Christ and the inheritance of the saints

Guthrie Thomas
Title: Christ and the inheritance of the saints

Author: Guthrie Thomas

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AND OF

GRATITUDE FOR HIS CONSTANT FRIENDSHIP TO

THE AUTHOR.

EDINBURGH, NOVEMBER 1858.
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THE INHERITANCE.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.—Colossians i. 12.

ONE thing is often set against another in the experience of the Christian; and also in the every-day procedure of the providence of God. So fared it with Jacob that night he slept in Bethel. A stone was his pillow, and the cold hard ground his bed; yet, while sleep sealed his eyelids, he had God himself to guard his low-laid head, and dreams such as seldom bless a couch of down. A ladder rose before him in the vision of the night. It rested on earth, and reached to the stars. And forming a highway for a multitude of angels, who ascended and descended in two dazzling streams of light, it stood there the bright sign of a redemption which has restored the intercourse between earth and heaven, and opened a path for our return to God.

Now, the scheme of salvation, of which that ladder was a glorious emblem, may be traversed in either of these two ways. In studying it, we may descend by the steps that lead from the cause to the consumma-
tion, or, taking the opposite course, we may rise from
the consummation to the cause. So—as a matter
sometimes of taste, sometimes of judgment—men do
in other departments of study. The geographer, for
example, may follow a river, from the lone mountain-
tops where its waters spring, down into the glen, into
which, eager to leave sterility behind, it leaps with a
joyous bound; and from thence, after resting a while
in black, deep, swirling pool, resumes its way, here
spreading itself out in glassy lake, or there winding like
a silver serpent through flowery meadows; until, forcing
a passage through some rocky gorge, it sweeps out
into the plain, to pursue, 'mid shady woods and by
lordly tower, through corn-fields, by smiling villages and
busy towns, a course that, like the life of man, grows
calmer as it nears its end. Or, starting from the sea-
beach, he may trace the river upwards; till, passing
town and church, tower and mill, scattered hamlet
and solitary shepherd's cot, in some mossy well, where
the wild deer drink, or mountain rock beneath the
eagle's nest, he finds the place of its birth. The botan-
ist, too, who describes a tree, may begin with its fruit;
and from this, whether husky shell, or rugged cone, or
clustering berry, he may pass to the flower; from that
to the buds; from those to the branches; from the
branches to the stem; and from the stem into the
ground, where he lays bare the wide-spread roots, on
which—as states depend upon the humbler classes for
power, wealth, and worth—the tree depends both for
nourishment and support. Or, reversing the plan, with