

THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME.

BEING


Papers on the Excellency,
Exaltation, and Supremacy of Christ.

BY

EDWARD DENNETT.

“HIS NAME ALONE IS EXCELLENT.”

PREFACE

HE following chapters, which first appeared in *The Christian Friend and Instructor*, are now collected and printed in a separate form. They all relate to the revelation which God has been pleased to make of Himself, first in the successive eras of the Old Testament, and finally in the Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Exaltation of our blessed Lord and Saviour. In the fervent hope that their perusal may be used in the Lord's goodness to lead the reader into a growing acquaintance and intimacy with Himself, they are commended to Him for His blessing.

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THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME.



CHAPTER I.

The Ineffable Name.



IT is apparent, even to the ordinary reader of the Scriptures, that the revelation God has been pleased to make of Himself is gradual and progressive. Now believers walk in the light, as He is in the light; but in a former day clouds and darkness were round about Him, and necessarily so as long as righteousness and judgment were the habitation of His throne. But when Christ had accomplished the work of atonement, glorifying God in all that He is, having been made sin for us, the veil behind which God had dwelt, and which had concealed Him from His people, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and God could righteously gratify His

own heart in coming out into the full display of what He is as revealed in Christ, on the ground of redemption. These are cardinal and fundamental truths; and they are stated as preparatory to a brief consideration of the several names of God, under which He revealed Himself in the various dispensations found in the Old Testament histories. That God is the same in nature and attributes in both the Old and New Testaments; that, in other words, He is immutable, is a necessity of the perfections of His divine being; but it is yet true that the aspects under which He is presented in different ages vary, and it is these aspects which are embodied in His several names.

ELOHIM is, as often remarked, the common name for God, viewed as the Divine Being with whom men as men have to do, and as the One to whom they are accountable. It is a plural word. The singular is Eloah, and this form is often used, especially in the book of Job. Heathen sometimes used the word for their deities, and doubtless from this fact arises the question in Psalm xviii., "For who is God (Eloah) save the Lord (Jehovah)? or who is a rock save our Elohim?" That is, the true Eloah was Jehovah, and the only rock was Elohim. The reason for the use of the plural word (Elohim) is variously explained. There

are those, as might be expected, who contend that it is simply, according to Hebrew usage, a plural of excellence, that the word in this form conveys the excellency or the perfections of the One spoken of; there are others who maintain that it is divinely intended to set forth the Trinity, the unity of the Godhead in the three Persons of the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In support of this the devout reader will not fail to notice the language of Genesis i. 26, "And God said, Let *us* make man in our image, after our likeness." Inasmuch, indeed, as the term expresses all that God is, all the persons of the Godhead must be included.

It is quite true that this could not be comprehended at the time. It was not indeed until the baptism of our blessed Lord that the whole truth of the Trinity came out. Then God spake from heaven; His beloved Son was on the earth; and the Holy Ghost descended and abode upon the Son. But now that the full revelation of God has been made, and the Holy Spirit has come, who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God, we can go back, as led and taught of Him, and discover much that could not before have been understood. It is one of the perils of the present moment that the Old Testament scriptures are being limited to the light possessed

at the time they were given. The truth is, that their latent meaning can only be apprehended when looking back upon them from the full shining of the light of Christianity. There is no incongruity whatever, therefore, in affirming that God chose the special word *Elohim* to express the truth of the Trinity. For example, we read in Genesis that God created the heaven and the earth; and in John's gospel it is said of the Word, the Word who afterwards became flesh, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." We know consequently that the eternal Son is comprised in the word 'God' in Genesis, and as we ponder upon it we learn more of the glory of the person of our Redeemer.

To the patriarchs God made Himself known under another appellation. The first mention of this is found in Genesis xvii. 1, "The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God"; that is, *EL SHADDAI*—God Almighty. But the meaning of the word *El* is said to be strength, omnipotence; and *Shaddai* is thought by some to signify the same thing, while others prefer the rendering of all-sufficient, or self-sufficiency. The combination of the two words will, in either case, import divine attributes, as omnipotence and all-sufficiency can only be found in God. These two words are used, for

example, in the passage, "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty [*El Shaddai*], but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them." (Exodus vi. 2, 3. See also Gen. xxviii. 3; xxxv. 11, &c.) When the word "Almighty" stands alone in our translation it generally represents *Shaddai*. There is a beautiful combination of this name with that of Jehovah in 2 Cor. vi., "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The God who was known to Abraham as *Shaddai*, and to Israel as *Jehovah*, was now declared as Father in that blessed and intimate relationship into which, in His precious grace, He had taken His people in association with Christ.

From what has been already said, it will be understood that JEHOVAH is the name God specially took in His covenant relationship with Israel. It is not, as the reader may easily ascertain, that the word was not used before God communicated it to Moses, but it was now first employed in connection with the chosen nation. The following remarks may help as to this: "In Genesis ii. and iii. it was of all importance to connect Jehovah, Israel's national God, with the one only Creator, God. So in Exodus ix.

30, the God of the Hebrews, whose name was Jehovah, is declared to be *Elohim*. . . . Otherwise Jehovah is a name, Elohim a being; only Jehovah is Elohim, but the former is a personal name"—the name He took in His dealings and relationship with men, but especially with His people. The word signifies the self-existent One, and, as another has observed, is practically translated, "Who is, and was, and is to come." Derived from the verb "to exist," it expresses the eternity, and, consequently, the immutability, of His being; and it thus brings before our souls the One who eternally *is*, who existed before all time, endures through all time, and continues after all time has passed away. He is thus the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last; and the use of these expressions (Rev. xxii. 13) proves, beyond all contradiction, that the Jesus of the New is the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

El has been referred to in connection with Shaddai, and it is also used with ELION, and is then translated the "Most High God." An examination of the various places in which this name is found will show that it is God's "millennial name above all idolatrous gods, and demons, and all power." It is in this character that God is said to be "possessor of heaven and earth." (Gen. xiv. 18, 19.) Hence it was that

Nebuchadnezzar was to lie under God's judgment until he should "know that the *Most High* ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will"; and that this end was accomplished is seen in that, when his understanding returned, he blessed the *Most High*, etc. (Daniel iv. 25-34.) Balaam in like manner uses this title when about to speak of the future glory and supremacy of Israel among the nations. In Psalm xci. it is found in connection with Shaddai (the Almighty). It says, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High (Elion) shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Shaddai), and in Psalm xlvii. 2 it is seen in combination with Jehovah; and it is added, "He is a great King over all the earth." These instances are interesting as proving that it is God, the one God, who reveals Himself to men under these different names in distinct relationships.

Most readers of the Scriptures are familiar with the term ADONAI as another divine name. It is translated in our English version as Lord, but is generally distinguished from Jehovah, which is also rendered Lord, by the use of small letters instead of capitals. It means, as to the root of the word, Master, Ruler, or Owner; but the form Adonai is only used of God, and of Him as One who has taken power and is in the

relationship of Lord to those who call upon His name. It is therefore especially applied to Christ in His exaltation at the right hand of God. This may be seen from a reference to Psalm cx., and to the Lord's citation from it when confuting His adversaries. "The Lord [Jehovah] said unto my Lord [Adonai], Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (v. 1.) In Matthew xxii. the Lord expressly applies this scripture to Himself, to Himself as Christ the Messiah (vv. 42—44), and employs it to demonstrate that David's Son was also David's Lord, that, in a word, He was the Root as well as the Offspring of David. In Genesis xv. 2 Abraham addresses God, not as given in our version, Lord God, but as Adonai Jehovah. This example will suffice to show once again that all these divine names are used of the one God, even that of Adonai, which is specially reserved for Christ in His exaltation on high. (The full Adonai character of our blessed Lord is displayed in Philippians ii. 9—11.)

There are other divine titles which it will suffice to mention for the reader's consideration. In the poetic books "JAH" is often employed, and it is this word which is embedded in the term Hallelujah, or "Praise ye Jah." Its significance has not been determined; it is generally supposed to be a shortened, or a poetic, form of

Jehovah. Then there are the words God used when sending Moses for the deliverance of His people; the first is given as "I AM THAT I AM," and the second as "I AM." Both of these are forms of the same word signifying existence ; the former is sometimes, and perhaps rightly rendered, "*I will be that I will be.*" The thought expressed in both is akin to the meaning of Jehovah (and necessarily so as coming from the same verb), and speaks of unchanging being, or existence. There is yet another term, not in itself perhaps a divine name or title, but one which from its frequent and special application to God is almost to be so regarded. It is ATTA HU, and it is found in such phrases as, Thou art He, etc. The equivalent is employed in Hebrews i., "Thou art the same" (v. 12), which indeed is given as the translation of ATTA HU in Psalm cii. 27. This term speaks also, as will be at once perceived, of the immutability of God, of the One who always *is*, and who is ever unchangeable.

We need not further pursue the subject, as enough has been said to point out the various ways in which God has been pleased to reveal Himself under these different names. It is a mark of His tenderness that He has done so ; and it proclaims at the same time His unspeakable grace in thus displaying what He is in Himself to His people. He might have concealed Himself

for ever in the blissful solitude of His own all-sufficing existence; but long before the foundation of the world, in the far distance of a past eternity, He chose us in Christ that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Before however these eternal counsels were communicated, the first man, Adam, was brought upon the scene; and after he, the responsible man, had failed, God continued for four thousand years to wait upon man to see if fruit for Himself could be produced. His trial of man went on until the cross, and then when God had demonstrated that man had lost everything on the footing of responsibility, He revealed all the grace which was in His heart in "the gospel of God . . . concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." In Him, as we may yet see, God has been fully revealed; and He is also the man of God's counsels, and in Him all the thoughts of God's heart will be accomplished. The partial unfoldings of the Old Testament have passed away before, or rather have been merged in, Him who is glorified at God's right hand; and this is told out in the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

CHAPTER II.

“Thou shalt call this name Jesus.”

MATTHEW i. 21.



WHEN the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made* of a woman, made under the law; and it is of this mystery, the ground-work of redemption, that Matthew writes in this chapter. There are indeed other characteristics of the divine and holy Child here mentioned. As this gospel specially presents Christ as the Messiah, in the fulfilment of promise to the Jewish nation, His lineage, as born into this world, is traced down from the two great roots of Jewish promise, Abraham and David. Not only therefore does Matthew show Him to us as “come” of a woman, and “come” under law, but also as the promised seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, and as Son of David, and hence as heir to David’s

* “Come” or “born” would be a better rendering. The word used signifies the commencement of the existence of anything, or becoming anything, or happening, etc.

throne and kingdom. It is thus a chapter in which the divine and human glories of our blessed Lord are mingled and displayed. By "mingled" we simply mean that the character of the Person of Christ is such that all that He is as God and as man is told out in His name and in His work. For example, if we think of Him as the Offspring of David, we are at once reminded that He is also David's Root, that David's Son is also David's Lord.

This will be very clearly seen by a consideration of the meaning of the name Jesus, which Joseph was instructed to give to the Child when He should be born. As may be seen from Hebrews iv. 8, Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, or Jehoshua, which signifies "Jehovah is salvation," or "whose salvation is Jehovah." There is therefore ample justification for the common observation that the name Jesus means Jehovah the Saviour. If so, what a subject for contemplation, yea, and for adoration, is thus brought before our souls! A child born into the world, of lowly parentage in man's esteem, is declared, divinely declared, to be Jehovah the Saviour! Yes, the God who heard the groaning of His people Israel in Egypt, who saw their affliction, heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, knew their sorrows, and came down to redeem them out of Egypt, and to bring them

up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; He who said unto Moses, “I am JEHOVAH: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by [the name of] God Almighty, but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known to them” (Exodus iii. 6–8; vi. 2, 3); it was He, the same God, the same Jehovah, the El Shaddai known to the patriarchs, who now came into this world as a Babe. But if a Babe, He came, blessed be His name for ever, as the Saviour of His people. Surely we may say that the shadows were fleeing away, and that the darkness, which had hitherto shrouded God from His people, was fast disappearing. It was indeed the blessed dawn of the day of grace.

The moment we speak of the birth of Jehovah the Saviour, the mystery of the incarnation constrains our attention. It had long been foretold, and, so far from its being veiled under dubious language, it was exactly and minutely described, so that Matthew could write, “All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” Even the very place of His birth had been foretold: “But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though

thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." [Micah v. 2.) Moreover, the holy nature of His humanity was by no means dimly shadowed forth in the type of the meat-offering, especially in the unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, telling out as it did the truth communicated to Mary by the angel, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i. 35.) It is the miracle of miracles, and for that very reason the revelation of the heart of God, when looked back upon in the light of the purpose of His coming into the midst of sinful men.

Before entering upon the purpose of His advent, it may be profitable to dwell upon some of the circumstances of His birth. There was the greatest contrast imaginable at the time between heaven and earth. All heaven (and what wonder?) was astir and in movement; but the whole earth, save a few pious souls, was still and almost unexpectant. The angel of the Lord sped on his joyful way to apprise, not the governing powers, or the great of the earth, but a few godly shepherds, of the marvellous event: "Fear

not,” he said unto them, “for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all [the] people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord,” etc. The angel of Jehovah was not alone, for as soon as he had announced the glad tidings, a multitude of the heavenly host praised God and said, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill [or “pleasure,” or “delight”] toward [in] men.” As has been strikingly said, “God had so manifested Himself by the birth of Jesus, that the hosts of heaven, long familiar with His power, could raise their chorus . . . and every voice unites in sounding forth these praises. What love like this love? and God is love. What a purely divine thought that God has become man.” And yet this stupendous event had nothing in it to compel the observation of men. Busy with their own thoughts and objects, they did not even perceive it, though it took place in their midst; and so absorbed were they in their self-seeking that there was no room for the infant Saviour in the inn! Such are men, although among them were the objects of God’s eternal counsels in grace, which He was about to accomplish through the One who, while the Creator of all things, was yet born into the world a homeless stranger!

The name Jesus was given in connection with

His work, "for," it was added, "He shall save His people from their sins." The term "His people" will, in this gospel, undoubtedly mean Israel; and indeed, in the angelic announcement to the shepherds in Luke, it says that the good tidings of great joy were for all *the* people; *i.e.* for the Jews. Not that the object of the Lord's coming into the world is in either case to be limited to the chosen people, but in these scriptures they only are in view. The wider aspect is stated by John when, in allusion to the prophecy of Caiaphas that "Jesus should die for that nation," he adds, "And not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." This makes it plain, moreover, that the death of Christ—His finished work, which He accomplished in, and through, His death—is the alone foundation on which He will save His people from their sins. We thus read in Leviticus xvi., after the details given concerning the rites and sacrifices, together with the confession of the people's sins by the high priest on the great day of atonement, "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." (v. 30.) Nor can this foundation truth be too constantly insisted upon; for as it is written concerning sins

in the old dispensation, “Without shedding of blood is no remission,” so now it is equally true that the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, alone cleanseth from all sin.

When, therefore, the angel said, “He shall save His people from their sins,” he looked onward, or at least the mind of the Spirit had respect in the words, to a time beyond the cross. For Israel could not be saved, as the prophets plainly testified, apart from repentance and the efficacy of the atonement. Simeon, when he enjoyed the unspeakable privilege of holding the Lord’s Christ in his arms, plainly foretold also that the glory of Jehovah’s people Israel would be accomplished through the rejection of the holy Babe on His presentation to the people. The sufferings of Christ must precede His glories, whether in heaven or on the earth; even as He Himself said to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” It was this fact that tested the hearts of men, and called forth their determined enmity. If they could have taken Jesus by force and made Him a King, and if He would but have placed Himself at their head and led them, all carnal as they were, against their enemies, and delivered them by His power, they would gladly have hailed Him as their

Messiah, even if they had immediately after rebelled against His authority. But He who came as Jehovah the Saviour must first stand in, and repair, the breach which the sins of His people had made between them and their God. And so fully did He take up their cause and responsibility that, as in their place, He cried, "O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee." Blessed Lord, we cannot fathom Thy sorrow and grief, but we can thank Thee in that Thou madest the sins of Thy people Thine own, and hast borne them away for ever!

Considering then this scripture in its application to Israel, it will refer to the salvation of the earthly people from their sins—from their sins and their consequences—and to their restoration and blessing in a future day in the land of promise. It is indeed in one aspect what Zacharias prophesied, when his tongue was loosed at the circumcision of his child, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David . . . that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us . . . that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness

before Him, all the days of our life.” (Luke i. 68-75.) First, then, Jesus will save His people from their sins before God; for a part of the new covenant runs, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah xxxi. 34); and, moreover, He will save them from the consequences of their sins in delivering them out of the hands of their enemies, in gathering them out from every land where they have been scattered, and in establishing them in their own land in blessing under His own peaceful and glorious reign. All this would have been fulfilled to them at once had they but received their Messiah; and even after they had crucified Him, had they but owned their guilt, and bowed in heart to the testimony of the apostles, their sins would have been blotted out, and the times of refreshing would have come from the presence of the Lord in connection with the return of Christ (Acts iii.); but, alas! through their unbelief they forfeited all these blessings, and they have now to wait until, wrought upon by the Spirit of God, they will cry, in the gladness of their hearts, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

Still, beloved reader, while it is true that this promise refers primarily to Israel, let it not be forgotten that the same glorious work, which constitutes the foundation on which their sins

will be removed, is the only ground on which any of us can know forgiveness. Through Israel's fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, and hence it is that the apostle could write to the Corinthians that it was delivered to him that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Well then may we praise God continually for His wondrous grace, the grace which took occasion through the unbelief of Israel to reveal all His purposes concerning those who should be heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ; and well, too, may our hearts be filled with gratitude at the mention of the name of JESUS, for He it is who has secured everything for us.

“Name of Jesus ! highest name !
Name that earth and Heaven adore !
From the heart of God it came,
Leads me to God's heart once more.

“Only Jesus ! fairest name,
Life, and rest, and peace, and bliss ;
Jesus evermore the same,
He is mine and I am His.”

CHAPTER III.

“They shall call His name Emmanuel.”



It has already been pointed out that the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem was in fulfilment of this prophecy. Not that the birth in, and by, itself contained its accomplishment: it was rather its pledge and guarantee. The meaning of the name, as divinely interpreted, is “God with us”; and this enables us to see that it looks forward to the full consequences for Israel of the introduction of their Messiah into this world; that, in other words, the Emmanuel name of our blessed Lord will only be realized in connection with the establishment of His glorious throne on earth, when He will make good all that God is in government, and when, as with His people, “His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed.” It carries with it, therefore, the fruition of His death for “that nation,” and the promise of His personal presence with His

earthly people. It is of that time the prophet speaks when he says, "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."

A reference to the prophecy itself, together with its context, will make this abundantly evident. Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, was at that time upon the throne of Judah. He "did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God, like David his father. But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel." (2 Kings xvi. 2, 3.) However, notwithstanding his wickedness and apostasy, God still waited with much longsuffering, and forebore to deal with His guilty servant. Yea rather, on Ephraim and Syria entering into a confederacy against the house of David, and going up to besiege Jerusalem, Jehovah sent His servant Isaiah with a message of encouragement, assuring Ahaz that the designs of his enemies should not prosper. The prophet added, at the same time, the warning word, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." Ahaz might be delivered from the present peril, but unless he turned to, and stayed himself upon, the word of the Lord, he

should not escape his merited chastisement. (See 2 Chron. xxviii.)

Yet again the Lord sought, in His tender mercy, to reach the heart and conscience of the offending monarch. God would condescend, if Ahaz requested it, to give him a sign, either in the depth, or in the height above, to certify him of the sure fulfilment of His word. The heart of Ahaz had turned to false gods, and thus hardened, he refused, though under the pretext of piety, the offered intervention, saying, “I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.” The Searcher of hearts was not to be deceived, and, after a solemn admonition, the prophet announced that the Lord Himself would give a sign. “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” It is in this that the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, is unfolded. David’s house might fail in their responsibility, as they grievously did, and forfeit everything; but, thereon God, acting from His own heart, and according to His purposes, could step in, and through the advent of Jehovah the Saviour—through His rejection, death, and resurrection—accomplish all the counsels of His grace. The birth of Immanuel would thus change everything. Those who were false to their trust would be punished as was Ahaz;

but Immanuel would secure everything, and vindicate and glorify the name of God in government upon the earth.

But there lies a long, weary path for Israel, because of their unbelief, between the birth of Immanuel and the glory of the kingdom. This was plainly foretold by the prophet in connection with the very prophecy under consideration. The careful reader will observe that the first invasion of the land by the Assyrian, bringing in utter desolation in its unchecked success (Isa. vii. 17), does but shadow forth another assault in the last days, when he and his confederates shall be utterly broken in pieces. They may take counsel together, but it shall come to nought; they may speak the word, but it shall not stand; "for God is with us" (Immanuel). Before that time—the final destruction of Israel's enemy—He who is born of the virgin, and named Immanuel, is seen in rejection. The transition to this is exceedingly beautiful. The prophet was instructed of the Lord not to "walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread." (Chap. viii. 11-13.) But this instantly brings in separation, distinguishing

as it does a remnant from the mass of the people. Accordingly we read, "And He shall be for a sanctuary" (for all those who sanctify and fear Him); "but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." As indeed Simeon prophesied "This Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against . . . that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Immanuel came. The sanctuary of those who had waited for Him, He is the true centre around whom His people are gathered; and here, for the first time, He Himself speaks, and calls them "my disciples." And He names them such in connection with "the testimony," and plainly states that the truth of that day, the law as well as the testimony, is entrusted and confined to the remnant, now His disciples. It was so also in the day of David's rejection. In the cave of Adullam, when everyone that was in distress, and everyone that was in debt, and everyone that was discontented, had gathered themselves unto him, and he became their captain, we find that the prophet Gad was also there, and immediately after Abiathar the priest is driven to the same company, which now possessed all the forms of God's testimony in the persons of

the king, the prophet, and the priest. In like manner Anna the prophetess was with the few who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. It must be ever so, that those who are in separation from evil, and are in communion with the mind of God concerning His Christ, and concerning the state of things round about them, should be the depositaries of the testimony for the times in which they are living. The reason is that Christ Himself is with them. He loves all His people; but He only identifies Himself with the separated remnant, as in verse 18 of this chapter. That here and there much truth may be found outside of them is unquestionable; but only with them will be seen God's special teaching for the moment, or the truth held and presented in its due proportions. The testimony will be bound up, and the law will be sealed up, amongst the Lord's disciples in an evil day, because as already said, He Himself is in their midst.

The state of things at the time of which Isaiah speaks is unfolded in the following verses; and let it again be recalled that it is Christ Himself who is the speaker. He says: "And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion."

In the Epistle to the Hebrews parts of these two verses are quoted to show the Lord's complete identification as Man with His people, with the true remnant gathered out from among the Jewish nation (chapter ii. 13); and this as preparatory to the object of His death, viz., to "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." But we will not pursue these interesting circumstances further than to call attention to the wondrous fact that the One who was thus as regards God in perfect dependence as Man, and hence waiting upon Jehovah, and as regards men despised and rejected, was at the same time, no less a personage than the Immanuel of Isaiah's prophecy; and that, in this path of rejection, He was experiencing some of those sufferings which must precede His glories.

In chapter ix. the people that walk in darkness see a great light, and "they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." For the fulfilment of this glorious prophecy, Matthew records that Jesus left Nazareth, and came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim. (See Isaiah ix. 1.) The moment Isaiah proclaims the appear-

ance of the Messiah as light in the midst of darkness, he contemplates its full consequences in the results of the deliverance which Messiah will accomplish in the last days. The yoke of the Assyrian being broken, all the brightness of the glory of the divine person of the Messiah shines out in the blessing of His people. And all this blessing is connected with the birth of Christ into this world. "For unto us," the prophet says, "a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." All these names are given in connection with His kingdom in this world, for the prophet proceeds: "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." (Chap. ix. 6, 7.)

It is evident, therefore, that Immanuel, "God with us," is the name belonging to our blessed Lord in connection with the earthly people, and that they will not enter into its full and blessed significance until after He has taken His great power, and when He shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously.

Who, then, is Immanuel? His birth is predicted in Isaiah vii. 14, and, after detailing the circumstances of His rejection in the following chapter, the prophet foretells the establishment of His kingdom in chapter ix. Together with this he takes occasion, in a passage already quoted, to present a series of titles, or names, which are expressive of the infinite and divine character of Immanuel's person. Let us pass them briefly under review. The first is "Wonderful," a word used oftentimes for that which excites astonishment, or admiration. Sometimes it is employed to denote a miracle, and nothing so awakens the attention as a miraculous display of power. And what miracle is so great as that of the Incarnation? What could produce such wonder as the fact that Immanuel could be born of a virgin? Then He is called "Counsellor." Divine wisdom is indicated by this word, as, for example, where it says, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." (Isaiah xi. 2.) The appellation "The mighty God" proclaims its own significance, for there could not be a more distinct declaration of His Deity; nor does the following term, "The everlasting Father," or "The Father of eternity," speak less plainly, inasmuch as it sets forth the eternity of His

being. Finally, He is "The Prince of Peace," a title which indicates the Solomon character of His reign, so admirably described in Psalm lxxii.

It may be permitted to us, in conclusion, to enquire why such a number of names should be combined. The answer surely is, that it is only by the contemplation of the rays of Immanuel's glory separately and singly that any conception can be formed of the truth of His person. However He may be presented, in whatever aspect or relationship, all that He is is there under the special aspect; and we are reminded of this by such passages as the one under consideration. It is indeed one of the fatal mistakes of these modern days to take some one feature of the life or person of our blessed Lord, and to regard it as the whole truth. He is the living Word, and it is only in all that speaks of Him that He can be fully discovered; and it is because of our feebleness that the Spirit of God calls our attention now to one aspect, and now to another; now to one feature, or trait, or attribute of His person, and now to another. But He is still beyond all our thoughts, seeing that He is divine, "very God and very Man"; and hence it is written, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father."

CHAPTER IV.

“Thy Name is as ointment poured forth.”



IN this language is portrayed the preciousness of Christ (as the Bridegroom) to the bride. This will be at once perceived if the context be examined. “Let Him kiss me,” cries the bride, “with the kisses of His mouth: for [now addressing Him directly] Thy love is better than wine.” It is not so much the love itself, as the enjoyment of the love, of which she speaks; this it is which is “better than wine.” Every renewed heart will respond to this statement, for while the love of Christ is ever beyond all our thoughts, infinite and unspeakable, it is only as we enjoy it that we in any measure enter into, or appreciate it. But when the heart expands in the power of the Spirit to its blessed influences and constraint, when it opens, without let or hindrance, to the inflowing of its mighty tides, then the soul learns experimentally the marvellous character of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Another thing is equally

true. The more we taste of the love of Christ, the more we desire it. Every experience of it begets an ardent longing for a larger measure of it. Thus, if the bride had not previously known something of the Bridegroom's affection, she would never have uttered this passionate desire.

It is, moreover, through the heart that all divine knowledge is received ; and hence, as here, the bride passes from the expression of her estimate of the enjoyment of the Bridegroom's love, to a declaration of the effect of His excellencies and perfections. Her heart apprehends, through the enjoyment of His love, the savour of His "good ointments." Still, it may be remarked, in the language of another, that "however strong" the bride's "affections may be, they are not developed according to the position in which Christian affections, properly so-called, are formed. They differ in this respect. They do not possess the profound repose and sweetness of an affection that flows from a relationship already formed, known, and fully appreciated, the bonds of which are formed and recognized, that counts upon the full and constant acknowledgment of the relationship, and that each party enjoys, as a certain thing, in the heart of the other. The desire of one who loves, and is seeking the affections of the beloved object, is not the sweet, entire, and

established affection of the wife, with whom marriage has formed an indissoluble union. To the former, the relationship is only in desire, the consequence of the state of heart; to the latter the state of heart is the consequence of the relationship.”

This distinction should be well weighed and apprehended, for it contains the key to the interpretation of the “Song of songs.” But it is still true, whether in the heart of the bride, or in that of the Christian, that love is the means of, the capacity for, divine knowledge; that, in a word, he that loves most knows most. (See 1 Cor. viii. 1-3, Ephes. i. 18—reading “heart,” instead of “understanding.”) Mary Magdalene is a striking illustration of this point. Peter and John had more light than she, for they (or certainly John) had seen that the sepulchre was empty, and had believed, while she was in utter darkness as to the resurrection. And yet it was to Mary that the Lord revealed Himself. The two disciples, having satisfied themselves that the sepulchre was bereft of its prey (and John, at least, believing that the Lord had risen Victor over death), “went away again unto their own home.” But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping. Engrossed, in the intensity of her affection, with her Object, she was rooted to the spot; having lost Christ she had lost everything, and all the world was but a

sepulchre to her if Christ were not living. The state of her heart was right, although her spiritual understanding was not enlightened ; and hence it was that the Lord could come and disclose Himself to her, and make her the glad messenger of the blessed tidings that henceforward He associated His brethren with Himself in heaven, before His Father and God, in His own place and relationship.

If the reader have understood the divine principles which have been enunciated, he will easily comprehend the language of the bride, which must now be considered. "Because of the savour of Thy good ointments," she says, "Thy name is as ointment poured forth." The "good ointments" will represent for us the blessed fragrance of His excellent perfections, as seen in His life, in His acts of tenderness and grace, as well as in His words, and in His walk of entire dependence and obedience before God in His pathway through this world. They will, doubtless, be apprehended and enjoyed in the intimacy of His own presence, in His manifested relationships with the soul, in His ways and personal dealings. The bride, indeed, could not have known the savour of His good ointments in any other way. And it is ever true that the nearer we are to Christ the more fully we enter upon the experience of the beloved disciple,

who was admitted to the intimacy of reposing upon the Lord's breast, and the clearer will be our perception of His beauty and grace. We may be much impressed by report and testimony, even when at a distance like the Queen of Sheba, but it is only when, like her, we hear and see for ourselves, that we are lost in adoration in the presence of the fragrance of the good ointments. If, therefore, we would be absorbed with the sense of His graces and beauties we must press on with the two disciples, drawn onward by His attractions, to the place where He dwells. Having part with Him there, the savour of His excellencies will constitute the perpetual joy and rejoicing of the soul.

Before proceeding further it should be noticed that the sweet savour of the life of Christ, as may be gathered from Leviticus ii., was first and foremost for God. The priests might eat of the fine flour, mingled with oil, of which the meat-offering was composed, but all the frankincense thereof was to be burned with a part of the offering upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord. How blessed to know this! If there had not been a single soul upon the face of the earth to delight in the savour of the good ointments of Christ, His life would not have been in vain, inasmuch as it brought glory to God and filled His heart with

infinite joy. No! our blessed Lord could not have wasted His sweetness "upon the desert air," because there was One whose eyes ever rested upon Him with unspeakable complacency, noting with joy the perfection of His every thought, and act, and word, and step. It was this which drew forth from the overflowing heart of God the words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And the more Christ was tested—and He was tested in every variety of way, even by the holy fire of the altar itself—the more abundantly did His sweet savour flow forth to gratify the heart of His God. We call attention to it, because if the bride is, if we ourselves are, permitted to participate in the enjoyment of the sweet savour of His life, to feed upon the perfections of His entire devotedness to the glory of His God, it is only because God has first had His portion, and because He, in His ineffable grace, has called us to share in His own delight in the pathway and person of His beloved Son.

Remark also that it is through the savour of the good ointments that His name, the revelation of all that He is, is spread abroad, as the fragrance of ointment poured forth. In this way, as expressed in the hymn—

"Like fragrance on the breezes
His name is spread abroad."

Illustrations of this abound in the gospels. “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria.” As we read in another place, “And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it; but He could not be hid.” No! blessed Lord, the savour of Thy good ointments had gone abroad on every hand, making Thee everywhere known, so that Thy name had become as the sweet fragrance of ointment poured forth to all who were burdened with distress and sorrow, to the weary and needy souls amongst Thy people.

This is doubtless only one side of this precious truth; for what our scripture brings before us is rather the soul's entrancement with the preciousness of Christ through the apprehension of His various excellencies as displayed in Himself and His ways. Still it is always through our needs that we first get to Christ and learn what He is in His love and grace. Then, when our needs have been met and satisfied, we are at leisure, set at liberty from ourselves, and at liberty in His presence, to contemplate Himself. The savour of His good ointments, indeed,

scarcely steals into the soul with its gladdening refreshment until every question affecting ourselves and our relationship with God has been settled. In rare cases Christ Himself may be known at the commencement of the spiritual life; but generally speaking, it is a troubled conscience which has to be appeased, through the efficacy of the blood of Christ, before we are free to survey His glorious perfections. Then, as these surprise and awaken the soul's delight, His name, even the very mention of it, will fill our hearts with the sense of its sweetness and fragrance, and produce such emotions as can only be expressed in adoring worship at His feet.

Another thing should be mentioned. The savour of the good ointments of Christ may flow out through the holy lives of His people. Every trait, every perfection exhibited by Himself in His walk through this world may be reproduced in those that are His. Look, for example, at the precepts and exhortations of the epistles. Every one of them has been perfectly exemplified in Christ; and unless this is remembered, so that they may be associated with Himself as the living Word, they will become hard and legal obligations. Christ in us, Christ our life, as set forth in Colossians, is to be followed by the display of Christ through us, in the power of the Holy Ghost. For this we

need to be much in His company; for the more we are with Him and occupied with Him, the more we shall be transformed into His likeness, and the more certainly will the savour of His good ointments be spread abroad. And this will be a mighty testimony to what He is; for in this case His name will, through us, be as ointment poured forth; the sweet savour of the name of Christ will flow forth from our walk as well as from our words. The apostle Paul uses the very words in speaking of his preaching, when he says, “We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ”; and in a subsequent chapter (2 Cor. iv.) he points out that testimony is connected with the life as well as with the lip. As we meditate upon it, may we not say, “What a privilege! What a mission, to be sent out into the world to make known the savour of the good ointments of Christ, that His name may, through us, be as ointment poured forth!”

The effect of this has yet to be noticed: “therefore do the virgins love thee.” The fragrance of the name of Jesus attracts the hearts of the virgins—not of all God’s people, be it observed, but only of the virgins. A very distinct thought is connected in Scripture with the virgin. It is character, moral character, speaking as it does of the absence of defilement, of uncontamination with the polluting influences of the world (see

Rev. xiv. 4.) Virgins, therefore, stand in this scripture for those who have been enabled, through grace, to maintain a holy separation from the defilements of the scene through which they are passing, those whose hearts have been kept true to Christ, and guarded in loyalty to Him through the sense of His claims, and of His love. A heart possessed of Christ is fortified against the most seductive allurements of the world. It is absorbing affection which always distinguishes the virgin; and this affection is ever intensified and deepened by every new discovery of the perfectness of Christ. In other words, those who partake of the virgin character always respond to the display of the preciousness of Christ. He being the sole object of their hearts, they are in the condition of soul to enter into, and enjoy, His beauties. They will detect His presence, the blessed fragrance of His words and His acts, where others will observe nothing. They live in His presence; they are wholly for Him; and hence it is the delight of Christ to disclose Himself to them in such attractive ways as to increase and elicit their affections towards Himself.

It follows from what has been said that the state of our souls may be discerned by the effect produced upon us by the name of Jesus. If our hearts are careless and irresponsive when He is the

subject of conversation or presentation, we cannot be in communion with the heart of God. Why even the name of a beloved object on earth will produce pleasurable emotions. How much more should the name of Christ, the object of God's heart—and also of ours if we know Him—awaken within us holy feelings of delight, which can only be expressed in praise and adoration !

CHAPTER V.

The* Name which is above every name.



SOMETIMES the question is raised as to what this name is; but whether it be the name of JESUS—as seems probable, if the amended reading be adopted—or not, its significance is very apparent. A passage from the epistle to the Ephesians will explain this. In connection with the display of the exceeding greatness of God's power "to us-ward who believe, according to . . . His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead," the apostle proceeds, "and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, *and every name that is named*, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." (Chap. i. 19–21.) Here the meaning evidently is that, whatever the exaltation or dignity of any of the heavenly hierarchies or intelligences, Christ as the glorified

* Some MSS. read "the" instead of "a" name; and the *Revised Version* has adopted it.

Man has been set above them all. Among the vast number of celestial beings He is absolutely supreme. The rendering "*far* above" may not be exactly justified by the word used; but we cannot doubt that our translators seized its spirit in seeking to express that there was no second to the glorified Christ, that His exaltation is so unspeakable that all the highest gradations of angelic existences are far beneath His feet. Similarly in Philippians "the name which is above every name" will betoken the absolute supremacy in the whole universe of the glorified Christ as Lord. Nothing short of this will satisfy the terms of this scripture.

This will be more readily understood if we consider the place and connection in which these words are found. In a sense the passage from *v* 5 to *v*. 11 is complete in itself. It grows out of previous exhortations; and herein is the marvel that all this blessed unfolding of the person, of the character, of the incarnation of Christ, His humiliation and consequent exaltation, should be given to enforce the apostle's exhortation that the mind "which was also in Christ Jesus," seen in His coming "from Godhead's fullest glory, down to Calvary's depth of woe," should be before believers as their example! Let us then ponder upon it, for the more it is considered the more deeply will it impress itself upon our

souls. In a past eternity He, who has been down here as the humbled One, was—subsisted—in the form of God. Such a statement, however far beyond the utmost range of all our thoughts, cannot signify less than His absolute and essential Deity. It speaks of His eternal existence as God, even as John says of the Word, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” On this blessed truth hangs the whole truth of revelation and redemption. To surrender it would be to lose the sun from the solar system, and thus to bring in darkness, chaos, and destruction. On this very account controversy has raged in all ages around the person of Christ. Now His humanity, and now His Deity, has been obscured if not denied. Faith meets all the arguments of man by the simple statements of the Word of God.

If, however, the Deity of our blessed Lord is here introduced, it is but to magnify His grace and self-humiliation; for the assertion of it is followed immediately by words of transcendent importance. First, He “thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but,” secondly, “made Himself of no reputation,” or, more literally and exactly, “emptied Himself.” The first clause will mean that although He subsisted in the form of God, He did not use it for self-exaltation, “did

not," as one has translated it, "esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God." It is, doubtless, a contrast to Adam, who fell into Satan's snare of seeking to exalt himself, to be "as gods, knowing good and evil." Adam being a man sought to exalt himself; Christ being God humbled Himself. How blessed the contrast! This was the mind which was in Christ Jesus; and the next clause—"but emptied Himself"—contains the first expression of that mind. It must be with unshodden feet (for the place is holy) that such a statement must be approached. Of what, then, did He who subsisted in the form of God empty Himself? It has been lately written that He emptied Himself of "divine prerogatives"; others have taught that the "emptying" included His divine attributes. Far be the thought! To admit it is certainly to becloud the essential truth of His Deity, and to open the door to rationalism in its worst forms. For what are attributes? They are the characteristics of Deity, so that to empty Himself of the former is to lay aside the latter. No! a thousand times, no! As another has said, "The essential being of Godhead cannot change. His emptying Himself applied to the form."

The next sentences will make this plain, describing as they do the process and the effect of the emptying: He "took upon Him the form

of a servant and was made (rather, 'became'—it was His own voluntary, and, indeed, divine act) in the likeness of men." It was as God He emptied Himself, and now these words present Him to us after He had done so; for we see Him in the likeness of men, and in form as a "bondsmen." This includes the whole truth of the incarnation, and through it we are enabled to form some estimate, however inadequate, of the immensity of the descent from "the form of God" to "the form of a servant." None but God was equal to such condescension and grace, for it was really the exhibition of divine love in the midst of sinners, and none but God could have made such a stoop, for man is limited to his own form and mode of existence. In the fact of the incarnation, therefore, we behold one of the glorious mysteries of redemption. And while unable to grasp its full and far-reaching significance, we yet learn that the lower Christ went down, the more brightly the effulgence of His divine glory shone forth! For God is light and God is love; and where do we behold this? Surely in Him who took upon Him the bondsman's form. In every step of His pathway, in His words of grace and truth, in His works of power and mercy, light and love in all their perfection may be perceived by the opened eye; and the divinely-instructed heart is constrained to exclaim, Lo! God is there.

As God, it has already been said, He emptied Himself, and now we learn that as man He humbled Himself. Indeed, the whole life of our blessed Lord as man is compressed into the words, "He humbled Himself"; for it is not, as in our translation, "*and* became obedient unto death," but "*becoming*" so, that is in humbling Himself: and then, to bring out the full character of the humiliation, it is added, "even the death of the cross." It was a low place indeed He took when He assumed a bondsman's form; but how much lower when, "being found in fashion as a man," He went down to the shameful death of the cross! And let us again remind ourselves in our meditations, while we wonder and adore in the presence of such infinite condescension, that Christ is here presented as our example. The question may well be asked, in the beautiful language of another, "Are not our affections occupied and assimilated in dwelling with delight on what Jesus was here below? We admire, are humbled, and become conformed to Him through grace. Head and source of this life in us, the display of its perfection in Him draws forth and develops its energies and lowliness in us. For who could be proud in fellowship with the humble Jesus? Humble, He would teach us to take the lowest place, but that He has taken it Himself, the privilege of His perfect grace. Blessed

Master, may we at least be near to, and hidden in, Thee."

Such is the wondrous foundation on which the present exaltation of Christ is based. That there is a direct connection between the two is seen from the word "wherefore," which also expresses to us the estimate of God's heart of the self-humbling of Christ. Many grounds of the glory of Christ are given in Scripture. His worthiness, for example, is celebrated in Revelation v., in virtue of the redemption which He had secured through His death, and through the efficacy of His blood. He Himself claims to be glorified in John xvii. because He had glorified the Father on the earth, and had finished the work which had been given Him to do. Here it is quite another aspect. It is God Himself stepping in, in the joy of His heart, in His delight in the One who had so humbled Himself, and raising Him to those heights of glory which He now occupies; and the act proclaims aloud throughout the whole universe that no other position would have been commensurate with His deserts, that He who went down the lowest of all must have the highest place. Morally it is the exemplification of the principle, in all its perfection, which the Lord Himself enunciated—"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." It may then be said that His being highly exalted was but His meed and crown.

The apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians touches upon another side of this great subject. There he tells us that He who descended into the lower parts of the earth is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. (Chap. iv. 9, 10.) While we may not be able to fathom this profound language, it cannot mean less than that, in virtue of the humiliation of Christ, and of the work He thereby effected for the accomplishment of the counsels of God, He will eventually flood the whole universe with His own redemption-glory. And this, and nothing short of this, will be God's answer to the humiliation of His beloved Son.

Returning to our Scripture, we learn that "the name which is above every name" is given Him as a part of His exaltation: nay, that it is God's own estimate of what was due to the One who had humbled Himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It is thus the worthiness of Christ shown out by the place which God has given Him to occupy. We say, "given Him to occupy," because the presentation here is that of His exaltation as Man, as the consequence of His perfect obedience and entire devotedness to the glory of God through the whole of His pathway on earth up to, and including, death. What "the name" is, or whether it is the name of Jesus, it has already been

remarked, cannot be decided; and, indeed, it is the thing signified to which the Spirit of God would direct our attention. The significance, let it be repeated, is that, whatever exalted beings may surround the heavenly throne, the glorified Jesus is above, and beyond, them all. The name accorded to Him, in virtue of His humiliation, bespeaks a dignity which far transcends the most exalted ranks of the celestial host, and tells, moreover, that He is supreme in all the worlds which constitute the universe of God. If then this position which He now fills is expressive of God's delight in the once humbled Christ, will it not also awaken the delight of God's people, as they contemplate Him in that state and glory? It is in the grace of our God we are called to share in His own delight in His beloved Son; and the enjoyment of this, however feeble its measure, is really the foretaste—the commencement—of heavenly joys, which, filling the heart, even while treading the sands of the wilderness, can only find an outlet through the channel of worship and song.

CHAPTER VI.

“At the Name of Jesus.”



IF God gives Christ the place of universal and absolute supremacy, He will have it owned, and in every circle of His dominions. Hence it says, after stating the fact that He has given Him the name which is above every name, “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” The language here employed must be carefully considered, if its precise significance is to be apprehended. And, first of all, the force of the words “at the name of Jesus” must be explained, inasmuch as much discussion has been raised upon this point. The phrase in the original is *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ*; and this, it is freely conceded, might be accurately rendered, “*in* the name of Jesus” instead of “*at* His name,” as in our translation. The question then is, Can this rendering be accepted? If “at the name

of Jesus" were an incorrect presentation of the original words, the other, whatever its attendant difficulties, would have to be adopted; but it is as exact as "in the name of Jesus"; and on this account we must be governed by other considerations. It is then submitted, that to bow before God *in* the name of Jesus, and to confess Him as Lord, is to appear there in virtue of what He is, in all the value of what He is through His death and resurrection (see, for example, John xiv. 13, 14), and consequently it would imply salvation for all the classes named. In other words, if "*in* the name of Jesus" were insisted upon, it would make this scripture teach universalism, and a universalism, as will be seen later on, which would include demons as well as men and angels. Such a meaning would thus land us in direct contradiction to many other scriptures; and hence we are compelled to adopt the alternative rendering, "at the name of Jesus."

By this is meant, that it is God's will that every creature in the universe shall sooner or later acknowledge the supremacy and lordship of the exalted and glorified Jesus. If the heart go with the acknowledgment, and the confession of the mouth proceed from a real and living faith in Christ, it will be salvation for all who make it. (See Romans x. 8-13.) All therefore who, in this day of grace, receive the gospel,

God's testimony to the death and resurrection of Christ, and confess Christ as their Lord as well as Saviour, will be everlastingly saved. But the point of the scripture is, that all outside of this blessed class, all unrepentant and unregenerate men, all the angels who have ever stood, or rather, who have been preserved, in their created perfection, all the angels who have fallen and have been “cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment,” and all demons and infernal beings, will own, or be compelled by power to own, the authority and lordship of the glorified Jesus. God will not suffer, according to the teaching of this scripture, a single sentient creature to be contumacious or outwardly rebellious towards His beloved Son. They may hate Him in their hearts, as many of them will; but whether they do, or not, they will be made to bow the knee to the once humbled, and now glorified Jesus, and their lips will have to confess that He, Jesus Christ, is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And this is His due, as it is well expressed in the familiar lines—

“Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should bow.”

It may be necessary, however, to explain this with a little more detail, as some may not have hitherto entered into the subject. Let us

then examine the actual words of this scripture. It says, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, *of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.*" Things in heaven, as before said, will include all celestial existences—all the heavenly hosts—and things on earth will, as plainly, indicate men; so that the only difficulty lies in the phrase "under the earth." The word itself (for it is actually but one word) points admittedly to that which is subterranean. Conceding this, it is yet contended by some that only the dead are intended. But even in classical usage, it went further and comprised evil spirits, and when it is recalled that, during the sojourn of our blessed Lord in this world, demons were compelled to own His authority and even to confess His name, and that, as James teaches, they "believe, and tremble," there is a strong assurance that they are in view in this scripture. There is another scripture which, though apparently of the same significance, is yet quite different. In Revelation v. we read, "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." The term "under the earth" here is

not the same as in Philippians ; and it means—as the addition of the words, "and such as are in the sea," etc., shows—every animate thing under the surface of the earth. It thus looks onward to the fulfilment of the last verse of Psalm cl., "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord," and anticipates the praise of the whole of creation.

Assuming then the correctness of our interpretation, it may now be asked, When will this universal acknowledgment of the authority of Christ, together with the confession of His lordship, take place? It is God acting from His own heart, let it be remembered, and also in righteousness, who has given to Christ this exalted place as Man. It is not a question here of His Deity, although this is never to be forgotten, but rather of the place which God has accorded to Him as the Man who once humbled Himself here, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And together with His exaltation in this character the decree has been issued that all created intelligences must bow to, and own, His sovereignty. Where, then, the question returns, will obedience to this decree be exhibited? In seeking to answer it, we may take the three circles of beings in their order ; and, first, therefore, that of things in heaven. There are two scriptures especially

touching this subject to which reference may be made. In Hebrews i., in a citation from the Psalms, we read, "Let all the angels of God worship Him"; and this is in connection with the introduction of the First-begotten into the world. In Rev. v. we are permitted to hear ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, when the Lamb takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sits upon the throne, "saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." When, moreover, the Son of Man comes in His glory, all the holy angels are with Him, as the executors of His throne; and we thus learn that their acknowledgment of His supremacy will be constant and perpetual—that, commencing with the moment of His exaltation, it will go on for ever.

The submission of the second circle, that of things on earth, will in one sense be more gradual and extended. It began on the day of Pentecost; for Peter's testimony on that day was, that God had made that same Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, both Lord and Christ; and every one who, through grace, received this testimony did in effect bow the knee to Christ, and confess His authority as declared by the

apostles. So with every one converted since that day, and so will it be with all who are brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light, on until the close of the day of grace. After the Church has been removed, there will be still proceeding a mighty work of grace, as may be gathered from Rev. vii.; and during the thousand years will be fulfilled the glorious prediction of the Psalm, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him." There will therefore be, during His glorious kingdom on earth, universal subjection to His rightful claims as Supreme; so that, as we read in another Psalm, "Through the greatness of Thy power"—power displayed before the eyes of men—"shall Thine enemies submit themselves unto Thee," or, as it is in the margin, "yield feigned obedience." During this reign of righteousness man will not dare, whatever the thoughts of his heart, to rebel against the sovereign rule of Christ, except at the cost of instant destruction. Outwardly, therefore, all will be in professed

submission to His government. And is it not a delight to contemplate this prospect, when the once humbled and rejected Christ will be universally exalted even upon this earth? The scene that once witnessed His shame and ignominy, will then behold His exaltation and glory; and from millions of hearts will go up the glad confession that it is His rightful due, as they sing: Blessed be His glorious Name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen.

In regard to the last circle we have fewer positive scriptures to guide us, although the fact is stated over and over again that nothing, no being in the universe, will be excepted from subjugation to His authority.* The time when "the angels which kept not their first estate," will be dealt with is distinctly stated to be at "the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6); and we learn from Rev. xx. that the devil himself will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, immediately before the session of Christ—to whom all judgment has been committed—upon the great white throne, where all the dead, small and great, will receive their everlasting award. Demons are not here mentioned; but there can be no doubt that they are included in the judgment of their leader

* See, for example, Eph. i. 20-22; 1 Cor. xv. 24-28, etc.

and chief. The final judgment, therefore, whether of the fallen angels, of Satan himself, or of the multitudes of the unconverted dead (for only such appear before the great white throne) will take place at the close of all God's dealings with this world. Before this last session of judgment commences, the earth and the heaven will have fled away from the face of Him who will sit upon the great white throne; for this final scene of the establishment of God's holy claims and righteous authority, is preparatory to the introduction of the new heaven and the new earth, wherein righteousness will dwell. God's purposes concerning the glory of His beloved Son, His will that every knee should bow to Him, and that every tongue should confess that He is Lord, will then have been accomplished. All evil will have been done away; for God will then have wiped away all tears from the eyes of all His redeemed, "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

Even the exaltation and glory of Christ has, if we may venture so to speak, an object. It is, as we read, "to the glory of God the Father." If His eternal counsels concerning Christ and His redeemed have flowed forth from His own heart, they will in their accomplishment and

issue redound to His own displayed glory before the eyes of the whole universe. It is for the believer to anticipate this; and, indeed, the contemplation of this glorious end of all God's ways will so fill his heart with admiration and adoration that he will be constrained to exclaim, in the inspired words of the apostle "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." And yet again, "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

CHAPTER VII.

“In His Name.”



ON examination, it will be found that there is, speaking generally, a two-fold significance connected with this expression—one God-ward, and one man-ward. To this may be added the expression, which, while slightly different, may be fitly included under this head; viz., believing “in His name.” (John i. 12, ii. 23.) The word “in,” in this case, is not the one usually so translated, but rather “into” or “unto,” and conjoined here with the believing, it indicates the object to which faith has been drawn. This will be more easily understood if it is explained that there are, in Scripture, three main ways of setting forth faith. For example, it is said that Abraham believed God; we also read constantly, especially in John’s Gospel (though the words are not always so rendered) of believing *in* Christ; and, in addition, we meet with believing on, or upon, Him, as in Acts xvi. 31, etc. There is a very distinct difference in these various modes of

expression. To *believe* a person is to receive his word or testimony; to *believe in* him is to believe that he is trustworthy; and to *believe on* is really to rest upon, or to trust in, the object of faith which has been presented to the soul. We may see, therefore, that to believe in the name of Christ is the assent of the soul to His trustworthiness, and that the name of Christ, the expression of all that He is, is that which is proclaimed in the gospel as the object for faith. And the reception of this testimony, testimony to what Christ is, as the Lord Jesus Christ, is the commencement of all blessing. The title to take the place of children is connected with it (John i. 12); as also the title to the possession of eternal life. (John iii. 15, 16.) Attention is called to this, and it is earnestly pressed upon the reader, because, without the knowledge of this door-way into all blessedness, it is impossible to enter upon the consideration of the virtue of the name of Christ. The value of His name must be known for salvation before it can be enjoyed in the presence of God, or before it can be used in the world.

In John xiv. we read, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." As the last words of verse 13 show, it is here, in accordance

with the characteristic truth of this gospel, the name of the Son rather than that of Christ; but this will all the more strikingly illustrate our point. What then is brought before us is, that believers are divinely warranted to appear before the Father in the name of the Son; that they themselves—in relationship through having been born again, and having received the Spirit of adoption, and having been set, through the death and resurrection of Christ, in association with Himself in His own relationship (chap. xx. 17)—are now free to enter into the presence of His Father, and their Father, in His blessed name. That these words look on to the period after His death, resurrection, and ascension is evident from the fact that the presence of the Holy Ghost is contemplated. (Chap. xiv. 16, 17, etc.) When that time should have come, not before, they might ask the Father in His name. This will explain the Lord's language in chapter xvi.: 'And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto' (during the time of His sojourn with them on earth), "have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (vv. 23, 24.) Who of us has entered into the vast significance of this scripture? Or who has availed himself

in all its length, breadth, height, and depth, of the unspeakable grace herein expressed ?

Let us then examine these wondrous intimations, and to aid us we may enquire, first of all, what is meant by asking in the Son's name. To be before the Father thus, is to be there in all the value of that name, according to the Father's own estimate of it, with all the claim of the Son upon the Father's heart, and with the Son's authority for the presentation of our petitions. When He Himself, the Incarnate Son, stood by the grave of Lazarus, He said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. *And I knew that Thou hearest me always.*" If therefore we ask anything in His name, we shall also be always heard; and this is precisely what the blessed Lord here promises. Understanding then that He has given us this liberty and privilege, when we are in the enjoyment of the relationship which He has secured for us with the Father, two things have yet to be ascertained; first, as to His requisite authority for the petitions here referred to; and secondly, as to their subject. The authority of the Son for the utterance of any special desires begotten in our hearts can only be obtained in communion with His own mind, as we are taught from the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit. And hence their subject can only concern the Son's own things. That is, in other

words, the assurance given that whatsoever we ask in His name shall be done, cannot allude to our own personal needs and desires; but it supposes His people to be in fellowship with His own desires, objects, and interests, so that they can pray for these in His own name, and with His authority. For when we have learned, in any feeble measure, what the Father's counsels are for the glory of His beloved Son, we are free, if we have ceased from self-occupation, to be led out into the vast circle of the Son's things and the Father's things (John xvi. 14, 15), and to pray for the accomplishment of all these wondrous purposes of His love. What a place it is into which we are introduced! And what grace to invest us with all His own preciousness before the Father!

If on this side we may appear before God in the name of Christ, on the other, it is enjoined upon us to do everything, whether amongst our fellow-believers or in the world, in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. (Col. iii. 17.) These two aspects are constantly, and in every variety of manner, presented in the Scriptures. In John xvii., for example, after the Lord has put the disciples in His own place before the Father, He gives them His own place before the world. Peter, in like manner, teaches that, if believers are a holy

priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, they are also a royal priesthood to show out, in the world, the praises (excellencies) of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. This is only to state the blessed truth that the believer is inseparable from Christ, whether before God or before men, that through grace he is so bound up with all that He is, and has accomplished, that he enters the holiest in all the value of His person and His work, and passes through the world as His representative. Indeed, this last word most nearly expresses what it is to act in the name of Christ, or, as in this scripture, in the name of the Lord Jesus. It is to act on His behalf, and under His authority. What an ambassador, or a plenipotentiary, is in relation to his sovereign, the Christian is in relation to Christ. He is to be governed entirely by the will of his Lord; he must, with all fidelity, express His mind, study His instructions, and seek in every way to advance His interests. Self and selfish objects can have no place in such a mission: his motto must be that of the apostle Paul, "To me to live is Christ"; Christ alone the motive and object of all his activities.

We may well pause in the presence of such a statement, and exclaim, Who is sufficient for such a mission? Lest any, therefore, should be over-

whelmed at the thought of what they might deem to be a tremendous responsibility, let it be remembered that He who sends us out to act in His name, sustains us in the mission with all His power. No one goes to warfare at his own charges at any time. His name, indeed, when rightly borne and used, carries omnipotence with it. Thus when the seventy returned to the Lord, they said, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us” (not “through,” as rendered, but) “*in* Thy name.” “Yea,” replied the Lord, “behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy.” The mission and the power for its accomplishment are thus intimately connected; only faith, faith in activity, is the essential condition for the use of the power. This truth needs to be earnestly insisted upon at the present time, if there is to be a revival, or recovery, before the Lord’s return. It is written, “all things are possible to him that believeth”; we read the words, do not doubt them, and yet we seldom think of the possibility of their being verified in our own experience. A saint of olden time knew the secret when he wrote, “Lord, give what Thou commandest, and then command what Thou wilt.” Even so, for it is only by the Lord’s own power that the smallest of His precepts can be translated into practice; while it is equally true

that His largest behests are as easy of performance as the smallest, inasmuch as adequate power is ever at the service of faith. This is seen in the case of the man with the withered hand. How could he stretch forth an arm that was dry and dead? He believed, and divine power flowed into his dead arm; he stretched it forth, and lo! it "was restored whole as the other."

A few illustrations of acting in the name of Christ will help to the understanding of the whole subject. Take first an instance of apostolical activity in Pentecostal days. When Peter and John encountered the lame man at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, Peter expressly disclaimed acting in his own authority, or power, saying, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." (Acts iii. 6.) In like manner Paul, "in the name of Jesus Christ," commanded the evil spirit, which possessed the damsel who followed him day by day, to come out of her. In both cases they acted, therefore, as His servants, and used, in the exercise of faith, His power in the miracles wrought. So likewise, when correcting disorders among the saints at Corinth and at Thessalonica, the apostle acted in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. v. 4; 2 Thess. iii. 6.) These instances will suffice to show that in all service, as well as

in all the duties and responsibilities of daily life, it is the privilege of the believer to act in the name of his Lord. It is, indeed, his true calling to stand before men as the representative of Christ. This may be seen in another aspect from a scripture in Peter. "If ye be reproached," he says, "for" (literally *in*) "the name of Christ, happy are ye." (1 Peter iv. 14.) Here it is evident that the enemies of Christ look upon His people as bearing His name, and thus standing forth in the world as representing Him. Hence their enmity to Christ is manifested in the persecution of His followers. And the Christian can never divest himself of this relationship to his absent Lord. Whether in the assembly, in his home, or moving amongst his fellow-men, everywhere and at all times, he must remember that he bears the name of Christ, to act in His interests, under His authority, and on His behalf.

It may be again repeated, What an unutterable privilege to be endowed with the liberty of appearing before God and men in the name of Christ! It is, on the other hand, the very greatness of the privilege which indicates the vastness of the responsibility. For if we are entrusted with the name of Christ, as with a holy standard, what incessant vigilance, and what realization of our dependence, are required to maintain it in all

its purity, and to guard it from all dishonour! To encourage ourselves to be diligent in this object, we may remind ourselves how precious it is to the heart of Christ to behold His people zealously and jealously caring for the honour of His name. As we read in the prophet Malachi, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, *and that thought upon His name.*" (Chap. iii. 16.) It was a day of abounding iniquity and corruption amongst God's people; but this pious remnant were drawn apart from the evil into the bonds of holy fellowship by their godly fear, and their love of Jehovah's name. The eyes of the Lord were upon them, and in the joy of His heart He proclaimed, "And they shall be mine . . . in that day when I make up my jewels"; that is, in the day of coming judgment He would put them into His treasury-house amongst His precious things. May we all covet the Lord's approbation for caring for the honour of His most precious and peerless Name.

CHAPTER VIII.

“For His Name’s Sake.”



HERE are two or three expressions which may be considered under this head. A shade of difference may be discerned in their meaning; but, in their practical application, they have to all intents and purposes, the same force. One might be rendered “on account,” or “by reason, of His name”; another as the title of this paper; and yet another, “on behalf of His name.” In all three alike the fundamental idea is the value of the name to the one acting, enduring, or suffering; and this will also find, as we hope to see, an exemplification in God’s actings of grace towards His people. The words, “Thy name is as ointment poured forth,” have already been before us, and the expressions now to be adduced will furnish another illustration of the fact that it is the fragrance of the name of Christ which delights both the heart of God, and the hearts of His people. Hence it is, we read in connection with the blessings of His righteous sway during

the thousand years, that "His name shall endure for ever : His name shall be continued as long as the sun : and men shall be blessed in Him : all nations shall call Him blessed." Yea, throughout eternity we shall continue the song we have learned on earth :

"Thy name we love, Lord Jesus,
And lowly bow before Thee ;
And while we live, to Thee we give
All blessing, worship, glory."

In the first case which will come before us, it is the value of the name to God as affording the basis for the exercise of His forgiving love. The apostle John thus says, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.) The whole truth of grace is contained in this short statement ; for the term "little children" in this scripture comprises the whole family of God. We learn from it, that in the forgiveness of sins God acts solely on the ground of the value of the name of His beloved Son, but in virtue of His name as the One who glorified Him on the earth, and finished the work which He gave Him to do. What misconceptions would be cleared away from the minds of anxious souls, if this simple truth were but apprehended ! For then, instead of spending weary days in searching for some good thing, or merit, in themselves, on which to rest for

acceptance before God, or as an undoubted evidence of their conversion, they would perceive that if they are to be saved, it must be wholly through what Christ is to God. Let all such, therefore, prayerfully ponder the words “for His name’s sake,” inasmuch as they show, beyond the possibility of doubt or mistake, that God’s attitude towards all who come to Him, confessing their sins, depends entirely upon His estimate of the value of the name of that Blessed One who now sits at His right hand. What an unchanging and immovable rock is thus provided for our souls—that Rock of Ages, indeed, on which we may rest for ever in perfect peace, a peace which no change of feeling, or experience, need ever affect. Let us, then, never cease to proclaim this blessed truth to sin-stricken and weary souls, for it is the very kernel of God’s glad tidings to men in this day of grace.

And not only have we thus received the forgiveness of our sins, but our feet are also kept, while passing through the wilderness, in the same way. We read, for example, in Psalm xxiii.: “He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.” That is, God has undertaken everything for us on the same ground as that on which He has forgiven our sins. The motive for all His activities of grace and love, for His unchanging

attitude, for His watchful care and protection, is found in Christ, and not in ourselves. This is blessedly exemplified in the Psalm whence the above citation is taken; only here, it is the Lord as our Shepherd, acting rather from His own heart, and from the relationship which He has been pleased to assume towards His people. The simple argument is, if He has become our Shepherd, He will provide everything necessary for us, whether in our pilgrim path, or as passing through the valley of the shadow of death. But the verse quoted shows that it is for His own name's sake that He maintains these relationships of grace. If we are weary, disheartened, discouraged, or depressed, He restores our souls; and, as needing constant guidance, with every desire to tread in His paths, but often unable to discern them, He has placed Himself at our head, and leads us in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. If, then, the name of Christ is so unspeakably precious to God, and if it constitutes the all-efficacious basis of His dealings with us, how we should zealously seek to be in communion with Him about it, and thus, having some feeble sense of its value, delight to lose ourselves in it, resting in it in our approaches to God, even as He rests in it in His relationships with us.

Communion with the heart of God, indeed, as

to the preciousness of the name of Christ, is the true secret of the unwearying devotedness and courage of many of His followers. The apostle Paul may be mentioned as a special illustration of this, even though the words, “for His name’s sake,” be not used. In captivity, and no longer able to deliver his blessed message,—in the prospect of death at any moment, for he knew not but that he might be thrown to the lions immediately, it was his solace, notwithstanding the mixed motives that governed the activity of many, that Christ was preached, and in this he both did, and would, rejoice. All his expectation and hope was that he might be so kept and sustained that Christ might be magnified in his body, whether by life, or by death. Absorbed in his object, Christ alone bounded his horizon; and hence for Christ’s sake he was willing to suffer anything and everything, if he might but bring glory to His blessed name. In like manner, we read in another epistle of some who had the name of Christ so indelibly graven upon their hearts that, for His sake, they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; of others who had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonments; and of others again who were sawn asunder, or slain with the sword, while if some escaped martyrdom, they had to wander about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented. (Hebrews x., xi.)

This suffering character of the path of His disciples was often the theme of our Lord's instruction. So far from concealing from them the afflictions and persecutions which they would encounter, He warned them on every possible occasion of what they would have to endure for His name's sake. Thus, for example, He says, in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake"; at another time, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake"; and yet again, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you"; "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." So it came to pass; for Paul wrote (citing from the Psalms), "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." But if our blessed Lord has forewarned us of what may be entailed upon us through the confession of His name, He has also ministered the needed sustainment and consolation. Of Himself, in His pathway through this world, it is written that for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame; and for our encouragement He has left on record these words, "Every one that hath forsaken

houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

To suffer with Christ is a necessity, in some measure, if we are the children of God; but to suffer for Christ is a privilege attached to fidelity in His service. As an example of this, the case of Peter and John might be adduced. Brought up before the Jewish Council, they had been forbidden to speak, or to teach, in the name of Jesus; but, obeying God rather than men, they proceeded with their blessed work. Once more arrested, after they had been miraculously delivered from prison, they were beaten, and commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus. Were they disheartened, or daunted, because of what they had to endure? So far from it, they departed from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. (Acts v. 40, 41.) What, then, is the secret of this superiority to shame and suffering? It is the preciousness of Christ to the hearts of His people, the assurance of His presence with them, and the knowledge that even death is but the path of life into His eternal presence. If He for our sakes became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich, it is surely no great thing if we are taught

through grace to count, like Moses, the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, and if we are made willing to suffer persecution, and to endure the loss of all things here for His name's sake.

Yet another instance of the power of the name of Christ may be considered. In John's third epistle we read of some who, "for His name's sake," went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. The form of the phrase, "for His name's sake," in this scripture exactly coincides with that used of Peter and John in Acts v.; and we thus gather that it was the value of the name of Christ to their hearts that led the latter to rejoice in suffering, and the former to refuse support from the world for His service. Well would it have been for the Church of God if the example of these devoted servants had been followed. Nothing has so corrupted Christianity as the acceptance of worldly help for the furtherance of its objects. Before the Lord was crucified, He said to His disciples, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing." Is He less tender in His care over His servants now that He is glorified at the right hand of God? A noble army of devoted servants in every part of the world will gladly testify that they, too, though without assured support from man, and

refusing assistance from the world, have lacked nothing. And it would be the commencement of a new era in Christian service, and especially in Christian missions, if those engaged in them were to go forth in the same simple faith in the all-sufficiency of the name of their Lord. In the closing days of the history of the Church on earth, may many true labourers be raised up, and be sent forth into the harvest by the Lord of the harvest—men to whom the name of Christ shall be so precious that they may find in it their only motive, the only stimulus for their zeal, and their abundant warrant for entire dependence upon Him for all their needed support.

The reader will find much edification in tracing out other cases in the Scriptures; and our prayer is that every one who may be encouraged to do so by the perusal of what has been written, may find, while so engaged, that his heart is drawn out more fully in the adoration and praise of our blessed Lord and Saviour, and that it may become his one all-absorbing desire, in all his future life, to bring glory to this precious NAME.

CHAPTER IX.

“Unto His Name.”



IF the term “name” as used of our blessed Lord and Saviour, is expressive of all that He is, it will not cause surprise to find it presented to us in so many different ways and aspects. The necessary connection, indeed, between the living Word and the written word, inasmuch as the latter contains the revelation of the former, affords the explanation. It follows that the more we have Christ Himself before us, in reading the Scriptures, the more fully are we in the mind of the Holy Spirit, and the better are we prepared for the discernment of the rays of His glory, which shine forth from every page. To regard the Scriptures as the display of Christ, of God as revealed in Christ, is a sure preservative from error, as well as the antidote to the rationalistic teachings of the day; while, at the same time, it tends to produce that reverence and adoration in the soul, without which it is impossible to receive the divine communications

therein made. Too much stress cannot be laid on this point; and the remark is earnestly commended to the attention of the reader.

In passing now to consider the phrase, “unto His name,” we propose to select two or three examples of its use to illustrate its significance, and to point out how, in every case, it brings into prominence, whether as Leader, Object, or Centre, the Person of our blessed Lord. We take, first of all, the expression, “Baptized unto the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts viii. 16; xix. 5.) In both instances, in our translation, it is rendered “*in* the name of the Lord Jesus”; but the words are εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, etc., which could only be accurately given, we apprehend, as “unto the name,” etc.* This, indeed, can be shown from renderings of the same word in other places. Thus in Acts xix. 3, where the apostle says, “*Unto* what then were ye baptized?” and they say, “*Unto* John’s baptism,” the same word is used. Similarly in 1 Cor. x. 2, where we read that they “were all baptized *unto* Moses,” the same word is also employed. It is, therefore, abundantly clear that “*unto*” should be substituted for “*in*” in the two scriptures cited; and it is necessary that this should be done, from the fact that “*in* the name of the

* The *Revised Version* has “into” instead of “unto,” in both places.

Lord" is also found in connection with baptism. (Acts x. 48.) The meaning in this case, as explained in a former paper, will be that those who baptized Cornelius and those who heard the word with him, acted, by the direction of Peter, on behalf, and under the authority, of the Lord.

Having now elucidated the force of the term, its meaning may engage our attention. The similar expression in 1 Cor. x. may help us to ascertain it. There can be little question that to be baptized unto Moses, implies the bringing of the people into association with Moses as under his authority. In like manner, to be baptized unto the name of the Lord Jesus, brought those who were baptized on to the ground where His authority was supreme, and into the company of those who owned that authority. The name of the Lord will then express, in this connection, what Christ is as exalted and glorified as Lord; and the baptized confess Him as such, and own also His claims upon, and His authority over, them. It is not the whole truth of baptism, for Paul teaches that as many as were baptized unto Christ Jesus, were baptized *unto His death*. But we do not enter upon this here, as we desire to confine ourselves to the scripture before us, and to call attention to its meaning. To go no further, then, its import is the absolute authority of Christ as Lord, and the responsibility

of the confession of it on the part of those who have been baptized. In a day of profession and declension, it is well to enquire whether souls who have been led on to the ground of Christianity are aware of the responsibilities which they have assumed. Surely the Lord might also say to many of us in this day, “Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” For there never was a time when the spirit of lawlessness was more prevalent, even in combination with the confession of the name and authority of Christ. If the first duty of a soldier is unquestioning obedience, surely a Christian should ever be marked out before the world by his unqualified subjection to the authority of his Lord as expressed in His word, and by his unwearied zeal and devotedness in maintaining the honour of His blessed name. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.”

Another example of the use of the same phrase may be cited from the Epistle to the Hebrews. There we read, “God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward [or “*unto*”] His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” (Chap. vi. 10.) In many respects, this is a most remarkable passage for the preciousness of the truths it contains. It will be observed that here it is the name of

God; for Christ, in this epistle, is seen as the High Priest at the right hand of God, where He both represents, and intercedes for, His people. Still, it is the name of God as revealed in Christ, for in chapter i. we are reminded that the Son is addressed as God. This being so, we have to enquire as to the meaning of the words—unto His name—in this passage. First of all, it is plain that the apostle alludes to ministry to the saints. These Hebrew believers had been doing good, and “communicating,” that is, sharing what they possessed with their fellow-saints who were in need, for they had apprehended the truth that with such sacrifices God was well pleased. (See chap. xiii. 16.) In thus caring, with true brotherly love, for the needs of the saints of God, they were, the apostle says, shewing kindness unto His name.

But this requires further explanation. It must, then, be remembered that our blessed Lord fully identifies Himself with His people, and that His name is called upon them, as well as entrusted to them to bear, and to maintain His honour, before men. Hence it is that to receive a Christian in the name of Christ, is to receive Christ Himself; and, further, to receive Christ is to receive Him that sent Him. God is thus identified with Christ (not now to speak of their essential unity), and Christ makes Himself one

with His people. Turning then to the other side, it will be at once understood, that whatever is ministered to His own, is kindness showed to His name. He Himself has explained it in the ever-memorable words, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” So too, in a still deeper sense, He could say to one who had been the bitter and relentless enemy of His people, “Why persecutest thou me?” How blessed an encouragement, to remember at all times that the Lord regards what is done to His saints as done to Himself! And herein lies also the secret of all true service amongst His people. If they are our object, much as they might benefit by the service, it is not such service as the Lord can commend. In such a case there might be brotherly love, or at least the semblance of it, in exercise, but that which should be the divine spring of it, Christ Himself, would be wanting. To be imbued with this truth, would produce unwearying and incessant devotedness.

As another instance, we may refer to Matthew xviii. We give the whole passage, “Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in

My name" (the words here are also εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα; that is, "*unto* My name"), "there am I in the midst of them." (Verses 19, 20.) To understand the blessed instruction of this scripture, it should be borne in mind that the chapter "supposes Christ rejected and absent, and the glory of chap. xvii. not yet come. It passes over chap. xvii., to connect itself with chap. xvi."; and the reason of this is that it deals with the two subjects introduced in chap. xvi., the Church and the kingdom, which should occupy the place of Christ on earth, during the period of His absence, and session at the right hand of God, where He will remain until His enemies are made His footstool. (Psalm cx.) It may also be pointed out that, in connection with the mention of the assembly in this chapter, provision is made for three things: First, the question of trespass against a brother; second, the administration of discipline, binding and loosing, with its divine ratification when done according to God; and, lastly, what more immediately concerns us in this paper, the condition of prevailing prayer.

It will be noticed by the **reader** that verse 19 commences an additional instruction, as shown by the words, "Again I say *unto* you," etc., though we cannot doubt that the company, the "two of you," or the "two or three," is connected

with the assembly in verse 17. What is added is the teaching concerning agreement in prayer, rather than anything which regards the Church, except, indeed, the revelation of the wondrous grace which associates the Lord's presence and union in prayer with any two or three who may be gathered unto His name. So understanding it, everything depends, as will be perceived, upon what is meant by being thus gathered. Speaking generally, it may be said that the essential point is, that as “name” expresses the truth of the Person, the Lord Himself must be the Centre and the Object of the gathering. But then it must also be remembered that His full name in this relationship is the Lord Jesus Christ. His name, as such, speaks therefore of His authority His Person, and His work. The gathering then must be under, and as subject to, His authority, and also to maintain the truths of His Person and work. That the gathering power is the Holy Spirit, is evident from the fact that He is here to glorify Christ; and being so, He could not sanction any assembly where the supremacy of Christ was not owned, or where there might be any indifference to the glories of His Person, or to the character of the atonement made upon the cross. Every company, therefore, claiming to be gathered unto His name must answer to these tests.

This is the condition which the Lord Himself lays down for His own presence—"Where two or three are gathered together *unto* my name, there am I in the midst of them." It is not even, there *will* I be, but there *am* I; and we then learn that the gathering together thus—unto His name—ensures His presence. The realization of it may depend upon our state of soul, as it must do; but the Lord's presence is a fact connected with the fulfilment of a condition. What grace! And what a fount of blessing and power in the midst of His own! An example of this, indeed, is given; for He tells us that He Himself, present in the midst of His saints gathered after this manner, is the power to produce agreement in prayer, and the assurance that every such prayer shall be answered by the Father. What room for heart searchings as to the character of our gatherings, is thus afforded! And what a call it gives to us to examine our own individual state of soul, even if we are truly gathered unto His name! One of Satan's snares is to lead us to take things for granted; the means of avoiding it is to be constantly before God, desiring to have everything, as to ourselves and our associations, exposed by the light of His presence, and to have everything tested by His unerring Word.

CHAPTER X.

“A Name Written . . . His Name is called The Word of God,” etc.

REVELATION xix. 12, 13.



It is only when we perceive that Revelation is a book of judgment, that we are prepared for the unwonted aspects in which our blessed Lord is here presented. In chapter i., He is seen as judging in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and in such a manner that even the beloved disciple fell at His feet as dead. Here also—only now in relation to the world—He wears the same judicial mien, betokened by the same feature in that “His eyes were as a flame of fire.” Indeed, it is expressly said in this scripture, that “in righteousness He doth judge and make war.” It is the same Jesus who once sat in lowly guise upon Samaria’s well, but who now, after His long session at God’s right hand, is returning to this world, which had rejected and crucified Him, to vindicate His rights, and to establish His throne, and thus to glorify God, by making good

all that He is, in His righteous government. All things are to be put under His feet, and in His sudden appearance through the opened heaven, we see Him coming to subdue, enter upon, and possess His rightful inheritance.

Before considering the significance of the names here mentioned, it will be for profit to call attention to the connection. In the previous part of the chapter, events of great importance in the divine ways are introduced. All heaven is filled with praise when the great corruptress of the earth meets with her righteous doom at the hands of God. Thereupon we have the celebration of the marriage supper of the Lamb, for which His wife had made herself ready, and was, through grace, arrayed in fine linen, clean and white—the righteousnesses of saints. In Ephesians, we have the private and intimate presentation of the bride, as “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Here it is rather the public marriage, to which guests can be invited, and with which all the heavenly hosts can be in communion. It marks the termination of the time of the patience of Jesus Christ; but if He is about to be exalted in the former scene of His shame and humiliation, He will share the glory of His throne with His beloved bride.

This is the fourth time the opened heaven is mentioned in the New Testament. The first occasion was at the baptism of Jesus, when "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The lowly Jesus, fulfilling all righteousness, and identifying Himself with His poor and afflicted people—the saints in the earth, and the excellent, in whom was all His delight—is here seen as the Object of the heart of His God. Next, He Himself speaks to Nathanael, and says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter [or "henceforth"] ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." Here on earth—at that time, and also in the future—we apprehend, He is seen as the object of angelic ministry. At the death of Stephen, the third instance occurs, as thus described: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." The Object of the heart of God has now become the Object of the believer, who has thus, through grace, been associated with God in His own delight in His beloved Son. Now lastly, the heavens open that the Son of Man may come forth, as we have seen, in righteousness to judge and to make war.

After the personal description is given, it is

said, "He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself." The introduction of this statement in this especial place, is very striking: "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns"; and then, before relating that He was "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood," the secret, written name is mentioned. There must be a reason for this; and as the explanation we cannot forbear giving the words of another: "But, though thus revealed as man, He had a glory none could penetrate into"; and the writer adds, in a note, "So it was as to His person and service. No one knew the Son but the Father. It was the secret of His rejection. He was that, and so necessarily such in the world. But the world under Satan's influence would not have that. In His humiliation His divine glory was maintained in the unsounded depths of His person. Now He is revealed in glory; but there ever remained what none could search, or penetrate, into—His own Person and nature. . . . As revealing God, in grace or power, so as to make Him known, we know Him. But His Person as Son always remains unsearchable. His name is written, so that we know it is unknowable—not unknown, but unknowable." These weighty words deserve the careful consideration of the reader—especially at the present moment—for they contain a whole-

some reminder of the inscrutability of the Person of the Son.

First comes the written name, unknown to all but its divine Possessor; and then, in connection with the vesture dipped in blood, it is said, "And His name is called The Word of God." This must be carefully distinguished from what is found in the first verse of John's gospel. "The Word" there who was with God, and who was God, if it be taken, for the moment, as a divine title, cannot mean less than that (as has been well said) "He is, and He is the expression of the whole mind that subsists in God"; and this absolutely as relating to all that God is. But in our scripture, while the "Word of God" is the revelation of what God is, it is the revelation of God in a special aspect or character. The very details of His appearing out of heaven sitting on a white horse will make this plain. There is not a word of tenderness, grace, or affection; He is "called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire. . . . He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood," etc. All speaks of holy and unsparing judgment; of judgment according to the standard of a righteous God; as indeed it is said: "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (v. 15.) It is of all this, of God so presented,

that Christ, as the Word of God, is the revelation. So in the gospels, for example, while Christ was ever God manifest in the flesh, it is in the aspect, sometimes of power, sometimes of grace—sometimes as light, and sometimes as love. But in whatever way, He expressed that which was divine; He was never less than all that He is.

Yet another name is given: in verse 16 it is said, “And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” The context explains at once the force of this title, showing that, in harmony with the whole book, it has relation to the earth. In the preceding verse, we are told that He will smite the nations, and rule them with a rod of iron; and the name, or title, we are considering, indicates that it is consequent upon this that our blessed Lord will establish His throne of universal supremacy upon the earth. Already exalted at the right hand of God, “angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him,” He will in the day of which our passage speaks, be exalted also in this world, when He will “have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” It will be the fulfilment of the promise, “Also I will make Him My Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.” (Psalm lxxxix. 27.)

As showing the delight of the Spirit of God in

directing our attention to the future glory of Christ in this world, it may be mentioned that twice before in this book it has been introduced. At the very commencement, in John's address to the seven churches, we read, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." It is the past of our blessed Lord, what He was when down here as the Faithful Witness; it is the present, what He is as risen from the dead, the First Begotten; and it is the future, what He will be, when He shall have taken His great power, and when all the potestates of the earth will render their homage at His feet as Lord of them all. In chapter xi. we find also the same blessed era. When the seventh angel sounded, "there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become [the kingdoms] of our Lord, and of His Christ;* and He shall reign for ever and ever." (Chap. xi. 15.) At the present time, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together"; in that day, "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God:" and under the rule of the rightful King over all the nations of the earth, the work of righteousness

* A better translation is: "The kingdom of the world of our Lord and of His Christ is come."

shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.

Such is the blessed future which awaits the earth; but before that can arrive, all the believers of this period will have been caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The marriage of the Lamb, as we have seen from our chapter, precedes the appearing of the Lord. The hope of the Church, therefore, is the return of the Lord for His saints, For this they daily wait in communion with His own heart. To be with Him will be the consummation of their joy, inasmuch as it will be His joy in presenting His bride to Himself, which will fill their hearts and overflow in perpetual praise at His feet. But their vision is not bounded by this prospect, glorious as it is; for they look forward also, with earnest longing, to His appearing in glory, not because, in the grace of their God, they will be displayed in the same glory with Himself, but rather because the time will then have come when their Lord, who was once rejected and crucified, will be publicly exalted and enthroned as King of kings and Lord of lords. Yea—

“Our longing eyes would fain behold
That bright and blessed brow,
Once wrung with bitterest anguish, wear
Its crown of glory now.”

CHAPTER XI.

“His Name shall be in their foreheads.”



HIS last mention of “His name” is in connection with the glorified saints. There is, however, another company of saints who are shown to us with this distinguishing mark, with the addition of “the name of His Father.” The words are omitted in our *Authorised Translation*; but, inasmuch as they are accepted in the *Revised Version*, as well as in most recent translations, they may be received with all confidence as genuine. To begin with the latter, we are introduced to a company of saints, an hundred forty and four thousand in number, who are with the Lamb as He stands on Mount Sion—“having His name, and the name of His Father, written on their foreheads.” (Rev. xiv. 1, R.V.) That this company occupies a special place of blessedness is seen from the context, and indeed from the express statement that they “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.”

If we enquire who they are, it will help us

to understand the import of the written name upon their foreheads. It is very clear that they are earthly, and not heavenly, saints. In the previous chapter we are permitted to see the terrible power of Satan as embodied in the rule and authority of the first beast, and as wielded by the second, who is the man of sin—the antichrist. It is this incarnation of evil who will cause all within the sphere of his authority to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, as indicative of their allegiance to the beast. It might seem that evil had completely triumphed; but the opening of chapter xiv. reveals to us a multitude who, redeemed from the earth, and during the reign of unchecked evil, are associated with the glories of the Lamb in the very seat of His earthly kingdom. Remembering, then, that it is in Jerusalem where antichrist will exercise his deputed power, it is evident that this company with the Lamb on Mount Sion is composed of Jewish saints—saints who, whatever their sorrows, have been brought victoriously through the fiery furnace of Jacob's trouble, that time of great tribulation, the like of which will never have been, or will ever be, witnessed.

But it is not sufficient to say they are Jewish saints; for we read of another hundred and forty-four thousand in chapter vii.—made up

of twelve thousand from each tribe. These are the symbolical number of the elect of all Israel; but those in our chapter, it must be recollected, are redeemed from the sphere of antichrist's sway; and hence, since only the two tribes will be in the land at that period, it is another symbolical number, made up of those who were preserved through grace from surrendering to antichrist's claims and threats, and from his moral contaminations. They are, in fact, the faithful from among Judah and Benjamin, who have now entered upon the glorious recompense of companionship with the Lamb in His exaltation in the kingdom. The very number (as in chapter vii.), twelve times twelve, speaks of intensified perfection in governmental administration, and hence of Messiah's perfect reign. It is an unclouded scene of joy and blessing, the bright promise of the issue of all God's ways in government and grace, which we are permitted to behold, ere the desolating storm of judgment breaks upon an apostate people and a rebellious world.

What, then, we may now ask, is the import of His name, and His Father's name, upon the foreheads of this blessed company? Two distinct things are indicated, as is apparent from their having the Lamb's name, and His Father's name. The first is a contrast with what is found in the

previous chapter. There we read, as already seen, that men generally receive the mark of the beast in their right hand, or in their foreheads, as the token of their acceptance of his Satanic rule, and as giving them certain rights and privileges within his realm. In like manner, having the name of the Lamb on their foreheads proclaims that this redeemed company, "the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb," belonged to their glorious Messiah, and that they had maintained their fealty to Him in the midst of the unparalleled sorrows of the dark, persecuting days through which they had been brought. Hated, and perhaps martyred then, they are now publicly acknowledged and honoured with special marks of favour and approbation by Him for whose sake they had suffered, it might be even to death.* In addition, they have His Father's name; for "by their open confession of God and the Lamb, they had been witnesses of it, and suffered as Christ had suffered in His life in owning God His Father."

We pass now to another scene. That which we have just considered is on earth, on Mount Sion; this is in the heavenly Jerusalem. It is true

* Whether they were brought alive through, or had died in, the tribulation, is not revealed; but from certain indications, as, for example, in *v.* 5, we incline to the conclusion that they are, whether "changed" or raised, in a resurrection condition.

that the holy city is presented in its relation to the millennial earth; for it is said that the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations. But when we come to the description of the blessedness of its inhabitants in its positive character, this of necessity is eternal. It is remarkable that the eternal state, as given in chap. xxi. 1-5, is presented on the side of relief—"there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain"—and that in the heavenly city we have rather what is actually possessed and enjoyed. But even so, it must be remembered that it is not the Father's house; so that, in accordance with the character of the whole book, it is still government (see *v.* 3); and hence the redeemed here are looked at as servants. It is profitable to observe these distinctions; and we are reminded by them that every aspect of the bliss of the redeemed must be taken into account, and combined, in order to comprehend, in any measure, what God has in store for His people when all His purposes are accomplished.

Three things, then, mark the condition of the heavenly citizens: "His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." They had served Him on earth, it might be thought, and many among them indeed had served Him devotedly,

even as Paul was enabled to say, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." But whatever perseverance, spiritual energy, and singleness of eye had characterized such as Paul and others while on earth, their service was never perfect. There was only One, the Perfect Servant, who could say, "I do always those things that please Him" (the Father). In heaven, in the new Jerusalem, every one of the countless throng of the redeemed will respond entirely and perfectly to God's will. When, therefore, it says, "His servants shall serve Him," it means that they will serve according to the perfection of the thoughts of God. They will, moreover, see His face; they will enjoy unhinderedly the intimacy of His presence, for then, like Christ, they will see Him as He is, and be able to enjoy the beatific vision which will be the source of all their delight and their eternal joy.

"For ever on His face to gaze,
And meet the full assembled rays,
While all His beauty He displays
To all the saints in glory."

Finally, and this is our immediate subject, "His name shall be in their foreheads." It has

already been shown that the primary signification of the name borne thus upon the forehead is, so to speak, ownership; that it marks out those who have it as belonging to Christ. And this conveys much; for to be His is really the sum of eternal blessedness, inasmuch as it brings us into everlasting association with Him, both now and also in heaven itself. There is, however, another thought. In chapter xiv. the name is “written” on their foreheads; here it is only said to be there. We gather from this distinction that here the predominant feature is moral conformity to the One whose name they bear. As seen again and again in these papers, “name” expresses the truth of the Person; and hence we regard it here that full likeness to Christ is displayed on every redeemed brow. That all believers will be conformed to the image of God’s Son, we learn from another scripture (Rom. viii. 29); and here we are allowed to behold it actually accomplished. What joy, we may be permitted to say, it will be to the Lord Himself to see, as He surveys the unnumbered hosts of His glorified saints, His own likeness beaming from every face, Himself mirrored and reflected in all the redeemed! It helps us to enter more fully into the words of the prophet: “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” Then indeed Christ will fill the scene. Old things will have for ever

passed away, and all things have been made new ;
for then, not to faith as now, but in actuality,
Christ will be Everything to all His own, and
this in full and unclouded display. To Him be
all the praise now and throughout eternity !

“ There in the sweetness of His love repose,
His love unknown !
All else for ever lost—forgotten all
That else can be ;
In rapture undisturbed, O Lord, to fall,
And worship Thee.”

CHAPTER XII.

“Thou Remainest.”



THROUGHOUT the whole of this year we have been occupied with the Name which is above every name, as expressive of the varied glories and excellencies of our blessed Lord and Saviour. It has been our delight to pass from one phase to another of His infinite perfections, and to call attention to Himself as the One in whom all God's thoughts and ways are centred, and as the One, also, who is the abiding and eternal portion of the believer's heart. To be overwhelmed in the contemplation of Christ, like the Queen of Sheba was in the presence of the glory of Solomon, is to anticipate the enjoyment of heaven. But to enter in any measure upon this, we must follow our blessed Lord—and this can only be through death and resurrection morally known—into the holiest; into the place where He dwells. There alone can we, with unveiled face, behold the glory of the Lord, and be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit

of the Lord. As it is His own desire to have His beloved people thus in the intimacy of His own presence, may He beget in all of us that purpose of heart which will lead us to say with the Psalmist, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple."

In our present subject we are invited to consider His immutability, in contrast to the transitory character of this world. Inasmuch as our bodies are links with this creation, which still "groaneth and travaileth in pain together," there are seasons when we are oppressed with the sense of the corruption and death which are written upon the whole scene. Already under judgment, it will soon vanish; for "the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." (2 Peter iii. 7.) The works of the Lord's own hands, they shall yet perish; as a vesture He will Himself fold them up, and they shall be changed. Is it asked, Wherefore? The reply is, The first creation will share the doom of the first man. For a little season, in testimony to the rights and glory of the Son of Man, it will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into

the liberty of the glory of the children of God; but the judgment pronounced upon it, if postponed, is final and irrevocable.

It is, therefore, an immense consolation to be reminded that the Lord Himself, the Creator, abideth for ever. The rapid flight of time, which is ever pressed upon our attention at the close of a year, the constant departure of those we have known and loved, the signs of mortality meeting our gaze at every turn—all these things might well fill our hearts with apprehension and gloom, if our vision were bounded by time's horizon. But thanks be unto God, we have to do with a Person who is above and beyond all change, with One who is ever the same, and whose years never fail; and He is known to our souls as Saviour, Redeemer, and Lord. It is, indeed, a characteristic of Christianity that we are shut up—blessedly shut up—to a Divine Person, and to a Divine Person who, having Himself been here as Man in the midst of men, knows all our needs and sorrows. In the very Psalm, indeed, from which the apostle cites, we find the feelings to which allusion has been made. It will encourage our hearts to ponder a little upon what is there recorded.

It may be first pointed out that the Divine title of the Psalm (cii.) is "A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth

out his complaint before the Lord ”; and let it be remembered that “the afflicted” here is no less a Person than the Messiah in the midst of His sorrow and rejection. But passing by the special circumstances in which He is here seen, and coming to our immediate subject, He says in verse 23, “He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days.” And then, turning to God, He says, “O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: Thy years are throughout all generations.” How it endears our precious Saviour to our hearts, as we are permitted to contemplate Him in circumstances so closely resembling those in which we ourselves are; to perceive that He, through His becoming man, was weighted with the feeling and experience of weakness, and the brevity of human life. Yea, as we elsewhere read, He was tempted in all points like as we are, sin apart; and it is on this very account that He is qualified to sympathize with us in our infirmities, and to minister to us the needed succour. Blessed for ever be His holy name!

Let us, however, regard the answer to His cry. It commences with verse 25, “Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt Thou

change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same,* and Thy years shall have no end." We may reverently say that God, in answer to the cry of distress of His Anointed, reminds Him of His Creatorship; and then, that if all the works of His hands perish, He would endure; that in contrast with their change, decay, and dissolution, He, although now in circumstances of weakness and sorrow, was in His own being the changeless One. Such language can only be understood in the light of the mystery of His Person; but the point we desire now to emphasize is that the comfort and sustainment ministered to His holy soul was in connection with the eternity and immutability of His own being. More may not be said; but oh! how close it brings Him to us in our weakness when we read this "prayer of the afflicted." and learn the character of the answer He received.

There is another thing to be observed. As the Captain of our salvation, He was made perfect through sufferings; and He has thus become the perfect Exemplar of all His sorrowing and tried saints. But the marvel is, that the consolation ministered to Him, while treading the path of rejection, when, to all outward appearance, He

* As pointed out in chapter i., the words *Atta Hu*, rendered "Thou art the same," have ever been regarded as having the force of a Divine title.

laboured in vain and spent His strength for nought, is of the same nature as that ministered to us in our pilgrim path. Is He told, as in the Psalm, of His changeless being? So are we reminded, while passing through this world of change, that He remaineth, that He is ever the same—the same through all the centuries of time, as through the immeasurable ages of eternity. We are in this way put upon a Rock—a Rock that nothing can ever shake, and on which, reposing in perfect peace, we can contemplate, without a single apprehension, the dissolution of all things. Christ remains, if we lose all besides; nay, we should rather say, Let all else vanish from our gaze, for we want *nothing* since we possess Christ.

All this does but teach us that we already belong to another scene, which is as unchanging as the unchanging Christ. It was this lesson in which the Lord so carefully instructed His disciples. In John xiii., for example, the whole significance of His washing their feet might be thus expressed—"If I cannot longer remain with you in your circumstances, I will show you how you may follow, and have part with Me in that new place to which I am going." So also, when Mary Magdalene would have detained Him here, He said, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My

brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.” It is the same lesson in another way. He puts His disciples, by this message, into His own place and relationship in association with Himself, and this is necessarily in heaven. Not only, therefore, do we belong to another scene—and one outside this world—but the Lord would have us follow Him to it, and be in His company there, even while treading the sands of the wilderness.

“Thou remainest,” is thus full of blessed sustainment and encouragement. Not only does it afford us a secure and immovable foundation in the midst of change and unrest, but it also attracts our hearts to that new place, and that new order of things, which He has formed and inaugurated in virtue of His death and resurrection, and where He Himself is the Centre of all the glory which floods the whole scene. For, as we elsewhere read, He has ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. Well then may we accept death upon everything here, for already the light of another world has dawned upon our souls—a new world where neither change, nor sorrow, nor death can ever enter, and where we shall be for ever with Christ and conformed to His own image. Of this new creation, He is the Beginning, as the First-born

from the dead, and *He remaineth*. Yea, as we are permitted to address Him, "Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end."

In conclusion, the writer would affectionately enquire whether the reader is consciously reposing upon Him who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever? There is no other foundation for our souls before God. Building upon it, we are secured both for time and for eternity; for God is then for us; and if He be for us, who can be against us?