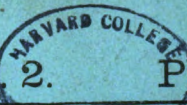


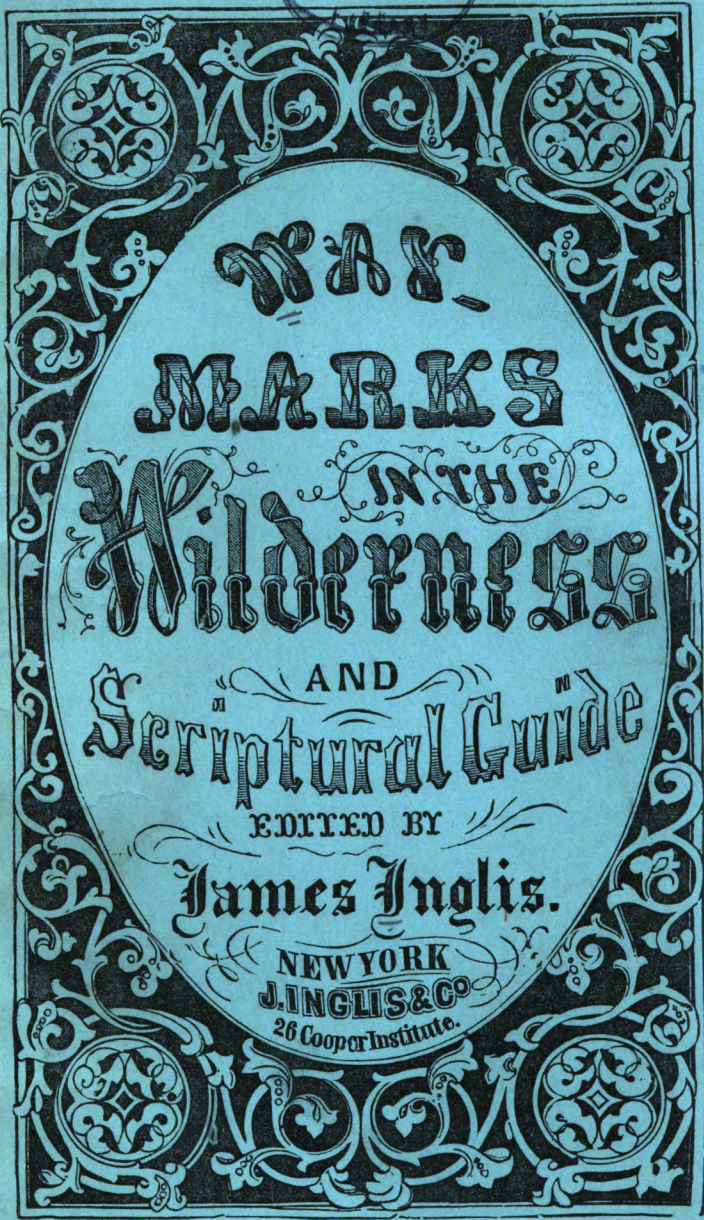
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JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

YEAR by year, if a man is indeed growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he perceives more clearly with what humility and self-distrust it becomes him to speak of that truth in which the whole interest of human existence is wrapped up, and, still more, which so intimately concerns the glory of God. In our study of it we should be emptied alike of prepossessions and self-confidence. An arrest should be laid upon our own reasonings and speculations; and, on the same ground, we should seek deliverance from the authority and influence of human systems of theology, so far as they consist of the reasonings and speculations of other men. Every voice should be silenced, that God alone may be heard. But among other discoveries of advancing years, not the least humbling is to find that much for which we have been contending with the greatest warmth as the truth of God is, after all, only our own or some other man's conclusions regarding it, or a human theory to account for that which should be received simply on the testimony of God. When every thing of human origin is eliminated from the matter of theological controversies which have separated the children of God, it will be found that controversy is at an end, and those who seemed to be antagonists are one in faith and hope.

Sometimes men say, in a condescending way, that a

profound knowledge of doctrine, and ability to expound or defend it, are not essential to salvation, or even to the joy and vigor of spiritual life here. "The most illiterate peasant," they say, "the blind pauper in her hovel, may be as truly saved, and may even rejoice in a faith as triumphant as the most profound theologian. A man may be justified by faith, who can tell you little about the doctrine of justification by faith; he may be 'made the righteousness of God in Him,' though he could not answer the question, What is the righteousness of God?"

This only means that these simple believers are untaught in theological science, and in human definitions of scriptural terms as these are introduced into the discussions and controversies of the learned. But what have these to do with that which makes a man wise unto salvation, or with the knowledge of those things which are, not intellectually, but spiritually, discerned? In the things of God, a man is called to be "a fool, that he may be wise." It would, therefore, be more to the purpose to reverse the statement, and say that a man may be learned in all the theology of the schools, and yet be utterly ignorant of Him whom to know is everlasting life; and may most skilfully maintain the doctrine of justification by faith as taught in human systems, and yet be dead in trespasses and sins. It is indeed a blessed truth that one who knew so little of what God has revealed for the comfort and edification of believers as the thief on the cross, could find everlasting life in Him who hung by his side. But beyond the simple revelation of the Saviour of sinners to the God-opened eye of faith, it is also true that those who know nothing of the wisdom

of this world may be most deeply taught in the things of God, and may have the clearest views of all that is taught in the Scriptures of truth. A doctor of divinity, who in his day enjoyed a high reputation as an expositor of Scripture, often referred with gratitude and tenderness to the instructions of his widowed mother, who brought up a large family in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, toiling with her hands for their daily bread. Speaking of his own study of the word, he said, "After I have pondered the elaborate and often conflicting expositions of the most eminent commentators, very often the recollection of my mother's explanation of a difficulty will come to me like a beam of sunlight through the mists." Many of us could repeat his testimony, to the glory of Him who has so provided for the upbuilding of His church "that no flesh should glory in His presence."

We say this without undervaluing the services or gifts of the distinguished men whom God has, from time to time, raised up and endowed for the advocacy or defence of the truth in the midst of prevailing error. But with all grateful acknowledgment of their services, we must not lose sight of the danger which attends their eminence and success. Even though they most earnestly disclaim all title to be leaders, a party is naturally attracted to them, virtually taking them as lords of faith and conscience. Doubtless there are defects in all human statements of doctrine; and, amidst the exigencies of controversy, undue prominence may be given to certain aspects of truth, or, in contending against error, the defender of truth may insensibly incline toward the opposite error. Whatever the defects or mistakes of such a leader may be,

these, as his peculiarities, become the distinction of his party, who carry them out to lengths which he never contemplated, until the truth is lost sight of, and another heresy awaits the testimony of some future defender of the faith once delivered to the saints. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

This could not be more strikingly illustrated than in the history of the various controversies which have arisen regarding the doctrine of justification by faith. The tendency to declension from this truth, which was very soon manifested in the primitive churches, has operated in all succeeding ages ; so that the lapse of a single generation has generally been sufficient for the adulteration of the purest testimony to it. The direction which the tendency may take, and the form of error in which it results, are commonly determined by some characteristics of the testimony or the witness. This form of error may give occasion to some peculiarity in the testimony which is borne against it, which, in its turn, will be worked out in the heat of controversy or by the zeal of partisans, to a new perversion of the truth.

Without going back into the history of remoter controversies, we find that something in the state of opinion around them led the defenders of the truth in a past generation to make a distinction between pardon and justification. This was perhaps innocuous in its first announcement, but it was logically followed by a division of the obedience of Christ into His active and passive obedience ; the one for our pardon, the other for our justification. The manner in which these distinctions were urged led men around by another way into bondage to that law from which those who

first made them professed to free believers, and obscured the whole truth of the believer's standing and acceptance in Him who died on account of our offences, and rose again on account of our justification. Then, in the grace with which He is accustomed to meet the failures of His people, God raised up a testimony to the truth which had been obscured, and this in its first simplicity was blessed to many. But those who bore this testimony, when they came to contend with the errors by which the truth had been obscured, denying that the active obedience of the Lord on earth constitutes the ground of our justification, in distinction from His passive obedience on the cross as the ground of our pardon, cast His obedient life altogether out from the work which He accomplished for us. They, or rather their partisans, have carried out this denial into rash speculations regarding the nature and design of different portions of His work, and even of different stages of His sufferings on the cross; and what at first seemed to be a restoration of the fact of His resurrection to its due prominence in the preaching of the Gospel, becomes in their hands the opposite extreme from the error against which they contend. They make His death the dividing line between two distinct lives, in the latter of which, His resurrection-life, alone, we have any interest so far as our justification is concerned. As these followers become consolidated as a sect, and as their scattered notions on this and other subjects begin to crystallize into a system, we see the first shadow of another eclipse of the great truth which Satan always endeavors to hide from perishing men.

In periodicals and ephemeral publications from

England, we find a bitter controversy in progress between the advocates of these rival views. We rejoice to think that, so far as many of those engaged in it are concerned, they have a faith unaffected by their own speculations. Their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ does not depend upon their respective hypotheses, but, in spite of it, upon the testimony of God, as does the faith of simple believers who have never heard of their controversies. Yet it is sad to find men on either side whom we recognize as brethren, and by whose teaching under God we have been blessed, reviling each other, endeavoring to excite popular prejudice against opponents by unworthy appeals to traditional orthodoxy; or, in a supercilious conceit of superior light, taunting those who differ from them as ignorant and carnal, having not the Spirit. We must remember too that the fact that these advocates of a theory have faith which reaches beyond it will not avert the disastrous consequences of their errors in hiding the great truth from men.

The controversy has not invaded these shores; and we would neither introduce it here nor engage in it there. But its results may reach us; or, at all events, the truth involved in it is assailed in other ways by influential teachers and writers among ourselves. So that it behoves us to seek to reach the greatest precision in our views of what the Scriptures teach, and an exact understanding of the terms used in Scripture respecting the doctrine in question, as well as to get rid of all intermixture of human thoughts and speculations from that which we hold as truth, for they prove elements of weakness whenever or however the assault may come. In all this, one of the most important

points is to determine the meaning of the scriptural phrase, "the righteousness of God," in its various connections and modifications; as when it is said to be "revealed from faith to faith," or is styled "the righteousness which is of God by faith," or "righteousness without works," or "without the law," or when we are said to be "made the righteousness of God in Him." When this is determined, there is little ground of controversy left. But before entering upon the consideration of it there are two questions to be disposed of.

The FIRST relates to the distinction between pardon and justification. In human relations they are very different. Here pardon implies guilt; for a man cannot be pardoned for that of which he is not guilty: while justification implies innocence; for a man cannot be justified if he is guilty of that with which he has been charged. Now, when we carry these human thoughts to the word of God, we must consider the pardon of a sinner and the justification of a believer as two distinct transactions proceeding upon very different grounds. But do we find this distinction in the use of these terms in the Scriptures? We cannot enter at length into the examination of this subject, but a very few quotations will serve to show that, in the word of God, they but express different aspects of one and the same transaction, and that a pardoned sinner is a justified believer. Thus Paul says, Rom. 4 : 6, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works." But how does he describe it? "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sin is covered; blessed is the man to whom

the Lord will not impute sin." Again, "The blood which was shed for the remission of sins," is spoken of as that by which we are justified; and so in Rom. 3 : 25, 26, Paul speaks of God having set forth Christ Jesus to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness, "that He might be just and the *justifier* of him which believeth in Jesus." Again, in 2 Cor. 5 : 21, the object of His being made sin for us is, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

The truth is, that pardon in the human sense is impossible with an absolutely righteous God; for it implies a setting aside the claims of justice and the sentence of the law. A human governor may open the prison doors to the condemned criminal, but he goes forth a guilty man; that is, a human governor may clear the guilty, which God can by no means do. All the power and resources of humanity cannot remove guilt. This human idea of pardon has led to the low and dishonorable view of the sacrifice of Christ, that it was a mere expedient for maintaining the authority of God unimpaired, while He sets aside the claims of justice and clears the guilty, designed not to satisfy God, but to influence His creatures. Many considerations growing out of the defects of human laws and the circumstances of the crime or of the pardon, might maintain the authority of the government unimpaired in the exercise of the pardoning power. But there is something infinitely above protecting His influence over His creatures to be considered when God deals with sinners. He is Himself infinitely righteous, and the most impossible thing in the universe is that He should fail to execute righteous judg-

ment. His sentence must be carried out. He can by no means clear the guilty. Sin must be put away, guilt must be removed, and it must be on the ground of perfect righteousness that He pardons. If there is no sin or guilt, but perfect righteousness remaining, then a just God must not merely pardon in the human sense, but must "justify him which believeth in Jesus." If "through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins," then it must be added, "and through Him all that believe are justified from all things." It is one and the same transaction; only in looking sin-ward, we speak of pardon, and in looking God-ward we speak of justification.

The SECOND question relates to the distinction between what they call the active and passive obedience of Christ. We doubt if those who first made the distinction had any such thought as that into which their partisans have been driven, that the Lord, in His life on earth, vicariously fulfilled the positive requirements of the law for us, and that this constitutes our righteousness before God, on the ground of which we have everlasting life, as His death on the cross met the penalty of the broken law, and is the ground of forgiveness. "The law," here, it is presumed, is used in a wide sense as including all the responsibilities of man before God; and the supposition seems to be that a certain definite fulfilment of these responsibilities should release a man from them, so that he should become the rightful possessor of everlasting life. It is thus taught that Adam, had he persevered for a certain time in loyal subjection to God, would have earned eternal life for himself and his posterity. But we find no such intimation in Scripture. Certainly it is not

contained in the prohibition, "Thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." It is not contained in the description by Moses of the righteousness which is of the law, "The man that doeth those things shall live by them." The very opposite is implied. He shall live by them, but never earn eternal life through having kept them. And so the Saviour, when one asked how he might inherit eternal life, answers, "This do and thou shalt live." He does not say, "Thus thou shalt inherit eternal life."

There is no such thought in the Scriptures as a vicarious fulfilment of the responsibilities of a creature which can set the creature free from them. In any case, it was too late to speak of such a fulfilment of the law for man. He was already a sinner, and what the law required was the penalty of disobedience. He was already condemned, and what justice demanded was the execution of the sentence. But if it had been possible that the law could then be fulfilled by a substitute in such a way as to constitute a perfect righteousness for man, on what ground could justice inflict the penalty of unrighteousness? What has the law to demand if by my substitute it has been fulfilled? So far as we can see, the execution of the penalty of disobedience would have been a great wrong after such a vicarious obedience had been rendered and accepted.

On every ground, the thought of such vicarious obedience seems inadmissible. There is the sentence of infinite righteousness upon the sinner, and it must be executed. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." But does it therefore follow that all His

life of humiliation, obedience, faith, and love was not truly *for men*, and in every step of it absolutely essential to human salvation? It is true that it was not to be accepted as a substitute for our obedience. Had He gone through it all divinely perfect and spotless up to the cross, and then had asked His Father for more than twelve legions of angels to bear Him in triumph from the midst of His discomfited foes, men would have remained guilty, ruined, and undone, the wrath of God abiding on them. But, on the other hand, had He presented Himself at the cross by one step from the throne, instead of travelling to it along that path of humiliation, poverty, obedience, service, trial, persecution, and shame, from Bethlehem to Golgotha, could He have presented Himself as our substitute, offering Himself without spot unto God, the duly qualified and prepared victim, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself? He Himself says that it was for that hour that He came into the world; and since He did not so present Himself by one step from the throne, but travelled on to it by the path we have described, there can be but one answer to the question. The facts in the case are God's answer.

It is not in the essential holiness and perfection of a divine nature that He is presented to us as the Lamb without blemish and without spot; but in the untainted purity and perfection of His life and character as a man. It would have been a waste of words to speak of Him in His original and inherent perfection as "Him who knew no sin." It was the human life on earth by which He advanced to that hour, which gives its meaning to the expression, "God hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us." The years of

His earthly life and the character of His manhood are described when it is said that "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," as well as when it is said that "He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin;" and unless all this can be said of Him, then, according to the teaching of the Scriptures, He is not qualified to be either the sacrificial victim or the great High-Priest within the veil. If so, then surely the life which qualified Him for the sacrifice, and gave its proper value and efficacy to it, was all for us, and necessary for our redemption. It was only at the close of such a life that He could be described as "suffering for us, THE JUST for the unjust."

The Scriptures, however clearly they rest our justification and redemption upon the shedding of His blood, His vicarious sacrifice, never separate that from the whole of His humiliation, sufferings, and obedience. The connected whole of it is for us and our salvation. "He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." Our critical theologasters might object to the correctness of the language, if we said that He did it all instead of us, vicariously, as our substitute. But they cannot deny that it was all for our sakes, and all necessary to our enrichment with the fruits of divine grace. So it is not alone on the ground of His death upon the cross that "God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." The significance of that name and the occasion on which it was given, will tell the significance of that exaltation, and its relation to our justification. But when the

Spirit of God gives the ground of that exaltation, He takes in all the humiliation of which that death was the last and lowest step, all the obedience of which that death was the crowning act, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was found in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Had He paused at any point in this wondrous course, and stopped short of the death of the cross, our deliverance had not been accomplished, and His exaltation in the name and character of Jesus would not have followed. But we do not surely undervalue that death or depreciate the blood, when we view it as the termination of a course, the starting-point of which was from the form of God, when we regard every stage of it as necessary, every step in it as having reference to our salvation; when faith cleaves to Him in every part of it, and love rejoices in the connected whole of it, which no ingenuity of man can dismember.

We are more than willing to admit that the Lord Jesus did not take up the violated responsibilities of Adam, to make good all in which he had failed, and to restore us to the place which sin had forfeited. This was not the design of God in redemption. The working out of such righteousness, had it been possible, would have been to reduce the Second Adam to the level of the first, and would have been as inapplicable to us as if He had taken upon Him the nature of angels, and fulfilled the responsibilities of their sphere. It was fallen man that was to be rescued and exalted,

and so God sent forth His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh; and sent Him, not into another Paradise, but into a sin-cursed world, to glorify the name of God where it was most foully dishonored.

What the first Adam was, is seen by his failure in Paradise, where there was every thing to quicken and cherish love, to confirm loyalty, and to forbid the slightest shadow of distrust to fall athwart the relations which Infinite Goodness had established with the creature of His hands. What the Second Adam is, is seen in love to God of another order, abounding in the likeness of sinful flesh, against all the oppositions of a world under the curse, and in love to man holding on its way unalienated by the vileness of its objects, enduring such contradiction of sinners against Himself; is seen in loyalty that was subjected to tests and obedience that was carried to lengths which were impossible, except in a world of rebels, and for their salvation; is seen in faith, which not only remains unshaken, but triumphed most gloriously when exposed to the very extremity of fiery trial. There was not only holiness, but holiness unspotted in the midst of pollution; not only love, but love passing knowledge amidst the most cruel hatred; righteousness amidst iniquity, and truth where all was falsehood; and in addition to this, there was the perfection of meekness, grace, and lowliness of spirit, which could have had no scope except in the relation to which He had stooped for us.

Contrast the first Adam, yielding all on the first assault of temptation, betraying all into the hands of Satan, in Eden, filled to the full with God's gifts, and encompassed with the witnesses of God's goodness; contrast this with the Second Adam, encountering the

same enemy in the wilderness, with the wild beasts, through forty days of fasting and loneliness, when every thing witnessed of wrath and the curse; and see Him *then* and *there* baffling and defeating that enemy; not by asserting His original omnipotence, but as the Son of Man, by weapons from the armory furnished for man's spiritual warfare. Do that temptation and victory signify nothing in the accomplishment of our salvation? Was it for His own sake, or for the sake of those He came to save, that, amid human relations and the ordinances of God to man, He owned that it became Him to fulfil all righteousness, and actually did so, the only perfect and the only righteous one? We cannot here follow the details of obedience in which He did, not His own will, but the will of the Father that sent Him. Only we remark that when He presented Himself as our substitute in suffering and death, He must needs be able to say, "I have glorified Thee in the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." There was no question of divine holiness or of the innocence of man in his original state. It was as the seed of the woman that He was the Lamb of God, and it was in that character and state that He must be seen to be without blemish and without spot. It was in that state, and in the demonstrated perfection of such a life, that He was pronounced holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. And so, though in a strict use of language we may not speak of it as a vicarious life, it was all for us, as the necessary qualification for that vicarious death, and it counts into the preciousness of the blood which He shed. When the sacrifice is accomplished and He stands attested as the Son of God, with power, by His

resurrection from the dead, it all counts into the blended glories of His name, "the Lord our righteousness," and into the acceptability in which we stand accepted in the Beloved.

We see Him as our passover sacrificed for us, and rest secure from wrath, because we know that God looks on the sprinkled blood. We see him as the sin-offering burned without the camp, and we know that God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousnesses. But we see Him also as the burnt-offering, the sweet savor of which ascended with acceptance from the altar, and as the meat-offering, the frankincense of which was also burned on the altar, and we know that in all the acceptance of perfect love to God and perfect love to man, He was offered up for us, and accepted for our redemption. Nor is it alone that all this enters into the value and acceptability of the sacrifice. Nor is it alone that the unbroken whole of His humiliation and obedience, from the Father's bosom on to the cross, forms the ground of His present exaltation. When, in His kingly majesty, He goes forth to terminate in glory that which He has begun in grace, the voice which once said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," shall say, "Ride prosperously, because of truth, meekness, and righteousness." His life among sinners, and His death for sin, equally attest that which is acknowledged, when the same voice says, "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

We have not unwillingly yielded to the inducements to dwell on these points beyond what might seem to

be the due proportion of preliminary questions. They have a direct bearing upon the subject before us, and on the principal question which we proposed to answer, What is the import of the scriptural phrase, *the righteousness of God*, when used in relation to our justification? For the views presented under the first point considered, seem to lead to the conclusion that, when God justifies, it must be upon the ground of a perfect righteousness with which the justified person is in some way endowed. And the views presented under the second head seem to lead to the conclusion that the lowly, loving, holy, obedient, righteous life of Jesus on earth, in some way, enters into the ground of justification—that is, into the righteousness with which the believer is endowed. But, as it is necessary to leave the main subject for future consideration, we do not now attempt to enforce these conclusions.

Without reference at present to the phrase in its scriptural use and connection, we may surely say that the life of Jesus in itself fulfils a righteousness of another and infinitely higher order than that which was ever required from any mere creature, or could be fulfilled by creatures. The fact that Adam fell from his original perfection entitles us to say that the most perfect natural humanity could not preserve its purity amid pollution, righteousness amidst wrong, and love in the midst of endless provocation and injury. Nor will it be thought too much to say that no created being could have maintained the course which Jesus pursued, resisting the temptations and surmounting the obstacles that He encountered; we say nothing of self-sacrificing love for enemies, for the vile and unworthy. All that we know of created beings favors the infer-

ence that none but Immanuel could have come down into such close contact with impurity, and held on through the miry ways of this world, undefiled and incapable of contamination; none but He could have met and conquered Satan in every form of temptation and assault; none but He could have loved, and trusted, and obeyed on to the end, in such circumstances. In short, we may say that the incarnation of the Son of God was not more necessary to the endurance of the curse than it was necessary in order to a God-glorifying, stainless, righteous life, as a preparation for the sacrifice.

There is another consideration which cannot be gainsaid. Adam was not required to sacrifice a throne, empty himself of glory, and humble himself to the dust, in order to reach the place of obedience and enter upon the path of righteousness. Nor is any such self-sacrifice the condition of fulfilling the obligations of any order of created beings. At any rate, none but He had a divine throne, divine glory, and divine bliss to resign. None but He could exchange the form of God for the form of a servant, and stoop from the place of the Creator to that of the creature. It is by this we are to estimate His love to God and His love to man; this gives character to His righteousness, and by this we are to measure His desire that the Father should be glorified, sin condemned, righteousness vindicated, and the sinner saved. In making the estimate, we must bring to it His full knowledge of all that lay before Him, and the joyful alacrity with which He came to do the Father's will, knowing that doing it involved His being made sin which was infinitely hateful to Him, and enduring the wrath of God,

who was infinitely dear to Him. In view of all this, whether it is embraced in the phrase in question in the relation in which we come to consider it, no one will deny that the only adequate description of such righteousness is “*the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*” 2 Pet. 1 : 1.

TO BE CONTINUED.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE “HIDDEN MANNA” AND THE “WHITE STONE.”

BY W. R. NICHOLSON, D.D.

THE Letters to the Seven Churches, occupying the second and third chapters of the Book of the Revelation, are a marked portion of Holy Scripture. They are letters of the Lord Jesus to the *hearts* of His people—spiritual, instructive, discriminating, searching, rebuking, comforting, humbling, quickening. And of these letters a leading feature is their promises—a glorious promise in each letter—the Seven Promises all alike referring to the believer’s future life, and, excepting the first of the seven, to the life subsequent to the believer’s resurrection at the coming of Christ. Taken together, they are such an exhibition of the blessedness of heaven, as that there is nothing like it in any other one portion of the Bible. And of these wonderful promises, that in the letter to the church at Pergamos, the third in the series, is perhaps the most remarkable, by a certain strangeness of language exciting and exercising a holy curiosity, and, if the fol-

lowing exposition be correct, absolutely fascinating us in adoring wonder at the promised glory which it reveals. It is believed that the argument of this paper will commend itself to all thoughtful and loving students of God's word as a scriptural demonstration.

The promise reads thus, Rev. 2 : 17 : "To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give unto him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which none knoweth save he that receiveth it."

There are two leading parts of this promise—that referring to the hidden manna, and that about the white stone. We shall find that these two parts coalesce into one harmonious whole; but we begin with the separate consideration of the first part, the meaning of which is easily ascertained. We are here assured that the overcomer shall have of the hidden manna, that is, that he shall eat of it; and that he shall receive of it because of Christ giving it to him. *Manna*, the food with which God miraculously fed Israel in the wilderness is here made the representation of the blessedness promised. Ex. 16.

Now, the manna was emblematical of Christ Himself. John 6 : 32, 33, 48-50; 1 Cor. 10 : 3, 4.

It set forth Christ especially in His abasement and sufferings, as thereby being made our spiritual food and sustenance. As the manna fell from heaven, and lay upon the ground, so Christ came down from heaven into deepest sufferings. Compare John 6 : 51.

Hidden manna; not hidden as it lay on the ground in the wilderness, even as Christ was not hidden in His deep abasement; but at the close of Israel's wilderness history, a portion of it by God's command was laid up

in a golden pot in the ark of the covenant,* within the holy of holies, as a memorial, even as Christ, at the close of His sufferings on earth, ascended into the heavens, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Christ is now hidden from our sight in that He is with the Father in the holy of holies; only in this sense is He the hidden manna. But He will no longer be hidden to the overcomer, when the latter shall have been admitted to be with Him where He is.

Even now by faith we feast on this manna; but only as it is hidden. We feast on Him first as He is manna, and next as He is hidden; that is, we feast by faith in Him, both as He suffered for our sins and as He triumphed out of those sufferings. Col. 3 : 3. But this promise, in common with all these great promises in the seven letters, refers specifically to the blessedness of heaven. It is only when the overcomer shall have been himself admitted to the holy of holies, where Christ now is, and when of course Christ will no longer be hidden to him, that the intended fulfilment of this promise will have been realized. We now feast, indeed, upon the hidden manna; but then upon the unhidden manna. The blessedness of heaven begins here; but it is perfected only there. It is of the same kind, the blessedness of feasting on Christ; but the feasting here, delicious as it is, is to the feasting there only as might be one bunch of grapes to the vintage of Eschol. The happiness of heaven will consist in our communing with Christ in the truth of His redemptive sufferings on earth, and of their efficacy in

* Ex. 16 : 33, 34 ; Heb. 9 : 4.

the there resultant glory. And all that will be a feast to the soul, sumptuous, relishing, endless.

The overcomer shall have *of* that manna. That is, he cannot exhaust it all himself, but all others will feast as well as he. He shall have enough, he shall be satisfied; but so shall every other among the myriads of the redeemed. The preciousness of Christ is ever a multitude of blessednesses.

And Christ Himself will *give* it to the overcomers. He Himself will give of Himself to each and every one; for He, who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, will not fail to realize that joy in His own communion with His redeemed, and between such a Giver and such receivers what an ecstatic play of the fellowship of eternity!

Such, then, is the first part of this great promise. What precious good it is for the Christian to have before him, as the divine stimulus of his daily life! And how opposite to the church at Pergamos! In their worldliness they were like Israel hankering for "the flesh-pots of Egypt;" but to Israel the manna was given instead of those idol-meats, and to the Christians at Pergamos was promised, as something infinitely to be preferred to the pleasures of worldliness, the manna-feast of heaven.

"And I will give unto him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written," etc.

This second part of the promise is, as we shall find, the counterpart of the first; as, of two sides of an object, either one is the complement of the other. This "white stone" is essentially connected with that "hidden manna." That there is a very close connection between the two parts of the sentence is at once ap-

parent. It is he, and only he, that eateth of the manna who receiveth the stone; but also, as I hope to show, the eating of the manna *cannot be* without the receiving of the stone—*this* as the security of *that*. Certainly the joining together of these two parts in one sentence must be accepted by us as an important principle of guidance for interpreting this second part; for why should the hidden manna and the white stone be thus connected together, if there be no link of identity between them? At once we feel sure at least of this: that the reference of this stone is, and must be, to the same history of Israel. And this is a great point gained.

Now, the gift of the stone itself is a part of the blessedness here promised: that is, the stone is not mentioned for the sake only of the name written on it. It is not a mere tablet for the name; but it becomes a tablet only in addition to what it is in itself. This is evident from the words, “I will give to him a white stone”—there is one gift; and then follows, “And on the stone I will give a new name written”—there is another gift quite distinct. If the name were all, doubtless the expression would have been some such as is found in 14 : 1—a name written in the *forehead*. No; the stone here is something in itself, and needs to be specifically interpreted.

Notice, then, that it is *a* stone. Not *the* stone, as if there were but one white stone, and which must be given to all overcomers in common; but a particular stone for each and every overcomer.

Again, it is a *white* stone. Some have supposed that this refers to the white pebbles used by Greek and Roman judges when they would vote *acquittal* of the

accused. But those white pebbles were not *given to* the accused, but only used as counters in a sentence of judgment; whereas the white stone here is no *counter* at all: it is only one particular stone for each overcomer, and, necessarily, it is actually given to each, since it hath a name on it which is meant for the particular receiver alone. Besides, the believer in Christ has full and everlasting acquittal even now, (Rom. 8 : 1, 33, 34;) he will have no need of a sentence of acquittal in heaven.

Others have supposed that it refers to the white pebble thrown to the conqueror in the Grecian games, and which made him possessor of all articles the names of which were written thereon, and entitled him to nourishment at the public expense. But such things as were written on the stone would be known to many besides the receiver of it; whereas this white stone hath a name on it known only to the receiver of it.

Either of these suppositions is thus out of the question. And still for another reason can neither of them be admitted—that, as we have seen, there is, and must be, in this white stone a reference to Israel's history. This is a *conditio sine qua non* in any attempted interpretation, and it at once disposes of several other conceits of different writers.

Nor, moreover, is it true, that the "white stone" of the text is simply a white pebble. "White" is a leading word in this book of the Revelations, 1 : 14; 2 : 17; 3 : 5; 7 : 9; 14 : 14; 19 : 8, 14; 19 : 11, 14; 20 : 11. "White," then, is "the color and livery of heaven;" compare Matthew 17 : 2; 28 : 3; John 20 : 12; Acts 1 : 10. We must conclude, therefore, that this "white" is not the dull white of a pebble;

but a *shining* white. Nay, this is expressly indicated in certain places; in Revelation 1 : 14, the white of the head and hairs of the Son of Man is associated with the *sun-like* splendor of His countenance in the last clause of the sixteenth verse; and that which, in the fourteenth verse of the nineteenth chapter, is, according to the Greek, *white* linen, is, in the eighth verse of the same chapter, according to a different Greek word there used, *bright* linen. Compare Matthew 17 : 2; Mark 9 : 3. It is necessary to say, then, that this “white stone” is not the dull white pebble, but a *shining* stone, a stone of *glistening* white. In fine, it is a *precious stone*. And this is even further confirmed by the fact that precious stones are expressly used in this book for describing the glory of heaven, (21 : 10, 11, 19, 20.) Such, beyond question, is the “white stone” whose reference here is to Israel’s history; and whose significance we must find, if anywhere, in such notices of precious stones as that history may contain.

Now, by this token we cannot fail to go at once to the account of the breast-plate of the high-priest, Exodus 28 : 17–20; 39 : 9–13. Twelve precious stones, in four rows, sparkled upon the front of the breast-plate. Then there is an historical connection between the breast-plate and the manna; the order for making the breast-plate having been given to Moses contemporaneously with God’s bestowment of the manna.

But especially, when at the close of Israel’s wanderings a portion of the manna was laid up as a memorial before the Lord, it was alone the high-priest who could have access to the holy of holies where the pot of manna was concealed. The promise of partaking of the hidden manna, therefore, is necessarily sugges-

tive, in its own completion, of the further promise of entering within the veil. But only the high-priest might enter there; and therefore must we understand this gift of the precious stone to the overcomer to be the investment of his person with that high-priestly privilege of going into the holy of holies—into the immediate presence of God.*

It is not the breast-plate with all its jewels which is given him, for that is Christ's, our great High-Priest, the Representative of all; but only one stone therefrom, whereby he receives into his person a portion of Christ's own priesthood, and stands in Christ before the throne of God. Thus in his priestliness he has access to the hidden manna, and partakes of the heavenly feast. Even now the believer in Christ is a priest, yet not in the holy of holies; even now he draweth nigh into the holiest of all by faith, yet not actually and visibly. The gift of that precious stone will be our investment with such a privilege, and we shall actually be where the hidden manna is, then no longer hidden. This, I think, is the meaning of the "white stone;" and as it seems to me, it presents itself to us with the force of a scriptural demonstration.

Beyond all question, this "white stone," or brilliant white gem, was some stone connected with the breast-plate, and expresses here in the promise the high-priestly admission of the overcomer into the real holy of holies; at the same time, however, it is a dis-

* Just as the privilege of wearing the breast-plate was synonymous with that of going into the holy of holies, although the high-priest may not have worn the breast-plate while in the act of going within the veil. His ever wearing it at all identified him as the only one who could go within the veil.

tinct question as to the particular stone referred to. Which one of all the precious jewels of the breast-plate was it? Now, we have enumerated for us all the stones which were upon the outside, on the front, of the breast-plate; and though they were all gems, each having its own peculiar glory, yet not one of them, in the fullest meaning of the phrase, was a “white stone”—that is, glisteningly white; not only brilliant, but brilliantly white. For although the *diamond*, which is just such a white stone, is named in our translation as one of the three in the second of the four rows, it is now confessed by the scholars to be a mistaken rendering of the Hebrew word. There was no white shining stone on the outside of the breast-plate; but, as we have seen, the promise of our text demonstrates that there must have been such a stone belonging to the dress of the high-priest; and in what part of his dress shall we look for it, if not in the breast-plate, which was so distinguished for its jewelry? Accordingly, was not the “*Urim and Thummim*” just such a stone?*

It is agreed by those who have most thoroughly examined into the question of what was the *Urim and Thummim*, that the two words together designate but one thing; and sometimes Scripture itself uses but the one word *Urim*, (Numbers 27 : 21 ; 1 Samuel 28 : 6.) It was placed, as we are expressly informed, *within* the breast-plate, which was made four-square and double, so as to fold back upon itself, and thus form a purse-like receptacle for the treasure, (Exodus 28 : 16, 30 ; Leviticus 8 : 8.) It was

* I am indebted to Trench on the Seven Letters for this suggestion, which he says he had met with in a German writer.

something very precious, as is implied in the sacredness attached to it, and as being the inclosed and central treasure of the jewelled breast-plate. And it seems to have been something very brilliant and shining, for the meaning of "Urim and Thummim" is *lights and perfections*. Was it not, therefore, the *diamond?* for, of all precious stones, the diamond is preëminently the one which we would have supposed could not have been omitted in so gorgeous an assemblage of jewels; and yet it was omitted except it lay within; meanwhile this missing gem of the outside, if indeed it did lie within, was every way worthy of being designated "lights and perfections"—of all gems the only one which could have so truly been thus named. It does seem to be well-nigh a proved conclusion. *That*, then, would be the "white stone" of our text—the glistening diamond as it lay within the folds of the breast-plate, and upon the heart of the high-priest, identifying him as the only person privileged to go within the veil into the holiest of all.

It is also believed by many that there was something written on the Urim, since the high-priest was to seek in some way counsel from God, "*after the judgment of Urim,*" in matters which greatly concerned the interests of the people; which writing, if indeed it was there, would make a further correspondence between the Urim and this white stone of the text with the new name upon it. And again, since no one could know what was written on the Urim save the high-priest, so here, as still an additional correspondence, the name upon the white stone none knoweth save he that receiveth it.

Furthermore, if this view of the "white stone" be-

ing the diamond be correct, it would account for what is otherwise an unaccountable thing—that in the description of the New Jerusalem, in the twenty-first chapter of this book, among all the precious stones mentioned there, nothing is said of the diamond. Of the twelve foundations of the city, each was a precious stone; yet of all the twelve varieties of gems no one was a diamond. It is remarkable; for certainly we should have expected the diamond to appear as a part of all that gorgeous glory. But, as in the case of the breast-plate, the omission of this brightest of the gems from the outside was compensated by the shining of its presence inside, so of the enumerated jewels of the heavenly city the diamond is not one, because of its being reserved as a special gift to each and every overcomer. That city is a representation of the glorified in the divine *display* of their existence; but thus each one's own diamond will be, for *one's self*, a richer beauty and an intenser brightness than all that exterior splendor of the vast assemblage. Thus, then, beautifully explained would be the absence of this gem from the city's jewelry; and the possibility of the explanation is proof presumptive of its truth. It is, in fact, a separate argument for the identity of the “white stone” with the diamond; meanwhile it is additional confirmation of the double identity, first of the “white stone” with the “Urim and Thummim,” and next of the “Urim and Thummim,” with a diamond. Instead of there being no diamond at all in the New Jerusalem, it will have myriads of them—one for every overcomer—one for himself in his priestliness before God, an ecstasy of splendor within himself, his own conscious glory of priesthood.

But whatever may be thought of the question of the diamond, one thing is clear—that the shining stone of the promise, as being connected with the "hidden manna," does and must express the high-priestly privilege of access into the holy of holies, where the hidden manna lay. The second part of the promise is the counterpart of the first, and its fulfilment is essential to the fulfilment of that. It is the promise, to the overcomer, of the high-priesthood in all the fulness of its merely human possibilities; Jesus-Christ for ever remaining the one great High-Priest, but also every believer in Him attaining at length to certain high-priestly functions, especially to that of approaching and ministering before the immediate living presence of the Lord God Almighty. And as there is a stone for each overcomer, so is it the promise of high-priesthood as of something intensely individual and specific. Each saint in glory shall have this priesthood complete within the limits of his own distinctive personality; as exclusively his own, and, as exercised and enjoyed by him, incommunicable. In the sixth verse of the first chapter we are taught that God hath made for all believers a kingdom—one sovereignty for all, each and every one a king, but all associate sharers, though in different degrees, of course, as possessors of authority and dispensers of power; whereas, in marked contrast to this, we are taught in the very same verse, not that God hath made for us one priesthood, but that He hath made us *priests*, as if it were meant in that verse to draw attention to this distinction between the collectiveness of our royalty and the separateness of our priesthood. From one point of view, indeed, we may speak of the one

priesthood of saints; they are all equally priests in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and they all are priests unto God. But in the soul's communion with God, in its every exercise of adoration and praise, and in its ministry or service, there should and must be the expression purely of its own identity—its own very self—which is not what is so much required in the act of dispensing power. Every overcomer shall have his own white stone; within himself, and yet throughout himself, in the *aloneness* of his individual integrity; yet in the fruitfulness of his personal capability, as his own self-expression, notwithstanding his worshipping in company with others, he will have entered the heaven of heavens, and will feast on the manna till then hidden, and gaze on the glory of God, and live in his own incommunicable consciousness of the wondrous fellowship, and say for himself what none other in heaven could say for him, and do for God's honoring what could else never be done—this blessed personality of fellowship and ministry being like a white, shining, precious stone, whose lustre is only the more intense when brought into sunlight—each unhindered personality, as broadening and brightening in the unfolding glory of God, itself a conscious splendor eternally increasing.

Nor is even all this the exhaustion of the promise. “The hidden manna” is one thing; the white stone, as opening the way to the hidden manna, is another thing; and still a third is that Christ will give, “written on the stone, a new name which none knoweth save he that receiveth the stone.”

A name written; not merely a *word*, but such a word as is a *name*—the designation of a person. This

is certainly the natural suggestion of the language, and, as we shall see presently, it is the only admissible interpretation here. And there is but one name on a stone; a particular name for each particular stone. And the name is *written* on the stone; secured to it as its enduring accompaniment. That is, a particular personal name is inwrought into the individual priesthood of the overcomer.

Again, a *new* name. "New" is another of the leading words of the book of the Revelation. See 3 : 12 ; 5 : 9 ; 21 : 1 ; 21 : 5. From the connections of this word, as thus exhibited in this book, we may infer that the new name on the stone will not be at least fully realized till the time of the manifestation of the new creation; and as the name is given simultaneously with the gift of the stone, so also that not till then will the individual priesthood be fully realized. It will be a name new in itself, yet also, as it were, not fully written out until the appointed time of newness.

And again, a name *which none knoweth save he that receiveth the stone*. There is a name upon each stone, and no one knows the name on a particular stone save the receiver of that stone. This is precisely what is here said; so that of two overcomers, each receiving a stone, neither knows the name upon the other's stone, but only that upon his own. There are as many names as there are stones, and as many stones as there are overcomers, and the overcomers are myriads, and so there are myriads of secret names among the host of the glorified. Therefore, this new name on a stone cannot mean what so many have taken it to mean, the revelation to all the glorified in common of

a heavenly blessedness which none but they shall ever experience and know. It goes much further than that; for the distinction is not between the glorified and the lost, but between the many individuals of the glorified themselves. A name on a particular stone, which is known only to the possessor of that stone, must mean something which he does not at all share with any one of his companions in glory. And therefore again, the "new name" spoken of in Isaiah 62 : 2, cannot be what is here meant; for that is to be given, not only to an *earthly* people, but to a whole people in common. Nor, for the same reason, can either of the several names mentioned in the promise to Philadelphia (3 : 12) be the name on a stone; each of those names will be given to all overcomers alike. Now, it is inconceivable that, in the possession of any one of the glorified there should be some secret knowledge which is incommunicable to another, except it be of the kind which is of the essence of personal identity. Whatever knowledge of God or of Christ one has there, that same knowledge every other has or may have; for the blessedness of "being filled with all the fulness of God" is held forth to all alike. But there, as here, it must be that each one's personal consciousness is distinctively his own, and incommunicably so; no one's feeling of being himself can ever be felt for him by another. There must be in heaven as many untold secrets of *consciousness* as there are persons; there must be the distinctness, and the integrity, and the inviolableness of personal individuality. Here, then, is a kind of knowledge which fully realizes the description given in the text; and it is the only kind imaginable which does. The name upon a white stone,

therefore, which none knoweth save he that receiveth the stone, is a name of personal identity; his own truest name; his thorough consciousness of himself in glory, as being precisely and fully himself. And as written on a stone, this name is impressed upon his priesthood. This naming of himself to himself—this perfect expressiveness of his conscious nature—enters into, animates, and characterizes his every act of worship and of service. As his personal individuality is the exact sphere of his priesthood, so his priesthood is at once the manifestation and the consummation of his personal individuality. It is not egotism, but truthfulness; not thoughts of self, but the fulness of life; all the forces of the heavenly manhood being identified self-consciously with every exercise of heaven; no wandering thoughts which so trouble us here; no ignorance of one's self which so misleads us now; no lack of self-impressment on the service rendered; no discord in the internal music of consciousness. Oh! it is among the sweetest of our views of heaven. His now clear understanding of God's secret dealings with himself on the earth; the full, felt significance of his past experience as an overcomer; the adequate appreciation of himself as having been once guilty and ruined; his bright intuitions of the never-failing love which ordained, and measured, and proportioned his every suffering and trial; and his now knowing that he is *awake*, that he is indeed in heaven, that God, and Christ, and the blessed Spirit, and all the redeemed, and the elect angels, and the jasper-glories of the New Jerusalem, and the boundless universe of thought and object, are no longer merely believed in, but are seen, and touched, and explored, and known; all this,

and whatever else contributes to make up the grand complex of his consciousness in glory, is the name which none knoweth save himself, and in the identity of which he eateth of the manna and dischargeth his priesthood, in whose brightness, as of a white shining stone, lives the *conscious* splendor. *It is I, I myself, a NEW name*; for never till then will he have known such intensity of personal existence, such truthfulness of personal life, such glory of personal consciousness.

What a motive now to the struggling believer in Christ is this promise, for the culture, at once, of his Christian separateness from the world, and of his Christian consciousness in communion with God!

"FALLEN FROM GRACE."

BY CHARLES CAMPBELL.

"Do you believe in falling from grace?" There is not, so far as we know, any question of a religious character more frequently raised than this. Now, if we bow to the word of God, we shall of course believe that Christians may be in the sad condition called "fallen from grace;" since it is distinctly asserted of some, "*Ye are fallen from grace.*" Gal. 5 : 4.

But to "fall from grace," in the popular sense of that phrase, is a very different thing from that intended by the Holy Spirit when Paul wrote these words. This is very evident from the self-contradictory form which the question referred to often takes. It is often put thus: "Do you think that a real, a true believer can fall from grace and be lost?" Absurd in itself as

is this question, I believe it embodies the popular sense of the words "fallen from grace"—a false interpretation of Scripture, involving or resulting from the unscriptural doctrine that a saint in Christ Jesus may perish for ever.

Now, the doctrine that a believer may perish eternally belies every fact of the gospel of God's grace, and contradicts every assertion of God's word concerning Him. This doctrine makes of Christ a half-Saviour, or rather a helper, not a Saviour; it makes salvation dependent on self and self-righteousness. It introduces utter uncertainty as to that of which the Holy Ghost has spoken in the most positive terms. This evil doctrine assumes, and even asserts, that one who is a child of God to-day may be a child of the devil to-morrow; and is in this at least consistent with itself, that it supposes and provides for many conversions, and then represents as new conversions both what Scripture calls restoration of soul, and what it describes as growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Let us set this erroneous teaching in the light of the word of God.

First of all, let it be carefully noted that all men are not only "guilty before God," but they are all absolutely "without strength." Man is not only a sinner, but just because he is a sinner, he is totally incapable of meeting responsibility toward God. Help to save himself is not what a sinner needs. Salvation, fully accomplished salvation, alone meets his case. If any are saved, God must do it all.

And He *has* done it all by His Son, who is one with Himself, God manifest in flesh. The achievement at

once of salvation for lost, helpless sinners, and of His Father's glory as the God of salvation, was the work which was given Him to do. Did He accomplish that work? I need not answer for Him; *He* has answered this question. "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." "It is finished." John 17 : 4 ; 21 : 30.

And shall His work, His finished work, be rendered fruitless? Nay, verily. God has "glorified His Son," and "given Him power over all flesh, *that He might give ETERNAL LIFE to as many as Thou hast given Him.*" Are not those "whom God has given Him," and to whom He has "given eternal life," believers? And yet I am asked to believe that they to whom *He* has given eternal life *may* be lost, like the "*son of perdition.*" John 17 : 2, 3, 12.

But what did Jesus do? The answer is the simplest statement of the facts of the Gospel. "He died for our sins, He was buried, He rose again the third day for *our justification.*" "He *put away* sin by the sacrifice of Himself;" "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree;" "He was *made sin for us*, who knew no sin, *that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him;*" "He *delivered us* from the wrath to come;" He *redeemed us* from the curse of the law, *being made a curse for us.*"

The words "our," "us," "we," in these quotations, certainly mean believers. We who believe in Christ Jesus are thus assured that our sins *were dealt with in the cross of Christ*, that by His death *we were redeemed*, that by His substitution *we were constituted the righteousness of God in Him*. When, then, you ask, Can a believer perish? you are asking whether it is

possible that God can be angry for ever with those whom He has redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Alas! that any of the redeemed should so lightly esteem the work of Christ, and His most precious blood. The doctrine we oppose is clearly derogatory to the facts of the gospel of the grace of God.

A very limited examination of the Scripture is sufficient to show that this evil doctrine directly contradicts Christ's declarations, and those of the Holy Spirit, by the apostles, respecting believers, while it rejects as untrue the testimony of God which He hath testified of His Son. Our Lord constantly declares the absolute and eternal safety of every one who believes on Him. His repeated declarations of this may be said to be summed up in two sentences: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life." "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand." John 5 : 24 ; 10 : 28. Thus Jesus says they have eternal life, shall never perish ; and men say they *may* be lost !

The apostles assert that all that believe "*are* justified," that they "*are* saved," that they "*have* redemption and the forgiveness of sins," that "God *has* reconciled them to Himself, *has* forgiven them all trespasses ; nay, they assert that "*He has made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance among the saints in light.*" Moreover, the apostles, continually joining all believers with themselves, make all saints to confess that they know that they are and have all that they have asserted them to be and to have. But it soon

became, and still continues to be, the religious fashion to discuss whether a true Christian (alas! that we should need the adjective) may not fall away so as to perish for ever. Strange sentences are used by Christian lips. Put some of these together, and they will, in effect, read thus, “By grace we are saved, in Christ we have eternal life, and we *may be lost eternally.*”

But to take such ground is to sin against God. It is to treat His testimony as less reliable than that of men, and so virtually to make Him a liar. This is a charge of the most serious kind; but it is one that the Holy Spirit Himself brings against those who take the position described. “If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater: for this is the testimony which He hath testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the testimony in himself: he that believeth not God *hath made him a liar*; because he believeth not the testimony that God hath given of His Son. *And this is the testimony, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*” 1 John 5 : 9-11.

We have, in citing this passage, written “testimony” throughout, instead of the words “record” and “witness,” employed in the authorized version to represent one word in the original, not because these are inadequate terms, but in the hope that the use of the other word throughout may arrest attention to the fact that the “witness” and “record” designate the one thing, “testified of God’s Son.” And this is the more to be desired, since the number of Christians is not small who say they have “the witness in themselves,” or had it once, and yet declare that they are

by no means sure that they have eternal life. By the witness in themselves such Christians mean that they had at one time or another, or, it may be, now have certain happy religious experiences, frames, or feelings. Now, the truth is, that "the witness in one's self," is simply God's record that He has given to us who believe eternal life in His Son. Verse 11. God has spoken; and as soon as I receive into my heart the testimony He has uttered, I have the testimony, or witness, in myself. It is thus obvious that no one has "the witness in himself," spoken of in this passage, without knowing that he has eternal life; for this "witness" is just God's testimony to that fact, received in faith.

Besides those to whom these remarks apply, there are others who say that they would rest in the assurance of complete salvation, "if only they had the witness in themselves." Such do not *mean* to be absurd. But when their words are set in the light of the Scripture, from which they take the phrase employed, to describe what they want, it will be seen that absurdity is involved. God's witness is that He has given eternal life to them that *believe*. These say they believe, and yet they have no assurance of life eternal. They are waiting, then, for something that they call the witness, while they are refusing to "receive the witness of God, which He hath witnessed." However, the absurdity is not so sad as the irreverence, which "makes God a liar." Reader, if you are one of those referred to above, you are guilty of this terrible effrontery against God. Be entreated to cease from your own thoughts and words, and receive the

thoughts and words of God—"His witness, which He has witnessed."

The evil doctrine which we seek to expose furthermore sets itself in direct opposition to the declared relationship to God in Christ of all who believe. It virtually denies regeneration. It may accept it in terms, but assumes that it is no better than a self-wrought improvement of nature. The word of God declares that we who trust in Christ are "born of God," "born of the Spirit," "born again by the incorruptible seed of the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." The doctrine of falling from grace teaches in effect that "that which is born of the Spirit," by the ever-living word of God, is really no more abiding than "that which is born of the flesh," with which it is contrasted, and of which He says, "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth, the flower thereof falleth away." Blessed be God, He has said also, "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." 1 Pet. 1: 23-25. We are begotten "unto a living hope, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, *reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.*" 1 Pet. 1: 3-5. Our Father will not lose any of His sons and heirs.

There is another aspect of our relations to God—rather, another fact concerning this relationship. It is, that all believers are ONE WITH CHRIST. Time would fail to array the reiteration, in the word, of this glorious fact, or to display the absolute refutation of the doctrine of the possible perdition of

the believer, which this glorious fact presents to our notice. Not only does the Holy Ghost act in regenerating power, but He dwells in all who are born by His power, to the very end that we may know that He and we are ONE. It is this fact which gives intense forcibleness to the assurance that He and we are bound in one "bundle of life." 1 Sam. 25 : 29. Says He, "*Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*" John 14 : 19, 20. When the Holy Spirit came, He made the apostles, and others too, to know this so well that the whole being of the Christian and all the outgoings of his life were spoken of as "in Christ," "in the Lord," "in Him that is true." Surely this should put an end to the discussion of the Christ-dishonoring question, "Can a believer fall from grace, and be lost?"

But is it not certain that he may sin? Yes, nothing is more certain than that "in many things we all offend." Is this question asked for the purpose of casting a doubt over the truth of the eternal salvation of the child of God? Then is it obvious that he who asks this question with such intention still holds that salvation, after all, depends not on Christ's person and work, but on the personal righteousness of the saved. And the inquiry further overlooks the abiding efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ. When the Lord would still the fears of His disciples, after He was risen, He showed them His hauds and His side. And so He would rid of us of all fears arising from our many failures and positive sins, by assuring us that "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession

for them." His priesthood needs no new sacrifice to sustain it. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; and He is the propitiation for our sins." He *made* propitiation, and *abides* "the propitiation for our sins." Some are not ashamed to say that such teaching makes light of sin. If answer were needed, it would suffice to say that the apostle wrote the assurance we have just quoted, in a paragraph which had for its object quite the opposite result. "My little children," says John, "these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." The Holy Spirit knows best how to keep saints in peace of soul, with holiness of life. There is no defect in the covenant. It is ordered *in all things, and sure*. It is no more the question of what we are, but what God is in Christ, that is involved in the matter before us. "Our life is hid with Christ in God; and when He who is our Life shall be manifested, we also shall be manifested with Him in glory."

Thus far, we have confined ourselves to the *popular* idea of falling from grace, and have sought to place over against its pernicious influence, the simple statements of the word of God. Set in the light of that word, it has been shown to be exceedingly evil. It impugns the perfection of the sacrifice of Christ, and plainly contradicts the word of Christ and the testimony of the Holy Spirit by His apostles; it nullifies the doctrine of regeneration, rejects the ancient confession of saints, denies their relations to God in Christ, and arrays itself against the efficacious intercession of their ever-living High-Priest; and withal "makes God a liar."

It is not supposed that all or any of this is *intended*

by those who hold this error. With intention, we have nothing to do; but we are bound to try every thing by the unerring standard; and thus tried, the doctrine in question is found contrary to the gospel of the grace of God.

There is, however, as was said already, such a thing as falling from grace in a scriptural sense. And having no wish to evade the Scripture on this subject, we proceed to offer some remarks upon it. An examination of this subject, scripturally conducted, will, we are sure, demonstrate the sure principle of truth, that sound interpretation of God's word never casts the faintest shadow of doubt over the eternal security of the believer in Christ.

Coming then to the *scriptural* sense of the expression, "Fallen from grace," we find that the verse in which these words occur reads thus, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Gal. 5 : 4.

It is of course essential to the understanding of these words that we should have an accurate idea of the spiritual condition of those addressed. They were those Christians in the churches of Galatia who had been seduced from the simplicity of faith in Christ. This simplicity had been unusually marked in the Galatian converts, on the first reception of the Gospel by Paul's ministry. Gal. 3 : 13, 14. But other teachers had come among them who "perverted the Gospel of Christ," and "preached another gospel, which is not another;" the burden of which was, "Except ye be circumcised and keep the law, ye cannot be saved." Gal. 1 : 6, 7; Acts 15 : 1, 24. This soul-subverting doctrine many of the Galatians had received, and instead

of resting in an absolute and eternal justification by the faith of Christ, they were now seeking to be justified by their own legal obedience. Having "begun in the Spirit," they were now striving to be "made perfect by the flesh." To these the apostle addresses himself; and of such he says, they "are fallen from grace."

Let us then look closely into the sentence containing this solemn assertion concerning all who seek to be justified by law. The words are plain enough, but there are shades of meaning which may be profitably educed by examining it clause by clause, and availing ourselves of the variety of expression employed by different translators.

First, what are we to understand by the solemn words, "Christ is become of no effect unto you"? It need scarcely be said that the apostle does not intimate here any change in Christ. "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself." The truth is, this clause, which the best scholars obviously find difficult to translate, says nothing of what Christ had become, but expresses the condition into which legalism had brought those addressed. To bring this out has evidently been the aim of all who have, as translators of the New Testament, obtained the confidence of the church. Wickliffe renders the words, "You have been voided away from Christ;" while Tyndale translates, "Ye are quite gone away from Christ;" and Bengel has it, "Your connection with Christ has been made void." Bishop Ellicott says, "You have been done away with from Christ," and Mr. Young, "Ye are ceased from Christ." All these translations point in the same direction. They less or more fully bring

out the apostle's meaning, which is, that legalists have separated themselves from the blessings which flow from the Fountain of all blessing. The connection between Christ and their souls has been broken—so far, at least, as present profit from Him is concerned; as indeed had just been said, "Behold, I Paul say unto you that, if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Our common version gives this result of legalism in the words, "Christ is become of no effect unto you." Legalism stops the channels of His grace; for vessels of law are "vessels of wrath," not "vessels of mercy." Rom. 4 : 15; Gal. 3 : 10.

The second clause of the text defines with exactness the persons intended, "Whosoever of you are justified by the law." But it is worthy of notice that the apostle does not mean to say they have *reached* justification by law, even in their own judgment, and, of course, far less does he mean to allow that such an end can be reached according to truth; "for by works of the law shall no flesh be justified." The words used are more exactly rendered by Bishop Ellicott, "Whosoever of you are being justified in the law." The persons before the mind of Paul have begun a course of legal toil, and their toil is continuing, and must continue. This difference of translation is important; for it is one of the weighty arguments of the Holy Ghost against legality, that is ever doing and never done. The goal of justification never can be reached, till the laboring and heavy-laden soul ceases from its own works, and lays down the unbearable yoke of law, and receives sweet rest as the gift of Christ. Matt. 11 : 28; Acts 15 : 10, 11. "It is finished," is a word the legalist can never utter with truth. "Do and live," means,

"Continue in all things written in the book of the law to do them; for the instant this doing ceases, cursed art thou." Gal. 3 : 10. What a contrast is here presented between the false and the true! "*All that believe ARE justified from all things.*" They that are of the law "are being justified," but never approach, far less reach, "*justification of life.*" Dear reader, have you known the liberty wherewith Christ makes free? Have you known Him as He who "takes off the yoke"? Hos. 11 : 4. Then be not again entangled in the yoke of bondage. But perhaps my reader is one of those "being justified." If so, I entreat you to observe that all who are *in process of justification* are profitless as to the grace of Christ. You may never have come to Him; and therefore could not be said to fall from that in which you never stood; in that case, you are yet in your sins, and must continue so as long as you are working at justification. Or you may have known once what Christ is as the Saviour of sinners, but have been seduced from Him by the too popular but fatal doctrine that your own works must finally secure your soul. If you are in this case, let me implore you to observe, what is so clearly testified by the Holy Spirit, in the words now before us. That testimony to you is this, that if you are *in process of justification, you are fallen from grace.*

Before we proceed further, it may be proper to notice two of the modes by which the force of the words we have been considering is evaded. The first of these is error of the grossest kind, though generally covering itself with a thin veil of refinement. It says, in effect—for its forms of expression are very various—that we are not under the law as to justification, but

we must keep it for salvation. This form of error assumes that justification by the faith of Christ brings a man into a condition in which he may save himself; and so makes the final issue dependent on his own works. It is thus assumed that God justifies a sinner at one time and condemns him at another. But this is not God's way. Whom He justifies, He saves, as it is said, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, *He saved us*, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that *being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs* according to the hope of eternal life." Tit. 3 : 5-7. So certain is the salvation of those whom God justifies once, that He, being God, "who calleth those things that be not as though they were," speaks of the glorification of those who are justified as already accomplished, just because it is as sure as though it were so. "Whom He justified them He also glorified." When God justifies, He does it for ever. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Shall God, that justifieth? I say nothing here of the degradation of the work of Christ implied in the view opposed, as that has been treated of at length in the former part of this paper.

Another mode by which the legalism of the human heart seeks to evade the force of such words as those of the clause under consideration, "Whosoever of you are justified by the law," is that which asserts that the apostle has in view "the ceremonial," not "the moral" law. But however convenient and legitimate it may be to use such distinction in handling parts of Scripture, such as those in which our Lord shows that the

ritual obligation cannot release from the moral responsibility, (see Matt. 15 : 4-6,) yet it is certain that Paul had no such distinction before him in his epistle to the Galatians. On the contrary, all his references to law prove that he has in view the whole law. And, indeed, as though anticipating this evasive distinction, he says, “I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor *to do the whole law.*”

It may be useful to observe, in passing, that the principle so often repeated by Paul, that by deeds of law no one is justified, he constantly maintains in such a way as to show that men’s *moral* delinquency was present to his mind. This is clear enough throughout Galatians, (see particularly chapter third,) and is still more marked in Romans. No one will pretend that the apostle finds the evidence of man’s helpless ruin and guilt in his violation of “*ceremonial law.*” Rom. 3 : 10-20. And when he is telling out the history of his own conviction as a guilty sinner before God, he does not speak of failure in ceremonial obedience, but declares plainly that he found himself guilty before God through the word, “Thou shalt not covet.” Rom. 7 : 7.

To return to the words immediately before us. The sum of the apostle’s assertion is, that all who are in process of justification by law-doing have cut themselves off from profit from Christ; they have “*fallen from grace.*”

The meaning of these words becomes thus very clear. There is not an atom of neutral territory between law and grace. If a man is yet striving after righteousness by works of law, he has not yet any standing in grace. Or if, having once confessed justification by

the faith of Christ, he has turned away from that to seek justification by his own law-works, he has fallen from grace. For if justification be "of grace," it cannot be "of debt." "For if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." Rom. 4:4; 11:6. Reader, we repeat, there is no middle ground between law and grace; no ground on which you may have salvation, partly by your own works and partly by the work or mercy of Christ. There is none other name by which you can be saved. He will not allow any man to "make up full weight by casting His name into the scale." The moment a Christian man turns to law, he has fallen from grace. The Epistle to the Galatians is one long exposure of this falling away, and constitutes the Holy Spirit's standing protest against it. Thus falling from grace is not some outbreak of our sinful nature; nor yet even a case of backsliding—though these surely flow from it; but it is the abandonment of the gospel of Christ, the rejection of the doctrine of complete salvation by grace, through the redemption which is in Christ, and the reception of "another gospel," which, if any one preach, though it were Paul himself or an angel from heaven, he is pronounced twice accursed. Gal. 1:6-9.

The nature of this false gospel appears throughout this epistle. As we have seen, it asserts justification by works of law. We recur to this, not so much in further proof, as in further illustration of what has been advanced: and especially to notice Paul's own illustration, in his record of the failure of his fellow

apostle; and Paul's clear testimony occasioned by that failure.

It is one of the most humbling of all the faithful records of Scripture that the apostle Peter, in semblance at least, fell from grace, for a season. We need not detail the particulars of his offence. It is enough to say that, having owned his Gentile brethren as on equal footing with himself before the Lord, he, when certain “of the circumcision” came to Antioch, assumed a legal distinction between those whom he had thus owned and the Jewish believers. Gal. 2 : 11-13. It has already been observed that Paul testifies “that every man that is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law.” On the same principle he sees in Peter's course, in setting up a distinction between the Jewish and the Gentile believer, that which overturns the doctrine of grace. And therefore he first openly rebukes Peter's dissimulation, and shows its tendency to enslave the Gentile saints; and then proceeds to assert the true grace of God, in which alone the believer can stand. “We,” says he, “we who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things that I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.” Chap. 2 : 15-18. It is both singularly sad, and happily confirmatory of our faith, that these words con-

tain precisely the ground which the erring Peter had himself taken, in his speech at Jerusalem, when this departure from the simplicity of the Gospel was judged by the apostles and the whole church. He then boldly asserted that God "put no difference between us" (Jews) "and them," (Gentiles,) "purifying their hearts by faith:" and further asserted that the attempt to judaize the Gentile believers was transgression of the worst kind. "Now, therefore," said he, "why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." Acts 15 : 9-11.

It is not likely that, in the painful affair at Antioch, either of the apostles would fail to recall this still recent testimony of Peter; and if so, Peter must have felt self-convicted, as a "transgressor," in having con-nived at "the tempting of God," by imposing the yoke of bondage on those whom Christ had freed.

However this may have been, it is manifest that he who is seeking to be justified by his own works has fallen from the grace by which we are saved. "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." Gal. 3 : 10. And no man can be "under the curse," and be "justified by faith," at the same time. For "the law is *not* of faith;" but our salvation *is* "of faith, that it might be by grace." Gal. 3 : 12; Rom. 4 : 16. To fall from grace, then, is to reject or frustrate the grace of God, after having begun with Christ for justification "by the faith of Him." Gal. 2 : 21.

As a necessary consequence of departure from the first and fundamental truth of the gospel of Christ, he

who has fallen thus rejects, *virtually*, "the manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John 3 : 1. And such a one loses *effectively* the consciousness of sonship. Indeed the process of *doing* for life, and the liberty which is *crying*, "Abba, Father," cannot coexist. If one who is toiling at the work which is never done, at any time thinks himself entitled to use these words, it is ever with a doubt, and only when, in moments of miserable self-complacency over some fancied progress in his endless work, he *indulges* a hope that now at length he is a child of God.

The apostle in Galatians, chap. 4, opens out this—the rejection of our sonship—as surely involved in falling from grace. He shows that men under law are slaves, or minors kept under a bondage which differs nothing from slavery. He shows that redemption was "in the fulness of time," was redemption from under law, and was achieved that they who believe "might receive the adoption of sons." This design has been effected. Believers are no more slaves, but sons. And because sons, God has sent forth the spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying "Abba, Father." See Gal. 4 : 1-7.

But the receivers of the "other gospel," who are now seeking to be justified by law, Paul shows, prefer slavery, with all its miserable toil and uncertainty, to sonship as resulting from the accomplished work of Christ, with all its present communion and its blessed hope. He views such as choosing to be cast out with Hagar and her son, rather than to dwell with Sarah and Isaac in the house of "the Father of all them that believe." God's word asserts that "Whosoever be-

lieth is born of God ;" but those who have declined from grace take the ground that they must by their own performances secure both their birth and inheritance. "Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. *So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.*" See Gal. 4 : 21-31. May every reader so simply rest in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, that he may freely take these words to be the assertion of his own position; and then take to heart the admonition which follows, "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage." Gal. 5 : 1.

To sum up what has been advanced: to fall from grace is to deem the salvation of the believer in Christ as incomplete, and therefore finally dependent upon his own performance or attainment. Or, in the words of another, "To fall from grace is to undermine the certainty of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus, and to leave salvation as a grand uncertainty, to be determined at the day of judgment, instead of receiving it now as of God, and, on the ground of it, rejoicing in peace with God and nearness to God." *Harris's Law and Grace*, p. 110.

Nor does it matter what is the nature of self-dependence for acceptance in the day of judgment. It may be dependence on circumcision, or on the observance of days, months, and years, as in the case of the Galatian perverts; or it may take any or all of the many forms of modern self-righteousness; the form of legalism is of little consequence. Whether the legalist

seeks the salvation of his soul by keeping the law of Moses, or by keeping a law set up for himself, or even by keeping the commandments of Christ, in the way of justifying himself before God, *in any degree*, he is a rejecter of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. On such ground, Christ can have nothing to do with him.

Reader, your dependence may be in your “holding on,” “doing your duty,” fulfilling your church obligations, paying your church dues, maintaining the integrity of your covenant vows, and keeping your moral and religious resolutions, or it may be in your round of religious and benevolent activities. But, even if these were all right in themselves, and then were perfectly performed and maintained, if you never find any better trust than these, hell will surely be your portion. Salvation by these would be salvation *in your own name*; but God only saves *in the name of Christ*.

And if, dear reader, you ever had the better trust—if once you committed your soul to Jesus “against that day”—and have since turned to such weak and beggarly elements, by way of sealing and securing your salvation—*you have fallen from grace*. Turn, we beseech you, once more to Christ Jesus; once more, and for ever, rest from all your own doings, in Him, who, having loved, loves to the end. Let all your dependence be in Him who, when He saves, saves for ever. You cannot love Him, or speak or act for Him too much; but oh! never more insult His grace, or disparage His precious blood, or do dishonor to His changeless love by thinking of your love *to* Him, or your speaking or acting *for* Him, as in any way adding security to that salvation which is yours in Him.

If the reader has followed us in our remarks on the

popular and *scriptural* sense of the words, "fallen from grace," we think he will not be surprised that we should state it as our settled conviction that to "fall from grace," in the sense of Scripture, is to hold the doctrine of "falling from grace" in the popular sense of that expression.

THE "INTERMEDIATE STATE."

BY REV. L. C. BAKER.

WE propose to call attention in this article to a topic, concerning which many of our readers have been obliged to correct some early impressions. We refer to the state of the pious dead between death and the resurrection, described in many passages as a "sleep." For ourselves, we confess that, since we have known the truth concerning the Lord's coming, and observed how closely and uniformly the New Testament connects the future reward of the believer with that great event, we could not rest satisfied with former impressions, derived from a system of interpretation which removes that grand verity from its crowning place in the economy of redemption, and evacuates the Gospel of the kingdom of God and the resurrection of the dead of half its meaning. In respect to this point, the state of the departed spirit in the interval before resurrection, two extreme views now prevail. The one extreme, which is perhaps the current view among orthodox Christians, regards the pious dead as entering immediately upon the rewards and felicities

of the eternal state. This view makes death to be the great crisis of the future. Every soul then virtually appears before the judgment-seat of Christ, and receives its award of everlasting happiness or misery. According to this view, there would seem to be no need of a day of judgment, except in the way of summary repetition and confirmation of what was settled long before. The resurrection is so far anticipated as to be stripped of its importance. Indeed, in the minds of numbers of Christians, the conviction has obtained that the departing saint receives a glorified body at death, or else departs into such a condition of unfettered spiritual existence as renders the prospect of reunion with the body something not to be specially desired. This view does not hesitate to borrow all the sublime imagery the Bible employs to describe the coming kingdom of Christ with its manifested glory on earth and in the heavens, as descriptive of the present glory into which the saints enter. The white robes and harps and thrones; the holy city, with its jasper walls and streets of gold and songs of joy, are regarded as depicting the abode of the ransomed now in heaven.

These views, of course, are the natural product and foster-growth of that system of interpretation which makes the "coming of the Son of Man" to be "death," and substitutes the realities into which the soul is then ushered, for the great events the Scriptures connect with the appearing and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And we cannot avoid the belief that it has logically, although unwittingly, given rise to such outrageous denials and counterfeits of the faith once for all delivered to the saints, as spiritualism and Swedenborgianism,

which assert that the resurrection is past already, or that the day of the Lord has already come—a heresy known even in the apostolic age. That doctrine, which makes the kingdom of God to be merely an improved condition of this present world, which postpones the Lord's coming not only until after this slow process has matured its results, but for a thousand years longer, is not only at variance with the word of God, but is the fruitful mother of many perversions of the truth, beguiling unstable souls, and bringing in privily even damnable heresies. Beloved, when we once depart from the plain teaching of God's word—when we substitute our own speculations, however pleasing and plausible, we are on dangerous ground. We know not where we shall bring up. One thing is sure. If we begin to handle the word of God deceitfully, we have no security that we shall not end in that strong delusion, that crowning lie and blasphemy of this evil world, which makes man his own saviour and denies Jesus Christ coming in the flesh.

Whatever view we adopt, then, of the present condition of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, we must be careful not to take the least liberties with the Holy Spirit's testimony to the sublime facts of the future, which sum up and crown all that He has spoken by the mouth of holy prophets since the world began, concerning the return of our Lord from heaven and the reward He shall bring with Him; concerning His bruising of Satan then under our feet, by raising us from the dead; and concerning the kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world, whose triumph, first manifested on the earth where its King was crucified, shall finally irradiate the wide universe with its glory.

But from this extreme view to which we have referred, there has been a reaction to another extreme. Many, who have been enlightened as to the truths that cluster around this blessed hope, perceiving the unscripturalness of the prevalent view, and its evil consequences in voiding the doctrine of the resurrection of its sanctifying power, have gone to the extreme of denying not only happiness but even consciousness to the departed saints.

Perceiving that the Scriptures always associate our future reward with *embodied* immortality, and that this is the goal of the Christian's ambition and hope, they profess to find no warrant in Scripture for any hope this side of resurrection. They therefore represent that this interval of unconsciousness is but a blank to the departed spirit, and such an utter blank that, on its awaking to life in the resurrection, the intervening period, although centuries may have elapsed, will seem as nothing, not even a watch in the night. This view has found sympathy even with men so learned and cautious as Archbishop Whately. But we are persuaded that, as it violates the instincts of the Christian heart, so also is it without warrant in the word of God.

And first, as to that numerous class of passages in the Old Testament, as, for example, "Man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" (Job 14 : 10,) which *seem* to teach the suspension if not the cessation of existence at death, and which are quoted freely to prove that the whole man dies, as the wages of sin, we dispose of them at once, so far as they bear upon our present inquiry, by the assertion of the truth that the relations of man in

the flesh to the divine government and to the unfolding scheme of redemption are prominent in the Old Testament. The doctrine of the repudiation of the earthly man as the heir of the kingdom of God, and of a new and immortal manhood in Christ, although foreshadowed, was not clearly brought to light until His resurrection and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Nor are we called upon to discuss the meaning of the word "spirit," nor to examine how far its use in Scripture carries with it the idea of inherent immortality. We are persuaded that most of the controversies that have arisen over these related topics, would not have been possible if there had been a clearer apprehension of the vital distinction in the word between the "old man" and the "new," and the relations of each to that revelation of God in Christ in which are stored all the treasures of His wisdom and grace. It clearly sets before us the end of man in the flesh. He is "condemned already," and this judgment will be made manifest and be conspicuously declared in "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Death now to such is but the prelude to that "second death" which will be God's final judgment upon the incorrigible rejecters of His grace, and His last impressive testimony to the unfitness of all such to go over into the new order of things to come, of which the risen Jesus is the corner-stone, and into which "there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither worketh abomination, or maketh a lie."

But it is not with the future of man in the flesh, but of man as newly created in Christ and made one with Him, that we have now to do. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;" and whatever shadows of death,

deep and ever deepening, may overhang the future of those who will not come to Him that they might have life, certain it is that they who live and believe on Him shall never die.

We object, then, to this interrupted life in Christ between death and resurrection, as inconsistent with the nature of our salvation in Him. His sheep shall never perish, nor can any pluck them out of His Father's hands.

Such a suspension of existence, as this view supposes, would be an interruption of life. Our mortal life ends at the grave, but in Him we have eternal life. The new man, the new creature in Christ Jesus is immortal. We are often spoken of as dead in the old form of manhood, but as alive in the new; and our new nature is that with which our personality is now connected in God's sight. This, indeed, is the most precious truth of redemption, both in its relation to our present standing in Christ and our future hopes. Not the "I" derived from Adam, that sins and does what we hate, and the wages of whose sin is death, but the "I" that derives being from Christ, and that cannot sin because born of God, is now "myself" before Him.

The attributes of my personality that came into being in connection with this old nature, are now transferred to that new nature begotten in me when I was born of God, and which now, at least in the case of all who are not babes in Christ, has a distinct self-consciousness of its own. Therefore, in Christ, born of the Spirit, as I was, in Adam, born of the flesh, I cannot die. There can be no suspension nor loss of consciousness in this eternal life. Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more. Can a member of His body have

its life suspended even for a season? It is true that our life, now hid with Christ in God, shall not be manifested in that form of embodied being in which He rose from the dead, until Christ, who is our Life, shall appear. But this does not prove that our life has meanwhile lost the functions of life. No, beloved, these mortal bodies that we consign to the grave and that see corruption, are only those dying members of our being we are exhorted now to mortify; while, connected with our risen Saviour, we have an imperishable life or being which is even now our real selves before God, righteous as He is righteous, pure as He is pure; and which, although it does not immediately take on the fashion of His glorified body, is yet partaker of His divine nature, with undying springs of life and blessedness in Him. The buds and branches of the Vine have life in them, albeit they are not yet sprouted into separate shoots that shall reproduce the perfect image of the parent vine. So as members of Christ, our life rooted and grounded in Him, we must live on through all the intervening period until our life, hidden in Him, take on its own glorious body, fashioned like unto His.

This seems so obvious that we will not tarry longer on the thought, although, did our present purpose admit of it, we would love to unfold the many blessed things of which it is the germ.

We pass to observe, in the second place, that many Scripture passages require us to believe that those who have fallen asleep in Christ are now living and happy with Him.

Without referring to the parable of Lazarus and Dives, in which Lazarus is represented as carried by angels into Abraham's bosom—for we may not rest

any doctrine upon a parable, which is often confessedly a dark saying—we may refer first to our Lord's word to the Sadducees, recorded in Matthew xxii., where they bantered him with the supposed case of a woman with seven husbands. "As touching the resurrection of the dead," He said, "have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." "I am" is the word; and this implies that these patriarchs, although dead in the flesh, were still living, and that His promises to them would be fulfilled at their resurrection from the dead. Life, without self-consciousness, does not deserve the name of life. And if these patriarchs were then unconsciously slumbering away the interval before resurrection, this epithet, "the living," would not have been appropriate to those who denied that there is any resurrection, or angel, or spirit.

Again, at the crucifixion of Jesus, a dying thief repented and confessed Him to be the Christ. Jesus said to him, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Surely the place here spoken of, "paradise," cannot be a state of unconscious repose into which this man and the Saviour entered. No; it was Jesus's gracious response to this poor malefactor, who owned him Lord in that hour when the wise and noble of the earth crucified Him as an impostor, that on that day this poor trusting sinner would be received by him on a peaceful shore the other side of death. We are aware that the force of this passage is evaded by a different punctuation, which connects the adverb "to-day" with the verb, saying, "Verily, *this day* I say unto thee," etc. This

might be allowed, if the general teaching of Scripture required us to adopt the theory in question. But, as we have seen, the tenor of Scripture is against it; and this somewhat forced rendering is an arbitrary shift to harmonize with this view a passage which directly refutes it.

In harmony with the teaching of this passage is the prayer of Stephen at his martyrdom. Arraigned before the Sanhedrim for preaching in the name of Jesus, he boldly arraigned them for national infidelity, crowning itself in the blasphemous rejection of the Just One. And while he spoke, his face shone as an angel. And at the close, full of the Holy Ghost, he saw a vision of Jesus glorified in heaven on the right hand of God. The council, infuriated beyond measure, at this final testimony to the Messiahship of the Crucified One, stoned him to death. But, though they bruised his outward man until it perished, surely his inward man, so full of spiritual life and energy, was beyond the power of their rage. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Can we imagine that that spirit, so energized and enlightened by the Spirit of God, went out in darkness, or that the Lord Jesus, in receiving it, merely took an unconscious being into custody against the day of His appearing?

Turn we next to the Spirit's language through Paul. He writes to the Philippians, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." How could it be "gain," "far better" for him to die—to depart and to be with

Christ—if he were going merely into unconscious rest before resurrection? Is this all that his desire to be "with Christ" includes? So also to the Corinthians, speaking as a new man in Christ, he calls his earthly house a dissolving tabernacle, in which he groaned, being burdened. True, so ardent was his hope of what awaited him at the resurrection, and such his natural shrinking from an unclothed state, that his faith leaped forward to that event, as the time when his mortality would be swallowed up of life. But of that blessed consummation God had now given unto him the earnest of the Spirit. And this was evidence to him that, when absent from the body, he should find a dwelling-place with the Lord. So that he was still confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. Or, as Dean Alford more literally translates, "We are still confident, and well content, rather to go from our home in the body, and to come to our home with the Lord." Now, can this language possibly be made consistent with the view that Paul expected and desired the unconscious rest of which we have been told, or that his home with the Lord was of such a sort as this? Surely, a "home with the Lord," although it be not that divinely fabricated dwelling with which He shall clothe us when we shall be made like Him, must be yet a blessed abode.

The vision of the "souls under the altar," in the 6th chapter of the Revelation, teaches the same thing, although we need not pause to fortify the doctrine of the plainer passages by one more obscure.

But still the question remains, Do not the Scriptures give us any more insight into the character of this intermediate state? We reply that not much is said.

about it. We know that whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; so that living or dying we are His. And this is enough to assure our hearts that death cannot interrupt our life. It cannot diminish, but must enlarge, our blessedness in Him who is death's eternal Conqueror.

And yet the frequent use of the word "sleep," as, for example, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," to describe the believer's death and his condition before resurrection, may suggest to us something concerning the relation of this interval state to the greater glory of the future. Observe here, that the word "sleep" is the uniform word for the death of saints, in both dispensations. The Lord said unto Moses, speaking of his death, "Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers." "David slept with his fathers." Stephen "fell asleep." Paul writes to the Corinthians and Thessalonians concerning "them which had fallen asleep." The frequent use of this term, indeed, has been pressed by the advocates of an unconscious slumber to prove their view. But "sleep" is not death. Natural sleep is attended with only a partial suspension of bodily activity. All the essential processes of life go on. And the mind, although unregulated, is often intensely active. So that this term proves the contrary of this theory of unconsciousness. Moreover, this is a sleep in Jesus; and, as we have seen, even sleep in Him, untrammelled by the clogs and infirmities of the flesh, is more blessed than the spirit's utmost activity in this body of sin and death. If we accept, then, this term "sleep," as descriptive of this state, there is yet room for continued life and spiritual freedom, and ecstatic vision, such as may make

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this sleep in Jesus infinitely better than life in this earthly tabernacle. Even natural sleep may be a time of happy dreams. And thus asleep in Jesus, the spirit cradled in His arms, folded on His bosom in an embrace more loving than a mother's, must surely pass its time, not only in peaceful repose, but in blissful visions of the glory yet to be revealed. Of such visions in the spirit, Paul had a foretaste, when, whether in the body or out of the body, he could not tell, he was caught up to the third heaven into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter. Of such a nature, perhaps, the visions of St. John in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and the many communications the Lord made to the early saints, not by the medium of bodily eye or ear, but directly to the renewed spirit. And even in later times, as those of our readers know who are familiar with the trance of William Tennent, an honored minister of the last century in New-Jersey, the Lord has sometimes granted such visions to His saints. This man of God lay seemingly dead for several days, so that his burial was about to take place, when he was aroused from a similar ecstatic vision of sights and sounds unutterable.

We shall not then be much astray from the truth if, in conformity with this usual designation "sleep," we regard the saints who have died in the Lord as now reposing under His watchful care, their spirits, in union with Him as the unfailing source of their life and blessedness, occupied with blissful visions of the things which God hath prepared for them; while their active entrance upon the possession and enjoyment of these things takes place at the resurrection. The interval is a happy, tranquil period of rest from tears and

from conflict, with no sin to vex the spirit, or becloud its sky, on which the rosy fingers of the dawning day of glory paint visions for it more blessed than Jacob's dream; and yet a period of inaction, compared with the boundless activities of the resurrection life; and of recuperation, to prepare it for its part in those administrations of judgment and mercy that shall introduce the kingdom of God on earth, and diffuse the lustre of its glory over the wide wilderness of worlds. "Sleep," it is, but such sleep as Jesus gives His beloved—a sleep in His embrace, thrilled with joyful visions of the coming day when the Lamb's wife shall be made ready, and she shall enter with Him upon their joint inheritance, prepared from the foundation of the world.

And finally, the most pleasing thought about it all is that, whatever our condition then, we cannot be separated from Him. Living or dying, we are the Lord's. He who died for us is now Lord over the whole realm of life and death. He first set in motion the tide of being that floods the heights and depths of space with worlds. And now, as our risen Saviour, He presides over all the forces that traverse this domain. They build up these earthly tabernacles, and take them down at His bidding. Launched by Him on this stream of life, they sustain or imperil the little bark that floats us on the tide. And when it is engulfed, He commands His angels, and they shelter the disembodied spirit in that ark of God's own building, freighted with heirs of the world to come. To this destiny hath God assigned us from the beginning of all things. To this end He gave His Son to the cross, and exalted Him in risen manhood as the Prince of Life. To this end all power in heaven and earth is given unto Him. He took part

in our flesh and blood that we might take part in His divine nature. Appointed the heir of all things, He would not abide alone. He became the first-born among many brethren. We are joint-heirs with Him. Because He lives, we shall live also. The Conqueror of death, He shall deliver us from him who hath the power of it. His arm shall uphold us in the swellings of Jordan; the shadow of His wings be our blest retreat through all the watches of the night that precedes our resurrection morning. And there, at the redemption of our bodies, we shall be manifested with Him, as sons of God, fitted to administer the affairs of His kingdom, and to enter upon the boundless activities and delights of that career to which we were destined from the beginning of creation; and for our entrance upon which the creature itself longs, as the frozen regions of the north, through the long polar night, entreat the rising of the sun.

Shall we then, beloved, fear to die? Shall we tremble to enter the dark valley into whose shadows we have seen our loved ones pass, to return no more? Shall we fear to trust Him who has said, "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you"? Oh! no. His word to us is, "Because I live, ye shall live also." "Neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

THE ECONOMY OF THE AGES.*

THE doctrine of Scripture is a connected whole, and an error regarding any part of it, besides being disastrous in itself, dims or distorts our views of all the rest. Just as—if we may use so imperfect an illustration—a defect in any part of a complicated machine affects its operation as a whole, or a mistake in the first step of a lengthened calculation extends through it all, to the final result. A friend was wont to say that he could tell where a man stood with reference to the truth which is testified in the closing verses of the Apocalypse, if he heard him expounding the first verses of Genesis. Undoubtedly, if one has been led to the attitude of looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and has then renewed his study of the Scriptures, as those who receive this hope generally do, it will shed new light upon every page, and, as one expressed it, make the Bible a book of new meaning as well as of new interest. Of course it demands time to work out the result; but sooner or later it will be found, according to the above observation, that a man's views of the close of the Apocalypse will be made manifest when he expounds any portion of Scripture.

This must be so; for God is working out a great purpose in this world, and the Bible is the unfolding of that purpose in a progressive revelation. Now, if a

* The Economy of the Ages. 1 vol. 12mo, pp. 562. New-York : United States Publishing Company. 1869.

man has adopted views of the course of things and their final issue, inconsistent with the purpose which God is working out, evidently the Book in which God has revealed His purpose must appear to him more or less obscure and contradictory. We find the bolder and less scrupulous propagators of their own religious speculations arbitrarily denying the authority of the portions of Scripture which they cannot bend to their use, as the earlier opponents of Chiliasm denied the inspiration of the Apocalypse. But many who would shrink from this profanity resort to the invention of canons of interpretation by which they can extort unnatural meanings from its plainest language.

When we speak of those who differ from us regarding the hope of our calling, the destiny of the earth, and the kingdom of heaven, we remember that, at present, they constitute a great majority of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and though, in the things of God, majorities do not determine what is truth, it behoves us to speak in their presence with humility. We speak what we do know when we say that among them are many who cannot be exceeded in reverent love of the word of God. They would not knowingly take from it, or add to it, or pervert a syllable of it; and they firmly hold that ALL Scripture is God-inspired. Yet, with all affection and respect, we ask them, if there be not something suspicious in a position which can only be maintained by artificial constructions of much of the language of the Bible which God designed for a people, among whom "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble" are found; which compels them to set aside a large part of Scripture—the prophetic books—as un-

intelligible or dangerous; and which leaves another large portion—the historical books of the Old Testament—very little to the bulk of Christians beyond a more authoritative *Josephus*? When these—the historical and the prophetic books—are set aside, what is left of “the Scriptures which,” Paul said to Timothy, “are able to make thee wise unto salvation”—“all given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”?

It cannot be supposed that the Holy Spirit has undertaken the office of a mere historian or biographer, however valuable the teaching of example may be. But when we observe the line in which the record is pursued, the character of those whose lives are traced, the nature of the incidents which are made most prominent, and the only nation whose existence is more than casually noticed, we must be satisfied that God had something else in view than the ordinary uses of history, or to contribute to the amount of our information regarding this world. Without entering on an examination of the records themselves, we are not left to surmise for what they are designed. The testimony of the Spirit Himself, and the use which is made of the earlier history in the later books, make this perfectly clear. We learn not only that God was unfolding His purpose to the successive generations of men who are there noticed as the recipients of His grace, until the oracles of God were committed to His chosen people; but *in* these persons, as well as *to* them, and in the things which happened to them; *in* the nation and in its history and institutions, God was illustrat-

ing His plan. They were constituted types as truly as the positive types of the Levitical system; and in this book "they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." The truth is imperfectly learned while any part of this divinely ordered revelation is neglected; and that must be a departure from the truth which disposes or obliges men to evade or explain away any part of it. As our views of divine truth approximate to fulness and correctness, we shall see these Scriptures to be a complete and harmonious whole; nothing defective and nothing redundant, one book with but one author, though so many pens were employed, and so long a time elapsed in the completion of it.

The unity of design and the progress of doctrine in the Bible is not a modern discovery. But after all our neglect of it, it is a signal favor bestowed on our age, that the subject has been presented in lucid and attractive forms to the people at large. Works directing attention to the distinctive character of the several books of the Bible, and to the relation of each to the general design of revelation, are among the most valuable aids and incitements to the study of the word; while the commentaries which have attained the greatest popularity rather supersede this study. On this account, even if we overlook the low and God-dishonoring views of the great doctrines of our faith which the work inculcates, it can only be regarded as a matter of deep humiliation that such a book as Barnes's Notes should be one of the most widely circulated of religious books wherever the English language is spoken. The demand for it is measured by the desire of professing Christians to excuse themselves from

the actual study of the Scriptures. This is sadly exemplified in its use among teachers of the young. Those who make it the resort of their indolence or haste in preparing for their duties, frequently, in a very short time, discover the uselessness of such preparation, and save themselves all further trouble by carrying it with them to the meeting of their class. Alas for the young who are brought within this deadening influence!

We have observed the happy effects of even the limited circulation of such books as Jukes *On the Differences of the Four Gospels*, and Bernard's *Progress of Doctrine*; and have earnestly longed to see some issue of our own press, at once thorough and popular, which shall do for the whole Bible what these works have done for portions of it. The work is vast, and we are content to wait. It is a much less voluminous and less laborious service to present to the churches a connected view of the doctrine unfolded in God's book. It may be ascribed to partiality, but we must express the conviction that neither the greater nor the lesser service can be rendered by one who adopts the world's vainglorious view of its progress to a golden age; or, as that hope appears in our theological nomenclature, the approach of a temporal millennium. And this, among other reasons, because when we come to trace the progress of doctrine in the Scriptures, we find any thing rather than the progress of the world. Every new unfolding of the grace of God finds its occasion in declension, and ends in man's failure. Every dispensation terminates in judgment.

Our own millenarian writers have made valuable contributions to the study of prophecy, in which they

have incidentally shown the bearing of their views upon other doctrines of the word. But we have waited with earnest desire for some full and connected view of Christian doctrine in which this hope should hold its proper place, and in which the plan of redemption should be traced from the divine counsels in an eternity past, to its issues in the glory of an eternity to come. We were prepared, therefore, to open with interest a book with this title, *The Economy of the Ages*, though it comes to us anonymously, and through none of the channels by which our theological treasures usually reach us.

This interest is increased when we read its opening sentences, "The Bible is God's text-book of redemption, in which He has undertaken to unfold His plan of salvation for the human race; and if this be so, we cannot question that the book itself is wisely adapted to its appointed end in the instruction of mankind, as perfect as the work whose nature and history it develops. Divine wisdom, of necessity, must be displayed in the arrangement and plan of the text-book, so as to develop in the clearest and most perfect manner the grand scheme of which it treats, and bring it most within the apprehension of those who were to be instructed thereby. God would not fail in a matter of such importance as this. He would not furnish an ill-arranged treatise on His grandest work of redemption. His six days' work of creation was complete in every part; and when finished, He saw that it was very good. There had been no failure in any part. So likewise His greater work of redemption is perfect, as well as the revelation which developed its plan and history."

Our sympathy is with the author's testimony to the

great design in the Bible from beginning to end, its perfection, and its self-evidencing power. We cordially agree with his statement of the disastrous consequences of overlooking the instruction of the Old Testament. "Some," he says, "are even ready to cast aside the volume, except as a mere historical record. For its theology they have little respect, regarding it as standing in need not only of great additions, but of no little correction also; while it is a mystery to them that so large a portion of what purports to be a revelation from heaven should contain mere matters of history. There is a mine of wealth in that Old Testament revelation which is utterly hidden from their eyes."

As we turn over the pages, it is a pleasure to find an author in our day who owns our absolute dependence on revelation for a knowledge of God and His works. "It is by revelation, and so by faith, that we have come to the knowledge of one infinite eternal Being, who is God over all; and the means by which the conception of such infinitude is reached is by presenting Him as the Author of creation. There was consequently the profoundest wisdom in first revealing Jehovah as the Creator of all things, carrying us back to the point when the foundations of the earth were laid, and giving us the history of the stupendous work. It is a truth revealed to faith, that God thus spake and it was done, making the universe to hang upon His omnipotent word, as the grand centre of its whole being and revolution.

"It has been thought easy, by means of the argument from design, to reach the Great Designer. This argument may be simple, after revelation has first made

plain the existence of an infinite mind, whose power was adequate even to the act of creation out of empty void. But blot out all knowledge of such a Being, and then give this problem of the universe to be solved, to tell whence it is and how it came; and it is not a matter for question whether the minds unaided by light from above would ever arrive at that vast conception of an original Creator, to whom all future existence was due, from whom it all began. Does the argument from design establish more than the fact of a simple manufacturer, who puts materials together and fashions them? Does it prove also an original creator of the materials? A watch proves a watch-maker. But does it prove that he makes the materials of which the watch is constructed? A tree proves a mind which formed it thus to grow. But does it prove that that mind created of nothing the matter which entered into its composition? The argument from design does not go back of the thing constructed. Then it stops of necessity. Will the unaided human mind from this point reach over the mighty chasm, and grasp that stupendous thought of an absolute creation and an omnipotence that is adequate thereto? We have no evidence of it. The deep problem was never thus solved. It is by revelation, not by reason, that we have reached that glorious truth. It is by faith, not philosophy, that it has been made plain and simple to our apprehension. Our children accept it as a matter of faith, a thing taught them. They do not reason it out. We received it in the same manner. So did our fathers, and thus we trace back the history until we come to the divine record, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' By faith, there-

fore, we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God ; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

We quote this passage at length because it is a fair specimen of the author's style and manner, and also because we desire to direct attention to the subject of his remarks. It is humbling to reflect how the most eminent teachers of theology have themselves opened the way for the incursions of rationalism and infidelity under the guise of Christianity, by the place to which they have exalted human reason and natural theology in relation to all our knowledge of God and the things of God. Our author has surely yielded all that can be justly claimed for the favorite argument from apparent design in creation. But let us suppose that human reason can infer a Designer of these worlds, or, if you please, a Creator of these existences, what would this avail as to the knowledge of the one living and true God? Even when men have God's own revelation of Himself in their hands, if they turn aside from it, in the pride of reason, to search out God for themselves, they are reduced to speak of a great First Cause, an infinite Being, a Deity—high-sounding names, indeed, but empty sounds and uninfluential abstractions, in which the soul cannot rest, to which we can hold no personal relations, toward which there can be no outgoing of the heart in love, trust, and submission, any more than there could be toward gravitation, or electricity, or light. In the presence of revelation they may indeed feel the necessity of investing this First Cause with personal attributes ; and when depraved men address themselves to such a task, there can be little doubt as to the character of the God they will construct.

In the famous supposition of a man finding a watch upon the sands, from the examination of which he infers a watch-maker, suppose further, that he sits down on the sand and endeavors to form for himself a conception of this watch-maker, his personal appearance and manners; his disposition, acquirements, and moral character—all that goes to make up a personality; could he ever think or reason out a real man—the man who made the watch, so that he could say, “I am acquainted with him; he is my neighbor or my friend;” and could he enjoy his society, or go to him for counsel or aid? It seems trifling to ask such questions; but is God so much more within the grasp of reason than a man?

The God of our faith is a person, and can be known only by those to whom He makes Himself known. But such is the plan and province which we have been accustomed to concede to reason in this matter, that revelation must be, in some sense, subject to it. Even those to whom God has made Himself known are persuaded that they must submit the discoveries He graciously makes to them, for the sanction and approval of reason. The vague conception which they were taught to regard as God, still comes between them and the light of a Father’s countenance and the glow of a Father’s love. The uncertainties of reason’s conclusions regarding what lies beyond its legitimate sphere disturbs their repose in the everlasting certainties of faith. When reason claims to be heard with reference to all that God presents to our faith, even that which it retains is placed on lower ground, and is stripped of its divine power, and the doctrine of the Bible must be modified and reconciled to reason ere it can be confessed before the enlightenment of the age. For this

cause we have occupied space with these remarks, and desire to point the attention of believers to the true source of our knowledge of God, and the ground upon which our faith rests.

Our God has made Himself known to us as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons, one God; and it is a happiness to find our author clearly stating this fact, though we might take exception to some particulars in his mode of stating it. Now, what can reason do with such a truth as this? Is this the God whom they pretend to find in nature? An American statesman belonging to the generation which has just passed away, when referring to the difficulties which some friends found in the doctrine of the Trinity, and the folly of the attempt which others made to explain it and reconcile it to reason, said, "I do not contend about a word; but I know nothing of God but what He has revealed to me; and He has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God. I know no choice between that and atheism." The word of God leaves us no choice, and draws the line thus precisely: "He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which sent Him. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath the Father and the Son. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also." There is strong ground, then, for saying that there is no choice between believing in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, and atheism, however atheism may be cloaked. If so, what has reason to do

here, but to fall down in silent homage before the revelation which its Author has made of Himself?

It is important also to notice, in opposition to the common vague acknowledgment of God, that the Scriptures teach that to know God is to have eternal life. "And this is life eternal," said the Lord Himself, "that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." An apostle, also speaking of knowing Him and being in Him, says, "This is the true God and eternal life." It will scarcely be alleged that such knowledge can be gained from an external creation, or from any exercise of reason. If it be asked, How do we come to a knowledge of God? without dwelling upon the means and methods of the revelation, we answer, in the words of inspiration, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It does not come by the reasoning of a poor, sin-blinded soul. It does not come even by any mere exercise of intellect upon what is recorded in the Scriptures. It is a divine work as truly as calling light out of darkness. God manifests Himself in the soul, and then only there is light. All short of this is darkness and death. And so while, on the one hand, it is taught that the knowledge of God is eternal life, on the other hand those who shall be destroyed at Christ's coming are "those that know not God," and no others. It is added, indeed, as a further description of them that they "obey not the Gospel." For all who know God do obey the Gospel, and upon the same ground—His own manifested light in the soul.

Why is it that believers are walking in such uncer-

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tainty, and feebleness, and indecision—uncertainty about all their relations to God in Christ; feebleness in their testimony, and in the good fight of faith; indecision as to their place and standing and prospects; their faith little better than a sentiment, their experience little better than an emotion, their worship little more than an art, their hope little more than a dream; while all the great truths for which apostles and martyrs contended to the death are questioned, modified, if not yielded to the demands of a pretentious age? Why, but because they are turning away from the joyful light of God's own manifested presence, to the flickering candle which reason holds up, as though the sun in the heavens could only be seen in its light; and are submitting to the arbitrament of a vain philosophy those things which God hath revealed to us by the Spirit, which searcheth all things, even the deep things of God?

To escape from the distracting attempts of reason to dispose of matters altogether beyond its province, and to sit down in the tranquillity of faith; to be at rest in a divine manifestation of truth to the soul, which is certainty itself, and which leaves only the simple question, "What is written?" to be asked regarding all that it really concerns us to know; this, indeed, is blessed. Then alone can we honor God as students of His word; not till then are we truly disciples, listening to God Himself, and waiting on the Spirit who has been received, "that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God." The privilege is unspeakable; but the position is a solemn one, to sit in the presence of God manifested to the soul, as in the audience-chamber of Jehovah, to hear His very word. Oh!

surely we should be then emptied of our own notions and fancies, and freed from the temptation to bring any point of the revelation to the bar of reason or science, conscience or philosophy.

To return to the volume to which reference has been made, the author no doubt aimed to take this place. He promises fairly, and doubtless sincerely, and it is with reluctance that we express deep disappointment with his performance. In this there is, indeed, ground of thankfulness, that the work is a proof among other proofs that inquiry is awakened; and, whatever may be its defects, it may promote inquiry so far as it circulates; for surely neither the author nor his readers can remain satisfied with that to which he has attained.

It is to be regretted that he did not withhold his publication till he had more thoroughly studied his subject and matured his views, and till he could have given greater precision to the language in which he expresses them. We do not know, and have not inquired, who the author is; and when these regrets are expressed, it is not necessary to conclude that he is a very youthful and inexperienced writer. It is more probable that he has long held and taught views very different from much that is found in this volume; and that from a comparatively recent date he has entered the "rich field of exploration" where, he says, "We have gathered hidden treasures of which we had no previous knowledge or suspicion even that such were to be found." If so, his own delight and profit may have inspired a generous eagerness that others should share with him; and he has not waited till he got fully out of old habits of thought and expression, or till his theology became fully conformed to the

standard of truth which he now owns, and till the truths he has learned adjusted themselves in order and consistency.

The title, *The Economy of Ages*, led us to expect that the distinctive character of the ages or dispensations would be presented to us; but the introductory chapter regarding the method of study is itself a warning that such an expectation will not be fulfilled. "God," he says, "has been training our humanity from feeble childhood up toward manhood, to which it has not even yet attained; and he has most wisely and successfully dealt with it in its education, by beginning with the rudiments, and leading on to more enlarged truths and deeper mysteries, as they could be comprehended, and the world was prepared to receive them. Should we not follow this divine method of instruction in our study of the system," etc. We might ask a writer who tells us that "it is time that the church laid aside philosophy to accept the simple facts of God's revealed word," whether it was from the Bible he learned of this progress of "humanity from feeble childhood up toward manhood"? But, if there has been such a progress, would it be well to relinquish the advantages of it and go back to the infancy of the race? If it *were* best, where shall we find the lessons with which God began? Our author can tell us of a remedial system, of the cherubim, of the respective offerings and tragic history of Cain and Abel. But how much of all that he has to say of that system, or of these symbols and types, did he find in the first chapter of Genesis? He concludes what he has to say regarding cherubim, in the twenty-second chapter of this book; how much of all that is contained in these chap-

ters, well-nigh one half of the volume, does he regard as "the grand elementary lessons with which God began the education of the race"? or has he, too, been "studying backward on his track"?

The author misapprehends the nature of the text-book. He evidently cannot follow his own suggestions—it is impossible; and if he could, assuredly he ought not to forego all the privileges of these last days when God has spoken unto us by His Son, and go back to any previous measure of knowledge. We have noticed this inconsistency only because it is important that attention should be directed to the true use of these records of the past. What God taught to the fathers of mankind is one thing; what He teaches us by this record is another thing; and the record of what they were, and what happened to them, teaches us much that was a hidden mystery to themselves. But it could not be expected that its lessons to us could be unfolded by one who passes "from the opening to the closing pages of the book of God," without, we do not say, discerning the nature of the several dispensations, but without seeming to get a glimpse of the peculiar relations of Israel to God's plan, either in its progress or its fulfilment, or of the distinction between Israel and the church of God; and who sees so little of the distinction of the present dispensation of grace as to give as the result of his investigation, that "Christianity is the truest Judaism."

We referred to the want of precision in the language which the author employs. Not that we designed to criticise his style or his ordinary use of words. But we find everywhere loose and unguarded expressions, in which we cannot think that he means what he says;

and some of these may convey serious errors. For example, it is impossible to believe that one who cherishes the least reverence for the person and perfection of the Lord, means what his words import when he says, "Christ redeemed first His own humanity." This also, "Christianity is the truest Judaism," may be one of these inconsiderate expressions. But, at any rate, the writer utterly fails to discern the present standing and relations of the believer in Christ; our heavenly calling and its hope; the peculiar place of the church, both present and prospective; and the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. If so, whatever treasures there are in the Old Testament records, he has not the key to unlock it, and cannot, as a scribe well-instructed into the kingdom of heaven, be "like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth out of his treasures things new and old."

We may be asked why the invidious task is assumed of pointing out the defects of this book in particular, which is not likely to exercise any wide-spread or lasting influence for evil. And we may answer, first of all, that it has attracted the notice of some whom we know to be lovers of the truth, and who find much that interests them in its avowed design, and it may be in its contents; for there are many things both interesting and instructive in it. Then it seemed to lie so much in the line of our own testimony, that it would have been pleasant to find it such as we could indeed commend. As it is, we should have left such defects as have been noticed to be corrected by the further inquiries of the author, as we trust they will be, were it not that they stand connected with grave errors on vital points, with which the opponents of mil-

lenarianism will probably charge all who cherish "that blessed hope." While, then, we raise a warning voice against them, there is a measure of necessary self-protection in it.

The author no doubt intended to present faithfully the truth regarding man's original condition, and the state into which he fell; yet we might ask a writer who sets out with the aim professed in the preface, whether the chapters on "the constitution of humanity," and "the temptation and fall," owe more to human speculation or the testimony of Scripture. We should have preferred a statement of "the simple facts of God's revealed word," in accordance with the summary and estimate of them in Romans v. But had such a statement been given, it would have been at least embarrassing to follow it with the views contained in the chapter on "human depravity." Of these, the author challenges examination, by the remark that "there is nothing which so shapes the views of men on religion and the doctrines of the Bible as their opinions upon their own moral condition, and the nature and desert of sin." A few sentences from this chapter will satisfy any one acquainted with the teaching of Scripture as to the shape his views must take, and will account for his failure to discern the truth on the important points to which reference has been made.

Regarding the nature of sin, he holds, "sin is a transgression of the law of God, committed by a moral and intelligent being, as a subject of the divine government." "Sin begins where moral action begins." The only thing that sounds in the least like Scripture, in all his remarks on that subject, is the first clause quoted above, which is the saddest mistranslation in

our English Bible. We might suppose the writer was an opponent of revelation, if he were to be judged by it. After his views of the nature of sin, it will surprise no one to read the answer to his question, "*How much* is man a sinner, and what is implied in being a sinner?" "It implies the loss of all holiness, of all spirit of obedience and love to God; thus the moral character of the sinner is wrecked." When a writer, who claims, by way of eminence, "to follow the Scriptures as our text-book, seeking to unfold the facts as they are here presented," uses such language to describe human depravity, we ask, does he use language in its ordinary signification? His own explanation of the language adds no depth of coloring to the description. "The truth is, all *moral* goodness is holiness." The loss of this, then, is human depravity. When is it lost? When the man sins, one transgression forfeits it; sin begins when moral action begins. "The moral character is a wreck," he says, and his illustrations make it clear that this is his estimate of human depravity. "One transgression works the entire forfeiture of character in the circle to which the crime belongs. One dishonest act will destroy a character for integrity. One traitorous deed will ruin all claims to patriotism. One fall from virtue will blast all purity in woman. In the same way sin will work the forfeiture of holiness, and be the ruin of man's allegiance to heaven."

That he actually means what he says appears from his account of God's provision for such a condition. "To this world of sinners the love of God comes by repentance and faith in Christ. It begins with the regeneration of the soul." And what does one who

makes the Bible his text-book teach that regeneration is? "It is a new character built upon a new foundation. And this God demands as essential to securing His favor, even as we demand of the dishonest man and traitor that they shall give evidence of repentance before we admit them to our confidence."

This from a man who rebukes the church for losing her hold upon her divine and lively oracles, and for doubtfully establishing their meaning! Nay, he so far imposes on himself as to think that, in presenting such views, he has done a daring thing and defied the hosts of hell. "We expect that carnal, worldly men will quarrel with this doctrine of sin—that systems of theology will deny it—those systems that are in league with Satan and shaped to his purposes." The expectation will be disappointed; for in the whole range of theological literature, a more feeble utterance on the subject of sin, depravity, or regeneration cannot be found, or one less offensive to Satan or the world.

Need we occupy space by showing to what views of the atonement and the way of salvation this leads? One quotation will suffice. "But when," he asks, "does Christ thus intercede or make atonement for the sinner? Whenever that sinner humbly applies for His mediation, making confession of his sins. The Lamb has been slain which can suffice to take away the sins of the world. It now remains for the sinner to accept this sacrifice—to apply to Christ as his High-Priest, and with humble faith, and confession of his sin, ask His intercession. According to these facts, the work of atonement is now being accomplished, Christ is fulfilling his priesthood, ever living to make intercession for us. His mediation or intercession is by making atone-

ment; He prevails to obtain forgiveness and justification only by presenting His own blood as our defence, while we secure His interest for us by faith." "This view of the subject," we are told, "avoids all the controversies respecting the extent of the atonement, whether it is universal or limited."

There is an air of sincerity about it which forbids us to suppose that the writer designed to travesty the Gospel. But surely, a more pitiable jumble of evangelical terms, we can scarcely say ideas, has rarely been seriously offered to the world. It would be doing injustice to our readers to occupy space with an exposure of its unscripturalness. And we can only dismiss with pain and regret a book which could not be redeemed by a thousand pages of truth while this one page stands in the midst of them. The charge, for it is a charge, that, "in this light the apostles present the subject," is answered by one sentence from Paul's address at Antioch, "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things."

The passover had been slain, and its blood sprinkled, the Red Sea had been passed, and Israel stood on the farther side, saved and free, before they knew either altar or high-priest. This is God's order, and cannot be changed. What these types signify can never be known or enjoyed in any other order, however men may perplex themselves or others by the confusion of their teaching.

A LETTER TO THE ALUMNI OF DARTMOUTH COLLEGE.*

THIS letter, it might be supposed, would attract attention by its novelty, and by the remarkable contrast it presents to the ordinary current of addresses on occasions similar to that which called it forth. The position and known ability of its venerable author, and the wealth of resources and the intellectual vigor which the letter itself displays, might suggest that there must be grave reasons for it if such a man turns aside from the popular themes which his pen could well adorn and in the treatment of which he could easily win applause, to bear a testimony which he knows will be more than distasteful to the majority of those to whom it is addressed, and which he knows the general public will dismiss with a sneer.

He writes under no misconception as to the probable reception of his address. During his long connection with Dartmouth College he was called to discharge the duties of Professor of Ethics and Theology.

“In the course of this service,” he says, “my conviction of the cardinal and vital truths of Scripture was greatly strengthened. I found here a foundation, a settlement, and a criterion. But, between these vital truths and the commonly received opinions respecting the social relations of Christianity—opi-

* “A Letter to the Alumni of Dartmouth College, on its Hundredth Anniversary.” By Nathan Lord. New-York: Hurd & Houghton.

nions in which I had fully acquiesced—I perceived, at length, an irreconcilable inconsistency which I had never before considered. That a fallacy existed somewhere it was evident, for truths can never be at variance. I sought for it with diligent and painful study; and found it, as I became presently confident, concealed amidst the subtleties and obscurities of our modern speculative philosophy. This tissue of sophistries, as it appeared, had imperceptibly changed the relative positions of God and man; had made our ethics and theology subservient to its visionary ideas of human ability, perfectibility, and glory; and was secretly producing, under its characteristic visionary pretences, a general disintegration of society in our own country and throughout the civilized world. It was a startling and affecting discovery. It put me at once upon a more scriptural and consistent method of inquiry; and the views expressed, though very imperfectly, in this letter, opened upon me with a clearness and force to which I had been a stranger in all my antecedent professional inquiries. Thenceforth I taught them to the classes, not as I had been brought up, nor as they learned from the books in general, and not according to the popular belief; but, more scrupulously, agreeably to my own convictions.”

He does credit to the respectful attention with which the students listened to his instructions; but as to results “only here and there an individual—perhaps three or four—in a course of years acquiesced in these peculiarities.” Now, at the close of life, when broader studies, larger experience and observation have confirmed his convictions, he presents them in this form, in the desire that those who have formerly

listened to them candidly, though incredulously, may on a deeper study approve them.

We should account it a privilege to extend the circulation of this pamphlet beyond the class to whom it is originally addressed. In no respect will it do discredit to our highest recommendation. But chiefly do we value it as coming to the youthful ministry of our day as a seasonable echo of the paternal solicitude of Paul the aged, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called; which some professing, have erred concerning the faith."

THE PILGRIM'S WANTS.

I WANT that adorning divine,

Thou only, my God, canst bestow ;

I want in those beautiful garments to shine
Which distinguish Thy household below.

I want every moment to feel

That Thy Spirit resides in my heart—

That His power is present, to cleanse and to heal,
And newness of life to impart.

I want—oh ! I want to attain

Some likeness, my Saviour, to Thee,

That longed-for resemblance once more to regain—
Thy comeliness, put upon me !

I want to be marked for Thine own,

Thy seal on my forehead to wear ;

To receive that “ new name ” on the mystic white stone,
Which none but Thyself can declare.

I want so in Thee to abide

As to bring forth some fruit to Thy praise ;

The branch which Thou prunest, though feeble and dried,
May languish, but never decays.

I want Thine own hand to unbind

Each tie to terrestrial things—

Too tenderly cherished, too closely entwined,
Where my heart too tenaciously clings.

I want, by my aspect serene,

My actions and words, to declare

That my treasure is placed in a country unseen—
That my heart's best affections are there.

I want, as a traveller, to haste !

Straight onward, nor pause on my way ;

Nor forethought, nor anxious contrivance to waste
On the tent only pitched for a day.

I want—and this sums up my prayer—

To glorify Thee till I die ;

Then calmly to yield up my soul to Thy care,
And breathe out, in faith, my last sigh !