

Enoch

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Section 1 of: **The Patriarchs: Being Meditations upon Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job; The Canticles, Heaven and Earth.**

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It is not so much of Enoch himself that I now purpose, in the Lord's grace, I would hope, to write a little, but rather of the times and the saints before the flood. Whether it be of them or of him, the materials, as we know, are very scanty; but in the way and wisdom of the Spirit of God, they are full of meaning and of value.

A peculiar attraction has been commonly felt in the Book of Genesis.

The simplicity of the narratives has to account for much of this, I doubt not. Human life is in its infancy and artlessness. The scenes are domestic, and the habits and manners such as family duties and affections were forming. This is a great source of enjoyment to the mind from this book. Such springs of pleasure are at times tasted in spite of ourselves. We are spoiled very much by the customs of the world, and we suppose that we like them. But still we find ourselves naturally at ease in such scenery as that which this lovely book presents to us. The wife of one wealthy lord, who numbered his servants by hundreds, and his flocks by thousands, would knead the cake for the traveller and the daughter of another, without practising the language of apology, would be seen by strangers watering the family herds.

Yet with all this there was the truest courtesy. The honour due to all men was as well understood as the love of kindred. It was not barbaric life, though simple and inartificial. It was not rude simplicity; but that which came from an influence that could mould and adorn life. And that influence was the knowledge of God. The times of this book were, as we know they were, unindebted to the advance of civility, or the regulations of cultivated life; but still the state of things was not barbarous just because there was the knowledge of God. The hand of God was felt, while as yet the conceits of polished life had not time or liberty either to garnish or soil the scene.

It is this which fashions the manners of these early times. Peculiar they are, deeply commending themselves to a right mind; but enough, perhaps, to provoke the smile of many who belong to times like ours. For strange nowadays would be the confidential friendship of, a master and his servant. And yet such was between Abraham and Eliezer, though all the while the duties and rights of the relationship were religiously observed. And how unwarrantable would it now be judged, that the intended husband of one of the daughters, or the son-in-law himself, as in the case of Laban and Jacob, should tend the family flocks in the heat of day and frost of night, getting his wages! And yet in all this there is no moral offence whatever; nothing but what may charm the nicest sensibilities of our nature.

But that which ought to lend this book its principal power to engage us is this: the Lord Himself is seen in it in ways and characters suited to this simple and primitive style. The action of the book being very much domestic, plain and unadorned, His way is according. Whether He communicates His mind, or manifests His presence, it is after this same pattern. He does not employ prophets, but personally makes His pleasure known. It may be in a dream, or with a voice, as well as by personal

manifestation; but still it is *Himself*. And even if angels are employed, they are rather His *companions* than His *messengers*.

In the cool of the day, or the afternoon, He walked in the garden. In the field He pleaded with Cain, *personally* pleaded with him, adding the weight and authority of His own presence to a moment of awful and solemn interest. He came down at the cry of Babel, and the cry of the sin of Sodom, just that He might see, as we would do, whether things were really as bad as they were said to be. In forms of intimacy He again and again appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; inviting confidence, expressing displeasure, or conveying His purpose, in ways of full personal familiarity. And though, in the progress of the book, this style may grow a little slack, still it is maintained in measure to the end, even where we might have least expected it. For to kings, not of the stock of Abraham, the Lord God appeared in dreams by night, and, without amazement, warned them of their duty, or told them of their danger.

The ministry of prophets, as I observed, is not employed. That would have been too distant, too reserved, to suit the general style. Nor is the divine pleasure communicated through the Holy Ghost, or by inspiration. That is not the way either — not the usual way. But it is, as we have seen, the personal interference of the Lord Himself, coming in a vision, or by a dream or a word; or in the still nearer way of taking the forms and attributes of manhood; and that, too, not in mystic dress, as afterwards to such as Isaiah, Daniel, or John; but as one who was meeting man in his place and circumstances. As a traveller needing hospitality, He eats of a calf and a cake at the tent door with one; with another He contends and wrestles, as a man with his fellow, having a quarrel or matter of dispute with him.

See all this style of action in the case of Noah. How interestedly does the Lord God enter into the whole state of things in that day! Just as we all feel, His eye affects His heart. And then, just as we all do, He takes counsel with Himself. He saw the wickedness of man that it was great; it grieved Him to the heart; and then He said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth." And after all this, just as we ourselves would do, having taken His counsel, He communicates it to a friend, passing it to the ear, and the heart, and the sympathies of another.

It was thus that the Lord dealt with Noah. He dealt with him as a man with his friend, as well as like God with an elect sinner. And we ourselves practise these ways. We love these confidences of friendship. We love a second self "The end of all flesh is come before Me," says the Lord to Noah, telling him what had been passing in His own bosom. And afterwards, in the day of the waters, in the same way of gracious friendship, when the ark was about to float upon the scene of the judgment, "the Lord shut him in." With His own hand He did it.

Here was intimacy. Here was living, palpable nearness of the Lord God to His creature. And this is in character with His general actings and communications in this book. The glory was not as yet taking its place in a dispensation, shrouded in a cloudy chariot, or seated between cherubim. In all that there was majesty and conscious greatness, and the distance of holiness, as suited an ordered economy. But in the times of Genesis this was not so. Things were informal, and the action was desultory; and the Lord was in person, as the occasion demanded, according to this.

In this manner do we find the action of this beautiful book. The elect of God are thus, and thus is the living God Himself. It is as divine as anything else in the Word. And the soul so receives it. And good reason have we for blessing the Lord, because He has introduced our hearts to such a book as this. For we are not always ready for the higher things. We cannot at all times reach them, or obey a summons to ascend the heavenly places. But the Spirit of God is tender of our weakness, and has provided for it. The Scriptures, if I may take leave to speak in a figure, have change of air and change

of scene for our souls.

It is relish and appetite we have to covet, beloved — a holy delight in the things of God, whether they be the things of the "children" or of the "fathers;" the pure milk or the strong meat. *Little* ones in His school are still *living* ones. That is the blessed thing. He who liveth in the mere power of intellect, or in the schools of men, is dead while he liveth.

There is, however, another thing to be said on the times and on the Book of Genesis.

In those times, or, as the apostle speaks, "from Adam to Moses," law did not give character to the state of the people of God. Adam was under law in Eden, and so were the children of Israel after the day of Mount Sinai. But not so the generations from Adam to Moses. Sin was equally in the world, but there was no law. Rom. 5: 14.

But not only, I may observe, were they not under law; there was also almost a total absence of moral or preceptive instruction. Much revelation of the divine pleasure and counsels there was; but scarcely anything of precept. Under the Spirit, revelation worked its result on character and conduct, and formed the mind and the ways of the saints. Evil was resented by them, and judged of God; but without a written standard of right and wrong. Without any law against murder, Cain is exposed; without a fifth commandment, Ham's dishonour of his father is punished. And so Jacob's guile is visited and resented by the Lord; and the wicked way of Joseph's brethren. And without the light of any precept the soul of a saint can thus plead with temptation, How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

All this is so, though neither law nor moral instruction was then published. It was revelation in matters of faith which, under the Spirit, formed patriarchal character. Abraham was not enjoined either his altar or his tent; but his call of God, through the Spirit, suggested both. No precept required his high, generous treatment of Lot; but his faith and hope in God dictated and commanded it. Without direction on the case, his knowledge of God and the mind of Christ that was in him disposed him, and taught him to let the potsherds of the earth strive with their fellows, but as soon as his kinsman was a captive to go forth for his deliverance. No word, no oracle from God, distinguished for him between the king of Salem and the king of Sodom; but the light that was in him did.

I might go through other histories in this book, and find these same things. The holy judgment of the mind that was in them, under the Spirit, suggested to those early saints conduct by means of revelation, promise, and calling of God. And this is ever beautiful, when we get genuine samples or instances of it.

Such then are among the characteristics of this earliest and infant age of our history, and of the precious book which records it. And this earliest method in the way of the Lord is to be the last and the abiding method. In Genesis, as we have seen, the Lord God acted "in the human guise," being personally present in the scene, and seeking the nearest intimacy with His creature. And this is to be the eternal thing when dispensations are over. God in manhood is to be for ever!

Precious mystery! Unfathomable wonder! Blessed to ponder this. The first is to be the last. The song of salvation — the "song of Moses" — was the first breath of the ransomed tribes. It was sung on the banks of the Red Sea, just as they had got beyond the reach of Pharaoh. After experiences were different. They had then to do with themselves. But at first the victory of the divine "man of war" was everything to them. And this first thing is to be the eternal thing. The song of Moses is to fill the courts of glory. Exodus 15; Rev. 15. And so in earliest days, in Genesis days, the divine presence was not deemed strange, or something which did not suit the earth, or belong to man. The divine courtesies

were then, so to speak, freely given, and unsuspectingly received. And so at the end, in days of millennial heavens and earth, the Lord God will be personally again in the scene.

The first five chapters of this book give us an account of antediluvian times, or, as they have been called, "the world before the flood." And it is those chapters I now purpose to look at a little particularly.

The whole opens, as of course, with the work of creation. I speak not particularly of this. But, instructed by the apostle, we may say that it is only *faith* which deals justly with this great work. Faith puts God above all the things that were made, or are seen. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Faith treats God worthily — the only principle in the soul which does so. He dwells "in the light which no man can approach unto." Faith owns this. The wisdom of men busies itself in seeing or inspecting Him. But though He will "show" great things of Himself, yet does faith know that no man hath seen or can see Him. 1 Tim. 6. It enjoys all His manifestations; but inspects not His dwelling-place in light.

The second chapter exhibits the man made in the image of God, in his estate in the garden of Eden. All there was tributary to him, all was for him. He had food for all the faculties and desires of his nature, and provision of all desirable things. He was made, however, to impart as well as to receive — and that is ever a necessary feature in the happiness of a well-ordered mind. He was important to the garden, as the garden was important to him. He had "to dress it and to keep it." And he saw his dwelling-place the spring-head of a fruitful river, which went forth with life and refreshing to the whole earth. With all this the voice of a Sovereign was heard. A command went forth. "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat." But this was no trespass, no discordant note on the ear of Adam. God will not, and cannot, give His glory to another. And a creature of a right thought, "made upright," as Adam was, must delight in having it so. All this was therefore only harmonious and consistent happiness.

To perfect his condition the Lord God celebrates for him a coronation day, and a day of espousals. But this action has an order in it. The Lord takes counsel with Himself about Adam's espousals. This is done *first*. Then He introduces him to the scene of his sovereignty. He brings the creatures of the field and of the air to Adam, to see what he would call them, and whatsoever he called every living creature, that was the name thereof. This was investing him with dominion, setting the crown royal on his head. Then He prepares the help-meet, and presents Eve to him, following his coronation with his marriage.

This is the order of these events — an order which has a sacred and interesting sense in it. It is not the mere progress of independent facts. It is the design, so to speak, of a great master. For there is, as we now know, a mystery which had been "hid in God," "purposed in Himself," before the foundation of the world, His secret (Eph. 3), of which this marriage in the garden of Eden was the type. Eph. 5. And according to this the Lord, in the solitude of His own presence, in the musings of His own bosom, ere He led forth Adam into his kingdom, prepares his helpmeet for him.

This, however, is not merely the *design of a great master*, but the *well-known way of a perfect love*.

The *richest* purpose of joy is the *first* in counsel.

The Lord's earliest thought was about Adam's best blessing. The help-meet at his side, the one like unto him, his companion, was destined to be more to him than all beside. And that which was

chief in his enjoyments was the earliest and deepest thought in the mind of his Lord. His Lord pondered it. He spoke of it to Himself. His coronation was taken in hand at once and disposed of; but the getting of his help-meet for him was counselled and talked of beforehand.

This is the way that love would take. We know it ourselves. We like to dwell in thought over the materials of the happiness of one we love. So that all this is sweet and important to our hearts; for we read in it that which may again draw out the admiration and the worship, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!"

And Adam at once owns all this. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," he says, as he received the woman from the hand of the Lord God, owning that all was now complete. The serpent may by-and-by insinuate it to be otherwise. But he is a liar There is not a flaw in all this estate. No lack, and no exception. Nothing that did not in its way contribute to bless him; and nothing of creature blessedness that was wanting to him

But all this is at once envied by the great enemy. And he had title to try the stability of it. The nakedness, the unshamed nakedness, of the man and the woman was innocency. Yes, but it was also *exposure*. The creature was to be proved. Strength of creaturehood was to be tried. And the enemy had title to enter the garden to carry on the trial. He was no trespasser there. The order and purpose of creation made room for him, as well as for Adam himself. The very instrument by which he was to conduct his designs was there already. The tree of knowledge was in the midst of the garden.

The tempter, this serpent that was more subtil than any beast of the field," was the devil. This is directly told us. Rev. 12: 9; Rev. 20: 2. And the scene around us to this hour tells of his victory. "The present evil world," whether in its moral condition or in its circumstances, we get in Genesis 3. And we might have expected this; for the world as it now is has derived itself out of the apostasy of Adam; its character and condition are formed by that great act of rebellion.

The three master-principles which animate "the course" of it — the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are here seen to become the springs of moral action in the heart of the woman, as soon as she listened to the devil; for the soul that gives up God must find out other masters, and other resources. And this is the world. The world has no confidence in God, nothing to bind it to Him, nothing give it rest in Him, no sense of His love and truth. Such has it been since this hour, when man gave ear to the accuser of God. It has therefore found out other objects. God made man upright; but he 'has sought out many inventions.' Ecc. 7: 29.

Conscience, too, is quickened into being. Sin did this. "They knew that they were naked." And it was then, at the hour of its birth, as it is to this hour, an *uneasy* conscience, a conscience that makes cowards of all who carry it. "I was afraid," says Adam (unable to look at God), "because I was naked." Conscience in man must be of this quality, for it owes its existence to sin. There was no sense of good and evil in him till he sinned; and this sense, thus acquired, must leave him a coward in the presence of the *righteous* One.

Instinctively they make themselves aprons. This is our doing still. Our common state of guilt makes us shun even our fellow-creatures. We cannot stand inspection even from them. One great and constant effort, in the scene around us every day, is to escape *full* notice. The apron is still invented. The social system understands and allows this. Indeed, it is maintained by a common consent of this sort. And religion, in its way and measure, as well as the rules and common understanding of society, helps in all this. But "the presence of the Lord God" is a different element from that of the presence of our fellows. No rules which sustain the social system will make that tolerable for a moment. The clothing and the ceremony, the inventions of society, or the good manners that array and adorn it, will

be found vanity. All have come short of His glory. Let but the conscience hear the tread of His foot, or the sound of His voice in the garden, and no attempt will be equal to that moment. Even religious inventions will all be vain. They can give no confidence with God, nor turn the current of the heart. With his apron upon him, Adam hides himself among the trees of the garden.

This teaches holy and solemn lessons. But with all this cowardice there is effrontery "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree." Man lays the mischief down at God's door. He says in effect, "Let God see to it; for the woman is His creature, and He gave her to me;" as he still, in the spirit of his mind, says, "Let God see to it; for the world is His, and He made it." A strange and horrible union! The insolence of the heart charging God, and yet a coward conscience unable to meet Him. The sinner may talk big, and make a noise; he may reason upon God and his own condition, and frame speeches and arguments as well as aprons; but in spite of all he can surround himself with, there he is, Eke Adam, ashamed of himself, and afraid of God. Man has wronged the blessed God, and avoids Him. He charges Him, and yet is afraid to look in His face while he does so. All this, in spite of himself, witnesses against him. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee," the Lord has but to say. And then, as again in the parable, he must be speechless.

Such was the mind of Adam then, and such is human nature still. But if this were his moral condition, what were his circumstances? Just those of man to this hour also. By the sweat of his face he was to get bread, and in the sorrow of his heart to eat of it; and that too in the place of thorns and thistles. And in like sorrow the woman was to bring forth children; and all this till they both returned to the dust, out of which they had been taken. And man is still after this manner, outside the garden, conversant with toil and sorrow. Dressing and keeping a lovely surface and a fruitful soil is not the thing or the allotment now. Thorns and thistles and an unkindly reluctant ground are to be contended with, and life to be had by the sweat of the face in the contest.

God alone is above this water-flood, able to manage this mighty catastrophe. And His supremacy is such that He will make even such an eater yield meat, and get sweetness out of even this strong one,

In a glorious sense, however, redemption is far more than remedy of a mischief, or relief, even with advantage, for an injured, ruined creation. Creation, rather, is the servant of redemption; for "redemption is no afterthought." For the pleasure of Him who sits upon the throne all things are and were created. But that very throne has *the rainbow round about it* (Rev. 4), the sign of covenant faithfulness, and that all things were to stand *in redemption*, or in the value of the blood of Jesus. So that when sin entered, the Lord God was at once prepared for it (I speak as a man); prepared to meet it by covenant arrangements made before the world began, as His very first word to the serpent tells us, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Here the great way of God opens upon us. This promised Seed of the woman, here revealed, is *God's provision for dead and ruined man*, in the face of all the malice and wrath of the enemy. And He is this *at all personal cost*; for the serpent was to bruise His heel. But though bruised, *He was to achieve a glorious victory*; for He was to bruise the serpent's head.

These are the holy, august characters of this mysterious stranger — this promised Deliverer or Kinsman. Such was the truth revealed on the first moment of our sin, and such has been the truth ever since. This gospel, published in the first promise in the face of the devil himself, is maintained in these last days by the apostle, in the face of men on earth and angels in heaven. Gal. 1: 8. Whether it be the earliest or the latest preaching of it, this glorious gospel is still the same. It is "the witness of God

which He hath testified of His Son." It is the gospel of the bruised and yet victorious Seed of the woman. In the bright and perfect idea of it man is silent and passive. Abram had only to *believe*, and righteousness was imputed to him. Israel had but to *stand by* and see God's salvation. Joshua in Zechariah 3, the prodigal, the convicted adulteress, are all in like case. And here, at the beginning of our sin, and the beginning of God's gospel, it is just the same. Adam has only to *listen*, and through hearing to believe and live. The word is nigh us, and we have but to receive it without working anything in the heights above, or in the depths beneath. The *activities* are God's; the *sacrifices* are God's. The profoundness of our silence and passiveness in *becoming* righteousness is only equalled by the greatness of the divine activity and sacrifice in *acquiring* righteousness for us. In the sight of such a mystery we may well stand and say, "What hath God wrought!" "Simple indeed it is to us," as one once said, "but it cost Him everything."

There is nothing in the heart of man like faith in this gospel. The faith of a poor sinner in the redeeming grace of God is the most beautiful condition the soul can be in. As saints, beloved, we may trust God for our need. We may look to, Him for counsel, or for provision. We may trust Him to vindicate our doings, comfort us in sorrow, and strengthen us in difficulties. But the faith of a sinner, in the justifying grace and work of His divine, Saviour, transcends them all. Nothing is so precious, for nothing apprehends God in so glorious a character, or gives Him to the soul in so wondrous a relationship. This faith it is which uses the richest resources in God, and acts upon the most blessed discoveries of Him. For while all the ways of His glory shine brightly — His strength, and comfort, and wisdom for His needy saints — yet, that He has grace and salvation for sinners, this excelleth them all.

The Spirit of God, in these early times, gives us some most precious samples of this most precious faith; as though (may I say it?) delighting in such a thing, He produced an impression of the finest character *at once*, as soon as occasion served.

Thus Adam, in his faith, talked only of life, though in the midst of death — death, which he himself had brought in, a standing witness against him. He was doomed to be an outcast in a scene of ruin which his own sin had produced. He knew this and allowed it. But he had listened to the story of the conflict between his destroyer and the woman's Seed. In the very place of judgment — from among the trees of the garden, where conscience had driven him — his ear had caught the sound of the sweet gospel, not of mercy merely, but propitiation and victory, and forth he comes, talking of life. He called his wife "Eve," the mother of all living. All life was in the promised Kinsman-Redeemer. In creation Adam himself had been constituted head of life — "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth;" but that, in his esteem, was now forfeited and gone. Life must flow in a new channel, "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

How grand in its very simplicity all this was! And there, was recovery also of *moral* glory, in a great sense, in all this. Adam had not *submitted* himself to the *majesty* of God, but affected to be as God. But now he does *submit* himself to the *righteousness* of God. His shoulders bowed themselves to receive the covering wrought for his nakedness by God's own hand. See Rom. 10: 3. He was now honouring God the Redeemer, though he had just before been doing all he could to dishonour God the Creator — so simply was he led by the Spirit to value the divine provision for a sinner in the promise of our bruised but victorious Kinsman.

In like manner, Eve. She had listened to the same promise, and therefore, as soon as she had brought forth her first-born, she gives witness that this promise lived chief in the thoughts of her heart. "I have gotten a man from the Lord," said she. She as much overlooked herself as Adam did. She

gloried only in her Seed. She had listened to the promise with too faithful an ear to mistake herself for her Seed. It was not over herself, but over him, that she now, in the language of another mother, was singing, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour!" There was a mistake here, it is true. But there was witness how the object of faith filled her visions, and the expectations of faith stirred in her heart. And so soon as disastrous events manifest her mistake, and prove to her that this first-born of her womb was anything rather than the promised Seed — that instead of being the bruiser of the serpent's head, he turned out to be the murderer of his brother — still is she found on the rock where faith had fixed her soul. "Let God be true, but every a man a liar," was her triumph. Over Seth she exclaims, "God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew." Though every cistern fail, she knows the fountain cannot. One son had been a murderer, and another his victim; but still God is true. "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord *for ever*; with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations."

Precious faith, we may say, "like precious faith," with Adam, and with us, beloved. So Abel. Faith in him had respect to the same promise, the same gospel. The word had spoken of a *bruised* Deliverer, and accordingly it is a victim, a bruised or bloody sacrifice, he lays on God's altar. But not only so. He brings the *fat* of the victim likewise. He knows the delight which God Himself takes in the provisions of His own grace. He knows that He is pleased with the work of His own hand. He understands that God is a cheerful giver, that there is no grudging in the gift of grace. In spirit he hears the music which the Father's command has awakened in His own house over His returned prodigal. In the delight with which God Himself had clothed the naked sinner with coats which His own hand had willingly wrought (a happier task than even the six days of creation), the faith of Abel seems to glory. And as thus the richest joy that is felt in all the costly mystery of redemption is felt by God Himself, he lays the richest part of the victim, the fat of the animal, on the altar, making *that* the Lord's own portion in this feast of love and joy, in His own house, and at His own table.

This was another most excellent sample of a sinner's faith. Abel, in spirit, was in Luke 15 — that chapter which tells us that the Lord's own joy in it may account for the gospel. And all these are *pattern* works of the Spirit, forming the faith of sinners. There is no questioning of God's grace, no uneasy reflections on creature-worthlessness, though there was plenty of cause for that. The strength, the liberty, the triumph of the promise live in their souls.

And let me add, that if the confession of Lamech (Gen. 4: 23, 24) be the utterance of a convicted believing sinner (as I believe it is), it is only another equally fine expression of this same early and excellent faith. It is of an order worthy to stand with that of Adam, or of Eve, or of Abel; fervent, strong unquestioning, and full of liberty.

God's word to Cain had revealed a great truth — that He, and He *alone*, has to do with a sinner. Others, like Abel, may suffer; but all sin is directly done against God, and He asserts His title to deal with it alone. "Whosoever slayeth Cain [the Lord therefore says], vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold."

This great truth, so unspeakably precious to faith, Lamech seems to have received and fed upon, until his whole soul triumphed in it. Not merely *preservation* from man, like Cain, does he count upon, but *salvation*, "the salvation of God." Learning that as a sinner he was *alone* with God, he takes that place, and there discovers how God can deal with him, even in the security and provisions of grace; and that discovery is the light in which his soul at once walks. Like Job, afterwards, he publishes his confession far and wide. "Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech," he says; "hearken unto my speech." Then in true gospel intelligence he magnifies sin, and owns that it was his destruction. "I

have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt." But then again, in true gospel simplicity, he much more magnifies grace.

If Cain be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold." In his thoughts, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." He is of the very mind and temper of Paul. His confidence and victory are apostolic. He seems to sing -

I hear the accuser roar
Of ills that I have done;
I know them well, and thousands more -
Jehovah findeth none."

A glorious sight his faith takes of the whole mystery, and of the boundlessness and riches of grace. He listens to the, provisions of grace (when alone with God), and the charging of the law, the accusing of Satan, the alarms of conscience, and the self-righteous reproaches of men, are not heard.*

*I do not, however, assume that Lamech was a murderer; but he could identify himself with such. With Paul, he could, in the sense of what he was before God, speak of himself as chief of sinners. And we know also that the repentant Remnant of the latter day will, in their confession, quite take the place or blood-guiltiness after this manner. They will look to Him whom they pierced. They will, in the spirit of Daniel or Nehemiah, make themselves one with the guilty nation.

These operations of the Spirit through the promise on the souls of sinners are truly beautiful. The apron of fig-leaves drops off, or is rather cast away, when such operations go on. It is found *unnecessary* now, as it was found *insufficient* before. And so all the inventions of men. They are the contrivances of the wrong-doer himself, the efforts of the creature, the devices of the sinner, and they can *therefore* never do. But they are as unnecessary as they are insufficient. The coat of skin, the work of God Himself, has made them so.

There is, however, something which this glorious relief provided for the sinner does *not* accomplish. The thorns and the thistles of the cursed ground remain; and with them the sweat of the face, and the sorrow of the heart, and then the return of dust to dust. As to this hour. We shine in "the righteousness of God," adorned under His own eye, and by His own hand dressed for His presence; but all the while pressures and hindrances and sore grievances wait on the tilling of the earth; and pains bring us into the world, till we return to the dust from whence we came. Neither does this glorious provision of grace displace the cherubim. They accompany it rather. They are stationed at the eastern gate of the garden, with their flaming sword, to keep every way of the tree of life; and no promise which Adam had listened to, no covering which Adam had received, changes this. Man's capacity to regain that tree is gone, and gone for ever. Never will he be anything but a *saved sinner*, pass he along what paths of glory he may, from "paradise" to "the kingdom," from the kingdom to "the new heavens and the new earth." Eating of that tree is only by gift of Jesus, the woman's Seed of the first promise. Rev. 2: 7.

Such are among the mysteries taught us in this wonderful chapter, full of mysteries as it is, and of the profoundest secrets of God. But we have to come down for instruction to learn man and his ways, as well as to rise, as we learn God and His counsels.

Cain is declared by the Spirit of God in the apostle to have been "of that wicked one." The first thing we see in him is his religion. He renders to God, as offering or sacrifice, the fruit of the cursed ground, the produce of his own toil. But this was unbelief. It was the denial of all that had happened

since the creation, the religious denial of it. It was the direct contradiction of the way of faith, or of Abel. Abel took the way of the promise to God, the bloody victory of the woman's Seed, the death and resurrection of Christ, and offered of his flock; but Cain refused to see man's rain and God's redemption, giving God the fruit of the earth; in effect saying, that He was to be read and known in the thorns and the thistles, the sweat, and the sorrow, and the death; and by the solemn services of his altar he was denying all truth.

This was the way of a heart deeply departed from God. He was laying the scene of ruin at God's door, as Adam, ere he repented, had laid down the sin itself there.

His next way is in terrible keeping with all this. He hates his brother, being of that wicked one who is a murderer (John 8: 44), and in process of time he slays him.

Tremendous fruit of the apostate, departed nature. He was the first of that generation who delivered Jesus to be crucified — self-righteous and murderous. For envy the Jews delivered Jesus; and Cain slew Abel because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous. It is the world. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." The Lord pleaded with him. See Gen. 4: 6, 7. His heart had conceived the sin, but his hand had not brought forth fruit unto death; and with a voice of long-suffering grace and warning the Lord pleaded with him. The grace was despised; this grace of pleading with him at the last hour, as the grace of the promise had been despised before.

"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." The light which the Lord Jesus was bringing with Him was the light of life or salvation. Isa. 49: 6; John 8: 12. And this was the light which Cain hated and refused.

There is the light of righteousness or holiness. But the refusal of it is not without remedy. In that light the Lord God had come into the garden and called, "Adam, where art thou?" Adam could not stand it; for he had sinned. It was intolerable to him. He had come short of that glory. He retreats from it. And then the Lord God shines in another light. The promise is made. The character of the glory is changed. God seats Himself in a light which the sinner can approach, and, believing, Adam comes forth.

This was the light which Cain despised, the light of salvation, the light of the promise, the light in which God shines before men outside the garden. And Cain is therefore cursed as Adam had not been. As it is said of another generation, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish."

All this is the solemn history of the first unbeliever. But the treasury of corrupt nature that was in him spends itself in further ways of wickedness. In him was rising that spring which was to give out "its superfluity of naughtiness." He lies after all this, and justifies himself. "I know not," says he; "am I my brother's keeper?" For "the lusts of his father he would do;" and when the devil "speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

All this, however, and even more than this, was *man*, and not Cain merely. It was the ruined heart of man exposing itself. And because it was this, because it was the common nature that was thus disclosing itself, the Lord takes the judgment of it away from man. "Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold;" for none are without sin. "Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself." All are in the like condemnation. No one can take up the stone and cast it at another. And in order to express this

great principle of truth, and that God alone has either title or competency to deal with sin, the Lord will not allow any man to touch the fratricide. By this divine writing on the case, all are to go out convicted, one by one, and leave the sinner with God. John 8.

For the ends of government, when government in the earth becomes the divine purpose, it shall be said, Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. 9: 6. But this is not so as yet. And for the teaching of the common pravity, that all of us may be humbled by the common conviction, that "we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God," not one of the whole human family is allowed to touch this wicked Cain. And so to this day, when government has been divinely set up, it is not sin that it deals with. *Crimes*, or offences against public order, and *wrongs* done to individuals, may be judged by man; but to take vengeance on *sin* would be the assuming of personal guiltlessness. "He that is *without sin* among you, let *him* first cast a stone at her." God has to deal with sin *alone*.*

*Some have spoken of the Jews, as guilty of the blood of Christ, so as to have betrayed the principle of self-righteousness condemned here. And yet I doubt not that there is a sense in which the Jews are — in a special sense — connected with that sin in the divine judgment. The land of the Jews is the distinguished field of blood; the blood of Jesus, in a great sense, is specially on them and their children. And so, like Cain, that people are under the special securities of God. And further; that blood is to be cleansed from off their land, though it now so stains it. Joel 3: 21.

And still further; the language of Lamech, I also judge, is mystical or typical, intimating the repentance of the Jews who shed the blood, after generations of unbelief and hardness of heart. See note, p. 20.

But, further, as to this awful history. Man will not always be making this terrible exhibition of himself. He will not at all times appear as the liar and the murderer. Legion will not be found on every journey we take. There are restraints. The law, in one sense, was given to that end. So there are the cheeks and improvements of education. And there is the control of God's hand, and the fear of His providence and judgment. And there is "the law of opinion," as it has been called, the verdict of society. These and the like influences produce an order in the social scene, which has therefore become not only tolerable, but full of vast accommodations and large entertainments. A new *scene* is thus produced, though not a new *creature*. Man is man still, the same creature in God's esteem, or in all divine reckoning, though he appears in the character of a respectable citizen of the world, and not as the murderer of his brother. Cain builds a city. He has a thriving, prosperous family. Through their skill and industry the face of the world flourishes and looks well. All is respectable; and pleasant and friendly the people are one with another. The murder is forgotten. Man does not hear the cry of blood, but the sound of the harp and the organ. His inventions have stifled his convictions. Cain is an honourable man. But as to the presence of God, he is as thoroughly separated from it as when his hand was freshly stained with the blood of his brother.

This is solemn. Man, as a respectable citizen of the world, may be as separated from God as a murderer. "The remnant of them," as the parable speaks, "took his servants and slew them." The remnant! a word which lets us know that the refusers of the supper were of *one* class with those who shed the blood of the innocent.

The ease and indifference With which Cain could turn his back upon the Lord, and upon the recollection of his brother's blood, are dreadful. He got a promise of security, and that was all he cared for. And quickly, under his hand, accommodations and delights of all sorts fill the scene.

In some sense this is principally shocking. This exceeds. But is not this the "course of the

world"? Was it not man that slew Jesus? Does not the guilt of that deed lie at every man's door? And what is the course of the world but the ease and indifference of Cain in this highest state of guilt? The earth has oh borne the cross of Christ; and yet man can busy himself with garnishing and furnishing it, and making life in it convenient and pleasurable without God. This is shocking when we look at it in full divine light. A respectable citizen of the world Cain was, but all the while a heartless forgetter of the sorrows of Abel! His ease and respectability are the blackest features of his history. He went away as soon as he got a promise of security; and that promise he uses, not to soften his heart, and overwhelm him with convictions of all that had happened, but as giving him full occasion to indulge and magnify himself.

We read in the New Testament of "the way of Cain." It may be, nay, it is, run by others. Jude 11. And what a way does this chapter show it to be! He was an infidel, or a man of his own religion; not obedient in faith to God's revelation. He practised the works of the liar and the murderer; he hated the light; he was proof against God's word in mercy and in warning; he cares nothing for the presence of God which his sin had forfeited, or for the sorrow of his brother which his hand had inflicted. And, as such an one, he can take pains to make himself happy and honourable in the very place which thus witnessed against him.

Is this the "way of Cain"? Is this man still? Yes; and nature outlives a thousand restraints and improvements. For at the end of Christendom's career it will even then be said of a generation, "They have gone in the way of Cain."

This is deeply solemn, beloved, had we but hearts to feel it. There is, however, a rescued, separated people. Seth's family are after another order altogether. They are not seen in cities, furnished with accommodations and pleasures, apart, like Cain, "from the presence of the Lord;" but as the household of God, separated from that world that lay in the wicked one, to the faith and worship of His name.

It is the sight of this elect family that has principally at this time drawn me to this portion of the precious oracles of God. There is much, I believe, in their standing and testimony which has instruction for our souls. Like all else in these chapters, it is but short notices we get; but great things are to be found in them.

This family of Seth may generally be thus spoken of: *They are strikingly opposed to the way of Cain, and remarkably apprehensive of the way of God.*

I speak not here again of their *faith*, but of their *standing and testimony*. Their faith, or the character of their religion, may be read in that of Adam, who re-appears here at the head of these antediluvian saints; and his faith (kindred with that of Eve and Abel, or of all who receive the gospel of the grace of God) I have already considered. But I speak now of their standing as a household of God, and of their testimony in the world.

The Lord had set a mark on Cain, that no one finding him should slay him. He would not have the blood of Abel avenged. This we have already seen.

The family of Seth are strictly observant of this. No attempt, or anything like it, is made by them to answer the cry of innocent blood. They know that it is heard in the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth; but, under this word of God, they are deaf to it themselves. Vengeance does not belong to them. The harvest has not come. They are not reapers. In obedience they heard, not the cry of blood, but the voice of the Lord countermanding vengeance. And they suffer it. They take the wrong done to their brother, and are acceptable with God.

Express charge demanded this, and this was consequently simple obedience. But the mind of a saint is full of light. It is the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2); in us, it is true, darkened in a thousand actings of it, by the coarseness and blindness of nature with which it is now linked; but still, in itself it is full of light. Even angelic nature is all life. Torpidity and dulness do not belong to it. "Winds" and "flames of fire" express that nature, and such things act constantly and fervently; and in like virtue the mind of Christ, the divine nature in the saint, is full of affection and intelligence.

We get some of its fine ways of acting in this household of God.

The innocent blood is to remain unavenged. Its cry from the earth is not to be answered, at least for the present. *That* is enough to teach the saint his pilgrim, heavenly calling. The family of Seth are therefore as pilgrims and strangers here, and all their habits are those of heavenly citizens. If the earth be not to be cleansed, the elect are to be strangers in it with a heavenly calling.

Beautifully true to the mind of God is. this! For this is the way of God; and it was apprehended by these saints, more in the light and knowledge of His most perfect and beautiful ways than many of us, beloved, who, in the fuller revelations of this present age, have been so much nourished and instructed. But it is not the much schooling we get, but the capacity which sits at the lesson. David wanted capacity for this same lesson, when he talked of building a house of cedars, a fixed habitation, for the Lord, while the land was still defiled with blood. But the Lord (may I say?) would be, like the antediluvian saints, a stranger on the earth, a dweller in tents, while blood was staining it; and that very night rebuked the purpose of the king of Israel. 1 Chr. 17.

We have many exhibitions of this way of God in different forms of it. The Lord, for instance, would have no altar in Egypt, uncircumcised as that land was. He would not have a throne in the land (in the full glory of it) till the day of Solomon, when all was sanctified for His royal presence. Afterwards the glory was grieved away by the abominations which were done in the temple. The captives, in like spirit, hang their harps on the willows of the Euphrates; for how could they sing in a strange land, or let the songs of Zion be heard in Babylon? Separation was the rule of the divine mind. Separation was holiness. Pollution demanded it, and faith rose at the bidding And with all this the Seth family, the household of God in earliest days — days before the flood — are in company. They are one in spirit with Jehovah Himself in Egypt, with the glory in the defiled temple, with the harps of the captives in Babylon, and with the Church of God in "this present evil world."

We have to distinguish between these two things: *God's assertion of His title to the earth*, and *God's call of a people out of the earth*.

These different things have been again and again exhibited in the progress of the dispensations. And they have been exhibited, as I have long judged, alternately.

The Lord began, in Adam, to claim and display His rights on the earth. The man in the garden was to own the sovereignty of God, and the earth was the rest and the delight of the Lord, and the place of His glory.

Sin entering and polluting all, and the pollution being left uncleansed, in Seth God called a people away from the earth to an inheritance in heaven.

Then in Noah the Lord God re-asserted His rights here, and took up the earth as the place where His elect might find a home, and His own presence be known again.

After this Abraham is separated from kindred, and from country, and from father's house, to be a heavenly stranger on the earth, with his altar and his tent, looking for a city whose builder and maker

was God.

Israel. in their day, then take up this mystic tale of the heavens and the earth, and in the land of Canaan become the witness of the scene of God's sovereignty. The ark passes over the river as "the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth."

And now the Church is set for the full testimony of heavenly mysteries again; and strangership here is the divine idea, till our being taken to meet the Lord in the air.

This wondrous tale these dispensations of God, like day and night alternate, have thus been telling from the beginning; and still are telling. And millennial days ere long will make these pledges good, and be the glorious substance of these foreshadowings.*

*Such passages as Eph. 1: 10 and Col. 1: 20 tell us that both the heavens and the earth are equally the scene of divine purposes. And the great argument in Rom. 11 instructs us about those purposes, and the ways and times of their accomplishment.

Now let me observe, that whenever God arises in this progress of His counsels to *assert title to the earth*, He begins by judging and cleansing it. And this, I may say, *of course*; because, the scene of His purposed glory and presence being corrupted, He must take the offence away, for His presence could not brook defilement. Noah's lordship of the earth was, accordingly, preceded by the flood carrying away the world of the ungodly. Israel's inheritance of Canaan under Jehovah, as the God of all the earth, was prepared by the judgment of the Amorites and the sword of Joshua. And the future millennial kingdom, when the earth is to be the place of the glory again, is (as all Scripture tells us) to be ushered in by that great action called "the day of the Lord," with a clearing out of all that offend, and all that do iniquity.

But *the call of God* is quite of another character. It proceeds on the principle, that God Himself is apart from the earth, and is not seeking to have it as the home of His glory, or the place of His presence; but seeking a people out of it, to be His, away from it, and above it. The earth is altogether a stranger to such a purpose. It is left just as it is found. No judgment, no visitation of the scene here from the hand of God, accompanies it.

This was exhibited in Abraham. Abraham was the object of the call of God; and accordingly the Canaanites find no rival in him. He does not dispute with them the title or possession of the soil. He finds them, and he leaves them, lords of it. He desires only to pitch his tent and raise his altar on the surface of it for a season; and then, for another season, to have his bones laid in the bowels of it.

So with the Church in this age. She is likewise under the call of God. But her call leaves the Gentiles in power, as it found them. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." The saints have only to obey them unreluctantly, or to suffer from them patiently, according as the demand made by them is or is not consistent with their subjection to Christ and the call of God. They cannot strive with the potsherds of the earth. Peter's sword is to be put up, and Pilate is to learn that the servants of Jesus cannot fight. Their warfare is not with flesh and blood. They are defeated the moment they begin it. The call of God has marshalled the hosts of God against principalities and powers on high and the battle is there. It does not connect us with the earth. Our *necessities* do, but not our *call*. We need the fruit of the ground, the toil of the hand, and the skill of the heart, to provide things needful for the body. Our necessities thus connect us with it, and we have to do with it for their supply; but our call separates us from it. Joshua went into the possession of the Gentiles, that his sword might make it the possession of the Lord; Paul went into the places of the Gentiles, to take out of them a people unto God, linked with the disallowed Stone, despised and rejected of men.

The family of Seth were, in like manner, under this call of God. It was intimated to them by the charge to leave the blood of Abel unavenged, and they understood the intimation. If the earth be left in its defilement, God is not seeking it (as we have now seen all His ways declare), and this family of faith are in that secret. They will not seek it either. Cain's house was in possession of it, and Seth's family will leave them there, without a rival or a struggle. The mind of God in them took this knowledge of the way of God, and of His pleasure touching them; and they acted on heavenly principles in a blood-stained earth, whose judgment was now for a time to linger and to slumber.

I own, beloved, that I greatly admire this fine expression of the mind of Christ in these earliest saints. They take the only way which the holiness of God could sanction. They are "partakers of *His* holiness." The light they walked in was *God's*; the holiness they partook of was *God's*. 1 John 1: 7; Heb. 12: 10. This is a peculiar thing. That light is not merely righteousness. It is the light of grace also. Yea, and the light of heavenly strangership in a polluted world. It is a light which reproves the course of this world, and makes manifest other principles and hopes altogether. There may be righteousness, and the watching and praying which escapes temptation; but there must be a walk according to these principles and hopes, to form a walk "in the light, as He is the light." These earliest believers beautifully shine there, I believe. They were not under law. They come between Adam and Moses. They had not precepts, as I have already shown. But they were in the light, as God is in the light. And if afterwards Abram did not need to be told to have his altar and his tent — if he needed no precept from the Lord how to order the marriage of his son, or how to answer the king of Sodom — so these saints of still earlier days understood the holiness of the call of God, and took their journey for a heavenly country at the bidding of the pollution of the earth.

I own indeed, again, that I greatly admire this. It is the beauty of the Spirit's workmanship in His elect vessels. All is His. "How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!" They learn the word in spirit ere the voice of the Spirit uttered it — "Arise, depart, for this is not your rest; it is polluted."

The details about these antediluvian believers are very scanty; but through it all there is this heavenly character. They do not supply history for the world; but they do supply instruction for the Church. This is heavenly. No spirit of burning or spirit of judgment had purged the blood of the earth, and they shrink instinctively from it. In the spirit of their minds they leave it. "What communion has light with darkness? what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness?" their conduct asks. Their *religion* is that of separation from the world, and so are *their habits*.

They call on the name of the Lord. The name of the Lord is the revelation He has been pleased to make of Himself. Immanuel, Jesus, "the Lord our righteousness," Jehovah, God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost — these are among His names graciously and gloriously published by Himself. And "to call on the name of the Lord" was service or worship of God in spirit and in truth.

This was the religion of these earliest saints. It was simply the religion of faith and hope. They worshipped God, and, apart from the world, they waited in hope. "The work of faith" and "the patience of hope" are seen in them. Something of the Thessalonian spirit breathes in them. For they served the living and true God, and waited for the Son from heaven, who had already delivered them. 1 Thess. 1. To "call on the name of the Lord" is faith, and salvation, and worship. It bespeaks the standing of a saint, and his spiritual service. It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Joel 2; Rom. 10. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. Psalm 116. And such was their religion, such was their worship.

It was worship in spirit. No temples, or costly carnal services, or institutions of man appear.

And in their ways and habits they are only seen as a people walking across the surface of the earth, till their bodies are either laid under it, or are translated to heaven above it. They rejoice, as though they rejoiced not they buy, as though they possessed not; they have wives, as though they had none. All around them is as Babylon to them, and their harps are on the willows. Cain's family have all the music to themselves. But Seth's family are a risen people. Their conversation is in heaven. They look for no estates or cities. All they take is an earlier Machpelah. Nothing is told us of their place or their business. They are strangers where even Adam was once at home, and, much more, where Cain still was. We may follow them, and in spirit abide with them for a day; but where they dwelt we know not — like the disciples who followed the glorious Stranger from heaven in the day of His sojourn here. John 1: 38, 39. They are without a place or a name. The earth knew them not. Like the stranger Rechabites, they are, throughout their generations, one after another, of the wilderness, and not of the city (Judges 1: 16); or in Levitical language, they were a standing order of Nazarites, more separated to God than even Israel themselves.

They are the earliest witnesses of this heavenly strangership. Such a life is exhibited afterwards in other saints of God in its fuller, beautiful details; but we have it here in spirit.

For instance, in Isaac. The world was against him. But he strives not with it either in deed or in word. He neither answers nor resists. The Philistines tell him to go from them. He goes at their bidding. They spoil him of his labours. He yields and takes it patiently, as Esek and Sitnah tell us. Gen. 26.

So his father Abraham before him. Only, sad to tell it, it is a *brother* who acts the part of the world in the scene. Lot chooses, as the world chooses, the well-watered plain. Abraham suffers, and takes it patiently — though it was something more galling than the wrong of a Philistine — the unthankful, selfish way of one who should have known better, and who owed him everything. Gen. 13.

So Israel, in still later days, accepts the insult of Edom in like spirit. They pleaded for a passage through their land by the claims of kindred, by reason of their common origin, by their many toils and afflictions, by the tokens of the divine favour toward them, and by their present need as toiling, way-worn pilgrims through a desert land. But Edom despised them and threatened. They pleaded again, but they were insulted again; they suffered it, and took another road. Num. 20. And so their Lord in the day of His pilgrimage. He sought another village when other Edomites of Samaria refused Him. Luke 9. Precious and happy, thus to put Him at the head of all that is excellent! The good that is done is *like* Him, as well as *of* Him. Isaac, suffers wrong from *the world*, and takes it patiently. Abraham suffers wrong from *one who owed him everything*, and takes it patiently Israel suffers likewise from their *kindred*; but Jesus from those whom *He was serving and blessing at the cost of everything to Himself*, from the world which He had made, and from that people whom He had adopted. And yet "He lays His thunder by," and goes on His pilgrimage of love and service still.

In like spirit the family of God, in days before the flood pursue their pilgrim path. They leave the world to Cain. There is not the symptom of a struggle, nor the breath of a complaint. They say not, nor think of saying, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." In habits of life and principles of conduct, they are as distinct from their injurious brother as though they were of another race, or in another world. Cain's family make all the world's history They build its cities, they promote its arts, they conduct its trade, they invent its pleasures and pastimes. But in all this Seth's family are not seen. The one generation call their cities after their own names; the other call

themselves by the name of the Lord The one do all they can to make the world their own, and not the Lord's; the other do all they can to show themselves to be the Lord's, and not their own. Cain writes his own name on the earth; Seth writes the Lord's name on himself.

We may bless the Lord for this vigorous delineation of heavenly strangership on earth, and ask for grace to know some of its living power in our souls. It is this which has drawn me to this portion of the Word at this time. It reads us a lesson, beloved. And well indeed, if the instincts of our renewed minds suggest the same heavenly path with like certainty and clearness. The call of God leads that way, and all His teaching demands it. The pastimes and the purposes, the interests and the pleasures, of the children of Cain are nothing to these pilgrims. They declare plainly that they refuse the thought, that there is any capacity in the earth, as it is now, to give them satisfaction. They are discontented with it, and make no attempts to have it otherwise. There lay their moral separation from the way of Cain and his household. They were not mindful of the country around them, but sought a better, that is, a heavenly.* May I not therefore say of them, as I have said, that they are strikingly opposed to the way of Cain, and remarkably apprehensive of the way of God?

*What I say of this antediluvian family is only as we see them in Genesis 5. I doubt not, as under every trial of man, failure and corruption are witnessed. But I speak merely of their standing and testimony as given to us here. Sons and daughters, as we are told, were born to them, generation after generation, and seeds of apostasy were sown and sprang up among them, I doubt not. But this does not at all affect the lesson we get from this fifth chapter.

After this pattern the Lord would have us: in the world, but not of it; of heaven, though not as yet (except in Christ) in it. Paul, in the Holy Ghost, would so have us, taking example from those whose "conversation is in heaven." Peter, in the same Spirit, would so have us "as strangers and pilgrims" abstaining from fleshly lusts. James summons us, in the same Spirit, to know that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God." And John separates us as by a stroke: "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

It is for the Church surely, beloved, to walk in this elevation and separateness. What is according to the call of God, and what worthy of heavenly hopes, but this? We breathe but feebly, and glow but faintly, in company with those and like witnesses. What a temper of soul, it has just struck me, we get in such a chapter as Phil. 4! What a glow is felt throughout it! What depth and fervency of affection! What a shout of triumph the spirit raises! What elevation in the midst of changes, perplexities, and depressions! The apostle's whole temper of soul throughout that chapter is uncommon. But if one may speak for others, it is to us little more than the tale of a distant land, or the warmth and brilliancy of other climes reported to our souls by travellers.

Lead us, Lord, we pray thee! Teach us indeed to sing -

"We're bound for yonder land,
Where Jesus reigns supreme;
We leave the shore at His command,
Forsaking all for Him.
"'Twere easy, did we choose,
Again to reach the shore
But that is what our souls refuse,

We'll never touch it more."

But surely it is one thing to be the advocate of Christianity, and another to be the disciple of it. And though it may sound strange at first, far easier is it to *teach* its lessons than to *learn* them. But so our souls know full well.

We have, however, still to look at the *destiny* and *endowments* of these saints, as we have already looked at their faith, their virtues, and their *religion*.

The translation of Enoch was the first formal testimony of the great divine secret, that *man was to have a place and inheritance in the heavens*. By creation he was formed for the earth. The garden was his habitation, Eden his demesne, and all the earth his estate. But now is brought forth the deeper purpose, that God has an election from among men, destined, in the everlasting counsels of abounding grace, for heaven.

In the course of ages and dispensations after this, this high purpose of God was only dimly and occasionally, slowly and gradually, manifested. But in the person of Enoch it is made to shine out at once. The heavenly calling at this early moment, and in the bosom of his elect and favoured household, declares itself in its full lustre. This great fact among the antediluvian patriarchs anticipates in spirit the hour of Mount Tabor, the vision of the martyred Stephen, and the taking up of the saints in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

Such was the high destiny of the elect people.

The prophecies of Enoch and of Lamech are samples of their endowments. And rich indeed, worthy of their dignity, these endowments were. For those prophecies under the Holy Ghost tell us that glorious secrets had been entrusted to them. They were treated as in the place of friends. "Shall I hide from them," the Lord was saying to them, as afterwards to Abraham, "that thing which I do?" For such privileges belong only to dignity. See Gen. 18: 18. And if Abraham knew the doom of Sodom beforehand, Enoch, in a deeper, larger sense, knew the doom of the whole world beforehand. And his prophecy lets out a mystery of solemn and wondrous glory — that the heavenly saints are to accompany the Lord in the day of His power and judgment. And, as of a character equal with this, Lamech's, which comes after, in its turn, with happier anticipations, sketches the scene that lies beyond the judgment, days of millennial blessedness, "the days of heaven upon the earth." The Lord has not given up the earth for ever. And these saints before the flood can speak of that great mystery even before the bow in the cloud becomes the token of it. But they know the judgment of it must come first; and they can speak of that mystery also before the fountains of the great deep were broken up.

Rich endowments in the Spirit thus attach to their high personal dignity with God. As with the Church now. "Stewards" they were "of the mysteries of God." They could "sing of mercy and of judgment;" unto God and of His counsels they could sing. Profoundest secrets feed their souls. "The deep things of God," the things both of prophets and apostles, the things of the epistles and the apocalypse, are theirs. Paul was entrusted with the circumstances of the heavenly calling He speaks of our being caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and of that great expectation as being our comfort and relief against the day of the Lord and its terrors; Enoch in himself, long before, illustrated that very thing John speaks of the raptured saints accompanying the Lord in the day of His power, joining in the breaking of the potter's vessel, and in the warfare of the Rider on the white horse; Enoch in his prophecy, long before, testified the same. Jude 14, 15. Prophets tell of the wilderness by-and-by rejoicing, and of the desert blossoming, of the blessed One renewing the face of the earth, and instead of the brier, the myrtle flourishing; but long before Lamech had told of this same comfort in the earth again, and this rest for man from the curse of the ground. Gen. 5: 29.

Rich indeed were these endowments in the Holy Ghost. There is even peculiar vividness in these earliest utterances of the prophetic spirit. There is commonly a haze over the distance. It is not clear, as if it were the foreground. Indistinctness invests it. And this, in contrast with the nearer landscape, only heightens the impression of the whole. So the notices of the prophets, and the things reported by apostles. They are delivered in different style. Properly so. The haze of distance commonly invests the communications we get of the future. Such is the perfectness of the way of the Spirit. The very drapery under which the distant or the future appears sets it off fitly. Clearness, or literal definiteness, would be offensive, as glare or nakedness. This is commonly so, and this is all admirable. But if at *times* the distance is illuminated, we can delight in it; and in these earliest notices the latest scenes of divine action are thus set off in strange and beautiful distinctness.

Such was the heavenly calling, its virtues, its dignity, and its endowments, of this antediluvian family of God. The end of their path was heavenly also, as heavenly as any feature of it. I speak not of the *fact* of its ending in heaven, but of the very *style* in which it so ended. No sign among the nations gave notice of it. No times or seasons had to mark or measure it. No stated age or numbered years had to spend themselves. No voice of prophecy had so much as hinted the blessed, rapturous moment. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." nothing peculiar ushered forth that glorious hour. No big expectations or strange events gave token of its coming. It was the natural heavenly close of an undeviating heavenly journey.

It was otherwise with Noah afterwards. Great preparation was made for his deliverance. Years also spent themselves — appointed years. But not so our heavenly patriarch. Noah was carried through the judgment; but Enoch, before it came, was borne to the place out of which it came.*

*I am not careful to apply all this, as I believe it may be applied. I rather leave it in the way of a suggestion. But it does seem to me that the Lord, *speaking of the Jewish election*, takes Noah for His text or type (Matt. 24); while the apostle, *addressing the Church*, takes his language the rather from the translation of Enoch. 1 Thess. 4: 17; 2 Thess. 2: 1. For the Jewish remnant, like Noah, will be carried through the judgment — the saints now gathering will be in the sphere out of which the judgment is to be poured. For we are taught again and again, as I have noticed before, that exercise of power in that day, in company with the Lord, is part of the glory of the saints. See Col. 3: 4; Rev. 2: 26; Rev. 17: 14; Rev. 19: 14.

And if the days and years did not measure it, nor signs announce it, did the world, I ask, witness it? Or was it, though so glorious and great, silent and secret?

The language of the apostle seems to give me my answer, and so does all the analogy of Scripture. He "was not found, because God had translated him." This sounds as though man had been a stranger to that glorious hour. The world seems to have inquired and searched after him, like the sons of the prophets after Elijah; but in vain. 2 Kings 2: 17; Heb. 11: 5. And this tells us that the translation had been a secret to man; for they would not have searched, had they seen it.

All scriptural or divine analogy answers me in like manner. Glory, in none of its forms or actions, is for the eye or ear of mere man.

Horses and chariots filled the mountain; but the prophet's servant had to get his eye opened ere he could see them. Daniel saw a glorious stranger, and heard his voice as the voice of a multitude; but the men who stood with him saw nothing — only a terror fell on them. The glory on "the holy hill" shone only in the sight of Peter, James, and John, though the brightness there at that moment (night as it was) might have lighted up all the land; for the divine face "did shine as the sun." Many bodies of saints arose, attendants on the Lord's rising; but it was only to some in the holy city they showed

themselves. The heaven was opened over the head of the martyr of Jesus, in the very midst of a multitude; but the glory was seen only by him. Paul went to Paradise, and Philip to Azotus; but no eye of man tracked either the flight or the journey. And beyond all, when Jesus rose, and that, too, from a tomb of hewn stone, and from amid a guard of wakeful soldiers, no ear or eye was in the secret. It was a lie, that the keepers of the stone slept; but it is a truth, that they saw no more of the resurrection than had they done so.

Silence and secrecy thus mark all these glorious transactions. Visions, audiences, resurrections, flights, ascensions, the glory down here, and the heaven opened up there, all these go on, and yet mere man is a stranger to all. And the translation of Enoch takes company with all these, I assuredly judge; and so, I further judge, will another glorious hour soon to come, in which "they that are Christ's" are all to be interested.

I have now reached and closed the fifth chapter. The first part of the Book of Genesis will be found to end here. For these chapters (Gen. 1 - 5) constitute a little volume.

1. This chapter opens the volume with the work of creation.

2. Creation being complete, the Lord, the Creator, takes His delight in it; and in the midst of it, and over it, places the man whom He had formed in His own image, with all endowments and possessions to make his condition perfect.

3. Man, thus made perfect, being tried and overcome, we see the *ruin* which he wrought, and the *redemption* which God provided.

4, 5. These chapters then show us one branch of this ruined, redeemed family choosing the ruins, and another branch of it delighting in the redemption.

This is simple, and yet perfect. The tale is told — a tale of other days; but in the results and sympathies of which we live at this hour.

It is the sight of the elect, believing, heavenly household, which we get in this little volume, which has at this time drawn my thoughts to it. They walked on earth as we should walk; but they were, by their faith, hope, and destiny, all the while, very near heaven, as we are.

Are we touching the skirts of such glory with unaffected hearts, beloved? Does anything more humble you in His presence, I ask you (for my own soul has already given its answer), than the conviction we have of the little estimation in which the heart holds His promised glory? It is terrible discovery to make of oneself. That we have but small delight in the provisions of His goodness, is more terrible than that we have no answer to the demands of His righteousness. And yet both stand in proof against us. After Israel had left Egypt, they were tested by the voice of the law; but the golden calf tells that they had no answer for it. In the progress of their journey, they are tested by the firstfruits of Canaan; but the desired captain tells that they had no relish for the feast. And what is the heart of man still? What was it in Christ's day? The parable of the marriage of the king's son, like the captain of the wilderness, tells us that there is no relish there for the table which God spreads. What are singing men and singing women to a heavy ear? The pleasant land is despised still. Canaan is not worth the scaling of a single wall, or an encounter with one Amalekite. The farm, the merchandise, and the wife, are made the captain to take us back, in spite of the invitations of love and the treasures of glory.

Terrible discovery! And yet it is not hard to make it. The proof of it clings pretty close to us. We know how quickly present interests move us; how loss depresses and profit elates us; and then, again,

we know how dull the glory glitters, if but a difficulty or a hazard lie this side of it.

Are we sorry because of this, beloved? Does it ever break the heart into sighs and groans before our God? Sad and solemn, if we feel it not thus — and terrible, when we deliberately talk to ourselves of making a captain again. And this we do when the pastime and the pleasures of the sons of men again give animation to our hearts, or when their honours or their pursuits become again our objects. Lot's wife, beloved, had got beyond Sodom, and that, too, in company with the elect, when it was found that she was still there, in such a sense as to perish with the city. Israel was as far as the wilderness of Paran, and that, too, in company with the ark of God, when it was proved that they were still amid the flesh-pots of Egypt. Serious remembrances for us all! holy warnings, that we wanton not with those lusts and enjoyments, which once we watched and mortified.

"Of that day and hour knoweth no man" — are the solemn words by which the Lord refuses to pledge the moment of His return to His Jewish remnant. Matt. 24: 36. That moment is to be to them as the thief of the night, or as the hour of the woman in travail. So as to death. If it come on any of us without a moment's warning, the Lord has not been untrue to any pledge He has given. And so as to the rapture. In no case is the day or the hour pledged or made known. All is included in *one* word of deep and holy import — "Watch" and that one word is addressed to all: "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."

Whether the close to us be by death or rapture — whether it be to Israel by being taken or left — the day and the hour remain alike untold; no pledge of it is promised at all. Each and all are set on the watchtower. *We* wait for "the Son from heaven;" *they* will have to wait for "the days of the Son of man," but neither of us know the hour that closes the waiting.

That is common to them and to us. We stand in equal condition with them as to this. But together with this there is a difference.

The Jewish Remnant are given signs. That is, they are told of certain things which *must* precede "the days of the Son of man," though they are left ignorant of the day or the hour of that appearing. See Matt. 24: 32-36. The saints now gathering to the hope of the "Son from heaven" are, on the contrary, not given any such signs, or told of any necessary precursory events.

The Lord communicated His *purpose* of judgment to Noah, but said nothing to him of the *time* of it. But Noah knew that it could not be till his ark was built. He knew not the time when the waters were to rise; but he knew they could not rise till he and his were lodged in safety. This was a sign, or an event necessarily forerunning the close of his history. And so with the earthly Israel. Circumstances must take place, though the day or the hour of it be not known, ere the Son of man can be here on earth again. But not so with Enoch. No circumstance necessarily delayed his translation. His walk with God was not a circumstance. And that was all that led the way to his ascension. And so with the Church now gathering. She waits for no circumstance — no years measure her sojourn here; no events prepare her heavenward way. She is not put, like the Jewish election, under the restraint of any signs or preceding circumstances.

The Lord treats it as *deceit* to say "the time draweth nigh;" while the apostle *expressly puts* us *under those words*. Luke 21: 8; James 5: 8. *After certain signs or events*, the Lord tells the remnant that their expectation is near; the apostle tells us that ours is *always so*. Matt. 24: 33; Phil. 4: 5. The Lord exhorts the remnant to watch, because the day may otherwise overtake them; the apostle exhorts us to watch, because we are already of the day, and it is fit that we should act as day-men. Matt. 24: 43; 1 Thess. 5: 5, 6.

Here lies a difference. But still, all are equally commanded to watch — we in this our day, as ever knowing that "the end of all things is at hand," and the remnant, in their coming day, even though they know that some events must go before.

And beautiful and just this is. For if the things threatened be profoundly solemn, as they are, and the things promised be unspeakably glorious, as they are, it is but little to require of us to *treat them as supreme* — and that, in other words, is *watching*.

And, the sense of the nearness of the glory should be cherished by us. I mean its nearness in *place* as well as time. And we need be at no effort to persuade ourselves of it. It is taught us very clearly and surely. The congregation of Israel were set at the door of the tabernacle, and as soon as the appointed moment came the glory was before them See Lev. 8, 9. So at the erection of the tabernacle, and so at the introduction of the ark into the temple. Ex. 40; 2 Chr. 5. So when it had business to do (though of different characters) with the company on Mount Tabor, with the dying Stephen, or with Saul on the road to Damascus — wherever it may have to act, and whatever it may be called to do, to convict, to cheer, or to transfigure — to smite to the earth the persecutor, to give triumph to the martyr, or to conform an elect Vessel to itself, it can be present in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. It is but a thin veil, which either hides it or distances it. The path is short, and the journey rapidly accomplished. We should cherish the thought of this, beloved. It has its power as well as its consolation. And so ere long, when the time of 1 Cor. 15: 51 arrives, that moment of the general transfiguration, as soon as the voice of the archangel summons it, the glory will be here again, as in the twinkling of an eye, to do its business with us, and in the image of the heavenly to bear us up, like Enoch, to the heavenly country.

Then shall the Lord be glorified in His saints — not as now, in their obedience and service, their holiness and fruitfulness, but in their *personal* beauty. Arrayed in white, and shining in our glories, we shall be the wondrous witness of what He has done for the sinner that trusts in Him. And as one much loved and honoured in the Lord has just written to me, so I write to you, beloved: "No lark ever sprang up on a dewy morning to sing its sweet song with such alacrity as you and I shall spring up to meet our Lord in the air." And his exhortation to me I would make mine to you (though feebly echoed from my heart): "Oh, my brother, set it before your mind's eye as a living reality, and then let hope patiently wait for the fulfilment!"

"Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."