

Truth Learned in Communion with God

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Extracted from "**Collectanea**"

Subtitled, "Being some of the subjects considered at Leamington on 3rd June and four following days in the year 1839." Published unrevised in 1882 by J. S. Robertson, Edinburgh.

Expositions are recorded of the ministry of J.N.D., J.G.B., & G.V.W.

There is one thing that binds our affections to all the family of God, the knowledge that we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. But as to this *knowledge*, when we come in the power of the Spirit, we do not look at truth save in connection with God. The value of truth is, that I get it in communion with God. The basis of this dispensation is Jesus and the resurrection; and I say, beloved friends, that it is only as we get into the power of this that we can know the power of communion with God, and grow in the knowledge of truth. The Lord met Peter, and gave him a commission; He met John, and gave him one; and He gave Paul a commission too; but I see a distinct character in each of them, though they were all given in the resurrection life. To Peter He says, "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs," especially directing him to look to the house of Israel. Paul's commission was based on the resurrection too, but he was to be a witness of something further still; Jesus at the right hand of God, was the truth he was called to be a witness to. Then our Lord seems to send John on a new commission, also based on the resurrection, but a new commission, and one that went still deeper; it was based on *the love of God*. And so it is, beloved, the more we find out the guilt of man, the more we find coming out the depths of the grace of God. Little did the Jews think, when they crucified Jesus, that they were striking their shafts into the bosom of the Father. When the Lord manifested Himself to John, when banished to the Isle of Patmos for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus, standing *in the midst* of the seven golden candlesticks, the object that John was first struck with when he turned round, was the *person of Jesus*. Then we have the effect of the presence of Jesus on John, the beloved disciple: "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." And then we get something, which to my own soul is peculiarly blessed. Jesus stretches out the pierced hand, and says unto him, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." Nothing changes the *first and the last*.

I do not think the epistles to the seven churches are given to us as a guide for discipline. We see throughout the addresses the gradual progress of evil, and in the midst of surrounding declension the Lord seems to direct the faithful ones to Himself, as one in whom they will find a position *suited* to their need. He comes forth to tell them, that though lost in everything that was outward, they had their portion in Him. The Lamb is the Head of the Church, He is the one in whose heart the Church dwells; but I see Him in Rev. 4 as the Lamb in *the midst of the throne*. In Rev. 6 I see saints not in glory, but "the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held," under the altar, crying to the Lord to avenge their blood on them that dwell on the earth; and it was said unto them, that they should rest for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed, as they were, should be fulfilled. I judge the four first seals to be providential trial, and not judgment. The Church cannot be in the judgment; and until I saw the truth of the remnant, I thought otherwise. In Rev. 8 we find Jesus standing at the altar exercising the office of High Priest, in intercession for His saints. And in the same chapter we get the pouring out of the judgment, which is a proof that the Church cannot be in them. But we do read of saints being on the earth at that time. The Jews could not be called *the saints* now, but after the Church is removed, they will then be the saints.

There is one thing that I have been especially struck with, and that is the importance of remembering that it is the mind of God we have to learn, which we cannot do from isolated portions of Scripture, but from the united testimony of the Word. I see nothing that stands between me and the Lord's coming *for me*; and come when He may, I have the certain knowledge of having Jesus, and with Him of having *all things*.