

## The Good Confession before Pontius Pilate

John 18: 33-37, 1 Timothy 6: 12-14.

J. G. Bellett.

BT vol 17, p. 120 etc.

The life of righteousness on earth, the life that is pleasing to God, must needs be a life of faith; because the great transgression has estranged God from the world that was made by Him (John 1: 10), and so polluted it that it cannot be the rest and portion of the righteous. Wherefore it is written, "He that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11: 6).

Faith is therefore the principle of all righteousness, practical as well as personal: personal righteousness or justification is of faith, that it may be of grace (Rom. 4: 16); and practical righteousness or godliness must, as we thus see, be of faith also. Faith was thus the secret power that was working in all those who have ever obtained a good report (Heb. 11: 2). Excellent things are indeed spoken of them; but these were all wrought through faith, which is of the operation of God. Faith in Noah floated the ark, while as yet, for 120 years, nothing but the dry land appeared. Faith in Abraham inherited the place and the everlasting city, while as yet those things rested only in vision and in promise. Faith in Moses saw Him that was invisible; and in multitudes (whom time would fail to tell of) faith would have nothing but the "better resurrection." In all these there was found the simple vigorous exercise of the soul, believing the word and promise of God. No religion of their own wrought this in them; no effort at raising affections towards God and unseen things could have done it, but the blessed power (which is faith) of taking God's own word from His own mouth as true, of counting Him faithful Who had promised. And so too, above all, in Jesus, the first and chiefest in the noble army of martyrs — "the author and finisher of faith," faith rejoiced in what "was set before Him," and reached after it, though it lay on the other side of the terrors and shame of the cross; such terrors (Thy "face was so marred more than any man," Thou bruised Lamb of God!) as the heart of man had not conceived.

Paul exhorts his son Timothy "to fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life," in remembrance of this faith that was in the blessed Saviour Himself. "Fight," says he, "the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, Who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 6: 12-14). Eternal life was to be laid hold on by Timothy, and nothing was to be allowed, as it were, to shake off his prey. As the brightness of "the joy set before Him" was never dimmed in the perfect faith of Jesus, though the cross tried His tenure of it to the uttermost; so was Timothy to keep his grasp of eternal life, let him forego what else he might. God in promise had set that before him; and that He would bring out in all its promised blessing and glory at the appearing of Jesus; and to that Timothy was to cling in spite of all the world. The world around him were contentedly getting their portion in this life; and many through the love of it had erred from the faith (ver. 10); but Timothy was to flee this in his pursuit of eternal life. Faith knew its object from the word of promise; and Timothy was to embrace it at every cost.

But there is ever to be confession as well as faith. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10: 10). For God is to be confessed in a world that has disowned Him, as well as believed on in a heart that has departed from

Him. This is His present glory in His saints, and this their service unto Him — service, which (it is true) may try them here. Their faith, like gold, may be cast into the furnace now, but it shall come forth hereafter stamped with the King's own image; for it shall "be found unto praise and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1: 7).

When Jesus was a child, in subjection to His parents at Nazareth, He grew in favour with man as well as with God; for He was then serving as under the law, infinitely attractive in all that was blameless and good. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2: 52). But when called from under that subjection, to witness for God in a God-denying world, then the world began to hate Him; as He says to His brethren, "The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil" (John 7: 7). Then did His sorrows at the hand of the world (because of this His testimony) begin and take their course; every man's hand was against Him, while He sat alone. All His life then became confession, and innumerable evils at once and continually encompassed Him. His supports were the supports of faith, and the light of God's countenance, and the hope of "the joy set before Him." Thus was He throughout His ministry: but in an eminent sense was He the Confessor, when He fully entered into the character of "the Lamb of God." Previously to this, He had been either in controversy with the unbelief of the Jews, or manifesting the name of the Father to those who had been given Him out of the world; but His character as "the Lamb of God" was formally taken up at the supper, when, like the worshipper under the law, He presented Himself as the victim or offering, saying, "This is My body;" and in that character He stood and suffered, from the time of His entrance into the garden, down to His giving up the ghost on the accursed tree.

In the progress of His deep and mysterious journey, after He had thus entered upon this character, He was successively called before both the Jewish and the Roman powers: and before both He stands the Confessor, ready (as He afterwards accomplished) to seal His testimony with His blood.

And here I would turn aside for a while to inspect this blood, the blood of the precious chosen Lamb of God; for surely there is much in it of which we do not properly make our account. That blood was shed for the remission of sins, and it makes clean the conscience of the believing person. But what is found in that blood, that it should bear with it such a savour of rest and refreshing with God, and be of such virtue with Him for tainted sinners who plead it? It was, it is true, blood of God's own; as Paul says to the Ephesian elders, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood." It was the blood of Him Who was Jehovah's fellow, without which indeed it had been nothing save that of a mere man. But this was not all that it was; it was the blood of the righteous One also — of Him Who had magnified the law and made it honourable, presenting Himself to God without spot — of One who willingly poured it out rather than fail in one jot of service and obedience to God. It was the blood of Him Who had finished the work that was given Him to do; Who had stood for God against the whole world, at the expense and loss of every thing; Who had before emptied Himself of glory, that God in the Son of Man might be glorified, as in man He had been dishonoured; and after He had thus emptied Himself, He still went down even to the death of the cross. There was all this in the blood; it was poured out bearing all this in it, and the savour of it with God was refreshing, "a sacrifice and an offering to God for a sweet smelling savour." Of old the joy in it entered so deeply, that "God said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake" (Gen. 8: 21). It was the blood of the righteous obedient Servant, it was the blood of Jesus the Confessor.

Confession is that which stands by the truth of God against the lie of man, and stands by it at the hazard of every thing; and this confession was witnessed by our Jesus. Throughout His life and

ministry, it is true, it had been the way of the Son of God to hide Himself: for having emptied Himself of glory when He took the ministry of our peace upon Him, His manner was, to refuse to know Himself save as the Servant of God. For He had come in His Father's name and not in His own, to seek not His own glory, but the glory of Him that sent Him. But the time was to be, when He must openly stand confessed. Therefore, when adjured by the high priest to answer whether He were the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, He stood to the confession of the truth and His glory, saying, "Thou hast said" (Matt. 26: 64). But this was at the cost of every thing; for then they at once began to spit on Him, to buffet Him, to cover His face with shameless effrontery, and to lead Him off as their prey, saying, "What need we further witness? for we ourselves have heard of His own mouth" (Luke 22: 71, Matt. 26: 65).

And He was to make confession still more public than this — more as in the presence of the world's collected powers and enmity, — and more immediately too in the very face and shame of the cross. And therefore is it that this last testimony of the great Confessor is so singularly marked out by the Spirit of God as His "good confession" (1 Tim. 6: 13). But I desire here to be somewhat particular, and listen very attentively to the character and bearing of this good confession, recorded as it is in

**John 18: 33-37.**

"Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews? "

Pilate throughout this solemn scene was clearly desirous to quiet the people, and deliver Jesus from the malice of the Jews. It appears from the very first, that he was sensible of something peculiar in this prisoner of theirs. His silence had such a character in it, that, as we read, "the governor marvelled greatly." And what divine attractions (we may here observe) must every little passage of His life, every path that He took among men, have had about it? and what must the condition of the eye and the ear, and the heart of man have been, that they did not discern and allow all this? But it is ourselves, dear brethren; we have looked in the face of the Son of God and have seen no comeliness there!

The governor's impression was strengthened by every thing that happened as the scene proceeded: his wife's dream and her message to him, the evident malice of the Jews, and above all, the righteous guiltless Prisoner (though thus in shame and suffering) still persisting that He was the Son of God, all assailed his conscience. But the world in Pilate's heart was too strong for these convictions. They made a noise, it is true, in his heart; but the voice of the world there prevailed, and he went the way of it, though thus convicted. Could he, however, have preserved the world for himself, he would willingly have preserved Jesus. He let the Jews fully understand that he was in no fear of this Pretender, as he might, judge Him to be; that Jesus was not such an One as could create with him any alarm about the interests of his master the emperor. But they still insisted that Jesus had been making Himself a King, and that if he let this Man go, he could not be Caesar's friend.

And here we are led to see that there is no security for the soul but in the possession of the faith that overcomes the world. Pilate had no desire after the blood of Jesus as the Jews had; but the friendship of Caesar was not to be hazarded. The rulers of Israel had once feared that, if they let this Man alone, the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation (John 11: 48); and Pilate now fears to lose the friendship of the same world in the Roman emperor. And thus did the world bind him and the Jews together in the act of crucifying the Lord of glory: as it is written, "For of a truth, against Thy holy servant Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4: 27, 28).

But still, as we have observed, Pilate would have saved Jesus, could he at the same time have

saved his own reputation as Caesar's friend; and therefore it was, that he now entered the judgment-hall, and put this inquiry to Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" For as the Jews had committed the Lord to him upon a charge of having made Himself a King (Luke 23: 2), if he could but lead the Lord to retract these his kingly pretensions, he might then both save Him, and keep himself unharmed. With the design of doing so, he seems thus at this time to have entered the judgment-hall. But the world in Pilate's heart knew not Jesus; as it is written, "the world knew Him not" (John 1: 10; 1 John 3: 1). Pilate was now to find that the god of this world had nothing in Jesus. "Jesus answered, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?" Our Lord by this would learn from Pilate himself where the source of the accusation against Him lay: whether His claim to be King of the Jews was thus challenged by Pilate as protector of the emperor's rights in Judea; or merely upon a charge of the Jews.

Upon this hung, I may say, every thing in the present juncture, and the wisdom and purpose of the Lord in giving the inquiry this direction is most manifest. Should Pilate say that he had now become apprehensive of the Roman interests, the Lord could have at once referred him to the whole course of His life and ministry, to prove that, touching the king, innocency had been found in Him. He had withdrawn Himself, departing into a mountain alone, when He perceived that the multitude would have come and taken Him by force to make Him a king. His controversy was not with Rome. When He came, He found Caesar in Judea, and He never questioned his title to be there; He rather at all times allowed his title, and took the place of the nation, which, because of disobedience, had the image and superscription of Caesar engraven, as it were, on their very land. It is true, that it was despite of the Majesty of Jehovah that had made way for the Gentiles into Jerusalem; but Jerusalem was for the present the Gentiles' place, and therefore the Son of David had no controversy with them because of this. Nothing but the restored faith and allegiance of the nation to God could rightfully cancel this title of the Gentiles. The Lord's controversy was therefore not with Rome, but with the rebellion and unbelief of Israel, with the "sinful nation." And therefore Pilate would have had his answer according to all this, had the charge proceeded from himself as representative of the Roman power. But it was not so. Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation, and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me; what hast Thou done?"

Now this answer of Pilate conveyed the full proof of the guilt of Israel. In the mouth of him who represented the power of the world at that time, the thing was established that Israel had disclaimed their King and sold themselves into the hands of a stranger. This for the present was every thing with Jesus. This at once carried Him beyond the earth and out of the world. For Israel had rejected Him, and His kingdom was therefore not now from hence. Neither indeed could it be; for it is written, "In Judah is God known, His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling-place in Zion. There brake He the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword and the battle" (Ps. 76: 1-3). Zion is the appointed place for the King of the whole earth to sit and rule; and the unbelief of the daughter of Zion must keep the King of the earth away.

The Lord then, as this rejected King, listening to this testimony from the lips of the Roman, could only recognise His present loss of throne. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence." He had no weapons for war if Israel refused Him. There was no threshing for His floor now, for Israel is His instrument to thresh the mountains (Isa. 41: 15; Micah 4: 13; Jer. 51: 20), and Israel was now refusing Him. Out of Judah is to come forth the corner, the nail, and the battle bow, and the house of Judah, and that only is Messiah to make His goodly horse in the battle (Zech. 10: 4). Therefore in this unbelief of Judah He had nothing wherewith to spoil the stout-hearted, and to be terrible to the kings of the earth, nothing wherewith to break the arrows of the bow,

the shield, the sword, and the battle (Ps. 76). His kingdom therefore could not be of this world, it could not be from hence; He had no servants who could fight that He should not be delivered to His enemies.

But this loss of a kingdom, which is "of this world," is but for a while. For Israel who once said, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," shall be brought to say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." And then shall the goodly horse be prepared for the battle, Judah shall be bent for Messiah, the bow shall be filled with Ephraim, and the daughter of Zion shall arise and thresh His floor.

And the answer of the Lord to Pilate intimated this final recovery of His Kingdom. For while from the thus witnessed unbelief of His nation, Jesus perceived and allowed His present loss of it, yet He allows this in such terms as fully expresses His title to a kingdom, leading Pilate at once to say, "Art Thou a King then?" And to this His "good confession" is witnessed. For Pilate would have had no cause to dread either the displeasure of his master, or the tumult of the people; he might have fearlessly followed his will and delivered his prisoner, if the blessed Confessor would now alter the word that had gone out of His lips, and withdraw His claim to be a King. But Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a King." From this His claim there could be no retiring. Here was His "good confession before Pontius Pilate." Though His own received Him not, yet He was theirs; though the world knew Him not, yet was it made by Him. Though the husbandmen were casting Him out, yet was He the Heir of the vineyard. He was anointed to the throne in Zion, though His citizens were saying, that they would not have Him to reign over them; and He must by His "good confession" fully verify His claim to it, and stand by that claim before Pontius Pilate, and in him before all the power of the world. It might arm all that power against Him, but it must be made. Herod and all Jerusalem had once been moved at hearing that He was born Who was King of the Jews, and sought to slay the child; but let the whole world be now moved and arm its power against Him, yet He must declare God's decree, "I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." His right must be witnessed, though in the presence of the usurper, and in the very hour of his power.

But now we are led into other and further revelations.

This "good confession" being thus witnessed, the Lord was prepared to unfold other parts of the divine counsels. When He had distinctly verified His title thus in the very presence of Caesar — i.e., of the world which as yet fills the gap, the way was opened for Him to testify His present character and service. "To this end was I born," says the Lord, "and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth; every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." His possession of the kingdom was now for a time hindered by the unbelief of His nation; but He here shows that there had been no failure of the purpose of God by this. For meanwhile He had come into the world for other present work than to take His throne in Zion. He had come to bear "witness unto the truth."

The Lord by this "good confession" was "witness to the truth," for His testimony of course was true. But this character extends far beyond this "good confession," and the Gospel of John is used by the Holy Ghost as the especial instrument of unfolding it. For in John we see that the Lord had been conducting His ministry as "witness unto the truth" from the very beginning; as is said in John 1 "the only begotten Son Which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him." He had been manifesting the name of the Father to those who had been given to Him out of the world (John 17: 6), and this is the same as bearing witness to the truth (see John 8: 26, 27). He had come to give His elect an understanding that they might know Him that is true (1 John 5: 20). Every one that was "of the truth," as He here speaks to Pilate, had been hearing Him. His sheep had heard and known His voice, while others believed not, because they were not His sheep (John 10: 3, 4, 26). He that was of God had heard God's word at His mouth, while others had not heard His words because they were not of God

(John 8: 47). And hereby had been made manifest the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error (1 John 4: 6). He had come into the world that He might say, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14: 6). He was the Good Shepherd come to search out His flock — to gather to Himself and to the Father all who were His — to bring into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God all the chosen children, and thus to fill up their full prepared measure; to bring forth sons unto God by the word of truth, to seal them with the Spirit of adoption, and to prepare for them mansions in the Father's house. The heavens were now to be opened; and the fulness of Him that filleth all in all; by the truth and through the Spirit, was to be prepared and brought into them.

Such was the Lord's present ministry; for such was He born, and had come into the world, and had He been throughout opening to His disciples. As He says, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world" (John 17: 6). Though a King, and King too of the Jews, and to take yet the kingdom of the world, He was not now to exercise that power, for His title had been denied by His own nation. Israel's rejection of their King had now been sealed by that testimony of Pilate: "Thine own nation hath delivered Thee unto me." The trial had now therefore fully proved them to be "reprobate silver." The Lord's tarrying among them, if haply they would repent, was therefore now to be over. He could no longer go through their cities and villages healing and preaching the kingdom, but must take on Him other ministry; and that ministry He now fully and formally reveals saying, "To this end was I born, and for this cause carne I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth; every one that is of the truth heareth Me.

But by this we at once discern the different purposes of God in His dispensations by Israel and by the church; for the further development of which I have judged this passage of scripture to be thus worthy of more careful notice than is perhaps commonly given to it. It is not as a King holding His citizens in rule, but as the manifester of the Father, making us sons, as we have seen, that the Lord is now fulfilling His pleasure. Through the word and by the Spirit He is gathering all that are "of the truth" (as He speaks to Pilate), filling up the measure of His body the church, which is His fulness.

We thus from this scripture get further evidence of the distinct purpose of God in His dispensation by Israel and the church; a subject that we have often considered. But while we trace these things, may we know the power of them in our own souls more and more! Knowledge without communion with God would only expose our souls to Satan; may the Lord preserve us in so tempting a day as this!

And from all this we learn that the present absence of the Lord is to be interpreted differently as respects Israel and the church. As respects the church, it is gracious; because for them it was expedient that He went away, as by that they have received the Holy Ghost to be in them, to teach them, as the Spirit of truth, the testimony of Jesus Who was the witness to the truth, the revealer of the Father. But as respects Israel, it is judicial; and righteously so, — because it was Israel's unbelief and sin that occasioned it. It was by the wickedness of the husbandmen that the Heir of the vineyard was cast out. According to all this, when the Lord left Israel He turned His back on their city, leaving it for desolation, and saying, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23: 38). He hid His face from them. But when He left His church, He left them in the act of lifting up His hands and blessing them (Luke 24: 51). His face was towards them. The one action was judicial, the other gracious. When He left the Jews, He said, "Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me and shall not find Me, and where I am, thither ye cannot come." But when He left His disciples, He said, "A little while and ye shall not see Me; and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father." When of old the glory departed from Israel, every ray of it, as it were, was

gathered up and not a trace left behind, no present mercy remained (Ezek. 11: 23). But when Jesus ascended from the midst of His saints, it was but to give gifts to them (Eph. 4: 12, 13); and as He said, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you" (John 14: 18). As to Israel, the Lord is now asleep (Ps. 44: 23); but as to the church, He is ever wakeful and active, the Advocate and Priest on high (Heb. 9: 24, 1 John 2: 1).

All this shows the different purpose which the Lord has as respects the church and Israel. The church during His absence is preparing through the Holy Ghost to stand in the glory of the Son; but it is the time of Israel's judgment.

And here I cannot refuse to notice the same distinct and decided teaching as to this, which we get in the parable of the talents (Luke 19).

The Lord is there presented to us as a nobleman who went into a far country, to get for himself a kingdom, and to return; who, previous to his departure, committed his goods to his servants to be occupied for him during his absence; and then on his return took account of them severally, but executed righteous judgment on his citizens, who had plainly told him before he went away that they would not have him to reign over them.

Now in this exhibition of the ways of God we shall find very clearly that the purpose (among others), of the present dispensation is to provide companions for the King in His glory, to give to Him those who shall share the throne of the kingdom with Him. The servants are distinguished from the citizens in this parable. The servants have their occupation during the nobleman's absence; but during that time the citizens are not within view at all. So is it with the church and with Israel. During this dispensation, which is the time of the Lord's absence, the church occupies the scene, and Israel as a nation are forgotten: there is neither Jew nor Greek; whereas after the return the distinction between the servants and the citizens is still as clear. The servants (found faithful) are called into the fellowship of the kingdom, and the citizens are punished for their rebellion. So again with the church and with Israel. The saints of the Most High are to take the kingdom with the Son of Man. They who have continued with Jesus in His temptations are to have a kingdom appointed them by Him, as He receives a kingdom from the Father. They who overcome are to sit with Him on His throne. The saints are to judge the world.

The servants of this parable are not the subjects, but the coheirs with the returned nobleman; and such are the saints, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;" they share the dominion with Him. They are not after the nobleman's return to bring forth their fruit, but they will then rather reap the glory of dominion with Him, as the reward of their having brought forth their fruit to Him now in this time of His absence. "Because thou hast been faithful in a very little," it will be said to the servants by the returned nobleman, "have thou authority over ten cities." But Israel, in the day of the return of their once rejected but then glorified King, are to meet the vengeance. Israel are the citizens, for Zion is the city of the Great King, and Jesus is the King of the Jews. It is as a King with His subjects or citizens that the Lord is to be associated with the people of Israel, and not as Heir with His co-heirs. And their cry, their rebellious cry, "We have no king but Caesar," in the day of the returned nobleman, the day of the revelation of Messiah the King, is to be answered thus — "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before Me" (Luke 19: 27). The present absence of the Lord is not working their repentance; but rather the old rebellious spirit is judicially working in them till His return finds them ripe for the judgment.\* And thus will that return bring the "day of vengeance" (Isa. 61: 1, 2; Luke 4: 18-21), "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30: 7); of trouble such as never was since there was a nation (Dan. 12: 1). In that day an alarm will be sounded, for it will

be "a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Joel 2: 12). "In all the land two parts shall be cut off and die" (Zech. 13: 8). It will be a day that "shall burn as an oven," and, Who, as says the prophet, may abide it? (Mal. 3: 2, 4: 1†).

\*The prophet Daniel is made to supply what is lacking in the completeness of this parable: he takes us into the "far country" and there shows us the very act of the nobleman receiving the kingdom (Dan. 7: 13) . . . How sweetly is scripture thus in harmony with scripture. Surely every note is touched by the same divine hand, and what music is the whole of it to those who have ears to hear!

†It is equally true that His return will be with salvation; the day is to be one of mercy as well as judgment: of mercy to the remnant who are waiting for Him in the spirit of repentance; of judgment to the nation. Thus in the several passages above referred to — in Isaiah, the mourners in Sion are to be comforted then, and the full blessing to come upon them (Isa. 61: 2-11), — in Jeremiah, Jacob is to be saved out of that day (Jer. 30: 7), — in Joel, there is to be deliverance in the remnant whom the Lord shall call (Joel 2: 32), — in Zechariah, the third part is left in the land, and made the people of the Lord (Zech. 13: 8, 9), — and in Malachi the day shall discern between the righteous and the wicked, and those who fear the Lord shall be made up as His jewels, and the Sun of that day shall arise upon them with healing in His wings" (Mal. 3, 4).

But let us not forget that the nobleman has returned "having received the kingdom," and that the faithful servants have been promised their ten and their five cities. Therefore though the rebellious be thus judged, the scenes of dominion is not to pass away in the judgment. The cities have been promised as the rewards of service, the kingdom has been received by the nobleman, and this earth, to which the nobleman returns (for the place of his return is the place of his kingdom), must remain for the exhibition of that kingdom, and to be the scene of those rewards. And therefore we read in other scriptures that it is "all peoples, nations, and languages," the peoples, nations, and languages of this earth which shall be given to the King and His servants. "The Son of Man shall be given dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him." Judgment then shall be given to the saints of the Most High. "The saints shall judge the world" and shall possess the kingdom (see Dan. 7: 13, 14, 22; 1 Cor. 6: 2).

From all this then, we gather that this present dispensation is giving a family of children to the heavenly Father, and to the blessed Son of Man, companions in the glory of His throne. These are its purposes. By the ministry of the "witness to the truth," which is the Son, and "the Spirit" which is the Holy Ghost, the saints are made sons and daughters, for whom are prepared the mansions in the Father's house. They are all one in the adoption of their heavenly Father, equally and surely belonging to Him, "all fitly framed together;" but in the inheritance of the glories of the coming kingdom (for which they are now getting ready) they are not one, as it is said to them, "Have thou authority over ten cities," and "Have thou authority over five cities."

And in this is the perfection of the ways of our God: for in this will be found all that quiets the soul while awakening it, all that would lead us forth to service, and yet never take us from our sweet retreat, the full assurance of our Father's equal love. Oh, that the love of Christ may constrain us more and more to be willing servants one of another! This is the only real dignity, the only true praise. "I am among you as one that serveth," said the Lord and Master of us all. Whatever the outward aspect and bearing of our life may be, the spirit of service should be the hidden principle. "If we be beside ourselves" — what should we still be able to say? "It is unto God" "If we be sober," what should we still be able to say? "It is for your cause." No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself. This is the only true rule of christian action, this the hidden and only effectual spring to set all our

movements right, as under God and like to Jesus.