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**REFLECTIONS**

**SUBMITTED**

**IN THE WAY OF HELP**

**TO THE**

**ATTENTIVE READER**

**OF**

**THE SCRIPTURES.**

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**LONDON :**  
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**FACING GRAY'S INN LANE.**

**MDCCKLVIII.**

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The only prefatory notice I think well should accompany these Reflections, is to say, that with obligations more than I can easily distinguish, to the teaching of others, I alone am responsible for their substance, as well as for the form in which they appear.

May the Lord graciously use them for blessing.

D. WALTHER.



## REFLECTIONS.

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I. To desire to climb to the understanding of God, is to take our place among the speculative philosophers of the heathen.

God, in grace to a dead world, *came down* to us. *There was a man sent from God*—He bore witness of the Light that was in the world He had made, and was unowned by it.

It is this letting down of Himself to earth—a depth and height that reduces to equal insignificance the different measures of men's minds—that so marks the Gospel as a true revelation from God.

II. When I say, *My God*, I speak that which is not the result of my discovering or choosing Him—but of His having looked upon me.

III. The revelation of Himself to me sets me in a relation, not merely of His creature, and as such required to glorify Him—but of one

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called to walk before Him in a definite responsibility, as Abraham.

Abraham was in a more especial sense, Father of the Faithful, as walking by faith in what was revealed to him of God's purposes in *resurrection* power.—See Gen. xii. 7, 8, xiii. 15, xiv. 23, xv. 5, xvii., xxii., and Heb. xi. 8, 19.

IV. In the bosom of God there is eternal truth, in reference to which His acts are done, and this truth in connection with His only begotten Son—the declarer of Him,—so that to see the Son, is to see the Father.

V. John bare witness of Him, that He was the Lamb of God—a title we are not to pass as familiar, but to meditate upon, as meeting our deep necessity. “Great is the mystery of Godliness”

The Apostle Peter writes to those redeemed by the PRECIOUS blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish. Revelation shews us the same one in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and of the elders—isolate in glory. We have such expressions as the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple;—the glory of God did lighten the city, and the Lamb is the light thereof;—and again, the throne of God and of the Lamb.

If the scriptures of truth form our minds, the

LAMB will stand in our thoughts as the great centre of the divine working. So also in meditating on the things of God we quickly arrive at that Blood which is the stay of our hearts, and as Ithuriel's spear to a false philosophy intruding into the sphere of Godliness.

VI. The Lamb is God's beginning.—In calling out a nation—or in preaching a peace already made, under this dispensation—it is the Lord's Passover. Calling precedes obedience—*Peace* precedes growth in the knowledge of God.

Man would hide his *need*, and take up with knowledge that would do him no good, that he may drown the feeling of a need that is without hope. Yet so real is that need, that when God shines through, every conscience must I suppose confess it. The Apostle, describing his preaching, does not labour to prove that man needs to be reconciled, but at once prays "*be ye reconciled.*"

A will mightier than ours mingles with all, and controls all that happens—crossing *our* wills a thousand times. Do we know it to be our friend?

The one whose right it is that His creatures should glorify Him, does He see them "consenting" and "taking pleasure" in a world that "does not like to retain Him in its knowledge?"—If this be so, who will doubt they are unreconciled?

VII. It has been already observed that there is great and eternal truth in the bosom of God.

It is plainly possible for God to act with a reference to such great truth under all His dispensations from the very beginning. He gives grace to receive and use the *fuller* revelation of a later time; but He may have given grace, and the very same grace as now receives and uses Christ, to those who had only a *preparatory* teaching.—In this sense I understand that Israel “drank of the rock, Christ,” and Moses “esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.”—The grace of dependance going on in faith,—and the grace of willingness to suffer affliction with God’s people, was the same.

VIII. The teaching to one under a former dispensation would necessarily be formed and founded on the things revealed to him: the guidance and suasion would be very different from that employed with those to whom it was said “*all things that I have heard of my Father I have told you:*” (the whole *communicable* truth; the things the Son had heard out of the “sounding” of His Father’s bosom toward those to whom, and for whom, He gave him). The guidance to the saints of old would be very different. And yet those who were of *faith*, children of *believing* Abraham, would find in GOD Himself the One on whom to

cast themselves. Patriarchal revelations, statutes and ordinances, would not be disowned; but their cry would be, "God be *merciful* to me a sinner." They would pass beyond the law, to the meditation on the Divine character intimated by its shadows, and perhaps not less by its deficiencies. The happy saints of earlier dispensations went not knowing whither, confessing themselves strangers and pilgrims; persuaded by promises; giving up *now* that they might receive hereafter; not considering the present, but living in the power of future things. Truly they deserve a whole chapter; for they did this, not knowing half what is told to us by the Spirit of the work and grace of Christ.

Hebrews xi. shews by various examples that *Faith* is necessary in order to please God. To ver. 13 we have the habitual action of faith—*these all died in faith*.—After this we have particular actings of faith recorded.—Accordingly Abraham has a double place as an example of the *life* of faith and of a memorable *acting* in faith: ver. 17. Rahab *acted* in faith of a state of things "not seen as yet," when the walls of Jericho should have fallen:—so Samson, Jephtha, and others, on signal occasions. The third verse should, I think, be read thus:—"Through faith we understand that the dispensations were so framed by the divine decree, that the things which faith has before it are not made of things appearing to sense,"—or

to that effect. This is a point for scholars. I do not think that Abel had much understanding of "the *lamb*" that was to come:—but he did *not* do as Cain had done (probably in his presence)—take of the fruit of his own works, and of the ground under the curse.—"Having no confidence" in these, he probably waited on God, and so may have been by Him led to offer a something that God had given, and which expressed a purpose in the Divine counsels.

IX. I recur to my first paragraph.—Admitting *that*,—the wisdom of the wise is valueless, as a help to the understanding God. Let us remember this, if we would be preserved from our own sparks.

If religion were the speculation of the human intellect, the pleading of Augustine,\* for compassion toward heretics, would be more in place—but we see in 1 Cor. how Paul deals with human wisdom in the sphere of divine things.

\* *Illi in vos sæviant qui nesciunt cum quo labore verum inveniatur, et quam difficile caveantur errores; qui nesciunt cum quanta difficultate sanetur oculus interioris hominis; qui nesciunt quibus suspiriis et gemitibus fiat ut ex quantulatunque parte possit intelligi Deus. Let those be wroth with you who know not by what effort truth is found, and how hard it is to avoid error—who know not the difficulty of cleansing the eye of the inner man, and how by aspirations and groans we come, even in a little measure, to understand God.*

X. We have to do with God — *therefore* simplicity is true wisdom. The activity of a mind that mixes its own\* with what it receives is direct against wisdom.

XI. And this will warrant our maintaining, in firmness of humility, a marked distinction between truth of doctrine, simply conveyed in the words of God, and any inference or conclusion that to us may seem to follow from it.

An inference cannot be separated from the weakness of the inferring judgment.

XII. Some might seek on this ground to invalidate precious truth. This should be watched against. If it be truth that God has judged needful for our soul's comfort, I expect it will be found, not merely as inference, but so manifestly and plainly involved in the word, as to be in substance distinctly presented ; although the terms in which it is established among Christians may be more or less of man, *e. g.* the personality of the Spirit, clearly seen in John xvi. 7, Acts v. 3. 4, xiii. 2, &c., &c., as also in a passage in the Old Testament not often referred to,—Isa. xlvi. 16. Personality is seen in such expressions as “another Comforter,”

\* John lived to see something of this intruding itself ; accordingly both his gospel and his epistles shew at their very opening how light comes to the believer. It is “that which we have seen, and heard, and handled.”

“sent,” &c., &c. So from the language of the affections—“this is my *Beloved Son*,” &c.

XIII. Fellowship is “with the Father and with the Son”—and it is by the Spirit—the other Comforter—reminding of Jesus—ruling—separating and sending and dividing to each one according to His will.

XIV. The plain words of God, simply and plainly accepted, would satisfy me. I would trust God with the hearts of those who are His children “by faith in Jesus”—and in lowliness subject to His love and truth.

XV. So of the Trinity.

“Hear, O Israel; the Lord thy God is One Lord!” No opening of the divine mystery can be inconsistent with this—though the Only begotten *come forth* from the bosom of the Father, to do the Father’s will,—and though the Father and the Son *send* the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus, as the witness of Jesus, to dwell amongst believers, and lead *in recognition* of the Church; as in Acts x. and xi. 15.

The word *Trinity* appears to be a perfectly unobjectionable expression of a Triune existence, counsel and action—Undeveloped as long as a gross Polytheism was at hand to abuse it, it is

opened, as the work of *proving, saving and sanctifying* is carried forward. Is it less real because thus progressively opened?

It costs nothing to allow that some expressions among Christians on these high mysteries may be unwarranted by scripture, and therefore had better be avoided.

XVI. Especially should we watch against such terms as convey a difference of counsel or of divine affection, *e.g.* of love in the Father and the Son.—

But even this is not so dry and profitless as the thought of one—and he a respectable tradesman—who being spoken to concerning the gospel, answered that his religion was, that “there is Father, Son and Holy Ghost—three persons,” and there stopped.—Scripture has no such barren doctrine for hearts untouched.

XVII. The saving word of *grace* is for the *Lost*—the consciously lost—the Lord opening their hearts. The Physician may attract by His gracious words, but his *virtue* goeth out to a felt need.

XVIII. So of all scripture—the *mere* reader cannot understand:—for it so answers *need*, that desires conscious of the need are necessary to the *understanding* of the communications.—We must

*appropriate* in order to use.—It is the “*man of God*” who is “furnished.” I cannot understand scripture without the comment of my own heart’s need; and my heart can only be understood by the candle of the divine word.

XIX. To an instructed Christian what a poor blind Muse is History, when, passing beyond the chronicling of facts, it presumes to judge moral character apart from the divine statements concerning the heart,

XX. And do we ever get quite *clear* of such misjudging, even when we are brought into the church of God? I should doubt it,—or it would be but in a few rare instances. Let us remember, then, how greatly our minds are hindered by the remaining power of the natural mind from gathering the full light and instruction of the word.

XXI. But worse than this is true.—The state of feeling, belonging to the alienated and unreconciled *heart* of man, is not so far from us as the east is from the west, although the *sins* are so, *through mercy*

XXII. Further :—the allowance of any known sin in our walk—the omitting to judge it—and also failure to abound in virtue, knowledge, temper-

ance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity—brings back the *cloud*, though not the condemnation ; and the cloud affects our capacity of understanding the word.

XXIII. I have sometimes thought that all the misconstructions of scripture that have ever gained injurious footing among Christians might, by wisdom of the Spirit, be traced to some sort of unjudged evil in the heritage:—*i. e.* the thoughts of the hearts of God's people.

XXIV. But in this paper I intend only to offer a few observations that may be helpful within a certain range of reading and reflection, nearly concerning the health and wellbeing of souls. Above all, desiring to guard the *Gospel*—by which I mean the message of *Glad tidings*.

XXV. In one sense, all the communings of God with man over the *Mercy Seat* are *Gospel* to every one who is drawn to take his true place before Him.

So I might say all is peace, revival and holy joy to the inconstant Saint, who *by faith* uses his access into the presence of the “God of all grace.” It is our mistake to take our stand too high—“He giveth grace to the *humble*.”

XXVI. Let us look at this:—we are told no

one has seen God at any time—the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, hath been the declarer and unfolders: and His *glory*—the glory as of “the only begotten of the Father,”—is full of Grace and Truth.

It seems essential to this glory that it should be of virtue to bless all who take their true place before it. I say their *true* place, for it is grace and *Truth*. Hence the necessity — if blessing is to reach them — that they should take the *place* wherein they are seen in the divine mind.

*Out* of that place, they seem not to be of the number comprised under that word (or rather principle) “whosoever shall *call* upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved;” for out of that place they are holding to some other confidence, whatever it may be.

We may remark on the “*leaving all*,” for the sake of following the Lord, in the gospels, which it would be well to remember more in our speaking concerning faith.

XXVII. To be saved *by the Lord*, there must be *no confidence* in the flesh.—“All *flesh* is grass.” True, there may be many different kinds of deliverances termed in scripture salvation.

XXVIII. But plainly the proper sense of the

word *salvation* among Christians is deliverance from condemnation through *belief of the Gospel*. The Lord added the *saved ones*, daily, to the Church. And they are saved to the glory of His *grace*. Wherever the testimony of *grace* comes, I do not doubt a power at hand to enable the hearers to receive it. If it can be shewn by the word that under a future dispensation any will cast themselves on *grace* in the Lord, such in a true sense may be *saved*; but *now* is the accepted time—*now* is the day of salvation. It appears altogether unwarranted to put forth such a thought as that any can be saved, in the ordinary and proper sense of the word, who, throughout this life, reject the gospel. I should count it a teaching in manifest contradiction with its spirit.

At the same time I am willing to wait upon the minds of any in whom this subject may be involved in difficulty. There may be states of minds little instructed, in which such speculations might rest for a while and be afterwards overcome. I would treat it as a dangerous speculation. If presented as *teaching* in the church, I would ask, not merely for its scripture warrant, (which might let in a quantity of misapplied scripture,\*) but for a commission in the word *authorizing* any to *teach* it.

\* This is especially the case with the texts put forward in favour of universal Salvation: and which, almost all, have reference to the divine purpose to restore *Israel*, after

As none could be produced, I would shew it the door, or eject it from the church. I would not refuse a hearing by those competent, or who, before God and in humility, deemed themselves competent to investigate it. And if found really among "things revealed," let all have it, for *all is theirs*.

But this respect, at least, is due to the all-but unanimous judgment of christians against it; and most reasonable, because of its tendency to invalidate, by general and vague statements, a simple inference from numerous very plain texts. I admit that in shewing it the door I should not be pronouncing on its *truth*; but on its not being part of the message to which the Church is to bear witness.

XXIX. I remark that *formal* doctrine seems at no time to have been God's way. Man's pretension to propound it is surely presumptuous. The knowledge good for us is that which is brought out to meet need; — relative knowledge, therefore — to "*know as we are known*." It would little advantage us to know how God made the worlds,—I need to know how He can justify a *sinner*. To know how He made the worlds is one great aim of science—one of the many ways of dis-

*all their correction* in judgment, to *blessing as a nation*. Observe that such passages as Rev. v. 13 extend only to the range of blessing.

sipating a short life, of which the responsibility extends to eternity.—The Saxon chief's speech, on the arrival of the Christian missionaries, was surely wiser.—The word of God speaks to and of those to whom it has come: it tells us of others only that all are *guilty*.

XXX. As to *precept*, we know there was once a time when it was peculiarly *formal* and *exact*.

Not so however in the Gospels and Epistles to the Church:—THERE we feel in presence of a spiritual instruction—comprehensive—but indefinite, and to be applied by a child's instinct everywhere supposed as the rule of the new creature. I may add, further on, some examples of the misconstructions of scripture resulting from a forgetfulness of this.

XXXI. And here I would remark, that I expect no steady progress in the understanding of the word in a soul that has not received or does not firmly hold the verbal inspiration of scripture.—In a tract entitled "A word on the Plenary Inspiration of Scripture," may be seen an argument on this important subject, with an answer to some objections, such as that sometimes grounded on 1 Cor. vii. 12.

XXXII. There are certain dispensational cha-

racters attaching to the different periods of Divine revelation, which we arrive at through a close attention to the word, and which are confirmed abundantly by the use and advantage derived from a regard to them. There is interesting evidence that dispensational differences, such as only an advanced student would rightly value, had not escaped the observation of here and there a commentator of former ages.\*

The crowd of interpreters have disregarded all this. Indeed, Christians have allowed themselves to deal with Scripture as men deal with Shakspeare and quote whatever serves their purpose.

Thus, from an early period, prophecies, that we now acknowledge to belong primarily to Israel, have been claimed as relating to the Church.

Of late years many have been brought to see and acknowledge this, and *now* they are rewarded by being taught to enter into and enjoy all the *sweetness* of such prophecies that may suit their own portion and hopes as possessors and expectants of a *heavenly* kingdom. The *order* of our

\* See Fabri Stapulensis Comm. in Evang. in *Matt.* xxi. 5. —*folio*, 1526.—“per ea quæ tunc gesta sunt intelligitur mysterium, solutio scilicet duorum populorum. Per asinam quæ sub jugo erat Judaicus populus designatur qui sub jugo legis erat. Per pullum, qui sub jugo non erat, populus gentium qui nullâ lege Dei tenebantur sed Idololatriâ; sed uterque solvitur,” &c. Observe, the mention of *the ass* and *her colt* is found in *Matthew* only.

learning is a point in which our true progress is intimately concerned.

In one sense all the Divine Dispensations *try man*. In another sense it is a character belonging exclusively to the *Law of commandments*. Wherever God is seen acting *beyond* this law of commandments,—as in the *Gospels*; or, when going out *beyond Israel*—as in the case of Naaman the Syrian; or in the beautiful instance of the *Syro-phenician* woman,—in manifestation of what is *in Him* for the creature, we find the greatest difference.

Of course there is need of a sound mind to watch against the tendency to multiply distinctions of this sort.

XXXIII. Obedience is due to God—and He never relinquishes His title to it.

Man tried without law and under law is declared guilty—“there is no difference”—God is acting in *grace*—“with God *nothing shall be impossible*”—and obedience *now* is the *Obedience of faith*.—By *grace* are ye saved—*through faith*—and that (*i.e.* salvation) not of yourselves; it is His gift.

XXXIV. We read thy *faith* hath saved thee—not thy faith as a thing *in thee* or *of thee*—but the conviction that there was *nothing in or of thee*

*that could save thee* was given thee that thou mightst *cry out* after Him who could save:—that sense and real cry was *faith*.

XXXV. “Justified by faith” marks merely the channel or instrument of communication of the blessing.

“Justified by his *blood*” goes nearer to the power of it—the faith is in his blood: “*precious*” is the word chosen of the Spirit, when speaking of this.

XXXVI. *Faith* does not begin until we pass beyond and out of *self*. “*Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace;*” is a most precious text:—for any thought concerning faith which darkens the pure and absolute *graciousness* of justification is therein plainly condemned.

Again it is “that the *promise* might be *sure*.”

XXXVII. There is a continuous sense in which words express the habit of a soul as well as that sense which serves to express a first action.

*Faith* is used in both senses.—John wrote to those who *believed* that they *might believe*, &c.

XXXVIII. We hold many—or even *all* the blessings we *enjoy*—by FAITH. “Kept *through faith* unto Salvation.”

XXXIX. That is a gracious word which tells us that through Him "we have access by *faith* into this *grace* wherein we stand." It will serve us when feeling and joy are dry. If *access* is by *faith* it is *not* by happy feelings. Standing in *grace* we may *ask* for these.

XL. "Increase our *faith*" gets something like a rebuke.—Observe the *Greek* word—it means give us a further gift of *faith*—*add to it*—The answer shews the law of *growth in exercise of what is . . .* "if ye had *faith* as a grain of *mustard seed*." &c.

XLI. *Saving faith* is that which receives and believes the love of God—"we says John have known and believed the love that God hath to us"—"Hereby perceive we the love" &c. &c.

XLII. But the love of God is sometimes described by John in words that leave us in doubt whether God's love to us, or ours to God, is intended. Is it because the measure in which the former shines in, and is *really* received in our hearts, is the very measure, and in *breadth* and *depth* exactly *correspondent* with that our hearts render to Him who first loved us? It is even (may I not say it?) the same thing. Love *really received* being (in its aspect Godward) *love to Him*. How needful then that we should *think*

*much* of His love to us in the gift and death of Christ.

XLIII. Often, the object of our Enemy is served by a change in the current meaning of words—or the association with words, of thoughts coming out of our evil hearts.

“*Intercession*” Heb. vii. 25, does not, I think, at all imply need of *reconciliation*—but, in a world hateful and hating one another,—that thought is very generally connected with it. Romans viii. 38 to 39 is very strong to this.

Is it not a mediation of asking and obtaining?—a priesthood after the order of Melchizedec, one who blesses—(nothing of making peace) He was king of peace—Neither does our Priest glorify himself—but He that said *Thou art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Set by God at His right hand—we would not think of Christ’s advocacy as any doubtful advocacy, nor of his priesthood, as passing to others—but as of power to save evermore—seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us—And note—that where we read of “making reconciliation for the sins of the people” the context leads to the conclusion, that what is in the mind of the Spirit is the *sympathy* that qualifies for *applying* the grace of forgiveness.

Sit thou at my right hand *until* I make, &c. Matt. xxii., Mark xii., Luke xx., may be noticed,

as quoted by the Lord Jesus, as shewing the two advents, and also this priesthood. First, it indicates two comings: at the *first*, rejection;—followed by a period during which his enemies are not subdued, while He is a priest; and this terminating in the putting of His enemies under His feet, at what is commonly called the *second* advent. It parts in two distinct spheres, sufferings and glories which should follow; and interposes between them a sort of *suspended triumph*, in the rest and security of a finished work,—“*sit thou\* at My right hand.*” May I not add, that into this rest of soul, every believer is introduced; and, consistently with it, is said to be “seated together with Christ” in the heavenlies.

Our Lord’s quotation of the 110th Psalm, (to which we read not that the Jews had anything to object,) is most valuable as a sample of the structure of the inspired word,—in which a single word, scarce noticed by the reader, unlocks a whole range of the divine actings.

XLV. Again in Luke xxiv. — “Ought not Christ to have suffered, and to enter into *his* glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets

\* *Until* is used in Daniel, where it is said he continued until the *first* year of Cyrus—and again in the passage “until he see his desire upon his enemies”—so as in no way to imply expiration at that time.

he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning *himself*." See also ver. 44 to 47. All are to be considered :—the understanding opened, perceives what "behoved *Christ* and "his glory."

The "*sufferings* of Christ and the glories that should follow," "thus it *behoved* Him to suffer, and to enter into *His* glory,"—the glory of God's grace!

But then we have elsewhere such words as "partakers of the sufferings of Christ," coupled with "the glory that shall be revealed." 1 Pet. iv. 13. This word *partakers*, shews that the sufferings here referred to, are not those on the *cross* "for us," but the "contradiction of sinners,"—the sufferings in which he learned obedience; and which were to be expected in such a world as this. He was God's holy one; a Light, from which unrenewed man turned; holy and gracious in an evil and self-righteous world. We may think what would belong to perfect love, knowing how to estimate the state of those to whom He came, bearing about Grace, and finding in every heart\* the pride that in indifference or in anger refused the blessing. Of this sort was that *contradiction* of sinners against *Himself*.

When by the same holy affection, and the like rejection, we get into suffering, such would be, as I judge, a partaking of Christ's sufferings; suffer-

\* "He knew what was in man."

ing in communion with God, where Christ, if present, would suffer, and as "in us" does suffer:—so suffering with Him as to be glorified together: "*now* is the Son of man *glorified*" was a word when Judas went out. So I understand that the spirit of Christ in the Prophets testified, and in one sense suffered, through the resistance of the Spirit. All that the Prophets foreshewed of Grace, was of Christ, and it was *suffering* and *glory*.

XLVI. The fact is before us—men are "far gone" from holiness. The remedy is in turning *to the Lord*; whether we take the call to the nations (Acts xxvi.), or the hope of Israel. (2 Cor. iii.) In this there must be some *suffering*.

That your *faith* and *hope* might be in God, marks the need of *reconciliation*, or of this turning to Him.

XLVII. "There is one Mediator\* between God and man, the *man* Christ Jesus." I think I once saw this last text on the front of an Unitarian chapel. But "*between God and man*," if applied to the Lord's person, is as much against the thought of the simple *humanity* of Jesus, as it is against simple *Deity*. And that word *man* is

\* A mediator does neither exclude, nor necessarily suppose the making two parties "at one:"—it may be a mediation of conveyance of grace already ours—as has been already said.

interposed, "*the man Christ Jesus*"—thus presenting His human nature,—may be added to assure our hearts, as *mere men*, of the sympathy of a Mediator, who, *as man*, is touched with the feeling of our infirmity. And does not the interposing of that word, "*the man Christ Jesus*," imply the presence of another nature.

XLVIII. Theologians distinguish Sin—as *original*, and *actual*; the first the parent of the latter.

It has struck me that the Sin *in the nature*, is as the quality of the clay, which, being raised up, shews its hardness. The Potter does it no wrong, by the sovereign grace that makes certain vessels of the same lump unto honor.

XLIX. To set any of such a race under a covenant of obedience, to walk before God, or to keep His ordinances, seems to me to *presuppose* the act of superseding the hindrance of *Original* sin.

I think the having respect to, and accepting the offerings of the patriarchs—also the special call of Abraham, and likewise the bringing of Israel out of Egypt, to place it in the land under conditions of covenant and promise, was just this setting aside of the distancing effect of Sin in the nature.

And I think Job, who was "upright and eschewed evil," as being *not* of the nation so brought and "set nigh," took a ground he had no right to take when he defended his *actions*, and got right only when he "abhorred himself." I think I keep the distinction between sin *indwelling* and *active*, by resting my thought on that word *self*, last quoted.

I remark also the peculiar promise to Israel, in Ezekiel xx. 41, xliii. 27; "there will I accept *you*," not your offerings, but something much beyond, and answerable (only in connection with Jerusalem) to a believer's *acceptance* in the Church.

L. There is so much, most real for reflection, and yet too unfashioned for teaching, that a little vagueness in the utterance of these thoughts may be excused.

LI. I remark the change from "*let out*" to "*give*" his *vineyard*, as we trace it in the parable of the vineyard found in three of the Gospels. How unnoticed is this distinction, yet how well worth observing.\*

\* See how wonderfully there is interposed and mixed up with this parable, the reference to "the stone" which Israel rejected and stumbled at:—Comp. Romans ix. 32. There was a teaching on the surface without this. So in John xiii., the 16th verse was on the surface,—all might receive it. The 10th was probably not understood when the words

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LII. But *fruits* are still looked to;—they are indeed to be the fruits of a *given* vineyard: and fruits may be reviewed and be subjects of judgment hereafter. “We shall all stand before the *bema* of Christ and receive the things done in the body, whether they be good or evil.” (I think of what at school we call *good* or *bad marks*.) Notice the word *κομίζω*: it is the same as is found in Peter, “*receiving* the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls;” an act of the mind appropriating to itself. The believer *personally* shall not come into condemnation or judgment:—he *hath* everlasting life: but I cannot deny a passing in review of his works, good or bad. The parables of judgment or award found in the Gospels, may be considered in this light. I submit this to the opinion of others.

LIII. What is set in privilege is trained and educated in responsibility. Read Psalm lxxx., or Isaiah v., and John xv. “Under law to Christ,” may be the happy form of it, but the principle is there.

LIV. The fig tree seems a figure of the Jewish *outward* order.

LV. But in reference to *fruits*, I know not were spoken, nor until brought to remembrance by the Spirit (John xiv. 26).

where we are cast on them for evidence of life. I suspect the tendency to look to them as evidence. We see so little of what meets the eye of God, that much fruit of abiding in Jesus may be borne, without our seeing anything. The allowing questions to be brought against the life in our souls on such grounds, is part of the confusion wherein the evil one triumphs—the confounding of *gospel* with *responsibility*. By fruits of *doctrine* at variance with the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, we know the *Teachers* or Prophets, not life in the Believer. “By this shall all men know that ye are my *disciples*, that ye have love one to another;” rather marks *general character*, than guides to the discernment of life in an individual.

LVI. Thus while holding that God’s work of justification of the sinner is well and perfectly done, we may make room for all the responsibilities of this grace, and not deny a judgment upon works.

LVII. I have some indistinct thoughts on the judgments appearing in the Gospels. Thus in Luke xix, in the pound left alike to all the servants to occupy withal, among those who *hated* the nobleman gone to receive kingly authority and return, I think I see how they who are *Christ’s*, take as it were, “the king’s money” in

receiving the Gospel; and are found to differ in fidelity and testimony for him during his rejection, and are promoted to *different stations* in the kingdom at his return. The *pound* "works out" or "makes" five or two more. It is as the Gospel of *peace with the King expectant*, it "gives light," and works out in extension of *allegiance* to him. The servant who laid up his pound in a napkin, is visited with a sentence of deprivation;—but, apparently, this is quite distinct from the destruction of those who would not have the king expectant to reign over them, in ver. 27.

In Matthew we seem in presence of a different truth; a dividing by their Lord of his own goods among his "own" servants, "according to their ability." The faithful *all gain as much more*, and are alike introduced into their Lord's joy. The goods were their *Lord's* goods, and their entrance is into *his* joy; there is no difference of blessing. As different branches in "the true vine," that which was committed to them was *doubled in service*. As branches they were "clean" (purged) by the word; the sap might flow in: and God had associated them in such fellowship with His own—"working in them to will and to do,"—that they could say, "*I have gained*;" while as acknowledging it was His working in them, they would also say, "*we are unprofitable*." "It is *not we*, but Christ" (Compare John xv. 4). But to be,

and to feel that we are unprofitable, because not the spring or authors of our own fruit, is very different from being unprofitable by reason of wickedness, and *sloth*, and hard thoughts.

In the parable, "*outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth*," is the lot of the wicked and slothful unprofitable servant. But I notice, for caution, that this is also the sentence on him who had not on the *wedding garment*. May not the various *judgments* shew various *trials*? May there not be reserved for one and the same individual, trial of his *faith*, of *allegiance*, of *fruitfulness*, of *love*, &c.?

LVIII. Let the heart be well established in the privilege of the Grace wherein it is set, and it is astonishing how we shall be admitted to understand the severe and bitter reprehensions, the jealous and strong discipline in judgment, and correction of evil, found in the place of privilege.

See the consequence of privilege of standing, in the lxxxth Psalm, in Isaiah v.; add the striking comment of Ezek. xv.: it may help in the understanding of the strong expressions of John xv. The 6th verse of the xvth of John, is seen to be a description of the *branches* to which comparison is made. The vine is *manifestation*. "Nigh unto cursing," whose end is to be burned (Heb. vi.); strongly pictures a worthless and arid land.

LIX. Faith—Faith will give its place to *all* the truth. Without assured Faith we shall not be able to hold our book steadily—we shall not comprehend the Shepherd's voice—but “by FAITH we *understand.*”

LX. I often quote a brother's word—“*By faith we understand, not by understanding we believe.*” Understanding is *after* and *by* faith.

LXI. *Faith* may vary in its subjects—not in its object. I doubt not the need to instruct and confirm man's faith in God's *providence* was one main reason for the length of the history of Joseph extending as it does through so many chapters. Events of great political importance are very briefly told. It is that which unlocks the divine teaching which the Spirit dwells on, as to us most important.

LXII. Nothing more rectifies our notions of this world's confusions, than to contemplate Tyre and Nebuchadnezzar and Egypt as shewn in Ezekiel. Tyre exults in the chastening of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar is sent against her:—he serves against Tyre but has no wages—Egypt has been a broken reed to Israel's foolish trust,—therefore Egypt is given to Nebuchadnezzar as his wages for the service he did against Tyre. How little did

Tyre or the king of Egypt or Nebuchadnezzar know the power that moved them !

LXIII. But Israel was the "*child.*" (Hosea xii.) Corrective judgments were tokens and assurances of the faithfulness of the Lord, and one form of acting of His love. Hence the roll written with woes came as a sweet joy to the prophet, though God would have him in *sympathy* of the affections know the bitterness of the correction coming upon his people:—"it was *in my mouth* as honey for sweetness."

LXIV. See how Hosea is quoted in Matt. ii. 15.

Perhaps only in *one* passage, Gal. vi. 16, is "Israel" used in reference to, or as comprising the Church. It is so I think in the sense of a thing touched with discovery and sense of *its own weakness* but holding on to the Lord. This I take to be the true instruction of that point of Jacob's history when he gets the name of *Israel* (Gen. xxxii. 25, 26). The *circumcision* are now declared to be those who "worship in the spirit and rejoice in Christ and have *no confidence in the flesh.*" Phil. iii. 3. *Sion* and *Jerusalem* are scarcely, if at all, applied to the Church, usual as it has been with most commentators so to apply them.

The *Red Sea* and deliverance out of Egypt is in 1 Cor. x. compared with *redemption*. "Be ye holy

for I am holy," was said to the redeemed *then*, Lev. xi. 44—as *now* by Peter, ch. i. 16.

The *Jordan* does not make an end of *trial*—but begins the obedience and consequent trial which comes in the knowledge of resurrection.

As long as faith is simple, its victories are easy and beautiful. "*Only be of good courage.*"—"I have overcome:" but it is "every place on which the *sole of thy foot* cometh:"—there is to be the *going forward*,—the *bringing into possession*.

LXV. We seem to have a beautiful acting of this faith in David, scarcely well seated on the throne in a narrow strip of territory, going to recover "*his border*"! to the very Euphrates. Compare 2 Sam. viii. with Ps. lx. and Gen. xv.

The believer can do all things through Christ strengthening him. The greater the requirement the more the strength;—in this sense nothing so encouraging as precept. What is this great thing enjoined on us—then surely strength for it is *at hand*.

In contemplating the saints of God, we must always think and judge of them as of those having the *commandments* and *vows of God* upon them.

LXVI. In certain parts of Scripture, as in Proverbs, &c., it seems rather as if we were called as it were to look with the saint out of the window

and moralize, with the understanding of God in the heart, on the course of a world that very little understands or regards Him. But what a difference in the *inner circle* of those who are exercised in the knowledge of Him—as we find in turning to the Psalms.—

LXVII. Without some spiritual entrance into what *nature is*, and what a new and different thing *God works in us*, we should hardly go on with Him in His dealings with *Saul*. If we fail to see and acknowledge God in the history, we shall be for sparing Agag and making covenant with Benhadad. All is wonderful teaching when considered with the Spirit's openings—without this, who shall understand it? Note how the history in 1 Samuel dwells on the *armour* of Goliath: it states the case for *Faith*—and *easy victory*: (and David does the same). How sincere this teaching! No underrating him that cometh against us. “We wrestle against principalities and powers and wicked spirits”—*therefore* put on the armour *God* (and not Saul) has provided.

LXVIII. Perhaps we shall have reason to think that though Israel in their wanderings in the wilderness came a second time to the same point, they never travelled a second time *on the same line*. However that may have been, is it not true that

we never pass a second time through the *very same experience*?—for the *past* suffices to make the present to differ—something has been *learned* or *unlearned* in the interval. David in 1 Sam. xxvi. seems to learn and practise over again, the grace seen in ch. xxiv.; but his haste in Nabal's case (ch. xxv.) had come between, and hence a difference is discerned, perhaps in the omission of the desire in ver. 12 of chap. xxiv. Ought not our repentings to set us nearer, or—which may be the same thing—in more softness of spirit; according to the principle of that line—“*nearer still* through Jesu's blood.”

LXIX. Was there not a teaching by the Spirit (not the indwelling) in those days, opening and applying the instruction of *facts*?—and so also of the *oracles of the Prophets*. Words seem to have conveyed more or less according to the hearer's faith. Thus the Lord argues from the declaration—“I am the God of Abraham” &c.—God is not the God of the *dead* but of the *living*—a large inference—but such as honors God.

LXX. But what are all ancient oracles—or precious words of promise—the stay of the souls of Patriarchs;—what all the examples of Divine faithfulness—or bright pictures of promised blessing to Israel, with breaks in the clouds

disclosing glory that only *forgiven ones* loving a commandment that brings no condemnation to them, can comprehend;—what are all these in comparison with the daylight clearness of revelation in Jesus: God *in him*—every gracious word and invitation—every act of blessing—a word and invitation of God!

LXXI. Sweet and establishing it is to trace the identity of the Divine character in the previous revelations of God: to see *grace* at one time suggested by the very exactions of law; at another intimated by the rest of *sabbaths*, or half opened through *blood*, and priestly garments with *precious anointing*;—and these things solemnly asserted, enjoined, and—guarded, because having to do with grace—for the very severity is of *grace*.

What was that oil of holy ointment, so solemnly guarded from imitation, in which Aaron was to minister with acceptance. Did it not answer to the oil of gladness with which the Lord's Christ is anointed above, or over his *partakers*? and compare with this the cxxxiii<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, and the Epistle to the Colossians, chap. ii.; and also the lii<sup>rd</sup> of Isaiah, ver. 8, as quoted in Acts viii., Who shall tell his seed [or progeny], for his life is *taken up from the earth*, &c.

LXXII. As to SINS, as one has said, "God's

*beginning* is to *put them away*;" without this we cannot come within the place of His teaching. The word of a full remission makes the Church, for it (the Church) is made, all will allow, by *faith*—He that *believeth* shall be saved, and much more to that effect. Weigh especially Col. ii. 12, 13.

LXXIII. And there is provision made for those who should believe on Jesus through the word of the APOSTLES. For such the Lord himself prayed. (John xvii. 20.) And perhaps for their sakes mainly were those words afterwards spoken to the assembled disciples in John xx.: "*Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained.*" Yet I have no desire to question that a solemn sanction to the *binding and loosing* by a company of believers (the Lord being in their midst), is contained in the Gospel.

Matt. xviii., may be connected with dealing with any sin, though apparently only contemplating the settlement of personal wrongs.

But in John xx., I rather recognize the assurance that the power of the Gospel should be *undiminished*, the joy *undiluted*, by the fact of the message passing through the lips of the poor and despised disciples. The *remission* is certified, as I think, *not*. the *remitters*: and remarkable it is, that in no one instance, do we read of the Apostles acting *officially* in remitting sin—a power claimed

by every parish priest. There is no appearance of any such thing; or that the Apostles, as officially authorised to remit sin, were to be, like conduits of that blessing, *supplemented* by others after the scheme of an Apostolical *succession*. Whence is this tendency to exalt *men*? How our evil mixes in our interpretations where assumption can come in.

LXXIV. Believers in Jesus are God's forgiven ones, called, one here, another there, a "*flock*" rather than a *fold*,—which is a remarkable mistranslation of the word in John x., where a clearing up of the sense gives great liberty to the souls of God's children.

LXXV. The other favorite text that has been wrought into the service of Rome, is Matt. xvi. See on this, a tract entitled, "Rome tested with her own weapon."

LXXVI. The *flock* is composed of sheep who hear and own the Shepherd's voice. Very near his heart, as we see in Matt. xii. 50—it is their character that they "hear" and they "live"—and they also "*keep*" his commandments. And here I may be allowed to notice, that to *keep* his word or precepts seems more truly understood of *observing, choosing, and laying them up in the heart,*

lest we transgress them. The word is used in distinction from the act of *doing*,—to which observing them would naturally lead. See Matt. xxiii., where we read “*observe and do.*”

A reader of John’s Epistle (chap. ii. 3, 4, &c.) may value this remark—which I submit for others’ approval.

LXXVII. We are *in* the house, when we are in Christ by faith. We are in the place of childlike service—“obedient *children.*” The Spirit of bondage and legality is not suited to us. Now many constructions of Scripture are erroneous and perverse for no other reason than that the character of our service is confounded with Jewish obedience.

The Jewish mind was formed by exact observances. A Jew would rightly have looked carefully that the loops, and taches, and curtains, &c., were punctiliously adjusted; and all his steps would have been in the plain prints of precise texts. How different when the Spirit is given to lead in *imitation.*

Do we disparage the word? Far from it—but it gets its place as testing—wherever it speaks—the *heart* by the *ways*, and the *ways* by the *spirit* of the precepts.

For in the obedience of children, the great purposes of the Father, declared in that which is

*general*, must preside over and govern all that is of *particular detail*. So may we not say that “*to do good,*” regulates “*give to every one that asketh*”?

I quite admit it would be an evil abuse of the child's admission to the fellowship of his father's *mind*, to be disposed to please ourselves in neglect of His *precepts*. I defend no such license; but I ask, is there not a drawing nearer in intimacy with the Father's mind, in order that we may obey him more intelligently? A parent leaving his children on a cold day, says, “Care for one another, and keep the windows closed.”—Is there, in a sultry day, no liberty to infringe the *latter* direction that we may all the better comply with the *former*?

I desire to judge none, and would hurry none. There must, I suppose, be those who will not eat of things strangled or with blood—not seeing that the precept was given to those who dwelt in cities where Jews had long been settled (Acts xv. 21), and that the wounding the weak conscience of a brother was the thing forbidden.

James wrote to Christian Jews—and added, in respect to the sick, “let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” Now no harm can result from taking such a text strictly, so long as we see that it is through “the prayer of faith” the sick is raised up.—The oil may express acceptance, and connect with the name of

the Lord. Just so, "he that believeth and is baptized," when contrasted with parallel passages, serves to shew the power in *believing*, and the baptism as merely its *sign*.

"Let not him that eateth *not* judge him that eateth;" is a word we shall often have occasion to cite—for I find such "weak consciences" judging others, much more than themselves;—save in the point they happen to be contending for.

LXXVIII. Again, we learn *spirit*,—the spirit of the precept:—we watch as it were *the eye*. In such texts as *resist not evil*,—*go with him twain*, we gather the lesson of patience under wrong, and of compliance, wherever it may be innocent, with another's will. To make more than this of these and similar precepts, betrays, in my view, a *Jewish* habit of mind, hindering from a free and blessed use of Scripture.

LXXIX. Is it not true that a large number of misconstructions of Scripture come out of some such twist very near the root of our processes of thought? It may be legality,—or a *precision*, savouring of legality.—It is indeed a very large principle, "The children of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the children of the free woman"—which of us can say that, in the full extent of

that word, we have *cast out the bondwoman and her son?*

LXXX. We have known Christians, conscientious after the manner above adverted to, who have pressed the literal compliance with the text, "Salute one another with an holy kiss"—"wash one another's feet," &c.—as if the spirit of the precept were not plainly the thing in the divine purpose:—the manifestation being taken from common custom or local circumstances.

LXXXI. From something of this habit of mind, I once thought that the direction, "a bishop (or elder) (1 Tim. iii., Titus i. 6) must be the husband of one wife," forbade any *unmarried* or *marrying a second wife* taking oversight; but the context would equally render indispensable his having "believing children." I now take what is meant to be, that if he have a wife, he must be irreproachable for truth to her; or, if he have children or believing children, that he rule well his house, having them in subjection.

In 2 Tim. ii. 6, there may be more emphasis in the word "*must*;" but even there, perhaps, it is no more than the highest congruity and fitness.—"The labouring husbandman must or should be partaker of the fruits"—he must *know* the fruits he hopes to raise, he should not be a *novice*.

LXXXII. In the agitation of questions of church order, among those desiring truly to return to the old paths, there is much danger from this habit of mind. Is it not better to drink into the *spirit* of apostolic precepts, than to tread in the *footsteps* of apostolic *example*? Is it quite certain that their action was example to us in our circumstances? Where are we told to walk "even as *they* walked?" Are none of their precepts limited to the then circumstances? But, with due liberty, and as "*obedient children*," there is no danger of imbibing too much of the *spirit* of their directions. How much better would it be to have one heart acknowledging stewardship ("neither said any that the things he possessed were his own") to the great Giver of all things in "readiness to distribute," than to *imitate* the deacons chosen because of murmuring! Not that I doubt that in any large company of believers, diaconal service will be needed. So, it is *ministry* brings the blessing we are apt to expect from *ministers* of a certain pattern.

LXXXIII. In John v. 32—47, I have thought the witness "not of man" was the Holy Spirit's witness, given through the response of the work in the hearts of his hearers to the One who was to finish the works given Him by the Father to finish. *Beside this* ("and") "the Father Himself

had borne witness of Him." I think the context supports this. I do not think it refers to miracles.

LXXXIV. I think the evidence of miracles has been much exaggerated in value, as evidence. They awakened attention; but it has seemed to me that it is to the peculiar character of His miracles the Lord's answer directs the Baptist, "The *blind* receive their sight, the *lame* walk, the *lepers* are cleansed, the *dead* are raised up, and the *poor* have glad tidings proclaimed unto them, and blessed is he who shall not be offended in me." It is a moral picture, that John by the Spirit might rejoice in and say, "now let thy *servant* depart in peace." They were miracles of *Grace*.

As to mere wonder and mighty works, "signs and wonders," are we not cautioned against them? Is not intimation given, that such shall appear in the cause of Darkness.

LXXXV. Some have thought that miracles might be, or had been wrought through the gifting of the Holy Ghost, by persons *not converted* and *not Christians*; I cannot allow such a thought for myself: it would make the Spirit of truth, the adorer of lies.

No doubt, *before* the Spirit began to indwell believers, in virtue of the ascension of Jesus, and according to the promise in John vii., the Spirit had

come upon individuals, and gifted them for special and passing service. In the Baptist, this was "from his mother's womb;" the child leapt at the voice of the mother of the Lord. In the Old Testament scriptures, in the prophet of Samaria, as in the prophecy of Caiaphas in the New, we have examples going to prove that God can use whom He will; the good with *sympathy*, and the bad *without sympathy*, with His purpose.

LXXXVI. The more I think of the subject matter, the more I am convinced the main argument of God is addressed to NEED; a need He makes us to recognise and feel.—When the Scribe *felt* the difficulty of loving God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, he was *not far* from the kingdom. This is an appeal that goes far deeper than the "dazzling fence" of disputers. The conscience is made whole every whit—renewed—or becomes a *new* conscience, tender and sincere; such as the believer, reconciled and made nigh by *the blood* is possessed of.\* Whereas he *was* blind he now sees. He *has* received—for he is con-

\* I notice the word "*this is right*," Eph. vi. 1, as an illustration of an accrediting the *believer's* spiritual conscience. Still more beautiful is the opening of the 6th ch. of 1 Cor.—"*Dare* any of *you*—(*you forgiven ones*)—go to *law* before the unjust. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Set the *very least* to decide a matter between BRETHREN, for surely *peace* is already half made by the yearnings of brotherly love.

scious, like Namaan, of a new *responsibility*. He is forgiven, *for he loveth*. It is a case for that word "*guide me with thine eye.*"

LXXXVII. Before this great argument had its weight with me,—and the Lord knows it, as yet, has not near what it should have,—I was used for many years to occupy myself with pros and cons of infidel and orthodox writers; I believe this reading had in one respect a deeply injurious effect on me, though in a certain way, it has armed me with experience.

LXXXVIII. The learned sceptics of the early part of the eighteenth century who assailed the New Testament quotations from the Old Scriptures, gave me some disturbance twenty years ago. But mark the advantage of approaching such questions when the soul is settled in the answer to need.—I now see the very obscurity of the principle on which such quotations are made, as a field of discovery that is here and there opening in illustration of divine foreknowledge, such as no ingenuity of accommodation, (such as certain sceptics have imagined,) could or would have adapted itself to.

The shafts of assailants are worth gathering up, and very commonly indicate some field of instruction.

To those who are moderately instructed in

Scripture I need scarcely instance such difficulties as are felt in—

Luke iv., “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor . . . *this day* is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears,”—when reference is had to the prophet, in whose word this is closely coupled with the building the old wastes, and repairing the waste cities, strangers feeding the flocks of Israel, and Israel eating the riches of the Gentiles.

Acts ii., “*This* is that spoken by the prophet Joel;”—whose word speaks not alone of the Spirit poured upon *all* flesh,\* but of their sons and *daughters* prophesying—and of wonders in the heavens and in the earth—the sun turned into darkness, &c., &c.

Isa. liii., “He was cut off from the land of the living. . . . he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.”

Psalms xxii., “They pierced my hands and my feet. . . I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.”

Yet these very passages, as well as other predictions. . . evolving in the very point in which they seem to fail. . . disclose the hidden *parenthetic* treasure—the Church period—the “until.”

But how much remains to be discovered, and

\* I suppose not the flesh of *Priests* alone,—as by the law.

which we add day by day, as the Lord reveals to one or another, and commends to the instructed in the word.

In the quotation in Matt. xxvii. 9, I am directed to *Jeremiah*,—and there in the xviii<sup>th</sup> and xix<sup>th</sup> chapters, I seem to read a foreshewn result, identical in *effect*, with the breach of the Lord's covenant which is seen in *Zechariah* as accepted by the princes of the nation. . . . in valuing Him at thirty pieces of silver.

For in the covenant of the chief priests with Judas, we find this valuing and rejection of Messiah. They rejected him, and after the rejection of that same Name preached in resurrection, we see the Lord doing with his work among that nation as the potter with the vessel that was marred, and making it again *another vessel as seemed good to the potter to make it*. What subject of thought is here.

Of Isaiah vii. and viii., I would state humbly my present thought. I think there is a use made of the conception and growth of *a child* to the age at which it knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, *primarily* to define the *period* within which a deeper grace gave pledge to deliver the land of Judah from the two confederate kings; and—that this pledge was given in terms and with accompaniments *pointing* to a more signal deliverance. A name is declared which name no child of

that period seems to have actually borne. A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel—(God with us). Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good—(i. e., there shall yet be plenty without straitness); for BEFORE he shall come to this capacity, the land, &c., shall be bereft of both her kings. In the viiith chapter is recorded the birth of the child of the prophet, and another, and expressive name is given to him, which as recognising what was there present—in a different and *much lower value*, puts at a distance the mysterious import and value of the Immanuel. But the prophet's child has a name previously written; its meaning is "hasten to take the spoil," and the promise is, before *this* child shall cry "father" and "mother," the strength of Damascus and of Samaria shall be carried away to Assyria. (See the fulfilment of this about two years afterwards, in 2 Kings xvi. 7—9.) I suppose part of the context to relate to the desolation that is to come in through the Assyrians coming to fulfil this proximate deliverance. He (the Lord) shall be for a sanctuary, but for "a stone of stumbling" to Israel; but the prophet and the faithful disciples are to be preserved. "I will look for Him." "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me." Only a few verses further, and an amended translation proposes to read—"but darkness shall not remain where

once was darkness;—as formerly he rendered contemptible the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, so he shall afterwards confer honour upon them; the track by the sea, the region beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.—The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light:” Isa. ix. 1.—Then follow joy—victory—the yoke broken—battle—garments dyed in blood, &c.;—for “to us a *Child* is born,—and his name shall be called Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace.” If we take this as spoken of *Immanuel*, we shall distinguish what refers to the prophet’s child. But the quotation would shew that blending of the *first* with the *second* advent, which so meets the insidious suggestion of the unbeliever; viz., an artful going about to appropriate and accomplish the prophecy.

The subject of the references in the New Testament, to the scriptures of the Old Testament, is deeply interesting.

Israel *nationally* gives us a sort of typical presentment of *Jesus*. Hosea xi. 1, is a singular example of this—“out of Egypt have I called my Son.”

Therefore also . . . . . of those *in whom He dwells* and *whom He leads*. This may serve as a key to *very many* prophecies.

Accordingly . . . Israel’s ways in the wilderness are types of like ways in *believers* now—as we see in 1 Cor. x.

But Jesus is also *Messiah*—the “Beloved” who is to *reign over* those whom He in grace will establish as the *nation*—*Jacob* or *Israel*. This is a principle of connection which I would like should be considered.—

Isaiah xlii. 2, “He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets,” &c.: if taken in connection with the 8th verse of the xlii chapter, would be a scripture applied on this or like principle in Matt. xii. 19. So also Isaiah xlix. verses 3, 6, and 8, as applied in Acts xiii. 47, and 2 Cor. vi. 2.

It is this association of Himself with those in whom He is acting, that I invite attention to. I think I see something like it considering the place and context of the liiird of Isaiah, which would prevent my entirely excluding the thought of a certain *representative* sense,—as of *Messiah* standing for *Israel*,—of even that remarkable prophecy.—the great *personal* subject being fully seen. Comp. Isaiah xlix. 3, noticing the context of ch. liv.;—and the restitution of the *nation*.—“When it shall turn to the Lord, *then* the veil shall be taken away, and “they shall look on Him whom they *have* pierced,” owning Him as the head of their *national blessing*. *His work* owned as their *Passover* opens their blind eyes. *Their nation* will not then be the only thing seen in the liiird and following chapters of the Prophet.

On a like principle of analogy, in the quotation in Matt. ii., the redemption of Jacob—the ransomed of the Lord returning, flowing *to* that *goodness* which is to *satisfy* them,—is in the all-comprehending view of the spirit of prophecy, joined with the “lamentation in Ramah.” Judea was everywhere inscribed with God’s teaching. Rachel dying in the way to Ephrath, had given birth to Benoni, whom his father named Benjamin (son of the right hand). “*There*,” (at Bethlehem) says Jacob, “I buried Rachel;” and *there* was her tomb.—*There* the wrath of Herod involved in his rage against “the young child,” the lives of the young children. In the coasts thereof were weeping and mourning; and the Spirit in recording this, connects with it the words of Jeremy the prophet, and which in his prophecies stand associated with this comfort, “Refrain thy voice from weeping—thy work *shall be rewarded*, and they shall *come again* from the land of the enemy. . . . *Benoni, Benjamin*, are names of significant import. So, *Gilgal—Bethel—Jericho—Jordan*—are names full of teaching. And the Lord hath not done with that land;—more will be written on its page. But what we have, viz., Rachel’s burial place—the young child, “the king of the Jews,” rejected, and his life sought—and the young children of the region round about slain, and as it were lost—these, with the future purposes

declared concerning the land and people,—make a combination, the principle of which, if we are learners, must be accepted as the true principle of interpretation, however, to our minds, abstruse. If, instead of being learners, we try the book of God by principles of *ours*, the result may be easily foreseen. The combination, though now perhaps but little understood, waits only a concise statement of its *principle*. Plainly its range is vast, and our conceptions narrow. As usual, the bearing and application of the divine oracles is unwarrantably limited by our minds. Where the real principle of application is not seen and admitted, the effect is often seen in a dishonest straining of the text to make it fit a more restricted reference in our minds. This is one of the very worst effects of our unwillingness to own our ignorance.

Plainly; Messiah *offering himself and rejected*—and *again to come* when they shall say, “*blessed is he that cometh*”—parts the prophetic testimony into fulfilled and unfulfilled;—in other words, into budding, and full blown fulfilment.

Certain prophecies are cited which are but in part, and up to a certain point, accomplished; yet, as the working upward, or shooting forth of the hidden principle, it is truly said, “*This is that which was spoken.*” (See Joel as cited in Acts ii.) So in ivth of Luke, “*This day is this scripture.*”

fulfilled ;” where we notice the Lord himself suddenly closing the book in the very midst of the prophecy. There are *puttings forth* that stand connected with express predictions marked by circumstances not yet seen. Bearing in mind that these last belong to that future period when the fulfilment will be again taken up which was interrupted by Israel’s unbelief, we shall no longer be perplexed by an imperfect correspondency between the prediction and the event,—but rather note, with the interest becoming learners, the things that wait their fulfilment.

The works of Jesus were a manifestation of His glory ; not a full manifestation, but a rich and blessed one for faith. The moral character of that manifestation that then beamed forth was a main thing,—“Go tell John what” or *what sort* of “things ye have seen.” Again, “himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.” The *character* of his glory was asserted in appropriating the prophecy,—though that character was not taken up in power. Again, “My house shall be called the house of prayer” or, of asking ; and ye are selling the *poor man’s offering* of doves. Of such glances at budding fulfilments I should take the various quotations in the New Testament, of Zechariah ix. 9, Isaiah ix. 1, xl. 1—11, xlii., &c.—to be instances. How remarkably in the quotation from Psalm viii., “Out of the mouth of babes and

sucklings Thou hast perfected praise," we have the smallest measure of manifestation of *character* connected with the full glory. As an example of the same connecting thread—taken up, as it *leads*, or as the Spirit knows it *laid*, in all the change and progression of circumstances—we may note that word, "he shall be called a *Nazarene*"—the unattractive aspect of that glory when its brightness was as yet covered up—a quotation not verbal, or taken literally from any prophet, but substantive; embodying in the term for an *object* the substance of many predictions of rejection, "as a stone which the builders refuse," &c.

Recall what has been said of the *sufferings* resulting from the "contradiction" of the men of this world; in other words, from that opposition to the moral glory of *grace* which was the fruit of the free action of their natural heart, when the light came;—and we are able to take up that word, "they hated me without a cause;" or *freely*.—He who was light was there,—a *light* where *darkness was—and was loved*.

Let these observed precedents of New Testament use of Old Testament scriptures be received and well considered. Out of these and other inspired examples we may expect to derive a really scriptural method of interpretation.

There would remain many other insulated words of prophecy, which by their remarkable position,

their antecedents, or their consequences, may have fixed and moulded the thoughts of the devout Israelite who waited for the consolation. Such, in a Psalm of King David, would be "they pierce my hands and my feet,"—"they part my garments," &c. These and other insulated words of the prophets, may have wrought wonderfully under God's Spirit, on the hearts of His "believing" people. Far above all these, I should expect that the character of the foreshewn glory, as in Isaiah, as of *grace* and *healing*, must have formed the character of Jewish hope in communion with the Lord. Sweet glimpses to souls bruised with falling under the burden of law. It is in this view I regard Solomon's Song; a communion that the watchmen of the city could neither share nor understand. But indeed it was not *merely* the words of prophetic testimony, that went to form Jewish expectation; there were the "*searchings*" what the testimony signified—and herein how wonderfully and graciously may God have wrought!

And long after, how must the *believing* Israelite have drunk into the comfort of that word deposited in the law of his nation, "a bone of him shall not be broken:" Israel knew the part every one of God's nation in the flesh had in the paschal lamb—Or that declaration that the heel of the woman's seed was to be *bruised*—when coupled with the word, "by his *bruise* we are healed." (See Isa. liii. *margin*.)

Before turning from the Sceptics, let me again press the blessed advantage of waiting God's time for clearing up our difficulties. The patience of the understanding is of great price and most blessed in its result.

I remember as to *Circumcision*, the insinuation by Voltaire (I think) that it was borrowed by the Israelites from the Egyptians. Herodotus I believe says the same—he gathered what the Egyptian priests told him. But mark the providence as to this matter. The Arabians and Egyptians do *not* circumcise on the eighth day—but they or other nations round about are said to observe it in the thirteenth year—Why so? Genesis alone enables us to answer;—that Ishmael was thirteen years old when Isaac was circumcised on the eighth day. This at once establishes the origin of the rite in the family of Abraham.

I will just introduce here one or two notices of passages that have been felt as difficulties.

In the miracle recorded in Joshua, I believe the original will warrant our reading “*sunlight*” and “*moonlight*,” which clears the narrative of a startling disproportion between the divine power put forth, and the effect to be produced.

XC. There are probably some mistranslations of Scripture, coming out of the hard temper of the

times in which the translators lived. Our translators have in several passages—(such as 1 Sam. ii. 3; Ps. ix. 18, lxxv. 5; Prov. xxiv. 12)—repeated the negative occurring in the *first* clause, as implied in the *latter* part of the sentence, according to a rule given in Houbigant. The application of this would make the dying charge of David respecting Shimei the reverse of what it is represented,—namely, “Thou shalt *not* bring down,” &c.; and this would consist with Solomon’s recorded action.

XCI. In many ways the habit and temper of their times would influence the translators; sometimes increasing, at others reducing, the intensity and force of a rendering.

But such misrenderings are probably few and unimportant, compared with those which come of the natural distance of the heart, and the *tendency to relapse into a state of feeling suited only to the distance of nature.*

We feel this tendency often where the passage, as appearing in the translation, has nothing to warrant it. It is the evil option that we make. In what sense are we accustomed to read such expressions as “*Whither shall I go from thy spirit, whither shall I flee from thy presence?*”—is it not as the utterance of one *wishing* to get to a distance? Yet how contrary does it appear on reference to it as it stands.

XCII. So it is;—while Grace,—free *grace*—and fruits of *grace*—are God's thoughts,—ours are running in the track of Law—Covenant on conditions—and Works that are *not* the fruits of *grace*.

We ought, I believe, always to use the word "*means of grace*," in the sense of means by which *grace* that *is ours in Christ* flows to us.

XCIII. As to Covenant—Heb. viii. shews that it is not necessarily *conditional* at all, but simply a *disposition* or arrangement.

I incline indeed to think that the Church is in a true sense above covenant. The 1 Cor. xi. 25 will occur to mind, "This is the new covenant in my *Blood*;" I add therefore, that—

I take it the first and second covenants have to do specially with Israel.\*

To Israel the law written in their hearts was to be a new covenant, *in contrast with the former* by which they possessed a formal covenant under a law that condemned them.

But has the *Church*, consisting of Gentile as well as Jew, nothing to do with the "law written in their hearts," and therefore with the *blessings* of the new covenant?—Yes, but as *new* only in

\* To them pertain the *covenants*, and *legislation* (by and bye). Gentiles were strangers from the *covenants*. Yet we read, "He hath made *us* able ministers of the *new covenant*, not of the letter," &c. 2 Cor. iii.

contrast with "thoughts accusing and excusing them:"—and though the blessing may be the same in the liberty of love and forgiveness, yet I think it is in a higher and more intimate connection as though Grace united with the Quickener, and as in Him forgiven their trespasses. (Col. ii. 14).

XCIV. Something resembling this is I think traced in the way in which the "kingdom of heaven" is presented in Matthew, and under a different designation, and if I am right, in a higher relation, in Luke.—

My present thought would illustrate what has, amongst many, the name of the "heavenly calling"—as follows,

Jesus came from heaven and began to teach the things of the kingdom: he was sent to the sheep of the house of Israel, and these were those *then* given to him by his Father. They stood, if I may so say, on the *broad page of Israel's teaching*, with a hope that had *Jerusalem* for its point, and the scene of its foretold glory: nay, even their Master spoke of a time when they of Jerusalem should say, "Blessed be he that *cometh*." The Lord of the glory was valued at thirty pieces of silver—rejected—crucified. But God raised him up and shewed him openly. Still the testimony was to Israel,—he shall send Jesus who before was preached unto you. But his name found no welcome with the priests

and Sadducees, though many were converted; the rulers sought to stifle their testimony by threatenings. The Holy Spirit, no longer merely the spirit of life (Jesus having breathed on them), but as the Comforter, comes to indwell the Church as God's habitation,—the one sinned against by Ananias and his wife. But the doctrine spreads—witnesses are suborned—the people stirred up,—and Stephen's defence is an accusation of their *nation*, for which the people stone him, laying down their clothes at the feet of Saul the persecutor, and soon to be the preacher of the truth that he blasphemed. Stephen sees “the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” Here comes forth the heavenly calling,—the *calling up* to heaven. Jesus *there*—is thenceforward the centre of the work of the Gospel: it is the kingdom “*of God*,” to which certain of the “circumcision” are helpers, Col. iv. 11. Saul is the vessel *chosen* to bear Christ's name before the Gentile nations; but he is not yet sent beyond the land of Israel: Peter is the one from whom the Gentiles first hear the Gospel, at *Cesarea*, and he follows the leading of the *Holy Ghost* (who makes the Church), beyond the narrow limits of his own thoughts, saying, “Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized?” After this, how long I will not say, we have the recorded separation of Barnabas and Saul to a certain work. The chosen vessel is now “preaching *among the Gentiles*”

the unsearchable riches of Christ," and, apparently on occasion of Sergius Paulus believing, and thus giving him the first-fruits of his ministry—the first living stone from the quarry of Gentile condemnation, or "from *out the nations*;"—his name is changed for Paul (*worker*). But hear him to the Thessalonians describing the *hope* of the *Church*, 1 Thess. i. 9, 10; iv. 14, to v. 10. Is it not plain that that hope has been, previous to that time, carried up, and placed where Jesus is, at the right hand of God? This is, I submit, the character of Paul's Gospel *as to* its point, the *apex* of the hope with which he labours to fill the souls of his hearers. To him the Gospel "*of*," or rather "*to*," the *uncircumcision* was committed,—as that of the *circumcision* was to Peter. Not a different Gospel, but a *distinct* one; received *direct* from Christ, when he met him on the way to Damascus; and so "*not of men, neither by man*." I judge his Gospel was in all respects the same in terms of access, and real power of blessing; the difference was, that his Gospel or message was *to* the *uncircumcision*;—and further, as he, and not the Apostle Peter, was sent to the *Gentiles*, the revelation of the mystery, that the *Gentiles* should be one body, or in other words, the revelation of the mystery of the *Church*, was *more especially* by Paul (yet see Eph. iii. 5). Jerusalem was *not* the

centre of this, but Christ in the heavens, therefore Paul treats of the heavenly things.

But we may imagine a very excusable curiosity to inquire;—whether those who *believed* in the days of our Lord's personal walk on earth, and those who *believed* on Peter's preaching afterwards at Jerusalem, make part of this same body, *the Church*. As to the first, I would say, that taking their believing to be not mere belief of his miraculous power, John ii. 23—25, but the resting in him for salvation, I should expect that every one who so believed, *lived on*, so as to believe in his resurrection, and in the *peace he made* and *spoke* (John xx. 26). Lazarus we know was raised; and *Matthew* tells us of *saints* awakened from their graves, and coming into the city *after His resurrection*. They therefore would form part of the 120 or others mentioned in Acts, and so come within the *second* class to which the inquiry relates. As to them, I believe that, for a while Jerusalem was still the centre of their hope,—but not after Stephen. If I am right, it was *then* as if the hand of God had lifted the centre of that page,—as we might lift a handkerchief by its middle,—and so raised the affections of those who looked for Jesus to “restore the kingdom” in Jerusalem, *upward* to that same Jesus who would come and receive them unto *himself*.

On the *practical* holding of the general truth,

the reader may consult "Thoughts on Unity of Judgment as to the Lord's coming, by W. H. D."

The New *Jerusalem* is shewn with its wall and *twelve* gates, and at its gates *twelve* angels, and names written thereon of the *twelve* tribes of Israel; and in its foundations the names of the *twelve* apostles of the Lamb. The number *twelve*, one has remarked, seems connected with the earth and with Israel. The names of the twelve apostles appear here, perhaps, in their view or bearing towards Israel *on earth*—But the Lamb is the light of the city; there—it has been remarked—individuality does not appear. Matthias took place as the twelfth apostle.\* Where then is Paul? In the iind and with chapters of Acts the *twelve*, without him, appear recognized. In 1 Cor. xv., Paul, after relating that the Lord was seen of the twelve,† says,

\* A close attention to the first of Acts, will I think convince us that what is called the *election* of Matthias was no act of the eleven. Peter declares that of them that had companied *with* them all the time from John's baptism *until* their Lord was taken up from them, "must one become (not "*be ordained*") a witness," &c. Jesus had chosen the twelve to be with him, and of the 120 now assembled, it would seem that but *two* answering to this requirement were put forth. The eleven seem to have shrunk from choosing one from these two; which would be very strange if we suppose them to have previously *chosen* two out of a hundred and twenty. They prayed, "*Lord shew which of these two Thou hast chosen.*"

† Matthias, afterwards numbered with the twelve, was certainly among them, as we shall see on considering Acts i. 21, 22.

“after that He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time (εκτρομα);” a word, observes a friend, that may denote a child brought into the world, by what is called the Cæsarian operation, which is practised sometimes after the death of the mother to preserve her unborn offspring—one ushered into life out of the ordinary course, by violence, as it were. Compare this with the account of Paul’s conversion.

Paul’s mission is an unique fact in the history, and his commission was not of men nor by man, but by the voice from heaven. He was in no-wise indebted to the twelve for authority or for power; nor was his “receiving from the Lord” limited by the measure of their understanding: they added nothing to him—nay rather, their regard to Jewish prejudice worked contrariwise.

Peter also had been helped by visions, and Paul had visions and revelations peculiar to him as “caught up to heaven.” All, as to Paul, was distinct and independent of the twelve. This is in one view a happy thought, not because of *independence*, but of independence of earthly centre. It is a great joy to be above union with Israel’s earthly place, in virtue of a heavenly one! The gospel of the *uncircumcision* was committed to him as the gospel of the *circumcision* to Peter. Here it is plain the difference indicated is in the parties to whom the two Apostles were sent. In 1 Cor. xv.

Paul declares the gospel he had preached, and in which the Corinthians *stood*; shewing, I suppose, the identity of their standing with those who believed Peter's preaching. This is no-wise inconsistent with the fact that knowledge was given to Paul, which he, when addressing the Gentile believers, would use and appeal to in a way in which it would not be used, and was not appealed to by Peter and James. This would never shew that Peter and the other Apostles were not partakers of the same truth (see Eph. iii. 5), by the Holy Ghost—bringing many things spoken by the Lord to their remembrance. Such words as “understand my knowledge in the mystery,” mark a special, but not exclusive revelation to Paul, that the Gentiles were to be one body—and connect with a class of appeals to the heart that are little, if at all, found in the Epistles of James and Peter.\* The Gentiles were to be fellow heirs and of the same body: *then, believing Israel* was with them *in the mystery*, even though, from dulness of understanding, “zealous for the law.” Was not Ananias a member of the church?—and a member made ministrant to it (Acts ix.), though so slow in his obedience. If Peter had been sent *to* the Gentiles, he would have been outside Jerusalem associations, and, like Paul, have taken up believers in connection with Christ *in heaven*.

\* *Their* epistles were only three, not thirteen, as Paul's.

XCV. Israel had been *brought out of Egypt*, and made nigh for probation, (an act of Divine sovereignty which was needed *in order to* their being led and taught); that probation being whether their ways and works would be fruit or wild grapes—unacceptable.

But another call went forth—it was a call to believe in the accomplished work of redemption by the Lamb of God: it was a testimony to *facts*, of which the blessing was offered to all who would accept the grace of the Gospel. The effulgence of light was immense; setting for ever aside the thought of further probation of man, or any claim to acceptance on the ground of obedience to Law. All that was blessedly over, and the verdict of “*all guilty*” unlocked the sluices of Divine mercy, laying its recipients under no law but that of Christ as their Redeemer, and His love. Into this place Jew and Greek, entering by one door, became neither Jew nor Greek, but the Church.

But beyond and future to all this there is a grace to *Israel, nationally*—when the nation shall turn to the Lord, and acknowledge him whom they have pierced, and shall know **THEMSELVES** and *not merely their offerings* accepted. This is, I believe, the peculiar promise in Ezekiel; but will not this change all their thoughts?—will it not change and reverse the very *order* of their meditations and feelings? Christ known as their Passover and as

the security of their national blessing, in the clear revelation of forgiveness and favour, writing the law in their hearts by a *New Covenant*. Does it not seem a necessary consequence that the sacrifices that Ezekiel shews as again to be set up, should be known in inverted order—no more as shadows of a future thing, which was approached in faith of something looked for; but as the expression and developed use and application of a found, and known, and unremoveable acceptance and present blessing? What an interpretation may then be looked for—when Israel, re-established in their land, shall possess the key to their own Leviticus.

XCVI. With this I incline to connect,—while disclaiming any preparedness to found any teaching on the connection—some thoughts on that which “Jesus *began* both to do and to teach,” especially in the *Sermon on the Mount*.

Since Adam fell I see none standing unless “holden up.” The fairest obedience could not meet the requirement of the whole heart. Accordingly, they who found favor would be broken and tender spirits; such as the publican in Luke xviii., or the scribe, described as not far from the kingdom of God. Such worshippers would not neglect the sacrifices of the law; but they would be to them the enjoined expression of a worship in “spirit and

truth ;" not abused to establish a righteousness of their own. The Father sought such worship: but where should it be found, save in consciences purged by forgiveness. Psalms xxxii., li., cxxxi., &c., would be the utterance of such a state. There was forgiveness with God;—although *that* wherein its power dwelt was not yet testified of. It was on such the Spirit of God, in Israel's history, had dwelt—turning back again to honor them. The beloved of God, (David), was not the unfailling servant, but tender and quick in confession—seeing Him only as the One sinned against; and forgetting self and the eyes of men, in the joy of the same holy presence. Can we doubt that there were in each successive generation a remnant of such, *servng the Lord "in His goodness,"* and going on in the *love of righteousness* (Ps. cvi. 3), and in the *experience of grace*. Isaiah had foretold a future time of peace in Israel, wherein the Lord himself would say, "*their righteousness is of Me.*" The roll of prophecy was bright with such glimpses, and at the birth of Christ we have Simeon, and Anna, and others, who waited for the consolation: (read the whole of Luke, chap. i. I hope to meditate more on the *hymns* of Scripture.) John Baptist had gone preaching the kingdom,—"now after that John was put in prison," Jesus goes into Galilee. Still "the kingdom is at hand"—"come nigh"—no more.

And now principles are proclaimed that, in a certain sense, are new, and meet this condition of soul wrought by grace in the hearts of publicans and sinners, the *lost* or *scattered* "sheep of the house of Israel."

That in Matt. v.—vii. these principles are seen in a body of statutes, while in Luke they are distributed in connection with the teaching, is a confirmation of the peculiar bearing of Matthew's Gospel, as toward the kingdom.\*

The Gospel, or "word of the kingdom,"† the message of glad tidings to *Israel*, meets, as we have said, a certain condition of soul, earnest in seeking righteousness, but bruised with falling under the burden of law. Its first sounds are, blessing to the *poor in spirit*; for yours is the kingdom of heaven: blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted: blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth: blessed are they which hunger and thirst after *righteousness*; for they shall be filled.—(He who filleth the *hungry*, would not send *them* empty away). But in con-

\* Among the proofs that in Matthew we have the order of time, I would refer to his *ninth* chapter, ver. 9 to 26, compared with Luke v. 18 to 39, viii. 41 to 54. In the latter I find nearly three chapters interposed. Yet Matt. ix. 18, has it, "*while He spake these things,*" &c.

† The "word of the kingdom," is not, as I view it, the word of life—begetting; but as spoken to a *certain condition*, rather corresponds, in another sphere, to the hearing of *disciples*. This may be considered in connection with the parable of the Sower, Matt. xiii.

nection with all this *Grace*, it is added, Think NOT I am come to destroy\* the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be *least* in the kingdom of heaven; for except your righteousness shall *exceed* the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom. Here, if I mistake not, we are admitted to the peculiar *moral* glory of the kingdom. GRACE is to reign; and as we see (chap. v. 46), to breathe grace: but this grace joined to the highest RIGHTEOUSNESS . . . teaching none other. But *how* is this meeting and blending of *grace* with *righteousness*—thus kissing each other—to be brought about? This is not disclosed; it was (may I say?) the mystery of Christ; it was not known how the Justifier would be just.† This therefore was not brought in as *motive* in connection with precepts; but other and lower motives are put forth; lessons learned from mercy and providence *toward earth* rather than from acceptance *in heaven*. It is “do good to them that hate you . . . for your Father

\* “Destroy or *relax*,” the precepts.

† John Baptist had indeed pointed to him, as “the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world;” but it was only later that we read, “From that time Jesus began to shew unto them, how he must suffer, and be killed, and rise again;” and then Peter took him, and rebuked him. Even the Cross did not clear their faith, and their Master’s last discourses, John xiv—xvii., may have been only afterwards “brought to their remembrance.”

makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good." "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive your trespasses." "Judge not and ye shall not be judged." "Behold the lilies of the field," &c., &c.\*

Now I put it to the reader, whether this does not bear the mark of the point of time at which the teaching was uttered, and of regard to what the disciples were then "able to bear"? If so,—why should any object to our taking a dispensational view of the meaning? For observe, it is not questioned, but rather adoringly confessed, that portions of the richest truth for the *Church* are found locked up, as it were in kernel, in the words spoken by the Lord, (such as, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone"); but may we not own that the Apostles opened *more deeply* the roots, and also followed *higher up* the results, of the Church's blessing, as united with her heavenly Head.

All that suits the original and place of the Church, I should expect the Church would use; and that much of the Sermon on the Mount

\* Observe (ver. 35) the place given to *Jerusalem*, as the *City of the Great King*, whose prerogative is the solemn sanction of the prohibition of swearing "*by Jerusalem*." It deserves our attention that the "*City of the Great King*," is a title that occurs but twice:—once in the xlviith,—a Psalm of a future day; and again in this passage. It is also remarkable, that it is here coupled with a double reference to Isaiah lxvi. 1, which may be turned to.

would be so used. Little indeed, and that by reason of little use, have Christians apprehended such primary instruction as "the servant is *not above his Master*,"—or again, "every one that is perfect shall [or should] be *as his Master*." Again, all that opens out in the inculcation of a walk even as Jesus walked, can never be separated from the instruction to be learned from the Gospel narrative.

But the real question is,—Is there not an advance, a marked advance and fulness in the teaching, according to "the promise," after the day of Pentecost ?

I will only say, we can lose nothing by going forward;—so it be with God. That which strengthened the hearts of the disciples will, I expect, be found everywhere confirmed to us; while every precept not among such as are superseded by our advance, (such as are found in Matt. xxiii. 3, Luke v. 14, xvii. 14), will be yet more deepened by the constrainings of a love that has obtained for us an eternal redemption.

I submit, then, that earnest and broken spirits were the harvest that whitened the fields on which Jesus looked with compassion.

There was indeed another generation—pure in their own eyes, but unwashed from their filthiness;—trusting in themselves that they were righteous, and despising others;—or worse still, binding heavy

burdens and grievous to be borne on bruised consciences. What a picture do we see of such in Ezekiel xxxiv. ? They said, "stand by:"—the glory as of *Grace* they knew not, or did not acknowledge;—and the Lord of it they rejected and crucified. With the parable before us we might think they discerned him to be *the heir*. The *servants* (the prophets) had also pointed to grace while exposing the nation's sin.

Briefly, the Sermon on the Mount is—blessing to the poor in spirit,—the mourners,—the meek,—the hungering after (as *empty of*) righteousness,—the merciful,—the pure (or *emptied* and *purged*) hearts,—the peace-makers,—the persecuted for righteousness' sake—for so persecuted were the *prophets*. Take heed, ye are the Salt; lose not your savour. Ye are light; shrink not to witness against darkness. Your righteousness is to exceed that of Scribes and Pharisees. As others count of *murder* so shall ye account of a contemptuous *word*. Let not thy brother have aught against thee; and then offer thy gift;—stop the first risings of offence or sin at the cost even of thy right hand; vow not; be unresisting, though it expose you to injury; give to every one that asketh; love—your enemies, &c. . . that ye may be, as children on earth, imitating a Father in heaven. Act and speak *to* Him, and as *before* Him: the light of the body is the *eye*. Your heavenly Father know-

eth what ye have need of, therefore take no thought for to-morrow. Judge *not*, or judge *thyself*. Cast not pearls before swine. *Ask*, and it shall be given. Enter at the *strait* gate. Beware of false prophets; by their *fruits* ye shall know *them*. They who do great things in My name, and work iniquity, I will disown; but whoso heareth these sayings of mine and *doeth* them—shall be as one who buildeth on a rock.

Such appear to be the principles on which the blessing was offered as to be established in Israel: while in the Acts and Epistles we have Christ's work, and the believer's acceptance in Him, witnessed for Conversion and as the ground of appeal to the affections of the new man.

XCVII. It has been said by some that the order of *provision*, or *institution*, and I might perhaps add of testimony, of the Sacrifices, as for approach to God, was the reverse of the order of *use*. It is an idea not difficult to seize: the outer court must needs be traversed to arrive at the altar: a regard to this has seemed to me a thing that might be helpful, in understanding the verses in 1 John v. "This is he that came,\* by *water* and *blood*;" a manifest reference, as it seems to me, to the sixth of the Gospel by the same John, but in inverted order, "there came thereout *blood and water*." Omitting

\* Observe the use of the word "*to come*," in John.

the words believed to be interpolated, we read—  
 “there are three that bear record on earth, the *Spirit the water and the blood.*” If the Spirit’s witness is overclouded, we go back to our *baptism*,\* and we can go further back, even to the spring in *Redemption*, and say “not by *water* only but by *water and blood.*” In this last passage it is neither the order of provision, nor the order in which the truth is certified to our consciences, but the statement, that not by *water* only, &c. &c.

XCVIII. In Heb. xi. 28, the word rendered *sprinkling* is in nearly all the earlier English translations, rendered *effusion* or *shedding*. The word occurs only in this passage, and in manifest reference to the Passover. The *remembered* application of the Blood shadowed in *sprinkling*, for confidence or for cleansing, is to be distinguished from the original separation by the Blood of the Passover. How have Christians, by confounding the two things, obscured the perfectness of their Passover!

XCIX. 1st John,—“*If* we confess our sins” seems to me rather distributive than a conditional statement; as though one should say, “If you do your part, never doubt I will be faithful to mine:” not as though this last were conditional on the former. (Compare a few verses further, ch. ii. 1,

\* “Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.”

“if any one sin we *have* an advocate with the Father.”) It has seemed to me that we might *ask* that forgiveness within the house which is really the modification, in grace, of discipline. We may ask, that a *forgiveness* which, in the title to it, is sure, may be made *sensible* (in application to a certain matter which is confessed) *to our* consciences. A parent is not counted capable of casting off his child, because his smile as the token of forgiveness is delayed by a love that seeks to bring sin into confession. Matthew vi. 14, may be taken in this view. It is no small point in the Divine teaching and blessing, that we are not permitted to walk uncircumspectly or to think lightly of the sin that interrupts our communion.

C. *Nurture* in Eph. vi. carries to many a wrong sense, as if *cherishing* were intended, when the meaning is generally *chastening correction*, as in Heb. xii.

CI. Concerning “Spirit, soul, and body,” I have thought that soul may be taken to express that which comprises *imagination*, furnishing itself out with past experience—a faculty or assemblage of faculties that may be active in dreams. Spirit I take to be the responsible helmsman of all\*—a power acting only when we are awake. I know

\* “Whom I serve with my spirit,” says Paul.

no clear instance of an original moral resolve taken in *sleep*, nor of anything that could not be resolved into previous reflection or habit. In Scripture the heart is generally regarded as the seat of *thoughts*, the bowels of the *affections*.

CII. The Song of Solomon rightly viewed is, where all is "pure," perhaps the purest utterance of *intimate* and *tender* communion.

CIII. Conversing with a converted Jew on the light in which his nation were accustomed to view *Baptism*, I gathered this thought, that there is in it always the idea of separation from a something to another thing. It may be from one teacher to another, such as Paul seems to refer to in Galatians; or from one dependance to another dependance. Baptism and the Supper express *realities*; for, as one has remarked, the faith of a Christian is established not on promises but on *facts*. If baptism shews forth reality, that thought would seem enough to guard it for *believers*. To call a christened infant, a baptized person, is to obliterate the solemn line of demarcation between the World and the church. How can they who do this ever *preach the Gospel*, without feeling the confusion they are sanctioning? Nothing perhaps has more served the enemy by weakening saints and freezing up testimony than this confusion. But

then the thing signified is more important than the sign. Therefore to separate as some do, for the *sign's* sake, from those who have the *reality*, is evidently unreasonable; and considering its consequences, in bringing in division in the family of God, I must view it as a grave evil.

CIV. There is, it seems to me, much confusion in many minds as to the general subject of baptism. I think we may discern three baptisms in the New Testament. 1st, the baptism of John, bringing men in confession of their sins, into a place of waiting—to believe on him who should come after. 2nd, the baptism by the disciples, with the Lord—to Him either as their teacher, or as their Messiah. 3rd, the baptism into all the blessing of his death and resurrection in union with him, as we see it interpreted in Romans vi. It is remarkable we do not read of any who had passed through the second receiving the third, yet I would not doubt that most of those who were baptized by the disciples (the Lord being with them), truly possessed the full blessings of his death and resurrection. I state the fact, and leave the use to be made of it to others. On the contrary, there is record of some who had been baptized unto the first or *John's* baptism, receiving the last mentioned baptism, that is, “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” or rather *to* (*es, to*), i. e., to

dependance on what is revealed of Him. (Acts xix.) If we adhere to Scripture, the words of baptism would be these. The concluding commission in Matthew xxviii., differs in form, and has, I think, some connection with a future Jewish testimony, which may present blessings resulting from the series of previous dispensations,—Father, Son, and SPIRIT ;—and may do this in connection with a discipling of *nations*, corresponding with such prophecies as Isaiah ii., and Zechariah viii.

CV. I have desired to be at once free and guarded in putting forth these reflections,—above all, careful to avoid over statements:—nevertheless some may perhaps be disturbed by the thoughts here expressed. To such I would offer this establishing reflection, that the place of their rest is also the place where light will be afforded to detect erroneous doctrine. The flock do well in such a day, to gather round the Shepherd who gave Himself for them, and to live within the sound of his voice. The thought of redemption remembered as his claim, will keep the truth for us. It is this that stamps such value on the reference to redemption in Acts xx. 28, where Paul is guarding the saints of Ephesus against *perverse things*—and also in Peter (2 Ep. ii. 1, and 1 Ep. v. 2), where a similar connection is traced.

Thus gathered, the saints of God will, we may

trust, be guided to say *No* to any doctrine that ascribes power to the flesh,—and a *No* as decided, only more deliberate, to any that detracts from the pure glory of the work of Christ. They are cast upon a Teacher who is to abide with them for ever to witness of Jesus, and be the Master of all their attainment in truth. He will guide them to a not less decided declinal of any teaching that does not meet the necessities of His work in their souls.

So I understand 1 John v.—They *need not* that any should teach them but as that same anointing that abideth in them teacheth them and *is no lie*. As “concerning them that seduce them,” they can say they *need not* their teaching. This will honor God and guard His work for His own guidance. True, it will not constitute the babes competent judges of teaching that ranges beyond their capacity. But it is happy to think, that if there is any preciousness, in title or blessing, that is a subject of inquiry among instructed Christians, it is a part of the portion of the weakest and least instructed believer that has bowed before the cross, and rests in the peace that Christ has made. Light and knowledge bring responsibility:—but implicit dependance admits to the blessing. “*According to your faith be it unto you.*”



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