

FOUR ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT

THE MANOR ROOMS, HACKNEY.

- I. THE CALLING AND HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN.
- II. THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.
- III. THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.
- IV. THE FOUR JUDGMENTS.

BY

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"THE TABERNACLE, THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS, AND THE PRIESTHOOD;"
ETC., ETC.

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FIRST ADDRESS.

THE CALLING AND HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN.

1 PETER ii. 9.—“Called out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

1 JOHN iii. 1.—“Called the sons of God.”

EPHESIANS i. 18.—“That ye may know what is the hope of his calling.”

HEBREWS iii. 1.—“Partakers of the heavenly calling.”

TITUS ii. 13.—“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

DEAR FRIENDS,—Our subject this evening is, “The Calling and Hope of the Christian.” I have chosen the word “Christian,” because I believe it to be a very descriptive and blessed word, and a word most abused. You will generally find that the best words are the words most abused.

The word “Christian” is no longer employed as a by-word of reproach, but is taken lightly upon the lips of the unconverted and unsaved, and claimed as a title by almost every one in this nation, and in Europe; so that to be a Christian is now only a nominal thing. Still, that name is a wondrous, blessed name—a “Christ’s man.” There is no doubt that it was originally given by the inspiration of God, even though it may have been used as a term of reproach. The early disciples gloried in it, and it is a most blessed name.

At this "end of the world" we have again and again to look into what is a Christian. Every other truth depends upon the calling and hope of the Christian; and unless our minds are well settled as to this truth, we cannot look into prophecy, or into the present state of the world, or into the future, with eyes anointed so as to see clearly. It is, therefore, deeply important that we should all seek to ascertain what is the true calling and hope of the Christian.

It may be that there are some here who are yet unsaved, and I desire to remember them; for however high, or perfect, and complete be the calling of the saved, however vast and wonderful the hope, it is a calling of which every one here may partake, a hope which all may possess, simply by faith in Christ.

There is a text which heads this subject—"Called out of darkness into His marvellous light." (1 Peter ii. 9.) Now the word *called* has two senses in Scripture, which you will find in two passages—"Called saints" (1 Cor. i. 2); and, "Many are called, but few chosen." (Matt. xx. 16.) "Called," in its grand and main sense, means not only hearing the voice, but receiving into the heart the power—the power of the voice of God. Those who reject that voice are called; they hear the voice, but reject it. Those that are called, in the strict sense of the word, as used in many passages of Scripture, receive the call, and with it the *calling*.

Thus the words, "called saints," do not mean "called to be saints;" but they are actually saints. Not that they are called to be holy as a matter of attainment, and gradually arrive at holiness in their lives; but that

they are actually holy, and therefore they are to exhibit holiness in their lives. God *calls* them saints; God *makes* them such by His call; He makes them saints by His word of power.

I will now mention three passages in which the word *darkness* occurs. In Peter we find, "Out of darkness into His marvellous light." In Colossians i. 13, "Delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son." And in Ephesians v. 8, "Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." Mark, "Called out of darkness," "delivered from the power of darkness," and "darkness itself."

The unsaved are in darkness, and therefore those who hear God's call are called *out of* darkness—there being no passage between darkness and light, no penumbra, if I may so speak—nothing indefinite, as if it were partly darkness and partly light. We may not know the fulness of the light; but still we are saved out of darkness, and are called into His marvellous light; and if a thing is said to be marvellous in Scripture, it is certain we shall never get to the end of it, nor be able fully to comprehend it.

Darkness has no power over a person who has been translated into light. Elijah was translated, caught up into heaven in a chariot of fire; he knew he was translated. This man of faith could see this world recede from him, and see the heavens open to him. When he was translated he realized his change of state. He did not climb out of the one into the other; he was translated, borne up; not by his own power,

but by God, who translated him. Thus it was a fact known and realized by him; he had no doubt about it; he knew he was in a different place, in totally different circumstances. He could perceive the difference between heaven and earth.

Do *we*, who are believers, realize the fact that we have been delivered out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son? Ought we not to *know* and realize by faith that this is a fact, as much as Elijah realized the fact of his being caught up into heaven? Faith is worth very little if it is not the *certainty* of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. My faith has no power if the eyes of my mind do not palpably perceive the unseen things, so that I can realize them in my soul as truly as if I saw them. And therefore I would lay it down as an axiom, that if we have faith in Christ we have the things of Christ—all that Christ has, and all that pertains to Him, and we *know* it, or *ought* to know it.

We read in Ephesians, "Ye were sometime darkness;" not only groping in the dark, living in the dark, and ignorant of it, but "darkness" itself. That is the condition of the unbeliever, who also spreads darkness, because it is his very atmosphere; and if we get into his atmosphere, his reason, or philosophy, we get into darkness. Darkness is not simply being in the dark, but it is the thing spreading itself around; and this spreading of evil is very extensive, because unbelievers are very numerous.

"Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light." Thus the believer spreads light; he is as a

city set on a hill, which cannot be hid; and he has his light in Christ, who is Light.

There are words in Scripture which, though very small, are nevertheless very important; and it is because we do not attend sufficiently to little words that we miss a great deal of blessing. In reading the Bible, therefore, we must mark, pause, and ponder over little words. Now mark these little words—"from," "out of," "to," "into," "in," and "by;" they are all of great importance.

Observe the word "from." "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people *from* their sins." (Matt. i. 21.) Let me ask you, dear friends, Have you been saved *from* your sins? from all the judgment due to your sins? from all the guilt of your sins? from all the distance of your sins? from the power of your sins? Are you saved? Do you believe that Jesus came to save you from your sins? that He has died? and that by His blood you are cleansed? It is not, Are you *hoping* for it, or expecting it? but, *Have you got* this salvation? Is it yours now? If you are not saved, you have not believed in that blessed name "JESUS."

You may *say* you believe. I find it is a common thing for persons to say, on being asked, "Yes; O yes, I believe." "But who do you believe in?" "Why in Jesus; He has died for all sinners." "Then you are saved?" "O dear, no; I *hope* to be so; I am not; it would be presumptuous for me to say that I am." "Then you do not truly believe that Christ died for

you; because if Christ died *for* you, He *has* borne your sins on the cross, has had the whole weight of your guilt laid upon Him. And if your sins have been taken from you, and laid upon Christ, how can you any more be answerable for them?"

Thus we see that the common expressions which are used are not true; the fact is, very few truly believe in Christ. Many say, "Lord, Lord!" Many will say in the day that is approaching, "We have been calling thee Lord all our lives; we have heard the gospel from thy servants in our very streets; we have taken the Lord's supper in thy presence; we have always attended a gospel ministry; we never could endure the formalism and ritualism of the day; we have taken our stand with the evangelicals." But what will the Lord say? "Depart from me; I never knew you." And why? Because they had never come to Jesus as lost sinners. They never knew their own ruin, and He never knew them as His lost sheep.

The death of Christ was a *real* thing; and you and I, dear friends, ought to have its real results; we ought to be in possession of the glorious results of His death, and if we have not these vast blessings we are merely unbelievers. I must look into the fact of Christ's death for myself. I must be saved myself first before speaking to others. I must be able to say, "He bore *my* sins in His own body on the tree." This is realised by faith, faith in God's word; for faith rests upon God's word, and not upon feeling.

Take the word of God about Christ, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree."

(1 Peter ii. 24.) Have you believed that? Have you believed that Christ Himself, His own self, the Son of God, the mighty God, the Son of man, on the cross bare your sins in His own body? If you believe that, the load must be off your heart. If Christ endured the wrath of God because of your sins, you will never bear the wrath of God yourself. Thus the heart is at once relieved, and you come into all the glorious results of that blessed truth.*

Look at another little word, "*unto*." "He that believeth . . . is passed *from* death *unto* life." (John v. 24.) "We know that we have passed from death *unto* life." (1 John iii. 14.) "Thou hast redeemed us *to* God by thy blood." (Rev. v. 9.) Again, to whom are we "*made nigh*," to whom "*reconciled*?" To God. (See Eph. ii. 13; Col. i. 21.) And we are begotten "*to* an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." (1 Peter i. 4.)

Now, what was God's object in redemption? I believe God's object was His own delight; He wanted to be happy with saved sinners, and to give them to enjoy His own happiness. He could not have intimate communion with angels. Holy elect angels are worshippers of Him; but He could not have the closest fellowship with them. They are not the beings to

* The saved sinner will always know that he is a sinner, and will be conscious of sin still working in him; but he is saved—he will never come into condemnation; and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth him from all sin, keeps him clean for the presence of God, notwithstanding he may feel the presence of sin. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

whom He entrusts His secrets, or who can enter into His counsels, though they have a joy in obedience. God cannot have full, unbroken fellowship of heart with them.

God's purpose in sending Christ to die for sinners was to display the love pent up in His bosom. His purpose was to have joy, delight, and fellowship with beings who should be able to understand, and comprehend, and appreciate Him, and love Him in return. This is what the saved sinner has. God accounted it worth His while for His own glory and joy to give Christ.

Now, mark how He has accomplished this wondrous purpose. Mark what our calling is. It is *to God*. It is to be brought nigh to Him, as nigh to the heart of God, to the unveiled glory of God, as His own Son. You do not find this to be the portion of unfallen angels, for they are not brought nigh to God. God loved us as He loved His Son; His love is of the same character and the same extent to 'undone, good-for-nothing, guilty sinners as to His own Son. Who can comprehend this? But yet it is true. It is one of the marvels that redemption in Christ reveals to us.

We are brought nigh to God. How? "By the blood of Christ;" nothing else. The blood of Christ has swept away distance, and sin; and has destroyed the enmity of the human heart to God. The blood of Christ has introduced us into God's presence, and thus we are brought nigh to God. Ought we ever to be outside? Should not we hate as the worst sin whatever makes our hearts distant from God, or ill at ease in His presence?

We ought to prize access to God as our chief joy; because we ought to see that it is God's delight to have us near Him. Anything that banishes blessed intercourse with God from our hearts, even for a little while, is a dreadful sin against Him; the greatest sin is the sin against His love.

Are we, as believers, acting as we ought? Do we watch our hearts, that we may keep out of them the intrusion of anything that will displease God? Do we jealously watch our hearts, because we know that God is jealous of our hearts? He says to the believer, "My son, give me thine heart." God prizes the affections.

The precious blood of Christ is the vast price of our redemption to God. We ought to reckon up what that word *precious* means, though I believe we shall never be able fully to do so. Does it mean silver and gold? No. Silver and gold are filthy and corruptible. When we enter the glory, and when we see around us what Christ has gone to prepare, and what His blood has purchased, then the value of this word *precious* will still remain to be told out on and on eternally. We shall have a little better glimpse of it, but it will take us eternity to learn thoroughly the preciousness of the blood of Christ.

Here, dear friends, I would say a word about those that do not count it *precious*. God will show by His judgments the value of the blood of His Son. Hell, with its terrible torments, will tell the value of the blood of Christ. Woe to those who deny these eternal torments; they are the eternal evidences of an un-

changing God. Therefore, while on the one hand the value of that blood will be known by the believer in unspeakable happiness, joy, and glory, its value also will be told out in hell by those who have rejected it.

Now let us take another text, which stands as part of our subject. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." (1 John iii. 1.) As if to prevent any misapprehension, the apostle adds, "Beloved, now *are* we the sons of God." We are not so merely in name, but in reality. We are born of God. He is our Father. We are children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

This is not only love commended to us, but love *bestowed*; the full expression of the love of God, manifested in making us His children, and giving us the heart, and affections, and capacities of children. And because we are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. We have the full intelligence of sons, and can through the Spirit utter from our hearts those wondrous words, which were first uttered from the heart of Christ on earth, Abba, Father.

If sons, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. Wondrous dignity, wondrous inheritance; and still more wonderful, Christ Himself is not ashamed to call us brethren.

We have not only vast individual blessings as Christians. We have also blessings which we hold in union with Christ, and with one another, which we may call corporate blessings. Redemption is not only by Christ,

but *in* Christ. "IN whom we have redemption through His blood." "IN WHOM." There is no salvation out of Christ. Therefore the salvation we speak of is *in* Christ. We look at Jesus, gaze upon Him, receive life from Him, and, besides this, we have life and union with Him. We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

The wife is presented to us in Ephesians as a figure of the Church. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church." How did He prove this? He gave Himself for the Church, loved it unto death.

We have a beautiful type of the Church in Genesis ii. We there see Adam perfect, but lonely. What was the garden of Eden to Adam? It had its beauties, its glorious creation, its perfection, its fruits and flowers, laid out by God. God had planted every tree and flower, and had made it in the perfection of beauty, according to His own taste. Adam could admire it, and look at its beauties, but he had no one with him to share his enjoyment; "and God said, It is not good for man to be alone."

God devised a wondrous plan, and in His plan of making woman He foreshadowed the Church. He put Adam into a deep sleep. It was a sleep from God. Not a natural sleep, a deep sleep, such as Adam would never again experience. This deep sleep from God is a figure of the death of Christ. His death derives its chief value from the fact that it was death from the hand of God, and not death merely from Satan, or from the hands of man. It was God's judgment.

Christ never tasted death until He was nailed to the

tree of curse, and Christ will never taste death again. In that marvellous death God vindicated and avenged Himself, poured out the vials of His wrath, that He might spare the poor, guilty, sinful creature, and show mercy and love to the being that had violated every law of holiness and love. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

During Adam's sleep God took from his side a rib, and *builded* a woman. This is a remarkable expression—"builded a woman," member by member; like a building, stone by stone. And when the woman was builded, no breath was breathed into her, no life was put into her. God breathed into Adam the breath of life, but not into the woman. Where did she get her life? From Adam. She had life, but she was the partaker of life from man.

Adam knew her instantly. He awakes, sees the woman, and he says immediately, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." So we, who are believers, form part of that glorious Church that is the image of Christ.

The woman stood forth, and Adam gazed upon her, and saw in her every feature of himself. Christ will gaze upon the Church, and will see in her every feature of His own beauty. She will be the mirror upon which Christ will gaze to see Himself. She will reflect not only the features of her Lord, but she will reflect also His grace and beauty. So it was with the woman as regards Adam; he claimed her, and called her Woman, *Isha*, because she was taken out of *Ish*, Man.

The word "woman" is the only word in the Old or

New Testament for wife. There is no such word in these books as wife; it is *woman*. What is a woman? A woman is a wife. She is made and formed to be the help meet of man. The Church is formed out of the death of Christ to be His delight and joy. We are created in Christ Jesus—a new creation, of which He is the beginning.

Why did Adam need a help meet for him? He had no toil, he was not occupied in labour which required help; but he needed one to help him to enjoy the creation in which God had placed him, to enhance his own happiness by sharing it with him—one who could fully respond to every expression of his heart, because she was part of himself. So the Church is the fulness of Christ, deriving all its beauty and glory from Him, holding all its blessings in union with Him, portraying Him in every grace, adding completeness to His already perfect completeness, sharing His happiness, His wisdom, His counsels, and His joy, displaying for ever His unsearchable riches. As believers we form part of this glorious body.

Shall we now turn to Hebrews iii. 1? “Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.” If you read Hebrews ii. 3, you will find the expression, “great salvation.” What is the great salvation? The great salvation is known by considering the great Saviour, as the heavenly calling is known by considering the Apostle and High Priest. The first of Hebrews tells us of the glories of the Son of God, that He is God, the Creator of the worlds, the Sustainer of all things,

the Heir of all things, the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His person, the Firstborn from the dead, the Son of man, the mighty God.

Look at the Son of God, at the vastness of His intelligence, at the wonders of His wisdom, at His glorious power, and then see Him bleeding upon the tree, see Him nailed upon that cross, and crying in agony to God, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" See Him, and you see the great salvation.

We know but little yet of the wonders of that great salvation; but it is indeed a GREAT salvation—great, because it saved us from our dreadful doom as children of wrath by nature. Great, because it saved us to God, to wondrous glory, to have everything under our feet, to be partners of His throne, to reign with Him. Great, because it saved us to know the greatness and vastness of His love. Great, because it saved us to be like Christ Himself. Look more and more at Jesus, more and more at what He was and what He is, and then look back upon yourselves and say, I have a "GREAT SALVATION."

We are no longer looked upon by God as belonging to this world. We have been saved out of it. We have been redeemed by Christ from this evil age, from death, and from sin. It was an evil age when the apostles were on earth; it has been an evil age ever since; it is an *evil* age now, and will be so until the Lord Jesus Christ comes, and the age is changed.

We belong to heaven, to God, and to Christ. God has sent down His Holy Spirit to take up His abode within us, even in our bodies. Our body is the temple

of the Holy Ghost. He is not a mere influence, He does not merely act upon us, but He is God dwelling in us. I do not know this by experience, but I believe it by the word of God. I cannot say, "I feel that God is in me," but I know it because He says so. This is not only true individually, but the Holy Ghost also dwells in the Church of God collectively.

The Holy Ghost acts in us through the word. The word of God is *His* word. It is the word of the Spirit, and therefore, if we are ignorant of the Word, we cannot know much of the leadings of the Spirit. Neither does the Holy Spirit reveal truth apart from the Word. If we cavil at the Word, the Holy Spirit cannot teach us. Therefore, if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. The subjection of our souls to the word of God is subjection to the Holy Spirit, subjection to God. God's word should be read and obeyed with as much reverence and promptitude as if we heard God speak.

What would you think if you heard the thunderings of God now rolling round you, and in the midst the still small voice of the mighty God? Would you not be awed, and filled with reverence? Would you not say with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Read God's word in this spirit. Believe that you are reading words from the lips of Jehovah, the living God; and bow to what you read. Do not play with the Scriptures as you would play with a problem in algebra. Do not think you can master God's word as you can master a human science; but know that God's word is above you, and know that

your place is to submit and believe, and in believing you will understand.

There is a beautiful passage in Hebrews xi. 3 for the geologists of the day. "By faith we *understand* that the worlds were made by the word of God, so that things that are seen were not made of things that do appear." The geologist tells me, that by calculation he understands that the worlds have been lasting—I don't know how long—perhaps for ever; and that this present creation was only a working up of old materials. I take the word of God and say, "By faith I understand that the worlds were made by the word of God." By FAITH I understand, not by reason, not by natural intellect, not by calculation, not by a process of my senses; but by *faith*. So with everything else.

If I can subject my doubting heart, and can bring down my reason and understanding, and confess myself an infant, a babe, God will reveal to me His Son. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Jesus rejoiced—it was the only time He is spoken of as rejoicing—because the babes, the illiterate babes, the fishermen of Galilee, ignorant men taken from their nets, were the fit objects for the revelation of God's blessed Son.

Whatever subject you find in the word, never take your reason as your guide, but always be suspicious of it. This is the way to handle God's word. The man of most intellect is the man most to be feared. It is

a difficult thing for the man of great intellect to submit himself to the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is the man of great intellect that leads us astray. The man of intellect and power speculates in things as far above him as the heavens are higher than the earth.

I will now shortly speak of the hope of our calling. If God has redeemed and taken us out of this world to be Christ's, and has left this world to have its own way, under the sway of Satan its god, what ought our hope naturally to be? Shall we have a hope of this world improving in any way? Shall we try, by great agricultural schemes, by meddling with electric telegraphs, and trans-Atlantic cables, and other inventions, to mend this world? This should be our endeavour, I grant, if we were men of the earth, if we were not called out of it.* But if we have been called out of the world, we have one business only: and that is, to *please God*. It is very easy to sum it up. Take as

* We are told to use this world as not *over using* it; not using it with *intensity*. It is a difficult thing to draw the line for any one. It must be left to individual conscience, instructed by the word of God. *The day* will show whether a Sir Isaac Newton, giving himself up to discoveries of science, will stand as high before the throne of Christ as some poor servant of God at the time who visited the sick and dying in the plague, caring for their souls' salvation: and whether the discovery of the law of gravitation will meet with as much approval from Christ as the self-denial of a Pascal, who laid aside his brilliant mathematical powers, in order to give himself more entirely to the service of God. Whatever we do, let us see to it that we do it to the glory of God. And nothing can be to His glory that is disconnected with the death of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

your motto that which was Christ's motto, and say, I must not please myself, but God; and then you will become a stranger and a pilgrim.

We sing about this strangership, but I am afraid we do not practise it. This stranger character is not to be attained by effort or imitation; but in proportion as we gaze on Jesus, and our hearts are filled with love and admiration of Him, we shall grow unconsciously into His likeness, who was the true stranger and pilgrim; and the ambitions in which we may have indulged will gradually lose their power over us.

If we have a heavenly calling, what will be our hope? If we are strangers here, where is our home? This world cannot improve, because the devil is in it, thwarting everything that is good, suggesting everything that is evil, and raising up preachers and teachers to pick to pieces God's blessed book. Men listen to such preachers. Men are eager after a book that has a spice of infidelity in its pages, one that will try to deny some of the truths of the Bible; such as books that advocate the doctrine of the non-eternity of punishment, the non-inspiration of Scripture, &c. Men are eager after them; and why? Because they are Satan's books; and because men like to follow their own self-will, and do not value Jesus as they ought.

Perhaps some may say, they read these books to refute them. No. If you see poison, you do not take it in order to get an antidote. If you get a taste of it, it may be death. I would advise you not to touch the book that has the stamp of death on it. We must *believe* God's word, and look on with increasing hope

to the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The appearing of Him who is the great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, is called "that *blessed* hope." It is the hope full of blessing, because we shall then see Him as He is, and be like Him. We shall reach the fulness of blessing; we shall be perfectly happy; we shall be in fulness of joy, and have pleasures for evermore. Anything short of this will not satisfy the soul. The blessed Lord's promise will then be fulfilled—"I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am ye may be also." Nothing can satisfy the believer but Christ Himself; to see Him as He is; to behold Him face to face; to know Him as we are known; to be with Him for ever; to be like Him; so that all regrets at our short-comings, all lamentations because of our evil hearts, all groans, all sighs, all tears, will be ended for ever; and we shall be satisfied with ourselves, because we shall be like Him.

The expectation of the Lord's return is our hope, because it will be the moment of resurrection. "For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) This is no spiritual coming, as it is sometimes erroneously termed; but we expect the Lord Himself, and we expect an actual change of our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His body of glory.

His appearing will be also the time when we receive the crown of righteousness. The apostle says, "Hence-

forth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." It will be the time of complete salvation; for now we are saved only by hope. We receive the salvation of our souls; but salvation as a perfect thing, both as regards soul and body, will not be till Christ appears. "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." It will be the moment of eternal life in all its fulness of enjoyment, and the completion of the mercy of God; "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude 21.) It will be glory, the final act of grace, "the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter i. 13.)

Look through the epistles, and see how often this coming of Christ is mentioned; and why? Because it is the one only hope of the Church. It may be misunderstood now, but at His coming all will be settled.

The believer says, "I want Christ;" "I must see Christ;" "Show me Christ;" "Give me Christ." Nothing will content him short of Christ Himself; and though to depart and be with Christ is far better than being here, yet even that state of the departed spirit is an imperfect condition. The full activities and enjoyment of life in glory will not be realized until the resurrection morning, when the living will be changed, and the dead saints raised, and we shall be all caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thess. iv. 17.)

SECOND ADDRESS.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

MATTHEW xiii. 11.—“It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.”

DEAR FRIENDS,—The twelfth chapter of Matthew closes thus: “Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But He [the Lord] answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

Here for the first time the Lord owns a *new* relationship, another distinct family whom He claimed as His own kindred; a family not in the flesh, but born of God. Whosoever would do the will of His Father which is in heaven, whosoever had the spirit of obedience to His Father, and, therefore, whosoever were born of God, such would be His new kindred, and would form a new family.

“The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were

gathered together unto Him, so that He went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore."

It is important to see the new family thus recognized by the Lord Jesus as distinct from the multitude, and even from His own kindred after the flesh; for the parables that follow have reference to the two companies—one composed of true believers, born of God; the other, of mere professing Christians, claiming to be Christ's, but having no real relationship to Him. These parables are seven in all. They are divided into three parts. First, the parable of the sower, with its interpretation. Secondly, the parables of the tares and wheat, and of the mustard seed, and of the leaven hid in three measures of meal, followed by the interpretation of the parable of the tares and wheat. And thirdly, the three closing parables of the treasure, the pearl, and the net, spoken alone to His disciples. If we keep in memory these divisions, they will help us in some measure to perceive the distinctive meanings of the parables; four being spoken to the whole company, and the other three to the disciples alone in the house.

Let us now turn to the parables themselves. The first, that of the sower, is of very general import. It does not directly speak of the kingdom of heaven as the others do, although it is evidently included amongst the "mysteries of the kingdom." (See *v.* 11.) It is introduced by the Lord without any preface. "And He spake many things to them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow."

The Son of man in this parable takes a new and humble position—that of a sower. Instead of coming with the clouds of heaven, and receiving “a dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him,” as described in the book of Daniel, and in the glory, majesty, and power in which He will come hereafter, and in which He was expected, He speaks of Himself as a lowly sower.

There could scarcely be a more contrasted character, or a more lowly action, because a sower simply scatters the seed; he does not make it grow; he cannot direct it aright as to where it should fall; he scatters it broadcast, and leaves it to God to watch over it. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ then took, and still takes, the lowly place.

If we pursue the parable, we find that the sowing even of such a Sower is unsuccessful as to three quarters of the seed. The seed—the pure Word—is good, and full of vitality, and yet it is unsuccessful.

The Lord first speaks of the wayside, the beaten path. Here good seed finds not the slightest entrance beneath the surface of the soil. This is a very common, every-day occurrence. A great deal of the Word of God, a great deal of the seed of life, falls upon a heart that has become hard and cold through the ordinary ways of life; not necessarily of sin or vice, though *they* tend to sear the conscience, but the ordinary indifference of the human heart through common habits and customs. Such a hearer hears, but does not admit the Word within; and by constant hearing the heart

becomes more hard, like a path trodden down by constant passing over.

How often have some of you, dear hearers, listened to the gospel and heard the truth? What impression has it made upon you? Has it gone beneath the surface? or has it been immediately plucked out of your heart?

The wayside hearer hears, and hears again; but never comes to a knowledge of the truth; for Satan is watching, and he plucks up the seed as soon as it is sown. It is not buried under any depth of earth, and Satan, the outside bird, plucks it out.

I fear that in this day very little is thought about the power of the devil. In fact, his very existence is often denied. He is only thought of as an evil influence which takes effect upon the heart through example or associations, and his real presence and power are denied. But *there is* a dark and fearful being called Satan. That being has his hosts, his rule and authority, and his deadly power. Poor helpless man is in the grasp of this terrible demon, and has no power against him. Man proved himself, even in his innocency, unable to stand against him; and ever since Adam's fall in the garden man has been lorded over by the god of this world. Demons fill the air. If we had vision to see a spirit, we should see this very place filled with devils and angels, we should see Satan acting through his agents in this room, and, it may be, plucking the seed out of your hearts.

It is said of these wayside hearers, that they do *not understand*. They have no hearts to understand. The

word "understand" in Scripture is commonly connected with the heart; and if the inclination, desire, and will be not to understand, there is no understanding, and Satan plucks the seed out of the heart.

The next kind of hearers is somewhat better. "Some seed fell upon stony ground." The seed immediately springs up. The very shallowness of the soil induced this rapid growth; but when the sun was up, when tribulation or persecution arose because of the word, by-and-by they were offended. The seed withered as quickly as it grew. It had rapidly sprung up, from the shallowness of the soil; it rapidly withered, from having no root in itself.

Here the Lord describes those persons who receive the word with joy, but the conscience is not reached. There is no trouble of soul, no distress of conscience, no conviction of sin; a pleasurable excitement is all that is felt, and a shallow reception of the truth is the result, which will not abide a day of trial.

I fear the gospel is too often received in this way; and I fear also that many preachers of the gospel are so desirous of seeing the seed spring up on the spot, that they give but a superficial testimony. If the gospel be preached in a way that is attractive to the natural heart, and that affects the feelings; if it be all smooth, all easiness, with no accompanying testimony of judgment, of hell, of eternal wrath; no description of the ruin of the sinner, of his lost condition,—the heart and feelings may be touched, but the seed will, in all probability, wither away when trouble and persecution come.

It is one of the surest evidences of the real work when a person can go through persecution, and stand. If, on the other hand, he quails under the sneers and jeers of the ungodly, the seed has no depth of root; the ploughshare of conviction has not done its work in the heart, and the seed withers away.

The next seed is that sown amongst thorns. We may trace progress in this parable; in the wayside the seed found no place at all; a little sprang up from the rocky ground, and withered; still further growth was reached by that which fell among thorns, but ultimately the thorns choked it. The cares, and pleasures, and deceitfulness of riches make progress with the seed, and finally overpower it.

Perhaps there are some here who have, either by cares or by the deceitfulness of riches, had the word choked in them. It may have sprung up a little, and made a fair show for the season, and then has come prosperity and the deceitfulness of riches, or adversity with its cares, and the word has been choked.

Why are riches deceitful? Because they allure and cheat the soul of the everlasting riches; they delude, and make the possessor think that he has obtained something of value, when he really has but a handful of dust. The fruit which would last eternally is choked, and the seed is unfruitful.

Why do cares equally destroy the fruitfulness of the word? Because they fill the heart, and leave no room for meditation. They engross equally with riches; the poor, as well as the rich, fail in their faith; the one from their anxieties, the other from their fulness.

Israel in the wilderness sinned in their murmurings when in need: Israel in the land sinned through pride and self-complacency; fulness of bread was their snare.

One only portion of the good seed succeeded—that which fell into good ground; ground well ploughed up, prepared beforehand by the husbandman. It is well, dear friends, if the ploughshare of conviction has gone deep into our hearts. It is well if the Word has found a deep lodgment where the devil cannot find it; where the heat of opposition or tribulation cannot scorch it; in good ground, from whence the thorns have been weeded out. It is well if this is the case. The seed takes time to grow and mature; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. There will be a harvest, either thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold.

Some produce more than others, because some have less of these various kinds of ground in the heart. We all have a mixture in our hearts; a wayside portion, a rocky portion, and a thorny portion; and where these are considerable in proportion to the good soil, there will only be thirty fold; where they are less, there will be sixty; where still less, a hundred fold. It should be our business as believers to root up the thorns, and to plough up the wayside ground, so that there may be good lodgment for the seed, and that it may bring forth abundantly.

This was the Lord's first parable. It must have startled His disciples to hear of Him, whom they expected to take His kingdom in power, coming as a

humble sower; still more must they have been astonished to think that any of the seed which He sowed would be unproductive.

The Lord said (*v.* 52), that "every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." *These* are not the old things. The old things are found in the Old Testament; such as the reign of the Son of man over the earth in glory, the stone cut out without hands smashing to pieces the nations and filling the earth. The disciples knew these things. They knew that Israel was to rule the earth. These were the old things which they had been accustomed to expect; but the new things were the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

The parable of the sower is the beginning of this revelation of new things; and instead of promising prosperous seed-time and harvest, the Lord began by telling them that three-quarters of the seed would not be productive.

After interpreting the parable of the sower, the Lord next spoke the parable of the wheat and tares. In this parable the Lord added another startling fact, that not only three-fourths of the good seed would be unproductive, but also that there would be another sower, who would sow tares (*darnel*), bad seed, throughout the field.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his

enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." Thus the kingdom of heaven would not be an unmixed rule of good. This was one of its mysteries. It was to begin with no open manifestation, but during its secret commencement and progress, the field (the world) would have in it two sowers, and two kinds of seed. One, the Son of man, sowing good seed; the other, Christ's enemy, the devil, sowing bad seed.

The expression, "kingdom of heaven," used only in the gospel of Matthew, is almost synonymous with that of the "kingdom of God;" but there is this difference, the kingdom of heaven rather expresses the rule of certain *heavenly* principles which are introduced into this earth, and meet with direct opposition from Satan, and which will not prevail until he be cast out of the earth. The kingdom of God points to God Himself as the One who is the power and authority of the rule. The word "kingdom of heaven" is taken from the book of Daniel (chap. iv. 3, 25, 26, 34)—"The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men;" "The heavens do rule;" "The King of heaven." See also ii. 44, vii. 14, 18, 22, 27. This kingdom of heaven spoken of in mystery is this present time, when there is no outward manifestation whatever of the power of Christ. As regards everything passing around us, it seems as if God were out of sight: there is no token of His power or presence. Men do as they please; Satan "lords" it over the world; and it is only weakness that characterises those that are the good seed. The kingdom, therefore, is simply a mystery.

The Lord speaks of it here as of a man who sowed good seed ; but his enemy sowed tares, and went his way. Directly the gospel had effect upon this world *Satan* came with his imitation, and adopted a new plan which he had never used before. When Judaism existed, *Satan* never attempted to imitate the Jewish system. No other nation adopted Judaism, with its rites and ceremonies ; but very soon after the Son of man began to sow, the devil began his *imitation* of the good seed. He succeeded in setting up a mere profession of faith in Christ. He persuaded the nations to adopt the name of Christian, and blinded them by forms of Christianity.

It is said in the parable, while men *slept* his enemy came and sowed tares. *Satan* attempted to begin this sowing during the apostle Paul's ministry. Paul and Silas were at Philippi preaching Christ. They made an inroad, the first in Europe, upon *Satan's* territory. The devil was watching, and cast about what he should do to defeat them. He had two plans ; he would try fair means, and if that did not succeed he would try foul. Thus at first he sends a damsel after Paul and Silas, who said, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation." This was the devil's voice, however fair, however bland. Mark that damsel. She followed Paul and Silas with this reiterated tale ; she never got beyond it, but repeated it day after day. Paul was evidently at first somewhat deceived by it. He did not discern *Satan's* voice in the damsel. But she did this *many days*.

Dear friends, it is a questionable thing, if you are speaking the same thing *many days* concerning the way of salvation, without actually receiving salvation. If your testimony goes no further than an approval of the preacher, without appropriating to yourself what he preaches, you may begin to suspect that you are under the power of Satan, and not of God. It was this repetition that startled Paul. He was grieved, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."

What does it avail the sinner to be shewn the way of salvation unless he takes it? What is the use of a directing-post if a man only looks at it, and does not take the road? The servants of the Most High God are only directing-posts; they can show the way, but can do no more. A person must himself take the way. What was the use, therefore, of this damsel saying day after day, "These men show unto us the way of salvation," and never taking it?

This was Satan's first attempt to sow tares; his first attempt to bring in a mere acknowledgment of truth without its vital power, and to satisfy the soul with this mere form of confession. But the servants were awake, and therefore for a time he was hindered. He had next recourse to violence. Paul and Silas were cast into prison.

Soon after this, the Lord's servants *slept*; and the enemy has diligently sown his tares among the wheat, until the tares have become the great crop; for there are bundles of them, and the wheat is comparatively thin.

You will see in v. 28, if you turn to the original Greek, that the householder said unto his servants, "An enemy (*a man*) hath done this;" that is to say, the devil did it through human instrumentality. If I were asked what human device suggested by Satan has been most productive in spreading tares, I should reply, that fearful falsehood, *baptismal regeneration*. Men have been made Christians by baptism, and not by Christ, therefore wide and far is the delusion. Children are taught to say, By baptism we were made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. Many glory in this falsehood, and others continue in it, and apologize for it. It is the common basis upon which the stability of the Romish Church, the Church of England, and the Greek Church depend.

The tares are so wide-spread, that a preacher of the gospel has to spend much of his time in trying to convince his hearers that they are not Christians. This is the solemn condition of this world. This is what the Lord prophesied of in this parable.

"The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them."

The thought in the minds of the servants was to purge out of the world all hypocrites who had only the appearance without the reality of being children of the kingdom. But they might be mistaken in their power of discernment, and might root up the wheat whilst they thought to gather up the tares. Some

have argued from this, that false professors are to be allowed to unite with believers in church-fellowship; but you will observe that the field is not the Church, but the World; and the command to the believer is, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate."

The time of harvest is the time when "the Son of man will send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

The field will be cleared of the *living* tares and *living* wheat; the living tares will be bound in bundles for the burning. There will be bundles of every description. The angels will classify men into bundles of drunkards, atheists, philosophers, blasphemers, and reprobates—all calling themselves Christians. I say this solemnly, You will find your old associates in hell. You know the vulgar proverb, "Birds of a feather flock together;" you will find your companions who jested with you, who made a sport of religion, kindred spirits, bound with you in bundles for the furnace. God will use discrimination, and the angels know well who are of the wicked one, and who are Christ's.

Angels see the man in church or chapel, where he may bow with great apparent devotion: they see him also in his business, and at home, and they can discern whether his religion is real or not. We have a kind of detective police around us at all times. They will

bind the tares in bundles for the burning, and gather the wheat into the barn.

Is *this* success of Christianity and of the gospel? Alas, for those that think the world is getting better! Let them read this chapter of Matthew with common sense, and ask themselves, Can I explain this, and say the world is getting better, when I see that the time is coming for a *separation* of tares from wheat, not for *converting* the tares into wheat?

The next parable is the parable of the mustard seed. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field;" a little seed at first. The gospel was that little seed; an insignificant seed. If it had continued small—if it had only germinated naturally, it would have been well; but it first grew up into the greatest among herbs, and at last became a tree, so that the birds of the air came and lodged in the branches thereof. "The fowls of the air" are explained by the Lord to represent the "wicked one." (See *v.* 19.)

I am aware that many will say that this parable represents the progress and success of the gospel; so that in due time it will extend its branches all over the earth,—all nations will be converted. But let us remember what the two preceding parables have already demonstrated. The first, that of the sower, declared that three-fourths of the good seed would not eventually bear fruit. The next, that of the wheat and tares, shewed that the field would eventually contain such an amount of weeds, that the kingdom of the

Son of man would need to be cleared of them in judgment; and they would be bound in bundles for the burning. The disciples were astonished at this. And what would their thought be about a great tree, in which the fowls of the air would shelter themselves? They would remember that in the books of their prophets the great tree was invariably an emblem of the power of the world used by man, in independence of God, for his own pride and exaltation, and doomed by God to be cut down. "The fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof. . . . Hew down the tree." (See Dan. iv. 10-14.) "I the Lord have brought down the high tree." (Ezek. xvii. 24.) "All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs," &c. (Ezek. xxxi. 3-10.) "And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan," &c. (Isa. ii. 10-17.)

The pure gospel of Jesus Christ, first preached in simplicity by the apostles, was being soon deteriorated by the worldliness of those who professed it; form and ceremony were connected with it; a priestly order was established, who were considered sole guardians of its mysteries. The lowly name of Jesus of Nazareth was degraded by the patronage of the great. The cross became a mere idolatrous object of worship; and, under Constantine, the corruption of vital Christianity was completed. The herb had become a great tree; nations were Christianized. The power of the world either protected the so-called religion, or the professed servants of Christ assumed the power of the world to themselves. The State found it convenient to succour the

Church, or the Church lorded it over the State. Power, wealth, titles, dignities, gorgeous apparel, splendid equipages, and sumptuous fare, were the distinguished characteristics of the so-called successors of the apostles. And the fowls of the air might comfortably nestle in the branches of this tree, and find even little occasion to pluck up the seed by the wayside, since but little of the pure word of God was sown. Such has been the rise and progress of Christianity.

Have I coloured this picture too highly? Will not the vengeance of God suddenly fall upon the vast professing body of nominal Christians, who perpetrate all kinds of violence and wickedness, and yet claim the name of Christ?

But there is something yet more melancholy. The Lord spake another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Here is corrupted dough hid in pure meal, till the whole mass, the three measures of pure meal, is all tainted by the sour dough.

Now let us see how the Lord Jesus Himself, and how the apostle Paul, uses this emblem of leaven. In Matthew xvi. 6, Mark viii. 15, Luke xii. 1 (which are the only places in the gospels where the word *leaven* occurs), the Lord Jesus tells His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, and of the leaven of the Sadducees, and of the leaven of Herod. Thus false doctrine, and hypocritical profession are described by the Lord as *leaven*.

The apostle also tells the Corinthians to "purge out the old leaven," and to "keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth;" and in Gal. v. 9, he speaks of a little leaven leavening the whole lump. It would be strange indeed, if in one only place in the Bible leaven were descriptive of something pure and holy, when in every other place it denotes that which is impure, corrupt, and hypocritical.

But because Christians are resolved to believe that things are improving, and the world is getting better, they turn this parable round, and tell us that LEAVEN is the gospel doing good all over the earth.

The three measures of meal are in Scripture first viewed as uncontaminated. The true Church of God is represented under this figure, as it was originally pure in doctrine and practice. It is a circumscribed body, and therefore defined by *three measures* of meal. But a woman *hid* the leaven in it. False doctrine, at first secretly brought in, spread its baneful influence, and soon the whole mass became leavened with evil.

You may ask me, Is this true of the Church of God? I verily believe it is. All of us in this room who are believers must be aware what false notions we have to get rid of in ourselves, and what false thoughts and perversions of truth we have to correct in others. Every system of the Christian religion at present in the world is either erroneous or defective in doctrine. Even the cardinal truth of justification by faith has to be daily contended for, as if it were some-

thing new. And believers themselves, for the most part, think it is a matter of attainment if they have peace in their souls. Children are early instructed in the falsehood, that if they are good God loves them, and they will go to heaven; but that God is angry with them, and does not love them, if they are naughty. I do not believe there is a true Christian in the whole world who has not to unlearn some false teaching which he has imbibed with his Christianity; and all who desire to know the whole truth will have every day to make an effort to UNLEARN, as well as to learn.

The first part of this wonderful chapter closes here. The outward appearance of the kingdom of heaven would be like a tree, which to the natural eye would seem flourishing, and which gave no symptom of decay or dissolution. The inward condition of even the true children of the kingdom would be leavened with evil and error. The whole of the four parables would fill the minds of the disciples with perplexity.

The Lord then dismissed the multitude, and retired into the house, and His disciples came unto Him, saying, "Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field." Evidently upon their understanding this parable depended their understanding the two others, and accordingly the Lord explained to them the mixed character of the kingdom of heaven during its continuance in mystery. He then added the last three. The first two of these must have greatly comforted them; for clearly the treasure hid is the precious thing in contrast with the great tree; the pearl of great price

is the pure thing in contrast with the leavened measures of meal.

In these last three parables the Lord does not use the word "*parable*." He says the "kingdom of heaven shall be like," &c. He ceased to speak in the hearing of the multitude, and was addressing persons who understood Him. He had His new family, His brethren, in the house.

He said, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." What is this hid treasure? Is it Christ? Has Christ ever been hidden? Has His truth ever been hidden? Is it not the exact contrary? Does the believer ever hide Christ? If he does, is he not acting contrary to the express command of Christ to confess His name? Yet interpreters tell us that Christ is the hidden treasure.

Again, mark what follows. "Which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." There is a hid treasure first, and when that is found it is again hidden; and the field is purchased by the finder at the cost of all he has for the sake of the treasure. What must the gospel of the grace of God have become when we are told that the sinner purchases Christ by giving up all that he has? Have any of us in this assembly given up everything as sinners in order to *purchase* salvation? Is it not the especial

peculiarity of the gospel that it proclaims Christ as the *gift* of God to the world? I decidedly say, that it is in the midst of our sins and ungodliness that Christ saves us. God commends His love toward us, that even while we were yet *sinners* Christ died for us. God justifies the ungodly. This popular interpretation of the treasure affords a convincing proof of the working of leaven in the three measures of meal; so that even the gospel itself is perverted, and a sinner is said to buy Christ, instead of Christ purchasing the sinner with His own blood.

Christ saw the treasure in the field. He had His own hidden ones mixed up in the world, and for the sake of redeeming them—His treasure—He gave up all He possessed, and bought the field. The Church is “the purchased possession.” “Ye are bought with a price.”

He has again hidden this treasure. The believer's life is hid with Christ in God. The true Christian walks about this world unknown and unnoticed. The world cares not for him, perceives not anything to admire in him, knows not that he is an heir of glory, understands not that he is a son of God. How the world will be startled when the day of manifestation comes! “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.” What a surprise will it be when the despised, outcast saints of God come with Christ to judge and rule the world! Oh, what a change! Christ has valued that treasure—His Church. He prizes it, and has spent His all to buy it.

This treasure is in contrast to the tree. The *tree* is the great outward aspect of the professing Church, spread out over the world, and doomed to destruction; while the hidden treasure is that which is purchased by Christ with His own blood, and which He will have with Him in glory for ever and ever.

We will now look at the other parable, that of the "merchant man seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

The treasure is an emblem of the Church as to its preciousness; the pearl is an emblem of its unity and purity. What is the value of a broken pearl? It is worthless. It must be whole, pure, and spotless. The Lord, for the sake of that glorious adornment which He will wear by-and-by, made Himself poor, that we, through His poverty, might be rich. If you want to see the character of that pearl, read the Song of Solomon—"My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her . . . fair as the moon . . . fairest among women." (Cant. vi. 1, 9, 10.) "Thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair." "How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights." "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." (Cant. iv. 1, 7, vii. 6.)

The pearl is celebrated for its lustrous whiteness; and it is a pearl of great price when it is large and entire, without a flaw. The Church of God will display the unsullied purity of Christ, arrayed in shining

garments, "exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them;" garments washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. And it already has an unbroken unity, for which the Lord prayed, though it be divided, scattered, and torn with strife and dissension.

This parable is in contrast with the three measures of meal that were leavened. The Church, viewed in its actual condition on earth, has been corrupted by false doctrine, and has lost its unity and purity; but, as seen in the counsels of God, and in its true union with Christ, it retains its unbroken unity and its unsullied purity. The apostle Paul, whilst he tells the believers to purge out the old leaven, adds at the same time, "as ye are unleavened;" and whilst he tells them to endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit, says that there is *one body*.

If Christ has so spent His all, even to the giving up of His life for us, ought we not to seek to answer to His love in some little measure, by seeking to fulfil His wish that all may be one, and purifying ourselves, even as He is pure?

We can always please Him by obeying His Word, and following His blessed precepts. If we do this, though we are scattered, we shall certainly more and more come together. If we give up our self-will, and lay aside our self-importance, our selfishness, our pride, we shall inevitably draw nearer one to another, because we shall draw nearer to Christ. Love is the bond of perfectness, and we shall at least be aiming at that unity for which the Lord longs, and for which

He prayed. Oh, what a comfort to the heart to read these two beautiful parables!

The Lord concludes with the parable of the net, which at first sight appears to be a repetition of the parable of the tares and the wheat. But it is not really so. The net is the drag-net of the gospel. It has been dragged through the sea of peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. Every kind of fish is caught by it. When the net is dragged to shore bad fish will be found amongst the good.

This is not Satan's imitation of the gospel, as in the case of the tares, but it is a result of the gospel itself. Bad fish are caught in the gospel net. The preacher can hardly discern between the bad and good. He hears the like profession of Christ from the lips of both. But when the day of separation comes they will be made manifest.

We read in Leviticus xi. 9-12 of fish that may be eaten, and of fish that are an abomination. The good fish are distinguished by fins and scales. The bad are those which have no fins nor scales. Fish that could rise to the surface by reason of their fins, and could keep themselves clean from defilement by reason of their scales, might be eaten; but those fish that had no power to rise in the water, that frequented the muddy bottoms, and were covered with slime, and not with scales, were to be held in abomination. There are believers that swim low, that grovel at the bottom, and bury themselves in the mud of this world. However they may excuse themselves by saying, "It is my

duty to do this or that; or I am only doing my duty in my line of life," still, if they spend their time and lade themselves "with the thick clay" of this world, we may suspect that they have neither fins nor scales, and consequently are not taking the high swim which, as Christians, they ought to do. They do not remember the Lord's word, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." (Mark viii. 36.) On the other hand, there are many Christians who are taking a high course, and keeping above the slime and filth of this present evil age, keeping themselves unspotted from the world, and hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Are you, dear friends, swimming high or low? Are you making a compromise with this world? Are you attempting that impossibility—to "make the best of both worlds?" Are you keeping your lives, or losing them? Are you playing the losing game to win, or the winning game to lose?

The day of separation is near at hand; the day will soon come when it will be manifested who are on the Lord's side, and who are not. We may deceive one another; we may deceive ourselves; but we cannot deceive God. It behoves us to see what we are doing, and whether our profession of Christ is real and true because we love Jesus, or is merely a salve to our consciences.

This is the last parable of the seven. The Lord had taken a complete survey of the progress and results of the kingdom of heaven during the time of

its mysteries, the period comprised between His resurrection and His return to set up the kingdom in power.

I might appeal to your knowledge of facts to justify the interpretation of these parables which I have given. I might call your attention to the state of every city, of every town, of every street in every town, yes, almost of every house in every town, to vindicate the judgment I have expressed as to the fact that the vast mass are unconverted, and the few are saved. But I forbear. I would rather you would draw your conclusions from the word of God itself, and decide from that whether the Lord is coming in person to take up His Church to Himself, and to gather out of His kingdom for judgment the mass of unconverted professing Christians, and begin another dispensation, during which Satan will be banished from the earth, and the Lord alone will be exalted; or whether the gospel will make such rapid progress in converting sinners, that the time is near when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

May we be better and better instructed in the mysteries of the "kingdom of heaven;" yet a little while, and the mystery will be no mystery at all. Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

"SURELY I COME QUICKLY. AMEN. EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

THIRD ADDRESS.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

- 2 TIMOTHY iii. 1.—“In the last days perilous times shall come.”
LUKE xvii. 26.—“As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.”
MATTHEW xvi. 3.—“Ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?”
1 THESSALONIANS v. 3.—“When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.”
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DEAR FRIENDS,—You will observe that the Lord alludes in Luke xvii. to the days of Noah and Lot; and to the days of Noah in Matthew xxiv. The chapter in Luke should be read carefully, especially the latter part.

The Pharisees asked the Lord a question about the kingdom of God, and the Lord, after answering them, turns to His disciples, and instructs *them* definitely as to His own coming by-and-by to this earth. In that instruction He uses this sentence—“As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they

sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.”

Let us look, therefore, into the days of Noah as described in the book of Genesis, seeing there is an analogy drawn between those days and the days preceding the coming of the Son of man.

Previous to doing so, let me ask, Why is any record given in the Scripture about the days that preceded the flood? Why is the history of a past world recorded at all? True, the record is but short; yet it contains in a small compass a good deal of information. Why has God thought fit to hand this down to us?

There are two reasons, I believe. In the first place, the Lord would have us to know that the people who are living at this end of the world are the same in character as those who lived before the deluge. Man is an unchanged and unaltered being; no education, no discipline, nothing that can be done for him, can improve him. God has shewn us this, not only in the dispensation before the flood, but in the history of the Jews. God chose a people, separated them off, hedged them in, became their instructor, protected them, and preserved them; and how did they turn out? They killed His blessed Son. In the days before the flood God left men very much to themselves. He shows there what man becomes when left to himself. When placed under proper teaching and proper rules, as Israel was, he is still the same. And when under a testimony of grace, as in the gospel, his history will end in manifesting the same evil propensities as before

the deluge. Man is incorrigible. That word of the Lord Jesus Christ is proved true—"Ye must be *born again*." Man cannot be improved as regards God's judgment of him; he must be created anew.

Another reason for this history before the flood is, to warn us of coming judgment. In Genesis iv. and vi. we read what was the state of mankind before the flood, and by observing the moral declension of man as there recorded, and comparing it with what we see around us at the present time, we shall perceive the same evils prevailing now as caused God to sweep the earth with the deluge, and, therefore, may expect similar actings of God in our day.

In Ecclesiastes the preacher says, that he has "weighed one thing after another to find out the reason" (chap. vii. 27, margin), and he tells, as the result of this diligent search, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

This was the great discovery of the preacher. Inventions began directly man ceased to be upright. As long as man continued upright he had nothing to conceal, and nothing to improve; but immediately he fell, his inventive faculty came into exercise, and the first use to which he turned it was to discover a method of concealing his nakedness. "They knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." Why? To conceal from one another the results of their sin. Who taught Adam and Eve to sew, and thus to hide their shame one from another? It was the first discovery, the first inven-

tion; and it succeeded for a time. They had quieted their consciences, and were at ease in one another's presence. But the voice of the Lord God was heard in the garden, and then their invention served not in the presence of God. They found that they were naked still, and hid themselves behind the trees in the garden.

Look at the second invention. Cain brought an offering of the fruits of the ground to God. The first invention of man was to quiet his conscience before his fellow; the second was to make his conscience easy before God. You remember the melancholy history that follows Cain's offering of his own devising: God rejected his offering, which brought anger into his countenance; and when he saw his brother's offering accepted, he slew him.

The first question God asked of man was, "Adam, where art thou?" the second was, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" He first demands of man where he himself has wandered; and next, what has become of his brother. Man first got away from God by sin; and next, he murders his brother. He breaks his allegiance with God, and then violates all human ties.

Cain then deliberately goes out from the presence of God. God does not drive him out; but he willingly leaves the presence of the only one that could pardon, that could forgive. A child was then born to him, and he builded a city, and called it by the name of his first-born, Enoch, which word means "*dedicated*." He dedicated his child to the world, and the city which he built was a memorial of this dedication. He went

out from the presence of God, and had nothing but this world to live for. He was a man of the world, and yet he was not without a religion; he first invented a religion, and then builded a city; and his family, following his example, spent their energies upon one object, that of making the world better, a more happy residence, endeavouring to blot out the results of the curse, and to live at ease in forgetfulness of God.

There is another Enoch, another dedicated man—not of Cain's line, but of Seth's—dedicated to God, and not to the world. He was the seventh from Adam, and was translated just at the time the world had arrived at its climax of iniquity.

“And unto Enoch was born Irad, and Irad begat Mehujael, and Mehujael begat Methusael;” these last two have the name of God, *El*, attached to their names. This shows that Cain perpetuated the name of God in his family; but it was a mere pretence, a form. God might be in the name, but He was not in the heart.

Perhaps some parents in this room are contented with giving to their children fine Scripture names, without seeking to train them for God. Are these Scripture names indicative of what the children are brought up for; or is the name given and the child tossed into the world—left to serve the devil? Are you, dear friends, who are parents, training up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? or are you educating them for the world, and at the same time praying that God will save them from it? If this is your plan, you are practically

putting your child into the fire, and asking God to preserve him from being burnt; you are tempting God.

Next comes Lamech, and of him it is said that he had two wives, Adah and Zillah. He was a true descendant of Cain, for he perpetuates the spirit of the murderer, and boasts of his security; sheltering himself under the word of the Lord to Cain, "Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." He violates also the sacred tie of marriage, and takes two wives.

These two wives bare sons, who are remarkable men. "Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle"—the first antediluvian agriculturist; a benefactor of mankind by improving the breed of cattle. He has a name amongst Cain's descendants, a name of renown. It may be in those days they had their cattle shows, their agricultural fêtes; they gloried in their fat beasts, just as men do now. A man gained a reputation through the size of his ox, and the amount of fat with which his bullock was covered. The fat beasts were, it may be, adorned with ribbons, as at the present time; and a man was considered a man of renown, if he had fed a beast which had attained a few stone over the average weight.

Is this the object of man's life? Does he spend his days, his brief span of life, in trying to make a beast fat? and after he has accomplished this object of his ambition, does he glory in it as if he had done a great deed? Is this living for eternity? Is this living

to God? But so it is; man will endeavour to make himself a name, a short-lived reputation, even by means of a fat beast; and he is reckless as regards his immortal soul.

“And his brother’s name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.” This descendant of Cain, this child of the murderer and polygamist, Lamech, is not an agriculturist, not a man living in a tent and breeding cattle, but an inventor of sweet sounds—sounds which are said to humanize the brutal man. He was the originator of music; and that not warlike music, not the clang of the trumpet, the clash of the cymbal, or the roll of the drum, but the harp and organ—religious music, which is said to elevate the soul and inspire devotional feeling. It may be, in those far off days, they had their semi-religious concerts, in which the tedium of religious melodies was relieved by an occasional sprightly air. Or they may have had oratorios wholly of a religious character. Perhaps Cain’s descendants celebrated Abel’s death by setting it to music. Just as in modern days the descendants of those who crucified the Lord of glory celebrate His death in the oratorios of “the Messiah.”

Oh, think of what men are doing! Think of the words of the dying Lord set to music, and sung by ungodly lips to an ungodly audience, decked out in the vain fashions of an ungodly world. Is this honouring God? Well may He say, “Shall I not be avenged on such a nation as this?” This is an age of religious music; music to please the ear of the per-

formers, and not to please the ear of God, for He is only pleased with the melody of the heart. Services are intoned, choral services are advertised as fêtes for the world, vast choruses of human voices are gathered together to produce an effect, and the broad road to destruction seems to be jubilant with psalm, and hymn, and song.

“And Zillah [the other wife of Lamech], she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.” Thus was Cain’s name revived in one of his descendants. The little *accident* of his early life, the murder of his brother, was well nigh forgotten, or more than atoned for in the eyes of his progeny by the advantages they had derived from the city he had founded. His success in life had caused his name to descend as an honourable one, instead of its being branded as a murderer’s name. A principle of modern days is this, that success obliterates all the evil ways and means by which that success has been obtained, and crimes are leniently dealt with, provided the hero achieves a great reputation for himself.

This Tubal-cain was the great mechanic of the day—“an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.” What could we accomplish in these days if there were not numerous artificers in brass and iron? The railroads, the steam-engines, the iron-clad vessels, the destructive weapons of fearful magnitude are the results of diligent working in brass and iron. This man, therefore, who bears the name of Cain, may justly rank among the greatest benefactors of mankind.

His spirit is still at work, and has been largely developed in these days.

One daughter only is recorded of this family, borne by the same mother as bare Tubal-cain. His sister's name was Naamah, *sweetness*. Evidently a remarkable contrast with her brother, and yet of the same blood. Sweetness itself, but sweetness in the flesh. A sweet, delicate woman, with the heart of a Cain. Let us for a moment view the picture as thus presented to us in Gen. iv. A religion invented, a city built, agriculture advancing, religious music and its accompaniments making rapid strides, every work in brass and iron advancing to perfection, and feminine sweetness, grace, and beauty displaying itself; add to this a murderous spirit and a wanton violation of natural ties, and you have an antediluvian picture.

Does it look very different from what the world now is? I question whether, with all the progress, so-called, the world has made, it has surpassed the inventions of the family of Cain.

At the end of this chapter is a solemn sentence: "Then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah," without any mention of sacrifice or altar. Mark where this sentence occurs again. "There he [Abraham] builded an altar unto Jehovah, and called upon the name of Jehovah." (Gen. xii. 8.)

Abraham called upon the name of the Lord with an altar and a sacrifice. He knew that God was not to be worshipped except through the blood of the sacrifice, which foreshadowed the death of Christ. Cain's family, imitating their ancestor, worshipped Jehovah

without blood. This was Cain's sin at the commencement, and his family perpetuated the sin. They knew not the value of the blood. The blood that Cain shed—not in sacrifice, but in anger—called out from the ground against him. Remember, if you do not call upon the Lord through the blood of His Son, you are nothing but a descendant of Cain. You may claim to be a Christian, but you are only imitating Cain if you call upon God without trusting in the precious blood of Christ.

This family, whose history ends here, multiplied on the earth; and God selected another family, that of Seth. If these families had kept themselves distinct, the Seth family would perhaps have been small, because the Cain family would probably have kept them down by strife and murder. In the process of time, however, the family of Seth, which should have kept itself distinct in its generation, saw the daughters of men, descendants of Cain, that they were fair—the Naamahs, who attracted them by their sweetness, and they took them wives of all which they chose. They were attracted by beauty, and they acted in self-will; they pleased themselves.

"As they chose" is a sad phrase. It is man's choice, and not God's choice. It is the first symptom of declension in the family of God. It is the current phrase of the day. "I make my own choice; I do what I like, what I think best." The result of this intermingling of the two families of Seth and Cain was, that children were born "which became mighty men which were of old—men of renown."

The same result has followed the mingling of the Church with the world in this day. If the Christian Church had said to the unconverted man, the heathen—for the unconverted man is nothing better than a heathen—"You *cannot* worship the Lord with us; we will pray for you, and do you all the good we can, but we will not own you as a Christian; your soul will be imperilled by it, we must separate from you," the unregenerate family of man would perhaps have murdered many of God's children, and made them a little flock, hiding themselves in dens and caves of the earth. But the Church of God has formed 'alliances with the world; has made ungodly compacts with the unbelievers, and the result is that persecution has ceased, and the children of God have helped on the world in its ambition, its scientific projects, its wars; and the world has believed that all its great enterprises have the sanction of God.

In the midst of this seeming outward prosperity the antediluvian age waxed worse and worse—all flesh had corrupted his way. "God saw the iniquity of man, that it was great, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually. . . . The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence."

God could bear this state of things no longer; His longsuffering had lasted 120 years, while the ark was preparing; but the state of mankind waxed worse and worse. "And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have

created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

This state of things had grown to this height of evil, owing chiefly to the mingling of the family of God with the family of man. There was *one* exception; Noah kept himself separate; "he was perfect in his generations;" "he walked with God."

And now let me ask you a question: Do you think the state of human society is anything better now than it was before the flood? I believe that you will find in these latter days the same worldliness, the same wickedness, the same corruption, the same evils, the same licentiousness, the same violence as characterized the antediluvians. In fact, the world is making advances fast towards the same state of things.

Let us turn to the description of the last days given by the inspiration of God in 2 Tim. iii. 1: "In the last days perilous times shall come." Perilous to whom? Perilous to God's children; perilous, because of the mingling of truth and error; perilous, not on account of open persecution, but because of subtle reasonings and delusive appearances; errors affecting to be truth; bitter called sweet; lies circulated under the pretence of honouring God; therefore, most perilous. Are the last days getting better? They are PERILOUS. Are they days of improvement? They are the most PERILOUS of any days. Some people will tell you that the world is improving; God says *perilous* times are coming, and that there shall come "scoffers in the last days, walking after their own lusts."

Who is to be believed—God, or people's thoughts? Who is true? "Let God be true, and every man a liar." God's word is true; and therefore I charge you to look into God's word for the answer to the smooth things that you hear.

"Men shall be lovers of their own selves." Dear friends, is not this the fact now? Do not men in general love themselves, and sacrifice everything for themselves? They disregard God's word, and follow their own notions. They love their own way, and pursue their own thoughts.

And what is one natural consequence? "*Covetousness*," the next vice on the list. Has not this symptom of self-love reached a mighty height? Look at the panic lately in this city; what did it arise from? *Covetousness*. Men were gambling for millions.

Not now satisfied with hundreds of thousands, they must speculate for millions. I can remember the time when it was thought a great failure if a man failed for a hundred thousand pounds; but now such a sum is a mere trifle: four millions, six millions, twelve millions, twenty millions, are the inconceivable amounts at which failures in the banking world have been estimated. A man, or a set of men, gamble with the money of others, and ruin thousands by their plausible schemes and tempting baits. A fine scheme is concocted, large interest is promised, and the covetousness of men's hearts is attracted, and they have lost their all by attempting to add a few pounds per cent. to their income. Covetousness has been the cause of these recent failures. If the word of God had been attended

to, "Be content with such things as ye have," there would not have been such wide-spread misery.

I believe we have as yet only had a little sample. "The awful panic," as people truly called it, has passed. The mighty merchants of the day are reviving, and they will be trusted with as much readiness as before; and, if the Lord tarry, the future crash will far exceed the present. Man's heart does not get better, nor will he learn by experience.

Look at the next word—"boasters." This is another sign of the last days. Great swelling words of vanity fill the ordinary speech of men, and great deeds of prowess are vaunted, and great men are deified. Life is risked in endeavouring to achieve a name, by climbing some perilous mountain height, that the feat may be boasted of in after times. Daring exploits are undertaken, nation vies with nation in its arrogancy. Even the words used in common speech are extravagant, and too frequently by the Lord's people, so that scarcely a sentence is uttered without some such word as "awful," "horrible," "dreadful," "tremendous," "fearful," and the like.

"Proud, blasphemers." Boastfulness nourishes and is nourished by pride; and pride exalts the miserable, fallen creature, so that he blasphemes God. This is a day of rebuke and blasphemy. Wherever God's Word is denied or wilfully perverted, it is blasphemy against God. And we see this token now. Not, as heretofore, amongst the "Carlyles" or the "Tom Paines" of the day, but amongst the bishops and deans of the Church of England, and professors of the universities. God's

Word is questioned or set aside, the atonement denied, the grand truths of the gospel characterized as puerilities, the Bible treated as a book written for a by-gone ignorant age, and unworthy of credit in this advanced nineteenth century.

Neology has crept into dissenting pulpits also. The denial of eternal punishment and of eternal existence has spread wide and far. A smattering of Greek and Hebrew is sufficient to delude souls willing to be deceived. A sickly sentimentality, which robs God of His great attributes of righteousness, justice, and truth, is paraded, and attracts the weak-minded. Any novelty is hailed, and received by itching ears; and what with the geology, the astronomy, and science of the day, blasphemy of every shade is more or less mixed up with the creeds of men.

Let us stand for the truth of God, for the truth once delivered to the saints, and contend for it. No new doctrine, no progress—"once delivered"—not to be added to, not to be controverted, not to be suspected or opposed—complete. Christ, the wisdom of God, and the power of God.

The authority of God's Word being denied or trifled with, the natural result is, the authority of the earthly parent is also set aside,—a wide-spread sin, apparent in all classes of society. Children early exhibit self-will; and this being unchecked, either by the Word of God or the authority of the parents, grows with their growth, strengthens with their strength, and independence and insubjection are the result. The fault is originally in the parents themselves. They do not

take the Word of God as their guide. They indulge their children when young. They let them read what books they like, form what connections they please, go to worldly places of amusement, dress in the fashion of the day, and then wonder at their disobedience, and disregard of their commands. The common words used by a child in speaking of his father are indicative of disrespect and want of affection. These are leading features of society. Of course there are many happy exceptions.

“Unthankful, unholy.” Has there been any national acknowledgment of God’s mercy in staying the cattle plague in the first place, or arresting the cholera in its deadly progress? I fear the times are past when such thanksgivings would have been rendered to a merciful God. Everything is now traced to what are termed “natural causes.” And benefits are derived, gifts are given, plagues are stayed, health is restored, but no sound of thanksgiving ascends to the gracious God. If men are unthankful we may be sure they will be unholy.

“Without natural affection.” Look at the list of fearful crimes which every week pollute the pages of a common newspaper. For the most part they exhibit the violation of natural ties. Murders of parents by their children, or of children by their parents. Sometimes wife and children swept away by the hand of the husband and father. Scarcely a week passes but the eye is attracted by some placard announcing a dreadful crime of some kind, which outrages all feelings of humanity. The condition of society is becom-

ing disorganized, for the latter days are quickly advancing.

“Truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded.” What are treaties worth now? They used to be held in some respect in former days, but we have of late seen them violated without any hesitation—treated as mere pieces of waste paper. What is the value now of a man’s word? Men had formerly some regard to their reputation. But if by telling falsehoods, either as regards another, or with respect to some scheme or project, he can succeed in amassing wealth, a man will run the risk of losing his reputation, well knowing that he will be highly esteemed still, if only he be rich. The good and upright are little esteemed in the world compared with the successful. Then, look at Fenianism. Traitors, most bloodthirsty in their desires, sapping the very foundations of civil society. Traitors in the army and the navy, spreading themselves no one knows to what extent.

Time will fail me to go through at length other characteristics of the latter days. I would only remark on one or two features. The ridicule to which almost all human dignities are exposed. It is the aim of two leading papers to turn everything into a joke. Crowned heads, princes, ministers of state, magistrates, &c., are caricatured, and those powers that be, which God tells us to respect, are made the butt of satire. Men are not afraid to “speak evil of dignities.”

The relationship also between master and servant is well nigh abolished. “Trades’ unions,” met by

“masters’ unions,” destroy all sympathy between the employer and employed, and the struggle is which shall outwit the other.

“Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ;” or, as it might be translated, pleasure-lovers rather than God-lovers. Railroad communication has greatly tended to foster this evil of the heart. Only take a look at the walls placarded with announcements of cheap excursions, races, regattas, fêtes, shows of all kinds, theatrical amusements, concerts, balls, spectacles of every description, and then say whether this is not, of all others, a pleasure-loving age.

The devil’s great design is not to allow men to have a day’s respite from some of his allurements,—not to give them time to think. The Lord’s day is especially devoted to pleasure-seeking, and large masses of the population are conveyed in various directions on that day. And this is not confined to large cities, but the villages and hamlets are infected with the mania. One would think that human beings had nothing to do but to seek their pleasure and amusement.

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” All this pleasure seeking, and a great deal of the open vice and sin characterized in these verses, is covered over with a form of godliness. The young men and young women of fashionable life have become of late *devotional* in appearance. The churches are decorated by the hands of ladies. Altar pieces and vestments are worked as religious service. Matins are frequented ; the altar is bowed to most reverently in the morning, and the night is spent in the ball-room or at the opera.

Forms and ceremonies occupy the senses, and leave the worshippers at liberty to indulge any lusts of the flesh they may please,—popery in various shapes, but ending in the same results. A sensual religion makes vast strides, and its handmaid, infidelity, conceals herself under a form of godliness, because it would not be respectable openly to profess infidelity. But where is the power? Well may the Lord say, “When the Son of man cometh, shall He find *faith* in the earth?”

Religion is at the present day especially addressed to the senses. It is sensational. It partakes of the characteristics which mark the novels, the theatrical amusements, and the poems of the day. All is for effect; whether it be a sensational drama which deals in startling and unnatural incidents and crimes, or religious service with its processions, dresses, decorations, and incense.

We will now turn and consider the political aspect of the world. We are only just drawing breath after a great conflict and strife in which Prussia, the German States, and Austria have been involved, which sprang up as rapidly as it has terminated. Armies have mustered on either side, a terrible battle is fought, blood is shed in streams, the wounded are left groaning and dying in misery by hundreds, wives and families are deprived of their support at a stroke. Few care to think about the woe and desolation thus caused; the ambition of one or two monarchs or their ministers genders the strife, peace is proclaimed, new boundaries are agreed upon, and the whole affair becomes a matter

of yesterday, and is forgotten to make way for some other engrossing subject.

But do you think that this lull of peace will long continue? Another and a more extensive conflict is looming in the distance. Already are ominous sounds muttered by the emperor of the French, and England can only escape the embroilment by yielding her first place among the nations, and submitting to be humbled for the sake of preserving her commerce. Look at America's unsettled state—a state almost of anarchy. Look at Italy. Look at Spain. The clouds which have long threatened will ere long burst, and a fearful crash it will be when the murderous spirit of Satan is again let loose. Meanwhile, men are eagerly preparing weapons of deadly magnitude and power, and the inventive faculty of man is devising new weapons of destruction.

“The Lord is at hand.” These are amongst the tokens that His coming draweth nigh. The Lord Himself, in describing His approach, gives other indications besides those mentioned in Genesis vi. as the precursors of the flood: “They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

Men are occupied in right things, but occupied in them with a wrong spirit. There is no harm in eating, drinking, marrying or giving in marriage; but is it right to be engrossed in them, to live for them, to be occupied solely with them? Is God to have no place

in the thoughts of man? Is Christ to be utterly banished out of their minds?

The world before the flood was full of violence and wickedness; and those who were not openly vile were true to one principle—self-indulgence. They were engrossed with the present moment, and were not thinking of the future.

In the present day, also, one part of society is religious and orderly—eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage; another part is disorganized—given up to violence and vice; both are equally living without Christ, and both are described by God as a sign that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

As surely as God swept the earth with a deluge, so surely He will visit it with flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who claim the name of Christians without the reality. This country will be the very first to feel His dreadful vengeance, because it has had more light than any country in the world. All that man is doing in the way of religion, such as building and adorning fine churches and chapels, to please his own eye, and not for God's glory, will be swept with the besom of destruction at the Lord's return, and the poor deluded victims who have trusted in outward formalities, and not in the blood of Christ, will meet with sudden destruction from the presence of the Lord.

The most delusive word is "peace." "When men shall say, *Peace* and *safety*, then sudden destruction cometh upon them." When men begin to congratulate one another that the world is at peace, when they have wearied themselves out with fighting battles, and have

found it more to their own interests to have a compact for peace, when a confederacy is formed by nations to keep peace, *then*, in a moment, they will be overtaken by the sudden outbreak of vengeance from on high, and there will be no escape. I tremble when I hear the word "*peace*." God is indeed the God of peace; but the only way of peace which He has made is by the blood of His Son. All that is called peace apart from Him is only the devil's delusion. And before the God of peace can establish a time of peace on this earth, He must bruise Satan, and cast Satan's followers into the lake of fire.

Dear friends, in conclusion, one short word about the door of escape from the coming judgment, from your sins, and from *yourselves*. That door is Christ—Christ crucified, nailed in helplessness to the tree, rejected, despised, and cast out by man, treated by men as they pleased, and given up by God into their hands, to show, on the one hand, how men would treat God Himself if they had the power, and on the other hand, to make a way of escape for every sinner that trusts in Him.

God loved the very sinners that slew His Son—they were the first to whom God sent the message of His love by the apostle Peter. Thus there is a way of escape. Not by a dressed-up and decorated religion of choir, surplice, organ, and pipe. No; but by faith in a dying Christ, a trust in the naked Jesus on the tree, bearing all the malice of men, and enmity of Satan, and above all, bearing the wrath of God. If you try

to add to that death of Christ anything of your own, you mar the most precious thing God has ever placed in this world.

If you wear gilded crosses upon your necks as baubles, you have no regard or reverence for the blessed Christ. If you need a figure or an emblem, you have not the reality—the faith. A saved sinner, who has Christ revealed in him, needs not a wooden or a gilt cross to remind him of the tree where the blessed Lord bare his curse. My sins, my temptations, and my wants remind me of the death of Christ.

Ah! let that blessed Jesus that died be *alone* your trust. Let Him into your heart. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” The Lord loves to enter in, and dwell in the heart of any poor sinner who will receive Him.

Oh! believe in Jesus. Let your heart’s affections and faith fix on Him, and then you have life everlasting. You need nothing more. If you trust Him, He is yours for ever. Then let the day of wrath, the day of judgment, come. Before one drop of the cup of wrath is poured upon this earth, all the believers will be caught up to meet their Lord in the air, to begin their hallelujah above, and to make the heavens resound with the mighty triumph of their joy.

FOURTH ADDRESS.

THE FOUR JUDGMENTS.

The Deluge. GEN. vi. The Cross. ISA. liii. At the Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 THESS. i. 7-9. The great white throne. REV. xx. 11-15.

DEAR FRIENDS,—We are living not only in remarkable times as regards the events passing around us, but in a remarkable period of this world's history as regards the past and the future. We look back and see two occasions on which God has poured out His judgments; we look forward and expect two future judgments. We stand midway between four judgments, in all of which we are more or less concerned.

We are concerned in the two past judgments. The one is a beacon of God to warn us of another outpouring of wrath close at hand; so that we may flee to Christ and be safe. The other points out God's wondrous mercy, in judging His own Son, in order that those who have merited His wrath may escape it altogether. We are concerned in the two future judgments: in that at the appearing of Christ, because it will be the grand test as to whether we are really waiting for Him and trusting Him; and we are

concerned in the last closing judgment of the Great White Throne, because then we shall see the equity of God's ways and dealings with sinners of every age and every clime. We shall escape these judgments if we trust in Jesus; and we shall see all the eternal counsels of God made manifest, either for everlasting happiness or everlasting misery.

The judgment of the deluge was avoided by Noah. "Warned of God of things never yet seen, he prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world." We are concerned in this judgment for this reason, that man is unchanged, God is unchanged, the devil is unchanged, and the world is unchanged. God is the same, man the same, Satan the same, and the world the same. If a judgment has already happened to this world, it is not unlikely, even if we had no revelation of it, that a judgment will again happen.

The world before the flood so increased in iniquity, that God swept it with a deluge, Noah and his family only escaping. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world has not mended it at all. Man, whether civilized or savage, is still the same. Civilization does not improve him, because he is, as regards God, utterly lost. The gospel, though it saves sinners out of the world, has not improved the world. We must keep this always in mind. The gospel was not a universal remedy for the improvement of the world itself; but when received by faith, it redeems out of the world; and man becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Man may be raised, by education and intellect,

above his fellows; but he is not thereby one bit rescued from the eternal torments he deserves, nor one atom advanced towards God.

If the world before the flood was destroyed by God, so this present world is hastening on to another destruction; because men, with all their intelligence, scientific progress, and inventions, have not sought God. They have not set their hearts first on God. Jesus Christ says, "Seek ye *FIRST* the kingdom of God and His righteousness." He does not say, "Seek ye first popularity, and wealth, and fame, and *next* the kingdom of God;" but, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God." Is this the rule and habit of mankind?

Noah was warned of God of things never yet seen. The people had never seen a deluge, probably not even a shower of rain; for it is said, "There went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." Noah believed God contrary to any evidence of senses, and contrary to the reasoning of the men around him. Moved by reverence for God, and not by fear of judgment, Noah prepared an ark for the saving of his house, and by this he "condemned the world."

Those of us who have sought the ark God has prepared condemn the world. We are living witnesses condemning the world, because we have fled to Christ as our refuge, and thus shew that we believe there is judgment coming. All those who do not flee to Christ prove that they do not believe there is a coming judgment. Either we are true, and they are false; or, we

are false, and they are true. There cannot be truth on both sides.

Noah condemned the world by building the ark; and a foolish thing that ark seemed to be. It was of vast length, narrow, without keel, with a flat roof, with only one door, and one window. Its interior must have been dark. It was pitched within and without with pitch, which added to its gloomy appearance. It looked like a huge long black coffin. Noah was 120 years in building it; and when it was completed, men must have said, "What a senseless structure! It has no beauty; it cannot float upon the water, for it has no keel. It cannot resist the torrents of water which are said to be coming; for it has no shelving roof. It is totally inadequate to save any from the judgment said to be approaching."

Just so is Christ in the estimation of an ungodly world. The gospel is said to be a gospel of gloom, because it speaks of blood and of death. As for salvation, the certainty of it is denied; "nobody can tell till he is in another world whether he is saved or not." Christ is treated very much in the same way as the antediluvians treated the ark. True, it was to men's eyes a gloomy place, an insufficient place of safety; but it was a vessel of which God had given the dimensions, and of which He had spoken beforehand, and He would uphold and keep it afloat for the sake of His *own* word. If men had *believed* there was coming danger, no matter how dark or shapeless the vessel, they would have sought its shelter. If men believed there was real danger *now*, notwithstanding

their repugnance to Christ, they would flee to Him. The cross is offensive now, as the ark was to the antediluvians.

But the day came when Noah entered into the ark. The people were "eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage." They did not see in the sky a single threatening cloud. They did not feel the earth under their feet giving any token that it was about to rend and vomit forth its waters of death.

Thus they went on in the ordinary course of pleasure and sin up to the very day when Noah entered into the ark. Men awoke as usual that morning to the busy activities of the day; the bride, decked in her ornaments, joined the bridal procession; the harp gave forth its sweet sounds, touched by some skilful hand; the feast was prepared; the wine-cup of festivity circulated gaily; the song and dance wiled away the few remaining moments of man's existence, when Noah entered into the ark. He left the busy scene of life and gaiety for the gloomy dwelling he had prepared; and God shut him in. There was no bolt of human manufacture to that door; no lock or fastening of brass or iron made by Cain's descendants. God slammed to the door, and held it fast; no one could open it; all within were in perfect security. What an awful sound of judgment was given forth when that door was shut! The echo of that slam rose up to heaven, and the windows of heaven burst open at the sound; the deep ground sent forth a responsive cry, and its mighty fountains were broken up, and rushed forth in overwhelming billows. Where was the bride? where the

bridal procession? where the gay guests of the banquet? where the partners in the dance? where the men of business or pleasure? One fearful shriek was heard above the roar of those surging billows; one prolonged cry of agony sounded forth on all sides, and then all was hushed in the silence of death. It may be some few sought admittance into the ark, and cried to Noah to open the door. But he could not open what God had shut; and they could not, with all their strength, prevail against that mighty hand that kept it fast.

So will it be in the coming day of judgment. "When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know ye not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." There is an open door now; but men will not enter. It will soon be closed, and then no cries, no tears, will prevail.

The deluge was universal, though scoffers of this day deny it. The flood increased till a dreary waste of waters stretched over the whole world. No continent, no island, no mountain appeared; one vast expanse of surging waves covered the cities and towns once teeming with life, and buried all in a universal grave. One little speck alone floated upon that deep; it was the ark with its living freight, a record of the truth of God's word, and of the safety of those that trust in Him. So it will be when Jesus comes. The only place of safety is Christ. He will gather His own, and catch them up far away from the scene

of His coming wrath; and that portion of the world which is called Christendom, or Christ's Kingdom, which has had the form of godliness without the power, will be overwhelmed with a deluge of flaming fire at His return.

Do we believe these truths? In proportion as we believe them they will have power over the soul; we shall separate ourselves from the course of this present evil age; and we shall be warning those around us to escape from the coming wrath.

(MR. SOLTAU then read Isaiah liii.)

This chapter is the centre chapter of the Bible. It contains the one grand, glorious testimony to Jesus, and to Jesus especially as the Substitute on the cross. It begins—"Who hath believed our report?" A melancholy question, a sad question. Have *you* believed the wondrous report of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? Do you believe reports published in books and newspapers of things you have never seen, of facts that you have never witnessed, of words uttered that you have never heard? Yes, you credit every day a mere passing rumour. But have you believed the report of Jehovah concerning facts which you have not seen? God asks this question of each one of us.

God the Father counselled from all eternity the mighty facts of this report, God the Son has accomplished those facts, and God the Holy Ghost has indited the report, and yet men do not believe it. If we disbelieve God's report, we make Him a liar. But let

God be true, and every man a liar. Let me subject my senses, my reason, my understanding to God's Word; let me count my heart to be the greatest liar in existence, and let me take my stand on the Word with unwavering confidence; it is the Word of God, and I shall find myself possessed of the greatest blessings He can give, viz., salvation, life everlasting in His blessed Son.

Consider for a moment the importance of this report. First, as regards the person it speaks of. Jesus is the One upon whom God's counsels have rested from all eternity. Nothing that God has done or will do is unconnected with His blessed Son. The mighty work of creation was all accomplished by Him and for Him. All mankind that have ever lived or will live are linked in the counsels of God with His Son; for Christ is the Head over all things.

This chapter records the incarnation, death, and resurrection of that glorious One; the only wondrous facts that could affect the mighty God Himself, the facts around which eternity revolves. The everlasting happiness of the saved, the everlasting misery of the lost, date from the death of Christ on the cross. This chapter describes a great judgment-scene of unparalleled magnitude, where the destinies for eternity of every human being are settled. Upon the estimate each one forms of the cross of Christ rests either the untold glories of salvation, or the inexpressible miseries of damnation.

The burden of this chapter for the most part is Christ placed by God under judgment as the Substitute

for sinners. Mark the emphatic words: "He was wounded *for* our transgressions," "bruised *for* our iniquities," "oppressed," "afflicted," "cut off," "stricken," "smitten." "Iniquity was laid upon Him" by the Lord. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him." "His soul was made an offering for sin." "He poured out His soul unto death." "He bare the sins of many." "For the transgression of my people was He stricken." "He shall justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." "With His stripes we are healed." Thus sin, iniquity, transgressions, and sins were laid on Him. The fierce wrath and indignation against sin of a holy God were expended upon Him. He drank to the dregs the cup of the Lord's fury and vengeance. He was emphatically the curse of God, as it is written, "He that is hanged is the curse of God."

This truth respecting Christ, who knew no sin, made sin for us, and God dealing with Him thus that the sinner might escape all wrath and judgment, and be made the righteousness of God in Him, is the cardinal truth of redemption. If this be not held, Christ is made of none effect. It is not His incarnation, nor His life on earth, but faith in His cross alone, that saves.

Have you, dear friends, seen the judgment of God executed on you, by believing in Christ judged in your stead on the tree? *Are* you healed by His stripes? Not, Do you hope to be? but, *Are* you even now, at this present time? Do you believe that God has taken off the load of guilt, and misery, and sin that was upon you, though, it may be, you knew it not, and

laid it upon another, Christ, instead of you, so that you are free? Is this the way you contemplate God's blessed Son on the cross? Not that the Lord *will* do it, but that it has been done, once for all? Do you believe that it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him? It was at the cost of His love that He bruised Him, because He loved us.

Whoever rejects this report must have a stubborn heart. Whoever says, I am not worthy of this great salvation, little knows the value of God's great gift. True, you are not worthy. God would not have expended His vast resources in Christ had you been worthy. He would not have put Himself to the cost of the death of His beloved Son, had He found anything of value in the sinner. "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." We have followed our own self-will, and the promptings of our imagination and understanding. We have done this to the very best of our power, and have wandered from God in our own way. But what has God done? "He has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

This judgment upon Christ on the cross is an all-important judgment; it includes the whole world; it is a judgment more vast than the deluge. The whole world is wrapped up in this judgment, either by its acceptance or rejection of Christ.

Can you say with the apostle, "We have come to God, the Judge of all;" not we shall come, but we *have* come? Not like Felix, trembling at the sound of judgment to come; but like Paul, rejoicing and saying,

WE HAVE come. Can you say, "I have been judged; I have been condemned; I have been crucified with Christ?" The believer looks at Christ's death, and says, That is Christ crucified instead of me; I have died, because He has died for me; I am justified from sin, for I have passed through its penalty—death, in another. Every one, sooner or later, must stand before the Judge. Happy those who have heard their sentence passed already on Christ in their stead, and who can say, There is now, therefore, no condemnation. Look back at that which is behind you—the judgment passed on Christ; and look forward, and you will find the bright and glorious prospect has not a single cloud in it.

Christ will come and take His own to Himself. He has borne their sins; they will share His glory. That coming would not be happiness to any soul, unless it were the coming of JESUS HIMSELF. It is the Lord Himself who shall descend. He Himself will give us perfect happiness. We shall be with Him, shall know Him, shall have Him, shall be like Him, and never be out of His sight. That blessed prospect awaits all that have been judged already, condemned already, sentenced already, and put to death already, in God's blessed Son.

This 53rd chapter of Isaiah, and the marvellous cluster of blessed passages which it contains, instructs us as to the great judgment of God upon sin. Two judgments remain to be noticed.

We have the third judgment recorded in 2 Thess. i.:

"Seeing that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

This is another judgment of the living, not of the dead. The deluge was a judgment which overwhelmed the living. The first act of the Lord Jesus, after leaving the right hand of God, will be to come down into the air, and raise the dead saints and change the living, and take them all up together to meet Him in the air; He subsequently comes to the earth to take vengeance, not only on the licentious and profligate, the adulterer, the murderer, the drunkard, but on those that "know not God, and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ." The vengeance falls alike on respectable, decent, moral, religious persons; on the upright and respectable, who have professed to be followers of Christ, who have been members of some church or chapel; but who have not really known Him. "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him;" "they have a name to live, but are dead." They say, "Lord, Lord," but do not the things which He says.

It is important that all should see their responsibility to know God; and that they will be judged at the Lord's return if they have not fulfilled that responsibility. But is not God a distant being? Is He not dwelling in thick darkness? Who can know Him, or reach Him, or understand Him? It is true, no one can by his own wisdom find out God. No one by searching can find out God; no one can find out the Almighty unto perfection. But God has revealed Himself in His Word. There we have a record of His Son, who has come down into this world, and has been made flesh, in order that men might understand God unto perfection. You can watch the ways and actions of Christ; you can listen to the words of the blessed Jesus. They are the ways, and actions, and words of God.

Some poor sinner may say, "I don't know how God will receive me; I do not think God will have mercy on me." But Christ sat even beside the poor wretched woman at the well in Samaria. Did He reject her? He encouraged her to converse with Him; she felt at ease in His company; she was not alarmed, and when she discovered who it was that spake to her, she went to spread the joyful news to all around.

Mark again. The publicans and sinners draw nigh to hear Him, and He received them, and ate with them. They found that though the Pharisees, the righteous men of the day, cast them off, God received them; Christ opened out the Father's heart to them. He related to them the parables of the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, and the lost son. They could understand the value a man had for a sheep. They

could enter into the feelings of the woman who had lost a piece of money. They could imagine the joy of a father finding his lost son. And such they found, only infinitely deeper and stronger, were the feelings of God for the lost sinner.

Jesus in His life was the manifestation of God. In that scene in the temple, when they brought to Him a poor guilty woman justly condemned under the law, He spoke words of full, perfect pardon and power, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." It was the voice of God speaking peace to the guilty soul, and giving her power over her sin, putting her under grace.

But the full, perfect declaration of God was when at length the blessed Lord hung on the tree. When you see Jesus put to shame, when you see Him enduring spitting and reviling, and reviling not again, crowned with thorns, set at nought by the soldiers, and hear Him utter those thrilling words, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"—when you hear the dying cry of the blessed Lord, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—when you listen to the last utterance of His deep necessity when brought into the dust of death, "I thirst;" and His subsequent triumphant exclamation, "It is finished:" remember you are listening to words of the mighty God; you are beholding the full manifestation of God's love to the ruined sinner—of God's justice, holiness, and grace combined. After this can you say, I do not, I cannot understand God? Rather should you say, *I will not* know Him. To know Him

is to have eternal life. To know Him is to obey the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ. He can be known nowhere else.

Creation, with all its wondrous display of skilful workmanship, never reveals God fully. His power is seen in creation, but not His love, His grace, His mercy. Christ crucified displays God's wisdom combined with His love and power. Wisdom, love, and power which can save the sinner dead in trespasses and sins, and give him a portion in glory far beyond the reach of the highest archangel.

The obedience of faith bows the knee to Jesus, and accepts His great salvation. You are inexcusable if you do not know God, and obey the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ. The world will be caught in a moment by the appearing of the Lord Jesus, and He will take vengeance in flaming fire, both on those who have opposed and persecuted His saints, and on those who have not yielded themselves to the message of His mercy, but have resisted His grace as displayed in the proclamation of His cross.

Let us now pass on to the last closing scene of judgment—the great white throne. “And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their

works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." (Rev. xx.)

Is it not a wonderful thing to see what has been crowded up in 7000 years? Why is this? If God had spread out the lives of individuals each into a thousand years, the individuals could not have manifested more distinctly what they were, nor have shown more plainly their reception or rejection of God's truth. Although an individual may live only a few years in this world, he lives long enough to manifest himself. God is doing everything for the display of Himself and of His own glory; so though only 7000 years have passed as regards eternity, yet there has been sufficient time for man to manifest himself, and sufficient opportunity for God to display Himself in connection with man. God never changes. If He hates sin to-day, He will hate sin for ever.

Every one lives his little life; and what he does, and says, and all his feelings, have eternal results. Ecclesiastes says, "God has set eternity in their heart." I forget, perhaps, the thoughts of to-day; but they will have their results stamped upon the future. We do not live for the moment, or for the day; but for

eternity. Circumstances and actions produce effects to last for ever. This is a most solemn consideration; because we may be losing a great deal, if we are not serving God *now*.

In this last scene we have the last reckoning of God with man, and the only resurrection of the wicked dead recorded in Scripture. All judgment is given to the Son. God has determined that all shall honour the Son, as they honour the Father; and therefore all judgment is given to Him. He is the one "from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away." Why? They fled in dismay from his glorious countenance, from the brightness of His visage. Creation is marred. Sin has stamped ruin upon it; and therefore it cannot abide the brightness of His unsullied glory.

The throne is vast; it fills the space once occupied by the earth and heavens. Creation flees, and makes room for it. It is white; there is not a stain or blemish on it. It is a throne worthy of Him that sits upon it. The darkness of the sinner comes out in fearful contrast with the whiteness of that dazzling throne. Multitudes will be there, ranged in order before that awful throne. The antediluvian men of renown, and mighty men; Cain and his progeny of artificers and musicians; the renowned of antiquity; the heroes of past ages, whose names have been handed down to posterity as worthy of imitation, or whose names were held in execration. Emperors, kings, conquerors, potentates, men of unbridled ambition, who have achieved mighty deeds, or who have startled the world by their

crimes and rapacity ; philanthropists, statesmen—all, small and great, will appear. The murderer and the murdered, the seducer and the seduced, the extortioner and his victim, the slave and his master, the oppressor and the oppressed, will stand before that awful throne. Crimes long forgotten will again be brought to light, secret things which had been buried in oblivion will be made manifest.

The gaze of all will be on Him that sitteth on the throne. A solemn stillness will pervade that vast assembly. The conscience and memory of each will be stirred and quickened to a fearful extent by the piercing look of His eyes, which are as a flame of fire. Scenes of past life, and sins long forgotten, of word and deed, will rush into the recollection with the vividness of eternal reality. None will accuse his fellow ; for each will be occupied with his own dreadful guilt and doom.

The judgment will proceed ; the books will be opened. Not books of good works and bad works, the bad works put down to ~~the~~ debit, and the good to the credit of the doer, and then a balance struck. But if the name be not found in the book of life, all the works, whatsoever they may be, stand recorded *against* the sinner. God keeps accurate records of the past ; not a thought, or word, or deed of sin forgotten. One thing alone blots them out—the blood of the Lamb. If the name be found written in the book of life, it will be joy and blessing for ever. If it be found *only* in the book of works, it will be eternal torments.

The sentence will be pronounced by Him who sits

on the throne. That unerring Judge, who has Himself felt the wrath of God against sin, who has borne the judgment it deserves,—He will vindicate God's justice, both in pardoning the sinner for whom He died, and in judging the sin of those who rejected Him.

Oh, the recollections of offered mercy rejected that will then rush into the lost sinner's heart! the hell that will then begin in his feelings! The body will be raised from the dead, and will be salted with fire so as to endure, and endure, and endure for ever. The fire of God's holiness will have a preserving power on these poor hapless sinners. They will be cast into "outer darkness," made only the more fearful by the gleams of the lake of fire. It is a *lake* of fire; for there is no tide, no ebb or flow, no intermission in that full, ever full, lake of misery. Besides this there is the worm that never dies, which gnaws the heart with recollections of the past. The poor sinner will contemplate *himself* for ever; no other object will relieve this terrible monotony of his ever-full wretchedness; he will have to know himself, to gaze upon his sinful, ruined self for ever!

The closing scene of this earth's history is this great white throne. Everyone will be there. The saints of God will be there, but *on* the throne. "To him that overcometh I will give to sit with me on my throne." They will be assessors with Christ. They will be with Him, and be like Him; they will have their eternal joy and happiness in contemplating and adoring Him. But the lost sinner will take his first and last look at Christ on that throne. He will see the fairness of Him

whom he has neglected and despised ; he will behold His glory and beauty for a moment, to lose sight of it for ever.

Dear friends, ponder these things. Be sure we shall all see Christ. We must see Jesus. Sooner or later, we *must* all behold Him ; either to render to Him the happy homage of our heart's adoration, or to bow the knee to Him in compulsion ; for to Him every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.
