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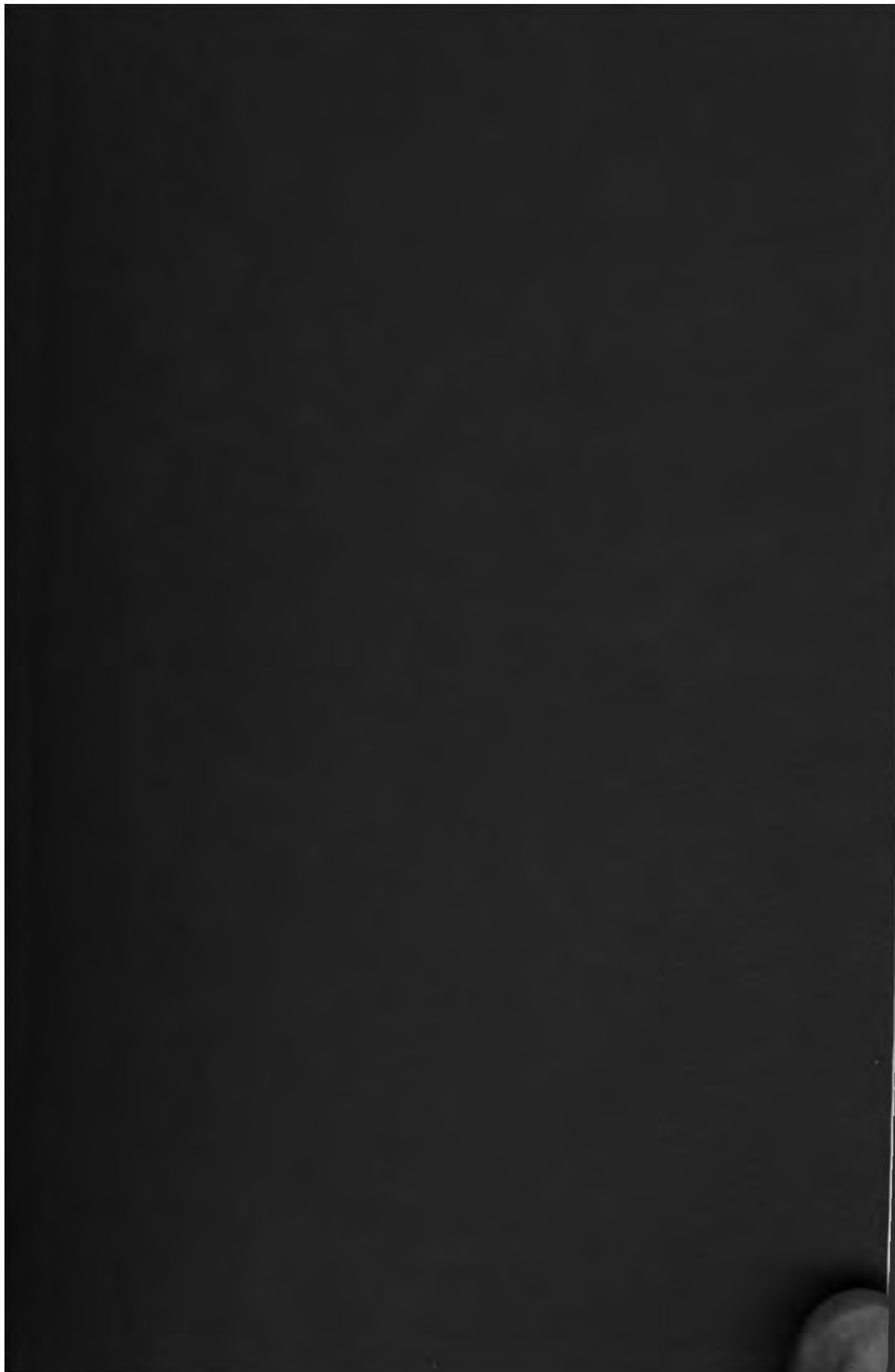


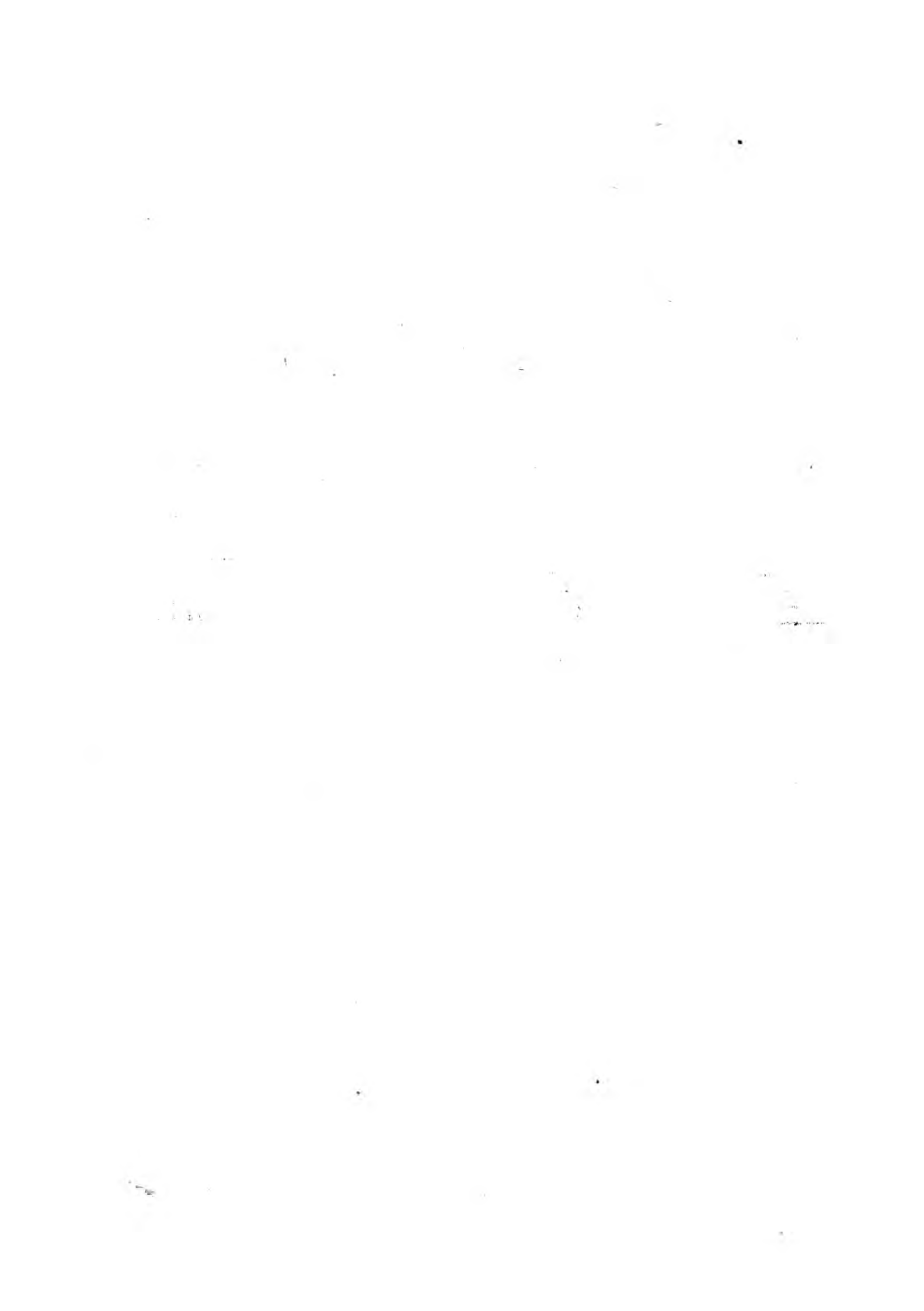
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"The Light

Of The Word."







“THE LIGHT OF THE WORD.”

THE
"LIGHT OF THE WORD."

OR

HOLMAN HUNT'S
GREAT ALLEGORICAL PICTURE,

TRANSLATED INTO WORDS.

BY THE
REV. RICHARD GLOVER,

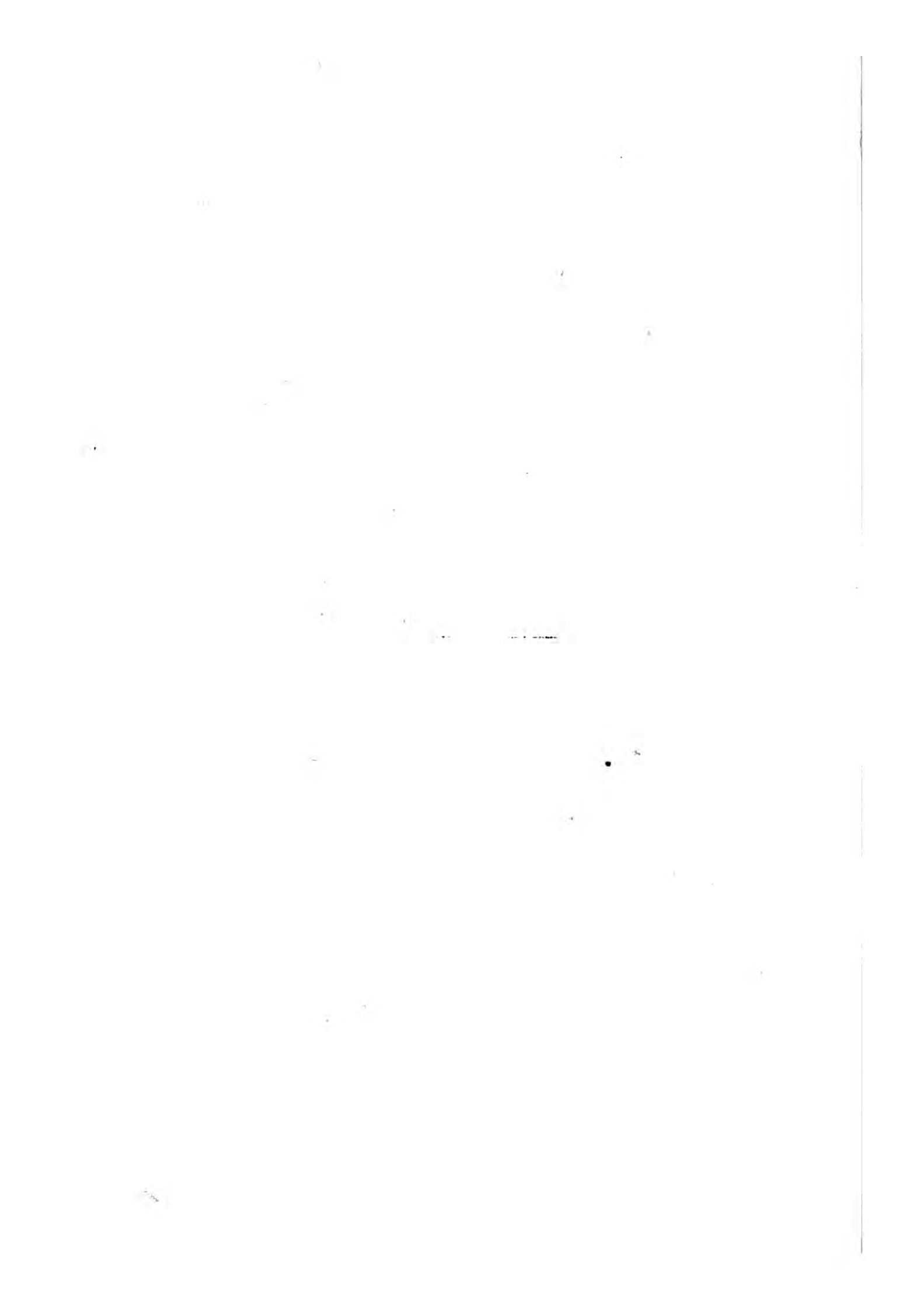
INCUMBENT OF HOLY TRINITY, MAIDSTONE ;

AUTHOR OF "BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON," ETC.

LONDON :
WERTHEIM, MACINTOSH, AND HUNT,
24, PATERNOSTER ROW,
AND 23, HOLLES STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE,
1862.

100 c 207.

TO
HOLMAN HUNT, ESQ.,
THE PAINTER OF
"THE LIGHT OF THE WORD,"
IN PROFOUND ADMIRATION OF HIS GENIUS,
AND STILL MORE
OF THE NOBLE ENDS TO WHICH IT IS DEVOTED,
THIS VOLUME, WHICH IS DESIGNED
TO PRESENT IN WORDS THE DIVINE TRUTHS
HE HAS SO POWERFULLY ILLUSTRATED IN COLOURS,
IS WITH HIS KIND PERMISSION INSCRIBED
BY THE AUTHOR.



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**“ One of the very noblest works of sacred art ever produced
in this or any other age.”—*Ruskin.***

PREFACE.

It will hardly be necessary to inform the discerning reader that this little volume (which is published by request) does not profess to be an essay on art, or a criticism on Holman Hunt's Picture. It is to be regarded simply as an attempt to translate the mystic symbols of his sacred allegory into the plainer language of human speech; and to impress them in a practical manner upon the mind and heart of the reader.

The author was induced to make this attempt by perceiving the deep impression which the picture made upon the public mind of the town in which he labours, when it was exhibited therein some few weeks ago. He wished as a minister of God's Word to deepen that impression, and to avail himself of so favourable an opportunity for illustrating thereby some of the grandest truths of Scripture, in connection with the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of lost sinners. He was aware

that this was a somewhat bold step ; and that it would expose him to the censure of those weak but well-meaning persons who are nervous lest by any such unusual courses the “dignity of which the modern pulpit is dying,” should be imperilled.

It was however sufficient for him to know that such a step had the warranty of the example of His Lord, who (as His parables and whole manner of teaching abundantly testify) seized every event that engrossed the attention of His hearers, and turned it to His own purpose, to illustrate and impress spiritual and eternal truth.

This is a very different thing from turning the Sanctuary of God into a secular Lecture Hall, or the pulpit into a chair of criticism. Far be it from the author to advocate any kind of approach to this desecration—for as such he regards it. Let the atmosphere around the pulpit ever be heavenly, and if ever earthly themes are introduced, let it be only the more strikingly to illustrate, and the more impressively to enforce, those that are divine.

But he has yet to learn that a sacred allegory

in paint, is one whit more secular than a sacred allegory in words ; or, that to illustrate a text of Scripture by "The Light of the Word," is more irreverent than to do the same by "The Pilgrim's Progress." The question is, Are these allegories faithful to the inspired Word of God? If not, neither ought to be used by the expositor of that word. But if they are faithful to it, and if they help to throw light on its truths, then both may be used, and both with equal advantage. That this picture (unless the author has greatly misread it) *is* true to the teaching of God's Word, and materially assists the thoughtful reader the better to understand and feel some of its deepest truths and mysteries, will, it is hoped, be clearly proved by the present publication. No picture has been more misunderstood. No great work of art has suffered more from purblind and captious criticism. Like Him whom it so livingly represents (and we say it with profoundest reverence) it has been "despised and rejected of men," and that for precisely the same reason as He was, that it has not been comprehended or understood. But, as with the living instance, none

notwithstanding, more *deserved* admiration and appreciation; so is it, we humbly conceive, with the pictorial one.

This is ever the lot of the highest and greatest things, whether in religion, morals, intellect, or art. Their excellence can only be appreciated by the few who have the power to comprehend their profound meaning. Holman Hunt can no more be *popular* as a Painter, than Butler can be as a Divine, or Tennyson as a Poet. All such geniuses must be content with the appreciation of "the fit, though few." One word remains to be said respecting the title of the Picture. The name originally given to it by Mr. Hunt was "The Light of the *World*." Since then, as he has informed the author, it has been altered to and exhibited under the title of "The Light of the *Word*." The engravings will, the author believes, be published under the original title. It is however immaterial by which of these two titles the picture will hereafter be known, inasmuch as Christ fulfils His office as "The Light of the *World*," through and by "The Light of the *Word*." The reason for the alteration seems to have been,

that as the light in the picture streams not from the person of Christ himself, but *from the lamp* in His hand, which lamp symbolizes His Word or Truth, "The Light of the Word" seemed the better name. Artistically viewed this probably is true; but, viewed allegorically, Mr. Hunt's original title probably is the best and most comprehensive, inasmuch as it does not concentrate the attention on one feature of the picture, but shews the full extent of Christ's office. But as the question is of no practical importance, either to the book or the picture, the author thinks it advisable upon the whole, to send forth his book under the more recent name by which the picture has become known, *viz.*, "The Light of the Word."

The author feels it due to himself to add that he has never seen or read a single criticism or description of the picture, with the single exception of the suggestive little hand-bill which is given with the ticket of admission, to the author of which he expresses his grateful obligations. It will, however, be perceived that many points and latent truths in the picture, which that description fails even to

hint at, are here suggested and unfolded. And as *that* has been regarded as “the most complete explanation of the Allegory” which has yet appeared; it is confidently hoped that henceforward, that statement may truthfully be applied to the present volume.

“Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it.” The author would therefore invoke upon this his handywork the blessing of the Divine Spirit. May He enable every reader to feel that this book deals, not with painted fictions, but with substantial and eternal realities; and as “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by,” may that same Spirit incline his heart to pray “Lord Jesus have mercy on me,” and thus indeed to “open the door.”

TRINITY PARSONAGE, MAIDSTONE,
Nov. 19th, 1861.

The idea of painting the Picture was suggested to Mr. HUNT
by the following Sonnet.

TO-MORROW.

FROM THE SPANISH OF LOPE DE VEGA,

Translated by H. W. LONGFELLOW.

Lord, what am I, that, with unceasing care,
Thou did'st seek after me,—that thou did'st wait,
Wet with unhealthy dews, before my gate,
And pass the gloomy nights of winter there?
O strange delusion! that I did not greet
Thy blest approach, and O, to heaven how lost,
If my ingratitude's unkindly frost
Has chilled the bleeding wounds upon Thy feet,
How oft my guardian angel gently cried,
“Soul, from thy casement look, and thou shalt see
How He persists to knock and wait for thee!”
And O! how often to that voice of sorrow,
“To-morrow we will open”—I replied,
And when the morrow came, I answered still
“To-morrow”!

THE LIGHT OF THE WORD.

THE SAVIOUR AND THE CLOSED DOOR.

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.”—REV. iii. 20.

THE bare recital of this text has repainted upon the mental eye of most persons present a wondrous picture. There has started up before you a form and scene which surely none who have once gazed upon them can ever forget. Thanks to the masterly effort of Christian art, this most touching text of God's word has lately been vividly imprinted on many of your minds and memories, and has been, for the last few days, the general subject of conversation in this town. A silent preacher has been delivering sermons in this parish every day for a whole week, and this has been his text. And numbers have gone to hear them (or rather to see, for they have been sermons without words) that never come to hear ours. And oh, what sermons! What powerful, tender, touching sermons

they have been ! I wish I could preach on this text as that canvass has. I wish I could gain your ears as that has gained your eyes. I wish I could teach in such an interesting manner, and hold your attention, and absorb your interest, and touch your hearts, as that picture has.

But yet how vain, as far as spiritual profit is concerned—how vain are all such appeals to the feelings, and all such sensuous emotions without the blessing of the Spirit of God ! I wonder how many persons who have gazed at this picture, have taken to themselves its solemn application, and read its truthful spiritual lessons ? I wonder how many said—‘ I am the man—that door is my heart ! ’Tis I who refuse to let Jesus in, and am deaf to that call, and disregard that god-like Majesty, and despise that long-suffering patience ’ ! And how many, I wonder, have said—‘ I am convinced of my sin and folly—I will go home and open my heart to Jesus, and ask Him on my bended knees in prayer to come in and sup with me and I with Him ’ ! Perhaps not one. It is not improbable that this practical spiritual effect may not have been produced in one single instance. At any rate it is certain that most persons, save those who before were true Christians, have gazed on that picture without any such spiritual feelings, or saving practical results. They have felt—deeply felt, just in the same way as they

often feel—deeply feel, an eloquent and pathetic sermon; but it has been merely sensational and emotional feeling, and there it has ended! And thus the desperate hardness of man's heart, the stubbornness of his will, and his ruined and depraved state through sin, which the picture so powerfully represents in symbol, is actually and practically illustrated in fact, in the case of those who gather around it. They can be moved to tears by a pictorial representation of their own conduct, and yet they can go forth and act still in the same way, and treat Jesus with contempt, and despise all His knocking, and keep their hearts barred against Him as firmly as ever!

Now then, let me endeavour to turn all this to your spiritual profit. Let me, as a minister of God's word, ask you to gaze with me again at that picture to-day, and look at it in a personal, practical, and spiritual light. We have nothing to do with it in this sacred place as a work of art—we have to do with it only as a sacred allegory. The great truths of the picture, remember, were not produced out of the fancy of the artist, but are the truths of God's Holy Word. The picture is a divine parable in paint, and a human commentary in colour. The artist has simply performed the part of the expositor, writing with the brush instead of the pen, and using colours instead of words. But all that he has written there in paint, and much

more, you will find previously written in words within the pages of this inspired book. We know that many persons cannot see much to admire in this holy book, who can see much to admire (and very justly) in such a picture as this ; but we can tell them that this picture has been exhibited in this old-fashioned gallery of Scripture for 1800 years.

Let us then proceed to the examination of this picture of my text in detail. And may the Holy Spirit of God take of the things of Christ and shew them unto you !

I. First look at *the Figure* that absorbs almost all the interest, and sheds such a mysterious glory over the canvass. Behold the Man ! Who is it ? A child sees at once, as one of my own little children did, that it is Jesus. But it is not exactly Jesus of Nazareth. It is not Jesus as He appeared when on this earth of ours. It is Jesus of Heaven—that is to say, not the Saviour who is about to die, but the Saviour who *has* died—and who, having risen again, and having ascended to the right hand of His Father, and having been crowned with the mediatorial crown, has “ finished the work which was given Him to do.” This picture in my text is the picture of Jesus at the time the Apocalypse was written, that is about 60 or 70 years after His ascension to heaven. Accordingly you see the

kingly crown upon His human head. In His humanity as our representative and surety, He has been accepted of God the Father and crowned "Lord of all"—"King of kings and Lord of lords." In His divinity He could receive no additional honours from God. He was "equal to the Father as touching His Godhead"—but as touching His manhood He had to *win* the kingdom, and, in human nature, to "open the kingdom of heaven to all believers." He had to enter into the lists as man with all man's spiritual foes, and having obtained the victory to get the crown. "Who shall *ascend* into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart: who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity nor sworn deceitfully." Of what man that was ever born of woman could *this* be said save of the man Christ Jesus? But what was promised to the man of whom it could be said?—and from Peter to Pilate and from John to Judas it *was* said of Jesus.—This was promised: "He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." This was bestowed upon his human nature, and upon all who were to be spiritually and mystically united to it—that is upon all who should be "in Christ"* at the time of His ascension.† Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the

* See last Sermon in this volume.

King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord (Jehovah) strong and mighty—Jehovah, mighty in battle.”* Here the ascending *man* is affirmed by the predictive spirit to be *Jehovah*, and the words can only find fulfilment in one man that ever lived, that is the man Christ Jesus—God and man in One Christ. This crown, therefore, is the mediatorial crown.

This is still further indicated in that the Saviour’s *crown of thorns* is intertwined with the crown of His Kingly glory. The one crown gave Him a right to the other. Suffering crowned Him with her thorns before glory could crown Him with her gold; and He is not ashamed of the former even now in heaven. He weaves the memorial of His sorrow and shame even into the insignia of His heavenly glory, and is even now beheld in heaven “as a *Lamb* that had been *slain*.” Still the crown of thorns is not exactly in the state it was when the soldiers platted it and put it on His head. As it here appears it is not on His brow—it can *pain* Him no more—He can no longer be a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief—but it is above His brow, enwreathed around the crown of gold, and forming a part of its *ornament*. For see! the thorn-crown is now leafy and fair. Like Aaron’s rod it is now budding and bringing forth fruit—a beautiful token that God

* Psalm xxiv.

has accepted Him who wore it, as the budding of Aaron's rod showed God's acceptance of him who owned it. Nor let His people ever be ashamed of the memory of His ignominy and sufferings. Rather let them glory in His shame, and say with his noble apostle, "God forbid that I should *glory* save *in the cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world"! And indeed we have reason to glory in the fact that He who is our King was the Despised, the Rejected and the Crucified. It is to His shame that we owe our honours—it is to His shame that we owe our salvation; and in these touching pleas which our Church puts into our mouth in the Litany, I see the crown of thorns transmuted into a lovely wreath of grace and glory—"By thine Agony and bloody Sweat; by Thy Cross and Passion; by Thy precious Death and Burial * * Good Lord, *deliver* us! But the Redeemer has a glory yet higher than this mediatorial Kingship. He is something more than the King of redeemed man. There is around His brow, you observe, *a halo of glory*. Such a halo is not unfrequently represented around the heads of saints—not merely those of Scripture, but also of the Church of Rome. But in truth no creature has any right to it. It belongs of right to only one man—to that one who was also God. This halo symbolizes Christ's Deity—the proof of which wondrous doctrine depends upon no painter's fancy, but upon the plainest

and most certain warranty of Holy Scripture. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him (He is therefore no creature—for otherwise He created himself) and without Him was not anything made that was made." "Before Abraham was, I am." "Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

These and many such like passages are they that give the warranty for that Divine halo—and prove Jesus to be, what the Catholic Church has ever held Him to be, and worshipped Him as—idolatrously, if the Unitarian be right—"equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, though inferior to the Father as touching His manhood."

But observe Him more closely, and you see that this mysterious Person that hath on the Kingly crown is folded in a *priestly robe*—magnificently gemmed with precious stones. Here is another important feature in the ascended Saviour's character. He is our *Great High Priest*. As a Priest, He has taken His atoning blood—for this mysterious one is both the priest and the sacrifice; it is, to use inspired language, "His own blood"* that He takes into the Holy Place—into the

* Hebrews xiii. 11, 12.

heavens—has sprinkled it upon the Mercy-seat, and “ever liveth to make intercession for us,”—and to atone for the guiltiest sinner’s sin, who believing that “the blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son cleanseth from all sin,” has recourse to Him and applies for His gracious offices.

In *the fastening* of this magnificent robe there is a very beautiful illustration of the truth that the Lord Jesus is not the High Priest of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also—that in the priesthood of the Son of Man all the sons of men are interested, and that in Him all believers are one. His blood availeth for Gentile as well as for Jew—and “by Him *all* that believe are justified from all things.” On the right, there is *the emblem of the Jewish priesthood*—the breastplate of twelve kinds of precious stones, engraven with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel—indicating that the names of all His spiritual people are written upon the heart of our Great Intercessor, and separately as well as collectively engage His affectionate solicitude and have remembrance in His prayers—and on the left, is a jewelled plate symbolically representing *the ancient heathen priesthood*. Both these handsome devices are linked together over the Redeemer’s breast *by a cross*. Thus beautifully exhibiting in colours the grand truth set forth by the apostle to the Gentile Christians at Ephesus, in these words—“Wherefore

remember that ye, being in time past Gentiles in the flesh who are called Uncircumcision, by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands ; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world : But now *in Christ Jesus*, ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh *by the blood of Christ*. For He is our peace, who *hath made both one*, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition that was between us ; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances ; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace : and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body *by the cross*, having slain the enmity thereby ; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” (Eph. ii. 11-18). Thus in Him Jew and Gentile are even now potentially, and ere long will be actually one. Even now they *feel* one, when both, from opposite points, approach with believing feet to the same cross. When *there*, they stretch out towards each other brotherly hands, and as they greet in Christian love, the angels sing in joy :— “ There is now neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.”

Beneath this outer official robe, and close to His Person, the Saviour wears another garment—the *White Robe*, indicative of His personal purity and spotless innocence. Allegorically speaking, this under robe gave all its value to the upper one. It is because Christ “did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth”—because *God* declared of Him—“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;” and *man* declared of Him, “I find no fault in this man”—because the human nature in which His divinity was garmented, was “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing”—therefore it was that He was able to be the accepted atoning High Priest of defiled and guilty men.

“For *such* a High Priest became us (or was proper and suitable for us) who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s, for this He did once when He offered up Himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. (Heb. vii. 26-28.)

But glance hither again. What meaneth *that mysterious Lamp* in the Saviour’s hand? There you get His third mediatorial office as our ascended and all-sufficient Saviour, viz., that of a *Prophet*. That lamp symbolizes the Light of His Word—or the truth

revealed therein, by which He instructs and teaches His people in all things pertaining to life and godliness. By and through that Word, He unfolds to us all we need to know touching eternal salvation. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my paths.”* Let that door that you see yonder, open—let the sinner open his heart, and allow God’s truth to shine in, and by its light he will see both himself and Jesus—and in *that* light he will see both in their true characters. “The entrance of Thy Word giveth light, it giveth understanding unto the simple.”†

What is *the depository* of this truth? Where is it enshrined? From whence doth it shine? It shines in and through the Church of Christ—that is, as our own branch of it defines it—“The blessed company of *all* faithful people”—or again—“The whole number of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world.” The ecclesiastical framework or organization of their various churches differ one from the other. The lamp (as the picture I refer to, fitly represents it) is not of one uniform pattern; but of many and diverse. The lamp hath seven sides, and each is different in form and pattern from the other; but all “dwell together in unity,” “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” all are “one

* Psalm cxix. 105.

† Psalm cxix. 130.

in Christ Jesus"—all reflect His truth with more or less of transparency and clearness—and all are held in His hand, according to the description of Christ Himself in the apocalypse, "These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars (or the seven churches—the number of perfection and unity—seven stars in one bright constellation) in His right hand."* Christian theology, can no more than Christian art, ever truly represent the Church, as the Church of Rome does, as a *Uniform* Church, because it is plainly contrary to the showing of "the Light of the Word." Christ's Church is a *Catholic* Church—an universal concord of particular variations—not a monotone but a music. The Catholic Church cannot be Roman any more than the Roman can ever be Catholic. No; the light is by no means confined to *her* side of the lamp, even if it be conceded that she is part of Christ's true Church at all. Rather do we suspect that the interstices and tawdry adornments of *that* side of the septagon are so many and so dark that the light of truth is almost altogether eclipsed. Nay indeed is it too much to say that in her division of the visible Church "the truth of God has been turned into a lie"—and that the light

* It will be observed by those who have seen the picture, that the lamp is held in the Saviour's *left* hand: but this perhaps was not so much an inadvertence as an artistic necessity—the act of knocking being naturally and usually performed by *the right*.

that is in her is darkness? That she hath the truth, we are ready to admit, but just as ready are we to prove that she “makes the Word of God of none effect by her traditions, teaching *for doctrines* the commandments of *men*.”* So darkly *stained* with the figures of saints and other human devices, is *her* pane of the window, that “the light of the word” cannot break through—or if it does, it is not with heaven’s transparency, but tinged and sicklied with the stains of its medium.

Now take in the whole figure and you see *a complete Saviour*—a Saviour adapted to all the lost sinners’ need—*Man*, able to stand in our place and sympathize with us—*God*, able to meet all Jehovah’s requirements and to supply all man’s necessities—*King* to overcome our foes and rule us—*Priest* to atone for our sins and bless us—*Prophet* to guide us into all truth and counsel us. Concentrate your eye upon that wondrous *face*, and observe how all the characteristics therein are *blended*. It is the face of a man. But it is the face of one more than man. What dignity!—There is the royal majesty of the King. What grace and tenderness!—There is the loving sympathy of the Priest. What wisdom and patience!—There is the efficient and gentle Prophet.

But *where* is this mysterious Person? He is abroad

* Mark vii. 1-13.

in the cold dark night. The dew is on His locks, and the cold ground chills His feet. And what is His errand? He is out on a mission of mercy. He has sallied forth "to seek and to save that which is lost." Absorbed in the great object on which He is bent, He seems utterly forgetful and regardless of His own discomfort, if by any means He can save one. It is indeed a spectacle to call for wonder—to fill us, remembering who He is, with feelings of profound astonishment. He Himself, in calling the sinner's attention to this act of marvellous love and condescension in the words of the text, prefaces it with an exclamation—"Behold!"—turn aside and see this great sight—I the Son of God—"Behold I stand at the door and knock!"

THE DOOR.

II. Now then turn your attention for awhile from the Saviour and fix them on the door at which He is standing and knocking. What is this figurative word of the text intended to signify? Undoubtedly the commentary of the painter is right that it was intended to be an emblem of the sinner's heart. "If *any man* open the door," that is, unlock his own heart, "I will come in *to him*." Here then is a picture of your heart, sinner. Unless *you* have let Jesus in as your Prophet,

Priest and King, there is a faithful portraiture of your own heart! Like that door, your heart is naturally *shut* against Christ. By nature Christ is not within you, but *without* you; and there would never be any possibility of salvation for you, if He, in His free grace and mercy, did not come and *seek* you. The sinner will never of his own accord go out to seek Christ: it is Christ that comes to seek him. And if any of us have been saved by Him, and "have received Christ Jesus the Lord," we have to thank His grace for it, and not our own goodness. The best Christian's heart, and the one which now beats with the strongest throb of love to Christ, was once as fast closed against Him as that door. The weeds may not have grown so thickly or so rankly around his heart as around the hearts of some others; but, by nature, shut it was, and if it has been opened, it is by grace alone.

But now with a thankful and pondering gaze consider *the awful state* of the sinner's heart.

(1.) And first how strikingly is *its wretched poverty* described! I never met with any one who caught this valuable lesson of this profound picture which so faithfully illustrates my text. But how clearly and strikingly is it portrayed just as the Word of God describes it. The Saviour is not knocking here, you observe, at the door of some splendid palace or lordly mansion, as He is sometimes represented in degrading

caricatures upon this solemn text ; but at the door of one of poverty's meanest huts. There may here be a subtle reference to the truth that "to the poor the Gospel is preached;" but as the door represents the sinner's heart or moral character, I think the lesson intended to be conveyed is that the heart of every sinner, however good and rich it may *think* itself, is in fact poor and degraded to the last degree. It is truly pictured in the very words which precede my text, which were addressed to the same church as the text, and which therefore describe the very heart the text is speaking of—"Thou sayest I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that *thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*" The sinner in the language of Scripture is he "that hath no money"—who hath "wasted his goods,"—who hath "nothing to pay"—who, spiritually speaking, is utterly bankrupt, beggared, ruined and undone. If he obtain mercy therefore, he must obtain it as a beggar, saying to God's free, willing, and bounteous grace, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

(2.) And hence comes out another awful truth—that the sinner *is not in his right mind*. He is a poor madman, though he hath his lucid intervals, or rather though (like other maniacs) on *some* subjects, on matters of worldly interest, he can be prudent enough—or as

our Lord puts it—"wise in his generation." But in spiritual things he is not in his right mind. Look there! Would any one but a madman live in such a wretched and miserable hut as that, and say to himself, and say to others (as I have heard a poor drivelling maniac in an asylum proclaim himself a king to those around him) "I am *rich* and increased in goods, and have *need of nothing*?" Why, in such a wretched little hut as that there is hardly room to stow away a pauper's meal, much less a rich man's property!

O touching stroke! With what pathetic and tear-compelling power is here set forth the mental derangement produced by sin. There, self-righteous man—behold yourself. The madman in that hut is yourself. Thou art the man! You think yourself good enough, rich enough in the sight of God without Christ. You need no better righteousness, you practically say, than that which you yourself possess, or can yourself work out. And why do you think so? Because you are not in your right mind. You put darkness for light, and light for darkness. You are altogether blind to your true condition in the sight of a holy and heart-searching God—and, worst of all, you are ignorant of the disease under which you are labouring. Not in proud scorn—God forbid!—but in sympathizing compassion, we pity you. If you were in your right mind you would no longer say "I am good enough as I am"

—but you would say, “Behold I am vile”! You would not remain without the righteousness of Christ another day—but flinging open the door of your heart and hastening to beseech Him to come in and bless you, you would say—

“Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,
Sight, riches, *healing of the mind*,
Yea all I want in Thee to find
O Lamb of God I come!”

(3.) Do you observe, again, that there is *no window* in that wretched hut. What a stroke of truth—of scriptural truth, is here also! The sinner’s heart is *utterly dark*. No light of heaven illumines it or can illumine it, until it opens to Christ. Without Him it is in densest darkness. The Scriptures ever use this image as descriptive of the sinner’s natural condition. “Having the understanding darkened”—“Ye were sometime darkness”—“Them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death”—“to turn them from darkness to light”—“God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined *in our hearts*.” All these scriptural statements shew that in spiritual things until “the life who is *the light of men*” enter into us we “walk in darkness and have no light.”

(4.) Being thus closed, and thus dark, *think of its inner condition*. Imagine what is *behind* that door. What a cage of unclean things must such a place

necessarily be! How foul, filthy, and unhealthy! What a place for reptiles, vermin, and creeping things! What a place for disease and death to revel in! But the poor man does not see or know this, because there is no light there! And the sinner does not know this; he does not know the foul state of his heart if the light of God's word has not yet shone into it "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." But if the light of this knowledge were to shine into him—what a revelation! What hidden things of darkness would then appear that before he had no conception of! How would the prophetic words then be fulfilled, "Then ye shall *loathe yourselves* in your own sight"! How would the best of you cry out when you saw Jesus at the threshold—Jesus the pure, the holy, waiting to come in to so foul a place—"Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord"! "*Out of the heart* (said the Lord Jesus) proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." These are the foul vermin behind that door. There they are, in the heart of the best natural man, and ready to rush forth into sinful actions whenever opportunity and strong temptation call.

That is its state within. What of

ITS STATE WITHOUT.

Look at the rank *weeds and grasses* that have grown

up in front of it. See *the rust* upon the hinges! How firmly fast that door is! Why, what a time that door must have been closed. Surely the inmate must be dead. He is

(5.) *Dead.*

And so declare the most solemn affirmations of holy writ. "Then saith Jesus plainly, Lazarus is dead"—and no less plainly does He say the same in his word of every sinner. Conversion is called in Scripture a spiritual *resurrection*—a *quicken*ing—"Awake thou that sleepest and arise from *the dead* and Christ shall give thee light." And again—"You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." There could be no such thing as resurrection if there had not been previous death—nor can a thing be quickened that hath already life. So that every unconverted sinner is spiritually dead. Then wherefore, it will be replied, if the sinner be really dead, wherefore the use of knocking at the door or of uttering the call? And truly here is a great mystery. It were folly and presumption to attempt to make such a mystery perfectly plain to the human understanding. Better far for us to accept the plain teaching of Scripture and to act upon the plain commands of Scripture—to believe that man is "dead in sin"—and yet, as we are bidden, to prophesy over him that he may live*—but without

* See Ezekiel's remarkable vision.—Ch. xxxvii 1-14.

attempting fully to explain such a mystery, let it be remembered that this death is a *spiritual* death of which those may be and are the subjects, who *have* an animal and an intellectual life. The call to arise may be heard by the life and the faculties they have, and through the organs of this life, spiritual life may enter. We preach the Gospel not to absolutely lifeless stocks and stones, but to *men*—to living men—to those who have in one sense “ears to hear” and intellects to understand, and reason to reflect and judge. We “speak as unto wise men, judge ye what we say.” And hence the profound meaning of the Saviour’s words, “He that believeth on me *though he were dead*, yet shall he live.” Here a man is represented as dead, and yet he is called upon to believe. And both these apparently contradictory truths are, with scriptural fidelity, here illustrated in that the Saviour is knocking at a heart that is spiritually dead. But you say, if this be the case what is the use of knocking?—How shall the Saviour’s knock or call be *heard* by the inmate within? Or how shall light from the lamp of his word penetrate to let the man know that there is a Saviour without? Almost every chink and cranny seems closed up, either by rust or ivy stems, or dirt, or weeds. How can sound—how can light find entrance there?

Ah! my brethren, and so I sometimes say as I look

at some of you! You have so long kept the door of your heart fast closed that now it seems almost hopeless to think that Christ's call will pierce your ear, or the light of his word will enter your eye. When that hut was first built there was hope—when you were young, and these evil habits and obstructions had not grown around your heart, there was hope. There were chinks and crannies in the door *then*, through which the words and light of Heaven could penetrate, and they *did* penetrate. You know you often heard the voice of Christ. You often saw in the light of His truth what was your duty. But you did not open your heart. You did not do what you felt, powerfully felt—for those early impressions were very deep—I say you did not *do* what you felt was your duty. You turned a deaf ear to Christ's call. You would not admit Him. "No, Lord," you said, "thou art too holy to be my guest; thy face is too sad and sombre. Thy countenance, thou Man of Sorrows, is tinged with melancholy. So grave a guest as thou art, it will be time enough to admit by and bye, when the pleasures of the world have lost their relish. If I admit thee, I must turn these pleasant sins *out*; and I must turn the world out. And I cannot part with my sins. I cannot turn the world out. It is too sweet a world. I love it. It affords me so many pleasures. No, Lord, I *cannot* admit thee—Get thee gone for this time,

when I have a convenient season I will call for thee! I know it must give thee pain. And thou art *without* too! As far as I am concerned, the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head—and that in the cold night! Down, conscience! down! yield not to that thought—at least *not yet!* Yield by and bye”!

Ah! as I shall show more fully next time, a long-suffering Saviour did not give *you* up. But he *stood without*—and he knocked again, and again!

“And oh! how often to that voice of sorrow,
 ‘To-morrow I will open’—you replied;
 And when the morrow came, you answered still
 To-morrow”!

But, meanwhile, what was going on? Why this. Look! These weeds were growing up and around the door. Bad habits were increasing and strengthening. Worldly friendships, like that insinuating ivy, were slowly and surely creeping up the crevices—shutting out the light and sound—making it harder for the Saviour’s voice to penetrate or His light to enter—throwing their tendrils round your heart in every direction—binding you *in* faster and firmer every day—and more and more effectually barring the Saviour *out*.

I close the subject until next Sabbath, but I do so by most solemnly impressing *this* fearful aspect of procrastination. I shall speak of its perils in other

aspects hereafter—to-day let me leave you to think of this one. You do not bargain for *this*. You do not take into account *the growing power of habit*, when you turn a deaf ear to the present calls of Jesus. You think it will be *just as easy* to open your heart to him in ten years' time as it is to-day. You think you will be able to throw off the world, to give up sinful companions and worldly-minded associates, just as easy then as you can to-day—perhaps you flatter yourself *more* easily. You think your circumstances at some future time will be more advantageous to make a profession of religion than they are to-day. But never was there a more fatal delusion of the Father of lies! Glance again at these parabolic weeds—and behold how rapidly their stems are growing and strengthening! That is just what is going on around *your heart* every day, and all philosophy and experience prove it as plainly as the Word of God. Evil habits never wait your pleasure. *They* will not procrastinate, if you do. *They* do their work to-day—and that work is to grow strong, and to bind you in prison as the Devil's captive, in such subtle but potent bonds as may seal you up to damnation for ever. I fear I can plainly see this process going on in many of my hearers. And them I now most solemnly address. You do not hear the voice of Christ when it speaks by me, His minister, as once you did. It was loud and powerful

at one time. I have seen tears in your eyes as it echoed. How plainly you heard it. What a deep impression it made. You were unhappy in your sins and pleasures; and you thought you would become a Christian. And when we saw you begin to "do many things," we almost began to hope so too. But no! Those friendships of yours—those entanglements of the Devil—you could not break them off! You could not burst the ivy. You could not bid the worldly men and women that came between you and Christ to stand aside. Well—what then? Why you are *far more entangled* by those friendships now, than you were ten years ago. It is more difficult for you to break away from them and to offend them—aye, and I very much fear they will yet be your eternal ruin! I know some of you that are still of the world, do not feel the truth now as keenly as you did. How should you? The skin of your heart has thickened and toughened. The ivy has been growing—the tendrils have been spreading. And they are more and more effectually shutting out from you the light of truth, and making faint the Saviour's call. Do you wish to be shut up in the prison-house of death for ever? Then by a desperate, prayerful effort to-day burst the bands that bind you in! "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Answer in reply to *this* call of Jesus, "Lord help me!" and with

determined earnestness burst open the door, and break through every friendship that is keeping you from Jesus—for who is he among your friends that can be compared to *this* Friend? and will any of them do for you what He will? or, “in all the time of your tribulation, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment” stick closer to you than a brother?

THE WEEDS.

“The wicked are estranged from the womb ; they go astray as soon as they are born speaking lies ; their poison is like the poison of a serpent ; they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear ; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.”—PSALM lviii. 3-5.

WE stand once more to-day, before that wondrous allegorical picture which illustrates in such a striking and impressive manner, the awful description of the natural heart of man, which the inspired Psalmist here gives. I must again remind you, that the only reason why I here notice this picture, is because I wish to deepen and make permanent its impression upon your minds, and to take advantage of the opportunity which a pictorial allegory affords, for teaching you many of those solemn truths of God's Word, which you can see and understand more plainly when thus presented, than you could in any other way, or at any other time.

I showed in my first discourse, the great truths we may thereby learn with regard to the nature, the offices and the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and also the natural state of every sinner's heart, that He

comes to seek and to save. It is shut against Christ—it is in a state of the most abject poverty—it is utterly dark—it is foully unclean; and its condition indicates a state of mental insanity, and of spiritual torpor and death.

From this, its inner condition, I led you to contemplate its state without. I showed you that there were hindrances in the way of the salvation of all natural men from without, as well as from within—that evil things from the world and the devil, obstruct the entrance of the Saviour's light and call, as well as from the flesh, or from the man's own self; and that every day of procrastination only increases the number and the strength of these obstructions, and tends to seal the man up to final obduracy, and to make his conversion more and more hopeless.

In confirmation of this awful truth, which ought to speak with arousing power, especially to those of you who are growing old in procrastination, and in the indulgence of habits and friendships that you know to be wrong, let me read to you the following remarks of a very experienced and successful pastor—the late Dr. Spencer, of New York. He is attempting to prove that the probability of conversion diminishes rapidly as every year rolls on, and he says—“Take a congregation of 1000 Christians; divide them into five classes, according to the ages at which they became Christians.

Of these 1000 Christians there would be, probably, hopefully converted—

Under 20 years of age -	-	-	548
Between 20 and 30 years of age	-	-	537
„ 30 and 40	„	-	96
„ 40 and 50	„	-	15
„ 50 and 60	„	-	3

“ Here are five classes (he adds). But you complain of me. You ask, why stop at 60 years old. Ah, well then, if you will have a sixth class—

Converted between 60 and 70 - 1.”

These were the probable proportions, considering the question *a priori*—judging from reason, the Word of God, and a very large experience. But he tested the matter by an investigation of *facts*, as far as it was possible to ascertain them in a given congregation. And he goes on to say—“ I once made *an actual examination* of this sort in respect of 253 hopeful converts to Christ, who came under my observation at a particular period. Of these there were converted—

Under 20 years of age -	-	-	138
Between 20 and 30 years of age	-	-	85
„ 30 and 40	„	-	22
„ 40 and 50	„	-	4
„ 50 and 60	„	-	3
„ 60 and 70	„	-	1.”

And how easily is this to be accounted for, if you

look at this picture, and see how rapidly these many weeds and obstructions are growing up around the heart, and rendering it more and more impervious to the sound of a Saviour's voice, and to the light of a Saviour's truth! O to-day, "to-day—whilst it is called to-day," open your heart to Jesus, and that for this most awful of all reasons, "lest any of you *be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*" (Heb. iii. 13).

Let us proceed now, in the next place, to the special contemplation of these weeds and obstructions, and we shall learn, I think, many solemn and salutary lessons as to the nature and character of those things that stand in the way of man's salvation.

There is one feature common to them all: and that is that they are all without exception *fruitless*. Or, if there be any thing that may be called fruit, it is worthless, or worse than worthless—rank and deadly poison. The only thing that looks like fruit here, is a kind of apple lying on the ground, as though some had been eaten, and some thrown down in disgust. Is this the forbidden fruit—the eating of which shot the first sharp pang of remorse through the breast of man—brought death into the world, and all our woe—and whose seeds, when conscience-stricken man flung the sweet bitter down, were the prolific and unnatural parents of all those deadly weeds around his heart, and

of that thorn-crown that pierced the Saviour's brow? Observe, it is in the foreground—and where else should it be, for was it not the cause of the dreadful state of this heart, and the occasion of the mission of this Saviour—and observe further, that it is on the left of Jesus—and, therefore, He is standing between it and the heart. It is just that position that He occupies as our Saviour. He stands between us and the baneful consequences of sin, and is able to arrest them—nay, to convert them into blessings, so that “instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” (Isa. lv. 13).

This, however, like all the weeds, is baneful, and its only fruit is death. How apt and true an illustration of a state of sin and unconversion! All weeds—bad fruit! “Ye are altogether become unprofitable. The poison of asps is under your lips.” We may well here be reminded of the apostle's words, when he refers the Romans back to their state of sin and unconversion—“*What fruit had ye then, in those things whereof ye are now ashamed, for the end of those things is death?*”

But the subject is so full, that I cannot stop to develope these thoughts, but only to suggest them for your own reflection. Our special business to-day will be to examine and muse upon these symbolic weeds one by one.

I. There is first that creeping, clinging, insidious *Ivy*. Springing up out of the earth—running up the crevices, and like a bar, across the opening of the door—look at it! There is “the friendship of the world which is enmity with God.” That is how any one *you* love more than Christ will serve *you*. If you allow any one, be it man or woman, to cling to your heart in that way, and yet refuse to open it to Jesus, that is just what that affection will do for you. It will fill up your heart more and more. It will gradually get the strength and mastery over you. It will bind itself so strongly to you, that you cannot tear yourself away from it, nor it from you. “If any man love *father* or *mother* more than Me, he is not worthy of Me.” How much less worthy of Christ is he who has *sinful* friends and companions that he loves more! There is a young man here to-day who has a friend he cannot keep, if he is to be the friend of Jesus. That friend leads you into sin. As long as you keep that friend you cannot really give your heart to Christ—you cannot keep from sin. You see an exact illustration of this in the case of Herod. He cherished an affection that was shutting out God from his soul, and that effectually prevented the struggling rays of divine truth from entering into his heart. He hears of the wondrous doings of John the Baptist. The mighty deeds of the holy man disturb his conscience. Light

struggles to break in. He hears the preaching of John the Baptist. The stirring sermons of the rude preacher of the wilderness, agitate him still more ; and, in spite of himself, work wondrous convictions in his mind. He is troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. But now, a wondrous flash of light from God's law is directed straight at his heart. A more than usually powerful call of God is sounded in his ears. John saith unto him, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." What follows? He is practically deaf to the call—and the light, as it struggles to enter into his soul, is obstructed. *How* is it obstructed? What shuts it out? Look at Herodias clinging to him! Look at her flinging her adulterous arms about him, like as that ivy is flinging out its tender tendrils about and around that door! See how that sinful affection is blinding his eyes! See how it is shutting up his heart! See how his heart is hardening! He will not tear down that ivy branch. No. Notwithstanding the direct and faithful rebuke from God's prophet he keeps Herodias—and so at last, his heart grows so hard, that for her sake he sends and strikes off the head of the Forerunner of Jesus, and silences his rebukes for ever! "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?"—do I suppose that any of you are likely to proceed to such lengths? I reply, there is no telling to what lengths you will go, if you cherish,

like Herod, those affections which God's Word and your own conscience plainly tell you are "not lawful." I repeat here, then, the urgent counsel I gave last time—that if you are cherishing any sinful affection, abandon it, lest God should abandon *you*! By "line upon line, and by precept upon precept," I would entreat you to do so. I would sooner tire your patience than not strive to save your soul from ruin; and it is because I know how common such ensnaring and fatal hindrances are, that I have again to-day touched upon this subject. O let not the lesson be unlearnt. Practically carry it out. Give up Herodias. Tear down the sinful affection, of whatever kind it may be, that tends to shut Christ out of your heart, and then, but not before, your ear will be opened to hear God's truth, and your eye to see its light.

II. *Dead Grass* is next to be discerned.

And of it what shall I cry? "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand for ever."

Withering grass, therefore, is the scriptural symbol of the evanescent, fading, perishable character of all earthly things, and especially of the pleasures of sin. What a freshness, brightness, and beauty there is in grass in spring-time! How gaily and gladly the green meadows

laugh out, dotted with their spangles of golden buttercups, and adorned with their variegated field-flowers, while the blue heaven rings with the lark's trilling as she soars from her nest within them ! And yet what an image—these gay fields—of evanescence, decay, and early death ! Brown autumn will soon be here, and he will find the wheat still standing, and waiting for his sickles to garner it ; but before he comes the grass will be gone ; or if he find it, he will soon turn it into red rottenness. Yes—ere summer has blushed into full bloom the grass will be gone. The mower's scythe, overturning the lark's nest, and dispersing or destroying its songful brood, and regarding neither the gracefulness of the stems, nor the beauty of the flowers, will have swept keenly through it, and have converted it into food for the beasts of the stall.

Striking image of the pleasures of the world. Fresh as spring grass they appear to the eye of youth. With what an attractive fascination are they all arrayed ! How the natural heart bounds to be among them,—even as the school-boy loves to fling his books into his desk, and to be out among the meadows and the birds. But how brief are the pleasures that it gets from them ! Spring will come again to the fields—youth will never return to you. There is a return of spring to humanity as there is to the fields, but there is no return of spring to individual men. If there is to my race, there is no

rejuvenescence to me. "One generation goeth and another cometh"—even as crop after crop to the fields. But the same individual blade of grass never returns to the same field. Nor do we to youth—nor do sin's pleasures to us. Man is a school-boy that hath but one spring; and sad for him if his pleasures are only of the earth—earthy. How soon the meadows become sombre—and the lark's song is changed for the robin's pipe or the raven's croak! How soon the dropping leaves are whirled away on rough equinoctial gales, and the trees stretch out bare arms to feel for sunshine under bleak and leaden heavens!

Such is the destiny of all those things that are of the earth earthy—and such the gloomy prospect for those who look for joy no further than the boundary of this brief life of ours. Man fades and the world fades with him. "The world passeth away, AND the lust thereof." Not long can its desirable things give man's immortal heart satisfaction and joy. That heart was made for something better. It was originally made for God, and nothing can satisfy it but God. And if it will seek happiness in anything short of God, it will find *that* happiness will not last.

"Fading is the sinner's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show;
Solid joy and *lasting pleasure*
None but Zion's children know."

The grass withereth; the flower fadeth. Be ours then the far-seeing, wise and prudent choice of Moses, who, knowing and feeling all this, "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin *for a season*, for he had respect to the recompense of reward." The man who chooses God is not fed with grass—nor is he only satisfied "for a season." "If any man open the door, and sup with" Jesus, He will give him not the food of cattle, but "angels' food." He will give him "meat indeed, and drink indeed" It is moreover "the meat *that endureth* unto everlasting life."

"There everlasting spring abides,
And never withering flowers."

Drink of earthly cisterns if you will, but remember, Jesus saith to you, "he that drinketh of *this* water shall thirst again, but he that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water *that I shall give him* shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And it is water that at the marriage supper of the Lamb, Jesus shall turn into wine. And that wine shall ripen and sweeten with the age of eternity. It will grow better as the feast proceeds, and the supply shall be exhaustless. The world—deceitful host—sets on the best first; Jesus keeps the best till last. And when the Christian

arrives at "the banquetting house," this, methinks, will be his exclamation, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse, but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

III. *Hemlock*. This is another of the weeds around this ruined heart, and one that has helped to ruin it. This, too, is a scriptural symbol.* And have we not in it an expressive image of those *grosser habits of sin*, by which the heart of man is often destroyed? We offer a solemn petition in our Litany—"From fornication and all *other deadly sin*, good Lord deliver us." It is such sins that seem to me especially indicated here—the sins of the flesh—the grosser forms of sensual indulgence—such sins as those to which those characters are especially addicted, whom St. Paul enumerates in this fearful catalogue, "Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."—(1 Cor. vi. 9, 10). This weed is here so depicted as to convey more than one lesson upon the characteristics and consequences of such sins, which it were to be wished those who are their unhappy slaves would read

* Hosea x. 4. Amos vi. 12.

and lay to heart. There is an indication of the withering character of such sins, and yet of their power of vitality even in their oldest slave. The plant hath *withered*; it is old, dried up, shrivelled. And do not the pleasures of such sins soon decay, and leave their poor votary with the power of enjoyment gone, his hair whitened, his brows furrowed, and his limbs palsied! And further, the plant hath *seeded*. It leaves something behind that reproduces itself. And is it not so with these deadly sins? Do they not spread their contagion beyond themselves? Do they not drop seeds of evil in the hearts of others? And doth not their example, carried by eyes and tongues far beyond their own social circle, as the seed is blown by passing winds into neighbouring fields, spread and propagate their baneful fruits? But though it hath seeded and withered, yet *a young green leaf* upon it shows that the root of the evil is still itself alive, and that it is strong and vigorous even in the plant's old age. Nor less vigorous are the rooted habits of sin, even in the heart of the toothless tottering old debauchee; being ever ready, even in his drivelling dotage and decrepitude, to bring forth the poison which is still alive in his heart of evil.

But even yet more is to be learnt from this scriptural symbol. What are the properties of hemlock? It is both *a narcotic* and *an energetic poison*—in small doses

an anodyne and an anti-spasmodic, and in large doses a deadly poison. So that the course of its operation is to produce *first stupefaction, and then death.*

How striking a symbol of the workings and effects of sin ! These are exactly the properties of sin, and this is exactly the course of its operation upon the soul. Its tendency is first to lull the soul to sleep, then to dull its faculties, to stupefy and derange all its moral powers, and at last to produce death. O if you will partake of sin, do not forget its deadly character. Its tendency is to work death in you, and to work it by such means as to render you *insensible to its operation.* Not only are its wages death, but its natural and necessary effects are death. “When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”—(James i. 15). Death is not only the punishment sin incurs, but the fruit that it necessarily brings forth. Take it, and I do not say, you *may* die, but unless Christ comes into your heart as an antidote to counteract its deadly effect and operation, you *must* die. And the serious part of this question is, you *have* taken it. The poison is within you, and it is now inevitably working to eternal death, unless grace be working within you to eternal life. Nor is this the most serious part of it. For when we thus tell you of your danger it is the property of sin to *soothe* you, to quell any alarms that might be produced, and to say,

“Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” It operates as an anodyne and narcotic. It puts men to sleep under sermons. It calms the spasm of excitement. It lulls the pain of an uneasy conscience. It stupefies men so that they cannot even *understand* the plainest and most forcible reasonings of the preacher, and, in this manner, it causes them to dream on unmoved and unterrified, even into the arms of eternal death! O beware of that fatal drowsiness of soul which this poison of sin produces! “Awake thou sleeper, and call upon thy God.” Is spiritual lethargy coming over you? Arouse yourself! But alas, and alas! for you, if you can still sleep on and take your rest, unaroused by the call of Jesus. I fear for you lest the very next turn on your couch of ease should roll you over into “the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.”

IV. *The Nettle.* Glance again—here is a stinging-nettle. The allegory is true here again to the word of God. Round and about the sinner’s heart is always to be found the nettle—ready to sting and to torture him, and to render him unhappy even in his sins. All experience confirms it—nor can man ever be altogether happy in sin—or wholly escape the pangs and twitches of this unpleasant neighbour. Though man is (as has been described) spiritually dead—yet

he is not morally dead : he is not so far dead as to be incapable of feeling, and often of feeling acutely, the miseries of an accusing conscience. He does not do wrong without knowing it to be wrong. God hath provided a stinging-nettle to prick the transgressor with a warning, and to make known to him the fact whenever he meddles with forbidden things, or does what he knows to be wrong. Have *you* never felt that you touched a nettle when you did what you knew to be wrong? Was there not something within that stung you—that “pricked you at the heart” when you committed any act of sin? You tried to harden your conscience against these stings. But you could not altogether succeed—at least, not until you had long persisted in a course of iniquity. Conscience would smart. She made you uncomfortable and restless in sin. You could not enjoy yourself as you would. Even in the midst of your pleasures, and when you returned from your sins and dissipation to your own chamber at night, that restless stinging conscience of yours would cry shame! and would alarm you with thoughts of an angry God, and of wrath to come. And why does not the nettle sting you *now* as sharply as once it did. Just because the skin of your heart through repeated sins against conscience is not so sensitive. A nettle will not sting the horny hand of the ploughman, as it will the delicate hand of the

child; nor will conscience sting the man who has grown hard in sin, as it will the youth who just begins to play with it. Or there may be even a more fearful reason still why some who are living in sin and disobedience to the Saviour's voice, do not feel the stings of remorse as once they did. They have found out the schoolboy's secret—in which secret there is an awful analogy here. He has been told that if he is brave with the nettle—if he snatches violently at it with a bold courageous hand, it will not sting him. The nettle cannot endure rough dealing. Violence breaks the fine point of its sting, and you may *crush it* in your hand, without being wounded.

There is the explanation of the awful fact that many men can live in the constant practice of sin, and continue to do what they know to be wrong, without any throes or painful stings of conscience. The reason is because their rough treatment has broken her point, and destroyed her power. They have treated her too violently—she cannot sting. When they have been about to pluck some forbidden fruit—the approach to which she guarded—and she has touched them with her remonstrant warnings, instead of shrinking back from what was evil, they have grasped it only the more firmly and determinately. They have virtually said—“I will do what I like. I will have what I wish. It is nothing to me that God says, Thou shalt not.”

And thus they have beaten the nettle down, and now perhaps are no longer pained with her stings. Is it so with any one here to-day? And do you congratulate yourself on the comfort with which you can sin? To do so is rather too premature. You shall meet with the nettle again, with her stems restored, and her points sharpened; and in that other life, which cometh, it shall be impossible to crush her stings. "For every one shall be salted with fire (*preserved* in the midst of destruction), and every sacrifice salted with salt." The resurrection of your sinning body will make your skin sensitive again. The resurrection of the body, too, will sharpen the stings of conscience. And there will be "no place for repentance" then, and no hope of forgiveness, which like an ointment would soothe their irritation and their pangs. This is Hell. This is the daring and impenitent transgressor's portion appointed him by God. This is "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched."

V. But look once more. Here is an ear of golden wheat. Let us examine it. Nay,—but it is *not* wheat after all. It is the darnel or false wheat, called by our Lord in His parable—

The Tares.

What doth this thing symbolize—this thing that *looks like* one thing and *is* another. What better picture could you have of *Hypocrisy*? Behold the

man who has the outward semblance and appearance of a Christian, but is a false one—no Christian at all—a wolf in sheep's clothing—a man “who has the form of godliness, but who denies the power thereof!” Tares are employed by our Lord in His parable* to illustrate those persons in the visible Church who to all outward appearance seem so like real Christians that it is sometimes quite impossible for *man's* eye to detect the difference, just as in this picture we thought this was a stalk of wheat, until we looked closer and found it was a tare. Accordingly we are here pictorially taught the solemn scriptural lesson, that one of the weeds around the door of the heart, that helps to close it up, that helps more effectually perhaps than anything else to shut the light of truth out from it, and to keep Christ from entering into it, is hypocrisy—the appearing to be God's servants, when all the time we are the Devil's slaves—the putting on the form of godliness while we deny the power thereof. Do any of my hearers see here a picture of themselves? Are *all* who are now before me *wheat*?—that is, true and sincere Christians—men who have been converted from their natural condition and character, into something that is meet for, and is ripening for the garner of God?—men that have really admitted Christ into their hearts, and have resigned the empire of their

See Matt. xiii. 24-43.

souls to the sway of His dominion? If you are honest with yourselves, do not many of you—most of you I fear—know that this is *not* the case. You know that you are not the true servants of God, and that you have never from your heart become the spiritual servants of Jesus. But yet you put on the semblance of His disciples. You wear the appearance of Christians—at least while you are here. What doest thou here, Elijah? What has brought you to this house of God to-day? Who hath required this at your hands that you should tread His courts? You have come here to-day as His people come; you have said the same prayers—you have professed the same creed; you have sung the same hymns. And sometimes, perhaps, you even come to the holy communion.—Perhaps! nay, would that it were a perhaps! But there are multitudes of communicants in our churches now-a-days, that are so manifestly “of the world,” that they proclaim their own tare-like character; and the ministers of Christ, with the utmost stretch of charity, cannot but conclude that they are of their number of whom the apostle told often, and told “even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who *mind earthly things.*” (Phil. iii. 18, 19).

Now, then, brethren, tell us honestly, how can you

escape charging yourselves with hypocrisy in making this religious profession, while at the same time you must be conscious that you are not leading religious and godly lives? O my friends, this outward profession of religion is just one of the weeds that is closing up the door of your hearts against a Saviour. The constantly engaging in these holy duties, without being a holy man, is one of the most effectual ways to shut out the light of truth that it is possible to conceive. This outward profession of religion makes you think that all is right with you, and so when Christ calls to you to repent and believe, the word finds no entrance, because you think it is not *for you*. You cheat yourself with the delusion, that because you do the things that Christians do, and are in so many respects so much what Christians are, that therefore you *are* a Christian, and so when Christ calls "Take up your cross and follow Me," the call makes no impression, because you cheat yourself with the notion that you have already done so. But O remember that though this mere outward semblance may deceive your neighbours, may deceive your minister, nay, may even deceive yourself, it can never deceive God. His eye can penetrate through your refuge of lies. He will "separate the tares from the wheat," by and bye, however closely they may resemble wheat. Not one false stalk shall be able to hide itself among the sheaves that shall be

bound for His garner. "In the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matt. xii. 30). And if it were possible that His angel-reapers could make any mistake, the Lord of the harvest himself, will search them with His own omniscient eye. To show this, our Lord, in another parable—changing the figure—says, "And when the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment; and he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the King to the servants, Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called but few are chosen." (Matt. xi. 14). Thus carefully will the Lord Himself rake out of His vineyard all these weeds; and for no mere outward professor, who lacks the new heart and the right spirit, will an unchangeable God go back from His solemn declaration—"Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

VI. There is just one other distinctive hindrance around this heart, upon which a word or two must be said, and that is—

The Bramble—or the Thorns.

This, again, is a scriptural symbol used by our Lord himself in the parable of the Sower. He himself describes it as a weed that chokes up the heart, just as it is represented here. But of what is it symbolical? "He also that received seed among thorns is he that heareth the word, and *the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches* choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." (Matt. xiii. 22). That is to say, in other words, just what is said in our painted parable, that the cares of this world—its splendid political anxieties—its petty household worries—its magnificent ambitions—its grovelling scrambles to "get on"—its business—its money-getting—deafen the ear to the calls of Jesus, and shut the eyes against the light of His truth, as truly and effectually as things that are in themselves actually sinful. These things are not sinful. They are quite lawful if a man use them lawfully. It is not wrong to be "diligent in business," and to try to get on. It is rather what Scripture inculcates and encourages. But if the cares of business and getting on—if the cares of this world in any shape—so engross and occupy your thoughts that you cannot listen to Jesus—that, Martha-like, you are so "careful and troubled about many things," that you cannot find time to "sit at Jesus' feet" in calm and meditative seclusion, "and hear His word," then they but help to destroy your soul, and will do it as effectually as the hemlock draughts of sin.

Perhaps, in our day, there is not one of the weeds whose meaning should be more solemnly pondered than this one. This is emphatically an age of worldly care—and an age when the deceitfulness of riches deceive and ruin more souls, than, perhaps, in any former one—at least in our country. Bad—very bad as our age is, there have been more licentious times, when the whole of our society, from the court downwards, was almost one reeking mass of pollution. Pleasure—mere worldly, sensual *enjoyment*, was the snare of those times. Men and women, drunk with wine wherein is excess, ran riot to perdition. Exhilarated with the poison, they went to their ruin with merriment and laughter. If they cared nothing for the next world, they at least enjoyed themselves in this. To such an age *the hemlock* might have had a special voice, if this picture had been extant. But to this age—to our merchants, to our tradesmen, to our working classes, to all classes, in this toiling moiling nineteenth century, these *thorns* lift up their voice. This is an age when men go carefully, not merrily to perdition. They go there now-a-days, not so much with merry songs and revels, as with wrinkled brows, and toiling hands and aching brains, and heavy hearts—giving themselves little time even for worldly enjoyment, so that they can only amass wealth. Thinking as little of their souls and of their eternity, as the

beasts of the field, they “rise early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness,”—and drudge, and sweat, and toil, not because they are whipped to it by a slave-master, but by a voluntary service to Mammon—not because they are compelled so to work that they may obtain an honest and happy livelihood, but because they are possessed with a simple greed to get rich. “The *deceitfulness* of riches”! Deceitful indeed! What a cheat the devil puts on these slaves of Mammon! He cheats them out of happiness in *both* lives! Seeking gold rather than God, they miss happiness in the next world, and by only slaving and toiling here they miss all enjoyment in this.

“Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come”; but Mammonism is profitable for nothing—having promise neither of this world, nor of that which is to come. It is a cheat and a mockery from first to last—enslaving here, and damning there. Let men of business take heed of this. Watch these thorns, or their points will enter into your soul through all eternity. Do not be so engrossed with the thoughts of this perishing world, that you are not able to give thought to the things of a world that will never perish. “One thing is needful,” and with all your getting, get the understanding of this. Attend to

business, but neglect not the greatest business of all ; and whatever other prizes you gain, take heed that you miss not the Pearl of Great Price. In weighing questions of profit and loss, weigh this one—"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" O find time—make time for calm communion with God, and for breathing that atmosphere of heavenly meditation, in which faith alone can live. The voice of Jesus, if we will heed it, saith, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life." And *His* way to obtain earthly competency, if men would only believe it, (and an evil and adulterous generation that seeketh after a sign will *not* believe it) is—"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you."

THE THREEFOLD APPEAL.

“Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also 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 that they hated knowlege, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.”—PROV. i. 20-31.

“THE testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” It is not in the New Testament alone that we read of Him, and see Him. The devout believer sees Him in every page of the Word of God, from the first verse of Genesis to the last of Revelation.

“Before Abraham was” (said He himself) “I am.” He was before Abraham, and He was ever the same.


“I am the Lord, I change not.” His character is manifested in different dispensations under somewhat different aspects, but it is ever the same character that is manifested—“Jesus Christ *the same*, yesterday, to-day and for ever.”

Thus we read of Jesus here in the book of Proverbs written 1000 years before His incarnation, just as we read of Him in the book of Revelation written 60 years after His ascension; and though in the one case He appears as Wisdom, and in the other as “the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the Creation of God,” (Rev. iii. 14); yet in both places we are manifestly contemplating the same Person doing the same work in precisely the same gracious way. “Wisdom crieth without.” That is a picture by the hand and in the style of an Old Testament painter, of the same original which is presented to us by the hand, and in the style, of a New Testament painter in these words—“Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” And the spirit and meaning of *both* these passages seem to me to be marvellously *blended* (as I hope will be proved in this discourse) in that painted commentary, which I am now endeavouring to translate into words.

May that Spirit who loves to take of the things of Christ and shew them to the soul, enable us to get from this stereograph—this double picture—of the Son

of God, a rounded and complete view of His character, that we may see how in Him “mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other” —how He can be patient, gentle, and longsuffering in His saving offers, and yet terrible in His doings towards those children of men, who trifle with His mercy too long! O Lord! send out Thy light that we may “see Him as He is.” It is only in Thy light we can see light. In vain shall all the solemn and affecting truths that are now to be placed before you be seen, unless He open your eye to “see the King in His beauty,” and touch your hearts with a desire to admit Him.

Do you remember, then, what was spoken of last time—or have the thorns I then spake of “choked the word”? Surely such things were said as ought to have set you all the week pondering upon the many hindrances and obstructions, from the world, the flesh and the devil, that are separately and unitedly operating to keep the Saviour out of your heart, and to seal you up to ruin. Did any man feel, as we described those weeds that we were giving—or rather that the Word of God which we were expounding, was giving a faithful picture of his own heart? Did you feel—It is true what the preacher is saying, that worldly friendships like the ivy, or the pleasures of sin like the hemlock, or the cares of the world like the thorns, or a false and hypocritical profession of religion



like the tares, are preventing *me* from giving my heart wholly to Christ; and that *I* am tied and bound by the chain of my sins? And do you feel as though it were *hopeless* that you could be delivered from their ensnaring and fatal power? If so, let me pray you to listen anxiously and prayerfully to the truths which shall be set before you to-day, while I consider in many of its aspects the knocking of Jesus at the door of the sinner's heart.

I. The first thing I would have you notice, is—that *it is before just such a heart as yours that this compassionate Saviour stands*. And I make this observation to show you that your case is *not* absolutely hopeless. Look once more at this door. You see that the heart at which Jesus is knocking is not a good heart, but a *bad* heart—a *very* bad heart. He comes to the sinner that is “very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil.” He comes to the prodigal who is in the “far country”—separated by a great distance from God and goodness; to the sinner who is utterly degraded and ruined, and reduced to the very lowest and most wretched condition conceivable; bad without, bad within; deranged in intellect, defiled in soul, debased in body; surrounded by bad companions, hampered and fettered by bad habits, utterly dead in trespasses

and sins, "having no hope and without God in the world." *That* is the kind of heart, observe, at which Jesus is knocking: and most true is the delineation to the representation of God's own word. Jesus Himself describes the kind of heart at which He stands and knocks, in the previous context of the passage which is here illustrated. "Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Rev. iii. 17.) It is before *such* a heart the Saviour stops, at such a heart He knocks, before such a heart He stands, and asks it to "buy of Him gold tried in the fire (that is refined gold), and pure white raiment, and costly eye salve (costly indeed, for it cost His life to purchase), that it might see." Everything he offers even to *such* a heart, you observe, is the best and costliest. He brings to such a heart even "the *riches* of His grace." But how is the sinner to *buy* such costly treasures? To purchase riches we need riches. But how can one that He Himself describes as "poor," buy gold and costly eye salve? The inmate of such a wretched hut as this asked to *buy*? Why, where is the money to come from? This poor wretch is penniless. He *thinks* indeed he is rich—"Thou sayest I am rich"—but he has not a farthing in the world. The sinner has "nothing to pay."

Then why does Jesus stop at such a door as this, and ask the man to buy? There is a deep and very

beautiful significance in this word, both here and in that parallel passage in the 55th chapter of Isaiah 1, 2, "Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money come let him buy, yea buy wine and milk without money and without price." He that is asked to *buy*, you observe, is "he that hath *no money*." For in the sense of an equivalent for the mercies we receive, we can give nothing. Still in an important sense we do not simply accept, but we buy the blessings of salvation. For what is buying but parting with one thing in order to obtain another. Now no man can obtain Christ's salvation until he parts with something of his own. He must part with his self-righteous pride, and renouncing this, must receive Christ as his all in all. This Church of Laodicea was emphatically self righteous. "Thou sayest I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing." By being besought to buy, then, it was asked to part with these riches that it might receive Christ by faith. It was thus that Saul of Tarsus *bought* Christ—"Those things that were *gain* to me, those I counted loss for Christ," (Phil. iii. 4, 9,) and counting them but dung—or giving them up—he received the righteousness which is of God by faith.

Christ here, then, uses this form of address in the hope that the sinner will feel and confess his poverty, and will *desire* what He has to offer, and then with

princely munificence, He will *give* what is desired the moment He sees that it is appreciated and wished for. He stops here to show that even such a heart may have such riches if it will. He does not want your money. What need *He* of money? Look at His crown. He is a King. If you have money, keep your money; it cannot buy *His* gifts. But He does not want money. He offers salvation; He offers Himself “without money and without price,” and that to the poorest, wickedest, and most degraded wretch that will only open that closed door and let Him bring His riches in. Even to the degraded woman of Samaria, who, at the very time He was speaking to her, had had five husbands, and he whom she then had was not her husband, He said—displaying the sovereign freeness of His grace to the worst of sinners—“If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and *He would have given* THEE living water.” Is it not clear then that “this man receiveth *sinner*s and eateth with them”—with the worst sinners—and permitteth the worst to receive Him? Do not say, therefore, whoever you are, whatever you are, you *can't* be saved. Speak the truth and say you *won't* be saved! Jesus here distinctly affirms to you, “If *any* man hear my voice, and will open the door, *I will* come in to him, and

will sup with him, and he with me." And elsewhere He puts *His* willingness into another and plainer form—" *Whosoever* will, let him come and drink of the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.) And, let the man be what he will, He says in another place—" him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out"—(John vi. 37.) Will not great sinners, then, be encouraged to come to Him and ask Him to come to them? If you *could not* be saved, if there were anything to make it absolutely impossible for Jesus to enter the worst sinner's heart, He would not waste His time (so to speak) by stopping to knock at this door. The very fact that he stands before you—the very fact that He knocks—the very fact that He calls you by this preached Gospel, is the proof that you *can* be saved, however bad you are, and that He is willing to save you however bad you are, and that He is able to conquer all these enemies, and to remove all these obstacles and hindrances, if you will only respond to His knock, and ask His help, and wish to let Him in. The only hindrance to your salvation is your own will—" Ye will not come to me"—I come *to you*—I shew by My acts *My* willingness; but the willingness is not reciprocal—" Ye will not come *to me* that ye might have life."

II. Accordingly I would have you take notice of

another thing, and that is, that *if this heart is to be opened, it must be opened from within.*

Fix your eye upon this door again. You observe it has no handle ; neither is there any protruding latch or key, by which a person from without, might let himself in, even if he wished to do so. There is nothing inviting an entrance to the Saviour—nor doth half-lifted latch, or door ajar, tell Him, as they sometimes do the passing wayfarer in our countrysides, that he is welcome to come in. On the contrary, this door is mercilessly and inhospitably barred against all entrance both without and within ; and offers poor hope of a welcome, even if the Saviour knocks and asks for it. At any rate, *if* that door is to be opened, it must be opened from within,—the inmate himself must open it. Observe, the Saviour intends no violence to this heart. He evidently is not going to force Himself upon the man, against the man's own will, although He has the power. Glance again at that crown. Could not He who stands there crush in such a puny rotten door as that ? And if, instead of a weak wooden door, it were a barricaded and fortified castle portcullis, could not this King take it by storm ? Could He not ask His Father, and straightway He would send Him more than twelve legions of angels ? Or, if He chose to exercise His own Almighty power in subduing this stubborn heart, could that heart successfully resist it ?

Do you think He could not break the hardest heart that any of you have brought into this church to-day, if He chose to do so? Unquestionably He could. And one day, if you repent not, you will *feel* what His Almighty power can do upon you, But if you are ever to be *saved* by Him, He will never save you in spite of yourself. He will never force an entrance into your heart. Your own free-will, indeed, if left to itself, would never choose Him, or volunteer to admit Him. "No man can come unto me, except the Father that hath sent me *draw* Him"; but this drawing is not forcible drawing, but the drawing that makes the man's own will yield. The man whom God chooses is made to choose God. "If God had not chosen me," said an aged Christian woman to John Newton, "I should never have chosen God." The Holy Spirit must operate upon the sinner's heart with the magnetic power of grace, before ever a sinner will say, "the love of Christ constraineth me." And so whenever a sinner is brought to God, this is the way the grace of God operates. It comes as a heavenly influence into the man's own heart, and "makes him *willing* in the day of God's power." The conversion of the sinner requires, indeed, the putting forth of Almighty *power*, and in conversion this power is always displayed. Saith the apostle, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined *in our hearts* to give the light

of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," thus proving, that the same Almighty power that effected the natural creation is required to effect the spiritual. So again he prays for the Ephesians, that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened, that they might know "what is *the exceeding greatness of His power* which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead,"—thus showing that "the power which raised Jesus from the dead, is the same in quality as that which raises every sinner from the death of sin to the life of righteousness." But observe the manner in which the power of the Holy Ghost displays itself in effecting an entrance for Jesus. It is not by bursting the door violently open against the man's will, as a shocking hyper and unscriptural form of Calvinism sometimes irreverently represents it;* but by making the man *willing*, by

* The following extract will abundantly justify the strong language here used. I find a popular, and certainly in many respects, most able, living preacher, allowing himself thus to speak on this subject, in one of his reported and revised discourses. "To-day I must abide at thy house. And oh! when the Lord comes to this that He must, and He will, what a thing it is with the poor sinner then! At other times we ask, 'Shall I let Him in at all? There is a stranger at the door; He is knocking now; He has knocked before; shall I let Him in?' But this time it is I *must* abide at thy house. There was no knocking at the door, but *smash went the door into atoms!* and in He walked: I must, I shall, I will; I care not for your vileness, your unbelief; I must, I will; I must abide at thy house."

quicken the ear to hear the Divine call—by opening the eye to receive the Divine light, and by gently constraining the heart to open of its own sweet accord and say, “Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest Thou without.” This is the way “the Lord *was opening* (διήνοιξε) the heart of Lydia, that she attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul.” (Acts xvi. 14). Gently and gradually He made her to see and to feel the loveableness of Jesus, as Paul descanted upon Him. He smote her heart with the love of Jesus; all her desire was towards Him, the love of Christ softly constrained her, and her will went to the door, when she heard “the voice of her beloved that knocked, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of night,”* and she “rose up to open to her beloved,” and her beloved came in, took His seat as the Lord of her soul, and spread the treasures of His banquetting house before her. He came to no reluctant heart. There was no standing in the door-way parleying and hesitating. There was an eager desire to possess Him, and that desire was expressed in the Saviour’s ear in the language of warm and passionate prayer—“Enter Lord! if thou wilt condescend to so low a dwelling-place. How I hate

* Solomon’s Song, v. 2.

myself for keeping thee out so long ! Now I see thee what thou art, how I grieve to think I have so poor and foul a lodging to offer thee ; but pardon, Lord ! Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Make my heart a temple worthy of thee. Never leave me, nor forsake me, O God of my salvation. Say This shall be my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein—

“ The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only Thee ! ”

Thus the Almighty Spirit works in “ preparing the way of the Lord,” and in effecting an entrance for Christ into the sinner’s heart. So that if the Saviour does enter, He enters not as an intruder, but as a welcome guest, and as a guest who at last comes invited by the sinner’s own earnest prayer. The sinner is not a mere passive agent in his own conversion ; he is, be it remembered, an active one. “ If any man *hear* my voice,”—there is his passivity upon which the divine call comes. The divine call comes first, for a man cannot hear a sound until after that sound has been created ; but when he has effectually heard, he becomes an active agent—“ Behold he prayeth ”—there is his activity ; he “ *opens* the door.” Yes,

every sinner that is saved is saved by the free grace of God; but so wondrously contrived is the glorious mystery of salvation that free grace always works through free will. “My sheep *hear* my voice, and *follow* me.”

But this will appear further in that affecting branch of the subject to which I now invite thoughtful attention, *viz.* :—

III. *The Characteristics of the knock which the Saviour is here giving.*

Recal to your mind's eye the Saviour's exact attitude and expression.

There is a volume of practical divinity in every lineament on which you have been gazing. Do you observe that the Saviour is making three distinct and separate appeals to that heart? He has just asked for admittance with this voice. “If any man hear my voice”—He must therefore have called. He is knocking for admittance with His hand. And He is pouring light from His lamp, and trying to awaken attention to His desire to come in by that means.

Thus there is a silent appeal, a spoken appeal, and a knocking appeal. He illumines by His silent light; He utters an announcement and a promise; He sounds an alarm. O what an affecting truth—or series of truths—is here! Does Jesus appeal to you only in one way? Does He not rather, as is expressed in

the solemn words I read as my text, try many and various ways of awakening your attention, and of arousing you to let Him come in and bless you? Doth not Wisdom cry without? And when crying fails, doth she not "stretch out her hands"? And when stretching out the hands is "not regarded," doth she not knock with alarming terrors? Doth she not bid you turn at her "counsel," and then expostulate with you on your folly, and then reprove you for your sin? When wooing fails, doth she not try argument; and from argument doth she not pass on to entreaty; nor stopping here, doth she not sound the loud alarm of threatening, and strive to startle you by the coming whirlwinds of desolation? It is so. She "pipes unto men, but they will not dance; she mourns unto them, but they will not weep."

And strikingly and truthfully are Christ's various appeals illustrated here—

(1.) *The Lamp.*

Here is the Bible—the quiet voiceless page of Holy Scripture. Doth not Christ appeal to you by this? Softly doth the Bible whisper to you, Here is Jesus; the Master is come and calleth for thee. Lying on your table, or standing upon your bookshelf—perhaps the most unread book in all your library—still it says to you every time your eye glances upon it—There is a Saviour seeking thee! Or, when in the house of God

you behold the minister take it in his hands to read his text—or ever he utters his voice—the sight of that Holy Book, reminds you that you have a soul, and a soul that Jesus has come to save. You read it, perhaps, it may be only as a dry Sunday duty—it utters no voice to you—it is a silent monitor, but is it not a monitor? and do you not, as you read it, feel that there is a supernatural light around and about you, that is striving to shine in?

(2). *The Call.*

Then, again, is there not a spoken and *vocalized* call by which He appeals to you? And is not this heard in the preaching of the Gospel? Every time the Gospel is proclaimed in your hearing, you hear the “*voice*”—the spoken call of Jesus. We, His ministers, beseech you, but remember, “we beseech you *in Christ’s stead*, Be ye reconciled to God.” If we preach His Gospel, it is not we that speak, but the Spirit of our Master that speaketh in us. And Jesus is as truly speaking to you in this voice of mine which you now hear when I utter these His words, “Take up thy cross and come follow me,” as though He himself stood in this pulpit. “He that receiveth you (said He) receiveth me, and he that rejecteth you rejecteth Me.” Take heed then *how* ye hear! See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. It is an awful responsibility to be a hearer of the Gospel. Be ye doers of

the Word and not hearers only ; and, lest it should turn to your awful condemnation, receive it “ not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the Word of God.” (1 Thes. ii. 13). Not until the preached Gospel is so heard, will it ever become a joyful sound or a saving sound.

(3). *The Knock.*

Then, once more, there is the knock—the alarm sounded on the door itself. What is this but the solemn appeals of God *in providence?*—those alarming appeals that come so very close home, and make the door tremble though it will not open. A few months ago your wife died. The desire of your eyes was taken from you with a stroke. It was a very sudden, and very stunning blow ; you spake unto the people in the morning, and in the evening your wife died. Did you not *feel* that blow ? Ah, yes. The preached Gospel—*that* you had often heard before without emotion. The call that came from the preacher’s voice you did not feel, but you felt this ;—how keenly, no one but yourself can tell. There have been times when you have all felt such blows from God’s hand. When your sister died—when your child died—when death suddenly took off that friend of yours—when you yourself lay upon the bed of languishing, and the physician looked ominously upon you, and you began to fear that the fond but sad farewells must be taken ; when you

were in that terrible storm at sea, and it seemed as though every mad plunge must be the creaking vessel's last—you felt *that*. Your heart did not open, but it *did* quiver and tremble, because the awful hand of God was then upon your heart knocking, knocking. Thus "God speaks once, yea, twice," and not in one form only, but in many forms, "and man regardeth it not."

But I can only thus touch on these wide and interesting fields of thought and illustration that here open out before us, and pass on lastly to consider somewhat more particularly the characteristics of the knock. This is the most prominent of all the appeals, and is the one that is especially fastened on in the Lord's address—"Behold, I stand at the door, *and knock.*" He was most likely appealing to the Church of Laodicea at this time, by means of chastisement and affliction—and the interpretation I have given of the knock, as the Lord's appeal by providential dispensations, seems, I think, to be conclusively established by the words in the verse preceding, "As many as I love *I rebuke and chasten* : be zealous, therefore, and repent."

Now, then, let us once more fasten our eyes upon our illustration, and see whether it is not confirmed both by Scripture and experience. What kind of knock is this?

- (1). It is a *Gentle* knock.

Observe carefully the form of the Saviour's hand in the act of knocking, and you will see at once that it would be impossible for a hand in that position to give a very loud knock. The fingers are not doubled together and clenched, neither is there that muscular rigidity, in the arm or in the hand, that would betoken a very startling knock, but the delicate fingers are bent slightly, and the knock falls lightly. It is not so alarming that the man *must* hear and regard, and yet it is sufficiently loud that he *may*. It is quite loud enough to make any one hear in such a confined little hut as that ; and gentle as is the pressure of the hand upon the door, it is quite heavy enough to push it open, provided there were no resistance from behind. And is it not precisely so with all Christ's appeals to the heart in His providential dealings ? They are all loud enough for the man to hear that "hath ears to hear" ; and heavy enough to press open the heart that is willing ; and yet a man may easily deafen himself to them, so that they will not arouse him, and he may put an effectual resistance against their gentle pressure ; and there may be such an allowed din of sin and worldly care in his heart, that he may be altogether unalarmed by them, and may drown—O how successfully ! their unwelcome heavenly sounds. God might speak to men in voices of thunder if He chose ; or make the lips of the earthquake to utter His appeals

instead of the lips of ministers. By what "terrible things in righteousness" might not the Omnipotent utter His voice, and smite with His arm? And both Scripture and experience teach us that there are occasions when God does so shake the nations, and shake individual men, by this more terrible lighting down of His arm; and when one considers how God is provoked every day, and remembers the Almightyness of His power, how marvellous is it that He is not much more frequently terrible in His doings towards the children of men. But His ordinary appeals are gentle ones. It is only at long rare intervals that He speaks in nature by the thunder, but He speaks there daily by "the still small voice." Is it not so in His dealings in grace and providence? His ordinary calls to men are made in ordinary Sabbath services, and ordinary Sabbath sermons. And of His providential knocks, there are few so startling and extraordinary that men involuntarily exclaim, "This is the finger of God," but they come in the ordinary occurrences of life, and they come in an ordinary way. They come in sicknesses, in bereavements, in misfortunes, in bankruptcies, in disappointments, in heart-aches—now from the lifting up of the heel of a friend—now from the hand of an enemy—but these afflictions are "common to man"—they come to others as they come to us—and therefore they come divested of that startling mystery and peculiarity

which belongs to a blow plainly given by the hand of God. Nevertheless these are given by the hand of God. Trouble doth not spring out of the ground. It is God that afflicteth, though He afflicteth not willingly—and not an ordinary sorrow happens to us, that we ought not to regard as a knock from a gracious Saviour's hand. Significant truth! it is in the *night* when Jesus is knocking. See the shadows of sad and solemn and lonely night are here upon the landscape and around the heart. Ah, yes, it is in those hours when you are in gloom and loneliness, in despondency and depression, when the sun of your joy is down, and you seem only surrounded by sickly misty moonbeams, *then* especially do you feel a gracious gentle knock from His hand—"Open, open unto Me."

(2.) It is a *Waiting* knock.

"Behold, I *stand* at the door." The Lord Jesus is in a standing posture, and He is waiting for a response—waiting if haply that door will open. And I can plainly read *this* in that sad and marvellous countenance, that this is by no means the first knock that He has given.* There is not the brightness of hope and the happiness of expectation that there would be if this were the first time He has knocked. He has evidently knocked before, and again and again; and now His

* This is strongly implied in the original—ἵστηκα * * * καὶ κρούω—
"I have stood and (still) am knocking."

countenance is clouding over, with what? *Wonder!*—more than disappointment—wonder!—wonder how He could be thus treated—wonder at the hardness of man's heart—wonder at the effects of sin! This astonishment of His countenance is heard in His first utterance. "Behold!"—gaze at this sight! The creature refusing his Creator—the sinner refusing his Saviour; and that Saviour instead of smiting, standing; and though thus treated, "waiting to be gracious." Let *us* behold—let *us* wonder. "Be astonished O heavens, and be amazed O earth." Behold the guilt, the blindness, the stupidity, the suicidal folly, the ingratitude of man! Behold the grace, the patience, the love of Jesus! O Saviour! Thy love to us is wonderful, passing the love of women.

But I see a tenderer emotion than wonder. Mark those eyes and that mouth! Do you not see *grief*? I can almost see the tears welling up from that loving heart and filling those tender eyes, as one might have seen them on the day when this "same Jesus" met that funeral procession which bore to the grave the widow's only son, or on that day when, beside the grave of Lazarus, "Jesus wept." The circle of these eyes have been red with weeping, and indicate One who was a "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Surely in a sense He is still acquainted with it, for "we *have* not a High Priest that cannot be touched

with a feeling of our infirmities ;” and can it be that Jesus, who is all compassion, is not touched with grief still, when His gracious appeals to the hearts of sinners are thus despised and disregarded? Though this be the ascended and glorified Jesus, then, it is well that there should be still the signs of grief here. Is there not a cause for grief? Is this all the return He gets for coming to earth for man, for living for man, for being scourged and mocked for man, for dying for man, for taking the pains and the trouble to seek him, and that in order to save him?

It is, however, no mere selfish grief. For the countenance is full of *pity*—pity for the poor besotted creature who is thus blind to his own interest, and so forgetful of his own mercies, and who is so madly choosing eternal death and woe. As there is still in those hands and feet the print of the nails of suffering, so there is still in that heart the print of human, nay, also of divine pity; and still it yearns over this poor besotted sinner, and still the Saviour weeps over him those same tears of compassion that it shed when “Jesus beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known at least in this thy day the things that belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.”

And mark too the shadow of *despair*. This is fast coming over the Redeemer’s countenance. Do you

not see it coming, like as you see the cold dark clouds scudding over the sky before some dreary winter storm? Hope has not quite departed, for look at the anxious, almost painful suspense with which He is listening with lifted eyebrows for the faintest movement within, for the feeblest response of prayer. O wondrous condescension and love to continue to wait another moment! Yet look! He waiteth to be gracious. "He is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He waiteth thus to-day before many and many a heart to which He has often called by His ministers, at which He has often knocked by providences, but heretofore in vain. And yet here He is now, waiting—waiting for your fervent cry of prayer, but waiting for what too many will not give Him, lodgment and sovereignty in their hearts. O Christless man! what think you of your conduct?

"Behold this stranger at your door
Who gently knocks; has knocked before,
Has waited long, is waiting still;
You treat no other friend so ill.

O gracious attitude! He stands
With melting heart and laden hands;
O matchless kindness! lo, He shows
This matchless kindness e'en to foes

(3.) Lastly it is a *Passing* knock.

It is a gentle knock, it is a waiting knock, but it is evident that the Lord Jesus is not going to wait before this door always—perhaps not a moment after this last refusal. This awful truth of God's Word—how strikingly is it here portrayed! Few catch this latent truth, but it evidently was a chief design of this great commentator to suggest it to all thinking observers. For, you perceive the Saviour has taken up no attitude of repose. He has not settled down before the door, so to speak. He is not sitting before it, but the picture is true to the words of Jesus, "Behold I stand." Moreover He is standing in such a posture as to indicate that He will soon depart and proceed on His way, and leave the heart to its own self-chosen state of sin and death. The face is not looking at the door as though He intended a long stay, but it is looking straight out of the canvass and down the road on which He is walking; and His foot seems ready to rise and go, and His lips to utter the words of doom—"Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone." And there is yet another indication how short the man's time is. The dawn is just breaking in the east, showing that "the night is far spent, and the day is at hand." Only a few lingering moments remain in which he may "cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light."

O brethren ! let us not play with such a subject as this, I beseech you. I am not preaching these sermons to amuse your fancy, I assure you ; and in God's name I beseech you to hear them not in a spirit of idle curiosity or of artistic interest ; but remember that we are here dealing with eternal realities, in which your immortal souls shall be concerned when this picture shall have been burnt up in the last great fire. Hearken then, men and brethren every one of you. Have *you* turned a deaf ear when Jesus has called upon you to give up your heart to Him ? Have you yourself admitted Him ? Not yet ? And do you mean again to refuse to-day ? Do you intend to try the desperate venture of keeping a Saviour waiting a little longer ? O take care, take care ! If you dare to attempt that, you may repent the step, the mad, foolish, fatal step through all the revolving cycles of eternity. I do not say you may *die* before next Sabbath. That may be the case, but a possibility like that will not move you. Preachers are never believed when they dwell on this possibility. You will still think that in your case that is not the least likely. That will not move you—but, perhaps *this* will. I pray God with all my heart that it may !—that before next Sabbath Jesus may have passed from you for ever ! He may never knock at your heart again ; He may abandon you to hardness of heart for ever. And

after that you may live many years, you may come to church, you may hear more powerful sermons from more powerful preachers than you have ever heard before ; you may pass through severer troubles, (though the probability is that you may be abandoned to prosperity, and that the knocking may cease, and God may say to you, why should ye be stricken any more ? ye will revolt more and more—but though you may pass through severer troubles) yet spiritually speaking, all will be in vain ; you will feel nothing ; and your heart will become hard as the nether millstone.

When God thus left Pharoah's heart, not one, nor all of the great miracles of Egypt, each more stupendous than the last, could make his heart obedient to God. The Lord withdrew His grace and Spirit from him, and thus "hardened Pharoah's heart so that he would not let the people go." O beware of trifling with the long-suffering patience of God and Christ ! It may be wearied out. Though forty years long He may be grieved with you, yet even ere you die, He may "swear in His wrath that you shall not enter into His rest." Wilfully continue in your stubbornness much longer, and the Lord may issue the awful command "Hear then indeed but understand not, and see then indeed but perceive not ; make the heart of this man fat and his ears heavy, and shut his eyes, lest he see with his eyes, and hear with his ears, and understand with his

heart and be converted, and I should heal him," (Isa. vi. 9, 10). O then "kiss the son lest He be angry, and ye perish from the right way, if His wrath be kindled, yea but a little. Blessed are they that put their trust in Him." (Psalm ii. 12.) If you will not do so now, there will come a day when you will strive to do so, but strive in vain. There will come a day when you will open that door, and find the Saviour *gone*—passed for ever. You will then run after Him, and will begin to knock at *His* door. Ah! in that day this picture shall be reversed. The Saviour and the sinner shall then change places—and O righteous retribution! as ye have done to Him so will He do to you; He will not open to *your* knocking. Was your heart hard? So then will be the heart of Jesus. Would ye not relent? Neither will He. Did you disregard beseechings? So will He. Would His tears not move you? Neither will yours move Him. "When once the Master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door, and *ye* begin to *stand without*, and *to knock at the door*, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are: depart from Me all ye workers of iniquity." (Luke xiii. 25-27.) May

you never see that face flush up into anger! God help those who shall see "the wrath of the Lamb"! But God will *not* help you—"He hath committed all judgment unto the Son"—none will help you! But will He not relent if you then repent? Never. If you appeal to His mercy will He not have mercy upon you? Never. This awful truth of many of our Lord's declarations, but especially as it is set forth in the parable of the ten virgins, has thus been powerfully rendered by a great living poet:—

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light had we: for that we do repent;
And learning this the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!
O let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late: ye cannot enter now.

Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
O let us in, tho' late, to kiss His feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.

So inexorable will then be the love of Jesus upon the solemn affirmation of the truth of Jesus. Can His forewarning words be plainer—and will any man be able to blame *Him* if he should be lost in persisting

to disbelieve them—"Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof: I also 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.*" What an emphasis should this give to another text of present and assured graciousness, which seems to me to speak out from this canvass loud above all other passages of God's Word that it illustrates—"Now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation."

CHRIST WHOLLY WITHOUT OR WHOLLY WITHIN.

“If any man hear my voice and will open the door, I will come in to him.”—REV. iii. 20.

ONE point of significant importance is frequently overlooked in the interpretation of this verse, and that is, that it is an address of the Divine Redeemer to the individual soul. Because it occurs in the epistolary message to the Church of Laodicea, the individual character of the address is too often merged and lost sight of in that of the corporate. But though Jesus was knocking at the door of that Church regarded as a collective building, yet it is clear, from the wording of the address, that it was intended to be an appeal to the heart of every individual that belonged to it; for He says, “If any man (*εαν τις*) hear my voice, and will open the door, I will come in to him (*προς αυτου*) and will sup with him (*μετ’ αυτου*) and he with me.” This language cannot be restricted to the angel or bishop of that Church merely, but must apply to “any man.” This epistle was not intended for the Church or Bishop of Laodicea only, but was intended to apply to every branch of the visible Church of Christ in every subsequent age, and must be interpreted as containing a

blessed promise to any man, who will only do what all Scripture teaches us is the duty of every man to whom the Gospel message has come, namely, open his heart to Jesus, and receive Him as his Saviour and his Lord. So that what we have to speak of to-day is a personal matter; it concerns directly every individual, and it matters not what "any man" is, if he will only do what the text prescribes, he shall obtain in his own experience all the blessings the text includes and promises. These blessings which are included in these wonderful words are solemnly promised, both here and in many other passages of Scripture, by Him who is "the Truth," and cannot lie, to any man who will only open his heart to Him. "Whosoever will let him drink of the water of life freely."

However, before coming to the blessings which result from opening the door, let me call your attention on the present occasion to a most essential truth which the clause before us conveys, but which is in our day most lamentably overlooked, *viz.*,

That if Jesus enter the heart in any of His offices He enters in all.

This discourse, therefore, will turn on the word "I" in this verse. "If any man hear my voice and will open the door, *I* will come in to him." And who is this "I"? That Saviour that you see standing at the door; not another—not a changing or a different

Saviour, but that Saviour—a complete and indivisible Saviour; He who is here in this picture faithfully represented, not in one aspect of His character merely, but in all the blended and inseparable aspects of His character, as Prophet, Priest, and King. There are some persons who would admit Him, but for that crown on His head. There are others who would admit Him, but for that priestly robe on His back. And there are others who would admit Him, but for that heavenly lamp in His hand. But He will lay neither crown, nor robe, nor lamp aside, to please any man. In this matter He can accommodate Himself to no man's prejudices. He will abide outside their hearts if men choose, but if He come in at all—"if any man open the door"—He comes as the indivisible "I"—as God and man, as the heart's only High Priest, as the heart's only Prophet, as the heart's only King. He is "the way, the truth, and the life." In Himself as man's Saviour He is a kind of Trinity in unity, that never can be divided or separated; "the way" by virtue of His priestly robe; "the truth" by means of His revealing lamp; "the life" by virtue of His kingly crown. If you receive Him at all, you must receive Him in all these characters, or in fact you receive Him in none. He will come in as He is, or He will not come in at all. And I repeat, He will not leave His crown outside the heart, nor His robe

outside the heart, nor His lamp outside the heart, to suit the theologic or the moral predilections of any. "Is Christ divided"? Receive Him or reject Him; but if you receive Him, you must receive Him in all His revealed characters and offices, or in truth you reject Him in all. This is a very startling and solemn truth for many. They evidently *do* reject Him in *some* of His offices; but what I wish solemnly to impress upon them now is, that inasmuch as they do so, they virtually and effectually reject Him in all.

I. First, then, let me ask, *Is Christ in your heart as your Prophet?*

Is His lamp within you as the light of your soul? Do you walk "in the light of the Lord?" Is His word your counsellor, from whom you derive your opinions, your beliefs, and the rules of your daily life? In other words, who is your Teacher and Guide? Whose maxims do you adopt and follow? Are they those of the world, or of your own reason, or of your theological school; or are they those of the Royal Prophet? Remember, as you may see illustrated in this picture, *the crown* of the Lord Jesus is at the top of all His robing and habiliments. In *all* His offices He is royal. He must in all be supreme, and be allowed supreme dominion. "He taught as one *having authority*, and not as the Scribes." There

must, therefore, be no more rebellion to His teaching, than to His Kingly acts, or to His Priestly acts. In no one of His offices must we refuse absolute and entire submission to Him. We must be taught without murmuring or questioning, just as we must be ruled without murmuring or questioning, if He is to be our Saviour. And if He is in our hearts, such must be the submissive state of our hearts before Him. Is it so, then, with you? To make the matter personal, let me ask, Is it so then with you? Are you looking to Him alone for the beliefs of your heart and the lessons of your life? Leaning not to your own understanding, do your reason and your prejudices bow before the lessons and dogmas of His Holy Word; and, as a little child, are you being "taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus"? In these rationalistic days of ours—these days of "Essays and Reviews," we see how many there are who do proudly reject Him as their Prophet. They can do without the lamp of Jesus. The "Light of the Word" is not a light unto *their* feet, and a lamp unto *their* path. They are not such children as to say, "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation." (Psalm cxix. 99). The lamp is old fashioned, and too dim. It is not sufficient to guide into *all* truth. Reason is a far better and more trustworthy lamp than this antique and mythic Book. Our "verifying faculty" (say these philosophers) is a

far better light than "the outer law" of the Scriptures. We are willing to receive Jesus in some of His offices, but we can dispense with Him as a Prophet; or at any rate, if we listen to Him, we must be allowed to modify and correct His teaching, by the brighter light of modern criticism. He might have been an authoritative Prophet to the Jews; they might need His teaching, but we have got beyond it. We can do very well without His lamp; it is behind the age.

But, we boldly say to such reasoners, who "professing themselves wise have become fools,"*—Proud men! think not that Jesus will enter in your hearts as a *Saviour* without that lamp. Reject it, if you please, but know, that if you reject *it* you reject *Him*. And in truth this is the very thing that accounts for your darkness. "Lo, they have rejected the Word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them"? "To the law and the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." There is no truth apart from the Light of the Word. There is no Christianity apart from the Light of the Word. There is no salvation apart from the Light of the Word.

* 1 Cor. i. ii. The best rationale and refutation of Essays and Reviews is to be found in these chapters. It shews us that this "mystery of iniquity did already work" even in the Apostle's day, and that this modern infidelity is nothing but the old Greek philosophy in Anglo-German costume.

And if men will reject Jesus as a Prophet—if they will not submit as little children to His royal instruction and dictation—if they will presume to question and dissent from what He advances, as something that does not approve itself to the light that is in them, we tell them that “the light that is in them is darkness, and how great is that darkness”! We tell them that they are “walking in the sparks of their own kindling,” and that Jesus cannot be in that heart as a Saviour which refuses to admit Him as its Teacher. And we mean by this not simply as *a* Teacher; for many will receive Him as *a* Teacher, just as they receive Plato, or Socrates, or Aristotle; but we mean that Jesus can be in no heart as a Saviour, which refuses to acknowledge Him as *the* Teacher—“the Teacher sent from God”—the Sovereign, Royal Prophet—“the Truth,” from whom there can be no appeal to any other authority, still less to an authority within their own dark and fallen minds. The picture of the heart that hath admitted Jesus you see in Mary of Bethany. She “sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word.” Beautiful portrait! And when hearing *His* word, that is always the posture of the true disciple. Not *standing*, disputing on a level, and “asking Him questions and trying to entangle Him in His talk.” *There* is the picture of the heart that hath not opened to Jesus, whether of the Pharisee or the Sadducee; but *sitting at His feet*;

receiving His teachings with the affectionate heart of a loving woman, and with the docile spirit of a little child. We see another picture of such a heart in the disciples. They were "disciples indeed"—not like some of our modern "successors of the apostles" who wear the robes of teachers of the faith they destroy—who are clad in the sheep's clothing, and feed in the sheeps' pastures, but who do the wolf's work. These men are not *disciples* of Christ; they are virtually *teachers* of Christ. They would correct Him, not learn of Him. Sit at His feet, like those who feel that "with the lowly is wisdom"? Nay—they virtually make Him take a place at the foot of their professorial chairs and learn of them. But the apostles were *disciples*—men who learnt of Jesus—men who called Him, "Master," "Rabbi"—men who with reference to His authority as a Teacher called Him Lord, Lord, saying, "*Lord* to whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life." The disciple is not above his Master, or the servant above his Lord—and to be Christians we must be disciples. To be so, indeed—to submit implicitly to Jesus, to say we have a *King* in the domain of thought, that we are not *free* thinkers, that we are not lords over our own opinions, that we are learning children in the school of a Prophet, and He a royal one, to whose dogmata we feel bound to submit, whether we comprehend them or not, whether

they approve themselves to our reason or not—all this may bring upon us the contempt of the wise and the scribe. They may denounce it as “foolishness;” they may pity it as weakness, as they did in the days of the great apostle. They may;—we are willing to be “fools for Christ’s sake.” And the only reply we greatly care to make is the childish one of that same apostle—“Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world; for that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” If our blind unreasoning trust, as our wise modern philosophers are pleased to call it, bring us *salvation*—if opening our hearts in this simple way to Jesus, bring Him in to them as a Saviour and Comforter, we can well bear their lofty pity, and can triumphantly reply, “Christ Jesus is made unto us *wisdom* AND righteousness *and* sanctification *and* redemption.” Let *their* wisdom see if it can attach to itself three conjunctions like these. *Our* wisdom is first King of Righteousness (look at His Melchizedekian robe and crown, betokening the Kingly Priest and the Priestly King) and *after that also* King of Salem, which is King of *Peace*.”

II. Is Christ in your heart *as its Great High Priest*?

If He be not, He is not in your heart at all—neither as Prophet nor King. You have no Saviour. This, therefore, is a very solemn point of enquiry, if we would wish to examine ourselves whether we be in the faith. In pursuing it you must carefully bear in mind what the office of Jesus as our Great High Priest implies. In this office He stands forth as the one—the only one, who can offer atonement and satisfaction for our sins. We cannot perform this office for ourselves; and none other but He is qualified to perform it for us. If we do not trust in His atonement, there is no forgiveness for us; and if we do not trust in His *alone* atonement, there is no forgiveness for us. We cannot propitiate that Holy God, who “will by no means clear the guilty,” by anything that we can do, for in His sight “our very righteousness is as filthy rags.” But, God of the great love wherewith He loved us, hath provided himself a Lamb. He hath laid help upon one that is Mighty, and hath ordained for us a High Priest in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. Such a High Priest was necessary for us, or we must all have perished, “for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” and, therefore, if we as sinners are justified, we must be “justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth *to be a propitiation through faith in*

His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness : that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 23-26). To be *just*, and yet to be at the same time *the justifier of a transgressor*, is what God cannot be by any other scheme, than that of the propitiatory " sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction *for the sins* of the whole world."* And thus the Socinian and Neologian schemes, which are at the present time spreading their poison among our churches, are compelled to relax the *Justice* of God, if not altogether to blot it out of their system, and to overlay it with the *Fatherhood* of God. They take little account of *sin*. They give us no forensic reasons why it should be pardoned. They have a Gospel that cannot satisfy the Law. And thus it is, that on a death-bed, when conscience realizes the awful thought that she must soon appear before the *judgment-seat*, this weak one-sided Gospel—this " other Gospel which is not another"—fails to give a solid peace;† while

* See the Prayer of Consecration in our Scriptural Communion Office.

† This was strikingly illustrated in the case of the son of Dr. David Brown, who, whilst at Oxford, had become greatly enamoured of the Maurician theology, especially of the very beautiful, but equally dangerous sermons of Rev. F. W. Robertson, of Brighton. Their

our Gospel—the Gospel of substitutionary atonement and satisfaction—can unblenchingly and boldly look the Law in the face, and say, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is *Christ that died*, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh *intercession* for us.” (Rom. viii. 33, 34). If God be only Love and not Justice also, wherefore the need of this intercession? But, being Just as well as Merciful, there is a necessity that there should be “a daysman, who can lay his hand upon us both,” and who can satisfy God’s Justice, so as to make it *right* that He should pardon the guilty but believing sinner, without any dishonour to His holy and inflexible Law. This office Jesus fulfils—this work He accomplishes as our High Priest.

If we would learn what God intended to teach us with regard to the nature and work of the Lord Jesus in this office of His saving work, we must study the typical office of High Priest in the Jewish ritual. There was one “taken from among men”—a true man, to offer atonement for the sins of the people. Being duly qualified, He was solemnly consecrated

fascinating theories could bring no solid peace to him on his death bed; but the simple Gospel of a pious American Missionary *did* give him a peace with which he could fearlessly and triumphantly die. See “Crushed Hopes Crowned in Death, Memorials of Alexander Brown.”

and set apart to accomplish this typical task. None other dare usurp his functions on pain of death—neither one of the priests, nor any of the people. On the Great Day of Atonement when the mystery of the sinner's reconciliation with God was fully exhibited, he carried the atoning blood into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it before the mercy seat, above which God dwelt between the cherubims. None but this one man dare ever enter that presence place of God. And whenever he went in, he went *alone*. No other ordinary priest, I repeat, would do in his stead—still less one of the sinful congregation.

What could more strikingly set forth the great truth that God will receive no other atonement for sin, but that which is made and presented by Him of whom the Jewish high priest was the express type and figure? And yet, here again, how many there are in this our day, who practically, and some indeed, theoretically and avowedly, reject Jesus in this office, and think that as far as *it* is concerned they can do without Him. Rejecting His teaching as a Prophet, when He distinctly tells them “no man cometh unto the Father but by Me,” they think they can come unto the Father very well without Him. However much they may need Him as a King and Head, they have no need of Him as a High Priest. The Unitarian and the modern Essayist and Reviewer, scorning the

doctrine of substitution, will tell you that man can do this priestly work for himself—that any man may come into the Holy of Holies and make His own reparation and satisfaction for his sins. He will tell you that God needs no satisfaction or atonement *of blood*—as though any man has any right to affirm what God does or does not need, except in so far as God Himself shall inform him ! Casting a gross and unfounded imputation upon Evangelical theology, he will tell you that God is not a Moloch who delights in blood*—that all that God wants is “a broken and a contrite heart.” We know that David prayed to be “purged *with hyssop*,” that is, in typical language, to be washed with atoning blood ; but they will tell you—“David was a Jew ; we have made an advance upon his enlightenment, and have got far beyond such gross ideas as that ! Let man only repent, and do his best, and take his

* In Maurice's Essays and Robertson's Sermons as well as in most of the books of the same school we are constantly thus maligned. As though we represent God as a Moloch ! and as though we do not preach “God is *Love*” as well as they ! Nay, where does God's love appear *so* great and *so* wonderful as it is when viewed in the light of the truth that GOD “*spared not* His only beloved Son, but delivered Him up for us all,” as our substitute, to receive from the rod of Justice that which was our due ! Mark the force of the word “for” in John iii. 16, and see with what intensive force God's love is brought out, when viewed in connection with the two previous verses, where Christ alludes to His being “lifted up” on the cross as our atonement.

heart to his Father, and his Father will readily receive him and bless him. He need not be afraid of wrath, still less of death." This, divested of its subtleties, and of its dishonest investiture of evangelical phraseology, is precisely the tone and meaning of a large portion of modern popular theology. And no wonder it is popular! The wonder would be if it were not popular. It is no doubt very fascinating. It is very flattering to the pride of man. It is a very soothing thought to his own Cain-like self-complacency, to think that the offerings of his own hands are quite good enough for God—that he needs no better merits than his own, and that he can dispense with the services of a vicarious Propitiator. The way is open to God—saith this theology—let any man go in with prayer, and he will be as much accepted as any High Priest. But hearken to the word of the Lord Himself! The way *is* open, but, "not without blood." There *is* access to God, free access, "access with boldness," but—only "through the faith of Him." Come to God "by Him," as the Scripture saith, and then you *may* come, whosoever you are, close to the mercy-seat. But, come in any other way—come without the name of Jesus—come without the passport of His merits—come rejecting His blood, and putting no trust in its propitiatory virtue; and though you may profess to pay homage to Him as King, there is no access to God for

you, and if you dare to attempt to go up to Him in your own merits, you will meet with death as surely as any presumptuous Israelite who had dared to step within the veil. Let us practically remember, then, the truth we have been here insisting on, that if Christ is to come into our heart, He will not put off His priestly robe—even though we may offer to admit Him with His lamp and His crown. If we are to be reconciled to God, we must allow Christ to officiate in the work; “He must save, and He alone.” These are God’s declarations, and if God offer us mercy, we must allow Him to dictate His own terms. And if men reject these terms, as being opposed to their notions of the dignity and worth of human nature, they do so at their peril. So that if you are trusting in any degree to yourself for acceptance with God, or to anything you can do, Christ has become of no effect unto you; He is not in your heart as your High Priest, and consequently is not in your heart at all. “If any man open the door *I* will come in to him,”—I who am “a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”

III. Let me ask, lastly, *Is Christ in your heart as its King?*

Probably professing Christians are even more likely to deceive themselves with regard to this third great office of the Lord Jesus, than with regard to either of

the others. They think that they have admitted Christ into their hearts, because they profess to receive His teaching. They profess to believe in Him as their Saviour—they profess to look to Him to make satisfaction for their sins, but they do not receive Him as their King. Their hearts and their lives bow to another authority—not to the authority of the Lord's anointed. And yet they verbally and credally acknowledge Him as King; they call Him "Lord, Lord," but—they do not the things that He says. He is not really and actually their King. "His servants ye are to whom ye *obey*,"—and Christ is a King that too many of His professed subjects obey or disobey, just as it suits them. If, for instance, He command them "not to forsake the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is,"—they will yield obedience here, and come to Church. And if He command, "This do in remembrance of me,"—they will perhaps yield obedience here, and come to the Lord's Supper. But, if He saith to them "Take up your cross and follow me,"—"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven,"—"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,"—"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,"—"Hear my sayings and do them,"—then they rebel. These are hard sayings,

who can hear them? *Such* a devotedness to God and religion as this they cannot at all subscribe to. This is carrying things too far. To be wholly Christ's, Christ's servant at all times and in all things—this does not suit them. They love the world and its pleasures, and here they must please themselves. There are some things, too, that Christ positively and specifically forbids; but, then, they say, they are only little things—and in these they act as their own will dictates. Ah, my brethren, ye that call Christ Lord, Lord, but do not the things that He says—ye that do not and will not forsake all that you have to be His disciples—ye that will not give Him your whole hearts—do not think that He hath any of your heart. No, my friends, not the least portion of it hath Jesus if He hath not all. If He is in you, He is in you as Sovereign King, as Supreme Lord of your soul and your affections, or He is not in you at all. “Ye cannot (He himself assures you) serve God and Mammon”; and if you do not wish to be, and yield up your heart to be, the servant of Christ, you are still the servant of the devil. There is no possibility of a middle position. Either Christ is the ruler of your heart, or something else is. And if He is not the ruler of your heart, then He is not in your heart at all. But He is still standing without, and therefore you have no *Saviour*; you have no hope and are “without God in the world.” Look

at this door again! You do not see the Lord Jesus half within and half without. You see He is outside—wholly outside: outside not in one part of His character, but in all. Now, if He come into this heart, do you think He will take His crown off and leave it at the door? Do you think He will enter with His lamp or His robe, if the inmate makes objections to His crown? In plain language, do you think that Jesus will teach you truth as a Prophet, if you have no desire to obey Him as your King? No—you must expect to remain in spiritual ignorance and darkness, while you refuse to do His will. This is the condition on which He promises to teach you the truth—“If any man will *do His will*, He shall *know of the doctrine* whether it be of God.” And on the other hand, do you think Jesus will ever save you from your sins as your Priest, if you refuse to obey Him as your King? Hear Him! “Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord,”—calling Him with mere lip homage King—“to whom I will say, I never knew you,”—I never knew you at all, either as Prophet, Priest, or King; there was never any acquaintanceship between us; you shut the door in My face as your King; and as I could enter in no other character, I did not enter at all; we are, therefore, strangers, and now must be so evermore—“depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil

and his angels.” O think of this, I beseech you, you that are conscious that other lords besides Him have dominion over you, that Christ regards every man that hath not given up his whole heart to His dominion as nothing less than His enemy, “Those mine *enemies*, who would not *that I should reign over them*, bring them hither and slay them before me.” Go, then, and solemnly ask yourselves, each man, each woman, Am I the Lord’s servant? Can I say that in all things I wish to obey the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it my desire and prayer that I may do His will, however counter it may run to my own will, and to the will of others? And if you cannot say so, Surrender! As Christ’s ambassador, I call upon you to surrender. Lay down the arms of your rebellion, and in prayer, ask Christ to enter your heart as King. And to encourage you to this surrender, let the ambassador add, that if Christ come in as your King, you will find Him no Tyrant. He is a good, kind Master; there is nothing His servants would not do for Him, and His oldest servants love Him best. His service is perfect freedom; His law is love; His sceptre grace. He will come in only to subdue *your* enemies as well as His own, and to rid you from the slavery of sin and death. Oh “if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed”; and you will soon say so and sing so in hymns of praise. Nor only so. Admit Him as

King, and with His sceptre He will bring His treasures, and they shall all be thine. Then it shall be said, "All things are yours for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Oh, yes, ponder this—to the heart that will open to Him as King, He will come in, not as King only, but also as Prophet to teach and comfort, and as Priest to bless and save!

THE OPENED DOOR.

“If any man hear my voice, and will open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.—REV. iii. 20.

THE common sense remonstrance that Naaman's servants addressed to him when he spurned the simple means which the prophet of the Lord prescribed for the cure of his dreadful leprosy, may be addressed by His ministers now to every unsaved and unconverted man. If the Lord had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather then when He saith to thee Open the door! Is your heart the thing that hath been already described? and is there a tremendous work of weeding, cleansing and purifying to be done within and without it? It is so. Naaman's body was not in a more incurable state of disease than is the heart of every unconverted man. But then does not the Lord Jesus by this Gospel which we preach to you propose a plan of salvation, by which you may be made whole of whatsoever disease you have? But what does He tell you to do so that you may obtain healing and salvation thereby? Open the door! That is all. He does not tell you to cleanse your own heart, and to set to work to make it a fit

place for Him to come in and dwell ; He does not say first make your heart good, and then I will come in, but He says, without any preliminaries, without any weeding or cleansing of your own, Open the door ; leave everything else to Me ; I will undertake to save you, to regenerate you, to make you a new man ; all I want of you is to let Me come in and do it. It matters not how unfit your heart is to be My guest chamber ; let Me come in to you just as you are, and I will sup with you, and you with Me. That is all the preparation Christ requires on the sinner's own part, that is, no preparation at all. He does not ask you to prepare for Him, but just simply to unlock your heart, and the work of purification He will do Himself.

But the Saviour speaks of "supping" with you, And what have you to set before Him ? Nothing. There is positively nothing in your heart by nature that can satisfy the Lord Jesus—nothing that is fit to set before Him. Surely there is no banquet for a King behind such a door as that ! If you do open the door then where is the supper ? He will create the supper ; He will bring in with Him abundance of provisions both for Him and for you—meat indeed, and drink indeed. If He expected you to provide the banquet, He would have told you ; but all He asks of you by way of condition is Open the door, and His promise includes everything else, "and I will come in and sup

with you, and you with Me." What could more strikingly show that Christ Himself undertakes to do all the sinner needs, and to provide all that he requires, if only the sinner will let Him. He supplies us with grace to perform whatever He asks us to do. The single condition required on our part is to come to Jesus, or, what is the same thing, to let Jesus come to us. And hence the singular suitability of the Gospel scheme to sinful and helpless man. Such a salvation is exactly adapted to our necessities, and is just the one that meets the sinner's case. We are unable of ourselves to do anything as of ourselves : but the Gospel of Christ does not ask us to do it. If it did, it would ask of us what we are utterly unable to do. But it comes to us in all our wretchedness, and in all our weakness, and it says, here is a Saviour able to save to the utmost, if you will only receive Him and allow Him to do what He wills.

“ If thou art poor (and poor thou art)
Lo ! He has riches to impart,
Not wealth in which mean avarice rolls,
Oh ! better far—the wealth of souls.
Thou’rt blind—He’ll take the scales away
And let in everlasting day ;
Torn and polluted is Thy dress,
He’ll robe thee in His righteousness.
Art thou a weeper ? grief shall fly,
For who can weep with Jesus by ?
No terror shall thy soul annoy,
No tear except the tear of joy.

Rise, touched with gratitude divine,
Turn out His enemy and thine,
That soul-enslaving tyrant, sin,
And let the heavenly stranger in."

This is what I have now to show you *done*. I shall try to call up before your imaginations a far more beautiful picture than the one which we have lately been contemplating. I shall ask you to imagine that door opened, and the Saviour no longer without, but within ; and I will try to set before you *the glorious transformation* that immediately takes place both within and around that door. Aladdin's wonderful lamp that we read of in Eastern fable, never wrought such a wonderful transformation as that that will be effected by this lamp of Jesus. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light, it giveth understanding unto the simple ;" and before that light the things of night and darkness flee away ; the bat flies from the lintel, the lusts of deceit, like disturbed vermin, vanish from their lurking corners, the door of poverty is transformed into the palace of a king, the weeds without are changed to beauteous flowers and abundant fruit, the night is changed to day, and where the moon shines with sad and sickly ray, the sun pours his bright light around, and everything rejoices in his beams ; the desolate orchard becomes a smiling fruitful garden ; the wilder-

ness and the solitary place is glad, the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose; Paradise lost becomes Paradise regained.

And let me here observe that though I "use similitudes," let no man think that this is mere poetry—that I am speaking of mere matters of imagination. A change no less great and glorious has taken place in the heart of any converted Christian, and if such a change has not taken place in any man's heart, the reason is because Christ has never entered it, and it is still shut against him. "If any man be in Christ," saith the Apostle in the solemn prose of eternal truth, or, what is the same thing, if Christ be in any man, "he is a new creature."

The Lord Jesus, then, has now vanished from the outer scene. Where is He? "He is gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." Let me, then, bring these discourses to a conclusion by shewing from God's Word the transformation that takes place when the heart of man does open to Christ, and receives Him by faith as its Prophet, Priest, and King; and you will be able to see in detail how real, how great, how wondrous a change it is.

I. First, then, every heart that opens to the Lord Jesus is transformed *from Darkness to Light*.

You remember what a thing of darkness the hut

formerly was, having no window, and its crevices all stopped up; and how that was shewn to illustrate the spiritual darkness of the natural heart. Behold it now! It is transformed into a palace, filled with windows, and the bright sun is flooding every chamber and avenue with heaven's own light.

The word *transformation* that I have used expresses no more than the language which Scripture employs in describing conversion, or the change that takes place when a sinner really and savingly believes in Christ. After this event the heart, Scripture teaches us in the strongest language, is not the same heart that it was. The promise has been fulfilled, "a *new* heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; I will take away the stony heart and I will give you a heart of flesh." "If any man be in Christ, he is a *new* creature, old things have *passed away*, behold all things have become new." He is no longer in any respect precisely the same man he was; he is no longer a natural man, but a spiritual man.

And when this conversion takes place, his heart is *enlarged*. "I will run in the way of thy commandments," says David, "when Thou hast enlarged my heart." Before, it was only large enough to contain the things of this world; now it has been enlarged to take in the things of eternity. Before, it had only room in it for itself and an idol or two; now it is large

enough to admit Christ and all Christ's people. Casting out its narrow and selfish affections, it expands under the warmth of divine love, and now can embrace Him who filleth heaven and earth, and all His saints. "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."

Nor only has it been enlarged, but *enlightened*. "Ye were sometime darkness," says the Apostle, "but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light." At conversion the eye has been opened by the "eye salve" which Christ is said in this passage to bring in with Him, and the soul has been able to receive the light, and simultaneously with this opening of the faculty of spiritual vision, heavenly light from God's Word has poured in, and, in His light the soul sees light. The soul now sees things clearly, though the development of spiritual vision is gradual; yet, as far as it sees, it views things in a new light and with other eyes; it sees things *as they are*—perceives the truth of things—sees itself as it is, not as it seems, but as it is, that is as a guilty, needy, unclean thing—and Jesus as He is, that is, as a suitable and precious Saviour; it sees sin as it is, as the abominable thing that God hates; it sees hell as it is, as an awful reality to avoid and flee from; and heaven as it is, as Christ's local habitation, for which it longs, and after which it strives.

II. It is transformed *from Sin to Holiness*.

“Being then made free from sin,” says St. Paul, describing this change, “ye became servants to righteousness.” Until faith opens the heart to the Lord Jesus, it is altogether carnal and sold under sin. There is no holiness or tendency to holiness in it; it can wish nothing holy, delight in nothing holy, do nothing holy. The heart of the best natural man until then, is the synagogue of Satan. But when Christ comes into it, it is immediately transformed into the Temple of the Living God. Christ’s presence consecrates it. The heart is now dedicated to God, voluntarily given up to Him as a place in which henceforward He shall be devoutly worshipped and served. The sins that were formerly loved and served are now expelled. No one is voluntarily allowed to tarry in that house that will not serve God. It is with the entrance of Jesus into man’s heart, as it was with His entrance into the temple at Jerusalem. Originally dedicated to God for His sole worship and glory, man’s heart, like that Temple, has become a den of thieves, that rob God of His rightful glory, and man himself of his soul. But when Christ comes into it, He says with the commanding voice of God, “Take these things hence”! There is at once a commotion and a revolution; the tables are overturned, lusts and sins and evil desires that have long polluted the heart, are

driven out by Divine power ; and holy desires and heavenly affections take their place ; sin shall not have dominion over it, for it is not under the law but under grace. This again is no fiction of imagination ; it is matter of actual fact in the case of all converted Christians. "God be thanked," exclaims the Apostle to the Romans, "that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you. Being, then, made free from sin, ye became servants to righteousness." And are there not, thank God, many living instances in which we can see with our eyes that such a transformation of men's hearts, from the love and practice of sin to the love and practice of holiness, has taken place, and to whom the minister of Christ can say, as he points to the old door in this picture shut and weed-bound, "Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are justified, but ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"? Yes, these "everlasting signs" are not yet cut off—these living epistles still abound, and they are our glory and joy.

III. It is a transformation *from Degradation to Dignity.*

You have gazed on the mean, low, poor, wretched, degraded heart in its natural condition. Now look at it. Would you know it for the same? I

That hut is now a palace—the Palace of the Great King. That heart is now a place where Jesus dwells, according to the express declaration of Scripture—“that Christ may *dwell* in your hearts by faith”; “Christ *in* you the hope of glory.” And because He who thus dwells in the converted heart is one of the persons of an indivisible Trinity, therefore, the other two persons of the Holy Trinity must dwell there too. I cannot explain this wondrous mystery, but such is the fact upon the authority of some of the plainest and most distinct affirmations of Holy Scripture. Thus St. Paul not only says “*Christ* in you the hope of glory,” but he also says to converted saints, “What? Know ye not that your body is the Temple of the *Holy Ghost* which is *in you*”? And what did the Lord Jesus himself deliver on this important subject? “And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive (He is not, therefore, you see, in any worldly heart), because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you and shall be *in you*.” (John xiv. 16, 17). Thus both the Son and the Spirit are the inhabitors of the converted heart; but in a few verses lower down in the same chapter Jesus speaks of his Father, and of all the three Persons of the sacred Trinity coming into the hearts of each of

His believing people. "If a man"—it is in the singular number—"if a man love me, he will keep my words, and *my Father* will love him, and *we* will come unto him and make *our* abode with him." Now think of this wonderful part of the transformation; think of the Glorious Majesty of the Triune Jehovah coming to such a heart as that, and making His abode there! As I have already said, for such an august reception the heart is *prepared*; it is created anew in Christ Jesus; but what a change!—the habitat of foul and creeping things transformed into "an habitation of God through the Spirit"!—the man that dwells in such a hut as this, honoured with *such* guests and *such* company!—the King of Heaven there spreading His Supper, and honouring the man, not only with His company, but with His friendship; conversing with him over that rich banquet of heavenly food, not as with an inferior, coldly and distantly, but in sweet communion conversing with him as friend with friend! "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth:" but ye do; I take you into my secret—"but I have called you *friends*; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you"; we take sweet counsel together touching the things in which we are now mutually interested, in closer communion than is possible between mere earthly friends; our friendship

is a mystic union of heart with heart, mind with mind, nay, of nature with nature ; we are so united as to be one, " I in you and you in Me." O the inconceivable dignity and honour for a poor sinner, once lower than a worm of the dust, for he once was in antagonism to his Maker, to have such a friend, and to be so intimately acquainted with Him ! For, you observe, we are not said in the text simply to " sup with Him," but " He with us,"—we not only enjoy His society, but we know and are graciously assured that He *enjoys ours*. O well might the Apostle exclaim, when he contemplated the extraordinary extent of a sinner's salvation ; when he thought on the depth from which salvation raises him, and the height to which it exalts him—" the love of Christ which passeth knowledge " !

IV. It is a transformation *from Poverty to Riches*.

It is no empty dignity that Christ's presence confers upon the soul. We have not with us the presence of a friend who hath simply titles and rank, but no wealth, or at any rate none at our service. His indwelling confers upon His people substantial advantages. He hath abundance of wealth, and that wealth is theirs. Christ so identifies Himself with the heart that opens to Him, that all His personalities at once are ours. He saith to it immediately " all mine is thine, and thine is mine." He makes a marriage with the soul—

“thy Maker is thy *husband*”—and accordingly the soul is endowed with His wealth, and He takes the soul’s liabilities. “Thine is mine.” He saith to the soul,—“what is thine?” “Nothing, Lord, but debt; I have nothing, but I owe much; I am a great debtor, and I have nothing but liabilities.” “Thine,” He replies, “is mine; I take thy liabilities on myself; I will give thee a bond sealed with my blood, that will cancel all thy past debts; thy sins be forgiven thee, go in peace. And as I thus take on Me what is thine, take thou upon thee what is mine. Art thou a spiritual leper? Doth the disease of sin cleave to thee? Mine is thine; there is spiritual health for thee; thy faith hath made thee whole. Art thou weak and unable to serve me and to do my will? Art thou not sufficient of thyself to do anything as of thyself? Let not your heart be troubled; mine is thine, thy sufficiency is of me; I will be with thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness; I am made unto thee wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption; all things are yours, grace for time, glory for eternity, whether things present or things to come; all is yours, for ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” Well indeed might the Apostle speak of “the *riches* of His grace.” O what wealth, what an inheritance hath that man, whose heart hath opened to the Lord of glory! Having the Possessor

he must have the possessions ; he that hath Christ owns all that Christ hath ; he is heir of all things, because he is "an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ."

V. It is a transformation *from Slavery to Freedom.*

This heart hath made an exchange of Masters. Until now it hath been the slave of Satan, "led captive by the devil at his will." But no man can serve two masters. And so if the Lord Jesus come into the heart to reign, Satan is dethroned. If a man open his heart to let Jesus in, by the same act he opens his heart to let Satan out. But though the man hath changed masters, he doth not continue a slave. This new master is not the tyrant the last one was ; He does not maltreat and injure and destroy the man as the last one did, but He rules Him with a loving and gracious sceptre. "His commandments are not grievous"; He wishes the man to do nothing that is not for the man's own interest and welfare, both in time and eternity. And this the man soon learns by actual and happy experience. He perceives, that in so far as he serves sin, he brings himself sorrow and suffering, and in so far as he serves Christ, happiness and advantage. Thus His service becomes perfect freedom. The man is a servant indeed, but he loves his Master's service, and hence it is no

slavery but joy. And if you wish to put the matter to the test, you may soon see whether a real Christian feels the service of Christ to be slavery or not. Bribe the man to desert Him ; ask him to leave his master ; tempt him to run away from Him if he gets a chance. And are not the chances always ready ? And are not these temptations being constantly plied ? To use the language of the apostle—"Truly, if they had been mindful of the country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned." I suppose any servant of Jesus has the power and the opportunity to desert Him, to give Him up, to turn renegade to-day if he likes. I suppose he can open the door to let the Lord Jesus out again, and to bid Him depart if he does not like Him. Who or what on this earth of ours can prevent him from renouncing his Saviour as boldly as he has confessed and owned Him ? But did you ever hear of a man that once really knew and loved the Lord Jesus, doing that ? You have heard of his praying, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord," but did you ever hear of one of Christ's servants praying "Go out, Lord ! I have been disappointed in Thee ; Thou art an austere man taking up that Thou layedst not down, and reaping where Thou hast not strawed ; I was happier with my former master ; I wish to return to the house whence I came out, for then it was better with me than now" ? Men come

over disappointed from the world to Christ, but they never go back disappointed from Christ to the world. Never. No, I say, you never yet heard of a man who ever was really a Christian saying *that*, but *this* is what you hear him saying:—

“ Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without Thee I cannot live ;
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without Thee I dare not die ! ”

That is the song of the house of our pilgrimage because it is such a happy house ; its servants are so contented with their Master ; they wish to go no more out ; they wish never to leave Christ, nor do they wish Him ever to leave them. Their cry is rather, “ Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.” They would sooner lose life than lose Him. “ He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.” No Lord ! and no man that ever really knew Thee as the guest of his heart, ever *did* love father or mother more than Thee. If those who have seemed to love Thee, who have *professed* to love Thee, have done so, and have gone out from us, “ they went out from us because they were not of us ”—they were never really converted Christians, “ for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us.” When it has come to a really practical question, father and mother or Thee ? I have known the father’s

house forsaken, and the mother's love abandoned rather than that the disciple would part with Thee. Take a case in point which I select from Mr. Weitbrecht's Missions in Bengal. "Last year (says that good lamented man) a well-educated and intelligent Hindoo applied to a clergyman in Calcutta for baptism. He had received his education in the Hindoo college and was a deist. A tract accidentally fell into his hands, by which he was made acquainted with the Bible. He read it for several days with deep attention, and discovered in it a religion concerning which his heart, his conscience, and his understanding convinced him that it was divine. He determined to embrace this religion. He was the only son of a rich Zemindar, and his friends did all in their power to make him change his resolution. When they found him inflexible, they sent him a sum of money, accompanied with a most earnest request that he would embark for England, and be baptized there, lest the caste of the whole family should be polluted by his becoming a Christian on the spot. But he remained unmoved, and declared, "Here in the eyes of all my countrymen, I will show in whom I believe;" and he was shortly afterwards baptized in the mission church at Calcutta. On the occasion of his baptism, he composed the following hymn; it is the effusion of a heart filled with the love of the Saviour.

“ Long sunk in superstition’s night, by sin and Satan driven,
I saw not, cared not for the light, which leads the blind to
heaven ;

I sat in darkness, reason’s eye was shut, was closed in me,
I hasten’d to eternity, o’er error’s dreadful sea.

“ But now, at length, Thy grace, O Lord, bids all around meshine,
I drink Thy sweet, Thy precious word, I kneel before Thy
shrine ;

I’ve broke affection’s tenderest ties, for my dear Saviour’s sake,
All, all I love beneath the skies, Lord, I for Thee forsake.”*

And there is not a true Christian on earth who, if the two things were put one against the other so as to be obliged to choose between them, would not be found by the grace of God, to say with Paul—“ Yea doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; and I do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him.

VI. Lastly, this transformation is no less than one *from Death to Life—even Life Eternal.*

Up to the moment when a man opens his heart to receive Jesus he is “ dead in trespasses and sins ;” but when He who is “ the Life indeed,” steps within that door, he lives. There is no spiritual life apart from Jesus, so that if you have him not in your heart, in the way I have already described, you are spiritually dead.

* “ Protestant Missions in Bengal Illustrated.” p. 224.

“He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” (1 John v. 12.) Such is the monosyllabic simplicity with which Scripture settles this greatest of all questions. It is not until a man has heard the effectual call, “Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,” that a man begins to live before God and to God. But when this takes place all the signs of spiritual life begin to appear. Behold he *prayeth!* Without that door are heard holy communings with God. The man begins to show to all around that he is thoroughly active and earnest as to his soul’s salvation. He considers Jesus. He meditates in his statutes. He takes delight in the ordinances of God. The weeds around his heart are, by help obtained from God, cleared away. He begins to be a “worker together with God” in the great work of regeneration and sanctification, and in cultivating, in the place of the rank, profitless, poisonous weeds, “the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.” His heart deviseth liberal things for the spiritual welfare of others. He has now a care for other souls. There is a forth-putting of effort to save them. He first findeth his own brother and he brings him to Jesus—or strives to do so; and he is not ashamed to tell others what God hath done for his soul, saying, at the same time, if not

in so many words, at least in eloquent and understood desires, "O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him." O when one sees a sinner thus alive to the interests and the honour of God—thus alive and active in the grand unseen things of eternity, and looks back and remembers the time when, like Gallio, he "cared for none of these things;" what can we say of so great a change, but this, "You hath he *quicken*ed who were dead in trespasses and sins." Yes, the change is nothing less than a new life—and that life an immortal one. "This is *life eternal*, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hath sent." It is a life that a man can never lose if once obtained. He that is once a "partaker of the divine nature," shall never die—*can* never die, unless divinity can die. "Because I live ye shall live also." "He that liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die." Believest thou this? Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the *Living* God; and that he that hath thee is as immortal as thyself. Christ and the regenerate soul have,

"The two-cell'd heart beating with one full stroke—Life;"

and therefore death to the regenerate soul would be death to Christ. And so the assuring promises of Scripture run—"He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Christ comes not into the heart

as a temporary sojourner. "Where Jesus comes He comes to *dwell.*" And so He says, not simply, "we will come to him," but He adds, "and *make our abode* with him." O wondrous change! In concluding this series of discourses, let me ask, has it taken place in you? If so great a change has taken place you cannot surely be ignorant of it. Is it conceivable, is it possible, that a change so great and so real should have taken place in a man, and the man not know it? If these Scriptural statements are true, the thing surely is well-nigh impossible. To have such a friend and not to know it! To have such a one as Jesus dwelling in our hearts, and to be ignorant of it! To use such language as to "trust we have," and to "hope we have,"—surely a man can hardly use such language as this who has really opened his heart to Jesus! O my brethren! never rest satisfied, on such a vital question as this, with hoping you have and trusting you have. If such is all you can say, stand in doubt of yourselves. Take it as a sign that it is more than likely that Christ and you are still strangers to each other! Rest not a day until you can affirm, "We *know* that He abideth in us, by the Spirit that He hath given us." O let not this course of Sermons close and leave you still undecided; but by all the perils of still refusing and hesitating, and so of missing salvation for ever, and by all the joys and blessings of opening

your heart to Jesus, I counsel you at once—at once to do so. If I live to minister among you for twenty or thirty years, I can never again hope to bring into one cluster so many and such various inducements to lead you to do so. I tremble for the man that allows such a series of solemn appeals to eye and ear to pass by unheeded. Never did I feel as I do to day the solemn meaning of these words, “If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.” Never did I feel more strongly that “to some we are a savour of life unto life, and to others of death unto death.” Never did I feel more powerfully the solemn urgency of the inspired declaration, and of its applicability to one occasion above another, “*Now* is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of Salvation!”

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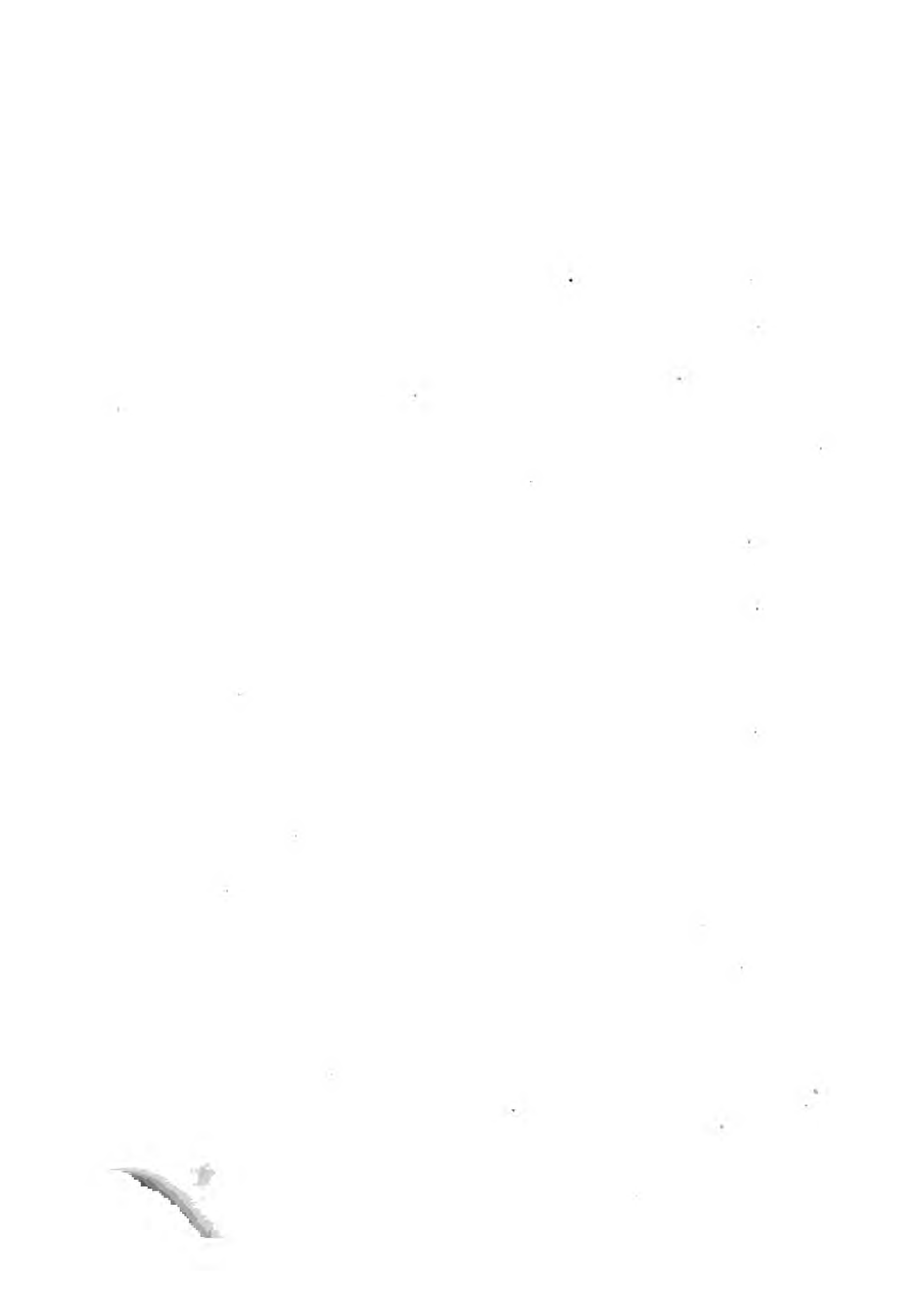
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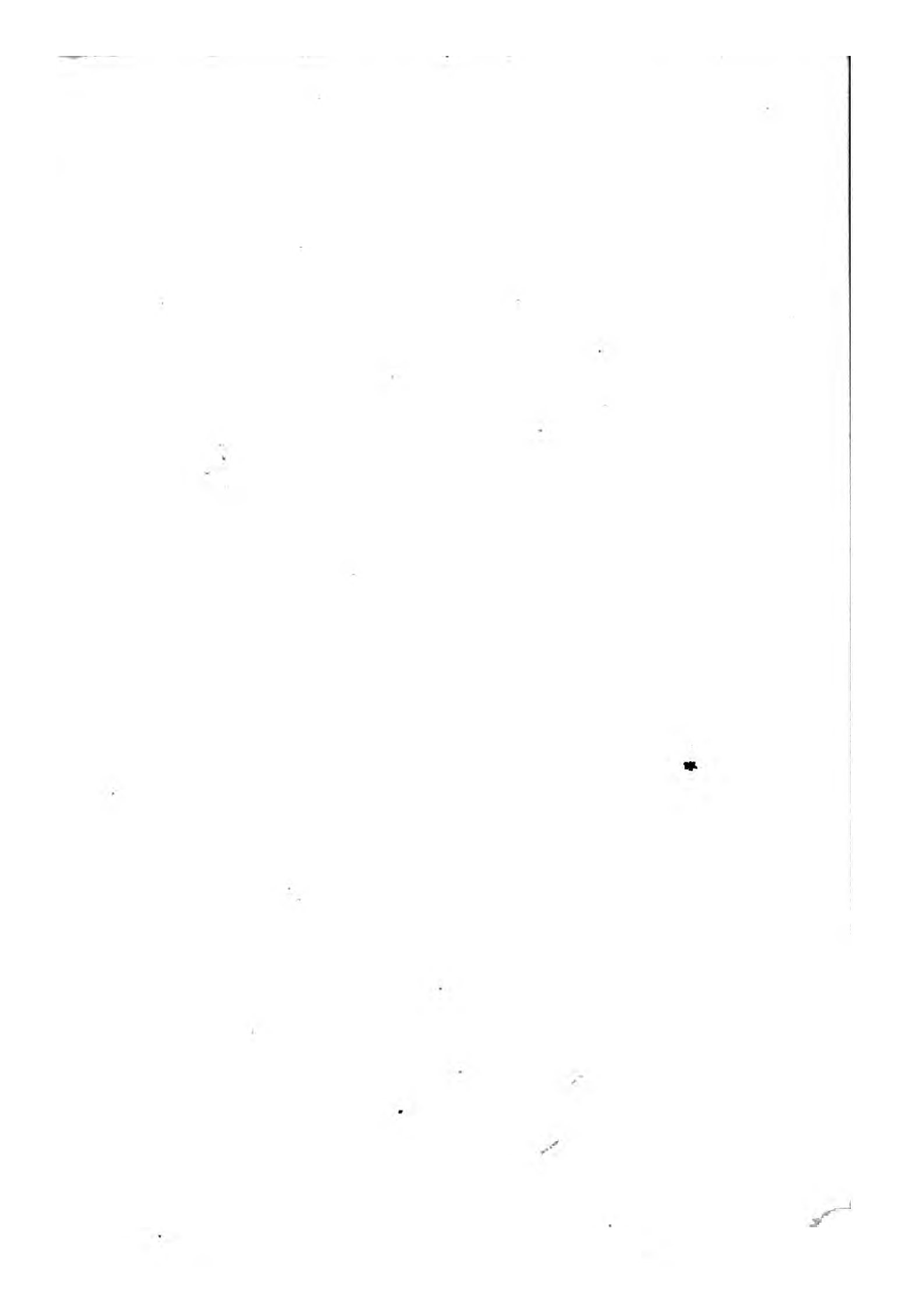
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