

king"—of "an entrance to be administered abundantly unto the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,"—as objects to be desired, sought, and secured—in a word, as things promised.

These expressions, and very many others of kindred significance, are to be found richly studding every portion of the New Testament. If we seek earnestly to ascertain the import of these declarations concerning things which though not now seen by us, are yet eternal, we shall find that they are indeed great and precious promises. Each phrase, each word, when fully weighed will be found comprehending enough to enrich forever a whole race of intelligent beings.

We will pause but a moment or two upon this part of our subject to ask you to notice, as you may do from the passages just cited. 1st, That the position pointed to by our text is one which Christ of set design has been engaged in preparing for the objects of his most intense love. This, if we consider the overwhelming evidence which we have that His is Almighty Power—that He has the resources of Omnipotence at His command, and if we remember also the indubitable proofs which he gave of the overwhelming strength of his affection—His unconquerable love, even unto death, for those for whom he undertook to provide a place, to prepare a home, must present the position to our thought as one invested with every possible advantage. So prepared it must be, at least for members of the human race, beyond comparison the most privileged place in the universe. Think of Christ as described in God's Word—the Being "by whom all things were made"—"Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God"—"in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;" and can we think of the place prepared by Him for the objects of his peculiar regard as in any respect inferior to any one occupied by even the most exalted order of created Beings? But we notice, 2nd, That it is not only prepared by Christ, but that it is the one He himself occupies; He is to be in it; it is the position, the state of glory, to which He triumphantly ascending, "leading captivity captive," has returned from His state of deep but voluntary humiliation. It is not merely a place upon which Christ has with infinite skill and power lavished the resources of infinite wealth, but it is the place where He in His exaltation, power, glory, and overflowing love abides, gathering round Himself the saved, redeemed, sanctified, glorified family, to which it is his avowed purpose to sustain the relation of an elder Brother. Such, if we do not utterly err in our most careful reading of the inspired exposition of His plan of love, is the astonishing design of Christ in His great work of human redemption. So will He magnify His power, His wisdom, and His love, in the sight and estimation of all. Having first, by condescending to earth and to human nature, afforded occasion of profound astonishment to the spirit world, furnishing thereby a mystery, "God manifest in the flesh, into which the angels desired to look." He then, by "ascending on high far above all principalities and powers," and lifting up for eternal connection with Himself those who were utterly lost, will give occasion to let yet higher wonder rise. Look at the position in these two points of view, as prepared by a Being of transcendent power and of infinite love, tried even to death for the object of His intense sympathy and quenchless affection, and as held by that Being in His state of exaltation and glory; and does it not seem to tower highest even among the thrones and dominions of the heavenly places, which the Great Creator of all things has made?

We have not, and we need not, a minute description of the position,—the great essential facts are revealed, and this may suffice for our faith so to rest upon as to ensure to the heart "joy unspeakable and full of glory." We need not, should not, sorrow as those without hope, for our friends who, being

absent from us and the body, inherit the promises; for from these teachings of Revelation we are authorized to infer, concerning the position which they occupy,

1st, That it is one of glorious exaltation—one of perfect safety. There can be no danger there. How unlike the coveted stations of exaltation and honour in this world! These are for man always giddy and dangerous heights.

2nd, That it is free from everything which could in the slightest degree offend or distress. There can be nothing there to cause a moment's sadness, uneasiness, or anxiety. It is a blessed shelter, a quiet resting place for the weary spirits, where there is neither weakness nor weariness, where "sickness and sorrow, pain and death, are felt and feared no more." How unlike the positions we may occupy here, where the best and most highly favored must often groan, being burdened, tried, afflicted, tormented.

3rd, It must be a place of most honorable and ennobling associations. There will congregate the pure, the holy, the lovely, the good, drawn around Christ—the central point of an attraction which will ultimately irresistibly extend to all such everywhere throughout the dominions of God. It must be a place of pure enjoyment, extatic delight, unutterable happiness—"Fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore are there."

II. Our text leads us to consider how this position has been reached. It is far removed from the station which man as a fallen being naturally occupies. It has not been reached by those whom we are to follow without strenuous effort. They earnestly desired and diligently sought it. They obediently labored under Divine direction and with Divine assistance, "to be made meet for this inheritance of the saints in light." How was it that they succeeded? Our text declares through faith and patience.

1st, Through faith. This is opposed to mere sight or sense. Man has been created with the power of knowing through the senses of the body, and of being influenced and excited to action by knowledge so obtained. The things which are around him in this world address themselves to him thus, and tend to move him to action, and to determine and regulate his action. But he has been created with the capacity or power of faith also through which he may know the distant, the unseen, that which is not now subject to his own observation. The faculty of knowing through the observation of the senses is one which he possesses in common with the lower orders of animals around him, but that of receiving impressions from distant and unseen, but spiritual and eternal, realities is peculiar to man, and constitutes for him an ennobling prerogative.

Men differ very greatly in the strength of their mental powers, in the clearness of their intellectual perceptions, and in force of will, and consequently in energy of character, social position, and success in life; but by far the most important distinction which exists is that which arises from the surrender which is made by the different individuals to the one or the other of these kinds of knowledge, that which is obtained of the present, the temporal, the perishing, through the senses, and that which is obtained of the distant, the spiritual, the eternal, through this mighty faculty of man's spiritual nature. The former class is by far the larger; it includes all the mere men of the world "who mind earthly things." The things which are seen engross their thoughts, monopolize their affections, and furnish for them the only motives to action, and so by these comparatively insignificant objects they are influenced, controlled, enslaved,—their will is determined, their character moulded, their life regulated. But it was not so with those "who inherit the promises." They were distinguished not only from the lower order of animals, but also from the most of their