

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION,

CONTAINING

SERMONS

Volume 1

BY

REV. B. M. PALMER,

Pastor First Presbyterian Church, New Orleans.

Reported By C. W. COLTON, Phonographer.

Harrisonburg, Virginia
SPRINKLE PUBLICATIONS
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TO THE READER.

Mr. Colton has reported my discourses during the past year; and I take pleasure in certifying to the verbal accuracy with which he has reproduced them from my lips. In the revision, I have had occasion only to remove redundancies of expression, which were my own. These printed sermons may be relied upon, as being exactly what was pronounced from the pulpit; with only such verbal corrections, made by myself, as were necessary for the press.

B. M. PALMER.

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sin can make it—but let neither the one, nor the other, dim the festal character of this worship. We approach this table in order that we may “with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation.” (Isa. xii: 3.) We are here that we may hide the sins which trouble us, beneath the covering of the blood. We are here that we may take large draughts of spiritual life from the open side, whence issues the full stream of life upon all the redeemed. Sadness of heart does not belong to the bride who is “adorned for her husband.” (Rev. xxi: 2.) The responsibility of the consecration may be great; but it will only cause the heart to throb with a stronger pulse of joy.

One preliminary suggestion may perhaps assist you in the vows you will here secretly make to Him, who has bought you with His blood. This incorporation with Christ draws after it a corresponding separation from the world. It is implied in the Apostle's entire argument, out of which the text is taken. We cannot be partakers of Christ and also of an idol. The world has its Sacraments, as well as the Church. I will not specify them here, but leave it to your educated conscience to ascertain what they are. There are forms of pleasure and pursuits of business, which are so intensely of the world that everybody accepts them as the badges of the world. Those who engage in them are naturally construed as being of the world, and belonging to it, just as those found at the sacramental board are construed to be followers of Christ, and professors of His religion. What I desire to say is, that these two are antagonistic. The one excludes the other, and we cannot wear the badges of both. I desire that your own spiritual life shall put out its instinct of recoil from all that would compromise the interests of the soul. I wish only to impress you that separation from evil is involved in the very name given in Scripture to the Church of the Redeemer; it is the body that is CALLED FROM. Consecration to something, is of course consecration *from* something. The call which carries you to Christ, takes you away from what you leave behind. What is it that you and I have given up? In what respects does the Master say of us, “they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world?” (John xvii: 14.) May the anointing which we have received of Him teach us, this day, what this pregnant Scripture means! May “the unction from the Holy one” reveal to us all that is involved in “the communion of the blood of Christ,” and which will not allow us to eat of that which is “offered in sacrifice unto idols!”

XXXIII.

CHRIST'S UNIVERSAL DOMINION.*

Ps. xcvi. “The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.”

MAT. XXVIII: 18. “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

I have placed together these two passages, the one from the Old Testament and the other from the New, because they cover the whole doctrine of God's providential government. The first affirms the fact that such a government exists, with allusion to the security and joy which it brings to the creature. The second sets forth the agency through which it is administered. It will scarcely be expected of me to cover, in a single discourse, this entire field of thought. I may be allowed to pretermit the first, which will not be denied by any who defer to the authority of the Scriptures, or by those who attend to the orderly working of human history. The second will demand a fuller expansion, as not felt in all its significance even by Christians themselves. Your attention therefore will be solicited to THE MEDIATORIAL JURISDICTION OF JESUS CHRIST OVER THE UNIVERSE.

We are accustomed to distinguish between the *essential* kingdom of Christ, as He is God, and His *mediatorial* kingdom, as He is the God-man. In His Divine nature, being of the same substance and equal with the Father in power and glory, He is invested with the same authority and rule. In what may be termed the absolute kingdom of God, we are not warranted in separating the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost from a co-equal jurisdiction. But apart from this essential kingdom, the Mediator has acquired the right to rule in that complex nature which belongs to Him as the Son of God, and as the Son of man. The proper subjects of this kingdom are the Redeemed, who are organized in a visible society which is the Church, over which as Mediator He more directly rules. It is of this our Lord speaks, when He says: “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not

* Preached on Thursday, May 10th, 1877, proclaimed as a day of thanksgiving for the emancipation of Louisiana.

from hence. (John xviii: 36.) Its spiritual nature is thus amply defined—a kingdom which is administered through the truth, because its jurisdiction is over the consciences and hearts of men—in which Christ alone enacts laws, appoints offices, institutes sacraments—and into which is allowed no intrusion of human legislation and authority. But whilst the authority of Christ is more immediate over the Church, it has a wider extension and holds all nature in its grasp. It is of this broader rule that I shall speak this morning, and that under the two following aspects:

I. AS TO THE GROUNDS UPON WHICH THE MEDIATOR CLAIMS THIS UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION; and

II. AS TO THE PRACTICAL RESULTS OF SUCH A BENEFICENT ARRANGEMENT.

I. The grounds upon which Christ administers this providential government, may be set forth in five particulars:

1. *It pertains to Him as the Eternal Word, by whose immediate agency the worlds were produced.* If you will collate the passages of Scripture bearing upon the point, you will easily gather that it is through the second Person of the Godhead the Deity is revealed, and the Divine power is exercised. The reasons for this lie too far concealed in the mystery of the Godhead, for the creature to explore: but the facts are too plainly given upon the authority of revelation, to be rejected. It is the official function of the Father, as the first in the order of thought, to represent GODHOOD, in its idea and reality, to all creatures to whom He is revealed. He must therefore always be conceived of as the absolute and the unknown. When Moses, in the passion of desire excited by communion with God in the cloud upon the mount, offered that over-bold prayer: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory"—the answer was returned which checked the presumptuous advance, "thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live." (Ex. xxxiii: 20.) Job asks with tremendous emphasis in his tone, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." (Job xi: 7, 9.) John declares that no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (John i: 18.) Paul affirms the inviolability of the Divine secrecy, "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." (I Tim. vi: 16.) All the acts of God terminating without Himself, are consequently mediated through the Son: who as the second in the order of thought, and imme-

diately of the Father by an eternal begetting, is naturally the exponent of the Divine energy as it breaks forth in its manifestations.

But whatever may be thought of generalizations like this, we have adequate testimony that the Son is the immediate Efficient through whose producing agency the worlds were created. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made, that was made." (John i: 3.) Again, "by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." (Col: i: 16, 17.) Testimony could not be more explicit, nor the amplification more full. The Son created out of nothing the very matter itself, of which the worlds were fashioned. He gave to it alike its substance and its form. He stamped upon it all the properties which it is the business of science to analyze; and He established those laws under which they operate and are developed. What can be more suitable than to assign to Him the office of governing and controlling that which He himself creates and upholds? If He becomes incarnate, He brings, along with his Divine nature, His original authority and rule. In this Divinity, we have assurance of His competency to wield the power of which he cannot be divested; and therefore He says: "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

2. *The government of this lower world pertains to Him as the Second Adam.* This touches, you perceive, the second term of the Mediator's person, who was both the Son of God and the Son of man.

Adam was made in the image of God, not only as having intelligence, reflecting upon his Maker the glory of a rational soul; but also that he might honor God through the operation of law. This too, not simply as he was a subject, in the obedience which he should render; but as being in his sphere the maker and administrator of law. He was accordingly invested with immediate jurisdiction of the lower creation. The animals defiled in pairs before him to receive their names, in token of their subjection to his supremacy. Beyond this, he was constituted a ruler in the little State, as it then existed within the family; out of which would spring the Patriarchal authority, adapting itself with indefinite elasticity to an almost indefinite expansion, and which must, in the lapse of years, make man a constructor of governments, and a legislator. Had not sin intervened, we might have been presented with the grand spectacle of a single monarchy over the whole earth. To us, accustomed to the disabled condition to which sin

has reduced us, the suggestion may appear sufficiently startling. But death being then unknown, the first Father would have continued in the exercise of the premiership to which he was at first appointed, and which no guilty descendant would have risen to dispute. In the absence of sin, too, there could have been no clashing of interests to break the peace of the world. With the diffusion of the race, power would necessarily be broken and distributed; all heading up at last in the progenitor from whom it was derived, who would everywhere be recognized as the vice-regent of Jehovah upon earth. It passes before the mind as a splendid vision, melting into air as soon as it is beheld. Alas, the earliest page of human history is stained with the record of the Fall, from which hour man has been incapable of this sublime trust. This disintegrating power of sin has been sadly proved, through all the centuries, in destroying the noblest social structures which human wisdom can erect. The earth is strewn with the wreck of broken empires. Nothing abides. Kingdoms emerge from obscurity, rise to greatness, and then crumble to decay. The glory of human legislation is perpetually turning into shame. We are constantly shocked by the swift declension in public morals; and wonder how a degenerate offspring can so soon betray the virtues which should have been their inheritance from an honored ancestry.

Shall God's purpose fail, in showing forth the beauty of justice and equity through a human administration of law? The answer is returned in the appointment of the second Adam, the archetypal man of whom the first Adam was but the shadow and the type, who seizes the falling sceptre and illustrates, in His kingly no less than in His priestly office, the glories of law. God speaks, by the mouth of His prophet, of the Saviour's human exaltation to this office: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it—and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is, and I will give it Him." (Ezech. xxi: 27.) So David in the Eighth Psalm: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (Vv. 4-6.) Which entire passage the Apostle carries over in its typical application to Jesus Christ, as the second Adam: "but now we see not yet all things put under Him (man); but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb. ii: 9.) It is impossible to escape the conclusion established in this comparison. Man was constituted in the beginning the monarch of earth. But this jurisdic-

tion, being forfeited by sin, can only be reclaimed and exercised by one who has fulfilled the conditions in which the first man has failed. Hence the Mediatorial sway of Jesus Christ over the creatures is a right inhering in Him as "the second man, the Lord from heaven." (I Cor. xi: 47.)

3. *This dominion belongs to Christ by virtue of His Father's grant.* This is the ground of the claim asserted in the text, "all power IS GIVEN unto me." The Scriptures abound with testimony upon this point; "yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree—the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Then follow the words of the grant; "ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Ps. ii: 6-8.) The Prophet Isaiah declares, "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given—and the government shall be upon His shoulder. * * * Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." (Isa. ix: 6, 7.) So Daniel, with even greater explicitness: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before Him: And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. vii: 13, 14.) In the New Testament, we have the declaration from Christ's own lips, "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" and to make it plain that this grant of power is made to the Mediator, He adds, "and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man." (John v: 22, 27.) He builds His priestly intercession upon this grant; "as thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him." (John xvii: 2.) Paul sets forth this universal dominion in its exact relation to His supremacy in His Church; "when he raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i: 20-23.) And the climax of testimony is given by the "great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the king-

doms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. xi: 15.) The chain of proof runs through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; the holy seer in Patmos echoing the strain which fell from the harp of David, and from the lips of ancient prophets—until at last the dawn of the Millennium breaks upon the sight, when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa xi: 9.)

It does not impair the certainty of this fact, whether we can penetrate the reasons for this grant of power, or whether the arrangement be ascribed to a purely arbitrary exercise of the Divine will. This reason is distinctly unfolded by Paul, as the reward of Christ's voluntary humiliation and shame; "wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. ii: 9–11.) But whether the reason be disclosed or withheld, in either case this grant is a clear ground of right; for the Father has undisputed authority to convey, and the Mediator entire competency to receive this trust.

4. *It is, further, a right which has been acquired through suffering and death.* If the title to empire be secured by grant, much more is it confirmed by purchase. This purchase was made through the obedience by which Christ "magnified the law and made it honorable." (Isa xli: 21.) Let this be pondered, until the heart is filled with the amazement and the praise it should excite. The Eternal Son leaping from the bosom of the Father, in the sweep of His condescension, passes through all the ranks of angels down to man at the bottom of the scale. In the swift descent, He gathers in Himself all the intervening grades, and stands upon the earth to render an obedience which shall be representative of that which is due from intelligent creatures throughout the Universe. It is designed to uphold the majesty of the Divine government, and to consolidate the interests of God's whole empire. It was an "obedience unto death"; (Phil. ii: 8,) that is to say, an obedience which searched through the precept until it reached the penalty—an obedience which first honoring the commandment, also fulfilled the sanction. It is therefore a complete obedience, covering the law in both its divisions; surpassing, in its virtue and extent, the obedience hitherto rendered by all classes of being in heaven and upon earth. It stands therefore before the eye of the Universe as a protest against the disobedience of the creature, and a triumphant vindication of the Divine law. Sin had lifted its dreadful front, even in heaven and

before the throne of God. It had exhibited a fearful power to propagate itself, in the seduction and fall of man in Eden. Who could tell what ravages it might commit through the universe? How shall its progress be arrested, and security be given against any further infringement of the law? These were solemn questions which angels might raise, but were incompetent to resolve. The tremendous exigency could be met only by the resources of infinite wisdom and strength. "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," (Gal. iv: 3,) to render a glorious and representative obedience; which should take off the stain cast upon it by the sin of angels and of men, and be the perfect pattern of that which the holiness of God demands. Upon the ground of this perfect vindication of the government and law of God, we can see how "an end of sin" may at length be made, in the everlasting punishment of that which already exists, in the eternal confirmation in blessedness of such as are pure, and in the final restraint put upon the spread of the dreadful leprosy beyond the limits in which Divine justice confines it forever. Surely the Redeemer has acquired, through this high achievement, the right to administer the law which He has vindicated from reproach, and to rule the empire which He has conserved!

Akin to this is Christ's title to supremacy, as the architect of grace; which, as an historic principle, is henceforth incorporated with the law equally with the justice whose claims it has cancelled. It is a thought ineffable in its sweetness—that the law, which has abundantly vindicated itself in the infliction of the penalty, should find its sanction to the holy in heaven, not in the threat of everlasting death, but in the assurance of eternal life. Wicked men and apostate angels are cast into the lake of fire, and justice is satisfied in their eternal overthrow. Again the majesty of law was honored when "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." And so complete was the homage rendered to the law in the sternness of its exactions, that the grace which met them all sits by the side of justice, wielding her queenly sceptre over all who are confirmed in holiness. He who wrought this grace in the forge of His own passion and death, is "exalted to be a prince and a saviour." Blessed fulfilment of the ancient type, when the glory of Divine grace shall be the covering of the law, the Shekinah upon the Mercy Seat, the visible glory of the Divine presence amongst His people forever! "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads." (Rev. xxii: 3, 4.)

5. *This providential rule of the Mediator is necessary to his govern-*

ment in the Church. For this reason, it is termed His *subsidiary* kingdom: He is "the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i: 22, 23.)

For example: the Redeemer is pledged to the care and support of His people, which extends even to the things of this present life. His direction is, "take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? * * But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Mat. vi: 31, 33.) But how shall Christ redeem this pledge of worldly maintenance, unless the control of nature be in His hands? It is not through miraculous intervention, but through the orderly working of natural laws, He leads us to expect the fulfilment of this promise. He must therefore command the seasons in their turn, in order to secure to us both seed-time and harvest. He must appoint the course of the sun—the rain and the dew must be at His disposal—and by this providential control of the natural world, He "giveth meat unto them that fear Him." (Ps. cxl: 5.)

Christ is still more solemnly pledged to the sanctification of those whom He has redeemed. The very design of grace, as stipulated in the Covenant with His Father, is "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v: 26, 27.) But how shall the discipline be varied, through which the godly are weaned from this world, unless the entire administration of Providence be committed to Him for this purpose?

Observe, too, how the history of the Church is complicated with that of the nations of the earth, in every age. This greatly enlarges our view of the Mediatorial sway. For if the care of individual believers is exceedingly minute, and requires the universal presence of their Head, this control of nations and the subordination of them to the welfare of His Church demand resources of wisdom and power which are inconceivably grand. Yet no truth is more constantly affirmed in holy Scripture: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed. * * He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision." (Ps. ii: 1-4.) "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice—the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." (Ps. xciii: 3, 4.)

It is scarcely necessary to press the thought further, either in the way of illustration or of argument. Under every aspect, the purposes of grace within and towards the Church depend largely, for their execution, upon that wider but subsidiary authority given to the Mediator, whereby He controls all nature, and administers all providence for the benefit of His Church. Without dwelling longer upon this topic, the right of Jesus Christ to this universal jurisdiction may safely be based upon the five grounds I have already indicated.

II. The consequences which flow from this momentous truth are sufficiently practical, to make a slight enumeration of them answer as the application of this discourse.

1. First of all, *it gives unity to history.* We read and hear much of "the philosophy of history." Exactly what is comprehended under this ambitious phrase, it might be difficult to determine. It assumes this, at least; that every fragment of history is the part of a stupendous whole, which can be interpreted aright only as its relation to that whole is discovered. A certain purpose or design is felt to pervade the whole, and every portion of that whole; which would prove, to the explorer fortunate enough to seize it, the thread of Ariadne guiding safely through a labyrinth of greater intricacy than that of ancient Crete. It is usually a learned effort to trace the progress of the human race, from a state of primitive barbarism, up to the degree of refinement and culture of the most civilized nations. All the influences which contribute to this result are carefully noted; the advancements and the retardations are calculated with the utmost precision, to ascertain the range and power of the general movement; that which is the most variable and contingent is sought to be reduced under the operation of recognized law; and the final conclusion is reached that history will have run its cycle, when all the tribes of men shall have passed through the same education, and universal man has reached the highest development of which his nature is capable. It is not the business of the pulpit to criticise the speculations of philosophy; and in this instance, it is wholly unnecessary. All that is so proudly written upon the perfectibility of man, and of the value of knowledge in hastening the approach of this golden age, may be conceded. It is not worth while to enter upon any issues that are not decisive. But when human history has reached its end in this world—what then? If the threads broken at the grave, are gathered up and woven by unseen hands into a new web beyond the stars—what then? Have we got the true "philosophy of history" at all, unless

it explains the purpose achieved by it in the ages to come, and throughout the continuity of being that loses itself in the vastness of eternity?

Ah! My hearers, the grand mistake of philosophy, vitiating its teachings from the Seven Sages of Greece to the thinkers of our own day, is that it makes man, and not God, the measure of all things. The Gospel does not directly teach science; but it gives the principle which corrects many of its aberrations, when it adjusts man's relations aright, and makes God in all things supreme. See, how it applies here. If Jehovah be infinite in all his perfections, containing within Himself all that can be desired of wisdom, and power, and goodness—then the creation of intelligent beings to whom all this can be disclosed, is a purpose which is infinitely worthy of Him. And "the philosophy of history" will find its key in the continuous revelation which God will make of Himself, through the ages of eternity. Creation, Providence and Grace, are thus bound together in the will and purpose of the Most High. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and God-head. (Rom. i: 20.) The shifting scenes of Providence present the same glory to the view; whilst in grace, He opens to us the infinite heart, and shows that "God is love." Revelation finds its climax in the last, which includes and glorifies the other two. Thus, in the Mediatorial supremacy of Jesus Christ, human history gathers up its several parts; and finds its unity in the completed discovery of Him who must otherwise have remained to us forever "the unknown God."

The only key which unlocks the complications of ancient history, is the subordination of the World-Empires to the fortunes of God's ancient Church. Not more truly do the moons of Saturn move around that great planet, than were the kingdoms of antiquity the satellites revolving around the Hebrew Church, having their destinies determined by their relations to her. Beginning with the Nomadic tribes on the south and east, and Philistia, like a selvaige border on the west of Palestine, to the stronger powers of Tyre and Sidon on the Mediterranean Sea—passing again from these to the more lasting kingdoms of Egypt and of Syria, of Babylon and Assyria, of Persia, of Greece and of Rome—we find them all standing in providential relations to ancient Israel, serving as ministers to accomplish God's declared purpose in behalf of His Church. Indeed, one of the great lessons to be drawn from the whole of Old Testament history, is just this—"that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will." (Dan. iv: 32.) For this end, the prophet stands by the side of the historian, to make authoritative expo-

sition of passing events as accomplishing the designs of Him, who "doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." (Dan. iv: 35.) If we do not equally see this in modern history, it is because the prophet no longer speaks, and the interpretation is withheld. But the lesson that runs through two thousand years of the world's history under the exposition of the Holy Ghost, is surely a lesson intended for all time. The doctrine of the text has therefore a special value in the unity it gives to history, and in which is found the philosophy of its teaching.

2. *This Mediatorial supremacy explains to us also the intermingling of mercy with providence.* What an exquisite symbol of this was afforded in one of the earliest of John's visions in Patmos! "And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and THERE WAS A RAINBOW ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE, in sight like unto an emerald." (Rev. iv: 2, 3.) It is the emblem of mercy, and gives assurance of the staying of wrath. How easy to comprehend it, when it is the author of grace who executes justice, and who covers its claim with a perfect obedience He himself has rendered! Hence, the extension of common mercies to the guilty no less than to the righteous. It is under the administration of Him who "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Mat v: 45.) How long are the wicked spared, for the sake of the righteous with whom they are bound up in the relationships of life! and how often, like Sodom, are even guilty nations reprieved, which but for the Church enshrined within them would be consumed with the edge of God's avenging sword! It rolls an immense responsibility upon the Christian, but a responsibility to be accepted with joy, to remember that the Church of God is the true Palladium of a nation's safety. For when in all the past has a people been destroyed, in which a living Church was bearing aloft its testimony for the truth of God? Not until that Church becomes corrupt and apostate, will the covenant rainbow disappear around the throne which grace has converted into the seat of mercy.

3. Consider, finally, *the wealth of consolation to the Christian in the fact that to the Savior is committed the administration of Providence.* "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (I Pet. iii: 13.) Are we not sheltered within the covenant, whose promise is that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." (Rom. viii: 28.) What shameful inconsistency in trusting to the Redeemer's care the soul

with its immortal destinies, and not the perishing body with the petty interests of this poor mortal state! Nothing removes from the Church the sad reproach which this contradiction involves, but the want of attention to the supremacy of Christ announced in the text. Let the mind be fully persuaded, that "all power is given in heaven and in earth," to Him who hath redeemed the soul from death, and it will become easy to remit our cares to Him that careth for us. It is the believer's privilege to lay the burden of care and toil, and grief upon the bosom of His Lord, in obedience to the Apostolic injunction—"be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." (Phil. iv: 6.) For, "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him: for he knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." (Ps. ciii: 13, 14.) In view of this gracious Headship of our blessed Redeemer over the universe, what remains but to convert the doctrine of this discourse into a doxology of praise? Let us unite our voice with that of the great multitude which, "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings," John heard in heaven, "saying, salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God. Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great: Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." (Rev. xix: 1, 6.)

XXXIV.

LOOKING AT THE UNSEEN.

II COR. IV: 18. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

This is one of the passages so frequent in the writings of Paul, in which human language wrestles in its agony to utter the deep things of God. Word is doubled upon word, and emphasis is piled upon emphasis, in the effort to construct a form of speech which shall not break down under the intensity of the thought. Read the paragraph, and notice how every word is weighted with meaning. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment"—ah, who that lies under the crush of a great sorrow ever thinks it to be *light*! And when grief lengthens its shadow along the path of life, until it deepens into the darkness of the grave, who feels it to be *brief*! Yet in the contrast with all that is to follow, the Apostle contradicts the exaggeration of sorrow; and with a fivefold intensification of his own, describes the blessedness in which this discipline will terminate. See how the language glows with the fervor of his inspired passion; "for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us—glory." Had he been content with the use of this one majestic word, we would pronounce the sentiment sublime; a word so vast in its import, that we cannot bring it within the compass of a definition—its very vagueness magnifying the objects which are dimly seen through the haze—but which as completely fills with its splendor the bounds of our conception, as the sun fills the earthly horizon with the brightness of his beams. But with all of its dim magnificence, the word "glory," is too narrow for the Apostle's thought—it is to him a "weight of glory." It is no empty cloud drenched with the light of the setting sun, whose crimson folds overlaid with burnished gold seem to hang like curtains over the windows of the palace of the Great King; but rather that sun itself, a globe of glory—whose solid joy rests, with the weight of its true substance, upon the heart which is only too happy under the pressure of its amazing riches. Will this strong utterance suffice? No; for it is an "exceeding weight of glory;" a glory always outrunning the thought which seeks to measure it—which widens in its range and passes beyond the limit of human comprehension—always the glory which exceeds the bounds of present expe-