

"THE GLORY OF THAT LIGHT."

ACTS XXII. 11.

I was journeying in the noontide,
When His light shone o'er my road—
And I saw Him in that glory—
Saw Him—Jesus, Son of God,
All around, in noonday splendour,
Earthly scenes lay fair and bright—
But my eyes no longer see them
For the glory of that light.

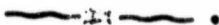
Others, in the summer sunshine,
Wearily may journey on—
I have seen a light from heaven,
Past the brightness of the sun ;
Light that knows no cloud, no waning,
Light wherein I see His face—
All His love's unclouded treasures,
All the riches of His grace.

All the wonders of His glory,
Deeper wonders of His love ;
How for me, He won, He keepeth,
That high place in heaven above.
Not a glimpse—the veil uplifted—
But within the veil to dwell,
Gazing on His face for ever,
Hearing words unspeakable.

Marvel not that Christ in glory
All my inmost heart hath won ;
Not a star to cheer my darkness,
But a light beyond the sun,
All below lies dark and shadow'd,
Nothing there to claim my heart,
Save the lonely track of sorrow,
Where of old He walk'd apart,

I have seen the face of Jesus—
 Tell me not of aught beside ;
 I have heard the voice of Jesus—
 All my soul is satisfied.
 In the radiance of the glory,
 First I saw His blessed face,
 And for ever shall that glory
 Be my home, my dwelling-place.

Sinners, it was not to angels
 All his wondrous love was given,
 But to one who scorn'd, despis'd Him,
 Scorn'd and hated Christ in heaven.
 From the lowest depths of evil,
 To the throne in heaven above,
 Thus in me He told the measure
 Of His free, unbounded love.



BRIEF THOUGHTS ON 2nd CORINTHIANS, III.

This chapter brings out the way in which the power of the truth works on our souls, to bring us into the presence of the Lord. It begins with the effect of this in testimony to others ; and then lets us know *how* the effect is produced—what a Christian, and so what the Church, really is.

The Corinthians had been calling in question the apostolic authority of Paul. How does he meet this ? He appeals to themselves, to their own calling of God, when they were turned to Him from idols, “as the *seal* of his apostleship.” It is as though he said, “If Christ has not spoken by me, how is it that you are Christians?”

So chapter xiii. 3-5 is not at all a precept to doubt, to examine and call in question their own Christianity. The apostle is shewing the absurdity of their doubt of him. "If you want to examine me, examine yourselves: you commend my ministry, because you commend Christ."

Then he goes on to tell us what a Christian is. He is a representative of Christ, just as much as the tables of stone were the representation of the law. Only in that case the writing being with the Spirit of the living God, not with ink, Christ is engraven on the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, and they—known and read of all men. The world ought to see Christ engraved on the heart of a Christian, just as much as Israel could see the letter of the law on the tables.

It is written on the "tables of the heart," by the "Spirit of the living God." Thus merely outward conduct (though there must be that for the world to see) will not do, but Christ *within*, as the motive and end of all we do.

There is a certain external respect for right and wrong as the result of the Bible and professed Christianity in these countries, which we do not find among the heathen. But a man may be following lawful pursuits, and be all that is correct outwardly and moral, yet if Christ is not the motive, it is all good for nothing. God did not send His Son into the world to bring in a negative Christianity. There must be that result which is worthy of the work. It must be evident through

the power of the Holy Ghost. There will be failure, for we are poor, feeble creatures; but the world will see where we are going, by the road we are taking. A man may get on slowly or stumble, but it is evident what road he is going.

We have to look to ourselves and see how far we are devotedly following Christ, with full purpose of heart—how far we can say, "This one thing I do;" but we must take care at the same time not to get into legal bondage by this standard. If I say, "Here is a rule of conduct: follow it," this cannot reach the heart, the affections. The ministration of the letter brings only failure, condemnation and death; for it prescribes a rule which man, being a sinner, can never follow. It does not *change* man, but it puts him under death; it proves him "ungodly and without strength."

We may turn even Christ into that letter of condemnation; we may take His life, for instance, and make it our law. Nay, we may turn even the love of Christ into our law, we may say, "He has loved me, and done all this for me—I ought to love Him, and do so much for Him, in return for this love, etc., and thus turning His love into a rule of life, it becomes the ministration of death—for the only thing a rule can do is to condemn. With the children of Israel, Moses put a veil upon his face, for they could not bear the sight of the glory—it condemned them. Man tries either to hide his condemnation from God, or his conscience

from His condemnation. He excludes himself from God—from the glory of His holiness and from His glory as seen in Jesus; and when His glory shall be revealed in the end, it will only bring out condemnation more fully.

In contrast with this ministration of death and condemnation, we see the ministration of the Spirit and of righteousness. Now, have we this? It is not Christ down here. The Holy Ghost here supposes Christ to be gone; and now it is the power of the Spirit of God revealing the glory of Christ to the soul. What has the Holy Ghost to tell us of Christ? He reveals Him not only as the pattern of godliness, but as always manifesting grace. The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of vile, miserable sinners; and Christ says, "him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

The whole life of Jesus was a manifestation of grace: He laid Himself aside for others. He gave Himself to all who came to Him. He "had no time so much as to eat;" in the midst of a world of wickedness, He was the perfect manifestation of the goodness of God. And this was not all. He died for sin, put Himself under the whole power of God's wrath for sin—He was laid in the grave—He ascended into heaven; and sent down the Holy Ghost as a witness to His glory, and as the minister of righteousness. So it is now God ministering, not requiring.

If I am brought to look to Jesus, I can say, He bore my sins—I did them, but he bore them—He gave His soul an offering for my sins; He has taken the whole charge of my sin. I trace my sins up to the cross, and there I have done with them. They are all gone,

Where, then, do I see the glory? Is it on Sinai; or in the face of Jesus Christ who has put away all those sins which were revealed and condemned at Sinai? He has entered into heaven, because they are put away. In Philippians ii. we see Christ in heaven, not only in virtue of the glory of His person, but because of the work He has accomplished. "Wherefore also God hath highly exalted Him," etc.

We are thus able not only to bear the sight of that glory of God, but to rejoice in it. Our souls rest in it. We do not ask to have it veiled, but that we may see every ray of it. Our hearts can satiate themselves there, because it is the testimony to the love of God, and the perfect putting away of sin.

There is also the ministration of righteousness. "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech." It is not a little hope here and a little despair there, but it is a message of perfect righteousness to the vilest. "By the obedience of One many made righteous." Now, it is God putting in fruit, and not requiring righteousness.

What is the practical effect of this work of Christ received in the heart? Not to make a man

careless about sin. Not to give him liberty to sin because Christ has borne the wrath due to it. The last verse shews how we are made this living epistle. Contemplating Christ we become like Him. If the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shews them to me, I can say, "What a Christ I have!" and there is the spirit of holiness at once. I long for Christ, and look at Christ, and thus I get like Him. The very thing which brings an accomplished righteousness to my conscience makes me like Him. Then, mark, there is no veil on the heart or on the glory. The Holy Ghost dwelling in us has taken it away. And it is said of Israel, "When they shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." When Moses went into the Lord, he always took off the veil; but the children of Israel could not bear the sight of the glory: so he put it on when he appeared to them.

For believers, there is no veil anywhere. They can look at the glory because it tells of salvation, not of judgment—accomplished salvation and effectual righteousness. What perfect liberty to be in the presence of God and enjoy Christ in all His fulness! (Ver. 17.) "The Lord is that spirit" (i. e., the mind of the Spirit in all these Old Testament things).

Then what is the consequence of this ministration of the Spirit? What follows my knowing that I am the righteousness of God in Christ? That God delights in me? I have a constraint

upon my heart to serve Him and follow Him. If I think of His love, have I any fear? I fail constantly: has God any afterthought about me, or about my sins? There is no uncertainty: nothing is between me and God but the love which has placed me there; without spot and in perfect freedom, for He has given Christ for me. It is now, not God requiring anything from me, but God giving things to me; and this that His Son may be glorified in me: not that *man* may be glorified, but His Son Jesus glorified. God is making a marriage for His Son. We have to be the epistle of Christ. We have this privilege—to glorify and manifest Christ. We should be delighted to be this epistle, cost what it may. Christ died for me, and I have to represent Him. Of course I shall fail, often and again; but the heart at liberty before God will run in the way of His commandments; and this because the affections are set upon God and the glory of Christ. My life, my daily path, must be an answer to the love of God. I am a debtor to Christ, for He loved me and gave Himself for me. What an amazing privilege to be permitted to glorify Him in any little way in our path down here!



There is no blindness like that which results from resisting the light, and, in presence of the light, not renouncing one's own will.

THE TIMES OF JEREMIAH.

The ministration of the prophets, in the varied exigencies of Israel, unfolds the grace and forbearance of the living God. The periods at which God raised them up, and the consequent character of their service, make the history of each very interesting; but of all the times during which the prophets prophesied, none are more painfully so than those of Jeremiah. It is not in the amount of good done that Jeremiah stands before us as pre-eminent; on the contrary, results of labour are nowhere found so small, perhaps, as from the labours of that prophet. The ministry of Moses was one that told wonderfully on the condition of God's people. He found them under the galling yoke of Pharaoh—he left them within sight of the promised land. Joshua left them in possession. The history of the varied deliverers before the days of Samuel, gives us an account of victories obtained. Each one left some footmarks in the track, to say that he had passed that way. So, afterwards, with the prophets. Elijah's and Elisha's days were marked times of God's goodness to an unfaithful people; but if we ask what were the results of Jeremiah's prophecies, we see nothing but desolation and ruin, and, by and bye, lose him himself in the great confusion. At the same time, we see incessant service, unwearied faithfulness, so long as there remained a part of the wreck to be faithful to. Others who had gone

before, had foretold what the disobedient and rebellious ways of Israel would lead them to, but it was the lot of Jeremiah to be on the ship when it went to pieces. He warned and warned again of the rocks that were ahead; but Israel heeded not. Up to the last moment, he was used of God to press home on their consciences their sad condition—but without avail; and even after the captivity, he remained to guide the wayward remnant of those left in the land, but only to experience the same obstinacy and determination to be ruined on their part.

The word of the Lord came to him in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign. Now this was a period of blessing—of revival. It was in the eighteenth year that the Passover was kept, of which it was said: "And there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel, from the days of Samuel the prophet." Jeremiah would have his share in that joy. I have often thought how much depends on the start of a Christian; how easily the heart sympathizes with what is around, whether baneful or healthful. To have the lot in early life cast among the fresh provisions of God's house, and mid the energies of His own Spirit, will give advantages to such a soul which are not the common lot of the church of God. Such were Jeremiah's first days, the days of Josiah—he was cradled in blessing—such, too, as had not been tasted in Israel, since the days of Samuel. He lamented the death of Josiah. These joys so fresh

were of short duration. But there is an intimate connection between the joys of communion and faithful warfare. There will be little of the one without the other. Jeremiah had drunk of the sweet draughts of blessing which had been so richly provided, and he was therefore able to feel the bitterness of the cup which Israel had to drink. The last chapter of 2nd Chronicles, shews how prominent as a prophet he was. His words were despised, and the result, the casting off for a season of God's people. One of the services of Jeremiah during this period, was to break the fall (if I may so express my thoughts) of Israel. Careful reading will show how tenderly the prophet applied himself to the then existing wants of the people; and it is wonderful to see the compassion of God, as exhibited by him. Jonah regretted that God's judgment did not fall upon Nineveh—but the solitudes of Jeremiah were those of the tender parent, who would fain prevent the calamity befalling a disobedient child, but failing there, carries still the parent's heart, parent's tears, to soften the rebellious woes of that child. How often do we, in our intercourse with our brethren, act otherwise. If I see willfulness and disobedience, I warn; I tell the consequences it may be; I press home with diligence those warnings; all are unheeded, the calamity comes, bad or worse, than I foretold; how ready is the heart then to triumph in its own faithfulness, and the poor victim of his own rashness is left to himself, while in a kind of

triumph, I tell him, "'tis all deserved." The heart of Jeremiah could say: "But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eyes shall weep sore and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive." Such hearts, such ministry are needed now.

It is in the book of this prophet, that we have the history of that part of Israel which was not removed out of the land. Jeremiah's service did not close even when the city was taken, and the wall broken down. The heart that—like this prophet's—is true to God and His people, will always have something to do. The special place he held was to seek to draw the people into repentance, to warn; he was unheeded, and the judgments of God reached home. No sooner had the captives been borne away, than quite another field of duty arose before him; and one would have supposed that what had just happened would have made him a welcome guest in the house of the poor deserted Israelites. In chapter xlii. we see this new labour that Jeremiah found. The destroying flood had swept away all he had formerly been among, the kings, the priests, the princes, the temple, the vessels; the glory of Israel had departed. How often have we seen, that when services have been apparently disowned, the servant retires. When we have been labouring for an object, we find suddenly all dashed from our hands, like a goodly vessel, before the world

and to ourselves ; our labour is in vain, and the heart faints and grows weary. Never was a more complete failure than that that was before the eye of the prophet. His heart alone remained whole amidst it all ; he was ready for fresh service. The remnant muster to him ; their confession seems honest, their hearts seem true. "Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the Lord thy God, even for all this remnant (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us) ; that the Lord thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do." (Chap. xlii. 2, 3.) Jeremiah had had experience of the human heart ; ready to act as aforetime, he says, "Whatsoever thing the Lord will answer you, I will declare it unto you." After ten days the answer was given to the same company (verse 9, to the end of the chapter). The leaning of the hearts of the people was towards Egypt. There is something in Egypt, with all its bondage, that the heart naturally clings to. The remnant, wearied with the struggles they had passed through, sought for rest to the flesh. "Would God we had died in Egypt !" every now and then oozes from the hearts of Israel. There is something in Egypt to attract all our hearts, something that flesh values ; and no wonder, when we can say, "No ; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread."

This repose of death the Lord keep us from ! The disappointed heart is in danger of turning back here. When the people came to Jeremiah, their words were, "That the Lord thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing we may do." God had provision for this time of need. There never was a time when the Lord would not bless them that trust in Him—there was never a place, however desolate or forlorn, where God could not meet His afflicted ones. His word was, "If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up ; for I repent me of the evil I have done unto you. Be not afraid of the king of Babylon," etc. "And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land."

The prophet's words are despised ; and notwithstanding the threats if they returned to Egypt, they are soon gone, once more to contend against the judgments of God. Once more Jeremiah finds himself despised. Unable to keep them by promises of blessing, or to deter them from going into Egypt by threats of judgment, the power of unbelief has set in so strongly, that spite of the warnings, Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, swept the land, and along with the rest Jeremiah himself, into the land of Egypt. But even here we find him with a word from God. The people, once back in Egypt, were

soon burning incense unto other gods. When once we get into a current, it will carry us far beyond our intentions. This remnant hoped to reach Egypt, that they might no more see war, or hear the sound of the trumpet, or suffer hunger; but they went into all the idolatry of that people. How often have we seen the same in principle. In all the periods of Israel we shall not find a more hardened state than that into which the remnant sunk; see their reply to Jeremiah, chap. xlv. 15-19. Here we appear to lose the prophet; and might he not say, "Surely I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought."

I think we may lose blessing, if we do not follow on in the track of God's grace to His people; and if we do, we must keep side by side with Jeremiah. Others had their service away in Babylon. God remembered His own there; but in following with this prophet, we learn the inexhaustible grace there is in God, where there is a heart to trust in Him, while we see, at the same time, the evils of the human heart becoming greater and greater as that goodness is put forth.

What varied scenes did this man of God pass through, from the time when with joy he partook of the passover in the days of Josiah, till he saw the utter desolation, which he so pathetically describes in his Lamentations—Oh, for hearts like his! "Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water, for the destruction of the daughter of my people."

As we have before observed, those who before-time had served their generation by the will of God, saw around them the fruits of their labours. In none of them, however, do we see the same measure of tenderness of heart. God had reserved Jeremiah for his day, and had given him the heart for his work—a heart sorely tried, but one that could weep for Israel's woes. This prophet was the expression of God's heart towards Israel too. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" (Hos. xi. 8) was Jehovah's language; and His prophet was there as the proof of God's grace. On looking back on the history of the Church of God, we see a constant raising up of one after another to step into meet the Church's wants. The Spirit of God acts according to His knowledge of present needs. Sometimes instruments (not marked either for correctness of knowledge, or even purity of walk, I mean when judged by the Word as to their associations) have been much used of God. In the latter days of Christendom, I doubt not, but that however lavish the hand of God may be in giving hearts like those of Jeremiah, to meet the wants of His saints, the apostasy will be so dark, that labour therein, even of the most devoted character, will scarce leave a trace of itself. The nearer we draw to the end, will, on the one hand, be the arduousness of service; and on the other, the profitlessness of it, too, to human eye.

MEDITATIONS ON THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

(Continued from page 100.)

Ehud.

(iii. 12-30.)

Othniel dies; the children of Israel return to their evil ways, and forget the Lord. The same God who had strengthened Othniel against the enemy, now, in judgment, strengthens Eglon, king of Moab, against Israel. Eglon and his allies take possession of the city of palm trees (Comp. i. 16, Deut. xxxiv. 3), of Jericho, not in its character of the accursed city, but in that of blessing for Israel. And now Israel, in their fallen state, make use of the *very one*, whom God was about to employ for their deliverance, to carry a present to Eglon, ratifying thus their subjection to the world, whose favour they seek. How many *gifts* there are in the present day which become but willing instruments for keeping God's children under the dominion of the world. But Ehud is faithful—he makes himself a two-edged sword: his first act—his only resource. The Christian in the day of ruin has also his two-edged sword, the Word of God being his chief and only offensive weapon. (Heb. iv. 12; Rev. i. 16; xix. 15; Eph. vi. 17.) True, this sword was only a cubit in length; Ehud's weapon was short, but well suited to its work. It was a tried sword, capable of piercing

to the inward parts of God's enemy and of giving him his death blow.

Before using his weapon, Ehud "girt it under his raiment upon his right thigh," carrying it about him, ready for use; not displaying it, conscious that it was there. The Bible is often displayed, and much quoted, without being used. But the Word of God has a *purpose*. Ehud, left-handed, adapts his sword to his infirmity, girding it on his right thigh. Had he worn it in the usual way it would have been useless. The manner in which the weapon is used invariably corresponds to the personal state of the one using it. To imitate others is of no avail, as we learn from the case of David, who was unable to handle Saul's sword, being accustomed, as a shepherd, to a sling and a stone.

Having brought the present to Eglon, Ehud turned again from the graven images (ch. iii. 19, margin) that were by Gilgal; having, as he said, a "secret message" unto the king. It was not, as with many others, a public victory, but a secret, single-handed encounter between the deliverer and the enemy, the public results of which were soon to appear. It was so with Christ when He was tempted of Satan in the desert. Here all takes place silently, with no apparent struggle, no cry; the enemy was found dead by the servants, who thought their Master was resting. The power by which Israel had been enthralled is destroyed by the short sword of a left-handed man.

There was no fame or glory attending such a victory. It was a secret message, but a "message from God" unto Eglon (v. 20). Our weapon is divine, and therein lies all its power. With Ehud, as with Gideon, it was the "sword of the Lord." The king was dead, but the weapon was not drawn out of his belly. Ehud was gone, but the servants had before their eyes the instrument of victory; God proved to their confusion, that it was this short sword which had abased the proud man, whose eyes stood out with fatness.

It remained for Ehud to reap the fruits of his victory. "He blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim" to assemble the people of God, and they "took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over." The people recovered these usurped possessions; and, through the vigilance of the children of Israel, the way of approach for the enemy was cut off. The usurper was expelled and destroyed, Moab could no longer maintain himself on the two banks of the Jordan. Such should be the practical result of conflict at the present time. If the actual effect is not to make us openly break with the world, it is fruitless and does not answer to the purpose of God. The more complete the separation, the more lasting is the peace. "The land," we are told, "had rest fourscore years."

Shamgar.

(iii. 31.)

Shamgar, the son of Anath, who followed Ehud, gained a signal victory over the Philistines : he also delivered Israel. Ehud's sword was mighty, though short. Shamgar wrought deliverance by the means of a weapon which seemed wholly unsuited to such a work ; a contemptible instrument, to all appearance only suitable for goading brute creatures. Without wishing to press unduly here a typical meaning—a tendency to do which in teaching is dangerous in more ways than one—I would like to compare the ox-goad of Shamgar with the short sword of Ehud. We have one weapon, the Word of God ; it may be presented in different aspects, but it is the only one that the man of faith makes use of in the warfare. To the intellectual and unbelieving world it is like an ox-goad, fit, at the best, only for women, children and uneducated persons ; full of fiction and contradictions ; yet it is this instrument, despised by men, that God uses to gain the victory. In making use of it, faith finds a weapon where the world only sees folly, for the weakness of God is stronger than men. Doubtless, it is written for the unlearned and suited to their needs and to their walk ; but this very ox-goad can kill six hundred Philistines.

Let us, then, make use of the Word with which God has entrusted us, always remembering that faith only can make it effectual, and that, too, when the soul has found therein for itself communion with God, the knowledge of Christ, and, therewith blessing, joy and strength.