

WHERE IS THE LIGHT ?



NONE OF THE WICKED SHALL UNDERSTAND ; BUT
THE WISE SHALL UNDERSTAND.—*Dan.* 12, 10.



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## P R E F A C E .

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Books abound, both great and small, learned and unlearned,—saving truths and soul-destroying errors are in extensive circulation,—and who is sufficient for these things? Perhaps, some persons may be induced to read this little work when they hear, that it was written with a special reference to the inhabitants of Quebec.

In days like the present, what multitudes of the ignorant, and how many of the “wise above that which is written,” are stumbling and falling! while, it may be, a “Babe in Christ” can say “this is the way, walk ye in it.” Now, it is to the former of these characters that these few remarks are particularly addressed. No pretension of argument with either the sceptic or the critic, will be found here. No new excitement to satisfy the “lust of the flesh or the pride of life,”—in short, no architectural fancies, nor heavy burdens which no man can bear, will be found here:—But, what has been written in weakness is sent forth with the simple hope, that God, the Holy Spirit, in his infinite mercy, may take of what is Christ’s, and reveal, with power to the conscience, the individual admonition,

“THOU ART THE MAN.”



## WHERE IS THE LIGHT ?



**How long halt ye between two opinions ? if the  
Lord be God, follow him : but if Baal,  
then follow him " : 1 Kings 18, 21.**

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IT is generally found, that some prevailing feature characterizes the christian world at different periods ; while years succeed each other, and time is rapidly bringing to a close our numbered days, and thus reminding us of its end, when "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Some of us may be well acquainted with church history, but many of us have but little knowledge of God's dealings with His people prior to our own days. There is, nevertheless, one grand, never-changing, and ever-manifest, proof of the immutability of the Lord's dealings with His people. From age to age, up to the present day,—fathers, young men, and little children, whose sins have been forgiven for his name's sake, can all alike testify by experience to this cheering truth, "that one and the self same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will," was the mighty agent which

“ opened their eyes, and turned them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God ”: Acts 26. But what, then, constitutes the changing characteristics of the church of Christ ? We know that in former days christians were persecuted even unto the death, and that those who were allowed to live out their days, lived as “ seeing Him who is invisible,” and daily experienced the fulfilment of their Master’s warning to those who follow Him—“ Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests ; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head ”: Mat. 8. A natural question is often asked—why is this ? what can the reason be that christians, at all times and in every age, are not called upon to prove the reality of their faith through scorn, persecution and suffering ? Such questions are generally prompted by the inexperienced and by those who possess limited views of causes and effects.

The persecuting enemies of the Cross still entertain the same hatred against Christ and His humbling doctrines, and still exercise the same cruelty against His disciples which they ever did ; nor can it be otherwise ; for the source of all evil is not *less evil*—his agents (the spirits that now work in the children of disobedience) are not *less wise* and expert in doing their Master’s work ! Years of experience would not diminish their zeal and power, nor intimidate them from exercising all their machinations to keep alive a world of vanity and sin, and the

work of destroying souls ! There is no softening in the "mystery of iniquity !" No change in the "roaring Lion who walketh about seeking whom he may devour": 1 Pet. 5. If then the cause of all evil remains as it was from the beginning, viz. : the world, the flesh and the devil, what other reason can be alleged for the professed followers of Christ enjoying comparatively so smooth a path ? so much ease and liberty ? in short, so light a cross, that they appear to carry no cross at all ! In proportion as carnal ease is indulged—earthly tastes gratified—a dread of singularity and the fear of man given way to, and the love of the world in operation *throughout*,—so will the cross-bearer cease to be a cross-bearer ! love will grow cold, and knowledge and convictions refuse to do their office—for the heart is so full of self and the world, that there is little of it left for God—nor is there spiritual perception enough to fear those enemies, to overcome whom, God has prepared a whole armour for his people to fight in ! "Strive (or agonize) to enter into the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in and shall not be able": Luke 13, 24. The force of this exhortation lies in the remarkable distinction between the words "strive" (or agonize) and "seek." Now, it is very evident, that few of us experimentally understand this exhortation to "agonize," while multitudes are satisfied with even a partial and mistaken attention to the *warning* contained in "seek." Indeed, it is but too evident, that they

lay aside the plain meaning of this solemn scripture altogether ; disregarding the exhortation, while the warning is perverted into an invitation. The "few" who, through sovereign grace, enter the narrow way, are well assured of the deception of the seeking multitude, and the danger of their false position—we would most solemnly and affectionately ask such, what are you dreaming about ? Consider your ways—"Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel !" Let the unchangeable word of God, which is a savour of death unto death, as well as life unto life, and fixes the Eternal doom of those who reject it, lead you to a decision. How often are we reminded of Balaam ! how many Balaams are there in the world, while the name of christian is attached to them ! how much of self can we trace in the deceitful and persevering manner in which Balaam tried to serve God and Mammon ! He had "a name to live" (while he should have agonized to enter into life) and all the time he sought his own self-gratification, which was covered over by an outward exhibition of real godliness—for again and again, did this poor deceiver call upon God, hoping to work a change in His word, which had previously and absolutely forbidden him to take the journey, or curse the people. This deluded sinner was appointed to condemn the whole of his own proceedings out of his own mouth, when he spoke that most solemn truth, "God is not a man that He should lie ; neither the son of man, that He

should repent : hath He said, and shall He not do it ? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good ? Num. 22. It is worthy of notice that Balaam's pretended fidelity, when he said, "if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more," (Num. 22,) was the very occasion of the betrayal of his lust ; the covetous desire to possess the bribes promised by Balak was, doubtless, the great object which he was in pursuit of ! So great is the blindness and deceitfulness of the human heart ! and we find, that, instead of obtaining the gratification of his lust he was just made use of to carry out God's purposes, and so he pronounced a blessing in the place of a curse. A terrible warning and fearful example do we see in Balaam's character ! We may regard the lusts and passions of our fallen nature, as standing in the position of the limbs of our body,—therefore, it is easy to comprehend what is taught us by, "if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched : where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched ; and, if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out ; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire : where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched " : Mark 9. These are the words of Him who loved the church, and gave Himself for it—therefore, it

was love, not want of love, which made Him speak thus. No doubt, every christian knows, in part or in whole, from actual experience, what it is to "walk in darkness." There are two kinds of darkness:—it may please God to withdraw sensible light for a time, to accomplish some wise end; this is truly a happy darkness in comparison with that which is brought on by our own unfaithfulness—when we forget our high responsibility in naming the name of Christ, and have, perhaps, but little carefulness about departing from iniquity, or watching unto prayer, that there be no entering into temptation. Surely we must, most of us, know that any thing is temptation which draws down our thoughts and desires from things heavenly to things earthly, and thus brings damage to the heart and spirit of the christian, and consequently leads him into fellowship with those whom, if he were walking in light, he would only pray for and grieve over. The sanctification (or being set apart) which is the blessed position of every believer, is indeed forgotten, and deeply dishonored, when brought into *companionship* with the earthly minded, who know of no other gratification than the lying vanities and follies of this life. Let the christian, so circumstanced, ask himself, why that light has departed which should reflect condemnation on the lives of those with whom he is enjoying fellowship? There are a few positions found in which the believer at times is called upon to carry a cross of worldly conformity—these cases

are generally known from the circumstances of the individual, and of course wherever *duty* calls, the christian is bound to obey—and to believe, that, “as his day, so will his strength be”; but, if we claim the promise, we must be faithful as to the *duty*. “If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things”: 1 John 4, 20.

We may understand from this Scripture, what a strict account is taken of all our ways, even to the secrets of the heart! and how solemn is the thought, that, when our earthly pilgrimage is ended, with all its deceits and follies, many will be found whose outward garb passed as *religion* before the eyes of men, but who, when weighed in the balance of God’s omniscience, shall be found wanting in those very essentials which constitute *REAL* religion. Indeed, if the soul were more fully alive to divine things, and enjoyed a more experimental acquaintance with the deceit and desperate wickedness of the human heart, there would be more often a holy indignation at the inward suggestions to stifle conscience and “do as others do,” rather than a compliance with things in which, though lawful in themselves, no profit is to be found. Giving heed to these childish persuasions, and thus doing and leaving undone exactly what ought to be reversed—continually brings the lukewarm follower of Christ under the lash of God’s judgment; for, we read—“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or

daughter more than me is not worthy of me": Matt. 10. "Blessed is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth: Rom. 13.

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**"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil:" Eph. 5. 16.**

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When we look back to ages gone by, to the present times, and at our own experience, we might wonder indeed (were we not fully cognizant of the deceitfulness of sin) that no better results were produced from such abounding knowledge and experience as we have in the present day, and by which we ought to have benefitted so much, knowing that the united energies of the world, the flesh, and the devil, are ever displaying their unchanged hatred against the church of Christ. But, such is our fallen condition, that each individual has to learn for himself (irrespective of all that has happened in the world) before he can say with one of old—"One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see": John 9.

Mighty foes harrass us within, and great are our enemies without; so powerful, and indeed so manifest, that our memories should act upon us as a "gospel lever." Is it so? Are we under a deep and solemn conviction, that, while believers are trusting alone in the blood and merits of Jesus Christ for salvation, and to "the word of God

which is perfect, converting the soul," (Psa. 19) all others will come under the condemnation of those "who shall add unto or take away from the words of the prophecy of God's book?" God shall add unto them the plagues that are written in His book : Rev. 22.

If we lived under a constant remembrance of these truths, the blessed position of the former, and the fearful state of the latter, how we would watch and pray, that whatsoever we do should be done for the glory of God. How clear and how important would all the exhortations and warnings in the Bible appear to us to keep us on our guard. To whom does God look for light and truth to be manifested? "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit": John 15. And now that miracles no longer outwardly testify to the power of the Spirit, to whom does God look for that spirit to testify of Christ, and to shew forth its fruits?—"love, joy, peace," &c: Gal. 6. These fruits are evidently to *characterize* the household of faith; (just as the reverse characterize the world at large); whatever tempts a christian to lower or to disregard this heavenly standard—which he has the privilege of maintaining—should be carefully shunned. The Holy Spirit is easily grieved; and no one whose heart is a temple of the Holy Ghost, can indulge a besetting infirmity, or allow any inconsistency to betray itself without suffering and condemnation. For instance, the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things: no man

can tame the tongue—it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison ; and although we have this sad and humiliating caution given us in God's word, yet, is it not a very common source of grief and condemnation ? it is, in some christians, the prevailing transgression ; of course, the cause of this is easily traced when it exists in the christian, viz., natural disposition and the force of old habits ; but, like every other sinful disposition, it requires never-ceasing watching unto prayer, lest, even contrary to our most anxious desires, the old "bitter water" should run out with the sweet, not only to our own shame and sorrow, but perhaps to the injury and pain of others. We are told, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous"—and, truly, these characteristic infirmities are afflictions of the keenest description ; but so long as there is a fountain opened for sin—a risen Saviour ever interceding for His people, and touched with the feeling of our infirmities—there can be nothing to justify the indulgence of a propensity so hurtful and so inconsistent ; the more so, as everything is promised, *unlimited grace* for all the believer wants ! and by the power of this grace deep-rooted prejudices may be successfully eradicated, and sweet, *only* sweet water will then run out of that "well of water springing up into everlasting life"—thus proving before the world that "whereas sin once abounded, grace does now much more abound." There is no sin too hard for grace—no duty too difficult with grace sufficient. We are told to "yield ourselves unto

God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God": Rom. 6. This would be telling sinful mortals to do an impossibility, were it not that Scripture explains Scripture—for we read again, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: 2 Cor. 9. Many tastes, both vain and unprofitable, cling to certain characters; but it behoves us to crucify them, so that the heart may follow the Lord *fully*. "The *little foxes*" spoil the vines, and eat up the tender grapes quite as effectually as an Achan, who hid all the silver and gold in his tent; the peace of God will never abide so long as any reserve is made. He who has presented his body a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," has no need to keep back; it is his high delight and privilege to be permitted to offer, first, himself, and then all he has, unto his Heavenly Father. No compromise can be entered into with a sovereign God whose written word is the christian's *rule*; no agreement to go so far and no farther—no weights and scales used which allow anything to be kept back, and thus strive to do what that word declares to be absolutely impossible—"to serve God and mammon." All who are thus self deceived and blinded to this truth are acceptable friends of the world; and to such we would just say—"Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you": Luke 6. A low and dishonouring state of religion on the part

of professing christians, and a high profession on the part of the world, will agree well together, and there need be no surprise felt when friendships are formed between the two parties. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness: James 4.

There can be no reason why they should not walk together in fellowship: there is no great distinction in practice, though there may be in heart. This seems to be evidenced by themselves; for it is not uncommon to hear christians disputing about the *lawfulness* or *unlawfulness* of certain questionable pleasures and employments, &c. Now, the very fact of contending for or *wishing* to reconcile such conflicting materials, (to say the least of it) bespeaks a most unworthy appreciation of the high privilege involved in being called upon to forsake *all* and follow Christ; for, to enlist under his banner comprehends not only *willingly* to give up, but to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and thus to keep off every intruder—like a sentry at his post, who, never sleeping, watches all around, lest some enemy should approach. Is not such conduct as this on the part of the christian approaching very nearly to that of another class to whom Christ refers?—"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess

unto them, I never knew you ; depart from me ye that work iniquity" : and yet he knoweth all things, even to the thoughts and intents of the heart, but He never knew them as His people, nor recognized them as such, though manifesting many of their outward characteristics ; just as the tares and wheat growing together cannot be distinguished except by the Lord of the harvest ; but their hearts were not right with God ; they saw not Him who is indeed invisible to the eye of sense, but manifest to the eye of faith, which experiences that blessed assurance—"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show *them* His covenant." In vain do we hear that religion is the fashion ! it is really to be feared many believe it. This odium on religion is one of the strongest proofs that *such a religion* cannot claim Christ as its standard or its author. The *Cross of Christ* has never yet been fashionable, nor even tolerated, excepting by those who are *fashioned like unto Him !* and are thus made partakers of His divine nature. The more subtle any temptation is, the more plausible are the arguments used to advocate it, especially when wielded by the enemy of all righteousness, who can even transform himself into an angel of light. Let us ever keep this in mind—(indeed it is very needful to do so)—that anything, no matter what it is, will be presented (and joyfully accepted by the world) in the place of Jesus Christ. The soul-destroyer cares not where your reliance is placed, or what devotion you give to anything,

provided it affords but a name to live while the soul is dead in the sight of God. It is no matter how contradictory it may be to the word of God, so that he keep you as the strong man armed whose goods are in peace : Luke 2. There is an undeniable fact, which perhaps tests *truth* even more successfully than any other feature which may come within our observation : this is a total want of that love without which the most exalted of all gifts and virtues are but as "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal" : 1 Cor. 13.

"The devils believe and tremble," but they cannot love ; and so it must be with every sinner in his natural state. It matters not how much he may devote himself to systematic forms, or lead what the world calls a good life. He may bestow all his goods to feed the poor—in short, he may be a devotee to whatever doctrines and practices he may choose ; still, so long as these are not derived from that "faith which worketh by love," (Gal. 5,) and the heart be not regenerated, the life can only be a course of sin in the estimation of a holy God. This love passeth knowledge ! and is the main spring of all the life, prayer and praise, peace and joy, experienced by every believer, and the want of it constitutes the eternal separation between those "who have the Son" and those who "have not the Son." The former love God *because* he first loved them—the latter receive not the truth in the love of it, and therefore there cannot be any love for divine objects or things.

"My son, give me thine heart," is often read, but too little understood; a request on God's part involving love and mercy worthy only of divine perfections. Wonderful indeed it is that the infinitely holy and almighty creator of all things should so love sinners as to make them His "jewels"—"chosen"—"the beloved of the Lord"—through the gift of His only begotten Son, who loved them and gave himself for them. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God:" 1 Cor. 2.

"My son, give me thine heart"! and what response does this meet with? God asks for the *heart* that he may make it capable of appreciating his love, and trusting in him at all times; possessing all things while having nothing; always rejoicing while yet sorrowing here below. Yes! all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. These blessed ones—these heaven-born souls, are nothing more than poor, miserable sinners, just as others, in themselves, but through sovereign grace they are "called, justified, and glorified," having been "chosen before the foundation of the world": Rom. 8 & Eph. 1.

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**"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him": 1 John 4.**

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This seems to give us some faint idea of the temporal and eternal blessedness of the children of God. Should they then shrink from the Cross in whatever form it may be sent to them? they know that as branches of the true vine they must be purged that they may bring forth more fruit, that God may be glorified, and they may be manifested as Christ's disciples. But, perhaps, there is no part of a christian's experience which he needs more frequently to be reminded of than that trials and afflictions await him; instead of expecting to meet with them, however, how often does he seem to think that some strange thing hath happened unto him! And who can be exempt, whilst in a body of sin and death, and therefore exposed to the same trials and infirmities as the unbeliever? and living in a world where the devil exerts his fiendish power, as the prince of the power of the air, more particularly against the child of God, whom he is continually assaulting, even as he did the Son of God himself. The servant is not above his Master, and therefore ought to expect to suffer with and to rejoice in his suffering, knowing that he is more than conqueror through Him who hath loved him; but there is a vast distinction between the believer and unbeliever; the one suffers alone with no confidence in a deliverer; and the

other suffers with Christ, in him the hope of glory. We may be assured of one thing ; just in proportion as we are living near to God and enjoying His favor, afflictions will be light, and we shall admire *all* His dispensations, whether joyous or grievous. We are apt to judge falsely as regards the chastening of the Lord. Some christians suppose they are suffering indirectly according to God's general disposal of events, when all the time their sufferings are the *direct* consequence of their unfaithfulness. A higher standard for our walk of faith would more often be a light unto our path to shew us where we stumble. For instance, we each have our appointed position in life to fill, and it is no uncommon temptation for every one to think his or her own lot unusually difficult and painful. This is far from being the case. "No temptation hath taken you but such as is common to man": 1 Cor. 10. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, but it knows not the greater bitterness which, perhaps, its neighbour endures. Infinite power and justice guide the maker of the universe, and all creation is so filled with His omniscience that a sparrow cannot fall without Him ! and while all His attributes are engaged in the exhibition of justifying the ungodly, we may know that infinite love and mercy are equally in force to dispense, direct, and overrule all events concerning His people, working all things together for their good. David knew something of this when he said—"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear

Him, and delivereth them": Psa. 34. What a solemn, and yet what a comforting consideration is this for the christian, especially if he is 'set as a solitary one in a family'—and his faith and patience are thus continually tested; but it is too often to be deplored that his faith declines, and he becomes weary in well doing under this trying discipline; consequently unfaithfulness creeps over the soul and paralyzes every christian energy; natural affection for, and the influences of, those near and dear ensnare, and presently *silence* takes the place of setting the Lord before their eyes! Conscience may continue to tell of the darkness and loss of confidence and peace; but, under these circumstances, unless sovereign grace is put forth, who can tell of the years, perhaps, of anguish and confusion the soul may have to pass through, before he *realizes* the promise—"Sin shall not have dominion over you"? Rom. 6. Is there anything gained; or rather, what is not lost by this unfaithfulness, this intimidation before man? The only gain is when godly sorrow working repentance is given, so that the soul, deeply humbled under a sense of sin, is exercised in like manner with that of others of whom we read; "Ye sorrowed after a godly sort; what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, clearing of yourselves, yea, indignation, yea, fear, yea, vehement desire, yea, zeal, yea, revenge"! 2 Cor. 7. It is not in the power of man to say what a soul loses while it lives at a distance from the source of all that is good But it is written, "He

that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad": Matt. 12. "He that receiveth the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended": Matt. 13. Therefore, what guarantee is there of *our* adoption through grace, while there are no evidences manifested to prove it, and no testimony of the spirit within? But, let us look at the opposite case. It is not in the power of man to say what a soul gains by *following the Lord wholly*. Now, let us return to the case of this solitary one; you may be a father, or a mother, or child; and whether the one or the other, cannot you trust in that God who is now become your reconciled father through the faith bestowed upon you in Christ Jesus? "Although my house be not so with God; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow": 2 Sam. 23. Afflictions are designed to press us on more and more toward the prize of our high calling; we need some remembrances, always in exercise, to keep us continually on the watch; we are too deceitful to be left alone. If we are unfaithful in the midst of every thing reminding us of the vanity and sin of human nature, how is it to be expected, that, if we were delivered from these

chastenings, which are tokens of God's love, we should be more faithful to the cause of our Lord ! The greater responsibility in all such cases undoubtedly rests upon the christian, for he possesses the light ; but, is there no responsibility on the part of others, although they are not children of light ? Let the words of Christ himself answer : " This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil " : John 3.

Living under this condemnation every hour, every day, the soul must be delivered from it in time, or the wrath of God must abide upon that soul throughout all eternity ! Let the members of a whole family try to realize what they will one day experience—their position before the judgment seat of Christ ! Has the unconverted one (whether father or mother), no cause *now* for remorse and anguish ? Has he never *led the way* to the end ? Has he never obliged a wife or child to do or not to do, according to the course of this world, irrespective of their souls and eternity ? Has he never accompanied them to places where the sound of Christ was never heard ? To the society of the foolish ones, and united with them in what are called " the *innocent* amusements of life, &c. " ? (Short-lived and fearful " *innocence* " ! " Alas ! their glory is in their shame, they mind *earthly* things " : Phil. 3.) He may be proud of those whom he naturally loves, he may take every

trouble and even deny self to advance them in this world! All this may and does exist in the most amiable and upright characters, and not unfrequently is accompanied with extreme attention to all the outward and *public* means of grace, (which of course work together to strengthen that pharisaical spirit which is usually found in characters of this description), while as yet he knows not the plague of his own heart, nor the spirituality of God's law. "The law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin": Rom. 7. And what appearance does this *dread* world present to him *now*? Can his former companions help him *now*? Do their society and friendship amuse and gratify him *now*? Are their accomplishments, property, or high positions sought after and valued *now*? In short, would he not give thousands of *such worlds*, if he could *now* seek pardon for all the past, through a crucified and risen Saviour, and once again hear the Gospel invitation to receive the truth in the *love of it*? But his appointed work is ended—his eternity has begun!

What is the position of the converted one—the despised on earth? What is *now* the manifest blessedness of his singularity? He is "on the right side," with all his sins blotted out; sunk into the depths of the sea; with "his robes washed white in the blood of the lamb;" through much tribulation and weakness he carried the cross; he did all things through Christ strengthening him. To such the Lord thus speaks in His

word—" I have loved thee with an everlasting love ; therefore, with loving-kindness have I drawn thee " : Jer. 31. How various are the devices which Satan exercises over human characters to keep up a life of self-deception ! It is no uncommon occurrence (in these days of abused knowledge) to see persons persisting in a course, from year to year, which every experienced christian can plainly discern to be the broad way that leadeth to destruction, whilst they imagine themselves to be in the narrow path which leadeth unto life eternal !

There is a vacillating excitement and much talking, and (*when not inconvenient*) an attendance on some means of grace—this is no sooner over than equal or increased excitement is called forth—and what is the subject of it ? Some worldly amusement is anxiously occupying the mind—arrangements and re-arrangements are well discussed, and so, *that* time—which is *always convenient*—passes away, till, without any unwillingness the looked for amusement is attended and enjoyed ! A variety of topics for conversation, connected with the by-gone amusement, still occupy the mind, and such conversation is often far from being profitable or sincere—" Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself ; for thou that judgest doest the same things " : Rom. 1.

The society of christians may perhaps be the next thing sought, and that of the vain ones of the world afterwards, and so it continues ! while

they sometimes accuse or excuse themselves on the plea of the wishes of others ; and the difficulty of knowing their path of duty, &c. How unquestionably these cases betray their relationship to their first parents, who vainly hoped to screen their own sin by throwing the responsibility on another ! How much better it would be if more time were given to the eternal interests of the poor sinners around them, upon whom their inconsistencies are often reflected ! But, so long as *sincerity of purpose* is wanting, there can be no example for others to take knowledge of their *fidelity to Jesus* ; and, so long as deceiving and being deceived continues, there can be no confidence placed in them. They are “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” : 2 Tim. 3. Nor are they crucified unto the world, because the world is not crucified unto them.—“Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity : *therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed*” : Jer. 48. They may have knowledge enough to spoil some earthly pleasure, but not grace enough to feel any of the joys of faith. These characters of admixture will benefit nothing more by their knowledge (but less) than the most ignorant—for “where much is given, much is required.”

If our sons and our daughters are brought up to shine (to find their lives) in this world, we know not how we can expect them to be “plants

grown up in their youth, and polished corners of a Palace" ! Young people are often much to be pitied, for it is difficult for them at all times to know right from wrong—they may be well instructed at *stated periods* and *particular seasons* ; but on other occasions, they are led into, and allowed to practice, direct opposition to all the good instruction they have received, and are still to receive again when the day returns for it. We grant, and are quite willing to allow, that this religion is and may very correctly be called "*fashionable*" ! for it is found to be so convenient and so easy that there is little wonder at seeing its advocates increasing ! What a cruel thing it is, and how sinful to substitute such confusion ; such soul-destroying work, in the place of the *unfashionable* but soul-saving religion of the cross ! How natural it is that young people should so gladly embrace what suits both their taste and their conscience, not knowing their present or eternal danger ! All the time attending means of grace, where perhaps *the light* is shining and the truth taught ; but their darkness comprehends it not, for they carry with them the pomps and vanities of this wicked world and many of them openly manifest the painful fact that they are not yet "willing to be made whole." A sinful nature binds them to earth, because they know of nothing yet more satisfactory.

What joy and gratitude Sabbath-School teachers and all Bible teachers would feel if they could see more seriousness and attention and self

application on the part of those who profess that they come to learn ! would that the solemn truths of God's word, which they heard from Sabbath to Sabbath, were written and engraven upon their affections, "not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God ; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" : 2 Cor. 3.

Then every day would be *the day* for reading and studying the Bible ; *every day* would be accountable for all we think, and speak, and do ! and *then*, and not till then, will our Sabbath Schools and places of worship present an altered appearance.

It is a most solemn and painful consideration to one who looks at every thing in reference to eternity, to witness so much cause for that sadness which the world complains of in the christian ; but this sadness is often especially felt on account of those very persons who complain of it,—and, at those very times, when the realities of sin are manifested in pride and ignorance, and indifference to it and unwillingness to hear of it, or to listen to those glad tidings which proclaim pardon and eternal life through a Crucified Saviour.

"How can I sing the Lord's song in a strange land" ? is often the exclamation of those who love to praise the Lord, and who would rejoice to do so even with those who are yet only wondering at, or ridiculing them for their "singularity" and "uncharitable judgments." Now, let us assure such, that if they could but feel any

thing of the truth of their real position as lost sinners, the cause of their wonder would then be just the opposite ! They would wonder, that any one spiritually alive to such awful realities, could cease warning them day and night with tears ; they would wonder how such a one could ever be silent on the subject ; but they would cease to wonder, that these few (we grant singular ones) should be so solemn, importunate, and anxious to tell them the truth, while they hope and pray that God, in His infinite mercy, may bless the means used to the conversion of some of their souls. We should none of us call that friend *uncharitable* and *singular*, who seeing us walking on blindfold with an open pit before us, should call out to us again and again to stop ! Let us remember, that every teacher of truth in a Sabbath School or elsewhere, is calling out to his blind-folded fellow-sinners to stop before they fall into that bottomless pit, from whence they can never be delivered ! Children as well as adults, all ye who hear the truth of God's word, see that *you* fall not into that pit, while you are, perhaps, Sabbath after Sabbath, seen in your class with that book in your hand, which shall at the last day condemn all who received it not in the *love of it*. Never forget, that there are but two classes of persons—children of light and children of darkness—and, although comprehended under various appearances, let not appearance, or any outward distinction tempt you to judge contrary to the word of God ; “ except

a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God": John 3. Come, then, to your Sabbath School, and pray that you may come for good. Watch against the influence of those who represent the fowls spoken of in the parable as devouring the seed sown by the way side—watch against those who would tempt you to make light of this responsible privilege. Think of the work you are engaged in: how solemn! how important to your soul! When the next Sabbath returns your seat may be empty—you may be ill—your sickness may be unto death;—what review will you then be able to take of your past Sabbath School instruction? Have you to thank God for blessings received? or have you to bemoan your neglected opportunities? Again we say, come to your class and give your attention, your serious attention, to the instruction given. Forget not that your Teacher watches for your souls, and being constrained by the love of Christ, perseveres in the momentous work, "whether you will hear or whether you will forbear."

The time is approaching when both Teacher and Scholar will appear before the judgment-seat to give an account of their stewardships. There will be but *two classes* found to exist in *that day*, when the secrets of all hearts will be made known! "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"; and "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels": Matt. 25.

Faith, or no faith, severally constitutes these classes. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life": John 3. Surely, surely, then, the most valuable gift we can possess is *saving faith*; and as no one can possess saving faith without knowing its author and finisher, it would be strange, indeed, if the recipients of such were not capable of teaching others, having themselves been taught of God, and telling them of Him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Nothing can justify any christian man or woman for concealing this gift (above all other gifts) under any false pretences or misguided notions as to whether they are or are not the "lawfully qualified" for such sacred responsibilities, &c! nor can others be excused from going forward in their Master's cause through a mistaken judgment regarding their insufficiency, weakness, &c., &c. We believe that all such excuses for not exercising our gifts and graces in our Master's cause are false, and will be overcome when the value of immortal souls and the love of Christ are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ": 2 Cor. 10. St. Paul writes thus—"Help those women who laboured with me in the Gospel", (Phil. 4 3.) and it is worthy of notice, that the two Marys were the first messengers sent to tell the good news that Christ was risen from the dead—while

the keepers (*men*) for fear of him became as dead men : Matt. 28. Women indeed seem to have been the most devoted and faithful ministers to our Lord whilst on earth ; may we not, then, feel fully assured that, now he is in heaven, their services in making known his dying love for sinners must be acceptable in his sight ?

Is it not manifest in the Scriptures that the Apostle Paul, with all his jealousy for God's glory and for Christ's kingdom, never forbade or limited any christian from holding forth the word of life—quite the contrary. Neither do we find him on any occasion, or from any plea whatever, condemning or discountenancing *any teacher of truth*. "One in Christ", was enough for St. Paul. His brethren in the bonds of the Gospel embraced all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity—according to his Divine Master, when he emphatically enquired, "Who is my mother ? and who are my brethren ? And he stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren : for whosoever shall do the will of my father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, my sister, and mother" : Matt. 12.

In what way does this divine example of Christ's love bear upon us ? does it find us cordially assenting to the Lord's judgment in this matter, while our hearts can testify before the scrutiny of Omniscience that we love one another with pure hearts, fervently ? Are we cultivating this heavenly principle as a positive christian

duty—and how is this love manifested? Are we so jealous of one another's character that we cover a multitude of sins through the fervency of our love? If one member suffer, do all the others suffer with it? Do we, as the body of Christ, constrain the world to cry out, "See how these christians love one another"?

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another": John 13. This is a beautiful picture, and would that it were painted with the finger of God upon all our hearts! but we must be faithful and reverse the case. Many of us do not love one another. Neither are we careful to cover one another's infirmities and sins. We are too selfish to suffer with them that suffer, or to rejoice with them that do rejoice; therefore it is a cause of deep humiliation that we do not impress the world with the idea of our fellowship and union as members of one body. But let not the worldly exult at this; let them not imagine that they have any argument against the *principles* of Christ's religion, *because* Christians are not faithful! neither let them suppose for a moment that *because* the truths of the Gospel are not made manifest as we could desire, that the slightest impeachment is thereby cast upon the scriptures of God. Indeed it is quite on the contrary; truth is all the more established. Let any of us exercise our observation and honesty, and find out, for the confirmation of truth, and for our own satisfaction, why is it thus? We shall find that the *key* to

understand these apparent discrepancies will be discovered on the very face of the Holy Scriptures—the word of an unchanging God. There can be no bond of peace and love without the unity of the Spirit. No manifest membership, one of another, without holding the head as the Alpha and Omega. No walking together in confidence unless we be agreed in sincerity and truth. No overcoming the sins which do most easily beset us, unless we fight the good fight of faith.

Any departure from God's way—any unholy partial separation of what God has seen fit to unite in His word, can only produce "wood, hay, stubble," confusion, and every evil work. "A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit; wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them." "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears *from the truth*, and shall be turned unto fables": 2 Tim. 4. Unless it pleases God to pour out the Holy Spirit upon ministers and people, they will only be "blind leaders of the blind, both shall fall into the ditch": Matt. 15.

While many are trusting to lying vanities, which cannot profit, here or hereafter,—others are resting their never-dying souls on what must inevitably deceive them—"Because they sought it not by faith": Rom. 9.

Let us each one ask himself, what am I trusting to? am I sufficiently acquainted with the perfec-

tion of God's attributes to see the impossibility of sinful man (who is "altogether become abominable,") doing the slightest thing towards his own salvation? and do I understand that nothing short of perfect God and perfect man united in *one to make a perfect man*, can redeem me from the curse of the law? can give me a new nature—make me holy unto the Lord—and fit me for His kingdom by clothing me in the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God "hath made to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"? 2 Corinth. v. 21.

If such is my experience, and if I believe that my sins, which are many, are forgiven, I am sure I shall love, or desire to love, much; and I am also sure, that this love will constrain me to deny myself, take up the cross, and follow Christ with far more willingness and gratitude than all the meritorious acts, self-righteous forms and ceremonies of man's devising, can possibly produce in any poor sinners who are not totally blinded to their helplessness and sin; taking things for granted which *are not*; thinking that good is received when it *is not*; and thus going on from day to day, till sooner or later sudden destruction cometh upon them, while they are saying "peace, peace"! No discoveries of their ruin, or horror at their past indifference to the truth, will then avail! amazement at the *madness* of their folly for believing man more than God, will *then* avail! For we read—"I will laugh at

your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you ; then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me : for they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord " : Prov. 1.

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**" For there shall arise false Christs and false Prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect " : Mat. 24, 24.**

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*Deceive the very elect!*—Yes, and we believe that we are living in the very days alluded to. False doctrines abound on every side, and so specious are some of them that, were it not for *that* wisdom which the Lord imparts to His own people, they would be deceived, even as others. Some of these errors are propagated by those from whom we might hope better things ; such, for instance, as that of apostolical succession, held, *of course*, by the Church of Rome ; but, alas ! by very many also of the Clergy of the Church of England. A doctrine fraught with evil consequences, leading, as it does, directly or indirectly, to many other errors. Now, if there is any truth at all in such an assertion,

why do not those who hold it, come forth boldly, and *with all plainness of speech, in public* as well as private, trace and explain this doctrine from the *word of God*, and shew to the world that they have sufficient evidence to bear them out in that lofty assumption—that they alone are the true ministers of the gospel, and that those of other denominations who exercise the privilege of preaching Christ to poor perishing sinners, are usurping an office to which they have no right or title whatever? But, we would ask, to what are the advocates of apostolical succession driven to prove it? Are they not obliged to trace the succession through the Church of Rome? We believe they are, and we certainly do not envy them in their passage through such a slough of iniquity. Do they not, by such a procedure, affirm that they have no objection to acknowledge *that apostacy* as the Church of God, and thereby, indirectly at least, falsify the *word of God*, which stamps her as the woman upon whose “forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH?” and I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her I wondered with great admiration”: Rev. 17. It may be asked, why is this notion of *apostolical succession* so dangerous? Many reasons might be given, but we will content ourselves with one or two. In the first place, those clergymen of the Church of England who hold it

claim for themselves something, yea, a good deal of the position assumed by the priests of the Church of Rome, that they alone are the authorized interpreters of the word of God, to this extent at least, that, though they do not deny the word of God to the laity, to read for themselves, they do deny them the right of using that word for the conversion of sinners and edification of saints. They would prevent the laity from going from house to house, to make known through the Scriptures Him of whom they testify. In the second place, these clergymen are so puffed up with the idea of their own exclusive position as the direct successors of the Apostles—(would that they had the spirit of Paul when he said, “not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand”! 2 Cor. 1.)—and, in consequence, so unduly exalt the church to which they belong, that they do not hesitate to assert, that there is *no salvation out of the Church of England*; thus branding all other denominations as heretical, it may be, with the exception of the Church of Rome. On this latter point we cannot speak positively, but we strongly suspect that these clergymen have far greater hope of those belonging to the Church of Rome, than of those comprised within the range of dissent. We do not wonder that many holding such views have realized our worst fears, and have thrown themselves into the arms of that Mother of Harlots; finding in her the complete development of that false principle

which induced them to deviate from the pure word of God.

“ But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ”: 2 Cor. 11. No doubt we are all aware that the most successful mode of shutting out the truth is by shutting up the Bible, and woe be to those upon whom such iniquity rests! It behoves us, then, to look well to our Bibles, to try the doctrines, as well as the spirits, whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. The Apostle Paul gives us *no mysterious, indefinite* sound on this momentous subject; he authorizes every one to receive or not to receive statements made by ministers, just according as the Bible does or does not substantiate them: “ but though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed”: Gal. 1. Although the unqualified condemnation of the Apostle is against those who preached error instead of truth, yet this is the true and the safe ground to take in reference to assertions such as we have been considering. When ministers put forth doctrines or devices of any kind which cannot be attested by the word of God, it gives us all full liberty to *regard them*, as we find them, *mortal men*—poor, weak, and

often deceived *men*. Who can calculate on the amount of error and perplexity, and even damage, which would accrue to the souls of inexperienced christians, if they were tempted to believe, that "there is no salvation out of the Church of England"! but, it might occur, that some of the individuals who *hear* of this newly discovered fact, have themselves received "*the truth in the love of it*"; either in the Wesleyan Church—or, it may be, in the Free Church of Scotland,—or, perhaps, in the Baptist Chapel! Therefore, we need have no apprehension on their account. Even should they hear some one assert, that their salvation would be null and void unless they believed in apostolical succession! for we read, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"! It is a very awful consideration to think of the real position and working of this subject,—it is right and useful to remember, that so long as any one holds "no salvation out of the Church of England," he is usurping God's prerogative, and pronouncing not only a temporal condemnation, but an *eternal judgment—everlasting destruction* on every immortal soul who does not worship with him in that Church! How deplorable it is to think of any one (but more especially those who have the care of souls) holding such views of a religion, which is, professedly, the religion of Jesus Christ, that the whole of their principles and feelings are involved *necessarily* in this peculiar *line* marked out by themselves; all others *who differ from them*, on

this ground, are met and regarded with silent suspicion, whether mere formalists or known followers of Christ ; all, but those who have the badge of the Church of England, are looked upon in the same light, and thus, there is manifested a sad destitution of any thing approaching christian fellowship, or *love*.

No doubt, every one taught by the spirit of God can discern that spirit and hold intercourse with it when he finds it in another—telling of that blessed oneness and communion of saints which is the only principle of true union to be found on earth. This principle badge, is the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and soon discovers itself, and joyfully acknowledges a brother or sister in the faith, whether in high or low life ; whether rich or poor ; whether a worshipper of their one Lord and Saviour in Church or Chapel ;—*their* union is begun in time to endure throughout eternity, when all others will have come to naught ! It is also to be deplored, that views should be held by any professing the religion of Christ, which could in any way underrate or undermine any of the true *children of light*, who visit and are gratefully received by the enquiring ignorant, for the express purpose of reading and explaining the word of God, so far as the spirit may have taught them, and who thus endeavour to obey the command of the Lord Jesus—“ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in

heaven": Mat. 5. Can those who hold that there is no salvation out of the Church of England, reconcile such an assertion with the undeniable fact, that as great a number of *spiritual* worshippers is to be found elsewhere as within her pale? if they can, they must be capable of believing any thing!

Akin to this dangerous error of apostolical succession is another, more fatal, perhaps, in its consequences; we mean Baptismal Regeneration held by all the advocates of the former delusion. If this doctrine be true, then all the inhabitants of christendom are regenerated or born of the spirit, and therefore, ought to shew, at least, some of the fruits of the spirit—"Love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, &c.": Gal. 5.,—but, do they manifest these fruits? Alas, no, but rather an abundance of the works of the flesh,—“Adultery, fornication, idolatry, hatred, variance, wrath, seditions, heresies, murders, drunkenness, &c.”: Gal. 5. And we know that there is no event more common than baptized persons (even those baptized in the Church alluded to) living all their days in nature's darkness, and dying ignorant of their lost and sinful condition! Of what advantage then, is this sort of regeneration, if it comprehends no more than that it is a matter of perfect indifference whether it takes place or not at Baptism? Of none; for it leaves man just as it found him! But the regeneration *necessary to salvation* has *from all eternity* for its commencement, and *to all eternity* for its duration!

“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them he also called : and whom He called, them He also justified : and whom He justified, them He also glorified ” : Rom. 8. “ For I am the Lord, I change not ; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed ” : Mal. 3. What a pitiable thing it is to see so many of the ignorant, particularly amongst the lower classes, instructed to believe, that Baptism is their salvation !

Is it possible that any true Minister of the Gospel can believe, or would like to believe, that all who boast of bearing that holy name are representatives of the Apostles’ doctrines and spirit ? Can they alike boast of possessing the Apostles’ grace and devotedness to Christ and the salvation of sinners ? Are all so holy in their life and conversation as to exhibit to their people the example of the Lord Jesus ? We fear, indeed, that many of their people are kept in such ignorance, for want of wholesome spiritual nourishment, as to be incapable of discerning darkness from light and error from truth ; and moreover, that they are led to suppose that it is very presumptuous for one of the laity, *especially a female*, to differ from, much less contradict any ordained minister in the Church of England. It matters not what he may preach ! he is to be listened to and believed and followed ! Now, this is quite monstrous ! To speak plainly,

we must look at the *man* altogether, apart from what he is ; what he believes ; or what he preaches ! and this is to save our souls ! One step more brings us to see, that it is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is not the Holy Spirit's teaching that sinners stand in need of, but the teaching of any *ordained* minister in the Church of England, which must of course be held sacred and received as undeniable truth !! " But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man—for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, *but by the revelation of Jesus Christ* " : Gal. 1. " When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His Grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen ; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Now, we would just ask one question : are all ministers in this Church called to the ministry according to the Apostle's estimate of what does and what does not qualify for it ? Have none " thrust themselves into " that sacred office ? Have none " crept in un-awares ? " If so, then these men are fit subjects, and well qualified, for any error, for we read— " The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned " : 1 Cor. 2.

We say nothing about the solemn and awfully accountable position of those who are not called *by the Holy Ghost* to the Ministry, but, let us judge for ourselves as to our own personal

accountability respecting them. There is much and manifest need for us to see that no undue importance be attached to the sanctity of the holy office to intimidate us ; that no such *unscriptural* deference or subjection (which blinds and then ruins) be given to those who occupy these holy offices as will beguile us for a moment into the belief that, however high and dignified both the office and the occupant may be, it cannot supersede the far weightier matter, even the salvation of our souls ! The one thing *needful* ! Remember, that although eternity will open our eyes to all the darkness and errors of the past ; *knowledge* of it then will bring no relief : neither will it mitigate our anguish to be in company with our unfaithful shepherds, who, together with the *fruit* of their doings—the *disciples of their ministry*—must endure for ever and ever the fulfilment of those divine judgments which have been predicted against their unfaithfulness. “ Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make my people err, the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark unto them ” : Micah 3. 5. “ The leaders of this people cause them to err, and they that are led by them are destroyed ” : Isaiah 8. 16. We have all the privilege of reading the word of God, and with the promise of the Holy Spirit’s interpretation, if we ask in Christ’s name ; with this privilege must come the accountability, and woe be to us if we neglect to compare what we hear with the word of God, and judge it thereby. “ These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in

that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so; therefore many of them believed": Acts 17.

The inspired word of God puts us on our guard, and provides for our instruction, lest we should all be ignorant of Satan's devices, and thus be led captive by him at his will—forgetting that "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some should depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils": 1 Tim. 4. The apostle also writes thus: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified. And that we may be delivered from unreasonable (or *absurd*) and wicked men: for all have not faith. But the Lord is faithful": 2 Thess. 3. There is much, very much, sin prevailing, and great darkness, and the gold is become dim; and what is to be done? Where can we look but "to the law and the testimony"? "Now, therefore, O, our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O, my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God": Dan. 9. Let us seek for that "godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto

salvation"—then, we shall find the power of God speaking to us in the fulness and love of His word. So merciful and so faithful is God in His dealings towards His own people, that when they seem determined to follow after idols, he speaks to them thus:—"Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies: I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord": Hos. 2.

In what way will such a knowledge of God affect us? In like manner as it did David, when in gratitude he exclaimed—"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord": Psal. 116.

"I long to be with Jesus,  
Meek, loving, lowly, mild;  
I long to be like Jesus—  
The Father's holy child.  
I long to be with Jesus,  
Amid the heavenly throng,  
To sing with saints His praises,  
To learn the angels' song."

Time is fast wearing away—our sun will soon be set—and nothing but Eternity will fill all things remaining! when “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he which is holy, let him be holy still”: Rev. 22. What preparation have we made to meet all that may be speedily advancing towards us? The “tribulation such as hath not been known”! The battle between truth and error! Are we not living on the eve of some mighty conflict? “Who is on the Lord’s side”—who? These are no days for hesitation—for halting between two opinions. “Little children,” “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” “What thou doest, do quickly.” Let not the bridegroom’s voice find you “slumbering and sleeping,” but be up and doing—with your lamp well trimmed and brightly burning, giving light to all that are in the house. “At *midnight (general darkness)* there was a cry made.” Forget not, that you are surrounded with the general darkness of unbelief and the power of Satan. Forget not that your Lord has made you responsible for His light as well as His life. Forget not to walk in that light—that, “when He shall appear, you may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming”: 1 John 2. O! let none within your circle ever lay to your charge that you did not use your christianity for their edification: you have but a short time left for the high privilege of making

known the truth of the Gospel by your life and conversation, in bold-opposition to that vast, that fearful multitude, who are "walking in the vanity of their minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart": Eph. 4. Think of the terrible end the multitude must inevitably come to! unless they be "born again." You see the shameless vanity and folly—the want of female modesty and propriety which meet you in all directions. You see and hear of their precious time being spent in idleness, foolish talking, and carnal amusements; "They have sown the wind, they shall reap the whirlwind": Hos. 8. You know the source of all this—the word of God tells you "that in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at any time they should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them": Mat. 13. Be not discouraged—be not weary in this well doing—for, although you are to them as a parable now, still "nothing is impossible with God," and the Lord, whose example you are to follow, knows you in a better and more encouraging way; for you can read in His word—"Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear": Mat. 13.

"And the spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely": Rev. 22.

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy": 1 Peter 4. "God is able to 'make all grace abound toward you,' even 'in troublesome times,' when 'nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom'; and they shall lay their hands on you and persecute you, and bring you before kings for my name's sake. It shall turn to you for a testimony—for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist—not a hair of your head shall perish": Luke 21.

"While men's hearts are failing them *for fear*"—"we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early": Psal. 46.

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth, there shall

no more come into thee the uncircumcised, and the unclean": Isa. 52.

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee": Isa. 60.

Young men and fathers, lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh. Rejoice that ye are not in darkness, lest that day should take you as a thief. Stand in Christ's stead, beseeching sinners to be reconciled unto God. Endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Let your light shine, so that men may take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus. The conflict will soon be ended—the battle will soon be won! The trials and sorrows of the church militant will soon be exchanged for the blessedness and glory of the church triumphant! "The time of your departure is at hand," and then, in the bright prospect of this victory you will be privileged with the Apostle to exclaim,— "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing": 2 Tim. 4.

*FINIS.*