have its fragments been gathered up, and consecrated by tears!

When Toplady lay on his death-bed, he said to a friend, "It is impossible to describe how good God is to me. The comforts and manifestations of his love are so abundant, as to render my condition the most delightful in the world. He leaves me nothing to pray for but a continuance of them. My prayers are all converted into praise. Those great and glorious truths which the Lord in mercy has given me to believe, and which he has enabled me, though very feebly, to stand forth in defence of, carry me far above the things of time and sense. Sickness is no affliction; pain no curse; death itself no dissolution. I am the happiest man in the world. O how this soul of mine

longs to be gone! Like a bird imprisoned in its cage, it longs to take its flight. Being fixed on the eternal Rock, Christ Jesus, my soul is filled with peace and joy." When he drew near his end, he said, "O what delight! Who can fathom the joys of the third heaven! The sky is clear; there is no cloud. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"* Soon after this, he closed his eyes, and found

"A death-like sleep,
A gentle wafting to immortal life."/

How many precious memories of the departed have thus been preserved, and how often have they been scattered far and wide, and everywhere shedding the fragrance of the Saviour's name! And think you, Christ is not glorified by this great cloud of witnesses, whether among the living or the dead? This testimony is designed to honor him, and does honor him.

Our last thought is, that the followers of Christ *live to promote his glory and advance the interests of his kingdom*. "None of us," says the inspired Apostle, "liveth to himself." Such is the supreme and all-absorbing egotism of the human heart, that to do this is the most difficult thing in the world. The great conflict is between the flesh and the spirit, self and interests that are higher

* Life of Toplady, by London Tract Society.

and more important. The conquest is complete when sin and self are lost and swallowed up in God. And although it is never complete in the present world, yet just in the measure in which the conflict is successfully maintained, is Christ glorious in the character of his followers. We confess to no sympathy with those moral chemists, who, by their subtle analysis, have endeavored to resolve all the elements of goodness into *self-love*. Self has its place in the nature and relations of all intelligent existences; it has its place in the divine law, and in the gospel of Jesus Christ. But the infinite and ever-blessed God has also *his* place. Nor is it possible for a false philosophy so to twist and mould any one modification of true piety, as to make it appear that its origin and ruling motive is selfishness. If this principle were true, it would break down all moral distinctions in the universe, and show that the best man in the world, though he may be wiser, is radically no better than the worst.

The controlling principle which governs every truly Christian mind, is not so involved in abstruseness and intricacy as to escape consciousness; nor is it so obscure and doubtful in its overt actings, as to escape observation. The self-sacrificing impulse is *strong*, where "the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost." The faith of the gospel "works by love." A dead faith is a contra-

diction; it has no actual existence; it wants the principle of life and activity; its vitality is gone. *Living* Christians are "constrained" by the love of Christ, henceforth to live," *not* unto themselves, but to *him that died for them.*" True piety has this for its great object; and never does it appear to such advantage, and never so glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, as when it holds forth the beautiful picture of a redeemed sinner, caring more for the honor of Christ than his own, and for the interest of his kingdom than his own interest. Be his errors and imperfections ever so mournful a blot upon the canvass, this single characteristic stands out upon it in bold relief. There is not a Christian on the earth, who does not live to promote the glory of the Redeemer, and advance the interests of his kingdom. It is not his own ease, or honor, or wealth, or social relations, or country, that he lives for; it is for interests above and beyond all these, and to which all these, even when most cherished, are made subordinate. This is the great triumph of Christianity. In the character of such followers, its author is able to show the universe some bright spots in this dark world. Much as he is despised and rejected of men, and little as the mass of mankind care for the salvation of others, and for the nations that are going down to death, there are those who think of him, and honor him; who feel that all they are, and

have, and can perform, belongs to him, and that it is their earnest expectation and hope, that he may be "magnified in them, whether it be by life or by death." Is he not glorious in such as these? May he not say concerning them: See, I have not died in vain! The manger of Bethlehem, the poverty of Nazareth, the gloom of Gethsemane, the scorn, the scourge, the spitting, the cross, the grief, the love, were not in vain. Nor when I rose, was it in vain that all power in heaven and on earth was intrusted to my hands. These are they who were bought with a price. To their hands I have committed my honor, and the interests of my kingdom in yonder world. This is my reward; these are my triumphs, and they shall be multiplied as the drops of the morning dew! Are they not multiplied? Are they not found wherever a pure Christianity lives? Does not the wilderness blossom as the rose for them? Are they not the friends of the fatherless and the widow; the founders and patrons of every charity, the teachers of the ignorant, the reformers of the vicious, and the Christianizers of every people, and kindred, and tongue, and nation? Sweet is the privilege to be thus instrumental in extending the knowledge of God's salvation, and to become one of the lights of the world! Every effort to make known his name, is an effort to promote his glory; it makes God himself known, and "makes his

praise glorious." It brings glory to him from others, arresting the attention of a thoughtless world, augmenting the trophies of his love and power, making new manifestations of his glorious character, radiating around them and beyond them, to untold generations. God himself has said, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise."

Thus is the glory of Christ unfolded in the character of his followers. Nor is this empty speculation; but full of comfort to the people of God, full of inducements to holy living, and full of rebuke to ungodly men.

It is *full of comfort to the people of God*, because *they have the greatest security in his guardianship and love*. "The Lord's portion is his people; Israel is the lot of his inheritance." He has left them in this world as the guardians of his honor; to their keeping he has committed this sacred deposit, more valuable than worlds. And think you he will not keep *them*, and be their Guardian? We may rest satisfied that his church is safe. The signs of the times may be complex, and even dark; thrones may totter and there may be commotions among the people; but nothing in heaven, or on earth, or in hell, shall ever divert the love of Christ from his people. His unchanging faithfulness is the guaranty that light and darkness, good and evil, joy and sorrow, friends and foes shall work together

for their benefit. "Surely there is no divination against Jacob, and no enchantment against Israel." There is nothing he regards with such a watchful eye, or such a loving heart. What God said to ancient Israel, he says to his church now, and in these ends of the earth: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." He stands forth their Protector. "He that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye." His church is more beautiful and lovely in his eyes than in ours; and he will be its friend because it is the only living exhibition on the earth of his amiable and glorious character. "Not for their sakes will he do this, but for his own great name's sake." He has too many important purposes to accomplish, by their character and agency, ever to intermit either his care, or his love, or to fail in the promise, "I will make thee an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations."

The thoughts which have been expressed, are also *full of inducements to holy living*. We know of none stronger, or more constraining. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear *much fruit*." For what has his spiritual vineyard a place in this desert world; for what has he built a hedge about it, and encircled with his omnipotent protection,

and nurtured it by the prayers, and tears, and blood of his Son; but to bring forth fruit? From time to time, he visits it to "see if the vine flourish and the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth." If his church would welcome the visits of his love, she should welcome these visits of inspection. Her prayer should be, "Awake, O north wind, and come thou, south; blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out! Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits!" It is not enough to be professors of the Christian faith, and maintain the forms of Christian consecration and worship; the pride and self-delusion of the human heart often assume this disguise. Outward decency may not be the "fruit of the Spirit." It is a melancholy indication when men refuse to avow relation to Christ, and are ashamed of his truth and institutions; but this avowal is not necessarily Christian, nor may its object be to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. If we would honor Christ, we must possess his Spirit, and sympathize with him in the great objects he came into the world to accomplish. We must exemplify his Spirit in the more arduous and self-denying duties, by bearing his cross and never becoming weary in his service. We should take heed lest we *dishonor* him, and furnish a keen-eyed and fault-finding world some plausible pretext for saying, "What do ye more than others?"

O give no ground for this. Be consistent; be circumspect. Do not wound the Saviour "in the house of his friends." Do not betray the trust he has committed to you, but preserve his glory untarnished. It is a glorious trust. "Wherefore also we pray for you that our God would account you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The thoughts which have been suggested *are also full of rebuke to ungodly men.* There are no indications of the Redeemer's glory in their character. They neither acknowledge him to be their Lord and King; nor is their odious sinfulness any reflection of his unblotted purity; nor are they his witnesses in the world; nor do they live to advance the interests of his kingdom and promote his glory. It is another Master they serve; another model they imitate; another cause in behalf of which they appear as witnesses, and other interests than his which they live to promote. They bear no fruit to his praise; and but for his overruling providence, would be cumberers of his ground, and but for his forbearance and long-suffering, would be cut down. "Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud; for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God before he cause darkness, and before your

feeble stumble upon the dark mountain, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eye shall run down with tears." It is wonderful that God spares "the proud and them that do wickedly" so long. It is a perfectly proper thing that after he has waited upon them a suitable time he should cut them down. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." We say frankly to all the ungodly, it must come to this unless you turn from your evil way, and live and die to him whose glory is man's chief end and joy. The day of his scorning is not gone by; for men still hide their faces from him, and it is the day of his reproaches. Yet, with all the contumely that you are heaping upon him, his eye now beams upon you the radiance of compassion and love. Woe to the man who discourages, and exhausts, and crushes those heavenly sympathies! The day is coming when the defamed Jesus will vindicate his insulted honor; when he will avenge the wrong that has been done to him; and the man who now hates and slanders him, will find that he has not a friend in the universe, and that heaven and earth "shall clap their hands at him, and hiss him out of his place."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED.

It is recorded of the two disciples, in their instructive and animating interview with their divine Master on their way to Emmaus, that "their eyes were holden so that they did not know him." The Sun of righteousness may shine around us in the fulness of his glory; but if our eyes are closed, it matters not to us whether he be risen, or covered with a cloud. It is one thing for him to possess these unutterable glories, and another for men to behold them.

At his first advent, "the light shone upon the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." It is no uncommon thing for those who have strong convictions of the truths of the gospel and some hopes of the divine favor, to complain of the obscurity of their views of Jesus Christ. They are not without some just impressions of their need of him; nor without occasional glimpses of his fitness, excellence, and beauty; nor do they doubt

his fulness and all-sufficiency; yet the great *defect* in their religious experience, and as they themselves judge, the dark spot in their character consists in their defective views of Christ.

On the other hand, there are those who think much and speak much of him, and seem to make much of him in their hopes, who do not furnish the best evidence in the world that they partake of his spirit. They profess to enjoy delightful, and even ravishing views of him; yet you cannot help feeling that their Christianity is questionable. It has an Antinomian cast; nor do they appear to have a sufficiently deep impression of the truth that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

Yet the important fact may never be forgotten nor obscured, that personal, experimental, practical godliness has much to do with Christ. His character and work and glory not more certainly form the great and prominent subjects of a supernatural revelation, than believing and sanctified views of him form the inward source and spring of devout affections and holy sensibilities of soul. All true believers are "complete in him." From "his fulness have they all received, and grace for grace." He "of God is made to them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." He is the fountain of their spiritual life, the ground of their hopes, the solace, the joy of their hearts, and their everlasting portion.

It is of no ordinary importance, therefore, that we make a scriptural presentation of *those views of the glory of Christ* that are peculiar to the people of God. There were those in the days of his flesh who "beheld his glory;" there are those who behold it now, and whose views differ from those which "see in him no form, nor comeliness." We shall confine our remarks to the following *characteristics* of those views of the adorable Saviour which are enjoyed only by his own people.

The first of these characteristics is, that they are *the fruit of the Spirit*. The apostle Paul represents unrenewed men as "having their understanding *darkened*, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the *blindness* of their heart. This blindness is nowhere more obvious than in their ignorance of Christ. Their views of him are obscure and confused. They are perverted views, and such as dishonor him; they are false views, and sometimes no views at all. Not a few persons of this description do not possess even a gleam of *intellectual* light when they hear or read of him who "is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person."

Of true Christians the Scriptures speak in very different language. "Ye were once darkness; but now are ye light in the Lord;"—"We all, with unveiled face, behold as in a glass the glory of the

Lord ;"—“ Ye are a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

We say, therefore, that the peculiar views which Christians have of Christ are produced by the Holy Spirit. “ God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in their hearts to give them the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.” It is not the work of man, nor of means, nor of the unillumined intellect in its deepest researches, or its loftiest flights. When the Apostle Peter, with his characteristic boldness, made that memorable declaration, “ Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” the Saviour said to him, “ Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.” In speaking of the appropriate work of the Spirit, the Saviour remarks, “ He shall take of mine and show it unto you ;” and he elsewhere speaks of “ manifesting himself to his disciples as he does not unto the world.”

As a consequence of this general and leading truth, we remark, in the next place, that the views which all true Christians enjoy of their divine Lord are *spiritual* views, in distinction from those which are purely intellectual. In the act of creating them anew in Christ Jesus, the Spirit of God creates within them “ a new heart and a new

spirit;" he "sheds abroad the love of God in the heart," which of itself lays the foundation for new discernment, new sensibilities, and, if I may so speak, a new spiritual taste. We see not why the metaphysical writers of a very intelligent class should have made so fierce a warfare upon what we mean by *spiritual taste*. It is a common-sense view of the subject when we speak of a spiritual taste in men, and a natural taste. Just as there is in some minds a peculiar sensitiveness to the beauty of colors, or to the melody and harmony of sound, or to the beauty of proportions; so is there in every truly regenerated mind a moral or spiritual sensitiveness, a ready perception of the deformity of sin, the beauty of holiness, the excellence of the divine character, and the glory of Christ. There is a taste and relish for divine truth, and for the duties and enjoyments of piety. There is no more certain criterion by which true grace may be distinguished from all counterfeits than this. The renewed mind receives pleasure from the contemplation of divine objects; nor can you touch a string within the whole circle of divine truth, but such a mind, if well instructed, responds to it. It is far otherwise with the unrenewed heart. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he show them, because they are *spiritually discerned*." Spiritual

minds are deeply interested in Christ's instructions; they have exalted and delightful views of his Person and work and ineffable glory. Their views of him are above and beyond all mere intellectual views, however just those intellectual views may be. All *spiritual* views of him are *scriptural*, but all *scriptural* views of him are not necessarily *spiritual*. Judas-Iscaiot may have had scriptural views of him. We are told that "the devils believe and tremble;" they may, and doubtless do possess views of Christ's Person and work that are accordant with truth: and wicked men may be well instructed in all those doctrines of the gospel which relate to the Son of God. Yet none of these ever truly beheld his glory.

Yet while we say these things, it is not unimportant to remark that the best and most orthodox intellectual views of Christ are *very apt* to be intellectually defective. There may be just views of his natural perfections as he unfolds them in the works of creation and providence; while not a few who live under the broad daylight of the gospel have no just conceptions of the glory of his moral nature. This thought suggests the true and discriminating nature of spiritual in distinction from mere intellectual views. It requires rectitude to perceive rectitude, goodness to perceive goodness, love to perceive and form a true estimate of love, just as it requires thought to perceive thought,

and genius to perceive and appreciate genius, and nobleness and generosity to perceive and appreciate them in others. It is one thing to possess the intellectual conviction that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again according to the scriptures, and another to perceive the excellence of his Person and work. Those there are who do not call in question the instructions of the gospel concerning him, whose views of him are limited to the bare letter of these instructions without any right feeling or corresponding emotions.

When we speak of *spiritual*, in distinction from intellectual views of Christ, we are aware that we use language that is capable of perversion. The words *spirituality*, *spiritual*, and *spiritualize*, are some of these compendious words, which, if we do not regard their true import, may conduct minds not a few, to the mysticisms of piety, rather than to its intelligible reality. Mysticism is obscurity. It is a sublimated, rather than a sublime religion, and flows from a supposed and direct intercourse with the divine Spirit, *without the intervention of God's truth*. The puerile illusions and collusions of modern spiritualists, are scarcely more absurd than the mysticism of the fourth and twelfth centuries. *The Spirit of God always acts upon the mind through the medium of truth*. Truth is one, whether revealed in the works and providence of God, unfolded in the Scriptures, or

brought to the view of the mind by that divine Agent, whose office it is to take of the things of Christ, and show them to men. Spiritual views of Christ are sober and veritable views. They are not high-wrought sentimentalism. They are not poetry; nor are they the effect of mere mental abstraction. They are not the fancies of the cloister; nor are they produced by dreams, and visions, and supernatural audible voices. Nor are they the effect of any extraordinary light to the outward eye; nor do they consist of those perceptions that are caused by an excited and fertile imagination, painting the Saviour as suspended on the cross, and surrounded by a halo of indescribable glory. Nor let the remark be deemed too trivial, when we say that they are never steeped and drugged into the soul by subtle opiates and alcoholic poisons, stealing upon the nerves and senses, and superinducing that dreamy and exquisite sensibility, which, by weak minds, is so often mistaken for the fervors of piety. Nor is it any evidence that they are spiritual views, that they were obtained in some extraordinary and unaccountable way, and have been deeply affecting. It is true that the "wind bloweth where it listeth;" the Spirit of God may sometimes come over the soul amid the night-watches; amid hours of solemn thought, and through altogether unwonted agencies; but when he does so, it is always in the

overshadowings of *truth*. All other views are imaginary or false, and are not worthy of confidence. They are a sort of religious transcendentalism, which a believing mind looks upon with suspicion and rejects. The *great facts* of the Bible form the basis on which a mind enlightened by God's Spirit rests its confidence. Spiritual views are "full of truth;" God's truth lies at the foundation of them all.

Another characteristic of those views of Christ which are peculiar to the Christian mind is, that *they are not selfish views*. Self is not dissevered from them, but they are not mainly excited or sustained by selfish considerations. They are views of a grateful, but not a selfish mind. They do not flow from regarding him merely as our benefactor; but from loving him as he is, and for his own sake. True love and gratitude are easily distinguished; while as exercised toward Christ by every truly Christian mind, they are never separated. A good man may receive benefit from one whose character he condemns; and a bad man may receive benefit from one in whose character he takes no complacency; while both may be grateful for the benefit and have no love for the character. Where the character deserves complacency and confidence, and the benefits bestowed demand gratitude; the complacency strengthens the gratitude, and the gratitude the

complacency. The character of Christ and his love towards his people, give him the highest claim both upon the complacent and grateful admiration of his glory; nor need they be separated.

But what if my *impressions* of my own personal interest in Christ are delusive, and my hope in his mercy no better than the hypocrite's hope? Such a persuasion obviously has not anything gracious in its nature. Remove this delusion, and such a mind would see no beauty in the Son of God. Those views of his glory which are imparted by the Holy Spirit, consist of enlarged and gratified conceptions of his own intrinsic loveliness. If my impressions of my own personal interest in him are such as are founded in truth; are they not rather the *result* of my spiritual views of him, than *these views themselves*? They are views of *him*, and not of my own hopes that are so transporting. These views of *him* produce a calm and peaceful state of mind; nay, they are often associated with hope's full assurance, and because they furnish the scriptural evidence that those who enjoy them are personally interested in his redemption. But they are not selfish views; nor do they forsake the soul even in her most desponding hours. There are those who have very languid hopes for themselves, who have at the same time views of Christ that are truly spiritual. They have the assurance of faith without

the assurance of hope. Through the power of temptation, or from a suspicious and gloomy temperament, or from bodily infirmity, they may be driven to the borders of despair; yet their souls pant after Christ, and they are resolved to seek him, though they die at his feet.

Then again, there are those whose views of the Saviour are so clear and transporting, that they do not stop to think of themselves. The manifestations of his glory are so resplendent and so absorbing, that they are raised above all thoughts of their own spiritual state. Such views are not selfish. The sweetest, purest, and most spiritual joys ever experienced by the people of God, arise from their objective views of Christ. Self is lost sight of. Christ is the object they are contemplating; nor can they, in such a state of mind, consent to withdraw their thoughts from *him*. His loveliness and glory are then realized, and make corresponding impressions on the heart. There is that heartfelt sense of his excellence and beauty, imparted by that grace which the world knows not of.

Another characteristic of these views is the *perfect assurance they produce of the reality and excellence of the things that are thus discovered to the soul*. They put to flight all doubts of the truth of God's word, and of the method of salvation there revealed. The Christian who enjoys them

no more doubts than Peter did, when he exclaimed, "We know and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God." He no more doubts than he doubts his senses. He has the evidence of experience; it is experimental knowledge; he has "*tasted* and seen that the Lord is good." This, to him, is more than all other evidence. It is no theory; it is matter of fact. He never forgets it. many a time, in subsequent seasons of darkness does he recur to it in order to eradicate his unbelieving fears and repel the suggestions of the adversary. There is something unutterably delightful in such views of God and his Christ, were it for nothing more than the assurance, and perfect repose they produce in the reality of the things thus seen. Babes in Christ may have these intelligent teachings, and this assurance that they are taught. They may have no other evidence within their reach, but this satisfies them. They have found the truth of Christ to be what it professes to be; it speaks to them as nothing else speaks. Mere speculative knowledge cannot produce this impression. It is something written on the "*fleshly tables of the heart*." It is unwrought; it is "*truth in the inward parts*," and is as much a reality as their own thoughts and affections. It is the joy and rejoicing of the heart. Good men glory in it as Paul did when he "*gloried in the cross*." The Person and grace of Christ shine

with such a divine glory, that they seek no other Saviour. They are satisfied with Christ, though in want of other things; while without him all other things are nothing.

Another characteristic of these views is that *they produce a lowly mind*. No views, be they ever so transporting, are the fruit of the Spirit that have not this effect upon the soul. Never does the Christian lie so low as when he enjoys the clearest perceptions of his Redeemer's glory. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes!" When he looks up and sees how exalted and glorious that Saviour is, he is covered with shame; an humbling sense of his own abjectness and vileness abases him. Past and present sin humbles him, abases his pride, and fills him with self-loathing. He lies low, and "his comeliness is turned into corruption." The soul feels its wants then. It is sensible of its insufficiency and ill-desert, and its language is "God be merciful to me a sinner!" We may rest satisfied that where our views of Christ are such as to lift up the heart in pride, and produce a self-sufficient and self-exulting spirit, they are not of God.

Still another characteristic of all spiritual views of Christ is a *cherished solicitude to honor and glorify him*. They give him the throne, and would

see him enthroned in every heart. One glimpse of his glory, and no living man asks for greater evidence that he deserves to be practically acknowledged as "God over all blessed forever." The crown of the Godhead is his; the crown of Creation is his; to him belong all the badges of kingdom and royalty. The crown of heaven is his; and his the crown of all the earth. His

"By ancient covenant, ere nature's birth,
And he has made his by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with his blood."

Look where he will, after such rich views of his divine Lord, the believer exclaims, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee; and what is there on the earth that I desire beside Thee!" His heart finds its sweetest impulses to active and self-denying duty in the character, the love, the ineffable glory of his adorable Master. His reason goes on from step to step, but finds naught to gratify it like the revelations that are made of Christ. When his affections become enchained and his imagination enchanted by earthly good; nothing breaks the charm like spiritual perceptions of this "brightest, sweetest, fairest One."

Where these views of Christ do not furnish effective inducements to holy living, they may always be regarded as spurious. The Christian profession is a good profession; and where it is sustained by supreme love to Christ and joy in him,

is indicated by watchfulness and prayer, by a circumspect deportment, and a faith that is manifested by works. His light shines before men, that others seeing his good works, may glorify his Father who is in heaven. If he is obstructed in his heavenly career, he is the more careful to lay aside every weight and the sin that doth most easily beset him; and though he is never what he should be, he strives to be better than he is, and seeks for grace to enable him to walk worthy of his high hopes and high vocation.

Such are some of the characteristics of that spiritual discernment of the glory of Christ that are peculiar to the people of God. They are by no means the same in all Christians, nor with the same Christians at all times. The best "see through a glass darkly;" while not a few "see men as trees walking;" and others walk for the most part in darkness. No one may draw the conclusion that he is not the disciple of Christ because he has not the same illumined views with Moses and Paul. If he does not habitually enjoy the sunlight splendor of God's countenance, let him be thankful for its milder, and less refulgent rays. Paul was not always in the third heavens, nor was Moses always in the Mount with God. There are bright views of the Redeemer's glory; and there are those equally spiritual that are less bright. The more bright we should desire and

seek after, because they are attainable. There are no new faculties imparted to the soul in order to enjoy them; they are such views as all might enjoy if their hearts were always right with God, and they loved the Saviour as they ought. They are not obtained by the revelation of any new truths not contained in God's word; but by clear and deep impressions of those already made known, and carried home to the heart by the Holy Spirit.

Let the reader, in view of these thoughts, ask himself, *am I a Christian?* Do I belong to that peculiar people, who in character and sources of enjoyment differ from other men? God has such a people, to whom he gives peculiar views of the glory of his Son. No thanks to them that they are what they are. The work is God's; his the grace, and his the glory! "I thank thee Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight!"

Would you be a *happy Christian*; seek to know more of Christ. There is more to be seen and admired in him than you have ever beheld. There is nothing which appertains to true godliness which those who have once experienced do not desire to experience again, and in still higher degrees. Paul could say, "Not as though I had already attained; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that

for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." There is room to know more, love more, admire, enjoy more, and to be more transformed by these delightful manifestations into the same image, from glory to glory. The mind of a godly man is alive to every repeated and every fresh discovery which the Redeemer makes of himself, whether in his word and ordinances, or in his providence. He "would see Jesus." He would see him everywhere, and enjoy him in everything. Whatever the scene, the events, the place, the duties which bring his Saviour near, attract his own heart toward Christ and heaven. *That* is the Mount of Transfiguration to him, and he says of it, "Lord it is good to be here!" The most adoring views he would have still more adoring. His prayer is, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory!" He would be satisfied to the full; he would drink of those "rivers of pleasure," that "river of life, flowing clear as crystal from the throne of God and the Lamb." If you walk in darkness, there is fault somewhere; and must it not be in *you*? It cannot be in God; for "God is love," he "taketh pleasure in them that fear him and in them that *hope* in his mercy." It is not in the gospel; for the gospel is "glad tidings of great joy." It is not in the Saviour; for his glory is never concealed, but always luminous, always visible if men will but open their eyes to behold it. "He that followeth after me," says this

great source of light and comfort, "shall *not* walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He passed through scenes of darkness, that he might "lift the light of his countenance upon them, and give them peace." Let the benighted Christian say, "Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee I will lay my hand upon my mouth." He is looking to other sources of light and joy, when he should be looking only to *Christ*. It is not the world that can give you peace, but *Christ*. It is not human counsellors, but Christ the *Wonderful Counsellor*. It is not frames and feelings, but *Christ*. To a sinner everything is dark but *Christ*. Happy frames and feelings are not *Christ*. They change, but he never changes. There is no delusion when faith fixes its eye not upon itself but upon *him*. "Who shall separate us from the love of *Christ*!" Let these simple truths sink down into your hearts, and your nights will be tranquil, and your days cheered and joyful. You will not indeed throw off from your heart the load of conscious wickedness, but you will find the relief of pardon and grace; you will be established in the peace, and hope, and joy of the gospel; your apprehensions will be dissipated, and you will possess those views of the Saviour's glory which fill you with light and joy.

Would you be *fitted for death and ripe for heaven*; seek to know more of Christ. Special manifestations of his glory are often vouchsafed to the

people of God for the purpose of furnishing them responsible and self-denying duty and toil. They are often imparted in order to prepare him for scenes of conflict and days of temptation and trial. But they always exert a happy influence in fitting them for death and heaven. No small part of the blessedness of that joyous world consists in "seeing him as he is;" though even there, there are heights and depths of his glory which the purest of disembodied spirits never penetrate. There the soul is happy because it loses itself in his infinity, and prospects are ever being opened which are the source of ever increasing joy. Preparatory to this glory hereafter revealed, there is no more delightful or effective means than those less refulgent manifestations begun on earth. Nothing so certainly withdraws the heart from things seen and temporal and fixes it on the things that are unseen and eternal. They are like the Pisgah views which the Prophet enjoyed of the Promised Land, where the eye of faith rests on the "delectable mountains," and runs over the fields beyond the flood. They are like some unlooked-for light which breaks on the path of the wearied and benighted traveller as he comes near to his journey's end, and as it glimmers from the window of his own beloved home. They are no unfriendly indications of our departure from the present world, when the veil is thus drawn aside, and like the martyred

disciple we are allowed to "see heaven opened and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Christ is "all and in all," to the dying, as well as the living believer. John the aged might well consent to be gathered to his people after that vision of the Son of Man in the isle of Patmos. It was a view that travelled with him to his grave. Ever after that heavenly voice fell upon his ear, "Fear not; I am he that liveth and was dead." And when that same voice spoke the words, "Surely I come quickly;" well did this favored disciple reply, "Even so; come Lord Jesus!"

But it may be that the reader *is not a Christian*. Yet is he travelling to the same eternity and through no such illumined path. It is a dark path through the wilderness which he has chosen, and a dark valley through which he enters upon his gloomy inheritance. No fellow spirit can accompany, no created arm support him in the dread conflict. The Comforter is afar off, and he goes alone to the house appointed for all the living."

What shall we say to him? Shall we cheer him by vivid delineations of earthly joy? His mind cannot be thus satisfied, even though thus transiently deceived. It may be that even now it would fain hunger and thirst after righteousness. It were no fitting counsel to magnify in his esteem the wealth, and honors, and pleasures of time. We come on a more kind errand, and have a sweeter

message. We would tell him of the crucified and living One who came to guide his erring feet into the way of peace, to make him happy by making him holy, to show him his glory and induce him to become partaker of his joy. The pleasure of his return to God would outweigh all the pain of forsaking and mortifying his sin. One cheering view of Christ would far transcend all the glories of earth and time. Come, "taste and see that the Lord is good." Gather fruit, now before the harvest is past and the summer of life is ended, from this Tree of Life. Drink of these rivers of salvation, that you go not any more to these broken cisterns which hold no water.

O what overpowering splendor shines in the face of Jesus Christ! Behold it as the "glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "Look unto him and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for he is God and there is none else!"

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRIST'S GLORY THE WONDER OF ANGELS.

FROM the fact that God has chosen this world to be the theatre of the great Redemption, the inference cannot be fairly drawn, that all the benefits of this stupendous work are confined to this world. We have our own special concern in it as fallen creatures; but others observe it as well as we, and may, peradventure, learn more from it than we ourselves learn. Men are not the only race of intelligences in the universe; some there may be that are lower; that there are those who are higher is distinctly revealed to us. We have frequent notices of the existence of a class of intelligences existing in another state of being, and constituting a celestial family, or hierarchy, over which God immediately presides. They are of different orders, and, it would seem, form a chain of beings which fill up the chasm between the infinite Creator and the creature man. We know nothing of them except from the Bible; while

from this source our knowledge is collected from hints and fragments, rather than from any historic or dogmatic statement. They are spiritual beings, of intelligent and holy character; and in those instances in which they have appeared to men they have appeared in human forms, in robes of purity, and with emblems of power. When sent on errands of mercy, their countenances are full of light and love; full of terror when bearing messages of judgment. They are described in the New Testament as *young men* whose countenance is like lightning, and whose raiment is white as snow. They stand in the presence of God; are ministering spirits to them that shall be the heirs of salvation; and in the execution of this office are sometimes clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow about their head.

We probably have very inadequate views of the number of these holy and heavenly intelligences. They are represented as a "host," and as "the host of heaven," standing on the right and the left of the celestial throne; as "thousands of angels;" as "thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand;" as "more than twelve legions;" as "a great multitude of the heavenly host," and as an innumerable company of angels." It is said of them that they "excel in strength;" that they are "great in power and might," and that their activity and power are such that they fly from heaven to earth,

and from earth to heaven, with a swiftness that is inconceivable to men.

The object of the present chapter is to speak of the *fact itself*, that angels take a deep interest in the Person of Christ; to show *why* they feel this interest; and to advert to the *impressions* which their views of his glory make upon their own minds.

We will, in the first place, advert to THE FACT ITSELF, THAT ANGELIC EXISTENCES FEEL A DEEP INTEREST IN THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST.

Although these celestial messengers have no personal interest in the redemption of Christ, because they are not sinners; yet are they represented as "desiring to look into it." One of the great truths enumerated by the Apostle Paul as connected with the history of God manifest in the flesh, is that he was "seen of angels." The same apostle, in addressing the church of Ephesus, distinctly informs us, that it was "the intent" of this redemption, that "now unto *principalities and powers in heavenly places* might be known the manifold wisdom of God." It is a curious fact, also, that in the great epoch of the Saviour's history we find these angel ministrations; ever and anon the angels of God are about his path, and hovering over him. There is an intercourse kept up between them, as though the association were expected and delightful.

Men "see through a glass darkly," both from the imperfection of their intellectual powers, the sinfulness of their character, and the remoteness of their position from celestial objects. Angels possess thought and intelligence far above that which is human; while their proximity to heavenly things enables them to behold them without any intervening obstruction. We are ignorant of the laws of their intercourse with one another, and with the great and glorious objects around them; yet in those instances in which they have appeared among men, the medium of their perceptions seems to have been not unlike our own. Their views and emotions were communicated just as we communicate ours; and their perceptions, though more extensively intuitive, are derived from sources of knowledge more proximate and more clear, indeed, but such as are revealed to men.

When the revelation was first made known in heaven that he was to take upon him "not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham," there is no doubt they regarded the intelligence with astonishment; and when he assumed man's nature, and made known the great objects he had in view by this assumption, while a part of their number revolted from this service as an indignity to their exalted rank, those who remained loyal held themselves ready to promote this glorious design in all the ways by which their loyalty to the Son of God

and their love for man could be expressed. They regarded him with high interest as their Maker and Lord; but when he veiled his divine glory, and was made of a woman and made under the law, they regarded him with new interest, and with an admiration still more profound. Some of them had, from time to time, attended on their adorable Master when he made a transient appearance to the patriarchs as a prelude and earnest of his actual coming in the flesh; and now they saw the whole import of that incarnation. Centuries before, it had been predicted that his "name shall be called Wonderful;" and now the wonder was realized. They beheld his glory; it was a rapturous view to them of those councils of peace which had been made known in heaven. They had seen that there was no hope for the apostate rebels of their own race; and they waited with eager expectation to see the problem solved, how God could be "just, and the justifier of the ungodly;" how Satan could be baffled in his mischievous and successful device of *man's* apostasy; how *man's* restoration and happiness could be rendered consistent with the support of the divine government and the authority of the divine law, and the whole enterprise be so conducted as to save the Deity, harmless, and even augment the lustre of his throne. When the eternal Word bowed his heavens, and they beheld the child that was born, they saw the mystery of god-

liness thus far explained. They were expecting this event; and Gabriel was sent to foretell it to his virgin mother. And when she brought forth her first-born and laid him in the manger, one of them was commissioned to make it known to the shepherds, while "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men!" They even indicated the place of his birth to the astonished shepherds; and it was in obedience to their angelic directions that these men went to Bethlehem and "found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger."

This was but the beginning of their admiration. When the eastern sages worshipped him, angels beheld the sight; and they saw how and why it was, that "Herod and all Jerusalem were troubled." They saw his flight into Egypt, wondering why men should take the alarm, because the God of love had come to dwell on the earth. They saw his return to Nazareth, and witnessed the purity and devotion of his private life, and marked how this remarkable Personage "grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man." Night and day did they observe him, for they had never seen such a sight before; "a sinless child, a sinless youth, a sinless man," among the descendants of Adam! It was a wondrous

object they thus beheld in humble retirement, and before he launched upon more troubled scenes and agitated seas. It was not in his true glory that he even then appeared to them; but they thought not the less of him for appearing in this strange disguise. He was not disguised to *them*; they knew him well; and they joyfully discerned in his person and conduct, that greatness and goodness, that beauty of holiness, which outshone all their own, and made them veil their faces in his presence. A palace and a throne would have added nothing to him in their estimation; nor the riches of the world, even though for our sakes he became poor. Nor would it have increased his glory in their view, if, instead of the reproaches that were cast upon him, his name had been always mingled with the hosannahs of the people.

For thirty years of his short life, he remained thus in comparative retirement; and they saw him all the while. But when he came forth to the world, and published the errand on which he came, they also published and confirmed it. He was seen of them when John baptized him in Jordan; and when he came up from the river, they heard the voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" In his forty days' dwelling in the wilderness they watched him, solitary and alone among beasts and devils; they

saw his conflicts, and when "the Devil leaveth him, behold *angels* came and ministered unto him." They saw his miracles; and were held in astonishment at the power of the Great Healer. They heard the contradiction of sinners against him; and were the witnesses of his patience and meekness under it all. When he was transfigured on the Mount, they saw him; and rejoiced at this prelibation of his coming glory. In Gethsemane they beheld him, burdened and distressed; and they heard the cry, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" They were the witnesses of that deep distress; and, strange and wondrous errand, so abject was his condition, and so high their privilege, that "an angel appeared strengthening him!" They saw him betrayed and apprehended; and legions of them stood ready to rescue him at his Father's bidding. They saw him arraigned, accused, insulted, blindfolded, spit upon, dragged from hall to hall, scourged, crowned with thorns, and at last condemned as a malefactor. They saw him led out to Calvary; they stood still, because heaven stood still; and this commandment they received from their Lord, while the high and holy and harmless One was laid on the cross, transfixed with nails, raised up in agony to be a gazing-stock to the infuriate populace, and inhumanly derided in his agonies. He was seen and heard of angels, when

he cast that look of pity on the dying thief; and when he uttered those words of filial love and duty on behalf of his weeping mother. They heard that prayer for his enemies, and that final sentence, "It is finished!" They saw him expire, taken down, and laid in the tomb of Joseph. Where the soldiers watched, *they* kept watch also over his lifeless body. And as soon as the third day began to dawn, one of them appeared and rolled away the rock that was upon the mouth of the sepulchre, and for "fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men." They saw him rise from the dead, and were in waiting in shining apparel, to announce the joyful tidings to his disciples, "He is not here, he is risen!" And when forty days afterward, he was received up into glory, they stood by and saw him go up. Nay, they tarried awhile to console his mourning disciples, with the assurance of his coming again a second time, without sin unto salvation. They conducted him to his throne in triumph; shouted his return in joyous praises, and though they have not learned the notes of the redeemed, they cried with a loud voice, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." After he ascended, also, they saw and honored him. They beheld his glory in the "ministration of the Spirit." And if "there is joy in heaven among

the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," what a jubilee was the day of Pentecost to angels! And how often has that jubilee been repeated; and those angelic triumphs, how sweetly have they reverberated, and how are they destined to prolong their echo! Nor does their admiration stop here. In the future and final administration of the Mediator's government on the earth, they still bear a part. They are commissioned by him to sound one trumpet and one woe after another, in order to prepare the way for his Last Advent. Nay more, at his command "the angels come forth to sever the wicked from among the just," and to "gather his saints together who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice." And when he shall come to judge the world in righteousness, they shall be his glorious attendants; "the Son of Man shall come *in his glory*, and all the *holy angels* with him." They are now, they shall be ever, enveloped with his glory; his glory, from first to last, is their wonder and admiration.

Thus true is it that the glory of Christ is the admiration of angels. Men admire other things. They are intent on the pursuit of wealth, pleasure, and fame. They gaze with admiration on the beauty and majesty of the outstretched earth, and the splendor of the starry heavens. Its princes and its palaces, its proud cities and gor-

geous temples, and the solemnity and pomp of their religious worship, these excite their wonder. Angels look at Christ and admire his great glory. This world did not contain such another Personage, nor present a scene half so glorious in their eyes. The splendid court of princes had no charms for them, compared with Mary's Son. The wealth and honors, the learning and splendor of earth they could not look at, so long as their eye might be fixed on Jesus. Its men, its virtues, were lost sight of, while they might behold him, and be conversant with one so holy and harmless, so undefiled and separate from sinners. Jerusalem with its gorgeous Temple made with hands, they cared not for, so long as they could see him within its sacred courts, and hear him disputing with its learned masters. Its sacred ark and vestal fires were of little moment to them. The ark was gone, the primitive fires on its altars were extinguished. The Temple needed them not, for he filled it who was its glory, and who made the glory of the latter greater than the glory of the former house. This earth did not contain such another Personage, nor present a scene half so glorious in their eyes, as this ever-blessed and adorable Redeemer.

We proceed in the next place, to THE REASON OF THEIR DEVOUT ADMIRATION.

Here we remark, in the first place, angels were

made the spectators of these things, that *they might be the witnesses of them*. It is well for Christianity, that its Author is thus glorious in the eyes of angels. They are his witnesses as well as men. In every view, *their testimony to the great facts in the history of Christ, is of weight in the argument in favor of the truth of Christianity*. These facts, as we have had occasion frequently to remark, lie at the basis of that religion that is revealed from heaven. He who believes these facts to be true, and treats them as true, is a Christian. He who rejects them, or gives his cold and bald assent to them, without trusting in them, is an infidel. We say nothing of other evidence; God himself summons his angels from heaven to bear witness to these great and glorious realities. They were eye-witnesses of them; and they have more than once come down from their high abodes to give their testimony. In bright array they stand before men as the Saviour's witnesses. Men may think little of this testimony; but it will be found to have either a justifying or condemning power. *We* may, or may not give credence to such testimony, but it is given to us. And it will be given at another day, when the universe shall hear it, and shall know that the witness they hear is true.

In the next place, *He whom they thus saw and admired, is worthy of their intense regard*. He

was manifested in the flesh, but he is their Creator; he is that eternal Word without whom not one of them was made. He was in low attire, but more exalted than they; "for to which of the angels saith God at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" God requires of them this respectful, this venerating, this devotional regard, to his well-beloved and only-begotten Son. When he bringeth his only-begotten into the world, he saith, "Let all the angels of God worship him." In his human nature, he is the "head of the creation of God." It is his purpose, "in the dispensation of the fulness of time, to gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in *heaven*, and which are on earth; even in him." It is but taking their place and giving him his, to watch him at every step of his career; and never are they so exalted as when thus observing and thus ministering to their Creator and Lord. God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of "things in heaven, as well as things upon the earth." Believers on the earth, in the homage they pay to the Incarnate God, are only "come to" and sympathize with, an "innumerable company of angels." We know not all the relations which exist between Christ and these unfallen spirits; but they well understand that his assumption of

human nature, and his official capacity and subordination to the Father, abate nothing of his essential claims as "over all God blessed forever." Angels celebrate the glory with which he is invested, because all power is given to him in heaven and on earth; boundless resources are his; to him belongs the homage of the universe.

In their admiring views of Christ, *there is also a beautiful exhibition of the angelic character.* They are not of the moral temperament which allows them to be indifferent to any of God's works, or to any of the manifestations of his excellence; much less to this great impersonation of the Deity; or to his redemption, which is the greatest, the brightest, of all his works. They were filled with wonder, because he was manifested for the purpose of destroying the works of the Devil, and establishing and perpetuating on the earth, the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost. God has taken occasion thus to turn the apostasy of man to good account, and thereby to illustrate his own wisdom and all-sufficiency, and to express at once the glory of his justice and the riches of his grace. Angels would do violence to their own nature, not to worship at his cross, and bow at his throne. Here is the showing forth of his glory, and the exact representation of his essence. On the wondrous facts of his mediation, these lofty intelli-

gences delight to meditate, because they are benevolent beings; this greatest expression of benevolence and love that was ever made, must necessarily attract their attention. They are holy beings; and it cannot but be delightful to their holy minds, to see the multitudes once totally defiled with sin, now, and hereafter, to be washed, and sanctified, and restored to perfect purity. They the friends of God, of order, of law, and of good government; and in this Deity Incarnate, and his triumph on the cross, there is a sure and certain pledge of the happy issue of all the events of time, and the everlasting security of the divine empire.

Nor may the thought be overlooked, that *angels themselves are the gainers by this great redemption*. Though not the objects of it, it consults their character, their honor, their joys. Though they form no part of Christ's redeemed kingdom, yet are they brought under the same rule, and authority, and Prince. It is the object of his incarnation, to bring the whole unfallen and redeemed creation into one family, and into closer union with himself. Through this great work they are expecting to see the terrible breach repaired, that was made by the rebellion and fall of so many of their own once holy society; and as those vacant mansions are thus replenished, to unite with the restored millions of our race in the sacred joys of

their obedience and praise. There is, and there will be forever, a heartfelt union between the saved of our race and angels, which never would have been known, but for Christ.

It is natural to ask, as the last topic of our illustration, *what are some of the impressions which their view of the Redeemer's glory must make on these angelic minds?* We know nothing what these impressions are, except as they are revealed to us in the Scriptures, and from what we know of angels themselves. Their impressions must be worthy of their holy natures, and of the vast intellect with which their Master has gifted them. They are, and ever have been, disposed to look with a friendly, gratified eye, on all that God has done. They are capable of very strong and intense impressions, and there is nothing more fitted to produce them than this Incarnate Deity, and the objects and purposes for which he came into the world. Their views of Christ must, therefore,

In the first place, *greatly augment their love and admiration of God himself.* Every new view of God increases their obligations to love and admire him; and here they have the clearest and most enlarged views. There is every reason to believe that even their intellectual and moral powers become invigorated by this service; and that in this contemplation of the Deity their minds become greatly expanded, and their hearts greatly en-

larged. Their love of him must be inflamed, and their confidence in him greatly strengthened, by their views of him as manifested in the flesh. It must fill them with unbounded admiration of his manifold wisdom, his strange condescension, his matchless love and grace, his equal justice, his inviolable truth, and all his glowing excellencie and unfolding purposes, as they thus shine in the face of his Son. It is altogether a new view of God, and such as they never had before; and it is a most delightful view. The prophet Isaiah once had a remarkable vision of the angels, as they themselves fixed their minds upon the Incarnate Deity. "I saw the Lord," says he, "high and lifted up; and his train filled the Temple. Above it stood the seraphim, each one had six wings; with twain he covered his feet, with twain he covered his face, and with twain he did fly. And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" These were very deep and strong impressions. They were heartfelt and thrilling impressions, whenever those pure and lofty spirits caught a view of Jesus. There is no object which they looked upon with half the admiration of the Deity, with which they looked upon him. This wide universe they had explored, but nowhere saw so much of God, and so much to admire, as in the Person of his Son. For ages and ages have

they travelled over the vast empire of Jehovah, to observe and mark where and what could give them the most admiring views of God; but they always came back to gaze upon the manger and the cross.

It is quite obvious, in the next place, that their views of the glory of Christ, communicate to their mind *deep impressions of the sovereignty of God, in providing a Saviour for men, and not for the fallen of their own race.* Those of their own race who fell, once stood upon as solid and lofty an eminence as the unfallen; but God suffered them to fall, and now they are "reserved in chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the Great Day." God kept these holy and favored ones, else they would have fallen too. And deep must be their sense of dependence, and most deep their gratitude. When a portion of their own once holy and happy race thus fell, they fell without remedy and without hope. There was no helper—no mystery of godliness—no God manifest in the flesh, preached to them, or to be received by them. When angels beheld him as the appointed Saviour for *men*, it was an impressive, an amazing view, of *his* amiable and awful sovereignty, who "has a right to do what he will with his own." It was an instructive and memorable view; it was a test of their submission to God's supremacy; it proved their submission,

and that instead of finding fault with God because he thus "had mercy on whom he would have mercy," they rejoiced in his government, and even became ministering spirits to them who should be heirs of salvation, in preference to the fallen of their own race.

Their views of Jesus must also, in the next place, give them *strong impressions of the evil of sinning against God*. The time was when they had the knowledge of good, but no knowledge of evil. Until a part of their own race fell, they had no conception of what it was to do wrong; there never had been an act of wrong in the universe; nor had they any conception of what it was to be tempted to such an act. When Lucifer fell, they saw what it was; and it was a terrible view when they saw him and his guilty confederates forever banished down to hell. When Adam fell, they saw what it was, and what a fearful curse rested upon all the successive generations of men! But when the Son of God, their Lord and Maker, stooped so low; when he descended lower than the nature of angels, and condescended to abject men; and when he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross—and all because he took the sinners' place—then they saw what it was *to sin*. Not Lucifer's expulsion from heaven, nor Adam's exile from Paradise, nor the flood that swept away the antediluvian world, nor the fires

that rained on Sodom and Gomorrah taught them what the death of Jesus taught them. If they had never seen Jesus suffer, never would they have had so deep impressions of the evil of sin. They do not wonder now, at the justice that condemns the sinner. No marvel that God spared not the angels who fell, when he spared not his Son; no marvel that he spares not sinners of our guilty race, if he spares not his well-beloved Son.

In their views of this glorious Saviour they also *have new views of all the works and ways of God*. From the time of their creation to the fall of Adam and the announcement of the method of redemption by Christ, they must have been a mystery to themselves, and known comparatively little of the high and great work for which they were brought into existence. But when Christ was revealed, they saw themselves, and all things in a new and splendid light. New glory was given to the Deity; a new face was put upon all his *creation and works*; upon angels and upon men; upon time and eternity; upon the church and the world; upon the method of God's grace and the method of his justice; upon everything in the universe of God; and especially upon that great and glorious end which Christ came to accomplish. God manifest in the flesh is the luminous truth that pours light upon every other and all other mysteries. Where sin abounds, it makes grace much more abound; where

darkness covers the earth, it chases the darkness away; it swallows up death in victory. *We* ourselves are babes in knowledge; and the more so for want of clear and impressive views of the work of Christ. Angels do not see all that is to be seen; but they see most when they see most of the Person, purposes, and work of Christ. New light is every day pouring in upon their astonished minds; the glory of Christ is still the subject of their new and more engaging, and rapturous contemplations; and their knowledge, holiness, and happiness still find their aliment in him who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his Person.

Such are the views of angels of the glory of Christ; such some of the thoughts which arrest their attention in their contemplations of his glory; and such some of the impressions which a view of his glory makes on their holy minds.

Does not this conduct of angels *rebuke the thoughtlessness and indifference of wicked men*? What shall we say of those who take no notice of that which angels stoop down to look into! Is Jesus thus admired of angels, and shall he be despised and rejected of men? Do angels veil their faces with adoring reverence before him, and will men turn away their faces from him through shame? This is strange delusion, else is it sin beyond the sin of devils. O foul ingratitude! blackest crime!

thus to condemn him whom all heaven adores ! Men have an interest in beholding this Lamb of God which angels cannot have ; yet they practically say unto him, " Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Ye who refuse to give your hearts and your confidence to this incarnate Deity, and will not come to him that you might have life, *ye are they* of whom we speak. Your heart is waxed gross, and your ears are dull of hearing, and your eyes have you closed : lest at any time ye should see with " your eyes, and hear with your ears, and understand with your heart, and should be converted." O that your eyes and ears were opened, and your consciences awake, and your fears alarmed, and your hopes excited toward this all-sufficient and all-glorious Saviour. Go not forward, I pray you, thus blindfold and careless in the broad road to destruction, when that Saviour, whose glory dazzles seraphs, presents himself before your eyes. You know not at what you stumble, and little think that this crucified Saviour rejected, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. That there should be *any* Saviour for lost and ruined sinners, is marvellous mercy ; but that there should be *such* a Saviour is still more marvellous. Well does he say, " Ye have hated me without a cause." And glorious truth that he also says, " Blessed is he that shall not be offended in me !"

And what thoughts does this conduct of angels address to the people of God? Christian! behold what angels see, and love, and admire. Though you have not seen him with your bodily eyes, you may yet know more of him even than angels know. If God has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, and shined in your hearts to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ; is it not wonderful that you know so little of him and love him so little? The world is blind; but why, Christian, should you be so blind to the glories of your Saviour? See him as he forgets himself and thinks of you. See him on the cross; and when you learn that it was your sins that nailed him there, O look upon him whom you have pierced and mourn. Repentance is never so deep and bitter as when the penitent sinner gets a sight of Christ crucified. Come see him, and let the tears flow. Come see him, O my soul, that thou mayest repent and mayest be forgiven, and mayest be saved. See him on the *throne*, and ask why it is that he is thus exalted? And when you learn that it was that you might live and reign with him, learn also more steadfastly to set your affections on things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. If you have beheld his glory; if you now behold it, look at him more intensely. Still look, look continually, never lose sight of him. All

your darkness, doubts, discomforts arise from losing sight of Christ. Look to him whose glory is the wonder of angels. His love never grows cold ; his resources never fail. Witness, ye who have been washed in his blood and presented faultless before his throne ; witness ye angels who excel in strength, swift to do his will, harkening to the voice of his word, if there be any sense of want he cannot relieve, any fear he cannot quell, any guilt he cannot wash away, any sinner so vile that he cannot save and save to the uttermost !

CHAPTER XV.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN ON THE EARTH.

WE have been contemplating a series of causes which forms the most effective chapter in the divine purposes and government;—God manifest in the flesh, teaching, obeying, suffering, dying, rising, ascending, reigning, and manifesting his power and grace in the dispensation of his Spirit. Facts like these may well be supposed to have a sensible and permanent influence on the destiny of our race. Earthly princes are not wont to visit the remote boundaries of their empire for unimportant ends; nor did this Prince of heaven and King of the universe descend to this fallen and proscribed province of his dominions, but for ends that vindicated his condescension. Well might the inhabitants of this and other worlds be looking out for important changes in human affairs, from the hour when the Sufferer of Calvary finished his work and went up on high. All orders and classes of men might well be, as indeed they were, held in eager expectancy. Kings upon their

thrones would naturally be arrested by these wondrous occurrences; and the agitated nations, attracted by the greatness and novelty of their claims, would anxiously demand, what will the end of these things be?

We have in a former series of lectures, spoken of some of the "first things" which distinguished the history of the divine government; in the remaining chapters of the present series, we propose to speak of *last things*. Our object is not retrospective; it is the bright and dawning future that now employs our thoughts. If we look into the Scriptures, we find a day is there foretold, such as the world has never seen; a remarkable age, and distinguished for nothing so much as the manifestation of the Redeemer's glory. When the sacred writers speak of it, it is in weighty thoughts and glowing imagery. "As I live, saith the Lord, the whole earth shall be filled with my glory. All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name. It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that

unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear. From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles. I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the Dragon, that old Serpent, and bound him a thousand years; and cast him into the bottomless pit and shut him up, and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be fulfilled."

Such are a very few of the many passages of Scripture which describe these coming days. Theological writers have been accustomed to speak of this period as the LATTER-DAY GLORY; as the MILLENNIUM of holiness and happiness; and as the MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST upon the earth. From the fact that the scriptural descriptions of this period are for the most part figurative and symbolical, there has been and still is a difference of opinion in relation to some of its leading characteristics. While by far the greater portion of the church of God believe that it is purely a *spiritual reign* of Christ that is here spoken of, not a few advocate the view that it is the *reign of Christ in his own proper person*. The former are decided in their judgment by the figurative and symbolic language which speaks of his Millennial glory; by other truths and facts

which they deem inconsistent with Christ's personal advent, and by the general scope and spirit of the Sacred Writings. The latter rest their conclusions upon the *more literal* import of the language which speaks of that period itself. This question is assuming such grave importance in our own land, and moreover has so intimate a relation to the conversion of the world, that we shall devote a few thoughts to the consideration of it, before we present the scriptural characteristics of the Millennium itself.

The views of those who adopt the opinion of Christ's personal reign upon the earth cannot be so clearly and intelligibly stated, as they might be if the advocates of them did not differ so widely among themselves. Those which come under review in the following chapter may be thus represented. In general terms they affirm, that at some subsequent age of the world Jesus Christ will descend in Person upon this earth, and here establish a visible and temporal kingdom, of which he himself will be the reigning Prince:—That the saints of all past generations will then be raised from the dead, be associated with him in this visible empire, hold places of power and authority under him as their Head, and with him possess the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven:—That the particular place where this kingdom is to be established, is the Holy Land;

Jerusalem is to be its recognized capital, and here the Palace of the Great King is to be erected:—That here all the tribes of Hebrew origin, and all the nations of the earth are to be assembled, and are to come up to worship the true God; and that for this purpose the order of Jewish Priests and Levites is to be restored, the altars and sacrifices of the Levitical Law renewed, and new revelations of God's will to be made known:—That during this visible reign of Christ and his saints upon the earth, the antichristian powers and wicked men who will not submit to his dominion are, at different times and in different places to be judged and destroyed, and that this is the day of judgment of which the Scriptures speak:—That this visible reign of Christ and his saints on the earth is to continue forever:—That the race will increase and multiply just as it does now, except that men will no longer be born in sin:—that this world will never come to an end, but be purified, made beautiful and immortal, and the everlasting residence of the righteous:—That men will always continue to be regenerated and sanctified, and thus the redemption of the race go on perpetually; and that the time when Christ will thus come to make these visible manifestations is near at hand, and may not irrationally be considered as the attendant, or the last scene in the drama of the age in which we live.

This, so far as I have been able to collect it, from volumes not a few, is the prevalent theory of what is called the *pre-millennial advent*. It holds that the time of Christ's second coming with all these attendants and sequences is not at *the close* of the Millennium, but *before* that period. We have not designedly misrepresented this theory; we have not caricatured it; we have not colored it by any additions, or imaginations of our own.* We have not presented it in its fulness; we could not do so without writing a volume.

We do not believe it is necessary for us to say, that we have no sympathies with this antisciptural theory. With the single exception of the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, on which we now express no opinion, and which is not a necessary part of the theory, we do not believe that it is anywhere taught in the Scriptures.

There are two ways of refuting the manifold errors of this strange system. The one is by a patient and critical examination of the passages of Scripture which are relied on for its support. This is too tedious a process for such a work as that to which these pages are devoted; nor could it be interesting to the great mass of readers. This has been done, and ably and conclusively done

* See Theological and Literary Journal—and also the Literalist—sparsim.

already.* The other method is to bring the theory to the test of those acknowledged principles and truths of the gospel with which it is at variance. The truths of God's word are unchanging things. There are truths so clearly revealed, and so important, that the theory, or interpretation which calls them in question must always be regarded as false. It is a safe law of Scriptural interpretation thus to "compare spiritual things with spiritual;" it is one of the first and best of all laws; one which is addressed to the popular mind; and one which cannot be controlled by any systems of Literalism or Symbolization. Of how little consequence is any theory of symbolical and figurative, or literal interpretation, which should, for example, come in collision with the doctrine of God's existence; or the perfection of his purposes and government; or the doctrine of human depravity; or the Deity and atonement of Christ! These are settled truths; the theory and interpretation that calls them in question must be unsound and false, however learnedly and ingeniously supported. Now there are features *in this theory of Christ's pre-millennial advent*, which, though not

* See The Bampton Lectures — Wardlaw's Discourses, and Brown on Christ's Second Coming. See also Scott's Com. in loco; Pool's Synopsis, Rosenmüller, and Alexander on Isaiah, in locis. The last named work does not professedly treat of this subject; while its sound principles of interpretation, do, in our judgment, put the question at rest.

at war with the truths just mentioned, are directly at war with other truths equally undeniable. Men who adopt theories of interpretation which lead to these results, are not to be reasoned with except as those who deny important truths in God's word, and important principles as sanctioned by the great mass of Christians, and as expressed in the Confessions of Faith of the Reformed churches. We must necessarily present a very brief illustration of these thoughts; and although in this illustration, even if more extended, you would have but a part of our objections to premillenarian theory, we hope that, partial as it is, it may furnish some protection against errors to which good men in the present age of excitement are not a little exposed.

I. Our first objection against this theory then is, *that the great principle which it assumes in its interpretation of the Scriptures on this subject, is a false principle.* That principle is the law of *rigidly literal interpretation*, than which nothing can be more preposterous. All agree that the Scriptures ought to be so interpreted as to express the mind of their Author, and the sense which the writers of them intended to convey. If the sacred writers were divinely inspired, they cannot be inconsistent with themselves. If there be doubtful and obscure passages in their writings, they are to be rendered clear and intelligible by

those that are not obscure and doubtful. A metaphorical or symbolical passage may receive light from one that is literal; while one that is literal may receive light, force, and beauty, from those that are expressed in symbols and metaphor. The simplest interpretation, and that which presents itself most naturally to the mind, is often that which regards the passage as purely symbolical or figurative. It may require great art and subtlety, and great research, in order to justify a literal interpretation of some passages on the subject of the Millennium; while the true import of the figures and symbols they contain, is discovered with perfect facility. "The true sense is the necessary sense;" and we only wonder when we come to perceive it, that we did not perceive it before. There are passages which, if literally interpreted, would go the whole length of the statement we have already given, of the Pre-Millennial Advent; but the question is, is the literal construction the fair and true construction; or do they require some other construction, demanded by the subject, and which must necessarily be adopted, in order to make the sacred writers consistent with themselves? To affirm a literal construction of those passages which are professedly contained in the most figurative and symbolical books of the Scriptures, would go far toward destroying all the fixed laws of sound interpretation.

This would be to make prose of poetry, and bold imagery as though it were doctrinal statement. No sober man would interpret such passages as one would interpret a law, a deed, a contract, or a last will and testament. To do so would be a perversion of language, and an outrage upon common sense and common honesty. The true principle of interpreting the word of God, so far as the question of literal construction is concerned, is to interpret those passages literally, which their authors designed should be thus interpreted. Enthusiasm and fanaticism would have nothing to restrain them, if allowed to put a literal construction upon those parts of the Bible which the Holy Spirit never designed should receive such a construction. If objects and events are represented to the sacred writers in a *vision*, and are described in all the richness of imagery and glow of emotion which prophetic pens could command; instead of overlooking this fact in our interpretation, we are bound, so far as thought and piety and prayer will enable us to do so, to enter into their views and emotions. The intellect and the heart will then be in perfect coincidence; and what is true to both, will be true to the word of God.

It is easy to *affirm* that the prophetic and apocalyptical writings which speak of the Millennium are free from figures and symbols, and are altogether literal. Yet on this mere *assumption*

rests the whole hypothesis of the pre-millennial advent. The strength of this argument lies in this rigid and literal interpretation, while the propriety of such an interpretation has nothing in the world to support it, but the strength with which it is repeatedly asserted.

As we shall have frequent occasion to make use of these observations in the present discussion, we will illustrate our meaning. The representation, for example, which speaks of "all nations flowing to Mount Zion;" which speaks of God's "gathering all nations and tongues," and of their "coming and seeing his glory in Jerúsalem," cannot be construed literally, because it is not possible for all nations ever to go up to Jerusalem. In view of this difficulty, the advocates of this theory are constrained to abandon their own position of literal construction, and to concede that all nations will thus worship at Jerusalem in the presence of Christ, only by some selected representation, or delegation of all nations! Their theory fails them; and if it fails them in this instance, why may it not be fallible in others? Kindred prophecies speak of priests and Levites, and of the offering of sacrifices, as under the law; yet the Apostle Paul assures us that these sacrifices "have ceased to be offered;" that "God hath taken them away;" that under the Christian dispensation "there is an annulling of them;" and that by "one offering

Christ hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." If literalism is thus to Judaize the church of God in the days of her millennial glory, may we, with impunity, give it our confidence? Paul says to the Hebrews, "Ye are *not* come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burneth with fire; but ye ARE COME to Mount Zion, and unto the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels." This declaration is true; but in what sense is it true? It is not true that the Hebrews were literally "come to Mount Zion;" for they were a persecuted people, scattered over Palestine and other lands. It is not true that they "were come to an innumerable company of angels;" for they were not in heaven where angels dwell. It is not true that they "were come to the general assembly and church of the First Born which are written in heaven," "and to the spirits of just men made perfect;" for they were still residents on the earth. But *it is* true, that instead of living under the law of terror, they were under the gospel of peace; instead of living under the Mosaic they enjoyed the Christian dispensation; instead of belonging to the earthly, they were initiated into the citizenship of the spiritual Jerusalem: they belonged to the same society with angels, and all holy men living and dead; were one with them, under the same Prince and Head, whose blood of sprinkling

had purchased for them these rights and this denizenship, and to whom they were all joined in one spirit. Paul speaks of true believers, whether Jew or Gentile, as "the Israel of God;"—as "the circumcision who worship God in the spirit;" and as "a chosen generation and royal priesthood."

It is yet more to our purpose to remark, that not a few of those passages on which pre-millenarians rely for proof of their doctrine, are interpreted by the *Apostles themselves*, not in a literal, but a figurative sense. When James, at the general Synod in Jerusalem, quotes the passage from the prophet Amos, "In that day will I raise up the *tabernacle of David*, and close up the breaches thereof," he expounds it as relating, not to a temporal kingdom, but the Christian Church; and makes use of it to prove the abolition of Jewish rites. When Paul, in writing to the Hebrews, adverts to the prediction of the Prophet Jeremiah, in which God declares that he will "make a new covenant with the *house of Israel*, not according to the covenant which he made with *their Fathers*;" he refers to it in order to show that the gospel dispensation supersedes the Jewish, and that the prediction itself is accomplished in the introduction of the gospel dispensation. When the same apostle, in writing to the Galatians, refers to that emphatic prophecy of Isaiah, "Sing O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing thou that didst not

travail with child," he applies it to the New Testament Church, and is instituting the contrast between the church under the new, with the church under the old dispensation. The following prediction in Hosea, "Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi; for ye *are not my people*, neither will I be your God; yet the number of the *children of Israel* shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered, nor measured; and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye also are the sons of the living God;" the same apostle declares to have been fulfilled in the calling of the Gentile Church. There is no truth more clearly revealed in the New Testament than that, "They are not all Israel who are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children." Let them belong to what nation they may, they are only those who are believers in his Son who are God's people—"sometime afar off," but "made nigh by the blood of Christ." So when the Prophet Zechariah speaks of "the man whose name is the *Branch*" as "building the Temple"—"sitting upon his throne"—and "a Priest upon his throne;" we are confident that the prediction is not to be interpreted literally, because Jesus Christ did not literally build the Temple, nor literally sit upon the throne of David, nor literally minister as the High Priest. Yet is

the prediction fulfilled in the establishment and extension of his spiritual kingdom, and in his ministrations as the great High Priest of the Christian profession. We deem it of some importance in our argument that the literal interpretation of the prophecies on the subject of the Redeemer's kingdom did not receive the least countenance from the Apostles; so far from this, they gave them a spiritual construction, and understood them figuratively and in a Christian sense. Though not verbally and literally true, therefore, these and other analogous predictions and descriptions express great and precious truths. Great and precious truths also are expressed by the figurative and symbolical representations of the Millennium, truths which the literal construction perverts and annihilates.

The literal construction of this subject is the most arbitrary construction in the world. Such a view of human language as this theory adopts is incompatible with the very design of language. They are most certainly mistaken views which result from them; nor is there any end to the mistakes which have been made in resorting to the doctrine of literal construction. If the nature of the subject, the object of the sacred writers, their consistency with themselves, and the analogy of faith have anything to do in interpreting the Scriptures; the arbitrary law of literal construction

must be given up. Nor is there any intimation in any of the scriptural descriptions of the millennial glory of the Son of God, that the language is to be thus literally understood. We have read labored dissertations on the laws of symbols and metaphors; we have observed the impatience their authors manifest because the Christian world does not bow to this dictation; we have noticed with some surprise the indecorous epithets with which they stigmatize those who differ from them as unlearned and ignorant men; but we have not found their system supported by the Bible. More especially in its application to the supposed pre-millennial advent of Christ, is it unsupported by a single proof text, a single declaration of the Scriptures, which, if properly explained, does not sustain the opposite doctrine. We give them credit for no small ingenuity and critical research, and patient labor, and great zeal; but they are distorted views which they express, and rest on no secure foundation. The subject is not a difficult one, if we consent to take the Scriptures as a whole. It is one which most certainly calls for a patient reading of the Scriptures; but the path of inquiry is a plain and simple path. Our adorable Master, when he spake of the future world did not speak in ambiguous language. There is great sublimity in his teaching, but no obscurity, unless we are on the lookout for forced and subtle interpretations. All

we ask is, that intelligent and devout minds should take a common sense view of the instructions of the *whole Bible* on this subject. If it be true that the Son of Man is to descend from heaven before he descends to judge the living and the dead ; that he is to establish his throne in Jerusalem, and there introduce the worn-out rites and sacrifices of the Jewish law, and give his sanction to a system of services which he himself abolished more than eighteen centuries ago ; if it be true that he is then to raise the pious dead of all generations, and that they are thus to reign with him *forever* on this earth ; and that those who are alive at his advent are to remain in immortal and unglorified bodies, and to perpetuate their race ; we have a right to demand chapter and verse for such theories.

It must be a forced construction of the Bible, a forced literalism and a forced symbolization combined, that proves such things as these. If they seem to be contained in the words of the sacred writers, taken by themselves, they express a sense which the writers themselves never entertained. They are errors of no ordinary kind, and lead to errors still more seductive, and that wax worse and worse. We marvel not a little that their advocates are not alarmed for their own hallucination, and do not shrink from the abyss into which they are plunging. It is due, not to the boldness of which these discussions are a speci-

men, but to the sober thoughts of the Christian community, and their love of the truth, that these errors have not more deeply imbued the American mind. There are those who have listened to them and followed them; but we are not without hope, that, like others who have listened and followed for a while, they will be glad to return, with elastic force, to the plain and safe instructions of the Bible.

II. Our second objection to the theory is, that it *obscures the spirituality of Christ's kingdom*. Jesus Christ has *now* a kingdom on the earth. It has been long established in this apostate world; has attained to great enlargement, and will eventually cover the earth. When the great Founder of it left this world, his kingdom did not die. When apostles and martyrs died, this kingdom lived. When the reformers died, still it lived. When we and other generations die, it will live still. "Of the increase of this kingdom and government there shall be no end. Christ must reign until all things are put under his feet." It is the same kingdom now which existed in the days that are past; it will be the same kingdom during the millennium; the same forever. It does not change like the kingdoms of time; it is "A KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE MOVED." Its Prince, its subjects, its laws, its privileges, its rewards, are ever the same. It began in Jerusalem, is now

being extended over the earth, and will be more extended in the latter days, and perpetuated in heaven.

The great characteristic of this kingdom is, that it is a *spiritual*, in distinction from a temporal and visible reign. When the Saviour founded it, he made the open avowal, "My kingdom is not of this world." When his disciples misunderstood its nature, he instructed them by the declaration, "The kingdom of God is *within* you." When the opinion was prevalent that it was limited to a particular locality, he uttered the truth, "the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor in *Jerusalem* worship the Father. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in *spirit and in truth*." When men looked for its advancement amid the pompous decorations of earth and earthly power, he told them, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." When two of his favored followers preferred the request that they "might sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left in his kingdom," he replied, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of *the cup* that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" He told them all that they should live and reign with him, but that it should not be here in this world; but that both they and all his followers to the end of time, should

reign with him at the right hand of God. He never intimated to them that they should leave those high abodes, and that angel presence, and those blissful interchanges of thought and affection, and that overshadowing of the ineffable glory, and come down to reign on this earth doomed to fire. He desired they should reign with him, and where he reigned. His prayer for those who were first given to him, and for "*all* those who should believe on him through their word," was, that "they might be with him *where he is*, and behold his glory."

This great characteristic of his kingdom, its holy and divine *spirituality*, is made as prominent as the Scriptures can make it. The passages multiply on every side, which assert and illustrate this great and important thought. Light and love are its distinctive features; wherever these are found, there is his kingdom; and though they exist in an imperfect state in the present world, there exist here the elementary preparations for it in heaven. This great truth, therefore, is to be carried into all our interpretations of those Scriptures which speak of his kingdom, whether now existing on the earth, or existing during the millennium.

The glory of this spiritual reign is expressed to us not unfrequently by figures and emblems and symbols addressed to our senses, because we are

creatures of sense. They are instructive and affecting representations, if we carry this great truth along with us in order to interpret them; but without this, we make havoc of the word of God. This great truth is worth all the literalism and all the algebraic laws of symbolization in the world. No man supposes that the sea of glass,—the streets of the New Jerusalem,—the river of life,—the trees on its banks,—the terraces of the city sparkling with precious stones,—the gates of pearl,—the harps of gold and the white linen of the saints, are anything more than *emblems* of the beauty, purity, and bliss of this heavenly and spiritual kingdom. Nor does any man suppose that when the same writer, in the same metaphorical language, speaks of an “angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand,” and of his “laying hold on the Dragon, that old Serpent, and binding him a thousand years, and casting him into the bottomless pit, and setting a seal upon him,” that there was literally any such *angel*,—or *key*,—or *chain*,—or *dragon*,—or *seal*. The meaning is, that the time is coming when Satan’s power on the earth shall be divinely and effectively restrained. And when the same writer proceeds in the next sentence to say that he “saw thrones, and they sat upon them; and the *souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of

Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, nor in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years;”* no one supposes that these were literal *thrones*; nor any person *that sat upon* them; nor any *beast*; nor *image*; nor any *mark upon the forehead or hands*. It was all a VISION, and was designed to teach such truths as enlightened and devout minds would receive. The writer is speaking of the thousand years when the power of Satan should not only be restricted, but the power of piety revived, and the kingdom of Christ greatly advanced. The whole passage cannot be understood literally, without the most preposterous conclusions. We have a key that unlocks the whole, in the *spirituality of Christ's kingdom*, in all its pro-

* *καὶ ἔζησαν καὶ ἐβασίλευσαν μετὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ χίλια ἔτη.*—“Hoc non ita intelligendum, quasi ipsi illi pii martyres, qui olim pro Christo religione supplicia sustinuerant, essent revicturi, et regnaturi cum Christo. Sed figurare et in imagine quadam exprimitur florens conditio reipublicæ christiano, quæ tanta erit, ac si prisci martyres sepulcris revocati, hisce in terris tranquille iterum viverent. *Cum Christo regnare* significat magnam felicitatem in regno Christi in his terris. Et intelligendum hoc est de ecclesia ipsa, non de singulis ejus membris. Itaque hoc vult Joannes, ecclesiam, quæ diu vitata et corrupta erat in suis membris, ita fore comparatam, quasi excitata fuerit e mortuis, ac denuo revixerit.”—ROSENMULLER SCHOLIA IN APOCALYPSIN, ch. xx. v. 4.

gress through the millennium. It was a most beautiful vision; it was piety predominant on the earth; it was the spirit of noble and martyred men living in their successors; men who had no alliance with antichristian powers, or with wickedness. It was a *resurrection* of long-decayed principles in the hearts of the blessed and the holy, living and reigning with Christ on the earth, as he had not lived and reigned since the days of Pentecost; as indeed he had never lived and reigned before. It was a *new creation* in which God creates Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

Premillenarians insist on a *literal* construction of a *vision*! Very well; we hold them to this construction. What was it that John saw? "I saw the *souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus." He did not see the *bodies* of these witnesses. It was *not* therefore a bodily resurrection. Literalists should abide the consequence of their own rigid interpretation; if they do so, so far as this passage is concerned, they must confess their error. John says of these *souls* that they *lived*, not that they lived *again* :* he simply saw the souls of the witnesses *alive*. Their testimony was living; there was a new race of *witnesses* for the truth. No, it was not the *bodies* and *persons* of departed saints which

* ζῆσαν, not ἀνεζῆσαν.

were seen rising from the mighty abyss of the past. They were the *souls* that were thus seen *coming up*—everywhere *coming up*—from the gulf of bygone ages. They were *souls* which never die, and of which no literal resurrection *can* be predicted; they were minds, bright, and pure, and spiritual minds, multiplying on the earth, influencing it by their piety, enjoying unwonted fellowship with their exalted Saviour, falling in and co-operating with his designs of mercy, and extending his dominion over the children of men.

Nothing is more obvious than that the theory of Christ's premillennial advent and personal reign, obscures the beautiful spirituality of his kingdom. We are told that when he comes, there is to be a splendid and magnificent temple erected for him on Mount Zion; that Jerusalem is to be rebuilt, and enlarged, and adorned with magnificence; that "he is literally to assail his enemies with the instruments of destruction," and "*fight* with them as he fought in the day of battle," and thus showing himself the great warrior of his age. So thought the Jews in relation to our Lord's first advent. They were literalists; nothing suited their taste but the visible manifestations of temporal royalty. Christ's own disciples were imbued with this expectation, even after his resurrection, and until after the day of Pentecost, when they

were in the highest sense "endued with power from on high." We know how prejudicial this notion was to the early propagation of the gospel; nor is the theory of modern literalists less ruinous. The day of Pentecost effected a radical cure of this evil in the minds of the disciples; and we marvel not a little that the glorious "ministration of the Spirit," does not eradicate the kindred error from the minds of those who are so intent on the personal and premillennial advent of the Son of Man.

How adverse is all this from the millennial reign of the Son of God, as described in the Scriptures! Give his spiritual kingdom the place which the Bible gives it, and you kill this theory at once. It has nothing to support it but a vain imagination, that congratulates itself in an empire decked with all the gorgeous royalty of this world, rather than one which is not meat and drink, but "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The world has seen in recent treatises from the press, how such an imagination misinterprets that sweet passage, "The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall *feed* them, and lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." One would scarcely believe that an intelligent writer would, from such a passage, draw the conclusion that the prophet is speaking of literal nutriment to the body; yet

such is the fact. Why not carry the principle through, and affirm that when the Psalmist says, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters," the language is to be literally interpreted? Why not apply it to the words of Paul, when he says, "I have fed you with milk, and not with strong meat, because hitherto ye were not able to bear it?" Is it not better to let the Scriptures interpret their own metaphors? There is no more difficulty in interpreting the passage, "In this *mountain* hath the Lord of hosts spread a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined," than there is in interpreting the passage, "I will give them pastors after mine own heart, who shall feed them with *knowledge and understanding*." We have no confidence in such views of the kingdom of Christ. His designs are above this. The gospel will not have free course, nor Christians be comforted and instructed, nor God's enemies humbled and subdued by such prospects.

We may not utter all the objections in their full force to this sentimental, tender, and pathetic theory. We are instructed by the great Teacher, that "except a man be born again, he cannot *see* the kingdom of God." Some of the features of modern Millenarians are not difficult to be *seen*; nor are they altogether revolt-

ing to the natural heart. We are told that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh;" nor may we forget the truth that in the resurrection "they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God." It is the anti-spiritual view of Christ's kingdom which imparts attractiveness to it which God himself has not given. We do not wonder that a theory which thus addresses itself to creatures of sense should produce excitement in the world. We do not wonder at the preposterous views concerning it in the first three centuries, nor that it sunk in silence under the burden of its own unworthiness and absurdities. We do not wonder at the wickedness of the Anabaptists of Munster, nor at the legal enactments against them; nor at the tragical issue of the "celestial republic" of John of Leyden. Nor are we surprised at the extravagances of the men of the "Fifth Monarchy," during the time of Cromwell, establishing a "heavenly kingdom" on earth, which was the resort of Deism, infidelity, and crime. Nor do later errors of the same general family in our own land surprise us. We respectfully submit to good men, who, though they disclaim all participation in principles thus ruinous, yet advocate this anti-spiritual and literal theory; whether the fundamental principle of their system does not lead to such results, and whether the sys-

tem they now oppose and which the Bible advocates, is not the safer system?

III. A third objection to this theory is that it *gives undue and unwarranted influence to the mere Personal presence of Christ in the conversion of the world.* It does not assign its proper place to the agencies in this work which already exist, and which God himself has appointed. When the Son of God ascended up on high, he bequeathed to his church all the agencies that are required for the extension and final triumph of his spiritual kingdom on the earth. These are the TRUTHS OF HIS GOSPEL and the OMNIPOTENT POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Just in the measure in which these are enjoyed will men turn from the error of their ways to the wisdom of the just. We hold this to be a truth of universal application—*everywhere* and *always*, in Christian, Antichristian, and Pagan lands, in present and future ages, down through the millennium and to the end of time. Just in the measure in which men withhold the gospel from their fellow-men, and God withholds his Spirit, will they *everywhere* and *always*, remain “dead in trespasses and sins.” This is the doctrine of the Bible, and one which is illustrated in every page of the world’s history, and deeply written in the hearts of all the people of God. No doctrine is more important, or more inseparable from the existence of true piety, or from the gospel itself. In

the same proportion in which this doctrine is obscured, the glory of the Prince and Saviour is cast into the shade or sunk in total eclipse; in the same proportion in which it is denied, the great *moral argument* in favor of the truth of Christianity loses its force, and the last and most brilliant chain in the series of facts on which it rests is broken.

This is one of the grounds on which we stand in our opposition to the supposed premillennium advent. We might have said more than that this theory *does not assign its proper place* to the truth and Spirit of God; but we should do violence to our own feelings to say more of those whom we have long known as the advocates of evangelical truth. Yet when a recent and able writer* made this objection to the views on which we were animadverting, the leading organ in the expression of those views in this country† repelled the imputation with indignant sensitiveness. Let us see how this matter stands, and whether, according to their own showing, this indignant disclaimer will avail them. We affirm that they deny the sufficiency of *God's revealed truth* in the conversion of men; because they declare that at the period when the Jewish and Gentile nations are to be, as they suppose, assembled at Jerusalem, God "is to give them new *revelations*, and institute new laws;"‡

* Princeton Repertory for April, 1851.

† Theological and Literary Journal—sparsim.

‡ Ib.

that "he is to make new communications of his will;" and that "these revelations of himself will be *more efficient means than any others*."* Is not this a plain denial of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, and does it not unite all manner of pretensions to a new revelation? God declares that his word "is able to make men wise unto salvation;" this theory declares that it is not able. God declares that "Christ crucified is the power of God;" this theory makes the bold demand, "What can exceed the error that the cause in which Christ suffered cannot prevail and be victorious, unless the work is entrusted by him entirely to his cross?"† And again it declares that "if Christ is not to come anterior to the conversion of the world, it is absolutely certain that it is never to be converted."‡

We have the same error expressed in somewhat a different form. We are told that in order to "bring the whole race to a full discernment of *God's being* will obviously demand *means far more influential* than any that have hitherto been employed;" "that it will doubtless require the use of extraordinary means"—"new and peculiar means," without which the nations "must fail of adequate views."§ Is not this an avowal of their belief that there are to be new means of grace and salvation?

* See Theolog. and Lit. Journal, Nos. 7 and 9.

† Ib. No. 9, p. 27.

‡ Ib. p. 18.

§ Ib.

Nor do these writers leave us in doubt as to what these new and extraordinary means are. They are comprised in the *visible and personal appearing and manifestation of Christ on this earth*. They speak of "the necessity of Christ's interposition to make the gospel efficacious," and of his "interposing to convince and convert the nations." They affirm that "it is not the purpose of God to give essentially any greater efficacy to the means of grace than he heretofore has given," until Christ comes in Person;* that "the universal prevalence of religion to be hereafter enjoyed is not to be effected by any increased impetus given to the *present* means of evangelizing the nations, but by a stupendous display of divine wrath upon all the "apostate and ungodly;"—that "the kingdom and universal church are to be established, not by gradual conversion more or less rapid under this dispensation, but by the Personal advent of our Lord himself, and all the remarkable events that accompany it;"—that "the rectifying comes at last, not by mercy, but by judgment; not by the sowing of grace, but by the sickle of vengeance; not by the extension of the gospel and the labors of its ministers, or *any gracious instrumentality now a work*, but by the angels of God who are to accompany the Son of Man at his advent;" and that "it will consist not in *resowing* but in *reaping* the

* Theolog. and Lit. Journal, No. 15, p. 15.

field.”* Nor may this class of writers protect themselves from the charge of error by saying that all they mean is, that these visible manifestations *arrest the attention*, and *wake up the minds* of men to the divine claims; for they expressly affirm that they “are to excite *love* and *submission*.”†

While therefore the advocates of the Personal Reign repel this attendant upon their views, it must recoil upon them as a necessary result of their theory. When the question is asked, Will the Personal appearing of Christ on the earth exert no salutary influence? Is it unnatural to suppose that it should occasion an overwhelming sense of guilt in not having believed on him; and a realization of the necessity of submission, faith, and love in order to salvation? To this we reply in the language of Christ himself, “When *he*, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will convince the world of sin.” The Scriptures represent all true conviction of sin as produced by the Holy Spirit. “Lord, make me to know my transgression and my sin.” We reply further, that these outward manifestations will not of themselves exert the east influence in the conversion of men. Were

* The author is indebted for these last three quotations from the millenarian writers to an able article in the Princeton Repository for April, 1851.

† Theolog. and Lit. Journal, No. 7.

he to come again in the flesh, his Personal presence would have no more influence in subduing the hearts of his enemies than it had on the Jewish Sanhedrim, or Pontius Pilate. It might awaken the attention of men, it might produce the faith of the intellect; but it would not touch the heart of rebellion. The solemn truth seems to be lost sight of that men are blind and dead in sin, and that no objective light converts the soul. Here lies the fallacy of the Premillenarian system in this particular article of its faith. It supposes that the unbelief of men is to be attributed to the want of objective light; whereas the true cause is subjective darkness and sin. Unbelief is never owing to the want of evidence, but to the want of an obedient heart. The burning splendor of the Millennium in its meridian glory would not convert a soul to God, unless the power of the Highest came down upon it, and the Holy Spirit take away the heart of stone and give the heart of flesh. To do *this* it is not necessary that Christ be personally present; his personal presence is supposed to be confined to Jerusalem. Yet he can do this in the Millennium just as he did it on the day of Pentecost. It will be no more difficult for him to convert the nations *then* than it was for him to convert Saul of Tarsus. This supposed efficacy of his Personal presence is the merest assumption in the world. It is worse, because it is

false doctrine. The rich man in the parable thought that if one should go from the dead to his brethren, they would repent. The abettors of this theory, though they mean not so, are furnishing the world a new apology for its unbelief, and are unwittingly throwing up a strong entrenchment to defend the infidelity of the human heart. The faith of the gospel consists in believing it *as it is revealed*. If the light of truth is so essentially defective, men are justified in waiting for more evidence. It is not defective. Men deceive themselves when they suppose that Christ's Personal presence will produce convictions that are not produced by that gospel which is now the power of God unto salvation. God has already given the world the best means of grace; if Christ's personal presence had been more effective, he would never have left the earth and committed his kingdom here to the Comforter. The reason why he did not remain was, that he had selected a more excellent way, and a more fitting agent. Nor has he seen fit to amend, or alter this arrangement; nor will he during the Millennium. The "Ministration of the Spirit" is to introduce and perfect that era of glory, and is to continue until the last heir of his spiritual Kingdom is gathered in. There will be no other dispensation until the unchanging dispensation of eternity. The presence of the Comforter was

forever to supersede the presence of Christ among men; and therefore it "was expedient that he should go away." In this beautiful feature of his redemption, the Millenarians have a controversy with Christ. Their theory is a fiction of their own, however ardent the piety from which it may flow, and however attractive to the imagination. What should induce them to believe, that the Personal presence of the Son of Man in Jerusalem, or in the clouds of heaven, or on the throne of judgment, or anywhere else, would be rightly regarded by men who will not regard the testimony of God in his word, it is not easy to divine. "Let not God speak with us lest we die." God told Moses he could not behold the fulness of his glory; no man can see his face and live. His presence on the Mount of Transfiguration made his own disciples afraid. The wicked would be filled with terror at such a view; they would tremble and turn pale; they would cry to the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them; but they would neither love, nor adore him. The man who remains unconvinced and at enmity with God, unsanctified and hopeless amid all the light of the Gospel, and in this world of the effusions of the divine Spirit, and amid these consecrated altars and ordinances, will not find holiness and hope from such scenes. Such scenes would disclose nothing more than is already revealed in the Bible; they would only

be the Bible over again, except under circumstances not so well fitted to be the subject of serious reflection, or to impress the mind. Christ's Personal presence is superfluous to the great objects which the Scriptural Millennium aims at. Christians in the Millennium, as in all ages, will walk by faith and not by sight. A spiritual mind needs nothing more than faith's view; it asks no more than those views of Christ which are here imparted by the Holy Spirit. Why should they desire his Personal reign in the Millennium? Faith will then exert its high moral influences on themselves, and on all their efforts for the advancement of their ascended Saviour's glory. "Because thou hast *seen me*, thou hast believed; *blessed* are they who have *not seen*, and yet believed." It is the high character of saving faith, to believe in an unseen Saviour: "whom having *not seen*, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

IV. Our fourth objection to this theory is, that it *denies the General Judgment, and the final destruction of this material world*. It is not necessary for us to prove that "God hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the world in righteousness;" that "the dead, small, and great shall stand before God;" that "the sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and death and hell de-

liver up the dead which are in them;" that before the Son of Man shall at last "be gathered all nations," and that he shall "separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats;" and that the sentence shall then be carried into execution by which "these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Nor do we suppose that it is necessary for us to prove, that at the close of this scene, "the heavens shall vanish away "like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment;" that the heavens shall pass away with a "great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up;" that all these things shall be "dissolved," and that "before the face of him who sits upon the throne, the heavens and the earth shall flee away, and there shall be found no place for them."

There are so many important ends in the divine government to be secured by this arrangement, that to deny it is a virtual attempt to disturb the pillars by which it is supported, mar its symmetry, and deface its beauty. No judgment of individual men, as such, or individual nations, can answer the end of a *general* judgment. That man does not preach the same gospel which Christ and his Apostles preached who denies, or even obscures this great truth. We have all our lifetime read the

Scriptures in vain, if they do not instruct us that Christ's second coming is his coming to the judgment, and if they do not connect the final and irrevocable sentence of the righteous and the wicked with his second coming. They speak *only* of a *first* and *second* coming; the first to save, the second to judge. The twentieth chapter of the Revelation makes it perfectly clear, that his coming to judgment is *after* the Millennium. If his coming to judgment is his *second* coming, there is no such event revealed therefore as his Premillennial Advent. There is no Advent until the judgment, and this will be the second and the last. The great event which the departed of all ages are next to look for is not the coming of their Divine Lord to establish a kingdom on the earth and there to reign with him; it is *the judgment*. "It is appointed unto men once to die; *after that* the judgment." It is not his coming to introduce, and extend and perpetuate his reign on the earth; but to bring it to its august conclusions, and announce the issues of that kingdom which he set up when he rose from the dead. It is not to convert his enemies, but to bring his kingdom of grace on the earth to an end and pronounce the sentence that puts their conversion beyond hope. It is to erect the indestructible barrier between eternity and time by striking time out of existence, and then sinking the impassable gulf. The Scriptures utter these truths as

among the most important they ever utter ; so that men may appreciate the privileges of the kingdom which Christ has already set up in the world ; may know the value of time while it lasts, and the true worth of this world before it shall melt away with fervent heat.

Yet these truths are denied by the Premillennial theory. It does indeed recognize *a* judgment, but no such "Great Day" of judgment as that to which the Scriptures give such emphasis. It makes the judgment consist in the *personal rule and authority of Christ during the thousand years*. It does this professedly, and as it seems to us, treats with disdain and contempt the idea of the General Judgment. It argues this question deliberately and calls upon us to prove, that when Christ affirms that he will gather *all nations* before him in order to hear his sentence and their doom, he means *all the nations of the earth*. We have no desire to prove so plain a truth, except by such Scriptures as we have just referred to. Men who deny the plain and obvious sense of such declarations, and yet whose whole theory rests upon the doctrine of *literal construction*, cannot be reasoned with. And what astonishing coolness is it with which they confront the Bible, and endeavor to show that this world will not at last be burnt up and destroyed ! They tell us that the Personal reign of Christ on the earth "is to extend through

eternal ages;”—that “it is to be exercised over all the world through endless ages;” and that the Scriptures “do not teach that the world is to be burned up, nor that the righteous are to be taken to heaven.” We have their reasoning, if reasoning it may be called, in such sentences as the following: “Were the world to be destroyed, because Satan has held dominion over it; or the race intercepted from multiplying, and transported to some other scenes of existence on the ground that the earth had become unfit for their residence because of the curse brought upon it by sin; would it not be a triumph to Satan?” Again, “Christ is to work a perfect remedy of the disorder and ruin brought on man and the world by revolt, not by putting an end to the multiplication of the race, nor by striking the earth from existence, but by rescuing them from the dominion of sin, and causing the race to continue as it would have done if it had not fallen.”* What would the noble man have thought of a future state in which the righteous are to live and reign forever on this earth, and increase and multiply just as they do now, who wrote of “a better country that is an heavenly,” and taught the world that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God?” What would a greater than he have thought of it, who uttered the words, “In my *Father’s house* are many man-

* Theolog. and Lit. Journal, No. 9, p. 23 and 24.

sions ; *I go to prepare a place for you ?*" What would the Apostle Peter have thought of it when he said, "Looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" What would he say to the miserable subterfuge of its advocates, who in order to protect the righteous from the desolating effects of the *fiery* judgments which, according to their own theory, are to come upon the wicked, are driven to the conviction that the final conflagration will be partial, and limited to scenes where the destruction of the wicked will not endanger the righteous ! We marvel not that the abettors of this theory speak of *new revelations* ? May it not be that, in their enthusiastic eagerness, they themselves have anticipated those extraordinary instructions from heaven which they so distinctly intimate will be revealed during the supposed Personal reign of Christ on the earth ? We must indeed have a new Bible before we can believe any of these things. Are they not a mere human device, originating in the love of novelty, fostered by the self-complacency of a severe and imperious criticism upon long received and well fortified opinions, and fitted only to mislead minds that are "carried about by every wind of doctrine ?" Most fervently do we wish that our respect for the advocates of this theory could restrain us from say-

ing that it is anything better than ingenious and learned trifling with the word of God.

V. Our fifth objection to this theory is, that it is *inconsistent with the scriptural narrative of those events which are to take place between the Millennium and the end of the world.* The 20th chapter of the Book of the Revelation furnishes the following brief, but comprehensive narrative. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet are, and they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." Immediately after this, the sacred writer proceeds in highly symbolical language to describe the Day of Judgment. "And I saw a great white throne—and the dead small and great stand before God—and the books were opened, and the dead were judged." There are several things in this narrative that are absolutely fatal to the hypothesis of the Premillennial advent. In the first place,

it speaks of events that are to take place on *this earth*, and affirms the thousand years of the Saviour's reign upon it are to have *an end*; "when the thousand years are expired." This the millenarians deny, as we have before seen. In the next place, it affirms that the judgment will not take place until the *close* of the thousand years; it was not until *the thousand years had expired*, that the books were opened, and every man judged according to his works. This also millenarians deny. And in the third place, it speaks of a great and final conflict between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, which is to take place between the *close* of the millennial reign and the *subsequent* and second coming of the Son of Man. This the millenarians also deny; and affirm that the final battle is to take place long before, and when Christ comes in Person to introduce the millennial reign and to establish his kingdom. Will they explain these incoherencies in their theory: will they inform us how it is, upon their hypothesis, that the spirit of Antichrist is to rise again in the earth, after the thousand years are expired? Will they inform us how it is that the great and final conflict which they assign to a period previous to the Millennium, John speaks of as after the Millennium!

Nor is this all. In the 21st chapter of the same book, we have the following narrative. "And I

John saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The writer then proceeds to describe in language that is too grand and symbolical to admit of comment, the beauty and glory of the heavenly world. This whole narrative is equally fatal to the Premillennial theory. It affirms that the first heaven and first earth are passed away; which this theory denies. It affirms that the great and glorious scenes and events which it speaks of are realized not until after the judgment. This also millenarians deny, and declare that they are realized during the thousand years of Christ's Personal reign on the earth. Will they explain these inconsistencies between the inspired writer and their own hypothesis?

VI. Our sixth and last objection to this theory is, that it *is fitted to produce mischievous and fanatical impressions upon the minds of men in relation to the period of Christ's second coming.* There is no doubt that the dawn of the true Millennium, and that of which the Scriptures speak, is not far distant, and that God is now rapidly preparing the way for it by the diffusion of his gospel, and the political agitations of the earth. Nor is there anything in this prospect but is fitted

to exert the most animating influence on the human mind. But the Millennium becomes a very different thing from what it will be in reality, when it is assumed to be such as it is described by the advocates of the Premillennial advent. Yet the same predictions and the same signs of the times which the Scriptures specify as indicative of the approach of the universal reign of holiness on the earth for a thousand years, millenarians regard as indicative of Christ's final coming in the glory of his Father and with his angels to commence the reign of eternity. Hence they proclaim their belief that that coming day is near. They proclaim it from the press; they proclaim it from the pulpit; and we ourselves have heard some of the most intelligent and best informed among them, and men whose personal character and worth might well give weight to their convictions, declare that *they were expectants* of his coming, could truly say that they held themselves *in the attitude of waiting* for the Lord's last advent. We know well that such men have no sympathies with the ravings of the mad prophet who has driven so many persons in this land to folly, and disappointment, and despair, and the madhouse, and that they disclaim all alliance with such extravagancies. But we repeat the thought, does it not behoove them to inquire if this millennial furor is not a legitimate deduction from their own avowed principles, and

whether they can throw off the responsibility of leading so many weak minds astray, and furnishing arguments in favor of their abused hypothesis to minds that are more wicked than weak?

Many are the generations, and many the centuries that will pass over the earth before the final coming of the Son of Man. Those who love him will welcome his coming whenever, and however he shall appear. His coming is virtually to every man at death, because his destiny is then unalterably decided, and his account sealed up for eternity. His actual coming "knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but the Father only." The harvest of the earth is not fully ripe. Great and important events are yet to take place, before the command is given, "thrust ye in the sickle;" and great preparations are yet to be made for that solemn catastrophe. The plans of heavenly wisdom are too vast to be consummated in a day; "the end is not yet."

We have thus presented our objections to the hypothesis of the Premillennial advent. We have omitted several *strong points* in the discussion, from necessity. It is unhappy that at this age of the world the church of God should be called on to go into a question which has been so often discussed, and one which we have long supposed put at rest. Forty years ago, there was not, to the best of my knowledge, but two men in New

England who advocated this theory; and their works were deemed unworthy of notice. They are crude views; and though persisted in honestly at the present day, I confess I do not see for what good end.

If you ask me, Is there then to be no Millennium? I answer *there is*; there is a day coming when the Great Prince and Saviour will reign gloriously over this earth. What is the nature of that reign, and what the leading characteristics of that coming age, we shall endeavor to show in our next chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN.

THERE is a class of minds, which the concealment of the future does but incite to ascertain what it will disclose. Give them but the clue to it, and though their inquiries be of doubtful success, they prosecute them with ardor ; though their excursions be across seas and deserts, and through deep caverns and intricate labyrinths, they shrink not from the toil, or the peril of the pursuit. Nor is there anything in the spirit of piety to repress, or rebuke this research, but rather not a little to encourage and give it right direction. The Christian is the only genuine philosopher ; the lover of God is the only true lover of nature and science, the only wise and profited inquirer into the history of the past, or the prospects of the coming times.

How trivial the consequences which flow from the greatest achievements of men, their most important discoveries and their most agitating revolutions, compared with those which may naturally be supposed to follow from the setting up of

that kingdom of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and which is fitted in its noiseless, pathless course, to transform chaos into order and beauty, and create all things new !

When, six thousand years ago, the thought was uttered that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the head of the serpent, there were wrapped up in this announcement some of the greatest thoughts ever intimated to men. Here was the love of God to this guilty world. Here was the Father of Eternity giving his Eternal Son to die, and here the stipulated reward of that mighty Sufferer, and the joy that was set "before him, when he endured the cross, despising the shame." And here was the bright harvest of the omnipotent and ever-blessed Spirit, who, though Paul plant, and Apollos water, himself gives the increase. The mighty mind of the Deity has formed purposes without number that are expressive of goodness and wisdom ; but they are all subordinate to this, and minister to its fulfilment. Without it, there had been a vacuum in the universe, the sun had never shone in the heavens, nor the moon walked in her brightness. This earth had not been this earth. Man had not been man. Seraphim had not covered their faces with their wings, nor had they ever have been heard to say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts, the *whole earth* is full of his glory." When Rome inscribed in three differ-

ent languages, that inscription on the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," there was an invisible hand which was preparing the announcement, "At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father." We have in the preceding chapter, endeavored to show in what this predicted age of millennial glory *does not* consist, and have expressed some of the reasons of our dissent from the opinion that Jesus Christ will then *reign in Person* upon our earth. We are, in some sort, under obligation, therefore, to show *wherein consists the glory of that predicted day*. This we do by the induction of the following particulars.

That coming day will, in the first place, *be introduced by remarkable judgments inflicted on anti-christian nations and wicked men*. It would seem, from many intimations in the Scriptures, that the church of God, just before the brighter dawnings of that day, will be involved in no small perplexity from the hostility of her enemies. It has been the method of divine providence to allow his people to be reduced to some extremity of depression before God himself interposes for their deliverance and enlargement. To such an extent has this been the fact in past ages, that good men have been taught the lesson that at the period when

their enemies began to triumph, they themselves may begin to hope.

The representations given of the Millennium in the Apocalypse are preceded by the representations of most exemplary and fearful judgments inflicted upon wicked men, and upon the powers of Antichrist in every form. Without attempting to specify the events in the past or the future history of the world, which correspond with the pouring out of the seven phials, containing the seven last plagues, it is enough for us here to say that they are all emblematical of the judgments that are to descend upon the earth, in order to prepare the way for the reign of Jesus Christ among men. And they are to be continued down to the period when John "saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand," to bind "that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan," a thousand years. The evidence preponderates in favor of the conclusion that the *sixth* phial is now being poured upon the earth, and has been descending for many years that are past, and will yet descend for years to come. The "Holy City," the true church of God, is still "trodden under foot of the Gentiles," infested by enemies and false friends, and in the old world especially the witnesses for the truth are "prophesying in sackcloth." For a series of years events have been taking

place which indicate the overthrow both of the imperial and the ecclesiastical Beast, or, in other words, the Beast and the False Prophet; and by which the sources of all antichristian powers have been and are gradually drying up, like the drying of a mighty river, which for so many ages has been overflowing all its banks. How long before the seventh and last phial will begin to be poured out, we are not warranted in determining any farther than to say that this last series of judgments is yet to visit the earth. There is little doubt that the spirit of wickedness is yet to become rampant in all its forms of arbitrary power, vile hypocrisy, giddy worldliness, bold infidelity, and filthy crime. Nor is there any doubt that they will combine their counsels and their power against the Son of God and his struggling church, and that in this last battle, which is to precede the Millennium, the kingdom of darkness will be made to tremble

“From turret to foundation stone.”

These judgments upon antichristian nations will neither be few nor light. Revolution will succeed revolution both in the political and moral world; convulsion will come upon the back of convulsion, and God will pour upon the nations “his indignation, even all his fierce anger.” The scenes shall be realized of which it is written, “And there were voices and thunders and lightnings and a

great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great." The "cities of the nations shall fall;" and "great Babylon shall come into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." The nations who have spilled the blood of his saints shall drink blood because they are worthy. The cry of the souls from under the altar shall be heard in heaven and answered, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth!" The "day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low;" and upon "every high tower and every fenced wall," and God will "cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible."

So far from being subdued and humbled by these judgments, the hostile nations shall throw their armor about them, and, exasperated with rage, shall contend with God as in the day of battle. With the sword and with fire and with famine God shall contend with them until they are swept from the earth. "They shall pass through it hardly bestead and hungry; and it shall come to pass that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God and look upward. And they shall look unto

the earth and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish, and they shall be driven into darkness."

This last conflict under the *seventh* and *last phial* is described in the Apocalypse by the most fearful metaphors and symbols which human language can utter. "I, John, saw the Beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, to make war against him who sat upon the horse and against his army." "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men both small and great."

Judgments, of which such things as these are the symbols, are yet to take place in our world, and to prepare the way for the glory of Christ in his millennial reign. There will be no refuge from this desolating march of death. The work will go on until the enemies of the Son of Man are destroyed by the breath of his mouth and the brightness of his coming.

Throughout all this period, God's designs are represented as rapidly coming to maturity for the

introduction of this predicted day of his great power and glory. The assembly of the first-born, we are told by the same symbolical writer, will give glory to God both for these judgments and for the dawning of millennial glory as *simultaneous events*. Immediately as this ascription of glory to God is being given, the angel who interpreted the vision to John is heard saying "Write, blessed are they who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb." Then it was that the song of triumph began. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluiah : for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him ; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready !" Then the devil will be chained, and the Millennium will advance by progressive and rapid steps. It will be like "life from the dead," and well nigh as rapid as a general resurrection. The perfect day will not shine at once ; but the dawn will shine brightly.

We are looking for that day. Heaven is looking for it. Angels and the spirits of the just made perfect are looking for it. Its fainter lights even now begin to transpire through the veiled windows of time, and seem struggling to break through and illumine this dark world. Even

"the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for this manifestation of the sons of God." The One so long despised and rejected of men, shall come "like rain upon the mown grass, and like showers that water the earth. All kings shall bow down before him, and all nations shall call him blessed."

Thus introduced by judgments, this reign of mercy will commence; and our next remark concerning it is, that it will be distinguished *by the multitudes who enjoy its sacred influence*. It will be the glory of Christ's millennial reign that "he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." Nor will the inhabitants of the earth then be few, notwithstanding the desolations that have been made by the sweeping judgments that preceded his gracious empire. Everything will combine from the very dawn of that blissful period to augment the population of our globe; so that at the close of a single century of the thousand years, more human beings will be found upon the face of it than ever existed at any former period.

The predictions which relate to the increase of *the Jews alone* are of a very marked character. "The mountains of Israel shall shoot forth their branches;" and God "will multiply men upon them, and do better to them than at their beginnings." Men shall no more say, that "the land

devours men, and has bereaved its nations." As the "holy flock, the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men." The same causes which contribute to this augmented population of the Jews, are adverted to in the Scriptures as having the same effect upon the Gentile nations. There shall be "an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains: the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." The "abundance of the seas," and the "forces of the Gentiles," the multitude of the beasts of the earth, and the glory of its forests shall unite in beautifying the place of God's sanctuary, and making the place of his feet glorious. This earth is now believed to contain eight hundred millions of inhabitants. Yet what vast portions of it remain uninhabited; and what a multitude, both of remote and proximate causes, retard the increase of the human family; or cut off its population in its bud, and flower, and fruitfulness; or diminish and reduce those honored years, in which "the almond-tree flourishes!"

The *social relations* form no small part of that wise and benevolent arrangement of divine providence by which the institutions of religion, and true religion itself are perpetuated from parents to their children, and the honor of the Redeemer becomes refulgent in the earth. They are dis-

honored now ; but they will not be dishonored in that coming day, when " a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation." Few, if any, will then be found who, from a dissocial spirit, from avarice, or licentiousness ; from the dread of toil, or the fears of responsibility ; from indifference to the wise arrangements of the Author of their living, or from any other selfish consideration ; will countervail that great law by which these relations are rendered perpetual and pure. The world will be exclusively a world of families ; or if here and there a solitary straggler is found beyond the bright zone that thus belts the earth, he will be pitied and wondered at as a wandering star.

The *science of Political Economy*, about which so much has been written to little purpose, will then be understood, and its true principles will be found in the nice adaptations of that moral code which not only prescribes the conduct of man toward his fellows, but the intercourse of nations. The crowded and suffocated portions of the earth, where human labor finds little encouragement, and there is a scanty supply for human wants, will migrate to broader lands, and where the earth is enriched by the quiet of centuries. Avarice will give way to contentment ; the spirit of speculation will be superseded by cheerful diligence and moderate gain ; and land and ocean

yield their increase, because "His way is known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations."

It was the promise of God to his people, that if they would hearken to his voice, "he would take away sickness from the midst of them." It is a remarkable declaration of the prophet Isaiah, concerning the Millennium, that the "inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." The germs of disease will no longer be found in human vices; men will die only by the gradual decays of nature; and "there shall be no more an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days." Famine and plague shall no more desolate the earth; war, that scourge of humanity, shall cease, and the resources it has diminished, and the energies it has wasted, shall be employed only in the diffusion of blessing. Those fountains of human infirmity and sorrow,—intemperance, licentiousness, and luxury—in whose deceitful and rushing maelstrom so many generations have found a premature grave, shall be dried up; and in its place the waters of the sanctuary shall flow, and "everything shall live whither the river cometh." Could we stand in the midst of those coming days, and view the population of this globe, we should see what has never yet been seen. Not a continent nor island, not mountain nor valley; not river's bank nor iron-bound shore, not a sandy desert nor a bold

promontory, but will teem with the habitations of men. Successive generations, no longer traversing the earth in solitary streams or broad rivers, shall flow on in one vast, swelling ocean, everywhere multiplied as the sands on the shore.

To an extent hitherto unknown, the age of which we speak, *will also*, in the next place, *be one of light and knowledge*. It is the device of the Adversary, to shroud the world in darkness; he holds his throne most firmly in "the dark places of the earth." He who is the light of the world never made a more exulting avowal than that at the bar of Pilate, when he said, "To this end was I born, and for this end came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the *truth*." He is the King of truth; light and truth are the great elements of his empire, and the only means of its advancement and triumph. It is a remarkable prediction, that "knowledge with the strength of salvation shall be the stability" of the best days of the Christian church. And it is a remarkable fact, that since the commencement of the Christian era, save the arts of divination, which still linger in Pagan lands as their forlorn hope, the lights of science have been waning throughout the Pagan world. Even in the darkest of the "Dark Ages," almost every department of useful knowledge, repudiated everywhere else, found a refuge in the monasteries of a corrupted Christianity. Facts

and principles multiplied without limit, do indeed show that a spiritual religion does not necessarily stand abreast with the progress of science and the arts; while they also show that all advances of true religion carry along with them a proportioned intellectual advancement. Bright will be the glory of that age of which it may be said that piety is the adornment of its learning, and learning is the adornment of its piety. This shall be eminently one of the glories of Christ's millennial reign. Institutions of learning shall be multiplied, and they shall be under a Christian influence. The press shall no longer teem with error, but become the vehicle of truth; important truth, truth that interests and pleases, because it instructs and elevates. Most of all shall *religious knowledge*, the knowledge of God and his Son, have access to the human mind. The world shall no longer groan under the bondage of ignorance and superstition. The Prince of darkness shall be expelled from this his usurped dominion, and be chained a thousand years. "The eyes of them that see shall not be dim; and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart of the rash also shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall speak plainly. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." The imagery by which this

increase of knowledge is illustrated is beautiful and significant beyond comparison. Nor is the sober fact less significant, or beautiful. God's word, never bound, shall then break over the limits of tribe, nation, and language, and have "free course and be glorified." "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all nations." The rising generation shall be a generation religiously instructed; and the Bible shall become a text-book in every school and university throughout the earth. Everywhere shall it have access to the human mind; kings shall honor it upon their thrones; courtiers shall honor it in their councils; and the common people shall honor it. Untold myriads shall be sanctified through the *truth*. An intelligent and holy ministry, and an intelligent and holy church shall be found in every clime. Heavenly truth shall be diffused through all nations; the institutions of heavenly love and wisdom shall flourish under genial skies; returning Sabbaths shall everywhere revisit the earth; churches of a pure faith shall be erected in every district, and stand as beacon lights on every shore. God shall "destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil spread over all nations." Amid the multiplied facilities for human intercourse, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as

the light of seven days," and the "knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

It will also in the next place be an age which is emphatically *the dispensation of the Spirit*. It will differ from former ages, in no one particular more than this. The third Person in the adorable and ever-blessed Trinity will then be universally acknowledged as the appointed and honored Dispenser of the blessings of that New Covenant of which the Son of God is the Mediator. In consequence of this, the reign of Christ on the earth will be the reign of *holiness*. There shall be few unconverted and unholy men. We dare not say that *all* the inhabitants of the earth will then be converted to God, because the Scriptures intimate that there will still be a leaven of wickedness, and miry places of the earth that "are given to salt," and where the waters that issued from the Sanctuary do not come. The final struggle between the righteous and the wicked, and the great battle of Gog and Magog which is just antecedent to the final judgment, and during which Satan shall be again let loose for a little season, cannot well be accounted for without the fact, that notwithstanding the multitudes of good men, there will be a remnant that will still cleave to their sins, and their lusts, remain rebels among the rebellious, and adhere to the last to the accursed Father of

rebellion. These constitute "the rest," the remnant of which the Apocalypse speaks, that lost their power during the Millennium, and "lived not again until the thousand years were completed." This one thing is clearly revealed, that the inhabitants of this world, as a mass, will then be holy. "The gathering of the *people*," shall then be unto the predicted Shiloh. "A nation shall be born in a day." The "daughter of Zion shall rejoice, because *many* nations shall be joined unto the Lord in that day, and shall be his people." "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place, incense shall be offered to his name, and a pure offering, and his name shall be great among the heathen." The Jews also will be restored from their long exile, and form one community with the Christian church; the veil that is upon their hearts shall be taken away, and from "all places whither they have been scattered," they shall return, and come into the fold of the Great Shepherd. The Root of Jesse shall "stand for an ensign to the people, to which the outcasts of Israel shall assemble, and the dispersed of Judah shall gather from the four corners of the earth." The effect of their conversion upon the Gentile nations may well be supposed to be bordering almost upon the miraculous; "for if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world,

what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

Not only will there be more good men, but good men themselves will be more conformed to God. They shall walk in God's statutes and keep his judgments as previous generations have not done. They will still be imperfect men; but they will be eminently adorned with the beauties of holiness. "They shall not speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth." In that day "there shall be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD!" This reign of Christ by his Spirit is his true reign upon the earth; and glorious will it be for the splendor of his power, and the triumphs of his redemption, beyond what eye has seen or ear has heard. Men shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call him blessed. "The idols he shall utterly abolish." The great obstructions to the prevalence and growth of piety in the earth will then be taken out of the way. The various forms of Paganism will die; atheism and infidelity and the Mahomedan imposture will wake no more; and every form of hierarchy will have slept its sleep. False religions that are baptized with the Christian name will no longer exert their neutralizing and corrupting influence; their teachers and their disciples will have passed away; no hand shall garnish the sepulchre where they lie, and none shall

be found to shed a tear upon their grave. It will be a time of great engagedness among the people of God; Christian churches will be Christian in character as well as in name. It will be an age of prayer and one of great anxiety, and still greater hope and expectation for the souls of men. The ministers of the gospel will be eminent for their self-denial, toil, and fidelity, and will preach as they never preached before. The Spirit of God will be upon preachers and upon hearers; and instead of here and there a passing cloud, the heavens shall pour down righteousness, and the earth shall open and bring forth salvation. The New Jerusalem shall come down from God out of heaven; God himself shall dwell with men and be their God. The Millennium will be heaven begun on earth, and heaven will be the millennium of earth consummated in holiness and joy.

We remark again, it will also be a period when it will be distinctly seen *that all things are directed by Providence in subserviency to the kingdom of Christ*. All things ever have been thus directed; but this subserviency has, to the eye of sense, and even to the eye of faith, been sometimes so obscurely made known that it has scarcely been perceived, much less always gratefully acknowledged. If we look over the earth on which we dwell, we see so many events, agencies, and influences that countervail the great objects which

Christ has in view, that we see not how they will ever contribute to his advancement and honor. We see wrong and injury in every form ; human rights trampled on, and human obligations unenforced and trifled with. On the side of the oppressors is power, and the oppressed have no comforter. But in that age of millennial glory, human authority and power will be in the hands of good men. As the vast majority of the human race will then be holy, such will be their influence that human governments will be in their hands, and the places of power and trust will be at their disposal. "The kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven will be given to the saints of the most high God." The *people* will be righteous, and therefore the rulers will be good men. The *people* will rule, and a glorious and Christian democracy will it be when righteous nations demand righteous rulers, and rulers and ruled come bending unto the Son of God ! "All kings shall bow down before him, and all nations shall serve him." Oppression shall cease, and every yoke of bondage shall be broken. Kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church of Christ. Great voices in heaven shall announce that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. He will be exalted, and all the powers of earth shall be subservient to his dominion. He

will reign over the earth, in his people and with his people, and they "shall live and reign with him." His influence will be extended to all the forms of power and to all the departments of government, everywhere vindicating the rights, and at the same time enforcing the responsibilities of men. Legislators will be wise and good men; that great engine of security and happiness, or of insecurity and misery, human law, no longer subject to the arts of professional adroitness, will be submitted to upright and impartial expositors and judges, and be a terror only to the evil, and a praise to them that do well; while in the execution of law "its officers shall be peace and its exactions righteousness."

There are great elements of nature also which have just begun to be subjected to the power of man. Others there are which as yet remain locked up in her own bosom, because the time is not come, when "the Lord hath need of them." The magnetic power, and the power of steam are destined to work wonders for the kingdom of Christ. The resources of the physical creation will not probably be known until they are rendered more subservient to the moral and spiritual creation. Problems are waiting for their solution, only until they shall be made to speak for Jesus Christ, bear testimony to his truth, and extend his kingdom among men. The heavens and the earth,

land and ocean, men and nations, the inspection of the present and the researches of the past wait his bidding, "by whom are all things, and for whom are all things." The light and the darkness, the atmosphere above us, and the fossils and minerals and more precious metals beneath us, every element, and combination of elements shall be conducive to his praise. And will it not be the jubilee of the material creation, when its clouds and its sunshine, its mines of gold, its honors, its pursuits and its enjoyments all do honor to the Redeeming Saviour?

The arts and sciences shall also be under the influence of Christian principles, and receive a benevolent direction. No longer will they be employed in works of impiety and unrighteousness, or for the mere gratification of selfishness and gain, or for the construction of ingenious instruments of death. Instead of being embarrassed and kept back as they have been in past ages, because they multiply the agencies of evil, they shall disclose new inventions and be crowned with new successes, because men have learned to employ them wisely. This whole material creation, made by Christ, and *for* Christ, shall no longer be diverted from the design of honoring him, and wickedly made the unhallowed means of obstructing the progress of his kingdom. For ages past, this has been a polluted earth and still "groans" under its pollution. Every

created thing in it has been prostituted to the vile purpose of dishonoring the Son of God. It has been thus "subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in *hope*." There is hope even for the earth which is now under the curse for man's sake. The day will dawn when it will be rescued from this "bondage of corruption," and made subservient to "the manifestation of the Son of God." "Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity. Sing O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, and forests, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel!"

It will also be a day, in the next place, when *the glory of Christ shall be wonderfully manifested to the children of men*. Here lies the true glory of that coming day. God himself is the true glory of all his works. In past ages he has done much to bring himself to the view of creatures; but they have been comparatively ages of darkness. He is known now by "the judgments which he executeth," and by the dark cloud in which he dwells, and whence the voice goes forth to agitate, con-

vulse, and overturn. Yet these are but parts of his ways. There are other glories of his nature to be unfolded ; other impressions of his excellence to be produced on the minds of men ; other honors which he is to receive, ere the last ingathering of this world's harvest. Some of these manifestations have already been made ; and if it is a view unutterably grand and beautiful thus to "stand still and see the salvation of God," what will it be when that salvation is consummated, and its splendid glories burst upon the earth, and the tongue of the dumb is unloosed, and millions in every land exclaim, "Behold, what hath God wrought!" They are these strong and vivid impressions of the Deity made upon the *minds* of men, which is one great object he has in view in the arrangements of his providence and in the dispensations of his grace. We turn aside to see this great sight, as Moses did, to look on the burning bush in Horeb, and take the shoes from off our feet. Or like Jacob, in the open field, we catch a glimpse of the heavenly vision, and with him exclaim, "Verily, the Lord is in this place!" He speaks to us as he did to Elijah on the mount, or to Job out of the whirlwind, and we bow at his footstool. Wondrous day will that be when the nations shall acknowledge his supremacy, and feel the weight of his great and amiable character. "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the

Lord, and for the glory of his majesty; for the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day!" Wondrous day, when "all kings shall bow before him, and all nations shall call him blessed!" No marvel that ancient prophets "searched what, or what manner of time" it would be. Delightful, yet awful day! desirable, yet fearful age! to his friends desirable, fearful only to his foes! And they shall go "into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

It is a great thought when we speak of *Christ's millennial glory*. The time is coming when it will be written in broad and legible characters on the azure sky, and stand out in strong and bold relief when the sun is turned into darkness, and the moon into blood. It will blaze forth as the recognized standard of that "kingdom which cannot be moved," and as the well-known insignia of its royalty and splendor, when the kingdoms of this world shall have "passed away, as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor." It is the ineffable glory of his divine nature in all the combination and infinitude of his perfections. It is the glory that is consequent on his sufferings who is "God manifest in the flesh!" It is glory that shall be worthy

of *him*, worthy of his greatest purpose, and his greatest work, worthy of his work of degradation and suffering, when he travelled in the "greatness of his strength." It is glory which is his fitting reward, and with which he is satisfied when he looks back upon the travail of his soul, and contemplates his completed work. The existence of this earth would be a dark problem, and the method of redemption would seem to be a failure, if we could contemplate only the past and the present. There are scenes unspeakably more glorious than these. It is not the present glory of his *church*, glorious as she is, nor *his* present glory, exalted as he is at the right hand of majesty in the heavens, which the revealing Spirit unfolds. It is the glory that *shall* be when the triumphs of Christianity are consummated on the earth, and the Sufferer of Calvary shall rejoice "over his redeemed with joy, shall joy over them with singing, and rest in his love." It is the glory that *shall* be when the ages so anxiously looked for and intensely enjoyed, shall have come and gone; when the light and love of a progressively holy world shall find a mirror in every bosom; when all that faith believed, and hope anticipated, and a sanctified imagination had tried to picture, shall be realized in its growing knowledge, holiness, and joy. Nay, it is the glory that *shall* be, when things seen and temporal shall be

lost sight of in those that are unseen and eternal, and when redeemed men shall press forward to their equality with angels. It is the embryo being and the embryo glory now ; for now the God of Israel is a God "that hideth himself." What has been, what is, may well be lost in the prospect of what will be.

This leads to our last remark, which is, that *Christ in his millennial glory will reign during a sufficiently long period to secure the great objects both of his humiliation and his exaltation.* We do not feel warranted in speaking, with anything like precision, of the time during which the Millennium will continue. It is one of the mysteries of the divine government, that the great objects of Christ's Redemption have not been more extensively attained, and are even now being accomplished so tardily. The greatness of the design may not be estimated by the extent to which it has already been accomplished. "God is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness." The reason why, after so long time, it has not been more fully accomplished, is found in the very magnitude of the design itself. It *cannot* be accomplished in a century. Eighteen centuries have passed away, and it is still a progressive work. Its peculiar glory is that every part of it is so arranged as to express the augmented and progressive glories of its great Author.

“God hath made all things for himself.” His great object is to show forth the undiscovered and unsearchable glories of his nature by such means, and in such progressive manifestations, as shall be most clearly seen, most deeply felt, and most admired and adored. No sudden effulgence can effect this: he has resources which cannot be thus exhausted. It were a low and unreasonable conception of the Deity, to suppose that all the features of any one of his designs are fully made known.

We know not how many years will pass away before the day of millennial glory will begin. Sir Isaac Newton well remarks, that “prophecy was not designed to make men prophets.” We have no desire to commit, or even trust ourselves with any numerical calculations on a subject where so many minds have been at fault, and where enthusiasm, or despondency have so much to do with forming the opinions of men. The four thousand years that were preparatory to the Saviour’s incarnation, were but the morning of a bright and prolonged day. God’s moral arrangements, like everything else which he does, contemplate events in their order. “The kingdom of heaven is like seed cast into the ground; first cometh up the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.” The fairest portions of Christendom have scarcely seen the “corn in the ear;”

by far the larger portions of the earth remain as yet fallow ground, which is yet to be broken up. The Millennium will no doubt come on gradually, though rapidly. Preparations are now being made for it; but the scene has not yet begun to open. Curtain after curtain is yet to be withdrawn, ere the world obtains a glimpse of the dawning glory. It is a mistaken notion that it is to be introduced and sustained by *miracle*, except so far as the work of the Holy Spirit is supernatural. It is the work of faith and the "labor of love;" a faith that is human, and a power that is divine; a faith that gathers strength and expectation from every instance of success and every new attainment, and a power that neither intermits nor relaxes its energy until "the zeal of the Lord of hosts" shall have accomplished its gracious purpose.

When we look at the prevalence of false religions, and more especially those systems of error that prevail throughout the oriental nations, and that are so venerable for age, so incrustured by the accumulations of centuries, and so deeply imbedded in the science, the morals, and social institutions of millions; it would seem to border on the expectations of romance to look for the time when these vast mountains of ignorance and wickedness shall melt away. There are not many visible indications of decay in any of the great antichris-

tian powers or systems ; nor is the sanctuary itself yet cleansed. We may not look for the dawn of the latter-day glory until there are some more significant indications of these great changes. There will be, as we have seen, days of great darkness and suffering and bloody persecution in reserve for the church of God, before Satan shall be bound ; yet in a little time "he that shall come *will* come, and will not tarry." Christ will prove himself the triumphant conqueror. He will "bruise the head of the serpent," and crush his power. It is not the majority of our race over whom the devil will triumph, and whom he will drag down to perdition, but a meagre minority. As a section of the divine empire, this world belongs to Christ ; in defiance of the past and present dominion of the adversary, he will reign over it. He will take his own time to make the conquest ; nor is there any reason to doubt that his millennial reign will include prolonged ages of his power.

The Scriptures speak of a *thousand years*, during which Satan shall be chained ; but they do not intimate whether these thousand years include only the meridian glory of that age of mercy, or whether they include its gradual dawn and close. They simply instruct us that his power shall be crippled for a *thousand* years. Whether this period be literally a thousand years, or whether a

round number of years is thus designed to indicate an indefinite and long period; or whether, counting a day for a year, which is revealed as the prophetic counting, it comprises *three hundred and sixty thousand years*; are questions on which great and good men have entertained different views. The most welcome conclusion certainly is the last; but we can only say that in a book so symbolical and figurative as the Apocalypse, it is not probable that the "thousand years" are to be understood literally. We can affirm with certainty that there will be a sufficiently long period, during which Christianity will have a free and unobstructed course in the world; and men and nations, unembarrassed by the deceptions of the adversary, and uncontrolled by his power, will flock to the universally-erected standard of the cross. The work to be accomplished is no small work, and the happy period allotted to it is no short and transient age. It is no vain hope that generations shall yet exist, which, in long and unbroken series, shall see the Son of Man thus come in his glory. And when *these* have travelled on and travelled far, subsequent generations, in a more distant and brighter stage of this the world's spiritual progress, shall behold still brighter glories, till their progress verges toward the hemisphere where the sun never goes down. Their

days shall be as the days of heaven upon the earth. It is the great glory of God's eternal Son, illuminating all, encompassing all, the atmosphere in which all live and move and have their being.

CHAPTER XVII.

PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS FROM THE DOCTRINE OF THE MILLENNIUM.

WE have reserved a separate chapter from some practical deductions of the Scriptural doctrine of the Millennium, because we could not, without embarrassment, crowd our thoughts within a narrower compass.

The first remark which suggests itself in reviewing this cheering subject relates to *the importance of having our minds deeply imbued with the fact that brighter days are yet to dawn upon this lost world*. There is no fact more delightful, in relation to the future history of man, than that the Redeemer is to reign in millennial glory on the earth. This is humanity's hope. Come what will beside, this one thing we know, the Millennium will come. Be the darkness ever so great that precedes it, and the convulsions ever so many and severe, and the conflicts ever so agitating; the pure light of heaven will yet dawn without a cloud, revolutions and war shall be no more, and there

shall be "abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." Human wickedness may be greatly prevalent, and wicked men and nations possess great power; but not more certainly is there a God in heaven, than "the righteous shall inherit the earth," and that "for yet a little while and the wicked shall not be, yea thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be."

The government of God needs this great revealed fact in order to dissipate the clouds and darkness that surround his throne. We are not without evidence in the dispensations of his providence that he now superintends the affairs of men; but the day is coming when his hand will be more conspicuous, and his gracious designs be more fully comprehended. When the Apostle John in the Apocalypse beheld the woman that "sat upon the scarlet colored Beast" upon whose forehead "a name was written MYSTERY, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth," and saw her "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus;" he makes this emphatic observation: "And when I saw her, *I wondered with great admiration!*" Good men in every age have stood surprised and in amazement at scenes and events so full of successful wickedness that they have been tempted to feel, that "the Lord seeth not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth." It is true that Eternity will

clear up these inscrutable things; but what symmetry and beauty does it give to the system of revealed truth that these clouds are even now dispersed by the light of prophecy, and that we have the perfect assurance that during the thousand years when the Spirit of God will be poured from on high, the wickedness and the miseries of the past shall be forgotten in scenes which earth and heaven behold with transport!

Does not the church of God also need this great revealed fact in order to remind her of her high destiny? It is not easy for us to conceive what Christianity is destined to accomplish. We have often spoken of it as God's greatest work, and as embodying the highest interests of his kingdom. Yet its progress has been so interrupted and slow, that even now after the lapse of eighteen centuries, they are but the orient dawnings of the Sun of righteousness that have risen on the earth in which we dwell. A thoughtless and giddy world may flatter themselves that the church of God has no higher destination than this; that these are the extent of her victories, and that here her horizon terminates. But though the moments seem to linger and the lapse of time is slow; the Christian's eye is fixed on these last days as the great triumphs of truth and holiness.

There is some obscurity in the details of this predicted advancement of Christ's kingdom; but

there is so much that is luminous in the results, that faith and hope live in the brightness of the anticipation. There is nothing visionary in the most generous expectations of all that is desirable and delightful in those days when Christianity shall fulfil its office among men, and accomplish the end for which she was sent from heaven. When the ancient church was an exile in Babylon, she hung her harp upon the willows; she wept sore in the night, and her tears were on her cheeks. They are days of exile which remain for a little while for the church of God that is now on the earth. Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction. The ways of Zion do mourn because few come to her solemn feasts; all that pass by clap their hands at her; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem. But these days of her mourning shall shortly be ended. Blessings, rich and pure as the heavens from which they descend, shall mark her progress as she returns and comes to her promised glory with singing. There is ripe fruit to be gathered from the seed that is now being scattered, and health and salvation from the tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. They are the most glorious revelations of the future, which God has made known. We chide ourselves that we do not give them that place in our thoughts and affections which their inimitable

richness and beauty demand, and are constrained to look upon this deficiency as indicating a low state of piety in our own hearts. When the Christian ministry, and the Christian church become deeply imbued with these great truths, it will become such a ministry and such a church as the world has not seen since the days of the apostles.

We cannot help feeling that there is a value and sacredness in this doctrine of the Millennium which we may well contemplate on our bended knees. It is heavenward in all its tendencies and influence. There is no remorse in such anticipations; nor do I know that there is even any temptation to extravagance and sin. Victor Hugo once said "that the law which rules the world is not, cannot be different from the law of God." The man in whose creed this thought is most intimately inwoven, in whose heart it is most deeply imbedded, and whose deportment is most under its control, other things being equal, will be the holiest, the most useful, and the happiest man. The man who uttered this sublime truth we all know is not a man who is living for the Millennium. This single anticipation, intelligently cherished in the bosoms of princes and statesmen, diffused throughout the various social organizations, and disseminated over the earth, would be like a new power from the armory of heaven by which

the world would be subjugated to the kingdom of Christ. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." What a powerful truth is this to take hold of the human intellect, to inspire human genius, and to consecrate human piety! Dwell upon it; teach it; instil it into the infant mind. Let the pulpit bear witness to it; carry it to the halls of legislation; let literature and the arts, and commerce honor it. Let it go forth to the world as man's inheritance, as heaven's harbinger of good-will to the race.

A second remark suggested by these views of the Millennium is, that *no other agencies are necessary in order to secure this glorious consummation than those which the church of God already enjoys.* Just before the Saviour ascended to his heavenly throne, he gave the commission to his apostles, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; and lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world." These are the promised agencies by which men are to be converted in every age of time. The *truths of the gospel* and the *presence of Christ*, these, and these alone, are adequate to the introduction and perfection of millennial glory. His gospel, with all its sacred institutions and influences imparted to all classes of men and all nations, and his presence in the

kingdoms of providence and grace are pledged to accomplish this great work.

The truth of God and his Spirit are the influences which *have penetrated* the mass of human society, and by which so large portions of it have become already transformed. And what is true of the past will be true of the future. Of the brightest days of the Millennium nothing more can be said than was affirmed on the day of Pentecost, that "Jesus, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."

We have heard much of the *law of progress*, and that, in the natural course of human events, the world is growing better. We, too, are believers in the law of progress; but it is not nature's progress; it is not the progress of the human intellect or the human heart; it is not the progress of human legislation or the science of human government, uncontrolled by the gospel of Jesus Christ. All history shows that without Christianity all the tendencies of our nature are evil. We look with concern upon the dreams of those modern philanthropists who expect to see the world transformed in its moral character by agencies which acknowledge neither the truth nor the power of the ascended Saviour. All other agencies are powerless. There is no *law of progress*

except this. Men who have conceived this idea of the necessary and resistless progress in human affairs, have caught this impression from those bright periods in man's history in which his moral advancement has emphatically indicated the development of the divine purposes of mercy toward our race. They overlook the thought that these purposes have been carried into effect by a power that is superhuman. The Bible is as truly suited to one age as another. No matter how rapid, and how far advanced the progress; the Bible will ever be foremost in the race of improvement. The same is true of the Spirit of God. Shut out God's truth from the minds of men; exclude the renovating power of his Spirit, and the direction of his almighty providence; and the character of our race will become not stationary only, but retrograde. Our confidence is weakened in the wisdom of men with every passing year. We look with suspicion upon all those arrangements and alliances by which they hope to renovate the world, irrespective of the truth and power of God. It is something better which we are hoping for, and to a more simple agency and a higher power that we look. If our world is made better, the work is to be done by Christianity. If the Millennium ever arrive, the work will be done not by science, nor by human legislation, but by Christianity; Christianity will prepare the

way for it by its patient collision with every system of error in church and in state, in individual man and in aggregate society. Christianity will introduce and perpetuate it by the power of its living and reigning Prince. It will be the sword of his Spirit cutting its way through the very heart of the nations, and multiplying its triumphs till he predicted consummation shall come.

In these two things, the truth of Christ and his Spirit, are comprised all those moral influences which act effectively upon the minds of men. The strength of all permanent reform lies thus in the power of Christianity. That peculiar and excitable state of the public mind which gives rise to spasmodic efforts to restrain and subdue the vices of men, is not what the condition of our world calls for. We honor those associations whose object is the suppression of human wickedness; but if we look into the Scriptures we shall find that even those *moral virtues* which adorn the character of good men are "the fruit of the Spirit." God is wiser than man, and better knows access to the human heart. What the world requires is the conservative influence of God's truth, enlightening the public conscience, imparting a strong sense of rectitude, deep impressions of human dependence and responsibility, and confidence in God. The destitute and wretched condition of the masses and their reckless vices will find no permanent relief except

in the truth and Spirit of the Great Healer. It is the dream of idiocy to look for any permanent melioration of individual or social wrong except from the influence of Christianity. It is no marvel that the truth of God is studiously protected from the inspection of the people, where the policy of Princes is to keep them in bondage. Rome fears nothing so much as the unembarrassed dissemination of God's truth. Recent as well as ancient facts in her history proclaim alike her shame and her weakness. This crusade of the Papal hierarchy against the Bible is the most emphatic exposition of its "universal declaration of war against freedom." If these fair lands in which we ourselves dwell, ever prove themselves recreant to the high and inestimable trust committed to them by their sainted Fathers, it will be by their national departure from Christianity. Nothing but this in the wide universe can hold us together, and induce us to hold fast that we have, that no man take our crown. Social and political convulsions may be directed by the wisdom of statesmen, or be held in check for a while by the strong arm of military power; but there must be another remedy for local jealousies and fermenting discontent; and that remedy is the "righteousness which exalteth a nation." Christian principles lie at the foundation of all order, government and godliness. That nation will bear the most honored part in introdu-

cing the Millennium which most fears God and keeps his commandments. Give the world the gospel and the presence of its divine Author, and the Millennium is begun.

We remark therefore again; the view which has been presented of the Millennium *urges the friends of God of every name to vigorous and combined efforts for the introduction of that promised day of their Redeemer's glory.* The agencies by which it is to be brought about are put into their hands for the purpose of being *employed*; nor can they throw off these solemn obligations of duty, of love to Christ and love to this lost world to employ them diligently. The Millennium will not come while good men are asleep. It is then that the enemy sows tares. Nor will it come so long as they are employed exclusively in their secular occupations, and living to themselves. We know not the power they may exert in preparing the way for their divine Lord. Men who have the gospel may send it everywhere, at home and abroad. They *may* send it with that mighty agency, the presence of its divine Author, whenever they are so intent on securing it as to give him no rest until "he make Jerusalem a name and a praise in the earth." The prediction was once uttered, "It shall come to pass that there shall come people and the inhabitants of many cities; and the inhabitants of one city shall go unto an

other, saying, Let us go speedily to *pray before the Lord*, and to seek the Lord of Hosts; I will go also. Yea, *many people and strong nations* shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to *pray before the Lord*." What a sight will this be, when, not individuals only, but churches; and not churches only, but nations; and not nations only, but many people and strong nations, nations pre-eminent in power, nations distinguished for wealth and literature, renowned in civilization, in arts and in arms, in solemn and delightful concert, go to "pray before the Lord!"

Such a scene we have never witnessed; in the present disjointed and jarring state of Christendom, the time seems far distant when the sun will shine upon such a scene as this. The importance given to party shibboleths, and the intolerance with which they are sustained—the mutual jealousies and apprehensions which find their way even into the more evangelical churches—the suspicions which are fostered against institutions that are based upon the broad basis of a common Christianity—the isolated and almost monastic training and habits of the Christian ministry, and the reluctance of private Christians to co-operate in those religious and spiritual services which so greatly advance the kingdom of their Master—the zeal and extravagance of good men in pushing some favorite measure of ultra reform, to the neglect of the divinely

instituted methods by God's truth and Spirit—the diminution in numbers and spirituality of men devoted to the sacred office—the thirst for novelty in the pulpit to the neglect of the solid and substantial truths of the gospel—the neglect of religion by the young, and the growing indifference to this neglect on the part of the old—the all-absorbing influence of the world, and the melancholy control which its social splendor exercises over men and women professing godliness—the unwonted apathy of the church of God in this and other lands, unmindful of mercies and unmindful of judgments—all these indicate that the spirit of fervent prayer, and the stimulus to united effort for the glorious presence of the Son of Man are greatly wanting in the age in which we live.

These things must, and will be repented of and reformed, before the coming of that predicted day. There must be another spirit in ministers and in churches, before Zion becomes a light to the nations, and salvation to the ends of the earth. It will not be amid such a state of things that the standard is set up to which the outcasts of Israel shall be gathered, and the dispersed of Judah shall assemble. Were the *men* and the *means* which have, for the last twenty years, been so unsuccessfully employed in promoting objects which the preaching of the gospel more effectually promotes, there would have been fewer divisions in

the church and in the state, and the spirit with which they are imbued would have been less rancorous. The church of Christ is, by the organization of her great Head, *one church*, and her interests are one. She is not an isolated community; her dwelling-place is among men. She may not maintain the position of indifference and prayerlessness; nor a selfish and iron-hearted policy; nor inactivity of any kind in the midst of so much ignorance, superstition, idolatry, impiety and crime. The great end of her existence is the instruction and conversion *of the world*. She is a MISSIONARY COMMUNITY, and from her very nature and laws, a community for the promotion of every good work. So far as religious objects are concerned, she is herself the great voluntary society of the earth, under a high and heaven-born organization. Her principles are principles of peace, of temperance, of purity, and of all that is lovely and of good report. If she would but be true to her principles, she forms the best organization for the accomplishment of all those great and important events which her exalted Saviour lives to accomplish. Her ministers, her officers, her members are by their covenanted allegiance to their celestial Leader, as well as by their own mutual engagements, pledged to seek nothing so earnestly as the universal triumph of his kingdom. It is no marvel that her light wanes, her energy becomes feeble, and her glory

obscured, when she loses sight of the great end for which she was called by his truth, washed in his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit. She needs a more self-denying heart, and one that is more sensitive to the endearments of redeeming love. She needs a *conscience exercised for the Millennium*, and one that speaks in higher tones of authority and decision. There is no lack of encouragement in this high source; nor is there any higher, or more hallowed impulse, than that it is the glory of her ascended and reigning Saviour which that illustrious day will secure. Never was there a period of the world in which his glory ought to incite to nobler thoughts and deeds, or in which her hopes ought to be higher or more regaled.

Our next observation relates *to the signs of the times, and the indications they furnish of the approach of this latter day of glory*. The history of the past is a most instructive history. As we look back on 1800 years, we see that Christianity, though not without severe conflicts, and some seasons of deep depression, has been making rapid advances. Within less than a century after the death of its Founder, one of its strongest holds was in the capital of the Roman Empire; in the fourth century, it was the established religion of the Empire itself. It was diffused through all its provinces, was embraced by barbarous and invading nations, was subse

quently handed down to the nations of modern Europe, and is now the professed religion of the most civilized and enlightened parts of the world.

In all this progress, this one fact has been delightfully demonstrated,—that Christianity consults the best interests of men, not for eternity only, but also for time. Just in the proportion in which it has had free course, have the temporal blessings of the Millennium stood abreast with its progress. Civil and religious liberty have trodden in her footsteps; literature and science have been her adornment; and if the Lord of heaven and earth has not always given Christian nations that *physical power* which has been exercised by some that are antichristian, he has given them a *moral influence* in the world which is more powerful. He has also given them physical power. To say nothing of our own land, we have but to look at the Christian and Protestant nations of Europe, in order to perceive the authority which they have exerted, and still exert in the world. What land holds so commanding a position among the nations as the little island of Great Britain, spreading her dominions as she does, over one hundred and fifty millions of the human family swaying her sceptre beyond the utmost boundaries of the Roman Empire, and embracing a territory on which the sun never ceases to shine? Her language is spoken in the East and in the West,

and her institutions have taken root in a soil occupied by one sixth part of the human race. While the foundations of the principal European states have been shaken by political convulsions, her social fabric has stood firm; God has made her the great bulwark of Protestant Christianity; and notwithstanding all her faults, she now lives to bless the world. Compare her condition at the present hour, with her condition at the beginning of the fifteenth century; and how marvellous the change! Read the third chapter in the first volume of the "History of England" by Thomas Babington Macaulay, and you will see a change, as almost by magic, and one to which the history of the Old World furnishes no parallel. Read the slight sketch indeed which is presented by the same elegant and forcible historian in his first chapter, and you will see when and how it was that the light began to break on that once dark land. Nor are we so much surprised as gratified to hear this author say, "Unless I greatly deceive myself, the general effect of this checkered narrative will be to excite thankfulness in all *religious minds*, and hope in the breast of all patriots; for the history of our country during the last hundred and sixty years is eminently the history of physical, of moral, and of intellectual improvement. Those who compare the age in which their lot has fallen with a golden age which exists only

in the imagination, may talk of degeneracy and decay ; but no man who is correctly informed as to the past will be disposed to take a morose or desponding view of the present."

If from Great Britain, we look to the Scandinavian nations of the North, comprising Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, we discover, if not equal, yet real indications of the same progress. What were the ancient Celts and Goths compared with the modern *Danes*, but a nest of merciless and ferocious pirates who were distinguished by their hatred of the Christian name, and their terror to all Europe ? What was *Sweden* in the days of Tacitus compared with Sweden after she was converted to Christianity at the close of the eleventh century ; and more especially compared with what she was in the days of Luther, and under the reign of the religious, the humane, and yet the invincible Gustavus Adolphus ; and with what she was in our own days, under Bernadotte. What was *Norway*, the most interesting, but the least known of all the countries of ancient Scandinavia, that land of lake and mountain, and pagan necromancy, until the period when the followers of Luther gave them the Sabbath and the Bible.

If from these you pass to the more central nations of Europe, and look at ancient *Germany*, ignorant of arts and agriculture, with no cities and no villages ; no temples, but groves and forests

where they worshipped the sun, the fire, and the earth; or if you inspect her provinces after the conquest by Julius Cæsar; or if you advert to her intellectual and religious character as they existed under the Papal See; and then compare them with what they have been since the great Reformation; you cannot but perceive that, notwithstanding the pernicious effect of her philosophy, falsely so called, the efforts of her reformers, and the learning of her universities have contributed largely to the growth of true religion in Protestant lands. *Holland*, the home of Calvinism, and the asylum of the Puritans, was not long since the land where 50,000 perished on the scaffold for conscience' sake under a single reign. *Switzerland*, the birth-place of Zuinglius, Bullinger, and Beza, and from the bosom of whose placid lake the renowned Calvin sent forth a voice that now speaks in every well-instructed and well-organized church in the Christian world, was once at the feet of imperial Rome, and overrun and almost extirpated by hordes of barbarians. *Prussia*, the land of Copernicus and the great Frederic, and whence Berlin, and Halle, and Bonn have diffused so much of the learning and intelligence of Europe, and which has been the honored asylum of the persecuted, and than which no country on the Continent is more distinguished for its schools, its toleration and its Christianity; as late as the 13th century

was the dwelling of the Vandal, and later still one of the arenas of that fearful conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants, known as the "thirty years' war." *Hungary* was once the hospitable region where reposed the innumerable hordes which overran the Roman Empire: it was the asylum of the Tartar; now, down-trodden as it is, it gives toleration and security to two millions of Protestants, and seventy-five thousand Jews. It is scarcely two centuries since *Russia* was known as an Empire; now she holds the balance of power in Europe; and though her religion is but one of the corrupted forms of Christianity, the Bible is recognized as its standard, and is accessible by the people. Of *Austria*, *France*, and the *Roman States*, we can say nothing, but that they are not Pagan, and that the witnesses for Christianity which are there, are there to suffer; and it may be by their sufferings, by the word of their testimony, and by the blood of the Lamb, are to overcome.

It is a fact of deep interest in the divine government also, that no one nation now on the earth is so powerful as to dictate and give laws to all other nations. It was not always thus. The Chaldean, the Medo-Persian, and the Macedonian Emperors successively ruled the earth. The Roman Empire, still subsisting in its ten broken kingdoms, once gave law to the world; but when that empire fell, it was the last antichristian power that

should sway the nations, and that was to be superseded by the "stone cut out of the mountain without hands."

Nor is the circumstance to be overlooked, that *Infidelity* has received a blow from which it will scarcely be resuscitated. The great question between believers and unbelievers in the Christian revelation has been so thoroughly discussed, and the evidence in its favor is so cumulative, that no intelligent infidel has for a long series of years ventured to array himself against the authenticity and inspiration of the Sacred Writings. Where infidelity has not retired from the field, it has sought a refuge in scholastic philosophy, or betaken itself to some corrupted form of the Christian faith. The well-known arena of its temporary triumph has been so fearfully scathed by the divine judgments, that its noisy pretensions have been silenced, and the nations look upon it with horror. It always has been, and ever will be the natural result of minds that are at enmity with God; but so long as the scenes of the French Revolution are fresh in the remembrance of men, it will not again form the great feature of national character. Romanism may in the last resort do it homage, because it has no Bible to fall back upon when its own resources fail. False religions in different lands may do it homage, because without the gospel, it is their only asylum in their

overthrow. Islamism will not honor it; rather will it honor the Christianity which itself honors the "One God." Despots will not honor it, because without some religion, they are insecure upon their thrones. Nor will the people honor it, because it gives them blood to drink, and only blood.

The rapid progress which Christianity has made in the world during the *last half-century*, is also among the brighter signs of the times. Wonderful as the fact may appear, the Bible is now scattered through the earth *in one hundred and seventy-five languages*. Great Britain alone maintains in successful operation *fourteen* Societies for Foreign Missions; Germany *seven*; the United States *fourteen*; Holland *one*; Switzerland *one*; France *one*; Sweden *two*; Norway *one*; British America *one*; while there are in the Christian world not less than twelve flourishing associations for evangelizing the Jews. Large missionary stations, with all the appliances of schools, Bibles and religious tracts are now formed in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, the inland seas, and the great islands of the Southern Ocean. Some of these stations occupy some of the most important positions on the face of the globe, where Christianity has entered in earnest into the contest with millions, and hundreds of millions; and where such have been its successes and triumphs that it is "dif-

ficult to furnish reapers even for the ripened harvest." In some of these fields of labor the ingathering has been of the most encouraging kind, and equal to the ingathering of the churches in Christian lands. It is a melancholy truth indeed, that false religions in every form still exist, and that they embrace in their gigantic arms the great mass of the human family; but they are agitated by internal convulsions, and are already beginning to be conscious of their own weakness. It is a remarkable fact, that the gospel has access to them all; that among tens of thousands of them it is doing its work; while some among them have not only publicly cast their idols to the moles and the bats, but have enrolled themselves with the great brotherhood of Christian nations, and have become fellow-laborers with them in carrying the gospel to other lands.

There are also some facts of a different kind not to be overlooked in this rapid survey. The *authoritative tendency of former ages in controlling the opinions of men* has been for centuries, and still is one of the great barriers to the progress of the world toward the days of millennial glory. That great birthright of every man, the right of private judgment in matters of religion, was long in being recognized and understood. The systems, and claims, and organizations of priestcraft, and parliamentary and legislative enactments which had for

centuries held the human mind in their iron grasp, are not systems "on which consumption feeds," nor which die a natural death, or of old age. The longer they live unassailed the more inveterate they become, and the stronger their dominion. Their death-knell was indeed sounded when Christ uttered the words, "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." It was a deadly wound that was given them by Luther, and Calvin, and Knox. The great statesmen of the English commonwealth contended with them; they were successfully assailed by Milton and Locke; Oliver Cromwell wielded against them his ponderous sword; Sir Harry Vane invaded them in the British parliament, and nobly breasted himself against them in the infant colony at Plymouth. But never was the triumph actually and extensively exemplified over them as it has been realized in this land. The influence of the American Republic in giving substance and permanency to the rights of conscience has been a silent, but powerful influence. It has not been by the intervention of her cabinet, or her arms. Her moral influence is her power, and her example is not only now felt and acknowledged by transatlantic states, but will eventually become the law of Christendom. It is no small advance in the state of the world toward better days, that so many men have been found, like Chalmers, and Candlish, and Guthrie and Cunningham in

Scotland, and Vinet in the Swiss Cantons, and Robert Hall and Baptist Noel in England, who have felt so deep an interest in establishing the intellectual and religious rights of men upon their true and proper basis, and in giving Jesus Christ the sole supremacy in his own house.

The great cause of *civil liberty* too has been making gradual advances during the last fifty years. Napoleon Bonaparte, with all his destructive ambition, taught the nations a lesson which they cannot easily unlearn. The despotisms of Europe and even of Asia are not what they once were. Who does not see that the policy of Great Britain has become a more liberal policy ; and that in all these gradual modifications, she has less of favor to the privileged classes, and a more benevolent view to the great body of the people ? The unexpected and untoward events which have recently taken place in Europe, and which would seem to indicate an alliance that is fatal both to religious and civil liberty may not throw so dark a shadow upon the future. It may be that the nations of Europe are not prepared for freedom, either by the strength of their religious principles or moral virtues. Some things they have learned, which they will hardly fail to lay up for future use. They have seen the unstable and faithless character of their own governments. They have seen the superior strength of the people whenever

they came in actual collision with despotic power. They have seen that despots are conscious of their own weakness, because they have been forced to take refuge in foreign aid; and thus experience has taught them salutary lessons both in relation to themselves and those who rule over them. Whether the more immediate results of these ominous overturnings be for weal or for woe, we have this to satisfy us, that God is on the throne, and that the darkest events are but evolutions of that complex arrangement which he himself is directing for the restoration of fallen man by the redemption of his Son. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." The most unnoticed flower and the smallest dew-drop occupy the place assigned to them by his unerring wisdom. The falling of a sparrow and the crushing of a worm under the foot of man as truly form a part of his all-comprehensive purposes, as the extinction of an empire, or the overthrow of the world by the flood. "He worketh *all things* after the counsel of his own will." "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and let the earth rejoice!"

Great and rapid has been the advancement of Christianity from the day of Pentecost to the present hour. It may not be observable in a single century, but in the progress of centuries it is strongly marked. This, as we have already seen, is the true character of the Millennium. It is the

progress of Christianity to its culminating point; retaining still all the characteristics of the New Dispensation and triumphant in the earth. The records of the future will, no doubt, in many respects, still be like the records of the past. There was a variegated and misty prospect to the eye of the first preachers of the Christian faith. Like a beautiful landscape that rests upon a deep background, Christianity then loomed from the hazy atmosphere of forty centuries. The age that preceded it was the iron age of the world; an age of exclusiveness and bigotry, of bondage and suffering, of wars, famine, and pestilence; an age fitted to the character of the nations that successively occupied it. Nor can we say much more than it looms now, if not from the same hazy atmosphere, and the same deep background, from a foreground that is still overcast, and from dark recesses where are seen gloomy and subterranean caverns, and many a rugged mountain and fallen tower. We have, it is true, travelled far beyond the dark ages: the day breaks upon us, but it is not a cloudless sky; "the morning cometh and also the night." Whether the prophetic symbol of the drying up of the river Euphrates denotes the exhaustion and overthrow of the Turkish empire, or the downfall of the nationalized hierarchies of Papal Europe, is not essential to our object. One thing is obvious, the struggle has commenced in which down trod-

den nations have taken the field. And it is equally obvious that there is no relenting on the part of their oppressors. This confederacy of the anti-christian and despotic powers, of which the present generation is the witness, may indicate that the time is not far distant when the great battle for religious principle and human destiny is to be fought; and when blood shall flow even to the horses' bridles; and when the prediction shall be fulfilled, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." This marshalling of the hosts of false religions is but the heaving of the tempest, the collecting of the materials for some mighty eruption. The promises of God to his church are but threatenings to her enemies: "he will give men for her and people for her life." It is not for us to foreshadow the steps of divine providence; but is it not obvious that the way is preparing for a change in the affairs of men; that the ground which was laid in the planting of Christianity, is becoming broader from year to year; and that in its ascent to brighter climes the superstructure will defy the storm?

Our next remark relates *to the prospects and the duty of the American people in the present interesting period of the world.* While with others, we feel that as a nation we are verging towards a most important crisis, we confess ourselves to be among those who have more hopes than fears. It is but a

little more than two short centuries and these States were the abodes of pagan and savage men. Yet was it the purpose of Him who giveth this earth to whomsoever he will, to reclaim this vast and rich territory from the desolations of past ages ; to put it under a Christian culture, and make it the theatre of his millennial glory. In the fulfilment of this design, it has been well said, and often repeated, that he “sifted three nations that he might sow the American wilderness with the finest of the wheat.” We have no spirit of glorying in the Anglo-Saxon race, but would rather invite all to adore the wisdom and goodness of God in bringing to these shores that combination of races which forms the excellence of the American character. The English and the Scottish Puritans, the generous Hollanders, the Protestant Irish, and the noble Hugonots of France constitute the elements of our national greatness. Never has the world seen four nobler races of men ; races whose combined intelligence, piety and thrift were so remarkably fitted by divine providence to convert these western forests into a great and growing empire. The design of heaven in thus laying the foundations of this government, was a far-reaching and benevolent design, and we still regard it as of bright augury.

There have been interpositions of Providence also, in all our history, which show that the eye

of God has been upon this land for good, and not for evil. The issue of the bitter conflict with the mother country, the master-spirits which directed it, and the wisdom, courage, and indomitable perseverance of that most useful and most illustrious man of the age, who was raised up as its honored chieftain, were indications that it was the purpose of God to make this land his peculiar care. What had this land now been, had this revolution been in the hands of wicked men !

Many a time since that period also, has the wing of an almighty providence sheltered us ; in days of peril, the God of our fathers has not forsaken their posterity ; while amid those very crises in which we stood upon the brink of civil war, his voice has more than once been heard stilling the tumult of the people.

It is a fact of deep interest, too, that the American people have never been a persecuting people. They seem, from this single circumstance, to be secure against those judgments which are threatened against the nations who shall drink blood because they have shed the blood of the saints. The Jews, persecuted everywhere else, have never been persecuted in this land ; nor can the threatenings against those who have trodden down the Hebrew race, ever fall upon us, either as an ecclesiastical, or political community. It is a beautiful feature in our history, that the God of nations

has taken this land out from the limits of that great persecuting power, the old Roman empire, and constituted it the asylum for the persecuted of all lands.

We put these facts together, and we carry them as a torch-light into the labyrinths of the present and the future. We have taken a glance at the Old World ; and while the events we have hinted at were taking place there, what is it that was in progress in the New ? Why " a little one was becoming a thousand, and a small one a strong nation : " so that now these Christian States are not only planted in the very midst of Papal superstition, and there carrying the liberties and institutions of Protestant Christianity, but spreading themselves out on mountains of gold, and almost within hailing distance of the whole Oriental World. The character of our increased population has indeed greatly changed ; but with all its heterogeneous elements, it is thrown into the same alembic, and its noxious gases are passing off. That great medium of Christian thought, the most potent engine of reform now in the known world, *the English language*, is gradually reducing these thirty millions to a uniform character. For the first time since the foundation of the Hebrew Commonwealth, the problem is being solved on a large scale, whether it is practicable and safe to elevate the great mass of the population. As

the world is constituted, it was a hazardous experiment; but it is one that was called for by the spirit of the Bible, by the intellectual, moral, and immortal nature of man, and by those unequivocal indications of Divine providence which planted this vine in the wilderness "wholly a right seed." Give the people *religion*, and it is always safe to elevate them. European statesmen did indeed regard the experiment with apprehension; Rome regarded it with inveterate hate; but the founders of this great human charity believed that it was the work of God, and could not be overthrown. And what is the consequence? It is that the land in which we dwell, which has been the scorn of older nations, the jest of the men in power, and the ribaldry of their scholars, has become the pride of all lands, teaching them lessons of liberty and law, gradually supplanting their commerce and manufactures, claiming their respect for its talent and literature, welcoming their surplus population by millions, and co-operating with the virtuous and good of all lands in evangelizing the race. Our fields are cultivated, our public works are wrought, our manufactories and our families are served by European operatives, while their children are taught in our schools, and themselves are insensibly imbibing our principles. We have given to their starving population the bread of our granaries; while, strange to say, up to the

present hour, in their spiritual destitution they do not hesitate to make their appeal to these western churches for the bread of life.

But this is not all. It is a remarkable fact in the history of this land, that while trouble and perplexity for a long series of years have been the portion of the older nations, *pure and undefiled religion* has taken deep root in the minds and habits of the American people. We do not mean by this remark, to commend the piety of this land above that of other lands; nor is it made from the spirit of self-complacency, and self-glorying. We could write a chapter upon the defects of the American character, which would be sufficiently humbling to gratify even the unreasonable hostility to our institutions which exists on the other side of the water. But we may not overlook the purposes of Divine providence toward us, nor be slow of heart to recognize the munificence of his grace. I refer to the fact, that amid the agitations of Europe, churches were being formed in this land, and springing up on every side, *plenteously watered by the dew of heaven*. Just at the time when our fathers, educated and disciplined as they had been by trials and by truth from their very landing on Plymouth rock for the liberties they subsequently enjoyed, were preparing the way for the struggle which issued in our national independence; God was preparing us for

the place we were destined to occupy among the nations, by those spiritual influences which form so luminous an era in our colonial history. And when this young Republic had taken that place, and had survived the corrupting influences of war, and the experiment was being upon a large scale, whether the church of God could prosper independently of state-patronage; the Spirit of God was again poured out upon us, and the land was visited with successive and long-continued refreshings from the presence of the Lord. Nor is it too much to say, that these wonders of a wonder-working God commenced a new order of things among the American people. Although unobserved by statesmen, they gave sacredness and permanency to our institutions; elevated and sanctified our colleges; raised up an effective Christian ministry; gave prominence to the American church, and moved other lands. There are no periods of our history so bright as those which have been thus distinguished. They were days of vengeance to God's enemies; but they were years of recompense for the controversies of Zion. Blood was flowing in torrents in Europe and the West Indies; kings were tottering on their thrones; cabinets were perplexed by divided and stormy councils; but the branch of peace was waving over the church of God in the New World. Nor, much as we have reason to lament subse-

quent seasons of spiritual drought and declension, have these seasons of mercy come to an end. Up to the present hour, "Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of hosts: though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel." This series of revivals has never been so interrupted as to leave a chasm; nor have the heavens over our head ever been so much like brass; but that from the top of Carmel some little cloud of mercy might be seen arising out of the sea like a man's hand. We have other grounds of hope, but these are the strong pillars of our confidence.

In regard to our duty as a nation, there can be no difference of opinion, unless it be as to the means and measures by which the great ends of our national existence should be pursued. It is needless to urge the necessity of sound religious principle, and thorough morality to the preservation of our institutions, and the continued favor of the God of nations upon our land. Nor is it necessary to say, that it is essential to our prosperity that he should give us upright and Christian rulers, and men who are more sensitive to the weighty responsibilities of office, than to its emoluments, or honors. We wave remark even upon these important topics, because we have often given utterance to these views. Nor have we time now to say more upon other topics, than that we

live in an age of great excitement, and greater excitability; nor are there any principles which can so fitly govern us as those of a *conservative* policy. We may be the opposers of infidelity and all false religions, without the spirit either of persecution, or of bigotry. We may be the enemies of tyranny, both civil and ecclesiastical, without active intervention in the authority of tyrants. We may be the friends of law, without aiming to make human laws do the work of the gospel, or endeavoring to introduce the Millennium by human legislation. We may combine in the promotion of every charity, without allowing human combinations to take the place of the church of God, or to neutralize her influence. We may be the friends of freedom, without interfering with the constitutional rights of our neighbors. We may be looking out for the Millennium, and fervently praying for the downfall of the kingdom of darkness, and the general effusion of the Holy Spirit, without expecting to see the Son of Man reign on a temporal throne in Jerusalem, or specifying the date of his advent. And "last, but not least," we may be the friends of the heathen without overlooking the spiritual wants of our own land. This land of the West is the first and great charge of the American people. To perform the part allotted to her in preparing the way for the coming of the Son of Man, she must remain a Christian land; and to remain a

Christian land, she must make rapid and effective aggressions upon the empire of darkness within her own borders. She must have ministers of the gospel, and they must be supported. She must have churches, and congregations to occupy them. She must have Christian families and Christian schools, or the people will perish for lack of knowledge. It is not possible for us to give these plain thoughts too great prominence. The field which God has obviously allotted to the American churches is this broad land. Already on the shores of our own Pacific Ocean the providence of God is planting colonies from the oriental, pagan nations, to learn the value of our institutions and our religion, and to go back the missionaries of the cross, or send back the glad tidings of the great salvation. Would we operate on all nations; we have them in our own land and at our own doors. If we would most effectively promote the cause of Christ, and the salvation of our fellow-men, and hasten the millennial glory of our Divine Master, this land is the proper sphere for our greatest exertions.

We may not extend these remarks. Yet before we bring the subject to a conclusion, we may not suppress this last observation, that as the creatures of God we *are under great obligations to him for the period of the world in which we have been permitted to live.* The years within the remembrance

of not a few among the living have been years of deep interest to individual man, and to every form of social organization. Events have taken place within a shorter period than half a century which some future historian will celebrate as among the brighter ages of time. It has been a period rich in results, and one that adorns the last dispensation of the divine government over this fallen world. That man must be an atheist who does not perceive that events have taken place in such sequence and dependencies as to baffle the councils of the wise, confound the wisdom of the prudent, and even take the most enlightened, the most expectant, and the most believing by surprise. They have been clustering and crowded upon one another so densely, as not only to give substance and continuity to the series, but to furnish striking proof of his supremacy, who "stretched abroad the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth that he might say unto Zion, thy God reigneth!"

Some of us were born to behold the whole of this wonderful, splendid era. Not many such series of events as those which have occurred within the last half-century are necessary in order to fill the earth with the knowledge of God. The fifty years to come will indeed be a momentous period. The child that is now in its cradle will see greater things than ever prophets saw but in vision. Nor will they be long in coming; nor stand alone; nor

will their influence be isolated. They will be fitted to one another and to the crisis they produce; and when the crisis comes they will rush to their glorious issues. This agitation among the nations, and the sweeping judgments that are now passing over portions of the earth, so far from obscuring the prospect, are just the events which God and his people are looking for. It will be in vain for us to expect that the course of divine providence will be tranquil and unobserved; rather will it be broken by rocks and ruffled by storms. There will doubtless be seasons of desolating calamity. The stream will be swollen by the mountain torrent; and as it dashes on and mingles with the ocean, "the deep will utter his voice and lift up his hands on high." Yet is there no depression in these anticipations. Notwithstanding the damp and murky atmosphere with which we are sometimes enveloped, there is a feeling in it that revives us; a fragrance coming up from the blooming earth which is the precursor of the new-born year.

Favored, highly favored is that generation which is destined to occupy these coming years! We may not say that we have no latent wish to put back the shadow on the dial, and enter with younger men and youthful ardor upon this opening period of time. We are thankful for the past, and congratulate those to whom the future furnishes so cheering a prospect. The trump of jubilee is

even now sounding from the lands to which Christianity was transplanted, to lands where she was born. Its tidings come from yonder "sea-girt isle," and are echoed far and wide from these mountains of the West. Long may a wakeful providence throw its guardianship around these lands, and bid them "declare his glory among the Gentiles!"

And thou, my country! The burying-place of my fathers and my children, be not thou unmindful of thy birthright, nor profanely barter it for a mess of pottage! Hail, ye blood-bought churches! whether planted on the sea-beaten cliff, or the verdant plain! Hail, ye her consecrated ministers! her colleges, her schools of the prophets! her Christian statesmen! destined to fulfil such wondrous councils of love more wondrous! Hail, ye her increasing millions! who stand in full view of this coming age of millennial glory! And thou, this poor, lost, but redeemed earth, all hail! under whose opening heavens the Son of Man is to descend, proclaim his triumphs, and receive his reward!

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GLORY OF CHRIST AS THE FINAL JUDGE.

IT is not so much the object of the present chapter, to delineate the scenes of the Last Judgment, as to speak of the glory of Christ as the Final Judge. The present world is not the theatre of equitable rewards and punishments; nor can it be unless governed by a perpetual series of miracles. Either there is no administration of justice in the universe; or God is unjust; or there is a judgment to come. Law implies responsibility to the Lawgiver. It were more reasonable to deny moral government, than to deny that man is the creature of account. It was not necessary for the world to be furnished with a supernatural revelation for the purpose of revealing this truth; this truth itself is the ground-work of revelation. It is an ultimate fact. Men feel confident of it; the foundation of it is laid deep in the constitution of the human mind. They need a revelation from heaven not so much to *assure* them of their responsibility, as to *define* it; to inform them what is its

standard ; and when, and where, and how they will be called to account, and what will be the final results.

For full information concerning a future judgment, therefore, we must go to the Bible. Here the light is strong and refulgent. Here we learn that "God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness ; that "we all shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ ;" that "it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment ;" and that "the small and great shall stand before God, and all be judged according to their works." It will be a day of deep interest to him who made and governs the world, as well as to its unnumbered inhabitants. The Scriptures speak of it as the "Great Day," and as the "Day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God." It must be a great and glorious day. But why will it be a day of such importance to *Jesus Christ*, and what is there in the divine arrangements concerning it which will then render *Him* so ineffably glorious ? The following thoughts may deserve some consideration, as a partial answer to this inquiry.

In the first place, *the time when the final judgment will take place, is determined with a view to his work as the acknowledged Redeemer.* In the days of the apostles, there were those who taught that the "resurrection is past already," and others

who taught that it was nigh at hand. In subsequent ages, prediction upon prediction has foretold the period; and in our own day there have not been wanting those who have fixed the date of this appearing of the Son of Man, and who have driven thousands to the frantic apprehensions, or the disappointed expectations of his coming. Not a few who discountenance the idea of his premillennial reign, still believe that what they consider the day of judgment, is an event which may come in ten years, or in one, at any hour or at any moment. That such views are without any foundation, is sufficiently obvious from the present state of the world, and from so many unfulfilled predictions which must occupy a longer period in the fulfilment than such views contemplate. The Millennium itself will occupy at least a thousand years. There are affecting events also which the Scriptures inform us are to take place between the Millennium and the end of the world, which necessarily put the final judgment at a distance from the close of the Millennium.

The time is fixed by God, and remains a profound secret to all the rest of the universe. How long after the Millennium it will arrive, we may not conjecture. All that is revealed to us is, that, at the close of the thousand years, Satan will be let loose from his chains for "a little season." From "the remnant" of wicked men who remain

unsubdued by the gospel during that long-continued period of holiness, a generation will arise who will body forth afresh the spirit of the Beast and the False Prophet, and in whom there will be an inglorious resuscitation of antichristian principles and influence, a fearful apostasy, an infatuated and presumptuous warfare against the saints of the Most High. "Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." As this will be the last, so it will probably be a most desperate conflict, and form a most interesting period in the history of time. Prostrate nations will contend against the church, besiege the beloved city, and become so merciless, that the only hope of the saints will be in that miracle of deliverance in which "fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours their enemies." This event will be the proximate precursor of the consummation of all things. It was immediately after this, that the prophet affirms, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." The time had come for the Last Judgment; the time fixed in the purpose of God; the time to which all preceding ages had looked forward. It will not come when men are looking and preparing for it; it will take them by surprise, when they least expect it, and

are least preparing for it. It will come suddenly, and as "a thief in the night." Kings will be in the pride of their thronely power; armies will be marshalled on the battle-field; senates will be in the midst of their deliberations, orators of their triumph, banqueting halls of their festivity, bridal circles of their hopes and joy, and the thief and the murderer in the hot career of crime. The frantic world will be shouting its triumphs over a down-trodden, desponding church; when suddenly, and at some unlooked-for signal all faces shall gather blackness at the sight of the "Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven."

Nothing shall hasten his coming before the appointed time. The living saints may be impatient for his appearing, but until then he shall not appear. The spirits of the martyrs may have been for ages uttering the cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth;" but bitter and affecting as the cry has been, he would still give the world every opportunity of repentance. Nor would draw the curtain upon its last hope, until the bright period of millennial glory is past, nor until the "remnant" have so unequivocally manifested their wickedness, that the safety of his cause, and his own glory demand that the end should come. Nothing in the universe can then induce him to any further delay. Many a time has the scoffing

infidel given utterance to the blasphemous demand, "Where is the promise of his coming;" many a time has Greek and Jew derided the doctrine of the resurrection and the judgment; and with them, many a time have those who have had their dwelling in God's sanctuaries turned a deaf ear to these solemn premonitions, and laughed at the thought of that everlasting retribution. Now men will no longer shut their eyes to the light; profligate infidelity will no longer question his coming; the day of scornful defiance will be at an end; and for the first time since the beginning of the world, ridicule, and reproach, and a lying tongue will honor the forbearance and the truth of the Son of God.

The great purpose of his redemption, that purpose which lies near his heart, will then be consummated; and providence will seal up its great Statute Book, and this material creation will be arrested in its course. When his design is completed, theirs will be completed; when his work is done, theirs will be done. Events shall not crowd so fast, nor time fly so swiftly, as to prevent him from finishing his great work. If there is a remote tribe, or forgotten island of the sea to whom his gospel has not proclaimed its glad tidings; or if there is a benighted son or daughter of Adam whom he foresees will accept the salvation by putting off this final consummation; the day of reckoning shall not come until that forgot-

ten tribe is thought of, and that wandering sheep gathered into his fold. The day would have been past and gone, and we all should long since have entered upon an unalterable and eternal destiny, had not his great work of redemption been still going on. If there were not hereafter to be another sinner brought to the saving knowledge of Christ; the mystery of God would *now* be finished, and ere yonder sun has time to cross his meridian, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God would sound. God has committed *all things* into the hands of Christ as the appointed Mediator. It is signal glory to him that he has preserved the seasons in their revolutions; has kept the lights of heaven in their orbits, the ocean in its bed, and held the elements in his fists; that men and nations have been under his control, and all overruled and governed not only with a view to the disclosures and decisions of this Last Day, but to the most fitting time when they shall be made. It will be known then why this world has stood so long, and why it shall stand no longer; why the Day of Judgment arrived no sooner, and why so soon. Nor amid these wondrous disclosures will anything be more wondrous than his character who is the great Mediator, his glory who is God over all, blessed forever.

We remark, in the next place, it will be an emphatic expression of the glory of Christ, that *he*

himself will be the Judge. After he rose from the dead, he said to his disciples, "*All power* is given to me in heaven and on earth." God has given to him this authority; and the time is coming when it shall be acknowledged from one extremity of the earth to the other. His cross is the consecrated symbol of empire. By solemn charter, written with the finger of God, and sealed with the blood of the everlasting covenant, he is "head over all things to his church." Nor will he surrender this authority until the close of the Final Judgment. He will sit as King upon the throne at the Last Day; and the last regal act of the God-Man shall be the process and decisions of that day.

There is wisdom and equity in this arrangement. It is altogether fitting that Christ should be the Judge, because *he is the Son of God*. It is his prerogative whose is the kingdom, and who is exalted as Head above all, to give law to the universe and become its Judge. His real and essential Divinity qualifies him for this high office. He could not have arranged the government of the universe with a view to the judgment; nor could he conduct the process of the Day itself, unless he were truly and essentially God. He could not raise the dead nor call angels and men before his bar; nor open the books of providence and search the heart; nor judge the world *in righteousness*; if he were not possessed of every divine perfection.

The Scriptures instruct us also that there is a peculiar fitness in his being the Judge, because he is the *Son of Man*. "The Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son." This is one of the features of the divine government. It is a beautiful arrangement, that the judge of men should sustain this intimate relation to the nature of those whom he calls before his bar. It is but carrying out the thought, that "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part in the same!" They are the brethren of his own family, the descendants of the same primeval parent, whom he thus summons before him. As by one man came sin and death, so has redemption come; and so shall the final judgment come by One, Jesus Christ.

It is in his character, therefore, *as God and man, the great Mediator and Redeemer*, that he will judge the world. The work of redemption began in his incarnation; it was advanced by his life, his miracles, and his preaching; it was perfected by his death; and there is a strong propriety in his still unfolding it, and making its grandest developments, and bringing it to its final issues on the Great and Last Day. It was for this that he rose from the dead, thus incontestably establishing his claims to be the Judge of men at his "appearing and in his kingdom." When the Lord of all thus stooped to the form of a servant; when the eternal

Lawgiver consented to become a subject; when he who was rich, and honored, and blessed for evermore, came to a world in which he had not where to lay his head, and hid not his face from shame and spitting, and sunk on the malefactor's cross; it was in view of this exaltation as the recognized and adored Judge of angels and men. "That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." He is the last being in the universe who will allow any injustice to be done to the *Deity*. Exhibiting as he does the transcendent glory of the Godhead, he will sit upon his throne as the selected and impartial vindicator of all its rights and claims, himself endorsing them all, and pledging his own rectitude not merely to save them harmless, but to crown them and their Author with glory and honor. He is also the last Being in the universe who will allow any injustice to be done to *man*. Identifying himself with humanity, and linking with it his own fortunes and honor, he occupies the throne as their Friend and Advocate; furnished with every plea on their behalf, and not less tender in his compassions, and not less touched with sympathy for them than when he wept over Jerusalem. From the commencement to the close of this judicial process,

every kind sentiment of his bosom is enlisted on man's behalf. The most depressed of all his followers, and those who, in the present world, have been so burdened and crushed by a sense of their wickedness, that many a time they have thought they should not dare go up to his throne; when they look upon his face so radiant with love and mercy, shall stand with confidence before him. And even the despairing sinner may have this consolation, that if there be one mitigating circumstance in his history, it will not be overlooked nor unappreciated. Guilty man could not have a more friendly Arbiter, nor God, and justice one more safe and true.

Neither the Father, nor the Spirit could so fitly occupy the judicial throne, nor throw around it such brightness; nor could its decisions and sentence come from any lips with so much emphasis as from his. Every virtuous mind in the universe will rejoice when they behold the *Mediator* in the Person of the descending Judge, and see the Sufferer of Calvary on the throne. It is a delicate, as well as most responsible office which the Son of Man then executes. If it is the glory of an earthly judge to be so well qualified for his office, and so faithfully to have discharged its duties amid scenes of popular tumult and furious revolution, as to secure the approbation both of the government and the people; what glory will rest

upon the Person, and encircle the Judgment Seat of the great Mediatorial judiciary, when God, angels, and men thus support his throne !

These thoughts will receive additional importance from a third general remark, which respects *the manner in which He will come to judgment*. The earth we inhabit will exhibit an unwonted appearance toward the close of that period of time which immediately precedes the General Judgment. If we now look up to these material heavens, or abroad upon the terraqueous globe, we do not perceive that as yet they indicate any mark of decay. The sun does not stagger in his place, nor throw out his beams less brilliantly ; nor does the moon walk less majestically her nightly pilgrimage ; nor do the planetary bodies move with less energy in their orbits, or exhibit a less sublime and attractive scenery, than they exhibited six thousand years ago. Nor does this earth on which we tread, with its oceans and continents, its lakes and rivers, its cities and villages, its cultivated soil and its uncultivated wastes, its mountains and its plains, and its ten thousand landscapes of inimitable beauty, show any signs of infirmity, or any reluctance or incapacity to sustain the myriads of animated beings which inhabit it. But the time is coming when they will all become white and withered with age. The Scriptures teach us that “ the heavens shall *wax old* as doth a garment.”

These brilliant lights shall be obscured, and gradually become dim. And this earth, so long scourged by the wickedness of man, but subjected to greater bondage when the age of millennial glory shall have passed away, shall give increasing proofs that it feels the burden, and "shall groan and travail in pain together" to the last. Its restless inquietude shall break out in terrible convulsions; in the ravages of burning volcanoes, destructive earthquakes, gloomy and terrific tempests; till worn out with the struggle, the earth itself also shall wax old, and become changed. And although, from the operation of those natural causes superinduced by the wickedness of these last days, the number of its inhabitants will not probably be so great as during the Millennium, yet will it be occupied with a full and crowded population. The men of God, in that apostate age, will be few, but many, very many, and like the sands on the shore, will be the men of wickedness. Led on by the Prince of darkness, now for a short season loosed from his prison, they shall go up upon the length and breadth of the earth, infuriate with rage against the diminished church of God, "scoffers walking after their own lusts," buried in the guilty security of sin, and little dreaming that the sun of time is making his last circuit in the heavens.

It is then that that immortal morning will

dawn when the Son of Man will come to judge the world in righteousness. We are told that "he shall come *in his own glory*." That personal glory which was beheld by Saul of Tarsus, and was seen by the disciples on the Holy Mount where "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light;" that glory which belongs to him as the God Incarnate, and which unveiled, no human eye ever saw; shall be the robe in which he enwraps himself as he comes in the clouds of heaven. It is not as the babe of Bethlehem that he comes; nor to travel through those scenes of deep humiliation where Jew reproached him, and Roman blasphemed, and slaves smote, and the rabble spit upon him, and soldiers gorgeously and fantastically decked him for the altar; nor is his visage now marred more than any man's, nor his form more than the sons of men. He shall come, not only "in his *own* glory," but "in the glory of *his Father*." His Father's glory shall rest upon him in all its brightness; he shall be the great and only representative of the Deity in that day, and all divine glories shall be concentrated in his Person. And whatever there is of created glory in heaven shall also then encircle him. Angelic spirits that wait to do his pleasure, and whose bright appearance has, from time to time, in different periods of this world's history, flashed upon the eyes of men like light-

ning from heaven, shall appear with him, adding to the splendor of his advent. He shall be "revealed from heaven with his mighty angels;" he shall come "with power and great glory:" it will be "the GLORIOUS APPEARING" of the Great God, our Saviour.

Once he trode this earth in retirement. It was an unnoticed village where he was born, and rendered memorable only by his birth. It was an obscure and even ignominious hamlet where he was brought up. Many were the solitary places where he wept and prayed, unseen but by the Great Invisible, and those heavenly Watchers that hovered about his unknown and sequestered paths. Now he comes "in the clouds of heaven." And although he comes suddenly, and as "the lightning, when it shineth from the East into the West," the thoughtless world will have notice of his approach in the heralding trumpets of his glorious attendants. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God." Some unearthly blast, and some brilliant object, just perceptible in the far distant heavens but drawing nearer and more near, shall first tell of his approach. No eye can be turned from the affecting sight even to look upon the obscured sun as it retires from its Maker's presence. The DESCENDING JUDGE fills every eye and every thought. HIM, this astonished world is

now gazing at with startled apprehension. "They *shall see* the Son of Man COMING in the clouds of heaven." "Behold! he cometh with clouds, and *every eye* shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." The one single object in the universe to which all eyes will be then directed, whether it be from heaven, earth, or hell, will be his great glory. Those who have thought and said that his Advent is far away; the millions who have taken refuge in their abjectness, as well as those who have gloried in their wealth and power; the "kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains and mighty men," shall see him, and exclaim, "Who can abide the day of his coming?"

We remark again; his glory will be still more enhanced by *the process and decisions of the judgment itself*. His glorious appearing is no pageant. It is not designed for show, or entertainment, nor as a pompous triumph, in which the badges of his own regal and judicial authority are displayed for the purpose of dazzling the eyes of the beholders. The events and circumstances we have been contemplating are but preliminary to affairs of more serious moment, and to the great business in which every intelligent creature in the universe has a stake deep as eternity.

When the voice of the archangel and the trump

of God shall sound the summons, both the living and the dead shall come to judgment. That vast living population, scattered far and wide over the earth, from north to south, and from the rising to the setting sun; young and old, king and slave, rich and poor, righteous and wicked, shall come before his throne. And those mighty and forgotten regions of the dead, wherever their bodies were deposited, whether buried in the earth, or floating in the deep sea; whether consumed by the flames, or enriching the battle-field, or evaporate in the atmosphere; all "from Adam to the latest born," shall wend their way to the great arena of the judgment. Not one shall be overlooked, or forgotten; every limb, every perished bone, every floating and secret particle of dust shall obey the summons and come forth. The grave shall be spoiled of its proudest and its meanest triumphs: and now, if one could look upon the earth, he would see not only its empty graveyards, and vacant cemeteries, but the whole earth itself, and its caverned oceans, one mighty excavated globe, and wonder how these countless generations could have found a dwelling beneath its surface. For the first time and the last, the entire race of Adam, of every age, and kindred, and tongue, will be assembled in one congregation before the Son of Man. It is a sublime and graphic description of this assemblage given by the writer of the Apocalypse, in

which he says, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead small and great stand before God; and the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them." And to these shall be added every intelligent creature, from every world; not one shall be wanting of the entire moral creation. Holy angels will be there as the favored attendants of their divine Judge. And the unholy too, Satan with all his legions, those seducers of man, those corrupters and destroyers of his race, those vaunting enemies of God and his Son, whom he has "reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the Great Day," shall be summoned from their dark abodes.

There will be a marked distinction then between the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked. Those there will be who will "awake to everlasting life;" and those there will be who "shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt." The ungodly and the sinner shall awake, from Cain down to the last reprobate of the human family. They may have glittered in the circles of fashion and beauty on the earth; they may have lived in honor and the adulations of their fellow-men may have followed them to the grave; but they are now stripped of their disguise, loaded with infamy, and

held in detestation by every being in the universe. Their bodies will be a fit dwelling for their vile minds. With all those fearful and horrid expressions which every base and malignant passion wakes up in the human countenance, stamped upon it for eternity, and burnt in by the flaming fury of their own terrific wickedness, they will be condemned to look upon their own deformity, and to feel that they are fitted for the doom of outcasts.

The bodies of the righteous will have no such loathsome attendants. "Sown in corruption, they will be raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, they will be raised in glory; sown in weakness, they will be raised in power; sown a natural body, they will be raised a spiritual body." When the souls of the righteous, who have slept in their graves until the resurrection, shall be reunited to bodies thus incorruptible, glorious, vigorous, spiritual, and immortal, the union will be a most welcome and delightful union. They will have left all that was defiled by sin in the grave. There sleep the ashes of every vile appetite and passion. Sin perished within them when these bodies were committed to the dust; and God provided it a fitting burial. It sank in the silent depths of oblivion, buried so deep that the archangel's trumpet shall not waken it. No scar, no stain of infirmity shall remain upon their persons; they will be in delightful correspondence with their character,

radiant with the beauties of holiness, lighted up with everlasting smiles, resplendent as the reflected glory of their risen Lord, and "like him, for they shall see him as he is." The glorious transformation is perfected of which all were the expectants, who "looked for the Lord Jesus, who shall change his vile body that it may be fashioned like unto their *own glorious body*."

Of the comparatively few holy persons who are found alive on the earth, at this universal resurrection, we have a short, but satisfactory account. After the dead in Christ shall *first have risen*, these living saints shall experience a transformation which is equivalent to the resurrection of those who slept in Jesus. Their bodies "shall be *changed* in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and we shall be *changed*. The living righteous shall not anticipate or take the precedence of the sleeping dead. "We which are alive," says the apostle, "and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not *prevent* them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall first *rise*; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up *together* in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

The assembled universe will now stand at

Christ's Judgment-seat. "Before him shall be gathered all nations. The dead, small and great, shall stand before God. And the books shall be opened; and another book, which is the book of life; and the dead shall be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works." There has been a minute inspection of the character of men in all the progressive ages of time, and an impartial and true record of what they have done, and what they have left undone. The eyes of *Him* who is seated on the throne have, from the beginning, been running to and fro throughout the earth, with a special view to the investigations, disclosures, and decisions of the Great Day. There has been no escape from his inspection, and there will be no escape from this judicial inquiry. Every son and daughter of Adam will then be found sustaining the same character, and in the same state in which they lived and died. There will be no deception on their part; and there will be no collusion on the part of the Judge. The great inquiry will be, Who are the righteous, and who are the wicked; who are the friends of God, and who are his enemies? The decisions of the Judge will be made dependent upon *the character*. Men are to be "judged according to their works," because their works are indices of their *character*. "Every one will receive in his body according to

that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," because these things show his character, and make it appear whether he is a good or a bad man. When the books shall be opened, there will be a full and convincing demonstration of the true character of all intelligent beings. The *book of nature* will then be opened; and since the want of knowledge diminishes both the turpitude of sin and its punishment, "as many as have sinned without the law, shall perish without law." The *book of providence* will then be opened; and the character of men will be tried by all the means and influences which have contributed to render it what it shall then be found. The *book of grace* will then be opened; and it shall be seen what character this countless multitude have formed under the power of gospel-truth, and what influence this method of redemption for the fallen and guilty has exerted upon them, and to whom it has proved a savor of life unto life, and to whom a savor of death unto death. Then too the *book of conscience* will be opened; and every one will intuitively and irresistibly perceive his own character, form his own judgment, and pass his own sentence. And *the Lamb's book of Life* too will be opened, containing the record of their names, whose repentance, and faith, and love, and corresponding conduct evince that they are the friends of Christ, have taken refuge in the gospel of his

grace, and have lived not unto themselves, but to him who died for them. As the Judge is just, these discriminations will be impartially made and universally recognized.

This solemn investigation completed, that mighty host of beings shall then take their places, the righteous on the right hand, and the wicked on the left of the Judge. The separation will begin which will continue forever. Never till then will the full import of those words be understood, "Let both grow together till the harvest." The *hour* has come when "the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just." They may have dwelt together in this world, and have been partakers of the same sorrows and joys, worshipped in the same sanctuary, and eaten at the same table, and slept in the same grave. But these associations and sympathies are over; the line of separation is drawn between the friends of God and his enemies, however intimate their former associations. The strongest tie that here bound men together is not too strong to be severed by those ministering spirits sent forth to "sever the wicked from among the just." These bonds can hold together no longer; and these once indissoluble attachments shall be dissolved by their own uncongenial elements.

It is a heart-affecting view even to anticipate that solemn scene. There on the *right* hand are

the followers of the Lamb of every age, and clime, and name. Princes are there who offered him their gifts, and kings who fell down before him ; and there are peasants who feared God and loved his Son. The missionary of the cross is there, whose love to Christ led him to make his grave in foreign lands ; and the humble islander is there, who only learned in ruder accents to speak his Redeemer's praise. The faithful minister is there, who lived and toiled not for the praise or the gold of men, but for his Master's honor and for the flock committed to his trust. And there is the flock which he guided in the way of life, and the strayed sheep and lambs which he gathered into the fold of the Great Shepherd. There are the matron and the sire whose household altar was consecrated to Israel's God ; and for whose fidelity and prayers, their children, on that Great Day, rise up from one common grave with them to call them blessed. There is the long-lost wanderer whom heaven's tenderest mercy sought and found, and took off his clothes of shame, and decked him in garments clean and white as the fine linen of the saints. There are the aged whose hoary head was a crown of glory because found in the way of righteousness ; and there the youthful piety, so full of promise, that bloomed for an early grave, and that now bears its immortal fruits ; and there the smiling infancy of by-

gone centuries washed pure in the second Adam's blood, and folded in his bosom who took the little children in his arms. The Christian sisters meet there to part no more; and the parted bridegroom and his bride, and the widow and her husband, all bound in Christian bonds never to be sundered, meet there to celebrate their everlasting nuptials at the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb.

"How fair the daughter of Jerusalem then!
How gloriously from Zion's hill she looks!
Clothed with the sun, and in her train the moon,
And on her head a coronet of stars,
And girdling round her waist with heavenly grace,
The bow of mercy bright; and *in her hand*
Immanuel's cross, her sceptre and her hope!"

But what a strange assembly is that on the *left* of the Eternal Judge! There are all God's enemies of every name and degree. Kings who reigned in wickedness are there, but without their crowns. Rich men are there who laid up treasures on the earth, and were not rich toward God; but with none of the appendages of their wealth and pride. And poor men are there, whose poverty was their wickedness, and who learn too late,

"that to do nothing was to serve
The Devil, and transgress the laws of God."

There is the oppressor, but with no remaining power to oppress. There is the mighty chieftain

famed in unjust and inglorious war, and now a bloody culprit at his bar who is the last Conqueror. There is the skeptic whose vaunting reason would not trust the word of God; and the man of science who sought all knowledge but the knowledge of his Maker; and the cunning craftsman, and the eloquent orator whose hand and tongue were all for self and evil. There is the thief and robber, and the practised cheat and liar, waiting for their portion in the burning lake. There is the duellist, hot from the field of proud resentment and of blood; and there the suicide, who

“tired of time, with his own hand
Opened the portals of eternity,
And sooner than devils hoped arrived
In hell.”

All the forms of voluptuousness and sensuality are there; the epicure, the reeling drunkard, the foul adulterer and adulteress, and the thousands who live for sport and merriment. There are the sons and daughters of fashion and of pleasure, who lived only to be seen and admired, and for whom the halls of mirth had more powerful attractions than the house of prayer. Nor are they these alone. There is the hypocrite, gone from the communion-table or from the pulpit to hear the voice, “I never knew you, depart from me ye that work

iniquity." There are the thoughtless millions who

"got no time
To think, and never thought, till on the rock
They dashed of ruin, anguish, and despair."

There is the delaying sinner who put off the work of repentance till death awoke him to his doom. And there are the multitudes, who when God called refused to hear, and who grieved his Spirit till the harvest was past. All these and kindred spirits are wicked and unholy, and despised God's great salvation. Their iniquity no longer keeps them in obscurity; their artifices no longer excuse them; nor will they be protected by the impudence of sin. Those who have deceived themselves and those who have deceived others, as well as those who gloried in their shame, and scandalized the world, are now seen in their true character, and are confounded before God, angels and men. At the summons of the severing angels each separates for his own place. What a sublime, yet touching and mournful scene, when the breathless silence of that countless concourse shall be disturbed, and the righteous shall move in unbroken and outspread phalanx to the right hand of the Judge, and the wicked tread their mournful way to his left!

It is not merely a day of trial, but *of judgment and decision*. Listen to the affecting narra-

tive of these closing scenes, told in the simple and impressive language of the great Judge himself: "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall stand all nations. And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say to those on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world! Then shall he say also to them on his left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal!" Such is the glory of the Judge, in the process and decisions of the judgment. His presence, his eye, his voice, his throne of justice and judgment, his edict, obeyed by angels, men and devils, these constitute his glory on that tremendously glorious day!

One more thought: *The final issues of the Judgment*, more than all, disclose the glory of the Judge. We have seen what they are, as they respect the righteous and the wicked. And they will never alter. The edict is final. There is no appeal from this last and highest tribunal in the universe. The sentence is conclusive. The righteous do not fear,

the wicked do not hope that it will ever be reversed. His glorious high throne who utters it, stands impregnable on the unchanging issues of this Last Day. It reads lessons for eternity which give it the most conspicuous place in the government of God. They are lessons upon the past, vindicating the ways of God to man; they are lessons upon the future, exalting him as God over all blessed forever. Nothing now remains but the destruction of this worn out earth and this material universe, and the commencement of that new order of things which shall never be disturbed. "The heavens pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up," and there shall "be found no place for them."

"See how the mountains, how the valleys burn;
 The Andes burn, the Alps, the Appenines,
 Taurus and Atlas; all the islands burn;
 The ocean burns, and rolls his waves of flame.
 ————— Nature dies, and God
 And angels come to lay her in her grave;
 O earth! thy hour is come!
 And the last sand falls from the glass of time."

Then shall appear "New heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Creation, providence and redemption shall have accomplished their object, and the end of the great Redeemer's incarnation, death and mediatorial reign

be attained. A new era in the divine government shall commence, marked by no changes of character, or destiny, and only marked by its forthgoing, and everlasting progress. The last revolution in the universe has taken place, because the plans of the "God only wise" require no further change in order to their perfect consummation. There will be no new form, and no new variety in the divine administrations. Time is the great interpreter of his mysterious designs, and time has had its course. Everything is tranquil now. No tempest bursts upon the calm surface. It is a new Dispensation; the last Dispensation; the Dispensation of eternity.

And in these final issues, how is the Son of God glorified! Long and terrible has been his struggle; but the conflict is past. For thousands of years has he maintained it in the midst of a hostile world, and with principalities and powers of darkness, and through deep humiliation and agony. Nor does he regret it now, but looks back to the darkest hour with joy. For this end was he born, and for this cause came he into the world. For this did he become the Priest and Sacrifice that he might bear witness to the truth, and that truth and holiness might triumph. For this did he become the Teacher and the King in Zion, that he might thus be "Lord of the living and the dead." He is the Conqueror now over Sin, Death, and

Hell. Grace and righteousness conquer and divide this last reward. What was once but the emblem of suffering and of hope has now become the signal of triumph. That bloody banner, THE CROSS, which was flung to the winds of time when he was "lifted up," now waves over the redeemed creation, and the song is everywhere heard, "SALVATION TO OUR GOD WHO SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB!" It is the "song of *Moses*, the servant of God, and the song of the *Lamb*, saying GREAT AND MARVELLOUS ARE THY WORKS, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY; JUST AND TRUE ARE THY WAYS, THOU KING OF SAINTS! The Accuser is cast down; and he who is seated on the throne proclaims, "IT IS DONE: I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END!"

Such is the glory of Christ as the Final Judge—manifested in the *time* when the Judgment will take place—in the fact that *he himself is the Judge*—in the *manner in which he will come* to the judgment—in the *process and decisions* of the judgment—and in the *issues* of that Great Day itself.

If there be a subject in which every living man has an interest, it is this expression of the Redeemer's glory. All worlds will, on that day, gather round the judgment-seat to fix their eyes on this Son of Man. Your destiny and mine will then depend upon the fact whether we have lived to honor him, and whether the joy of our existence

will be to do him honor forever. Every one of us must give an account of "*himself* unto God;" and this will be the test. Happy day will that be to millions. Happy will it be to the astonished Centurion who exclaimed at his cross, "Truly this was the Son of God!" Happy will it be to those daughters of grief, who went forth from Jerusalem, bathed in tears, to attend the forsaken Sufferer to the place of skulls! Happy will it be to the enraptured Paul, who, amid all the ignominy cast upon his divine Lord, could say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom I am crucified to the world, and the world to me!" Happy will it be to all those who have "come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Happy will it be to all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity; who have consented to take up their cross and follow him, through evil report and good report, and who were willing to suffer with him, that they might be glorified together. Happy will it be to those who were not ashamed of him and of his words in this evil and crooked generation, and of whom he will not be ashamed when he shall come in the glory of his Father and of the holy angels!

A "wrathful day" will it be to every other son and daughter of Adam. Miserable, beyond utter-

ance, will the man then be, who, in the *Saviour* he has rejected, sees the *Judge* from whom he cannot flee; and who because he despised him on the *cross*, cannot stand before him on the *throne*. The voice of the archangel will not utter a more tremendous sentence than those words, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA!"

I utter this closing paragraph then to *you* who do not love him. The best and most fitting thing we can say to you is, that *repentance* is the great doctrine, the revealed privilege, the sweet hope of his precious gospel. "God now commandeth all men everywhere to *repent*, BECAUSE he hath appointed a day in the which he will JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness." Retrace your downward steps, and repair, in true and godly sorrow for your sins, to his cross. Mourn and be in bitterness, as one is in bitterness for his first born, over your rejection of him. So true is it that all holiness and all happiness are bound up in Christ, that severed from him there is nothing but wickedness, and therefore nothing but tribulation and anguish to every soul of man. Most glorious will he be, when he comes to judge the world. Upon his head the crown shall flourish, while all his enemies shall be clothed with shame.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHRIST GLORIOUS IN THE DESTRUCTION OF HIS ENEMIES.

WE would not willingly stand convicted either of the want of fidelity, or the want of tenderness, in speaking of the glory of Christ in the destruction of the wicked. The subject is one fitted to awaken both terror and compassion. It does, as it were, survey the great battle-field of the universe after the battle is over; where the Omnipotent One is the Conqueror, and those who have met him on terms of mortal defiance, are agonizing in the last struggle.

Those there have been who have denied all distinction between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, virtue and vice; and who therefore deny that there is any essential difference of character between the righteous and the wicked. What they *deny* is the great fact which the Sacred Writers *assume* in maintaining the authoritative and penal character of the divine government. If there be no such thing as good and evil, sin and holiness

in the universe ; then is there no difference of character in angels and devils, and in good men and bad. We cannot proceed a step in vindicating the Redeemer's glory in the destruction of his enemies, without recognizing the radical difference of character between his enemies and his friends. This great truth lies at the foundation both of his moral and mediatorial government ; nor is there one which the Scriptures more abundantly recognize, or on which they more strongly insist. They recognize it in the different appellations they give to these two great classes of men, in the intelligible descriptions they give of their characters, by every truth they reveal, and every promise and threatening they utter. It is only by denying, or keeping this essential distinction out of sight, that subtle heretics have been able to deny the final separation between the righteous and the wicked in the future world. There is no one point of Christian doctrine on which the minds of men are more exposed to be corrupted by those who lie in wait to deceive, than this. Let a man once be persuaded that, after all, there is no great difference between good men and bad, and certainly no essential difference of character between them ; and his conscience may sleep. There is no anodyne more effective, no poison more delicate and insinuating. This difference of character is the reason why the Supreme Judge treats them so differently in the eter-

nal world. All men are by nature his enemies; but there are those whose enmity to him is subdued, and superseded by love and loyalty. These are his friends; they are the friends of truth and holiness, the friends of law and order, the friends of God and man, and will be found on his right hand when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. Those whose enmity remains unsubdued, and who prove fierce and intractable in their hostility are radically different from these, and are assigned to a very different destiny. They will be found on the left hand of the Judge, and to them he will say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels!"

We have seen some of the glories of his character; but is he glorious in the execution of this fearful sentence? This is the single question we propose to discuss in the present chapter.

In doing this, it is necessary, in the first place, to direct our thoughts TO THE DESTRUCTION ITSELF which will be inflicted.

For reasons unknown to us, but unquestionably wise, God has seen fit to shroud that world of darkness in a veil of impenetrable mystery. It would be in harmony with the emblematical representations of the heavenly world, if similar representations were adopted in relation to the fearful allotment which awaits the ungodly. This is probably the case. The lake of fire—the worm that

never dies—the bottomless pit—the ascending smoke of torment—the wine of God's wrath—the chains—the brimstone—the consuming of the flesh—the gnashing of teeth—the parched tongue and the unslaked thirst may be regarded as emblems fearfully descriptive of that state of mental and corporeal suffering which are reserved for the wicked. The very fact that the sacred writers, under the guidance of God's Spirit, have chosen such emblems is of fearful import. They do not seem to be capable of a literal construction because they are confused and contradictory; while they teach us that it must be a dreadful recompense which requires to be set forth by such fearful and energetic imagery. Our knowledge of the sufferings of the damned is a very imperfect knowledge. What God has revealed concerning it offers little gratification to restless curiosity. When his own hand lifts the veil from that unknown world and ushers the ungodly into their unalterable destiny, it will be time enough for them to know in full measure in what the woes of that place of torment consist. Some things we know concerning it, and they may be expressed in the following particulars.

We know, in the first instance, that *there is such a place as hell*. There is as much evidence that there is a hell, as that there is a heaven, and that it has a distinct existence and a local identity.

We know not where it is, nor of what its deep foundations are composed, nor how its adamant walls are built; nor, in many particulars, do we know in what its suffering consists. But we know that there is such a world. Infidels may sneer at it; Universalists may scoff at the very name; carelessness and stupidity may not allow themselves to think of it; yet there it stands, supported by the pillars of eternal truth and justice, and neither skepticism nor obduracy can strike it out of existence. The Scriptures speak of it in scores of places both in the Old Testament and the New. They teach us that "the wicked shall be turned into *hell*;" that "*hell* hath enlarged herself;" that there are those who cannot "escape the damnation of *hell*;" that God is able "to destroy both body and soul in *hell*;" that God "spared not the angels, but cast them down to *hell*;" and that the punishment "prepared for the devil and his angels" will be the punishment of ungodly men. In some part of God's widely-extended dominions God has prepared this world of suffering, this place of residence for the lost. There are the souls of all who have died and will die in their sins, and there their bodies will be after the resurrection. There are all the elements of suffering which, after the final judgment, will be found in the universe; and there are all those means and instruments which the justice of the

great God has prepared to express his everlasting abhorrence of sin, and to inflict deserved punishment on the sinner. This is that outer darkness and that lake of fire. Every token of divine anger distinguishes these regions of eternal doom. When Judas "went to his own place," this is the place where he went. When "Capernaum was brought down to hell," this is the place to which she was brought down. When licentious Sodom was wrapped in flames, this is the place to which she descended, "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Over that dismal territory the enemies of God shall wander, unforgiving and unforgiven, outcasts from the New Jerusalem. This is the place of their punishment, their gloomy prison, deep and large, where omnipotence consigns them; the proper place of their punishment, their joyless and gloomy eternity.

The next fact we know concerning that melancholy world is, that it is a *world of actual, living, conscious existences*. The Scriptures speak of the *destruction* of the wicked; but by this they never mean their *annihilation*. Annihilation is no punishment; when once these creatures of God are annihilated, there is nothing to punish. The penalty of sin is suffering, and therefore there is a sufferer. The redundant descriptions of the misery of the lost which are found in the Bible, necessarily imply a state of conscious existence.

The soul will not lose any of its intellectual or moral powers, or any of its capacities for suffering, because it is banished to hell. Its perceptions will be clear and vivid, its thoughts vigorous, its volitions strong, its memory retentive, its imagination brilliant, and all its sensitiveness quickened by its dismissal from this sluggish and material habitation of flesh and blood. Hell is no drowsy slumbering world; "they rest not day nor night." There are no waters of forgetfulness there in which the mind can bathe and forget its sorrows; and no Lethean opiates whose draught can lull it to repose. Wicked men may trifle away their day of grace; they may sleep away their Sabbaths, and lock up their thoughts in profound stupidity, amid scenes which make devils tremble and angels weep; but there will be no stupidity and no trifling when once they awake in hell. It is no world of dreams; nor are there found there any fond conceits of unconscious being. Men who enter it, will know that they are; and when they suffer, they will know that it is the wrath of God they suffer, and for what they suffer it. Multiplied sins will rise up to their remembrance; lost Sabbaths, perverted means of grace, abused bounties of providence, a wasted life, and a death of impenitence and unbelief will all be recalled. Not one active principle of their nature will be eradicated or paralyzed. They will *think*, and be always

thinking ; and O what thoughts ! they will *feel*, and more keenly than they ever felt ; they will *live*, and still live if it were only to perpetuate the threatened, executed death of God's holy law.

A third fact distinctly revealed concerning their destruction is, that they *shall all be united with the most degrading and debasing society in the universe*. It is a fearful allotment to be cut off from all intercourse with holy beings, and suffer an eternal separation of the soul from God, and from the presence of his glory ; but the anguish is inconceivable to be shut up in hell with all the ungodly of every age of time, every nation and language, and of every degree of wickedness, and with the devil and his angels. The society of heaven is too pure and holy for them ; they have no sympathies with that blessed world ; it is a different companionship only for which they are fitted. However the less debased may shrink from such fellowship, this is the world and this the society in which they must dwell. The last sentence consigns all them who work iniquity in the universe to the society of the damned. Who can speak of the sources of wretchedness in a society where there is everything to debase and infuriate ; where there is nothing but reciprocated malice and treachery, crimination and bitterness ; and where their only fellowship is the fellowship of wicked passions, and where the storm of passion

never passes away: visions of loveliness have vanished, and only these visions of deformity remain. Enmity takes the place of love; discord, of harmony; curses, of reverence; and the proud vindictive spirit of hell, embittered to madness, renders that cruel world like a furnace of fire.

We remark again, there will be sources of misery in hell *arising from the state of mind* of the guilty sufferers themselves. These mental ingredients are of various kinds.

One of them is their *own wickedness*. We know something of the desperate wickedness of the human heart in the present world. We have felt it in our own bosoms, have tasted the wormwood and the gall, and know too well how they embitter the fountains of our joy. We have seen it in others; in the discontent of the envious, in grasping ambition, in infuriated anger, in bitter malignity, in desponding gloom, and in the frenzied maniac. We have read of it in the triumphs of power and cruelty, until we have sickened at the recital, and turned with horror from the record of pollution and blood. But we know little of those sources of wretchedness which are found in the bosom of every ungodly man in that wretched world, where iniquity is unchecked by the kindly influences of social life, unrestrained even by self-respect, and where the vilest and most malignant passions rage in all their ungoverned fury. The

thought is not always present to our minds, that, when men are at last abandoned of God, not only are all the restraints upon their wickedness taken off, but exciting causes are there brought into action by which it is fearfully provoked and irritated. We read of those who "blaspheme the God of heaven, and gnaw their tongues for their pains." When the inhabitants of hell, after all their efforts and combinations, find themselves unable to resist or endure their sufferings; how will they foam out their blasphemies against the God of heaven and the friend of the saints! What flames of livid enmity will then be lighted up, and how will they burn and rage! Many a man has seen enough of himself to confess that he feared no worse hell than that which exists within his own bosom. But what a hell is *that*, where rancorous enmity and infuriate malevolence break out in such frenzied violence that none shall quench them!

Another of these ingredients will be the *mournful disappointment* of the sufferers. They must now realize what perhaps they did not once believe; they must now suffer that which they secretly hoped to escape; they now find that intolerable which they once trifled with and made up their minds to endure. Instead of being too good to perish, as they once thought, they now find they are vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.

This is one of the bitter ingredients in their cup. What defeat, what overwhelming reverse of expectation, when they see all their hopes shipwrecked, and they themselves launched out on the burning lake!

There will also be that deep *sense of shame* which will make the proud and aspiring spirit of incorrigible rebellion stoop. Men can suffer, if they may suffer alone, and no eye looks in upon them to detect the cause and expose the shame of their sufferings. Many a man has taken refuge in the wilderness, and even in the grave, in order to shield himself from reproach. It is not improbable that wicked men will suffer quite as much from the shame, as from the pain of their punishment. They will "awake to shame and everlasting contempt." Their earthly honors were laid aside at the grave. Their true character will then be known, and all their wickedness exposed; and what wonder if they are despised, and become the objects of universal derision and contempt? God himself says "he will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh." The Scriptures instruct us that "the righteous also shall see and laugh at them." Their associates in wickedness, and devils shall scoff and exult over them, and the universe unite in turning their glory into shame.

Nor is there any doubt that their suffering will

be greatly aggravated *by fear*. Fear is a terrific passion when once it takes deep hold of the human mind. In that dreadful world "terror will take hold on them as waters, and fear will come upon them as desolation." They were afraid when they came to the bed of death, and grew pale and trembled. They quaked with fear when they heard the archangel's voice, and stood before the Son of Man in judgment. And now, when the gulf of perdition yawns, and every object that meets their eye, and every sound that falls upon their ear fills them with dismay; how do all faces gather paleness because the day of wrath is come, and with what fearful forebodings do they leap into the bottomless pit!

There will also be bitter *remorse of conscience*, and with nothing to assuage the agony of its accusations. There will be a deep sense of black and damning guilt on the soul. Remorse with all its vipers stings the guilty sufferer, and hangs upon his bleeding heart like the never-dying worm. The guilty sinner is his own tormentor, while his restless conscience hurries him, 'alternately distracted by terror and remorse. Deeds long since done rise up before him in new and irresistible horrors. The darkness of hell cannot hide them, nor its flames burn them out of his memory. He lies down in his shame, and his confusion covers him.

Those *poignant regrets*, also, that the day of mercy is past, and that they are shut up in hell; how will these aggravate their woes! There shall be mourning then. There "shall be weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth," when they see what they have lost, and what they must endure. Most truly will that be a world of tears

And besides these, they will be overwhelmed with *ceaseless despair*. *Hope*, that casts a smile even upon the brow of sorrow; that sweet lenitive, that bright star in the darkest night, rises not on their dark eternity. Hopes have perished which can never return. That single sentence, uttered at the final consummation, "Depart ye cursed into *everlasting fire*," seals their doom, and leaves them

"There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespited, unpitied, unrelieved,
Ages of hopeless end."

Myriads and myriads of ages will have come and gone, and "he who made them will not have mercy on them, and he who formed them will show them no favor."

The last thought we suggest on this part of our subject therefore is, that it is the *great God himself who is the punisher*. We know not how he punishes, except as we know something of his nature, and see how he sometimes punishes in the present world, and what engines of wrath he often employs to execute his displeasure. Famine, fire, plague,

sword, earthquake, flood, volcano, and every instrument of destruction have already been summoned to the work of fulfilling his purposes of justice. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God." His wrath is infinite and eternal as his love, and omnipotent as his power. They are terrific descriptions of it which we find in the Bible. It is called his "*fierce* anger," the "*fierceness* of his anger," the "*power* of his anger," and the "*burning* of his anger." Wicked men had better array against themselves all the principalities and powers in the universe, than throw themselves into the hands of such a punisher. When the omnipotent and angry God undertakes to *punish*; he will convince the universe that he does not gird himself for the work of retribution in vain. He has access to all the avenues of distress in the corporeal frame, and all the inlets to agony in the intellectual constitution, and he will cast "*both body and soul* into hell." He himself has told us that he "*will show his wrath, and make his power known, in the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.*" Terrible will be that wrath and power which he thus sets himself to *show* and *make known*! O who shall tell what it is to be lost and damned forever!

"What harp of boundless, deep, exhaustless woe,
Shall utter forth the groanings of the damned,
And sing the obsequies of wicked souls,
And wail their plunge in the eternal fire!"

Such is the destruction inflicted on all impenitent men. Such is the dreadful recompense of sin, and such the everlasting triumphs of law and justice. We feel that this is an awful subject, and that these are fearful thoughts. We ask ourselves, Is it right that any of God's creatures should thus perish? Can such a sentence ever be inflicted by a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness; and is he *glorious* in executing it to the uttermost? On this grave question the following thoughts deserve consideration.

1. In the first place, we are free to confess that it *puts in requisition all our confidence in God in order to justify and approve this procedure of his government*. It becomes us to be cautious and slow in questioning the equity and goodness of anything which God performs. That he does execute this sentence, we have just as much reason to believe, as to believe that the Bible is his word. We must fall back upon *blank infidelity* unless we believe this truth; and then where do we fall, and what catastrophe do we meet with? Yet we may not affirm there is no perplexity in contemplating this stern feature of the divine government. It is not to be wondered at that smatterers in theology have treated it lightly; nor that declamatory zeal exhausts itself in these affecting denunciations without weighing its words, or sitting in judgment upon its own spirit; nor that

fair and candid minds have regarded it with embarrassment. It must be more than a superficial view, or a traditionary belief, or an instantaneous decision that satisfies on such a question. Nothing is more obvious than that Jesus Christ can do no wrong. The whole universe bears testimony to the excellence of his character. If such a being as the ever-blessed and glorious Saviour has formed the purpose thus to punish his incorrigible enemies; he has not formed it without calm forethought, and cool dispassionate deliberation. It is too important a measure to be the result of a wild and visionary mind, or to be hastily adopted; nor has the Son of God hastily adopted it. And we may well be satisfied with this single thought. Had I any embarrassment in contemplating it, this one thought would dissipate the last shade of mistrust. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. The darkness is in our own minds. There must be the best reasons for this judicial sentence, else would it never go forth from the lips of the God-Man Mediator. We cannot weigh this grave subject as his infinite mind weighs it. We cannot comprehend the claims of his punitive justice; nor measure the ill-desert of sin; nor appreciate the great and everlasting interests, which present themselves to his thoughts, when he thus determines the punishment of the wicked. Our minds have also a wrong bias, from the fact

that we ourselves are sinners. The condemned prisoner at the bar is not the man to determine the punishment his crime deserves; *that* belongs to the majesty and rectitude of the law. I look up to the throne of Judgment, and see who that great and glorious Being is that occupies it, and feel the force of the demand, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth *do right*?" Take away the infinite perfection of the Judge, and I confess I look down upon that world of darkness with horror. I shudder over it as I shudder over some deep and dark abyss which is a perfect anomaly in nature. But when I think of *Him*, there is a bright side to this dark cloud; there are divine glories reflected even from those walls of fire. They compose parts of a great and glorious design which has God for its Author, and which must therefore be wise and harmonious. To the cavils of the complaining, and the embarrassments of every honest mind, the voice of Wisdom utters the words, "Be still, and know that I AM GOD!"

2. In the next place, from what we know of Christ, we have the perfect assurance that *he takes no delight in sin and misery*. We have seen who he is, and have traced a faint outline of his character and history, from the glory he had with the Father before the world was, to his incarnation; and from his incarnation to the cross, and to his ascension and return to his native heavens. There

is no being in the universe whose heart is so full of tenderness as his. He "hears the ravens when they cry," and the "young lions when they wander for lack of meat." He would not inflict one needless pang, even upon a worm. His tears over Jerusalem and his prayer on the cross assure us that he would not needlessly wound his bitterest enemy; much more that he would not, from sheer delight in misery, consign him to everlasting burning.

The principles on which he punishes the wicked are not always appreciated. If proud and overbearing man, so self-complacent in his little brief authority, did not so often punish from impulse, caprice, and malignity; he would have a better opinion of the great Judge of the universe than to admit the thought that he punishes from want of tenderness. Happiness is not the greatest good, nor is misery the greatest evil. If they had been, such lessons would never have been read to us, as have not been washed out by the waters of the deluge, nor burnt out by the flames of Sodom, nor obliterated from the cross of Christ. There would have been no gain to the universe from the agonies of that mighty Sufferer, if the woes of Calvary were thrown into the scale simply to hold an even balance between the claims of human happiness and misery.

We ourselves often have strong convictions of

the worth of principle. Men suffer for the sake of principle; torrents of blood have flowed for principle; and where the principles of truth and righteousness have prevailed, they are worth the sacrifice. There is no nobler spectacle than where a good man consents to make every sacrifice for principle. The happiness that is sacrificed and the suffering that it costs, are of minor account. Daniel was tempted to *lie to the God of heaven*; or, in the event of his refusal, to be cast into the burning fiery furnace. And who does not see that his unbending adherence to the *principles of truth and rectitude* was worth all the suffering which Babylon's furnace, seven times heated, could inflict? When once it is considered how much suffering has been endured in the world for righteousness' sake; and how much is still endured for the sake of invigorating the strength of moral principle in good men; and how often they themselves have gratefully confessed that to have gained the victory over a single besetting sin, and to have made some sensible advance in the divine life, is worth all their suffering, twice told; the conviction must be strong on our minds that there are higher interests to be consulted by the divine government than the mere happiness or misery of its subjects. In the final issue, there must be no connivance at wickedness, be the sacrifice what it may.

It is because this truth is so important that the divine government is *penal*. Nor does it follow, because the penalty is *executed*, the great Lawgiver and Judge is not kind. Compassion that is superior to rectitude is weakness, is effeminacy, is sin. If the question of sending the incorrigible to hell were left to his compassion and tenderness only, they would relent; never could he inflict that exterminating sentence. But his rectitude never changes. He cannot do "evil that good may come." His tenderness and compassion are not lawless, but under the guidance of his rectitude. He cannot do wrong, even to save immortal beings from everlasting perdition.

And who does not perceive that he is not the less amiable and glorious, because his love and tenderness are governed by his rectitude? Is not the sentence that banishes the wicked to hell just what it should be; a respecter of principles, rather than of the persons of men; an attachment to law rather than to the transgressor? Does it not deserve our confidence? and does not he deserve it who sits upon the throne? The suffering is fearful, but the rectitude is glorious.

3. There is another view of the subject in which a class of minds may perhaps take a deeper interest. We affirm that it is *an expression of the Saviour's goodness* thus to punish all his incorrigible creatures. When opposers of future punish-

ment make their appeal to the Saviour's *goodness*, they practise deception upon their own minds. Has goodness no tenderness for the obedient? Does law exhaust all its tenderness for the guilty, and has it none left for the virtuous? Must not the divine goodness aim at the highest and most comprehensive good; and can it be shown that this is consulted by allowing the lawless and obdurate to go unpunished? Would not this be an impeachment of goodness; and does not mercy revolt from this inconsiderate and reckless connivance at sin? When God caused "all his *goodness* to pass before Moses," one expression of it was in the words, "He will by no means clear the guilty." In that memorable song of the Psalmist, which celebrates the divine *mercy*, are found such thoughts as these: "To him who *smote Egypt*;" to him who "*overthrew Pharaoh and his host* in the Red Sea;" to him who "smote great kings and slew famous kings;" for his "mercy endureth forever!" His mercy was illustrated by these acts of his justice; it was a sacrifice of the less to the greater; it was the deliverance of Israel that was one inducement to cut off her enemies. Just as it is mercy to the living that the murderer should *not* live, it is mercy to the righteous that, in the final arrangements of God's government, the wicked should perish. There are other sources of happiness infinitely dear to Christ, beside those which

might flow from unrestrained and unpunished wickedness.

We may not place so much confidence in this view of the subject as in some others; yet is it one which no benevolent mind can disregard. Even if the law of *expediency* were the great law of the divine government, it would demand the destruction of the ungodly. It would not be *wise* to jeopard and destroy the peace and safety of all virtuous minds, through interminable ages, for the sake of impunity to crime. The wicked *must* go to their own place; they are in league with the devil and his angels, and may not have their dwelling within the heavenly city. They are not fitted for it, but for their own chosen associates, and chosen hell. The Son of Man must "send his angels and gather out of his kingdom all things that *offend*." And the universe will stand in awe. It will be an awful and majestic deed, when he who hung on Calvary shall cast those who have trodden his blood under their feet into the "furnace of fire, where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth;" but it will be a glorious deed, and the only and last resort by which his own throne and the tranquillity of his obedient subjects can be secured.

4. The fourth and last thought by which the glory of Christ in this destruction is illustrated, is that *it is required by justice*. This is the true

ground on which the Scriptures place this great subject. The government of the world belongs to God; it is a government of law; and is a perfect government. The precepts and prohibitions of it are equitable and right; and the penalty is commensurate with the ill-desert of transgression.

Justice gives man his due. It is essential to *punitive justice*, that the penalty of transgression be proportioned to the magnitude of the offence. Justice, pure, *equal justice*, inflicts penalty which neither goes beyond, nor falls short of the offender's ill-desert.

Such justice as this is one of the essential and immutable properties of the divine nature. God not only may be just, but must be just; he not only may punish, but must punish. He sits on the throne of eternal justice. He *must* forever hate sin, and forever be disposed to punish it, and actually punish it according to its desert; else is he no longer just.

The consciences of men respond to this representation. They are conscious of having violated God's law, and are equally conscious that this renders them deserving of punishment. No arguments are necessary to establish the connecting bond between sin and punishment. No excuses, no reasoning, no theory, no hopes, no refuge can relieve the transgressor's mind from this secret apprehension. His great Maker has so constituted

him, that he is looking out for the ministers of vengeance—"a fire not blown consumes him;" the "shaking of a leaf" fills his mind with ominous forebodings, because he "*knows* the just judgment of God, and that they who do such things are worthy of death."

When therefore God announces himself in his word to be a *just God*, he makes his appeal to the sinner's conscience. When the sinner reads the curses that are written in his book, he cannot set aside this condemning power and sentence. And when we come before him to vindicate this sentence, and to show him, that the righteous Judge *is glorious in executing it* to the uttermost; our appeal is to his own *sense of justice*, nor do we go beyond the resistless convictions of his own conscience, when we affirm that he deserves punishment. He deserves it wherever it exists and *as long as it exists*. We only ask that God may not be disrobed of the honors of his *justice*. We dishonor him if, on the one hand, we suppose him to be indifferent to the destiny of wicked men; or, if on the other, we suppose him to be under the influence of those turbulent, ungoverned, furious passions which cannot be gratified by anything short of making them as miserable as it is possible to make them. But is it any dishonor to him that "he cannot look on sin;" that "to him belongeth vengeance and recompense;" and that he is clothed

with righteousness as a garment? The true and impartial exercise of his justice is founded on the highest reason, and supported by the strongest virtue. Wicked men have done evil and nothing but evil; and therefore they are ill-deserving. The time will never come when these sufferers will cease to be conscious of their ill-desert. While therefore the divine justice leaves them without hope, it is JUSTICE; and because it is justice, we may not fault it. It would not be justice, if they did not deserve it; and because they deserve it, the justice is glorious. It would not be justice if they were punished *beyond their ill-desert*; this would be *injustice*, and there is no fear of this.

- They will suffer because they deserve it; they will always suffer because they will always deserve it;
- and because they forever deserve it, the justice that inflicts it will be forever glorious. The only reason why their punishment will be everlasting, is that their ill-desert is everlasting.

Such is the destruction of the ungodly, and such the considerations which show that Christ is glorious in inflicting it. We are sensible that it is no easy matter to persuade men of these truths. They often wonder at the adoring approbation with which holy beings are represented in the Scriptures as expressing toward these acts of God's judicial power. When Pharaoh and his host were cast into the Red Sea, Moses gave Israel the song,

“Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power. Who is like unto thee among the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” When the Psalmist sets forth the wickedness and the perdition of the ungodly, his language is, “The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance.” “Zion heard and was glad, and the daughters of Jerusalem rejoiced, because of thy judgments, O Lord!” When the seven angels appear with the seven last plagues, the saints are represented with harps in their hands, and singing, “Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord, God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!” When mystical Babylon fell, the high command was issued, “Rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy Apostles and Martyrs, for God hath avenged you on her!” It was when the Apostle John was carried away in the Spirit into the wilderness, and there saw “a woman upon a scarlet-colored beast;” and he saw her “drunk with the blood of the saints,” and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, that he also “saw an angel come down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory; and he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!” And then he heard “a great voice of much people *in heaven*, saying, ALLELUIAH! Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our

God; for true and righteous are his judgments! And again they said ALLELUIAH! and her smoke rose up forever and ever!" Nothing is more obvious, than that if we have emotions diverse from these, we are either in great darkness, or our habitual state of mind is not heavenly. The character of Christ, as the *Rewarder* deserves *our* admiration and praise as well as *theirs*. If we are dissatisfied with this essential attribute of his nature, it is because we have a state of mind that is dissatisfied with *him*. To look upon his justice as odious, is to look on sin with indifference; to regard his justice as hard and cruel, is to take the part of his enemies. Beware of this state of moral feeling. No man can sit down with the saints in the kingdom of God, who cannot sing the song of *Moses*, as well as the song of *the Lamb*. There is a wide difference between the enemies of God and his friends. His enemies hate his justice, with implacable hatred; his friends approve and adore it. In the view of his enemies, it is a blemish in his character; in the view of his friends, it is one of its glories. Sterling virtue is not the enemy of justice. No man can from the heart accept God's pardoning mercy, until he approves his condemning justice. It is not possible to perceive and appreciate the grace of God in saving, if you neither perceive, nor appreciate his justice in punishing.

Most men live as though there were no such

state of misery in the universe as that which we have described. Great multitudes, and among them some professing godliness, do not feel satisfied when they read or hear anything of the gospel but its glad tidings. Christ incarnate, Christ sinless, Christ commiserating and healing, Christ dying, Christ rising, ascending, reigning,—these are topics which interest them. And well they may; would to God that they interested them more intensely! But Christ on the throne of Judgment, Christ the Redeemer, Christ uttering and *executing* the sentence, “*Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels*,” this is a manifestation of his glory which they would rather have concealed. It is too overwhelming to be real; they wish it were not true, and wish it suppressed even if it be. I cannot but think this is one of the devices of Satan to destroy the souls of men. It is not more “a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” than that he is glorious in the everlasting destruction of those who neglect this salvation. Never would he have died on Calvary if he did not mean to vindicate his high claims as the righteous Judge. His death would have answered no valuable purpose if incorrigible offenders go unpunished, and if it only served to proclaim impunity to crime.

O ye who are in the gall of bitterness and

the bonds of iniquity, who are the prisoners of his justice, and for a few short hours the possessors of hope, will you not be persuaded to "flee to the stronghold?" We know we have uttered fearful truths; perhaps he who utters them may be accused as a stern prophet, and a prophet of wrath because he utters them. We have uttered them because, "knowing the terrors of the Lord, we would persuade men." The world of lost spirits is no idle figment, no melancholy conceit or invention of men. And there is but one method of escape from it. O how it exalts that wondrous redemption to think upon the woes from which it delivers, and that it shows the way of escape from bitter groans and endless burning! You are to exist eternal ages, and if it be a miserable existence, when it comes upon you there will be no escape. There is escape now, but before another sun shall rise, you may drop from your thoughtlessness into the pit of despair. O thou creature of guilt and misery! wilt thou not escape from this coming wrath? A few more Sabbaths of thoughtlessness and sin, and the storm will burst. The proffered salvation of him who is "a just God and Saviour," is in your hands; and we demand of you, by his authority and in his name, whether you will ascend with the redeemed to heaven, or whether, with the devil and his angels, you will make your bed in the lake of fire.

CHAPTER XX.

CHRIST HIMSELF THE GLORY OF HEAVEN.

It is a beautiful remark of John in the Apocalypse, when speaking of the New Jerusalem, that "the City had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it." He had been describing it as no uninspired pen could have described. Death and hell had been cast into the lake of fire. The wicked of every land, and class, and name, from "the fearful and unbelieving" to "whoremongers and liars," had been doomed to their own place. Fear, sorrow, and pain were among "the former things that are passed away;" and the inspired narrator was borne away in his vision to "a great and high mountain," there to take a view, and furnish a sketch of the "Holy City, coming down from God out of heaven."

There are some strong peculiarities in this description. The great Architect had decked that bright world with unfading splendor; and this apostle was directed to avail himself of an accumu-

lation of imagery, fitted to make the most vivid impressions of all that is beautiful and magnificent, and at the same time to convey some definite instruction. The City was "foursquare," symmetrical in its form, accessible from all sides, and on its foundations were inscribed "the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb." So vast was it, that it could not be measured by any human standard, but only "according to the measure of *the Angel*." It was adorned with the most expressive symbols of unwasting wealth and perpetual joy. There was "no Temple therein," because it was all temple; the same worship pervaded the whole, and incorporated itself with every service and place. There was no sun and no moon in it; there were brighter lights and more dazzling; and this was the zenith of its glory. The "GLORY OF God did enlighten it, and THE LAMB IS THE LIGHT THEREOF."

We are sensible that the theme is above our reach. "We know but in part." The indwelling Shekinah is behind the veil, and it is only the outer court of this celestial temple we are permitted to occupy.

There are *four thoughts* by which we would present some illustration of the truth, that CHRIST HIMSELF IS THE GLORY OF HEAVEN.

The first is, that *he is there the rightful and acknowledged Head of his redeemed people*. It is not

only one of *his* glories that he is the everlasting King of his church, but it is the glory of that holy and happy *kingdom* over which he reigns. There is a kingdom which he administers as the Mediator, which he will not administer in the heavenly world; one which is more extensive than his redeemed church, and which will continue only until the close of the final judgment. The objects of his Mediation will then have been so far secured, that all his enemies will have been "put under his feet," and all his followers gathered into heavenly mansions. The day of grace and the space for repentance will have been terminated; nothing more will remain for him to accomplish for the salvation of men; and then he will "deliver up" the kingdom which was delegated to him over "all things," to "God even the Father that God may be all in all."

But this termination of his mediatorial reign, although it leaves the absolute and universal supremacy in the hands of the Eternal Godhead, involves no dissolution of the union between his divine and human natures. It does not even terminate his priestly office; much less those outward manifestations of the invisible Deity, that are so wondrously and progressively made by God in human nature. "He that *descended* is the same also that *ascended* far above all heavens," forever retaining his crown and sceptre, as the King and

Head of the redeemed universe. "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away." He is to be the God-man forever; and in this character he is to reign as the King of Zion, the King of saints, the King of glory.

For successive ages he has been preparing himself a KINGDOM; now he is in complete possession of it, and his crown beams in all its splendor. His ascension from the Mount of Olives was his installment and coronation; and then it was that herald angels conducted him to his palace, and "the everlasting doors were lifted up that the King of glory might come in!" From that day, he has been a Prince upon his throne, swaying a sceptre such as no earthly monarch ever held, reigning in immortal love and holiness, perpetuating his triumphs, and inviting "the children of Zion to rejoice in their King." It is their unspeakable joy *now* to know that he is upon the throne; but what will their joy become, when the mystery of God shall be perfected; when the last revolution in this convulsed universe shall be brought to its long predicted issues; and he "shall reign over the house of Jacob forever!"

His subjects will be multiplied, so that no man can number them; and it will be his enduring honor to be at the head of so vast and holy an Empire. They shall come from far-distant lands, and from the islands of the sea; they will have been nur-

tured under all the diversities of time and circumstance, and amid all the varieties of intellectual and moral culture, and modes and forms to which the different families of the church of God were subject; but they shall be one in him, and he shall be their glory and crown.

It is not difficult to perceive why it is that "there remaineth a *rest* for the people of God." The perfect *repose and safety* which the redeemed will enjoy in having *him* for their Sovereign, are themselves enough to render him the glory of the heavenly world. In the new heavens and the new earth, "there shall be *no more sea*," or, it will be, "as it were, a *sea of glass*." Its surface is unruffled. Not a ripple stirs it. Nothing overlays it but the pure light and fragrant breath of heaven. Storms and tempests never gather over those tranquil regions. The changeful winds of passion are still. Nor are human kingdoms nor human hopes ever engulfed under the reign of this Prince of peace. Despotism and anarchy have done their work in this nether world. The "nations of the saved" now rest under the equitable monarchy of heaven, whose laws and principles shall never be repealed nor abated, but remain in full force and blessedness to all eternity.

Glorious supremacy and glorious world which can boast of such a Sovereign! There will be spectacles of admiration in his heavenly kingdom,

and scenes of splendor such as mortal eyes never beheld; bright and embellished minds will be there, angelic and human, shining in all the blended and perfected beauties of holiness; but they will be like tapers under the splendors of his throne. So long as the redeemed were "present in the body they were absent from the Lord." The best of them had very imperfect views, and "saw through a glass darkly." They could do little more, even in their brightest hours, than stand on the shore of that ocean of light and love, and exclaim, "O the depth!" But they have come now to Mount Zion, where the King of glory unfolds his loveliness, and they see him without a veil. And if, during their pilgrimage in this dark world, they looked to him as their chief joy, and nothing charmed them like his beauty; what must be their delighted and rapturous admiration of him in that world where they have no need of the sun, or of the moon to shine on it, because "the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Thou art the King of glory, O Christ! Who would not take thy cross and become a partaker in thy humiliation, if he may thus become partaker in thy exaltation and glory! To be made "kings and priests unto God even his Father, and live and reign with him;" to be "fellow-heirs with him of the same kingdom," sit "down on his throne," and "enter into his joy;"

what a heaven is this, and what else is it but to learn by blessed experience that Christ himself is its glory!

We illustrate this truth, in the next place, by the thought that *Christ himself is the Author and Dispenser of all the blessedness of the heavenly world*. Its "Builder and Maker" is God. His name is inscribed on every page of its history. "I go," said he to his early followers, "I go to *prepare a place* for you." There is no scene of loveliness or splendor there; nothing to delight the mind, cheer the heart, or regale the senses, refined and purified as they will be for immortality, but owes its loveliness and splendor to him. If the skies are genial, it is because he has "spread them out as a molten looking-glass." If there is no sickness, nor infirmity, nor decay, nor death, it is because he has shut them without the walls, and has made its inhabitants immortal. If no heart is wrung with disappointment and anguish, and no countenance dejected, and no eye heavy with sorrow, or dimmed with tears; it is because "the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne leads them, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes." If there is no serpent to sting and no tempter to ensnare, it is because he has crushed the serpent's head. If the wicked there cease from troubling, it is because he does not allow anything to enter that defileth. It is his own palace; and

lest any invade or hurt it, he himself is its everlasting Warder.

Its *redeemed inhabitants* are all the children of his power and grace. It is not their work by which they have found access to that glorious world, but his. The design of bringing them there originated with him, and was completed by him in whose blood they have washed their robes, and made them white. Take away Christ from heaven, and there are no hopes, no promises, no heaven itself for man. They were naturally fallen and apostate; but he saved them by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Their exalted and holy character was formed by him, and formed for eternity and heaven. It was the offspring of his grace when it was cradled here on earth. His hand burst the bandages of its infancy, and his voice first cheered it in its onward progress to immortal manhood. And now, in its perfection and richness, who is its recognized author and dispenser, if not he who presents it "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!" All the varieties of its excellence, mingling its most exalted with its humblest emotions, its strongest lights with those that are the most delicate, its angelic purity with its human loveliness, are to be attributed to him who has thus "clothed his church with the garments of salvation, and covered her with the robe of righteousness, as a bride-

groom decketh himself with ornaments, and a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

The sources of their *blessedness* are all either in him, or from him. Whatever of God they there enjoy, is through Christ and from Christ. Whatever of angel blessedness flows in upon them, his hand opens the channels in which it flows. There are social joys there; and the sacred intercourse and fellowship of that immense holy society are exalted and pure because the bond that unites them is perfect love to him. There are remembrances of the past, and personal recognitions, and endeared and responsible relationships fondly dwelt upon, and present amiableness of character, and mutual services, and reciprocated acts of kindness which make their cup of joy run over. All this, by sympathies and a fellowship never till then known, nor its source appreciated, will then be recognized as imparted by him, and he will be honored as the medium of these visions of loveliness, and the gracious dispenser of every joyous thought and emotion. That thirst for knowledge, there gratified to fulness; those sources of thought, so ample, and various; and that reality and certitude of truth, which leaves no phantoms to be dissipated, and no probabilities to unsettle or perplex the mind, are radiations from him who is the "light of the world," and streams from that ocean of God's unsearchable wisdom and knowledge. If

their affections are exalted and exalting, they are all in view of his imperishable truth, and excited and sustained by manifestations of his glory. And their acts of duty, whatever they may be, and wherever they may be required, are not less cheerful and happy than they are uniform and constant, because they are swift to do *his* will, "hearkening to the voice of his word."

The *permanency of heaven* is also the work of Christ. He is the *everlasting* Rewarder. Those fields of light will be illumined with a splendor that never fades, because he "is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever." When this earth has disappeared in the final conflagration, it will be seen that there is yet remaining "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The highest eminence hitherto occupied by Moses and Paul, is low compared with those sublime heights which they, and all the redeemed will occupy in the yet unexplored sources of blessedness that are treasured up in Christ. They will always have Christ, and therefore will always have heaven. They will be everlasting recipients, because he is the everlasting Giver. There is no present joy which Christ does not bestow; nor is there any such last limit to the believer's everlasting career of blessedness, that he can say, this is all that Christ can give.

We say therefore that Christ is the glory of

heaven, because he is the dispenser of all its blessedness. Suppose a man like ourselves, to be so eminently favored of God as to be the author of all *temporal* blessings; the fabricator of all that is wise and good in human institutions and laws—the inventor of all that contributes to wealth and prosperity—the example and patron of every virtue, and the promoter, and guardian, and partaker of every joy; who so fitly as such a man would be the glory of his race? What then must Christ himself be to the heavenly world! We know the comparison fails. All comparisons are like atoms in the sunbeams, when we think of him whose infinite glory and blessedness are reflected in the natures of the saved.

We may derive a third illustration of this truth from the fact that *Christ is the most happy of all the glorified inhabitants of heaven itself*. It is no ordinary source of enjoyment, to see those happy whom we love; to virtuous and disinterested minds, there is no higher source of earthly joy than this. More especially are such sacred and delightful sympathies realized, when these joys are virtuous and holy, and the sources of them such as God approves. We cannot conceive of the blessedness of heaven, even in the meanest of the saints; much less in the brightest and most favored spirit that bows before the throne. It mitigates our sorrows, and makes us happy to think of their

happiness, and that though they once toiled and suffered on the earth, they are gone to their heavenly rest. And how much more to think of the infinite blessedness of the Son of God ! He is the most happy Being in heaven, because from the infinite perfection of his intellectual and moral nature, he is the most capable of happiness. Of all the bright minds in the universe, his is the most bright and holy, and can hold more joyous thoughts and emotions. And if it is "more blessed to *give* than to receive;" we may never forget he is the *greatest of all Givers*. Just think of his benevolent and generous mind surveying that Holy City, infinitely more resplendent with the memorials of his redeeming love than with the precious stones which garnish its walls, and its gates of pearl, and its streets of gold ; and then, if you can, estimate the blessedness which flows in upon his holy soul from these 'unnumbered and hallowed sources. What joy in being able to make such gifts to millions who were so unworthy and ill-deserving, so poor and miserable, and who, but for his bounty, had "lifted up their eyes in hell, being in torment!" To have saved such as these is his everlasting blessedness ; and in bestowing this salvation he himself enjoys more than those who receive it. Just before he left the world he uttered the prayer. "Father, *I will* that they whom thou hast given me be with me

where I am, that they may behold my glory, even the glory which I had with thee before the world was!" Heaven would scarcely be welcome to him without *them*. "I in them, and thou in me, that we may all be made perfect in One!" Everything contributes to his joy, now that he is glorified, and they are all glorified with him. He has finished his work on the earth; his redeemed are gathered in; and he has nothing more to ask as his reward. Every accession to their blessedness exalts his own. His infinite love has been indulged, expressed, and gratified.

It is this, his own divine blessedness that fills up the glory of heaven. The Redeemed themselves have no higher joy than to see their adorable Lord thus glorified and happy. Some of them had seen him a man of sorrows, debased and miserable, and all of them have known how he was once nailed to the cross. But the scene is changed. From insult and torture he has found a throne; from being once the greatest Sufferer, he is now the most honored and the most happy of all who dwell in that honored and joyous world. He once said to his disciples, "If ye love me, ye will rejoice because I said, *I go to the Father*." Blessed Master! who, of all thy followers does not rejoice in the thought, that thy last tear was shed on Calvary, and the last badge of thine undeserved infamy was left in the tomb! Sweet is the thought, that

among all the lovely, he is the adornment of their loveliness; and of all the honored and happy, he is the most happy and the most honored. If we are ever permitted to have a place in some of those many mansions, the first Person we shall ask for will be, not the children whom God has given us, nor the friends we most loved, but "the Lamb that was slain." He will be the first and great object of attraction, in the full enjoyment of his own heaven, restored to that habitation of holiness, of which his own blessedness constitutes the glory and crown. What will it be to be permitted thus to enter into his joy, and ourselves to exemplify the truth, "The glory which thou *hast given me I have given them!*"

There is one more thought which illustrates the truth, that Christ himself is the glory of heaven; *he is the object of their adoration and praise.* Christ alone, as the Mediator, is not indeed the only object of celestial praise. The Eternal God-head is there honored by the adoring and everlasting acknowledgments of all the unfallen, as well as all the redeemed creation. "They rest not day and night, saying Holy, holy, holy, *Lord God Almighty*, which was, and is, and is to come!" Spotless angels give "glory, and honor, and thanks to Him that sitteth upon the throne, who liveth forever and forever." The redeemed from among men "fall down before Him that sitteth upon the

throne, and worship Him that liveth forever and ever; and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they do exist, and were created." A beautiful view is this of the heavenly world, that the Great and Eternal Jehovah, in all the fulness of his infinite glory, is thus exalted by these grateful and adoring acts of praise.

Yet is it revealed to us that the God-man Mediator is, to redeemed men, the object of special adoration. He sustains a relation to *them* which he does not sustain toward the unfallen. It was not the angelic nature that he assumed, nor was it for them that he suffered and died, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven; lives and reigns, nor is it by virtue of anything he has accomplished for them, that he becomes the Final Judge and Rewarder of the living and the dead. It was the human nature to which he became allied; it was that nature, in the persons of his redeemed, that he bought off from the curse of the law; rose for their justification; became the dispenser of those gracious influences by which they were fitted for heaven; and "raised them from the dead, and set them at his own right hand in heavenly places." He feels an interest in *them*, therefore, which he does not feel for the unfallen. If "there

is joy in heaven among the angels of God over *one sinner that repenteth*, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance;" what must be the interest and the joy which his benevolent mind experiences in repentant and redeemed myriads, above that which he feels in the character and blessedness of those who were never the objects of his mediation, nor the subjects of his grace? He is the Sovereign Lord of Angels; but to his redeemed people, he is the all-sufficient, gracious, faithful, once suffering and now glorified *Redeemer*. They are his people, his own blood-bought inheritance; and can there be a doubt that they also feel an interest in *him* which the unfallen cannot feel, and maintain a more intimate and sensible relation to him?

Since then they have sources of enjoyment from him and in him, which angels cannot have; and feel towards him as angels cannot feel; and since his presence diffuses joys over their happy society which angels can never know; why should they not praise him in strains which the tongue of angels cannot utter? The Apostle John, in the Apocalypse, beheld them as they "fell down before THE LAMB, having every one of them harps; and they sung a *new song*, saying, Thou art worthy, *for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood.*" It is not creative power and persevering goodness, but redeeming grace which

is thus extolled. The unfallen and unredeemed cannot extol him in accents such as these. It was "a voice as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder;" it was "the voice of harpers harping with their harps; and they sung as it were a *new* song before the throne, and *no man could learn that song but those that were redeemed from among men.*"

Christians in the present world often make Christ the special object of their praise. They are attached to the song, "Worthy is the *Lamb* that was slain;" and are never happier than in those favored moments, when anticipating the employments of heaven, their praise to him is thus intimately incorporated with their devotions. In the worship of heaven his Person and work hold a distinguished place. No part of the glory which belongs to him is there kept back, or expressed with reserve. The great and the gratified desire of the redeemed is to exalt and glorify him. A thousand grateful recollections constrain them to cast their crowns at his feet. The palms in their hands, and the pure robes they wear, are emblems of his victories. "The glorious company of the apostles praise him; the goodly fellowship of the prophets praise him; the noble army of martyrs praise him." The redeemed church from every kingdom, and language and tribe praise him. The ear and tongue and soul of man are formed for

this celestial harmony. A great multitude which no man can number, once mourning pilgrims, but now at the end of their pilgrimage, and clothed with the garments of joy and salvation; once struggling with sin, self, and the world, but now conquerors through him that loved them; stand on that "sea of glass," unruffled as it is by the storms of earth, and unperturbed by the deep agitations of time, and "having the harps of God," "sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb;" but the chorus is the Lamb that was slain. Praise "sweet as the breath of love," and deep as the memory of their woes, and loud as the echo of his fame, bursts forth from every tongue. These harps of excelling excellence are divinely strung for the full echo of his glory. We cannot think of the song of the redeemed, without thinking of Christ. Nor do these redeemed ones think of him without bowing the knee before him, and under the impulse of emotions that are sometimes tender and serene, always joyous, and sometimes rapturous and vehement, ascribing everlasting glory to the Lamb that was slain. What a world is that of which Christ is thus the glory! What a song is that when the full chorus of all the spirits of just men made perfect, from Adam down to the last-redeemed of Adam's race, gifted as they never were before with melodious hearts and melodious sounds, and with a tongue sweeter than angels use,

thus express their sweetest and most devout affections and transporting joys.

“And to the Lamb all glory and all praise,
 All glory and all praise at morn, at even,
 That come and go eternally, and find
Us happy still, and *thee* forever bless'd!
 Glory to God, and to the Lamb, Amen!
 Thousands of thousands, thousands infinite
 With voice of boundless love answered Amen!
 And through eternity, near and remote,
 The world adoring echoed back Amen!”

We have thus endeavored to present some faint illustration of the thought, that *Christ himself is the glory of heaven*. Let us weigh this thought, and from it derive the following practical remarks: In the first place, let us learn from it *what are the essential preparatives for the heavenly world*. They are all comprised in that state of mind which cheerfully gives Christ the throne. This is the character of the redeemed in heaven, and this is the test of piety on the earth. Its measure and degree are not the same in the church below, but its *nature* is the same with the piety in the church above. Its humility and love and gratitude and praise and loyalty are imperfect here, but they are the same in kind. Here, these heavenly graces are in blossom; there, they are fully ripe. Here the tree is scathed by storms; there, it is in full bearing.

Let none please themselves with the illusion,

that *such* a heaven has any attractions for an unholy mind. Wicked men know not what they ask when, with all their sinful propensities dominant, they ask for such a heaven as this. They cannot drink of the cup which the Saviour drank of, nor be baptized with the baptism with which he was baptized. Their false views of heaven neutralize all their efforts. It is not the heaven of the Bible which they are seeking; yet is there no other; no other heaven in the universe than that of which Christ is the glory, and his presence the fountain of joy. How fearful the disappointment, when they struggle at last to go up to that celestial city, and see inscribed on its archway, "There shall nothing enter that defileth!" Could those who are now living in sin, and estranged from Jesus Christ, whose treasure is on earth, and whose heart is there, to whom the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life furnish all their sources of enjoyment, see that holy and glorious and blessed world as it is, and as angels and the spirits of just men made perfect behold it; it would not be surprising if they should become strongly conscious that such a heaven has no attractions for their unholy minds. No, no; such a heaven is no place for an ungodly man. He has no sympathies either with its society its employments, its laws, its blessedness, or its great and glorious King. All who enter heaven desire and pursue that which constitutes its bles-

sedness. "It is character that makes heaven; it is spiritual enjoyment that makes heaven; it is the presence and blessing of God that make heaven." It is Christ that makes heaven. To him who loves not, trusts not, obeys not, honors not Jesus Christ, such a heaven as this has no allurements. He must be a different man from what he is, ever to be happy in such a heaven. Well did the Saviour utter the words, "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." How is it possible for one who "loves darkness rather than light," to be happy in a world which is thus filled with Christ's glory, and which he thus irradiates as with ten thousand suns? It is not heaven's spaciousness and splendor, nor its salubrious streams and healthful clime, nor yet its everlasting day and blooming immortality that can commend it to the moral temper and disposition of the soul that does not love Jesus Christ. Not until Christ himself retires from that glorious world, will it be a fitting residence for an ungodly man. Quench its flame of holy love; dry up its fountains of holy joy; silence its song to the Lamb that was slain; then, and not till then, will it have charms for a mind that is "dead in trespasses and sins." The heaven where Jesus is, none can enjoy but the friends of Jesus. "The pure in heart shall see God."

In the next place, how strongly does the

thought that Christ himself is the glory of heaven *urge upon the people of God a more heavenly mind and more heavenly anticipations.* True followers of Christ love to think of heaven. It is a heaven of holiness, and where Christ is all in all. These are its charms, and these the sweet realities which give such sweetness to their hopes. What marvel if, in their more spiritual frames, they look toward these heavenly hills with eager expectation, and pant for those abodes of spotless purity where Jesus dwells, and where their perfect conformity to him constitutes the perfection of their blessedness!

We would fain stimulate them to think of it, and with sweeter hopes and brighter anticipations. How magnificent is that New Jerusalem, where the Lamb is the light thereof! When John saw even a mighty *angel* come down from heaven, the earth was lightened with his glory. How brilliant, then, and overpowering the light of *heaven*, enlightened as it is by the *Lord of angels*! It does not need the sun nor the moon to shine in it. The reason why "the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and as the stars forever and ever," is that Christ, the light of heaven, shines upon them in the effulgence of his glory.

If it is true that our minds become assimilated to the objects about which they are most em-

ployed, were it not wise to cultivate more heavenly thoughts? We shall be the gainers by being more familiar with that holy and blessed world in our daily contemplations. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." There is a voice which speaks to thee, my Christian brother, in sweetest accents, "Arise thou, and depart hence, for this is not your rest!" A few more days in this distant land, and you shall behold him whom your soul loveth, and "be like him, because you shall see him as he is."

Few things probably would surprise angels more, than to be informed how reluctant the friends of Christ are to leave this world and go to their heavenly Father's house. The writers of the New Testament address those to whom they wrote as though they knew they were Christians. They lived in an age of trial, and the apostles everywhere spoke *to* them and *of* them as though they knew there was but a short distance between them and their unearthly home. And why have not Christians at the present day the same unembarrassed confidence? Why is it that you have any latent doubts of that "faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners?" Turn back to the facts which have been demonstrated in the preceding pages, and inquire if there is not enough in these heavenly credentials of Mary's Son to warrant an assured faith. Not a few of

your strongest hopes rest on dreams; but there is no illusion in these great realities. It is not one fact alone, but many facts, all bound together; there is a piling up of truth upon truth, none of them disjointed, but all of them compact and each in its place; all combining to silence the tempter and banish doubt. Again I ask, why is it that your faith in these great realities is not more tranquil and confident? Is it that you fear to *die*? Is it that you reluctant from breaking up these earthly associations and enter that unseen world? Why should you fear to *die* when you see how death has been robbed of his sting? You need not *anticipate* darkness because you are approaching the regions of the departed. You will be cared for as you go down into the dark valley, and your flesh shall rest in hope. Why not a more cheering and brighter view than this? Why should you wish to be still a foreigner and an exile from that heaven of which your Saviour is the glory? What have you found in this sinning, suffering world to detain you when the summons comes? Why cling to the ashes of this burning earth, when the New Jerusalem is unfolding its gates, and angels bid you enter in? Why clank these fetters and bear this load when heaven's messenger comes to set you free? What more have you to do with these dark and cloudy habitations of wretchedness, when he who sitteth on

the throne, and hath made you kings and priests unto God, commands you to come away? O that we lived more with our eyes and hearts on Christ and heaven!

In the third and last place, these thoughts admonish all *to labor into that heavenly rest*. We do not forget that this is the closing chapter in our series. We do not know what good has been done by this series of thoughts, nor whether one soul has, through these humble means, been brought to the knowledge of Christ, and the hope of that heaven of which he is the glory. I am the more earnest therefore in urging you to strive to enter in at the strait gate—labor to enter “that rest, lest any of you should seem to come short of it.” What a loss does he sustain who loses heaven! O there is no loss within the range of human thought like this. Nor can it ever be repaired. I have known those who were burdened to despondency, and miserable almost to distraction, because they could not obtain even to a comfortable *hope* of heaven. And if to be denied the mere *hope* is to be denied all that can cheer the mind in its earthly pilgrimage; what must the agony be when the loss is realized, and the despondency become despair! To go up to the gates of the Heavenly City and find them shut; to see the multitudes coming from the north, and the south, and the east, and the west, and sitting down with patriarchs

and prophets, and Jesus himself in the kingdom of God, and *you yourself cast out*; what a fearful and mournful overthrow is this!

O that in that day when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed, it may be seen that these truths have not been without some hallowed influence upon the reader and the writer of this volume. There may *he* have some humble place, and some harp of gold; and there may *they* join in the sweet and everlasting song, "To HIM that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be dominion, and praise, and thanksgiving forever!"

THE END.