

JOHN THOMAS, M.D.

born 1805 : died 1871

Author of

Elpis Israel (1849)

Edited

APOSTOLIC ADVOCATE (1834)

HERALD OF THE FUTURE AGE (1845)

HERALD OF THE KINGDOM (1851)



AN EARLY MANUSCRIPT OF DR. THOMAS*

THE HYPOSTASIS AND THE ELENCHOS

I—REVELATION

NOTHING supernatural can be known but as it is revealed; but things revealed may be disliked. They were so by Cain, by Pharaoh, by the Philistines, by the ancient philosophers, and are to this day, by philosophical deists; and this is the root of the enmity that subsists, and the cause of the difference there is, between the children of God and the children of the devil.

The occasion of this enmity is the revelation of "God in Christ"; for human nature has no particular quarrel with either natural religion, or moral philosophy, or even the precepts of the decalogue, provided that Christ be excluded from these systems severally; but the Gospel, as such, is wholly rejected.

This, on the contrary, is "glorious" in the eyes of every christian; and as nothing can be influential but as it is believed, the "belief of the truth" creates an internal dissimilitude between believers and unbelievers. The similitude is resemblance to Christ; the dissimilitude is alienation from Christ; and these respectively are comprehended in the doctrine of the new

birth. The external dissimilitude is apparent in various degrees of difference.

Then, unless, on the one side or the other a change of ideas be effected, this dissimilitude will be eternal; and this is the ground work of "the regeneration", or of that new order of things, spoken of in the scriptures; of that separation from the world, which is called the church; and of the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishment. With the proofs of these assertions the children of God are familiar; and, therefore, citations are superfluous.

* In *The Christadelphian* for February, 1971, page 76, mention was made of an early manuscript of Dr. Thomas presented to his daughter on November 11, 1842. The Preface was reproduced in full with the original spellings and punctuation. Beginning with this issue, the eight essays from this handwritten booklet will be published in full. The title, from Hebrews 11:1, means "The Substance and the Evidence".

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THE HYPOSTASIS AND THE ELENCHOS*

2—ABEL

THE sacrifice of Christ is prefigured by Abel's offering; and to that, in every age, God has "had respect". The levitical sacrifices were all typical of Christ; and upon his vicarious sufferings and propitiatory death the entire scheme of human redemption is constructed. "From the foundation of the world" he was "the Lamb slain"; and to the conclusion of the Apocalypse, which looks through time into eternity, he is the Lamb that is glorified.

Now it was for the sake of Christ that God had respect to Abel's faith; and for the sake of Abel's faith that God had respect to Abel himself; and it is through the same medium that believers in Jesus have ever been "accepted in the beloved". For God loves his Son, and he loves his people for his Son's sake; and they are thus made "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ". Had Cain, even after the murder of his brother, taken with a penitent and contrite heart, refuge in this atonement, he would have found mercy, and obtained forgiveness: for though the blood of Abel cried for vengeance, "the blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than that of Abel". In Jerusalem, the "bloody city" therefore it was commanded that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in Christ's name—which imports his person, his mediation, his merit, his fulness, and his supremacy: and never did a convinced sinner

call in vain for mercy upon that name. Abel signifies vanity; and so are all prayers, worship, oblations, and austerities, without faith in Christ; but faith is no fancy—faith is no vanity!

"By faith", it is affirmed, "Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead, yet speaketh". His very ashes, that is, attest the truth of the doctrine of acceptance in the beloved, and speak encouragement to sinners to come to Christ. For faith is "the work of God"; God reckons it for righteousness; he estimates it as "gifts"; and by Abel testifies that all spiritual excellency is derived from Christ through faith. Wherefore, to the "will-worship" and thank-offerings of superstition and deism God has no respect.

Then listen to the voice of this dead man. He was the first martyr of Jesus, in a figure. He fell a victim to the deadly enmity against "God in Christ", of a wicked brother; who was the first persecutor, in a figure, of "the children of God". The one was a righteous man; the other "was of that wicked one"—the devil. Happy they who are "born of God".

*"The Substance and the Evidence" (Heb. 11:1). A M.S. presented to his daughter on November 11, 1842.

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3—ENOCH (Genesis 5 : 21-24)

ENOCH signifies the dedicated one ; and herein he was a signal type of Christ ; for as Enoch "had this testimony that he pleased God", so of himself Jesus Christ affirmed (relatively to his obedience to his heavenly Father), "I do always those things that please him".

Enoch was the seventh generation in the line from Adam, and was gifted with the spirit of prophecy ; for he foretold the coming of the Lord "to execute judgment" upon the antediluvians, as Christ predicted the destruction of Jerusalem ; and as the "hard speeches, which ungodly sinners had spoken against God", evidently afflicted him as similar "unlawful deeds vexed Lot's righteous soul from day to day", so it is written, "The reproaches of them that reproached God, fell on Christ".

To spend a few weeks among a profane *crew*, is most painful to minds of correct moral principles ; but to live *alone* in the midst of an ungodly world, who revile the system of Providence, (for they were "murmurers" and "complainers") and to be unintimidated by impiety, and uncorrupted by "evil communications", was an astonishing instance of moral courage, and a stupendous example of faith. And, yet, for "three hundred years", Enoch lived nearly, if not altogether, in this state.

The phrase "walked with God" denotes the object on which Enoch's faith terminated, the source whence he derived strength to sustain this conflict, the means by which his spirituality was augmented, the fellowship with God which he experienced, and the consistent course of conduct in which he persevered ; and, without controversy, such inflexible firmness, such uncompromising sternness of virtue, is without a parallel in the heathen world.

The respect which God had to Enoch's faith, shows that "God is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" ; that "he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him" ; and that under no circumstances ought we ever

to despair of his mercy. Doubtless, the walk of faith is a sightless one ; sense is antagonistic to both faith and hope ; and, therefore, the men of the world, who calculate events according to second causes, oftentimes prosper, and keep each other in countenance, while faith is apparently disconsolate. For it must not be overlooked that "the trial of faith" is inseparable from the life of faith and from the walk of faith ; and that "the bitter is before the sweet". Deliverances are not to be ordinarily expected. "Patience must have its perfect work, that it may be entire, wanting nothing". The reward, therefore, may be deferred. Hard and long is the way that leads to life eternal. Weary, weary, weary, are the steps to be taken to endless felicity. But the reward will come at last. It came—yea it came most unexpectedly—to Enoch. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye", he was "changed", and "caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so" has he "ever been with the Lord". And is the Lord in reality less near to us than he was to Enoch ? Is the existence of heaven less certain ? Is sudden death less possible than his sudden metamorphosis ? Cannot God in an instant take us to himself ? The Parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Paul's rapture, the visions of the Apocalypse, and sundry scriptures, imply as much ; and the Gospel insures to the faithful a glorious resurrection.

But whither did Jesus Christ go, when he ascended into heaven ? Was it not to the Father ? And is he not "able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him", seeing "he ever liveth to make intercession for them" ? Then, forsake not the way of peace ; "be not faithless but believing" ; believe steadfastly things invisible ; let not our hearts condemn us ; endeavour to please God ; and come poverty, come sickness, come persecution, come death, glory will be the issue.

*"The Substance and the Evidence" (Heb. 11 : 1). A MS. presented to his daughter on Nov. 11, 1842.

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4—NOAH (Genesis 7 : 1-6)

UNBELIEF was the ruin of the old world. The ark was typical of Christ ; Noah, of the ministers of the Gospel ; the deluge, of the wrath to come ; the preparing of the ark, of faith ; the entering into it, of salvation ; and the shutting of it against those that were without, of damnation : and "As the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating, and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and swept them all away : so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

The warning of God to Noah related to "things not seen as yet". This warning Noah believed ; for he considered that "no demonstration can be stronger than this that God saith it". This faith operated in him fear. This fear prompted obedience . by which "he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith".

The antediluvian world were "scoffers" ; and "in the last days", there will be scoffing like the hiss of the Serpent, the devil being its author, and men will deny that the world was ever submerged by the waters of the deluge, and laugh to scorn the notions of the dissolution of the globe by fire, of eternal judgment and of hell and damnation. But "the day of the Lord will come" notwithstanding, and "things not seen as yet" will then be visible.

The antediluvian world had no one to blame for their perdition but themselves. They were "disobedient". All the while that Noah preached ; all the while that God's long-suffering lasted ; all the while that the ark was a preparing ; all the while that the living creatures were assembling ; and all the while that Noah's house were making ready, they were disobedient, and, like the devil and the damned, indifferent to both hope and fear!

The antediluvian world perished in unrighteousness. Presumption and profaneness usually unite. A people wicked past divine endurance without a single redeeming trait in their state ; and consequently, if there be a God, in a fearful condition, were as unconcerned for a justifying righteousness as if they had been angels. The possibility of being "found wanting", of being found "naked", of being found Christless and helpless, and hopeless, seems never to have entered their thoughts, and repentance and faith were deemed superfluous. What a picture is this of depraved human

nature generally. While myriads by faith, moved with fear, are preparing for eternity, and "have fled for refuge to lay hold upon" Christ, as "the hope set before them" in the Gospel, the great mass of mankind are as careless of eternity, as sceptical of a divine righteousness, and as neglectful of "the great salvation", as if religion were a dream and christianity a fable! And lest the justice of their condemnation should not be sufficiently apparent, they give credit to the most monstrous proposition, that christian religion is of human invention, even palmed upon credulity. Oh! that "judgment should have fled to brutish beasts, and men have lost their reason!"

But the living God is no laggard. He reckons to an instant. Neither is the living God mutable.

"His very word of grace is strong
As that which built the skies ;
The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises"—

and that his threatenings are potent "the spirits in prison" can attest. Accordingly "the great day of his wrath" did come upon the antediluvians, and it will hereafter come upon all the world.

How precious, then, is Christ to the believer! How salutary to the soul are faith and fear! Wherefore "you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power ; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe".

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5—ABRAHAM (Genesis 12: 1-6)

“THE God of glory”, said the proto-martyr Stephen, “appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran.” The glory of God is his word, which is his Son, and his grace in Christ Jesus, which is his Gospel; and it was for the discovery of the one, and for the revelation of the other, that God was pleased to call Abraham.

This was a call by grace; for the dwellers “on the other side of the flood, served other Gods”, “and with their darkness durst affront his light”; and God “took Abraham” from among them, and through him was pleased to communicate the knowledge of Messiah to the world.

It was also a call to “eternal glory”; for the “place which he should after receive for an inheritance” was so understood by the patriarchs. Upon this their whole earthly pilgrimage was one practical comment; “for they that say such things” (that is, confess that they are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth,”) “declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly if they had been mindful of that country, from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city”.

It was for this celestial city, therefore, that Abraham (visionary-like, in the world’s estimation) set out; “and he went out, not knowing whither he went”.

Faith is rich in promises, but usually poor in earthly possessions. Accordingly “the God of glory gave Abraham none inheritance in the land of Canaan, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him” (Canaan literally being a figure to him of the heavenly inheritance) for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.”

Here, then, it is apparent that Abraham’s

life was, of necessity, a life of faith; for whithersoever he journeyed, he was but a sojourner upon the earth; “the land of promise” was to him but “as a strange country”, when he pitched his tent, and tabernacled “with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise”; though, with no other abatement than what arose from his great antiquity, he might live with all the elegance of a modern Arab Emir, still his “citizenship” was “in heaven”; his inheritance was reversionary; his heirship was of God; and not of earthly proprietorship; and his faith was found equal to his expectation, “For he looketh for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

This is the heavenly Paradise, described in the Apocalypse, where God and the Lamb reign; where the benevolence of God is seen *as it is*, pure, bright, and perfect; where forfeited bliss regained, is experienced; where the “curse” of God is excluded, and where suffering-testimony is superseded. *There* the saints shall see God; and *there* the servants of Christ shall be glorified. Life, light, and immortality, will be their eternal felicity.

Now it is to this “heavenly Jerusalem” that all the children of God are journeying: some by long, others by short, some by hard, others by easy, distances: but all reach thither at length. “For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.”

“The glory of God” was pleased, also, to call Sarah, Abraham’s wife, by his grace; and to make her, not only a help-met, in the best sense, to her husband, but encouraging him to judge, as she herself did, that he was “faithful who had promised”; but an illustrious type of the New Testament church, the members of which are “born after the Spirit”, and constitute

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Christ's mystical "body the invisible church".

This church is *free*, not under the ceremonial law; it is numerous, "as the stars of the sky for multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable"; it is a *suffering* church, for "as then, he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now"; it is an *espoused* church, called "the bride, the Lamb's wife"; it is the *universal* church, "a rejoicing" and "a joy"—a "nation born at once"; and it will be "a *glorious* church" not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be "holy and without blemish".

The members of this church live by faith, walk by faith, and die in faith; like Abraham, who "rejoiced to see the day of Christ, and he saw it, and was glad", they see the promises "afar off"; even "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever", as "the end of their conversion"; and of the primitive part of them, it is affirmed, "Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory". And although none but Jesus Christ himself can, with infallible certainty, identify each as his own—

"For neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only soul that walks
Invisible, except to God alone.

"By his permissive will, through heaven and earth"—they, in a greater or a less degree, profess the evidence of experience, and the witness of the Spirit, that they are "born from above". Such are "the children of the free woman".

Faith is belief of the divine testimony. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness". Strong faith is belief against appearances. For nearly five and twenty years there was not the slightest appearance of the fulfilment of the promise; but Abraham "against hope, believed in hope . . . and being not weak in faith . . . He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but

was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform"; and victorious faith is belief against seduction, against tribulation, and against intimidation. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life".

It is written, "By faith, Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called . . . Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead: from whence also he received him in a figure."

As a clear case of conscience, this was the perfection of right reason. Can anything be more reasonable than to believe that God is his own reason, his own rule, and his own end? Can anything be more reasonable than to believe that God is too wise to err, and too good unnecessarily to afflict? Can anything be more reasonable than to believe that unless we know God's eternal purpose, we cannot justly doubt the equity of his proceedings? Can anything be more reasonable than to believe that the simple recollection of the reasonableness of "*humility of mind towards God*", ought to *silence* us at least; and teach us to *hold our peace* against Providence? And can anything be more reasonable than to believe that with God nothing (necessary) is impossible? All this Abraham believed, and, in perfect obedience, exemplified; and, therefore, he is called of the Almighty, "Abraham my friend."

Here we leave him; for none but the martyrs can follow him—excepting at an immeasurable distance.

The moral is simple: account that God is "able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think", when our deliverance shall be subservient to his own glory.

Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, walked in the steps of "the father of the faithful"; and in a similar manner "Wisdom is justified of all her children".

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6—MOSES (Hebrews 11: 23-31)

CHRIST is reproached by the reproaches of his people. He was "made perfect through suffering"; and suffering is the condition of their calling. This is a heart opened to *attend* to evidence, followed by a perception of evidence, and resulting in the adoption of things evidenced: and this process appears to have passed in the mind of Moses; for he saw clearly who were "the people of God", and he determined that they should be his people, and their God his God. These were his believing choice and pious resolution "when he was come to years".

Faith is seldom long without temptation. A palace is the abode of royalty, the recess of majesty. A court is a scene of dissimulation, and a theatre of pleasure. A nation is sometimes both great and glorious. Such was Egypt, when Moses lived in the palace of the Pharaohs. But sin plated with gold has no attraction to faith; and, therefore, for reasons supplied by faith, "Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

"When faith is virtue, reason makes it so."

Faith is fruitful of expedients. Power may impose silence. Oppression may intimidate from action; but souls enlightened never can be reconciled to slavery. Happily for Israel God had prepared in Moses a mind suited to the great occasion of their emancipation. His first misunderstood, and ill requited, attempt to redress the wrongs of his suffering brethren, compelled him to seek for safety in flight; and forty years elapsed before God's time came to employ him as the Liberator of Israel.

Henceforth, let no man despair of the final triumph of the great cause of civil and religious liberty, because its success is deferred; nor let any man retard its progress, by mistaking rashness for movement.

Faith is designed for use. Its duties are generally painful; and its services extremely arduous. Moses found them so. It required great faith to encounter Pharaoh, and withstand a superstitious priesthood; to brave the wrath of a despot, and be unintimidated by a whole people; but faith is invincible: and "By faith, Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

The redemption of the world from slavery to sin, and from vassalage to Satan, was prefigured by the departure of Israel out of Egypt. Miracles, death, a lamb, and a deliverer, were the means by which both were effected: and faith in

Christ, which saved the congregation, obtains salvation for the church. "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first born should touch them"; and "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us".

Faith is intrepid. By faith Columbus discovered a new world. By faith the Pilgrim Fathers crossed the Atlantic, and located themselves in the wilderness, resolute to maintain for themselves those rights of conscience which they so little respected in others. And "by faith they passed through the Red Sea, as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned". Such is the difference between faith and presumption.

Faith is resistless. Sin, death, and hell, must give place to it. They have no power over the soul. They may dispute but they cannot prevent its progress heavenwards. They have no power over the church. Confederacies, alliances and policies, and armies, are all vulnerable to faith, as "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days".

Faith is prudent and honourable. Imprudence is want of due regard to our own welfare; and meanness is cunning substituted for wisdom: but faith gives neither advantage to the adversary, nor cause of complaint to the faithful. "By faith", therefore, "the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." How much less, then, shall the Lord's people ever have to complain of "a God unfaithful or unkind!"

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7—DAVID (1 Samuel 17: 32)

DAVID was an illustrious type of Christ. Through David's instrumentality it pleased God "to take away the reproach from Israel"; and "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil."

The reproach itself was, that not a man of all the thousands of Israel, durst encounter Goliath of Gath, who had defied the armies of the living God; and what but defiance of God himself is sin as arrayed by the devil?

This man was champion of the Philistines; and Satan is "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience".

This man was the terror of Israel, for of him "they were sore afraid"; and our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour".

This man proposed nothing less than the voluntary servitude and absolute slavery of Israel to the Philistines; and the devil expects us to be "the servants of sin", and promises "the wages of sin" which "is death".

This man trusted in himself; from whom then could deliverance come to Israel, but from one who trusted in the living God?

Such an one was David. A youth; a Bethlehemite; a keeper of sheep; a brother; an observer; an Israelite—circumcized in heart; a believer in the "one only living and true God"; a hater of idolatry, and of the uncircumcized Philistines as idolatrous; zealous for God; and touched with solicitude for the honour of Israel—but neither a man of war, nor in estimation with his brethren.

"What shall be done", said this stripling, "to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcized Philistine, that he should defy

the armies of the living God?"

Here was faith. "Who is this uncircumcized Philistine?" Why he had just beheld him stalk forth out of the armies of the Philistines, "a man eleven feet high, an helmet of brass upon his head, armed with a coat of mail, the weight of which, with his spear's head, weighed at least 350 lbs., besides his greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders". And besides all this "one bearing a shield, went before him". But what were gigantic stature, a panoply of brass, an armour bearer, or the whole of the Philistines, to faith! "Wherefore, David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him: thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

Not so, however, thought king Saul. He had a great deal more of what is called reason than faith. But David was not to be dissuaded from his purpose. He related one or two occurrences that had before happened to him, and then said, "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee."

And now a combat ensues between faith and brute force.

Faith arms itself simply with a stone and a sling; brute force with military prowess. Faith looks upwards; brute force looks down with *disdain*. Faith prays; brute force blasphemes. Faith depends on the Spirit of God, and ascribes all glory to God; brute force vaunts of human might, until by the power of God, it is smitten, falls, dies, and is consigned to everlasting oblivion. Thus perished Goliath; and thus faith "subdued kingdoms".

But what comparison will the results of this combat bear with the achievement of Calvary?

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There the Son and Lord of David "conquered when he fell". There "he spoiled principalities and powers, made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it". There he bruised "the head of the serpent", and wrested "the prey from the mighty". There he sealed the doom of sin, death, and hell; and there he "opened the kingdom of heaven unto all believers". And now that he has "ascended on high, has led captivity captive, and has received gifts for men"; now that he has "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high", and is "exalted to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of

sins", what should discourage us from "fighting the good fight of faith", that we may "lay hold on eternal life?" Deism, indeed, may vaunt of its five-fold defence; anti-christ may rally its discomfited host; power may protect Satan's insidious emissaries; and "the armies of the living God" may be intimidated: but doubt not the issue. The decree is gone forth—"Babylon is fallen, is fallen!" "Have faith in God." Be true to God's word. Be faithful to his Son, who is "the Son of the Father in truth and love"; and, in due time, "his enemies shall lick the dust".

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is coming." The day of retribution came to the conspirators against Daniel. "And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives: and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the den." The day of reckoning came to Antiochus Epiphanes. "But now", he said, "I remember the evils that I did at Jerusalem, and that I took all the vessels of gold and silver that were therein, and sent to destroy the inhabitants of Judea without a cause. I perceive, therefore, that for this cause these troubles are come upon me, and I, behold, I perish through great grief in a strange land." The day of visitation came to Rome pagan, and it will come to Rome papal. Then be it ever remembered, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink. For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." And let the whole world recollect, "That the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape."

The second thing suggested in this connexion, is, that faith is that, the exercise of which is pre-eminently necessary to every Christian.

There is no conceivable condition of misery in this world, to which it may not please God to permit his "dear children" to be reduced; and there is no state of mind so deplorable that this may not have a natural tendency to superinduce. Over and above all the calamities and "temptations common to man", the Hebrew worthies were "destitute, afflicted, tormented". Now think of the distrust, the rebellion, and the

desperation, which these things, acting upon natural affection, self-love, mortified feelings, a just regard to appearances, and a nice sense of self respect, were calculated to produce, and what advantage this would give to the Tempter. Here, then, faith is requisite. The divine goodness is not to be measured by worldly advantages. Evil suggestions are not to be listened to under any circumstances. Mercy is not to be despaired of whatever be our guilt. Look at Peter! Hear Paul! "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." These may be horrid blasphemies, devilish darings, and black unbelief; but they must either be hurled back with defiance, or borne with dogged resolution, by faith: for if "faith fail not", the soul is safe.

It is faith, therefore, which grace succours. "I have prayed for thee", said Jesus Christ to Peter, "that thy faith fail not"; and many are the refreshments with which faith meets; and great is the solace to which it has access. There is Jesus, "within the veil", to whom faith looks—to his advocacy, fulness, and glory. There is his divine example of endurance on which to meditate, and the joy which awaits us to contemplate. There is the God of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles to confide in; and the impotence of sinners against him to reflect upon. There are the comparative mildness of our tribulation, "the uses of adversity", and the glory to be revealed to be considered, all which considerations should prevent us from being "wearied and faint in our minds". And then when death arrives "to die" will be gain—and when God's voice shall "shake, not the earth only, but also heaven"—and "like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a wrack behind"—you shall inherit the kingdom which cannot be moved. Wherefore, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a "consuming fire".