

# "SOUND WORDS."

2 Tim. i., 13.

A MONTHLY PERIODICAL,

FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL AND FEEDING  
"THE CHURCH OF GOD."

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*"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all  
wisdom."*—COL. III., 16.

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## "THEY THAT WERE READY."

"And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and *they that were ready* went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut."

Another "year of grace," as men speak, has sped by. How many of those who were in the world when the year began, were in it when it ended? Where are the *souls* of those that have passed away? Are they "present with the LORD" or where are they? Ah! where are they? Where, dear reader, would your's have been had you been called away? The earth goes on, completing its successive journeys round the sun. With unabated force it circles round its centre, sustained by the Hand that formed it, and sent it on its way. Nigh six thousand such journeys has it made. The same earth and the same journey; but are its inhabitants the same? How many of those now on it will see it complete its present journey? Such are the solemn and penetrating thoughts that arise in our minds, as we think of earth, and the rolling by of years marked off by *its* annual revolutions, but how different are the thoughts, though equally solemn and penetrating, that fill the heart as we contemplate the verse before us. It is not a question of earth and time. It is not *death* carrying off one and another, and filling the abodes of blessedness or woe with their respective occupants, that comes before our view. A Bridegroom is coming for his Bride, and there are those who are expecting His coming as having been waked up suddenly to expect Him. There are those that are *ready* and those that are *getting* ready. A vivid picture of the present state of the professing Church as expecting the return of the LORD. It is not our purpose to comment upon the entire parable of which this forms a part, but only to take up briefly the points brought before us in our verse. We do not say either how far all Christians, so called, are really expecting the LORD, but shall just take things as the *verse* presents them. The LORD as the bridegroom of His church, is coming; hearts and consciences are alive to the fact, and acting accordingly. This is the general feature that the verse gives, and if we compare it with the state of things actually around us, we soon see how clear is the light it sheds. What means all the religious activity that everywhere meets the eye as we look abroad? It has entire reference to the future, when carefully looked into. Where there is no future in the mind connecting it with Eternity and God, there is no religion. It is all a pre-

paration for a *future* state, and according to the vividness with which this is presented to the mind, is the earnestness of preparation. Where the coming of the LORD is not consciously the motive, it is death that is prepared for, as that which ushers the person into Eternity, and people are getting ready to die and meet God. Now, though death is a very real thing and may overtake any of us, yet it is not death that in the New Testament is presented as that which ushers unto God's presence in Eternity, whether this be for blessing or woe. Uniformly, whether for the heart's joy, or the terror of the conscience, it is *the coming of the Lord* that *Scripture* sets before the soul, saint, or sinner.

This is the case, whether we look at that which was presented to faith previous to the first coming of CHRIST, or at that which should be the subject of testimony as preceding His second coming. The key note of the gospel of Matthew from which we have quoted, is: "Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. . . . *Prepare ye way of the Lord*, make His paths straight." John the Baptist warned his hearers with "flee from the *wrath* to come," and spake of Him that was coming, as having His fan in His hand, and that He would "thoroughly purge his floor: and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." This is not the aspect of the LORD as coming in grace, to die on the cross for sinners, and lay a righteous ground of blessing for man, but as bringing in in *power* the Kingdom of God, which would be blessing or judgment for man, according to the state in which it found him, as believing or not in Him who was *coming*. CHRIST was utterly rejected by Israel, as presented by John, and instead of setting up the Kingdom of God, and blessing and judging man in accordance with its principles, He offers Himself to bear the judgment of God against sinners, and dies on Calvary "the just for the unjust to bring us to God." Raised from the dead, He goes back into Heaven to receive afresh as the risen and glorified man, the Kingdom, and to return to set it up in manifested power, and according to prophecy. The LORD Himself directly teaches this under a figure in Luke xix: "and as they heard these things, He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the Kingdom of God should *immediately* appear. He said, therefore: A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return; and he called his ten servants and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, occupy *till I come*." In the verse previous to this quotation, JESUS

had said: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," and He would teach them, that as *Son of man*, He must work the work that would save the lost, ere as *son of David*, He could sit upon the throne of His Kingdom. It was for this reason the Kingdom could not be *immediately*. He must first die, rise again, and go back to His *Father* to receive it, ere it could be set up. In the meantime, during His absence, His servants were to occupy till He came. Hence, it is for those who are His; *occupying till He comes*. The rest of the world, and especially the Jews, hate and reject Him, and so he adds, "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, we will not have this man to reign over us."

Hence, *waiting for CHRIST* characterizes the present dispensation, and was, and still is the actual attitude of those who are *subject* to God's word. Wonderfully of late have souls been waked up to the *fact* that CHRIST is coming again. Far and wide the sound is going forth amid the midnight darkness of this scene: "Behold! the Bridegroom cometh." In the Church and in the Chapel, in the house and by the wayside, this soul-stirring cry is heard: "Behold! the Bridegroom cometh." From the press, too, on every hand is poured forth unceasingly and increasingly, the still, small voice of God, announcing the quick return of His SON. From the heights of Glory the LORD JESUS calls down unto the Churches: "Behold! I come quickly." And more or less in every ear is being echoed by the HOLY SPIRIT: "Behold! the Bridegroom cometh." The sound rises and falls, and with it hearts and consciences. With ever-increasing intensity it is thrilling the breast of man with expectancy, striking the conscience with terror, or filling the heart with joyful hopes; arousing love in some, and hatred in others. Heard only to be rejected by some, still it is heard. Disbelieved in, yet it makes itself felt, and infidelity, scornful yet affected by what it rejects, looks round for a reply, and says, "Where is the promise of His coming? For, since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." And yet creation, silent to the scornful scrutiny of the sceptic, answers clearly to the believing heart, with the heaving throbs of expectancy; "for the *earnest expectation* of the creature *waiteth* for the manifestation of the sons of God." Unwillingly made subject to vanity, it is subject in hope, and in every groan and sigh pleads eloquently to God, in the ear of Faith, for deliverance. Groaning and travailing in pain together until *now*, it

makes its *hopes* felt in every Divinely quickened heart, and proclaims its own sure and bright *future*. "Because the creature *shall* be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom. viii.) Aye, too, and under the earth the same sound is heard, and "the devils also believe and tremble." In Heaven, on earth, and under the earth, all is alive with expectancy. Everything speaks of the "coming of CHRIST." All alike proclaim that "the coming of the LORD draweth nigh." Knowledge is increasing. Men, restless, run to and fro the earth. Nation is rising against nation. Wars and rumors of war. Men's hearts failing them for fear of the things that are coming on the earth. Society is broken up. The old bulwarks no longer stand the storm of popular excitement. The traditions of the past, as reins broken in the hands of those that hold them, no longer avail to keep the multitudes in order. The race has run away with itself, and would-be rulers stand aghast, adopting this expediency and that expediency, but in all in vain. All is confusion and anxiety. Statesmen cower before tumultuous mobs, and, vainly expostulating, are carried with the stream they know not where. Kings doff their crowns and put them on at the will of self-made subjects. For thus saith the LORD GOD: "Remove the diadem and take off the crown; this shall not be the same; exalt him that is low and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more until HE shall come whose right it is, and I will give it to Him."—Ezekiel xxi. Clear indeed is the light here thrown upon the present moment by the despised word of prophecy. Vivid the picture of the present hour, sketched over two thousand years ago by the hand of Him who knows everything, from the beginning to the end. Nor is it *thrones* alone that are thus uptossed by JEHOVAH's hand. *Republics* shall fare no better, for thus, too, saith the LORD: "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far-off countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, for God is with us, and it shall come to nought." Plain, also, is the path given for the obedience of faith amid such scenes. "For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, a confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, a confederacy, neither fear ye their fear nor be afraid. Sanctify the LORD of

Hosts Himself, and let Him be your fear and let Him be your dread." And Faith's answer to such a guidance is, "I will *wait* upon the LORD, and I will *look* for Him." (Isaiah viii.)

How vain, then, are all the attempts of man to set himself and his circumstances right without God and before CHRIST comes. In God's will and counsels everything waits for CHRIST. Creation and the world, Jew, Gentile, and the Church of God, all alike shall have their order, place and blessing, when CHRIST comes. Judgment, too, is in the hands of the SON of man, and will be unsparingly executed when He *comes*.

Solemn and weighty considerations are these to commence a new year with. Surely, no question for 1871 can be more intensely to the point for every soul than "are you ready for CHRIST to come?" "And **THEY THAT WERE READY** went in with Him to the Marriage, and **THE DOOR WAS SHUT.**" The same door that shut in those that were *ready*, shut out those that were only *getting* ready. In which of these two classes, dear Reader, do you find yourself? If the LORD were to come this very instant, while you are reading these words, and He might, on which side of the door would you be? Are *you* ready, or only getting ready? which? Oh! be stirred. Your eternal destinies are at stake. The Bridegroom may come this moment. To be only *getting* ready when He comes is eternal ruin. There is no time for an iota of preparation *after* He has come. You must be ready now, or never. The door of mercy is for ever closed on the unprepared when CHRIST comes. After that it is only the outer darkness, with the weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth for ever. But why are you not ready? Are you *doing* your best, and *hoping* by your own efforts to fit yourself for CHRIST's presence and Heaven? if so, you will never be ready; "for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. iii., 20). Are you adding law keeping to the finished work of CHRIST, or trusting in CHRIST, together with ordinances? Listen again to the great Apostle of the Gentiles, on this subject. "Behold, I Paul say unto ye, that if ye be circumcised (trust in ordinances), CHRIST shall profit you *nothing*. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised (trusts in ordinances) that he is debtor to do the whole law. CHRIST is become of no effect unto whomsoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. v., 2).

Oh! be warned in time. You are a foolish virgin, and

adopting the fatal principle of which our verse speaks so solemnly: "and while they *went to buy*, the Bridegroom came," and while they were thus occupied the door was shut. No appealing cry for mercy was of any avail after. "Verily, I know you not," is the only answer. Acting on the principle of *the law* and *getting ready*, they had never known the Bridegroom. Fallen from grace they were lost. They were not wise unto salvation. Oh, how many, many foolish virgins are there now! Honest and sincere persons, just as you are, *doing* their best religiously to be saved. How full are the Churches and Chapels around of foolish virgins! *Getting ready* for Eternity and CHRIST. Going eagerly to the blind leaders of the blind, who sell, or pretend to sell, the wares of Eternal life. Law teachers and law keepers. The dark enemy of souls is behind all this. Oh! dear reader, open your eyes; you are on the sure road to perdition. Cease from your *buying* this moment. Flee to Christ this instant. Trust in his precious blood *now*. Rest *entirely* on his finished work. Nothing has to be done to save your precious soul. "It is finished" is the clear, full testimony of the SON of GOD on the Cross. Listen to it and be at peace with GOD. Look, and live. "Believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST and thou shalt be saved." You have not a moment to spare; cast yourself *at once* upon CHRIST and His finished work, or it will be too late. Hear again the cry: "Behold! the Bridegroom cometh;" "and they that WERE READY went in with Him to the marriage." Look *only* to JESUS, I entreat you. Listen *alone* to His words: "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk *without money and without price*." "And let him that heareth say come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life *freely*." "He which testifieth these things saith, SURELY, I COME QUICKLY" (Rev. xxii., 17—20).

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## THE GIVING GOD.

SOMEWHERE about 3300 years ago, GOD spake to man from Mount Sinai. It was a most solemn time. The mountain burned with fire, and He spake in the midst of darkness and blackness, and clouds and tempests, and the sound of a trumpet; and so terrible was the sight, that Moses cried out and said: "I do exceedingly fear and quake." God then gave to man His law, demanding strict and uncompromising obedience, saying: "Do this, and thou shalt live."



He required from His creatures holiness, and righteousness, and love. The law was summed up in this—"Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." (Luke x. 27.)

But in man, that is, in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing, and out of his heart, which is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, and the like.

How then, can he love God with such a heart? Impossible! The law therefore only made known to man his sinfulness, and his utter inability to do any good thing. By the law is the *knowledge of sin*. By the commandment sin is made to be known, and felt *as exceeding sinful*. For some 1500 years God thus proved man. For 1500 years was God asking man to give Him holiness, and righteousness, and love, but man had none to give, and he had no power to produce anything of the kind. Man was thus proved to be altogether worthless, but some 1870 years since, God, having failed to get any good *out of* man, revealed Himself in another way, and in another character. He had revealed Himself as an *asking* God, but He could get nothing. He now makes Himself known as a *giving* God—as one who has something to bestow, and that fully, freely, and eternally. Freely, without money and without price—fully, for He *gives* every spiritual blessing—eternally, for he that believeth in the SON of GOD *hath everlasting life*.

GOD sent His SON JESUS CHRIST, and it was His special and primary mission to make GOD known to man. For no man hath seen GOD at any time, but He that is in the bosom of the FATHER hath declared Him. (1 John i. 18.) JESUS came, as a man, full of grace and truth, to reveal Him who is love—the GOD of all grace. Look at all the words and ways of the blessed SON of GOD, as revealed in the Word of GOD. See Him standing up in the synagogue to read! He looks for a certain Scripture, and what is it He finds? "The SPIRIT of the LORD is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the LORD." (Luke iv. 18, 19.) *Grace* was found in the lips of Him who came from GOD full of love, and nothing but words of love proceeded from His mouth. It was all blessing, blessing, blessing. The law *cursed*, but grace *blessed*; the law kept in bondage, grace set the captives free.

God, then, is a *loving* and a *giving* God. No longer asking from man, but looking out for poor sinners, who are ready and willing to accept what He has to give, without money and without price of any kind. But what does this free and full-giving God give? He has given in the first place, His own SON, His only-begotten SON, the SON of His love, in whom is centered all His delight.

"God so loved the world, that He *gave* His only begotten SON, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, needing life. There was no law that could give life: but God hath *given* the life in His SON, for His SON is life. Therefore, in order that we poor sinners might have life, and might escape the coming judgment, God would not spare His SON, but delivered Him up for us, and He, by the ETERNAL SPIRIT, offered Himself as an offering and a sacrifice for sin without spot to God, that—He paying our debt of sin for us—God might give pardon and life to all who believe in JESUS. JESUS the Lamb of God, did this perfectly and completely. On the CROSS He drank the cup of wrath for us, *died* on the Cross for us, and atoned for *all* our sins, and now he that heareth God's word, and believeth on Him that sent Him, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but *is* passed from death unto life.

"The wages of sin is death; but the *gift* of God, eternal life, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD." (Rom. vi, 23). Is the Reader, then, willing to *receive* on these terms, God's gift of eternal life in CHRIST? There is no other way; God no longer says, "Do this and live;" but He says, believe and receive, look and live, all doing on man's part ends in death—eternal death; whereas, believing in CHRIST is life from the dead. It is eternal life, for "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on Him.*" (John iii, 36.) We must first be made alive in CHRIST, then we shall have power for doing; "for the grace of God which bringeth salvation for all men, hath appeared, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously and Godly in this present world: Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST." (Titus ii.) We must have and know the grace before it can lead us to God. Again, God gives *all* spiritual blessings in CHRIST. Now that He is revealing Himself love, the God of all grace, He withholds no blessing, but, out of His own fulness *gives* everything.

Under the Law, God promised to bless His people, on condition of obedience to all His commandments; but under grace, God *gives* all "spiritual blessings in CHRIST JESUS" to all who receive Him. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God; even to them that *believe* in His name." (John i. 12). In this CHRIST, God has concentrated and treasured up every blessing, and we, having received CHRIST, have all in Him, and we are made complete in Him—"in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. ii., 9. 10).

He gives, as we have said, *fully*, for He gives *all* blessings; and He gives *securely*, for they are all in CHRIST in the Heavenly places. (Eph. i., 4).

Does the reader know *this* God? This giving, this full giving God? Does he know what it is to sit still, and *receive* a FULL blessing in CHRIST?

Again, God *gives* those who believe in JESUS, His HOLY SPIRIT, for JESUS said, I will give you another Comforter, and He shall *abide* with you *forever*. He shall be *in* you and *with* you. (John xiv.) He is the *power* by which we are born again. He is the *indwelling* power which makes known JESUS, His beauties, His glories, His grace, His perfections, and all the things that have been freely *given* to us of God. The *bodies* of those who believe in JESUS and His finished work for them, are the temples of the HOLY SPIRIT.

We dwell not now on these marvelous blessings at any great length, our purpose being simply to show the blessed fact that God is now made known as a *giving* God, and not as One Who looks to man to give Him anything. The LORD deepen His work of love in the hearts of all His children, that through drinking deeply and more abundantly into this sweet, deep well of love, their capacities may be enlarged more and more to apprehend the love and grace of Him Who *is* love, "the God of all *grace*."

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## INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD.

It is a question often put, and one that has come before us again recently, "Why should not instrumental music be used in Christian worship, as it was in Jewish worship?" Such a question betrays the prevalent ignorance that exists as to the entire contrast between the Jewish and the Christian dispensations, law and grace, ordinances and the Spirit. Unless this

distinction be seen and clearly apprehended, it will be impossible for the incongruity of instrumental assistance in the *present* worship of God to be entered into; and we will therefore briefly look at the Jewish economy, and compare it with the Christian, as this will enable us to see the points of contrast or resemblance. The Old Testament will supply us with the material for the one, and the New Testament with that for the other.

Leaving our readers to supply in detail the Scripture proofs, we notice, first, that the Israelites were an *earthly* people, called to inherit an *earthly* inheritance. As a consequence of this, all their deliverances, although truly Divine, were *temporal* deliverances. Their conflicts were with flesh and blood. Called *saints*, as separated to God by the rite of circumcision, they were as such in the flesh, and it was "called circumcision in the flesh." It separated them outwardly, as a visible sign in the flesh, from the nations that surrounded them. Of the same character was their approach to God. Their religious rites were all external, and applied themselves to the *flesh*, "sanctified to the purifying of the flesh" (Heb. ix. 13), thus putting them *relatively* nearer God than other nations. Their place of worship, whether tabernacle or temple, was visible, external and material. It "had ordinances of Divine Service," but a "worldly sanctuary." Their principle of obedience had entire reference to life in the flesh, and the law *if* kept, secured *present* blessing in natural and temporal things. Faith was in question, where God was apprehended through all these things, but nothing of what we have enumerated raised the question of *Eternity*. Heaven or Hell was not in view. The salvation of the soul, with the hope of resurrection, in no sort hung upon the observances of these rites, or depended upon the fulfilled requirements of the law. The breach of them might be followed by the attached penalty; but even this left the question of *Eternity* and the world to come, untouched. Death might be staved off, but never set aside, and all were equally "all their lifetime *in bondage* through fear of death." Sins might be forgiven in the conscience through the sacrifices offered, but sin was never *put away* by them from before God, and the relief was only *temporary* and never complete. Clean as the washing of the water could make the person, it fitted him not for God's presence, for it touched not the unclean nature within, and the veil, as the Apostle (Heb. ix. 8) tells us, hung betwixt the worshipper and God, testifying that "the way into the holiest of all was not *yet* made manifest." It

was emphatically a religion of sight and sense. And even when God himself was apprehended by faith and conscience, it was as, to means, through the senses. The signs and wonders of Egypt, the pathway through the Red sea, the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, the descending fire on the sacrifice, with the accompanying cloud of glory filling the tabernacle—all alike brought God *visibly* before the worshipper, and bowed him at a *distance* before Him. In keeping with all this *visible* glory was the subsequent building of the gorgeous temple at Jerusalem, with its external grandeur and internal beauty. Precious stones, gold and silver, cunning work of brass and iron, garments of beauty, colors of delight, traceries of taste, forms of grace, lights that cast their brightness on lovely types of deeper things, and made the drops of *very* blood glow with mercy's soft reflection, are all fitly found within. And while clouds of incense arose fragrant before JEHOVAH's throne, and hovered o'er the blood-stained mercy seat, what more in true accord than that praises to the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, should peal themselves forth in the ears of Israel's waiting tribes, and that the word should be:

"Sing aloud unto God our strength; make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.

"Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.

"Blow up the trumpet in the new moon in the time appointed, on our solemn feast days.

"For this was a *statute for Israel*, and a *law of the God of Jacob*."—*Psalms* lxxxi.

So sang the sweet Psalmist of Israel, "and four thousand praised the LORD with instruments which I made (saith David) to praise therewith." (1 Chron. xxiii., 5.) And, in later days, when Israel's beautiful house, fallen into disorder, is restored by Hezekiah, we read, "And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of God the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet, for so was the *commandment* of the LORD, by His prophets." (2 Chron. xxix., 25.)

The blast of rams' horns, and the clear, shrill note of silver trumpets, rallying Israel's hosts, and leading forth to victory the numbered warriors of JEHOVAH, are all in place as we look upon the tents of Jacob. Fitly too were their feasts of gladness, their solemn days, and their times of sacrifice thus proclaimed: "Also in the day of your gladness, and in your

solemn days, and in the beginning of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings, that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the Lord your God." "And the sons of Aaron the Priest shall blow with the trumpet; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations" (Numb. x., 8). All this is perfectly in keeping with the then ways of God with a people which He had before Him for earthy blessing, and in the flesh, *manifestly* the subjects of His care and government. Blest with earthy blessings in the flesh, they worshipped Him in and with means, that appealed to the various avenues of sense. Sight, touch, taste, smelling, and hearing were all in question. All was visible and external, in form and ceremony—shadows only of good things to come, in which faith and the Spirit had no place. Precisely regulated in every particular by Divine command, through Moses, the great apostle of that system, the law as a whole was, as Paul tells us, but "a schoolmaster up to Christ, that we should be justified by *faith*;" and then he adds, "but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." *Instrumental music* was one of the means of instruction in the hands of the schoolmaster. Now faith is come to those that have accepted Christ, and we are *children of God* by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii.) The schoolmaster—the entire system of the law as a means of blessing and access to God—has passed away. It is no longer servants at school, but children of God in life and liberty, through the Spirit, "heirs of God, through Christ." Gal. iv. We would earnestly beg our readers to prayerfully read what the Apostle says in these two chapters as to what the law really is, and what the place of the Christian is as entirely outside it as a system, in every way, though under law to Christ. As *Gentiles*, we were never in any way under the law as a religious system, and as to the Jews who *were* under it, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons." To bring back instrumental music, is to bring back part of the material of the schoolmaster, and to bring back part is to bring back all in God's sight, and makes the whole binding on the conscience, entailing the judgment that attaches to a breach of any part, "for whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James ii., 10). In *principle*, thus to touch the ordinances of the law, is to be "a debtor

to do the whole law." Thus CHRIST becomes of none effect, and to be in *any way* under law, is to have fallen from grace. It is to "tempt God," and to "put," as Peter says (Acts xv.) "a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." A solemn aspect this indeed to view things in, and we have dwelt upon it, that our readers may see what the law really is, and what the ruinous consequences of bringing back *any* part of it. We trust that it will thus become clear, that the question of instrumental music involves something more than a mere opinion, or bare consistency with one religious system or another, Jewish or Christian. Deep and fundamental principles touching the blessing of man and God's glory, underlie such an inquiry.

"The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST." We have looked briefly at the one, and brought it into relief in itself and its effects, we will now in brief trace the other as it flows from its source, and contrasts itself with the former. As the Jew was under Moses and the law, so the Christian is under CHRIST and grace. Both give a standing before God, and as we have noticed for Judaism, a standing in the flesh. A Jew changed from his standing in Judaism by giving up Judaism and receiving Christ. He thus became a Christian. A Gentile left his idols, and he became a Christian by receiving CHRIST: "and to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become sons of God, even to them that believe in His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i., 12). The one thus received was the "Word made flesh," dwelling among men, full of grace and truth, and those who were thus His received of His fulness and "grace for grace." As the Jews listened to CHRIST in contrast with Moses, and *believed* in Him and His Word, they passed from law to grace; they were born again of the Spirit, and entered into a new relationship with God in a kingdom where flesh has no place, and law no claim. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," remains such; "and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit," the LORD teaches them. The one cannot be changed into the other, and has no place in company with it, has no part in the kingdom of God (John iii. 5, 6). Here *all* is of the Spirit; and if of the Spirit, all of grace or gift. "If thou knewest the gift of God (the giving character of God in contrast with law demanding), and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him and He would have *given* thee living water," says the LORD to the woman of

Samaria at Sychar's well (John iv., 10). "The *gift* of God is eternal life through JESUS CHRIST, our LORD" (Rom. v), Paul tells the Gentiles, and Peter adds: "God, which knoweth the hearts, bore *them* witness, *giving* them the HOLY SPIRIT, even as He did unto us (Jews); and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by *faith*" (Act xv). In what is now before us, CHRIST is all and in all. The life is *eternal* and spiritual. The power of joy and fruitfulness is the HOLY SPIRIT. Its entire principle, as flowing from God, is grace, and that which in us enters into and enjoys the blessing, is *faith*. A present kingdom of God, "which is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). The Christian is a Heavenly person. His calling is to Heaven. His blessings are *spiritual* blessings in Heavenly places. His inheritance is an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in *Heaven*. His salvation and redemption are eternal. His conflicts are *not* with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in Heavenly places. He is sanctified in CHRIST JESUS through the SPIRIT and "by the offering up of the body and blood of JESUS CHRIST once." His life is hid with CHRIST in God. His sins are all put away by the blood of JESUS. He has boldness to enter into the holiest of all by that blood. *No* veil is betwixt him and God. His priest is in Heaven, in the holiest where the blood of eternal redemption is on the mercy seat, and he draws *near* with full assurance of faith, and a body washed with pure water—a holy nature fitted for God's presence. His place of worship is no temple made with hands, but Heaven itself. He has the *substance* of every type and shadow in JESUS, in his sacrifices, and all that surrounds Him now in Heavenly Glory. He knows that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth;" and as children of His love, "for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John iv., 23). He has tasted "that the LORD is gracious," and CHRIST is everything to him. Having come to Him "as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious," he *rests* upon this foundation, and knows that all Christians as "lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by JESUS CHRIST" (1 Pet. ii: 4. 5). Outside the camp, bearing His reproach, seeking a city to come, he gathers with others to the name of JESUS, and having a conscience purged from "dead works" by the blood of CHRIST, he worships the living God, and offers "the sacrifice of praise to God continually,



that is the fruit of the *lips* giving thanks to His name" (Heb. xiii. 15). To introduce instrumental music into such a scene of *spiritual* worship, or make it part of such an order of things, how incongruous! By the *nature* of things then, instrumental music can have no place in Christian worship. To introduce it is to return to fleshly worship, and adopt the elements of Judaism. The plain statements of the New Testament, giving directions as to praise and worship in the *Christian* assembly, are entirely against such a practice. Here all is controlled and sustained by the HOLY SPIRIT. In 1 Cor. xiv. 15, Paul says: "I will *sing* with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding." A little lower down, in the 26th verse, in correcting some disorder with reference to singing, he says: "Every one of you hath a psalm," clearly showing that the song of praise *started* from the individual saint, and not from an organ in the gallery, to *make* music for all. In Eph. v., saints are told "to be filled with the Spirit: *speaking* to yourselves in psalms and spiritual songs, *singing* and making melody in your hearts to the LORD." So, too, in Col. 1. iii, they are enjoined, "let the Word of CHRIST dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, *singing* with grace in your hearts to the LORD." Let it be noted here that the LORD is the One for whom the heart's melody is made, and He, too, is the One sung to. It becomes thus a matter of what will please the heart and ear of the LORD Himself, and not of those who worship. The One worshipped is ever before the soul. Gladness of heart at any time is to find its expression in *singing*; "is any merry," says James, "let him sing psalms." Here, then, is plenty of praise and joyous worship; the *voice*, according to God's directions, being the medium of it, and the HOLY SPIRIT who dwells in the believer the power of that praise. Simple singing, holy, happy and Divine, meet surroundings for the presence of Him, who, as Man in the midst of His brethren, says, "I will sing praises."

In vain shall we search for anything in the New Testament that can give the slightest color for the use of instrumental music in the worship of God in the Christian assembly. The *body* of the believer, as much as his soul, is "bought with a price" (1 Cor. vii.), and dwelt in by the HOLY SPIRIT, is the instrument of God's service and praise. The power of testimony in the word through the mouth, the SPIRIT makes melody to the LORD in the *hearts* of the saints, and uses *their voices* to sing *aloud* His praises. Our thoughts in no way can connect,

and it would be near to blasphemy to do so, the HOLY SPIRIT with an organ or an harmonium. We do read of *harps* in Revelation, but this is only a figure, and he who would build anything on this for the use of actual harps in worship, either now or bye and bye in Heaven, must also be prepared to put the lopped off branches of palm trees into the hands of the glorified saints.

After all, the question is: is worship to be spiritual and according to GOD, or fleshly and according to man? Dear reader, let us entreat you be done with instrumental music and all that is in keeping with it, when you would worship the GOD and FATHER of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. It is but the "beggarly element" of a past economy. Now properly only the accompaniment of idolatrous worship, it is in principle idolatrous, and "what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" "Be separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing." (1 Cor. vi.)

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## THE REDEMPTION OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION.

Eph. i., 14.

THE earth is the subject of redemption as well as man. It is already purchased, and bye and bye, in due season, it shall be rescued or delivered. That is, it is the subject of the two-fold redemption known in Scripture—redemption by *price* and redemption by *power*.

The blood of the Cross has already reconciled or purchased it. As we read, "And having made peace by the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in Heaven." (Col. 1.)

This gives the inheritance the title of "the purchased possession." But though purchased, it is not yet delivered. It is still under "the bondage of corruption." (Rom. viii.) It is redeemed by purchase, but not as yet by power.

We, therefore, wait for the "redemption" of that which is already purchased. This bright and happy truth, this mystery found among the mysteries of God, has had its pledges and foreshadowings, as well as others. The ordinance of the Jubilee seems to set forth this two-fold redemption by price and by power. (See Lev. xxv.) For that chapter teaches us that at any other time during forty-nine years, the alienated possession of an Israelite might have been purchased by the

kinsman of the heir, and thus redeemed or brought back to the family to which, under God, it had belonged; but if that were not done, it would return to the heir in the fiftieth year, or the Jubilee, without purchase.

These two ordinances again, I say, serve to set forth the mysteries I am speaking of—redemption by money and redemption by power. The kinsman might redeem with money, the Jubilee would redeem without money, by virtue of its own title, by virtue of that force or authority imparted to it by Him who was the God of Israel and the Lord of the soil.

Again, Jeremiah the Prophet was commanded to purchase the field of Hanameel, his uncle's son. He did so in the spirit and obedience of faith, though at the moment the Chaldean army was in the land, and was under commission from the Lord to tread it down and waste it, or possess themselves of it. But when Jeremiah made inquiry respecting this strange thing that he should be asked to lay out his money upon a piece of land thus devoted to the sword of an invader, the Lord tells him that a day of *power* was to come, and that the Lord's own people should possess it again, brought back out of the hand of the spoiler. This was the Lord's answer to His servant. And thus Jeremiah had reason to know that the purchase now made by good money of the merchants, should be made good in a coming day of power. (See Jer. xxxii.)

And let me add one other notice of this distinguished case, the purchase of Hanameel's field, for it has interested me. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" is the Lord's challenge to Jeremiah on this occasion, as it is of Sarah in Gen. xviii. Sarah did not know that she whose body was then dead, could have a child, for *she knew not the resurrection strength of God*. Jeremiah did not know how he who was laying out his money on a piece of ground, which was then in the hand of the enemy, could get its value back again; for, like Sarah, he knew not the resurrection strength of God. That strength makes all simple. The victory of CHRIST, the resurrection of JESUS gives us to our inheritance, sure rights under the seal of a title-deed easy to be read.

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## THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THE PSALMS.

THE Psalms afford us special light on the Government of God, and the sympathies of the SPIRIT of CHRIST with His people. This, in the first instance, has the Jews for its object

and centre of display. Still, in making allowance for the difference of their state and ours, and of the relationship of a people with JEHOVAH, and children with a FATHER, God's ways in Government apply to us Christians also. It is not the highest ground on which a Christian is viewed, for that is heavenly, but it is a most important and interesting one, and brings out all the tenderest display of Divine care, the care of Him who counts the very hairs of our head, and the seriousness and vigilance required in walking before God, who never swerves from His holy ways, who is not mocked, though all be the ministration of His grace for perfecting us according to these ways before Him. Of this application of the Government of God to the *Christian's* ways, the Epistles of Peter are more especially the witness. See for example, I. Peter i. 17; iii. 10—15, and the spirit and tenor of the whole Epistle. This Government, in the second Epistle, is carried on to the consummation of all things. The first is more the Government of the righteous, the second the judgment of the wicked, though that judgment, as closing the power of evil and the deliverance of the just, be alluded to in the first also. He was the Apostle of the circumcision, and this subject came specially under his eye in teaching.

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## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. Will you explain the "rest" of Heb. iv? Is it a present or future thing?

A. The rest here spoken of is *God's* rest. "If they shall enter into *My* rest." This decides it to be future. For the present the LORD's words apply: "My Father *worketh* hitherto and I work." They were charging them with breaking the Sabbath. His answer is as it were, "God keeps no Sabbath yet. Sin has come in unto His first creation rest, and now He is at work until all things are again according to His mind. He cannot rest with such a scene as this before His eyes." The Millenium even, is God's last work day, not His rest, but a transition state, although it may be true that as even before that comes, and as soon as the saints are taken up to Heaven, the *Heavenly places* are set in order, and Satan cast out. (see Rev. xii.) His rest may be said to have begun there.

But it is God's rest, that we who believe enter. It is not said "*have entered*," but "*do enter*," and "let us *labour* therefore to enter into that rest," shewing it is a future thing,

because, as the same chapter tells us, "he that *is* entered into His rest has ceased from his own works, as God did from His." Now that is not so assuredly while we are "labouring" to enter in. No doubt there is a present rest, *while* labouring such as the LORD speaks of where He says, that in taking His easy yoke and light burden, we shall find rest for our souls, but that is quite another thing,—a rest *in* labouring, not from labour, the rest of a broken will and a heart that sees God upon the throne, and our Father.

No doubt too there is a rest of conscience in the knowledge that the blood of JESUS has answered for us as to our sins before God; but an apostle could not tell us as Christians to labour to enter into *that*. Nor is that *God's* rest. But this is one we are to share with Him when the sun that has now made Him a worker, shall be gone from off the scene into which it has intruded, and a new creation satisfy for ever the heart of its Creator. To that we press forward with joy and hope.

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### "FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP."

THE love of God is the source from which redemption flows. The perfect sacrifice of CHRIST is the channel through which it flows. Faith wrought in the soul by the HOLY SPIRIT, is the power of enjoyment; and everlasting life, known and experienced, *now*, is the result. (*John* iii, 16.)

THE Gospel is not producing a happy world, or spreading out a garden of Eden. It proposes no such thing, but to take *out* of the world a people, a Heavenly people, for CHRIST. But the presence of the LORD will make a happy world by and bye, when that presence can righteously return unto it.

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### POETRY.

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#### "THE END IS NEAR."

Clouds of darkness gathering o'er us,  
 Awful tidings with them bear;  
 Scenes of misery spread before us—  
 Dearth, and pestilence, and war;  
 All in one loud, piercing chorus,  
 Tell us that *the end is near*.

Hearts of men within them failing,  
 For the coming woes they fear;

All their efforts unavailing—  
 No propitious signs appear ;  
 Sin increasing—crime prevailing,  
 Tell us that *the end is near*.

Selfishness in all abounding ;  
 Gold the idol everywhere,  
 Worshipp'd by a host, confounding  
 Gold for all that's good or fair ;  
 Crowds the mammon god surrounding,  
 Tell us that *the end is near*.

Formal godliness increasing,  
 Power denied, and forms held dear ;  
 CHRIST and fashion coalescing,  
 Forming now the character :  
 Rites so popular and pleasing,  
 Tell us that *the end is near*.

Lawlessness so vastly spreading,  
 Void of Reverence, awe, or fear ;  
 Sacred things beneath it treading,  
 Stamp'd with God's own signature ;  
 Never once His vengeance dreading—  
 Tell us that *the end is near*.

War, that heaviest curse of nations,  
 Running on its dread career ;  
 While the mass its desolations  
 Listless, or applauding, hear ;  
 War, with its abominations,  
 Tell us that *the end is near*.

Saints of GOD, all evil hating,  
 Faithful to the name they bear ;  
 For their coming SAVIOUR waiting,  
 To be caught up in the air,  
 Hence their rest and blessing dating,  
 Tell us that *the end is near*.

*Sinner*, wouldst thou in the glory  
 Of that " cloudless morning " share ?  
 Wouldst thou have *this* hope before thee ?  
 Wear the crown saints then will wear ?  
 O believe redemption's story ;  
 Look to CHRIST ! *the end is near !*

Let not earth, thy thoughts engrossing,  
 Cheat thee of that portion fair !  
 Look to CHRIST ! on *Him* reposing,  
 Thou shalt happy be, nor fear !  
 Sinner, haste ! the day is closing ;  
 Look to CHRIST ! *the end is near !*

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