

THE GLORY IN THE CLOUD.

The cloud which conducted Israel through the wilderness was the servant and the companion of the camp. But it was the veil or the covering of the glory also. Commonly it appeared in the sight of Israel only as a cloud, and the glory was known only by faith to be within it. But still the glory was always there, and at times it shone forth.

Such was that beautiful mystery. It was occasionally a hidden, occasionally a manifested glory. It was the servant and the companion of the camp, but it was, so to speak, its God also.*

Now all this was Jesus, God manifest in flesh, God in the "form of a servant" commonly, occasionally shining forth in divine authority, and always entitled to the honour of the sanctuary of God.

* The glory in the cloud was that which dwelt between the cherubim in the holy of holies, the sanctuary or dwelling of Jehovah. The glory which served the camp under a veil was that which, without robbery, assumed all the divine honours of the temple.

Let us look at instances of this shining forth.

Israel had to be defended. The cloud changes its place and comes between the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and then the glory looks through it and troubles the host of the Egyptians, so that they come not nigh Israel all the night, and this was doing for the camp the service of God.

Just so, Jesus. On a kindred occasion Jesus acts exactly as the cloud and the glory on the banks of the Red Sea. He comes between the disciples and their pursuers. "If ye seek me, let these go their way." He defends them; and then, as of old in the borders of Egypt, He looks through the veil and troubles the enemy again; and all this with the same ease, the same authority, as in the day of Pharaoh. He did but, as it were, look out again. He did but shew Himself again. (See Exodus xiv. 24, and John xviii. 6.) Can we refuse to see the God of Israel in Jesus? "Worship Him, all ye gods!" He is the God of Psaim xcvi. 7, and yet Jesus (Heb. i. 6). The Egyptian gods worshipped Him at the Red Sea, and the Roman gods in the garden of Gethsemane. And when brought again as the First-begotten into the world, it shall be said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

But further, Israel had to be rebuked as well as defended, to be disciplined as well as saved. The same glory hid within the cloud will do this divine work as well as the other.

In the day of the manna, in the day of the spies,

in the matter of Korah, and at the water of Meribah (Exodus xvi.; Numbers xiv.; xvi.; xx.), Israel provokes the holiness of the Lord, and as often the Lord resents it. The glory is seen in the cloud, expressing this resentment, a witness against the camp.

Just so Jesus in His day. When grieved at their unbelief or hardness of heart, He asserts His glory, His divine person and power in the midst of the disciples, and is thus, as of old in the wilderness, rebuking their way (Mark iv., 37-41; v. 39-43; vi. 36-51; John xiv. 8-11).

Surely, here again was the mystery of the glory in the cloud realized in Jesus, God manifest in flesh. That cloud veiled the glory, and was at once the servant and the God of Israel. The cloud was the ordinary thing; the glory was occasionally manifested, but it was always there, and in the temple. And is not Jesus in all this?

But I would look a little more particularly at one instance of Jesus as the hidden glory, alluded to above, that in John xiv. In the parting scene on the shore at Miletus, we see the dear apostle full of affection towards the saints, and also strong in the consciousness of integrity (Acts xx.). But there is no glory shining out there. Paul was a servant and a brother. He was a vessel in God's house. Others had been blessed through him: but he was, all the while, a companion, a brother, a fellow-servant, a minister, and apostle, and such only. No veil is to be rent to let him appear other

than he is seen to be. There was no hidden glory in him, nothing to be manifested personally which had not been manifested.

But there is another parting scene where we get this. I mean that which is presented to us in John xiii.-xvii. We find there the tokens of the most devoted affection, as we may get in Paul on the shore at Miletus. Jesus girds Himself with a towel, pours water into a basin, and washes His disciples' feet. But with all this, mark the sense of His authority and of Himself, of His office and of His person, which fills His soul. He knows Himself to be the "Lord and Master," though washing their feet, and "that He was come from God and went to God" (John xiii.). Here is glory in the cloud again. He is the servant of the camp again, but when Israel's ways or words challenge or demand it, Israel shall again, for their rebuking, look to the wilderness again (Exodus xvi. 10), and see the glory in the cloud. And so, quickly afterwards (John xiv. 1-3), the same Jesus would render them other service. He would prepare mansions for them in heaven, as well as wash their feet while on earth. He would also return to take them home. But if the disciples, like the camp of old, be unbelieving, the glory shall shine through the cloud for their confounding, and Jesus will say, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip; he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"

Thus Jesus is the clouded glory. And very grateful all this truth is to those who trace, and delight to trace, that glory in its full brightness because of the thickness of the veil under which, in measureless grace, He hid it. He was the servant and the companion of the camp still, on whatever stage of the journey they were. Here was love—the patient, serving love known of old to Israel in the desert. But it is the love of the glory. That is the joy, had we but hearts to take it in. Paul's was love, patient, serving love. But it was the love of a brother, of a fellow-servant, of a man of "like passions," the service of a Moses. Jesus' was the love of the glory.

The glory in the cloud was the God of Israel (Ezek. xliii. 4; xliv. 2). The God of Israel was Jesus of Nazareth (Isaiah vi. 1-10; John xii. 41). The Nazarene was as the cloud which veiled a light, which, in its proper fulness, no man can approach unto, though discovered by faith.

Here let me add that it is the business of faith (through the indwelling Spirit) to discover the hidden true glory, and to refuse the displayed false glory. How quickly Abraham discovered it! (Gen. xviii. 3.) How beautifully Abigail owned it in David, type of Christ! (1 Samuel xxv.) How did the wise men discover it in a manger, after they had passed by all the false displayed glory of the world round Herod in Jerusalem? (Matt. ii.) And how did Simeon discover it in the Child, the same Child in the temple, and passed by all the

religion, glory, and array which was then filling that very same spot? (Luke ii.) Faith was doing this, discovering hidden glory, all through the life of Jesus. Under the despised form of the Galilean, at one time, the Son of God was owned; at another, the Jehovah of Israel; at another, the Creator of the world; at another, the Son of David or the King of Israel. All these were different glories of the Same Person hid under the same veil.

How precious to Christ was that faith which rent the veil! The wise men, Simeon, Anna, rent the veil of infancy, the dying thief rent the veil of the cross. And see Mark x. The Lord was speaking of His deepest humiliation (ver. 34), but at that very moment the sons of Zebedee speak of His kingdom and desire it. The multitude speak of "Jesus of Nazareth" (ver. 47), but the blind beggar at that very moment speaks of "the Son of David" and prays to Him for help.

How precious is sweet faith as this! And I ask myself, am I rending veils in like power of faith? Do I see glory in the Church still? not doctrinally merely in the person of Christ, but really and livingly in the persons of His people? If I am delighting in, and honouring, a member of Christ under the veil of worldly degradation, such as men would neglect and despise, I am doing this ancient beautiful work of faith, rending veils.

**THE PLACE OF FAITH, THE WORK OF FAITH,
AND THE PRESENT REWARD
OF FAITH.**

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(HEBREWS VI.)
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As we have no place on earth, but are called out of it, our place now must necessarily be only known to faith and held by faith ; and if I am not in faith, I must lose sight of my place. The word of God gives gives me my *place*, declares it to me, and it is by faith that I abide in it. If I am "going on to perfection," I am discerning things good and evil : the favours of God have not been in vain to me. I am not like the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, only to bring forth thorns and briers. I hold by faith the place which God has given me, and I abide therein, occupied with the interests of God and not my own. If I am in a place of faith, I must be dependent on God, and therefore taking thought for myself is a divergence from the place of faith.

Now if I am not in the *place* of faith, I cannot properly engage in the *works* of faith. If I depart from the place to which alone I am called, it is plain that I cannot do the things suitable or incumbent on me in that place ; but, on the contrary, every attempt that I make at them must tend to damage and hinder others. Abram was called

to a place in Canaan, by faith simply depending on God for it ; therefore he could not choose any place for himself. Lot chose one and dropped out of the place of faith ; therefore he could not serve others. If he attempted to do so, it would be but to lead them in the same downward road with himself. The works of faith did not belong to the place which he had chosen. Abram abides in the place of faith and is secure from the troubles in which Lot is involved, which is ever true even now. It may be said that a faithful Christian does not escape from the effects of tumults in the world. True, he does not escape as to *temporal* things ; but if he be by faith in heaven in Christ, he does in the spirit of his mind escape from the effects of tumults down here. Like Abram I am to have faith and patience. To abide in heaven in Christ is my place. My faith is exercised here, and the suffering here may be prolonged and continued ; but I abide there, and while abiding I engage myself with everything connected with God, and with reference to the place He has set me in. In that region where He has set me, and where He alone can keep me, and where I am simply dependent on Him, it is His interests alone which engage me, and thus it is that I ministered to the saints and do minister. I do the things which accompany salvation, I am engaged with works connected with the place of faith. Thus did Abram. He gathers together all his resources, and, at his own risk, by night uses and exerts them to deliver his

brother Lot. God's love is towards men, and as I am in the power of it, I must act according to the power of it, and in the *direction* in which it works. If I am in the place of faith, God's interest must occupy me, for if I serve Christ, I follow Him, and when I follow Him, I am serving best. Serve Him I *cannot*, unless I am in the place of faith ; and if I am there, I am, though "enduring afflictions," occupied with His interests according to His own mind. Peter, like Lot, diverged from this place when he said, "I go a fishing." And seven went. Instead of serving, he was then hindering and damaging others. Thus did Moses at first, and thus did Saul. They failed to help when they themselves were off the ground of faith. How could they lead others right when wrong themselves? If Lot wants well-watered plains, surely he is off the ground of faith, and he is found helpless among the unrighteous. If Peter is restless, he is off faith—goes a fishing, and has company enough ; but anything but blessings follows them. If Saul wants distinction, he is off faith and is rash and extreme in everything. Abraham abides in faith and patience. Paul abides in faith and patience, and they serve truly and well to the end.

And not only so, but their own souls know it. And this is the present *reward of faith*. Abram is refreshed and blessed by Melchisedec. Paul knows himself to be "possessed of all things." What a reward for the work of faith ! What *wages*, if we may so say ! It is the "fulness of joy," which the

Lord pronounces to be the portion of the one who keeps His commandments and abides in His love. (John xv.) Serving Christ, the soul is cheered and refreshed on the way. How much greater is the cheer that Christ pours into the heart of the true servant than Melchisedec could to Abram! Thus the true servant is not depressed and complaining, or comparing present things with the past; dissatisfied and discontented, retiring into corners to unburden his murmurings; but, on the contrary, he is so truly from the *place* of faith doing the *works* of faith, according as the interests of Christ are presented to him, that he knows in his own soul the *reward* of faith. He has his wages—fulness of joy—Christ unfolding Himself to him in blessed nearness, and he knowing the fellowship of the Holy Ghost; and what the kingdom of God is—even “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. xiv. 17).

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“OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN.”

PHIL. III. 20.

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We were nearing the end of what had been a very fatiguing journey of over twenty miles, from G—— to A——, upon a keen frosty morning, with the thermometer ranging about 25 below zero. Already one or more of our little party had in a measure succumbed to the influences of the weather, and as we urged our horses on through the village of A——, beyond which there remained

some little distance still to traverse of a road that by no means improved as we proceeded, every one of us was already anticipating the moment when, beyond the piercing cold, the snow drifts, and all the other surroundings incidental to our onward way, we would alight at our destination, where a hearty welcome was awaiting us from dear ones who, knowing we were on the way, had been thinking of us and on the look-out for us from the early morning. There was an unusual stir in the village of A—, and, as we *passed through it, for our goal lay beyond*, we were greeted with the cry, "Your vote and influence!"—the one who thus hailed us judging that we were upon the same bent as himself, that being the day of their municipal election. The answer came simply enough in a shake of the head and pointing forward as those who had their destination beyond, who could take no part in the affairs of the village, simply for the reason that we did not belong to it. We had no rights of citizenship to maintain in it, all our business being in diligent haste to press on until the journey was over—nothing congenial in our surroundings by the way—nothing to tempt any one of us to settle down short of our destination.

Even so, child of God, learn: that party cries raised, however loudly, have no meaning for thine ear as thou *passest through, a stranger, a pilgrim* (in this world), because *a citizen of Heaven*. Let nothing tempt *thee* to alight short of the goal, but, "one thing" characterizing thee—"forget-

ting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before"—do thou "press toward the mark" (or goal) "for the prize of the *calling on high* of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. iii. 13-14.



A VOICE OF WARNING FOR THE PRESENT DAY.

(READ 2 CHRONICLES XVIII.)

In the declining days of the house of David, as we see in 2 Chron., the Spirit of God occasionally visits. The Lord sends His prophets, "rising up early and sending them;" and those prophets warned, and threatened, and counselled, "till there was no remedy," and Judah went into captivity.

The like thing, to a certain measure, is seen in the history of the Ten Tribes, or in the kingdom of Israel, as the two Books of Kings shew us. Prophets warned the people again and again, till Israel was carried into Assyria.

But these visits or energies of the Spirit in Israel distinguished themselves, I judge, from what they were in Judah. They never, I believe it will be found, brought comfort or encouragement. For Israel, at the very outset, revolted from God as well as from David—and what the house of Jeroboam began, every other house that reigned in Israel, whether of Baasha, Omri or Jehu, continued. And the Spirit seems always to act as a

stranger, when acting in Israel. Thus, at the very beginning, the man of God, sent against the altar at Bethel, was commanded not to eat or drink, or to tarry, or even to return by the way that he went. And much in the same way was the young man, who was sent to anoint Jehu, instructed to carry himself. And Elijah and Elisha, raised up by the Spirit in the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, appear as strangers there, all through their ministries. Their walk is desultory and informal. They own no house of God in the land—and each of them furnishes the Lord Jesus, in His teaching, in Luke iv., with instances of God going outside the bounds of His earthly people. I mean when He alludes, as He does there, to the widow of Sarepta, and to Naaman, the Syrian.

In Judah, on the contrary, the Spirit was *at home*, and had *various* work to do. To the end of the declining days of Judah the Lord recognizes His house among them (see 2 Chron. xxxvi). And though His voice in His prophets be generally that of warning and rebuke, yet still, at times, He counsels, and comforts, and encourages.

Thus, Rehoboam is warned not to go against the revolted tribes, with the hope of bringing them back, because that revolt had been God's judgment on the house of David. This warning was, therefore, gracious counsel.

In the times of Jehoshaphat and Amaziah, the Spirit, in different prophets, warned the kings of the house of Judah, to keep themselves from all

alliance with the house of Israel. This was gracious.

Asa and Hezekiah, and the days of Joash, in the person of Jehoida, witness how mightly and blessedly the Spirit could help Judah at times.

And there is a peculiar form and acting of the grace of God, by His Spirit, in the days of Josiah. The Book of God is found ; and then the Spirit in Hulda's, the prophetess, interprets present things in the light of the Book.

Now, all this various energy of the Spirit of God in the declining days of the kingdom of Judah, has a voice in our ears in this our day. But among all these instances of the acting and energy of the Spirit then, our chapter (2 Chron. xviii.) affords us one of the most solemn and affecting.

The whole scene is very weighty and serious. The two spirits are there, the unclean spirit, and the Spirit of God, the spirit *from* the Lord, and the Spirit *of* the Lord.

The world, or the apostate, is there, in the person of Ahab.

The involved, defiled saint is there also, in the person of Jehoshaphat.

The separated man, the witness of Christ, is seen in Micaiah.

And, beside, we get the various fate, so to speak, or the history of the different actors, in this solemn scene ; at the end of it all, the king of Judah and the king of Israel.

The spirit of delusion, the unclean spirit, is

here, doing the work of dementation in the apostate Ahab, ere his destruction comes—for his measure of iniquity was now full. But the Spirit of God is here also, in the prophet Micaiah, faithful, and, therefore, *grieved* and *suffering*—grieved, doubtless, by the evil, impure connection between the saints and the world, which that moment exhibited—Jehoshaphat sitting with Ahab; suffering even to bonds and imprisonment as from the world by the hand of Ahab.

Striking, indeed, are the energies which are seen at work here. The spirit of error encourages the king of Israel to go on with all his projects; for he promises him that there is only victory and prosperity before him. Zedekiah, one of the false prophets, goes so far as to make horns of iron, symbols of the strength, with which Ahab was to push his enemies, till he had destroyed them. Zedekiah did not take into account the moral condition of things at that moment with Ahab and his kingdom. This was nothing to him. It can be nothing to a false prophet. But Zedekiah says all he can, and does all he can to urge Ahab on his way, and carry out all the purposes and expectations of his heart, assuring him of all the honour and wealth that would attend him.

And surely, I may say, we see much of this same thing nowadays. The moral state of the world, its character under God's eye, is not appreciated. It encourages itself to go forward. "Progress" is the writing on its standard now. "Excelsior" is

its motto ; higher and higher still in the attempts and attainments of human skill and capability. A rejected Lord is overlooked or forgotten. The blood of Jesus may have once stained the earth, but the earth is still fruitful. Man has departed from God, but he has skill and resources to build a city and a tower. If ever there was a time when man was encouraged to go on, it is the present. Character or condition before God is not estimated. These are days when many a Zedekiah is making horns of iron ; many a deceived heart, and practised hand is prophesying and sketching the world's sure progress.

And much of the religion of the day speaks flattering words in the ear of the world, as to all this its purpose and its expectation, not knowing its character before God. But in Micaiah, the true language is heard—vessel of the Spirit of God as he was.

He lets the king of Israel know that Ramoth-Gilead shall witness his fall, and the scattering of that flock which he, as a shepherd in Israel, was now gathering there. He speaks not of progress and of triumph, but of judgment.

Surely this is a word for us. Christendom presents all this. This chapter is a fruitful witness of what is now around us in larger characters. A grieved, and, in some places, a suffering, faithful election—saints defiled by evil alliances—the world in its hopes and projects of growing importance—and an unclean, false spirit encouraging the world,

thoroughly careless or indifferent as to its character before God. Can we not read these things in this chapter, and can we not as clearly read them in the day through which we are passing?

And, let me observe, there is something of all this to be seen in Luke xix.

The multitude are watching the Lord on His way to Jerusalem; and they think that the kingdom of God is *immediately* to appear. They judge that nothing is needed but a little "progress." The Lord was on His way to the royal city; and He had but to reach it, as they seemed to have imagined, and the glory would be there, and the day of the power of the kingdom. They did not weigh present things in Israel in God's balances—they did not appreciate them in their relationship to Him, which is the real character of every thing.

The parable of the nobleman who went into the far country is there delivered by the Lord, to correct this thought of the multitude—and after a little while He makes His formal entry into the city, but only to expose such a condition of things there, such a *moral* condition, as would surely hinder God from displaying His glory there; and Jesus, therefore, instead of letting the kingdom immediately appear, retires in judgment. For the glory must have a clean vessel.

This is full meaning—and like our chapter, has a voice for this our day. For, if there be a warning needed by the present generation in Christdom, it is this—that things must be estimated in God's

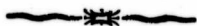
light, in the face of the great wide-world fact, that Jesus, God's Christ, has been rejected here. No other estimation is divine. But this generation are not carrying that secret with them—as the multitude, in Luke xix., did not consider the moral condition of Jerusalem then, but looked for an immediate kingdom ; and, as the prophets in Israel made promise to the king in Israel, of progress, and prosperity, and triumph, in spite of all the apostate condition of things then in Israel.

Let the saints of God remember, again, I would say, that the glory must have a clean vessel. The Spirit of burning and of judgment must do its work in the cloud by day, ere the shining of the flaming fire by night, can rest on the dwellings and assemblies of Zion, as says the prophet (Isaiah iv. 4-5). The angels of the Son of Man must take out of His kingdom all that offend and do iniquity, ere the righteous can shine forth in the kingdom, as the Lord of the prophets Himself says (Matt. xiii. 41-43).

And surely do the ministers of judgment find out the subject for judgment. At the end, Jehoshaphat is preserved, and Ahab falls—though all was tending to the contrary. Ahab had sheltered himself ; and the word of the king of Syria had marked such a one as Jehoshaphat appeared to be, for the sword. But God was Judge. The issue of the day was in His hand ; and the *eagles* that He sends out know whose the *carcass* is (Luke xvii. 20-37). "Where, Lord?" asked the wondering disciples.

"Wheresoever the body is," said their Master, "thither will the eagles be gathered together." Again, I say, the ministers of judgment find out the subject for judgment. The Judge of all the earth will do right. The arrow of the Almighty will surely reach its mark as it does here, and Ahab, the apostate, the representative of the revolted world, falls.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!"



MARK OF A FAITHFUL SERVANT.

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."—2 Cor. iv. 5.

The following incident recorded of Judson on the occasion of his return to his native land in broken health, after an absence of thirty years, aptly illustrates the above scripture. It affords also an affecting proof of devotedness to the interests of Christ, and is very precious in days like these, when many—who take the place of being servants of Christ—so frequently use similar occasions for the exaltation of man, if not for the display and gratification of self in a greater or less degree :

"Announced to address an assembly in a provincial town, and a vast concourse having gathered from great distances to hear him, he rose at the

close of the usual service ; and, as all eyes were fixed and every ear attent, he spoke for about fifteen minutes, with much pathos, of the 'precious Saviour,' of what He had done for us, and of what we owed to Him ; and he sat down, visibly affected. 'The people are very much disappointed,' said a friend to him on their way home ; 'they wonder you did not talk of *something else*.' 'Why what did they want ?' he replied : 'I presented to the best of my ability, the most interesting subject in the world.' 'But they wanted something different—a story.' 'Well, I am sure I gave them a story—the most thrilling one that can be conceived of.' 'But they had heard it before. They wanted something new of a man who had just come from the antipodes.' 'Then, I am glad they have it to say, that a man coming from the antipodes had nothing better to tell than the wondrous story of the dying love of Jesus. My business is to preach the gospel of Christ ; and when I can speak at all, I dare not trifle with my commission. When I looked upon those people to-day, and remembering where I should next meet them, how could I stand up and furnish food to vain curiosity—tickle their fancy with amusing stories, however decently strung together on a thread of religion ? That is not what Christ meant by preaching the gospel. And then how could I hereafter meet the fearful charge—I gave you one opportunity to tell them of ME ; you spent it in describing your own adventures !' "