

HELP AND FOOD

FOR

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page.</i>
Answers to Correspondents:—	
Some further Notes on the Day of Atonement	25
Eternal Life as possessed by the believer, etc.....	51
Assembly-Action: its Character, its Sphere, and how far to be Received	309
Atonement:—	
Chapter XVI. —The Testimony of the Psalms.....	17, 42
“ XVII. —Atonement in the New Testament. The Gospels.....	150
“ XVIII.—Romans and Galatians.....	190
“ XIX. —Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Corinthians.	301
“But one thing needful.”.....	1
Conscience:—	
1. Its Nature and Origin	46
2. Its Office and Character.....	75
3. Purged and Pure.....	80, 102
4. The Church and the Individual.....	104
Faith Witnessing and Witnessed to:—	
1. The Principle	276
2. Abel.....	296
3. Enoch	324
Fragments	{ 24, 45, 50, 56, 112, 168, 179 196, 204, 240, 263, 280, 300, 332
Humility of Mind	111
In Christ	224
Key-Notes to the Bible Books:—	
The Old and New Testaments.....	29
The New-Testament “Mysteries.”	65
The Gospels	128
The Gospel of Matthew:—	
I. The King	141
II. The Kingdom Announced	143
III. The Manifestation and Rejection of the King..	180
IV. The Mysteries of the Kingdom	205
V. The Coming in Humiliation	225
VI. The Coming in Glory	228
VII. The Purchase of All by the One Offering.....	230

	<i>Page.</i>
Key-Notes to the Bible Books.—The Gospel of Mark:—	
I. Character and Results of the Lord's Ministry.....	253
II. Discipleship to a Rejected Master	281
III. The Lord's Service Perfected in Suffering and Death	317
"Life Abundantly."	113
On Success and Failure in Explanation	100
Poetry:—	
The Bride	108
A Song in the Desert.....	189
"We will be Glad and Rejoice in Thee."	223
"God is Love:" "God is Light."	308
Repentance and Life	110
Some Themes of the Second Part of Romans:—	
I. "In Adam" and "in Christ."	158
II. Justification and Dead to Sin.	169
III. "In the Flesh" and "in the Spirit."	197
The Approbation of the Lord	252
The Famine in Samaria, and How it was Relieved.....	241
"The Leader and Perfecter of Faith."	85
The "Only Begotten" and the "First-Born."	233
The Proclamation of Peace	57
The Psalms:—	
Sec. 3. Series 2. <i>First Five.</i> (Ps. xxv.—xxix.) <i>Continued.</i> —	
Psalm XXVIII.	126
" XXIX.	127
<i>Second Five.</i> (Ps. xxx.—xxxiv.)	
Psalm XXX.	185
" XXXI.	187
" XXXII.	213
" XXXIII.	215
" XXXIV.	264
The Repenting Sinner's Reception	217
The Wounds of Christ.....	293
"To him that overcometh."	138
What is our Place? and What our Responsibility?	266
Wholly Following.....	37

"BUT ONE THING NEEDFUL."

*A Lecture, at Plainfield, N. J., on Monday evening,
August 4, 1884.*

"Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him, and said, 'Lord dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her, therefore, that she help me.' And Jesus answered and said unto her, 'Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.'" (Luke 38-42.)

AS you know, beloved friends, there was genuine faith in both these women. "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." Martha had not only received the Lord into her house, but she had received Him into her heart; there is no kind of doubt about that. The very character here in which we find her was not merely her natural character. She was busy about One that she loved. She was busy about One whose glory she recognized, at least in measure. She was busy in serving *Him*; and there were very few, beloved friends, in that land and time, that cared to serve Him. He was One who had not where to lay His head,—One who was despised and rejected of men

—the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; men hid, as it were, their faces from Him; He was despised, and they esteemed Him not.

Martha had faith—genuine faith, as Mary had,—faith that thought of Him truly, as at least One who had come far to serve her, One whom she owned as the Christ of God come into the world. Martha was busy in her care for *such* an One; and that is the solemn lesson. With all this love in her heart, and with all this real faith in His person,—that faith which made her one of the very few in Israel that recognized Him at all,—that with all that, she could be so far wrong as we see her wrong,—that with all that, she could be put in disparaging contrast with Mary her sister,—Mary who did nothing,—Mary who simply sat at His feet to hear His word. The Lord takes her up to signify His entire approbation as to where she was and what she was. He has a reproof for Martha's service, but has only approbation for Mary's simply sitting at His feet.

His words are very striking; "Thou art careful," He says to Martha;—"Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things." Beloved friends, if you are busy about many things, you will not only be busy, but troubled. Martha, we read, "was cumbered with much serving;" and she was not only "encumbered," but "troubled;"—it weighed upon her. It was very busy service; but it weighed upon her,—weighed her down. Beloved, if you have service that weighs you down, look to it—see well why it is. Plainly, that very character would put you along with Martha here. She was cumbered with much serving. She goes to the Lord with her complaint. Mary

might help her; Mary has left her to serve alone. She wants Him to use His authority with Mary. She says, "Dost not Thou care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her, therefore, that she help me." She began with seeking to help the Lord, as it were, and she ends with complaining that she cannot get help herself. She wants to serve the Lord, but she turns round at last and wants to get Mary to serve her. The Lord's words are what we are to think about to-night: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." "But one thing is needful"—only "one thing." To what a little point would that diminish all care if we realized it: only "one thing"! How many distractions would our hearts be free from if we only recognized and bowed to the truth of the Lord's words. Only "one thing"! Do you honestly think it, beloved friends? There are a great many needs in this busy world: there are a great many duties that you have, and that Christians think they have to society, to their neighbors, and what not. The Lord here would bring our hearts from every thing simply to one, and that one, to sit at His feet and hear His word! Don't you feel as if that would leave service out altogether? How is it possible that only one thing is needful, and Mary had chosen that very part, when there are so *many* things to do? Are we to leave out service to the Lord?—what does it mean? Beloved, this: That the thing which is to be our care is that we receive from Christ; and if we receive,—if we are receiving, beloved friends, service, and every thing else,

may take care for itself. Mark, I do not mean that you won't serve. You will—*you will*. But I say this: that if your care is not for service, but to be receiving from Him, you will find that that "one thing" which the Lord speaks of embraces all the rest.

What God wants from us is receptiveness,—He wants in us capacity to receive. You remember what He says Himself in the seventh chapter of John, when men were busy with their feast of tabernacles before the time,—busy with their empty show of something which after all left the heart just where it was, or, rather, emptier than ever. The Lord stands up just upon that *great* day of the feast: the great day of the feast is when the hollowness comes out the most. And in that "great day of the feast," when men have shown how little they can do to secure the happiness they have been seeking, the Lord stands up and says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John vii. 37, 38.) Beloved, there is not any thing there, you see—there is not any thing about these busy Martha-cares—this busy Martha-service; there is not a bit about it—not a bit about it. "You take care," the Lord says, "to receive of Me. Come and drink; and he that believeth on Me, [faith being that receptive character in the soul,—“he that believeth on Me,] out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

Well, now, can it be so simple? Have we not got a great deal more to do than believe on Christ? Why, how many of us, beloved friends, are believing on Christ? Thank God, a good many here.

And how many could say—how many could realize at all that out of their bellies are flowing rivers of living water? Mark what a beautiful thing,—that out of the innermost of man's nature—the part that craves—the part that is the natural man's god in his fallen condition, the fullness flows. "Their god is their belly," says the apostle in Corinthians: that is to say, that man having fallen from God—fallen from the apprehension of a love that satisfies, and got to be a mere questioner of it, has got into self-care—into labor—into lust. God did not put him into such a place as that. God did not put him into a place where he must care; God put him into a garden; did not think that even the very world which He had created was good enough for the man of His choice, but took up one special part of it, *planted it with trees of the choicest kind*, made every thing that should gratify his eyes—his heart, and put him there in the midst of that garden, beloved friends; to enjoy the favor of God, and receive from His hands. And that is all.

Well, you say, was there nothing else? had he nothing to do? No; he had to refrain from doing,—he had not to take of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. There was no labor that God required of him. He was the favorite of Heaven—the last, newest creature; he was put there in a marked way as a dependent one, the most dependent, I believe, of all God's creatures. He was put there into a paradise watched by and cared for by God Himself, all his necessities made but the means of God's care for him being manifested. He was essentially a dependent creature. The angels had fallen before this, as we know, and God had made man a creature like the angels—an

immortal spirit,—one who was, as it were, His child—His offspring by creation. I say, God put this spirit which He had made into a body, with which it was to be linked, and upon which it was in a certain respect to be even dependent. You know how dependent we are upon our bodies. I don't mean that Adam was in the same way that we are. - He was not. I don't mean to say that there could be in Adam any tendency to death, or any thing of that sort—the condition which we are in as fallen. Surely not. But he had necessities, he had to subsist by food, he was dependent upon the senses for his communication with the world, in which he was to subsist; not independently, but maintained by food. The angels fell by pride. God, by all this, was hiding pride from man. He was teaching him dependence; caring for him, at the same time, in a way that made that dependence no trouble to him. If He made him a needy creature, He made all these things avenues by which he could be filled with satisfaction and delight. How blessed and wonderful that! God has joined those two things together from the very beginning; making man dependent upon Himself, and making that dependence no trouble—no distress, but a means of realizing the loving care of his Maker and Preserver every day and hour.

And, beloved, you know how man fell. A beast seduced him. God would not allow him to be tempted by a higher being,—one in that character. Of course, we know it was Satan who seduced him. But God would not allow him to come in any angel-shape—as one higher than man. And that makes very significant what you find in the second of Genesis, that God made Adam look at all the

beasts which He had made, and give them names. He made him give them names as having knowledge of them. And looking them through and through, Adam knew that there was not one that could be found that could be a help for him. He was the master of the beast; they were all put under his hand, and he was the lord of them. Then God made woman, and gave her to be the help for him that he needed. But, beloved, it was by a beast man fell. God would not suffer him to be tempted but by a beast. He should have no excuse. He should not be able to say really that he was beguiled by one whom he could suppose had superior knowledge. He gave place to one who was below him, lost his superiority over the beasts themselves, and the blessed realization of what God was having vanished from him, he was sent out of paradise into the world outside, now to prove for himself what his own hands could do for him.

“God hath made man upright,” says the preacher, “but he has sought out many inventions;” and men are proud of it,—they are proud of their inventions. I have often said, How is it, beloved friends, that man has to have these inventions? Men say that “necessity is the mother of invention.” It is required to invent to meet men’s necessities now. But, beloved, how did man *need* those inventions? They are the sign of the fall. Outside of paradise, and fallen away from God, he lusts. His belly is his god,—he craves. He is a creature made for eternity; he has, as the preacher says again, “eternity in his heart.” That expression in Ecclesiastes iii. 11—“the *world* in his heart”—should be “eternity.” With eternity in his heart, man tries to

satisfy himself with the poor things of time. What is it that baffles all his wisdom? He has no possible invention that can enable him to do away with death, or to meet judgment. He is a creature, formed for eternity, trying to satisfy himself with a world that passes from him, and ignorant of God. The first knowledge that we find after the fall is of his nakedness, and the first invention an apron to cover his nakedness. And so he has gone on.

Now Christ comes into the scene after this fallen and wretched creature,—comes into the midst of men such as you and I are. And he says, with the fullest knowledge of man's condition, "Whosoever is athirst, let him come unto Me, and drink; he that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The place of want, beloved friends, is the belly—the very thing that compels man to toil for satisfaction. The Lord says that he shall be so full—so satisfied, that out of that craving heart of man—out of his belly, no longer craving, but satisfied—shall flow "rivers of living water." Do you believe it, beloved friends?—do you believe it? If rivers of living water flow out of you, this means both testimony and service, surely. It implies real ministry to others, and that God is to get His own from you in the world. Surely it does. But if this is to be true of you, what are the means by which it is to be accomplished? You are to come and drink; you are to come and receive from Him as Mary did, and you shall find that in this one thing needful all other things are contained. Even amid a ruined world paradise is returned again for him who takes this place at Jesus' feet,—this place of happy dependence to which there is no lack, eternally

secured to one that finds it. "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." How sweet and wonderful is that! Do you believe it? I am sure most Christians do not believe it at all. I am afraid, beloved friends, that there are scarcely any of us that in our hearts do fully believe it. If you say you do, where then are these "rivers of living water"? Why don't they flow? What is wanting? Ah! faith in it is wanting. There is so little of it. You see, the fullness is *His*, it is not ours. People have the idea that grace in a man is a sort of thing that God puts as it were a seed into the soul, and it is to grow and grow and grow, and develop there into more, so that he has consciously more and more. That is not it at all. Surely I do not mean to say that a man is not born of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, and that as so born he does not grow. Surely he does; but that is another thing. From the very beginning of growth this ought to be true of us. Beloved, the blessedness we speak of is to be found in that which God has already given to us, if we are Christians,—that which the apostle witnesses in the second chapter of the epistle to the Colossians—in that verse of which we have often been speaking together as the key of the epistle. "In Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are filled up in Him." Now, if that is really so, you see your competence at once. God has given you your place, your part, in Him already; and think, beloved friends, that in One in whom is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily in Him we are filled up! Faith has got to recognize this; faith has got to make it all *practical*,—*not to make the thing true*. It is true; but we

have to recognize it to find the proper truth of it.

Let us remember, too, that the Voice that spoke in the feast of tabernacles did not address itself to any inner circle of privilege. It was in the world He spoke. In it still, therefore, He is speaking to every weary, unsatisfied heart. Now, I appeal to you, if there are any of you who have such. The Lord invites *you*, beloved friends. You say, perhaps, Well, I am afraid I don't realize my sin enough. Come to Him, then; for He is exalted to be a Prince and Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins. Come to Him. He invites men convicted of sin; but He invites them also in another character,—as thirsty and weary ones. Like Martha here—occupied with their own efforts in one kind or another—He invites them to come to Him. Whatever they are and whoever they are—not a soul but is welcome, thoroughly welcome, to Him. Alas! we are all Marthas, (not, of course, in faith,) but apt to be busy with much serving; and the last thing which we naturally think of is to come to the Lord, to find satisfaction in Him alone. Ah! is not that true of some person here? You think, If He is such a glorious Person, He must be served. If He is such a glorious Person, would He come down from heaven to earth to be served by *you*? Was it not more adequate faith in Mary, saying, as it were, "If He had wanted service, He would not ask for it from such poor incompetent hands as mine." "The less is blessed *of* the better." It is not more blessed to receive, but "it is more blessed to *give* than to receive." And are you trying, beloved friends, to serve Christ? Take care you are not trying to be "the better," and to make Him "the less." Are

you trying to serve Him, when He had to come down from heaven to earth to serve you? Mary says, "If He has come to serve *me*, I will let Him do it." She is down at His feet: He says she has chosen that good part. Do *you* choose the "good part," and you shall have it forever.

What is the secret, beloved friends, of all the dishonor done to Him (alas!) by His people? I'll tell you,—the one thing, the secret of it is, that they are not where Mary was,—they are not in the place of real occupation with Himself. That is what the Lord wants. He has come all this weary way to attract our hearts to Himself. He wants us to receive out of His fullness,—He wants us simply to receive. Not to get us to say, after a little while, "I must be doing something now." He wants us to receive—to *receive*—to RECEIVE. If it is only receiving from Christ, every other responsibility will be met easily,—not by effort, but met of necessity. This will come after your own soul is *fully* satisfied; for the vessel must be filled itself before it can properly flow over. It is not from a vessel that is partly full that you expect an overflow. You must sit at His feet until you are filled yourself,—that is the first thing. And when filled yourself, don't think that you require effort then. Beloved, as surely as you are filled yourself, out of your belly shall flow "rivers of living water."

Alas! alas! pride is so natural to us. Man has followed Satan in that way. He would be as God. Man would still take that place, and make God his debtor. How can God be gracious? How can God give, and give, for nothing in return?—how can that possibly be? And, beloved, if there are

those here who have these weary, restless, sinful, unsatisfied hearts, how hard it is for you to learn that He would make over to you, positively and definitely, His fullness! That is what He does.

You have only to receive; only to take the place at His feet: He will pour out His grace. I would press this as from first to last the blessed truth. It is He who applies—who appropriates to the soul all the fullness of His grace, all the value of His work.

You remember, in the third chapter of Zechariah, how Joshua the high-priest is represented there, the very picture of a sinner clothed with his sins before the angel, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. There is not a word spoken by Joshua, nor a question asked of him. There is none to ask. Convicted sinner as he is, the only question is, what has God for a convicted sinner? People get into the presence of God in their sins. Many think, indeed, that they have to put away their sins and *then* get into the presence of God. No; nobody gets into the presence of God except in his sins, and then he is as dumb as Joshua is. The angel of the Lord says to Satan, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" And what does He say *then*? He says to those that stand by, "Take away his filthy garments from him;" and then He turns to the poor sinner himself, and, to make it plain to him and to us, He leaves the language of type and shadow, and *to him* He says, not "I have caused" thy *filthy garments* "to pass from thee," but "I have caused thine *iniquity* to pass from thee." It looks like a New-Testament

revelation; so clear, so full is the grace announced. Poor souls that trouble themselves about their acceptance, how glad they would be to have such a voice!—And yet it is for them,—written for them,—the unchanging word of the unchangeable God. Does the angel tell Joshua to appropriate this grace? No; He says, "Take away the filthy garments—take them from him," and He says to him, not even Can you believe that your iniquity is gone? or that My grace is great enough? but, in His own free and royal way, "I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee." He who speaks without repentance, and never withdraws His words, says, "Behold, *I* have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." That is how Christ ministers to one that comes to Him. Is there a soul here that needs *that*? Christ definitely assures you of the forgiveness of your sins. He does not say, Now, appropriate this; but He says, I appropriate it to you, and it is yours. "If we confess our sins," says the apostle,—what then? Joshua stands with those sins confessed upon him;—those sins covered him in the presence of God, and what is the result? He found God Himself acting in his behalf. It is *God* that appropriates the value of Christ's work to the soul. It is *God* that says, by the Spirit, to men, not You must do so and so, but *I—I*, if you confess your sins—if you simply take that place,—*I* am faithful and just to forgive you your sins, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. (1 Jno. i. 9.)

Beloved, it is an immense thing to be clear as to that,—it is an immense thing to be able to give souls such assurance. Like the spies to Rahab—"Our life for yours." Those are grand words.

She, as it were, says, "What can you tell me from God? Give me a true token." "Our life for yours." Oh to be able to comfort souls in that way,—to give them the positive assurance from God—those souls that would gladly accept salvation, but are busy with *their acceptance* of it! Oh to be able to give them a "true token" that Christ has *so* died for sinners,—that when you take that place as sinners before God, that blood is the true token of salvation yours, *yours*, YOURS!

And as we begin, so we go on. Would that we did! but I mean in God's thought. As we begin, so we go on. We get out of His gracious hand—out of His fullness, first, our acceptance with God,—that which satisfied our souls—peace and rest in His presence. But oh, beloved, is it there we stop? Are we to acquire holiness in a different way from that in which we get righteousness and peace? No, surely; just as we find Christ for righteousness, so surely we do for sanctification and all else.

We have got to receive it at His feet, to look into His blessed face, to learn of His love to rejoice in Himself; and that is true sanctification. If that is so, Christ sanctifies. Occupation with Christ is what makes our lives what they should be,—transforms our lives—transforms our very faces. Occupied with Him, looking into His face, we are changed into His image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. It is in company with Himself we find "that good part" which Mary had chosen, in "part with Him."

And as with sanctification, so with service. Oh that we may have that kind of service which will not separate us from Him—the service that flows

freely, almost unconsciously, from the joy of His presence, and of the service which He renders us! Beloved, we are continually exalting ourselves, and He has to abase us. How strange and sad it is that so much of our lives we cause Him to fight against us instead of for us! Because He would have us in the place of blessing, He has to put us down, *down*, DOWN,—our efforts at holiness, our attempts at service, in order that He may put us in the place He has for us. How slow are we to receive in its full reality the grace that requires not, but gives,—that delights to give,—that only seeks to have objects for it; the grace that, simply as we receive it, we find, not only fullness for ourselves, but that which makes our lives full also for others. May we all learn it more simply, the power and value, not of our efforts, but of Christ Himself.

It is the “one thing” I want to say to you to-night. Don’t you think it is enough? If Christ says, “But one thing is needful,” what is more needful than simply to learn that “one thing”? He came not to be served—to be ministered unto, but to minister to others, yea, to give His life a ransom for many. Let *Him* serve, in the greatness of His love; and we shall find, not only practical fullness for daily need, but all that He is told out to us.

Whoever you are, there is no one to ask the question, when you come to Him, whether you are fit for His presence. He has no guard to His presence-chamber to ask whether you have got a right to be there. He does not want you to be kept off. Sin is no barrier even, because in the cross of Christ grace has triumphed, aye, over the

worst sin that man could possibly commit; as the hymn says,—

"The very spear that pierced His side
Drew forth the blood to save."

Beloved, wherever you are, whatever you are, no soul so far from Him but I invite you to Christ to-night. There is not merely no guard to His presence-chamber to keep you out, there is the public proclamation that you are welcome there. The King's door stands open, His table is for *you*, beloved friends. And His presence, Lord of all, come down in grace, that His fullness may be available for us, that we may find in Him, out of His fullness, "grace upon grace."

Now, I don't want to say any thing else to-night; but "one thing is needful," and we may shut up our books.

That "one thing needful" is *occupation with Christ*—to sit at His feet and learn of Him. So then, if we want to serve Him, the only possible way is to receive from Him first till our hearts are so full that we cannot hold it any longer. When the vessel is once filled, *all the power of the spring pours over*. The overflow is not measured by the capacity of the vessel, but by the power of the spring. Think of that, beloved friends. Think of our testimony in the world being the testimony of the divine fullness,—not the measure of what *we* are, but the measure, so to speak, of what *He* is. The one thing needful for us is that our whole souls should be satisfied with Himself; and to be occupied is to be satisfied.

God give us more practically, every one, to know and prove it in His grace.

ATONEMENT.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Testimony of the Psalms.

IN the Psalms we have some of the most wonderful unfoldings of the cross in its inner meaning that Scripture furnishes. It is striking that whereas in the gospel narratives themselves it is mostly the external sufferings of the Lord which occupy us, in the Psalms the divine Sufferer utters freely His heart out. The one cry of abandonment which does indeed expose its mystery, and which Matthew and Mark record, finds its full interpretation only in that twenty-second psalm, the language of which it borrows, and to which it thus guides our thoughts. And here we find, under a vail, if we may so say, the vail removed. As the priests, able to enter within the tabernacle, could behold the glories of it, so we whom faith brings within, can listen to the very heart of Christ outpoured, and see earth's failed foundations laid afresh and for eternity by One standing where no other could stand but He. Typically given, according to the Old-Testament character, unbelief may doubt or deny the revelation. It is to faith that God reveals Himself; Christ, dumb before His accusers, displays to His disciples His true glory.

There are five psalms which we shall briefly look at in connection with our subject, and which give us different aspects of the cross. Three of these—the twentieth, twenty-second, and fortieth are in the first book; the sixty-ninth is in the sec-

ond; the hundred and second in the fifth book. I have elsewhere shown the way in which these five books of the Psalms identify themselves respectively with the five books of Moses. Here it will be seen how the Genesis-book,—the book, as we may say, of the divine counsels, maintains its character in the way in which it opens up to us the work of Christ: in the twentieth psalm, as victory over evil; in the twenty-second, as meeting the requirement of the divine nature as against sin; in the fortieth, of that which, like the sweet-savor offerings, shows the infinite moral perfection which delights in God, and in which He delights.

The twentieth psalm begins then, where the story of grace began in Eden, with the announcement of the cross as victory over the enemy. The way in which it is introduced is perfect as all else. The first book (psalms i.—xli.) divides into three parts; in the first of which we find, as connected with the sufferings and deliverance of His people, Christ rejected (ps. ii.) and glorified (viii.). His people are always here Israel, and in the second part (ps. ix.—xv.), their sufferings in the last-day crisis, out of which they are finally delivered, are detailed. In this second part Christ is not found. In the third (ps. xvi.—xli.), we have Him in a new character which, penetrating to the heart of the subject, explains and perfects the whole counsel of God. He is seen *amongst* the people in the lowly grace of perfect manhood, for God, for man, redeemer from misery as and because from sin. The sixteenth psalm thus shows Him in the place of dependence and trial, God His one portion and sufficiency in that path that passes through death itself into the joy of His immediate presence:

the path of life through death, for us henceforth open.

Thus the seventeenth psalm shows how He can now associate others with Himself; giving the righteous through the only righteous One their ground of appeal to God. While the eighteenth psalm speaks of His victory over all His enemies, a victory which involves others with whom He is pleased to associate Himself.

The next three psalms show, on the part of His people, the faith which attaches them to Him. In the nineteenth psalm, first of all, setting its seal to God's other testimonies of creation and the law, but to rest only with full satisfaction and delight (in the two following psalms) in Him who is alone their kinsman-redeemer. While psalm xxii. completes the picture by adding to the knowledge of redemption by power that of redemption by purchase, "not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

The twentieth psalm is in other respects a remarkable one, but, as far as we have now to do with it, is of very simple character. The anointed (or Messiah), king of Israel, is seen in distress and difficulty in the presence of his enemies (compare xxi. 8, 11). It is conflict on account of others; and the name of the God of Jacob—*i. e.*, of grace toward sinners, is appealed to in his behalf. From the sanctuary in Israel, and out of Zion, seat of loving love, the help is to come. It is connected with the establishment and triumph of the people plainly, and Messiah's offerings and burnt sacrifice secure this. Hence, in his deliverance they rejoice aloud, and in the name of this God set up their

banners. Jehovah, their covenant-God, saves, and to the king also (to Messiah Himself) they call. The next psalm enlarges upon this deliverance and victory.

The twenty-second psalm now unfolds the reality of the sacrifice upon which all is based. It is the well-known psalm of atonement, so solemn and so dear to the Christian heart. It is the sin-offering,—the requirement, as I have elsewhere said, of the divine nature. The forsaking of God is the necessary result of the holy One being made sin.

This is what is throughout put in contrast with all other sufferings. All felt as they are, and no indifference to any,—the bodily anguish, the shame, the heartless wickedness of the assailants,—yet the one agony which outweighs all the rest is this forsaking of God. “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? far from helping Me, from the words of My roaring? O My God, I cry in the day-time, and Thou hearest not, and in the night-season, and am not silent!” “Be not far from Me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help.” “But be not Thou far from Me, O Lord: O My strength, haste Thee to help Me!”

This forsaking is also carefully distinguished from any thing that a righteous man ever suffered. “Our fathers trusted in Thee; they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them: they looked unto Thee, and were delivered; they trusted in Thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man.” Yet a long line of martyrs witness to us that, as to deliverance simply from the hands of enemies, multitudes have cried and not been delivered, the sufferings through which they passed only proving that they were not forsaken, but on

the contrary maintained and enabled for whatever they passed through by a power manifesting itself thus the more. How many before and since have proved Paul's experience, "Persecuted, but *not* forsaken"! None of these patient sufferers, precious and acceptable as their patience was to God, touched even the border of the darkness of the cross,—when the cry of the holy One found no response.

What to Him that desertion was, He Himself alone could know. "Thou art He that took Me out of the womb; Thou didst make me hope even upon My mother's breasts; I was cast upon Thee from the womb; Thou art My God even from My mother's belly." To us, born in sin and shapen in iniquity, to whom estrangement from God is the natural condition, and who, even when by grace redeemed, can so readily slip out of communion with God, how little is it possible to realize the agony of this condition! With us, too, when out of communion, it implies a state which prevents realization. The spiritual sense is blunted, the spiritual affections are not in play; and if even in this state sorrows and troubles surprise us which make us feel vainly after Him, the consequences of the terrible loss are sure to overshadow and obscure the spiritual loss itself; while at the most the darkness that can envelop one who has ever known God is the darkness of a clouded sun compared with a night of total absence in the case of Him who was made sin for us.

Alone in human weakness, with every element of bitterness in the dreadful cup which was His to drink,—He could ask, as none among men beside could, "*Why* hast Thou forsaken Me?" yet

proclaim at the same time the holiness of Him who had forsaken Him. "But Thou art holy: dwelling amid the praises of Israel." Is not here, in fact, the reason of this forsaking, that the holy One would dwell amid the praises of a redeemed people? That worship could never be but for the cross. He must be in the outside place of darkness, that we might be, children of light, in the light with God.

The consequence is, that after He has been brought into the dust of death, and is heard from the horns of the unicorns, the blessing that flows out answers in perfect contrast to the suffering endured. The Son of God, as the fruit of His own abandonment, communicates to now-acknowledged "brethren" the Father's name. He who was in that unique, solitary place, praises in the midst of the congregation which He gathers, and whose praise He leads. Yea, "the meek shall eat and be satisfied: they that fear the Lord shall praise Him:" the heart of the redeemed shall taste the joy of eternal life (26). To the ends of the earth, and to perpetual generations, the wave of blessing spreads,—joy out of sorrow, praise out of desertion, light out of darkness, life out of death; the subjection of adoring worshipers to a Saviour-God, and His righteousness declared in the accomplishment of this great salvation.

Thus ends the wondrous twenty-second psalm, of which atonement in its central feature—He who knew no sin made sin—is the theme throughout. Any full exposition is not here within our scope. But it is the foundation of all true blessing to understand it; its words will give the deep tones to our praise forever.

A number of psalms follow which give us, in very various character, the exercises and experiences which find their answer in, or are the fruit of, this blessed work. At the close of the book are two psalms which give, by way of conclusion, as it were, the moral of the whole. The heart of Christ is shown in its innermost depths, His life in its one principle, in the fortieth psalm. In the forty-first the heart of man is seen in relation to Him who has come into the place of poverty and reproach for men—into a humiliation so low that unbelief can misconceive and discredit His true glory.

The fortieth psalm is significant in its very number, which is that of perfect probation; and here again we find the Lord in those sufferings which were the trial of His perfection, and which brought out the sweet savor of His blessed sacrifice, here put in contrast with all other sacrifices.

In the twenty-second psalm we have seen the Lord taking the sinner's place, that God might dwell among the praises of His redeemed; here we see what was in His heart Godward who did so. It is the perfect Man, with ears which never needed the anointing of blood to consecrate them to God; who, marked out in the book of God's counsels from the beginning, now comes forth simply, as none else, to do the will of God; His law within His heart. "By which will," says the apostle, "we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." This perfect devotedness He manifested there where, in the sharpest and most terrible contrast to it, He cries, "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon Me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more in number than the hairs of My head; therefore My heart

faileth Me." Yet, says He, "I waited patiently for the Lord;" even in the "miry clay" of that "pit of destruction."

Plainly this is the psalm of burnt-offering, though the sacrifice represented take the place of all the other offerings. Indeed it is quite in character that it should be so. The burnt-offering was the "continual burnt-offering," as that which was emphatically a sweet savor to God. The sin-offering is what the necessity of man craves and obtains; so with the trespass, and so with the peace-offering; but the burnt-offering, as it goes wholly up to God, expresses that which is the object of His unceasing delight. Thus, when no other sacrifice was there at all, the burnt-offering kept its place upon the altar, which from it, indeed, received its name; for this blessed work it is in which the moral glory of His person (which is what the altar speaks of) shines out most fully.

Here, accordingly, it is not the outside place that His cry expresses, but the "iniquities" which, as taking them upon Him, He could call "Mine:" this was the miry clay of the pit into which He who came to do God's will had descended. This, therefore, is the character of suffering most suited to display, as a dark background, that personal glory. Unbelief might indeed take such confession to justify its rejection of the holy One, while faith, adoring, finds in it its eternal blessing. And this is the key to the psalm which follows this.

"WHENEVER we get into trial, we may feel confident that, with the trial, there is an issue, and all we need is a broken will, and a single eye to see it."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Some further Notes on the Day of Atonement. (Lev. xvi.)

THE letter of a correspondent raises question concerning some points of the interpretation of the day of atonement given, vol. ii. pp. 241-255, as well as regards the doctrine taught in this, which for the sake of others I feel it needful to answer publicly. The letter itself is too long for insertion, but I shall quote it as fully as may be necessary to bring out what is in question.

"The very fact of there being one lot for the Lord and another for His people speaks to us of the Lord having His lot in that work and of His people having theirs. What then was the Lord's lot? Was it nothing more than Christ becoming a substitute for sinners—that is, His taking the sinner's place, and bearing the sinner's load of guilt? . . . Was it not the full, complete, eternal glorifying of God according to His nature and every attribute? Was this nothing more than substitution? Is it of substitution *as such* that the Lord's lot speaks? Why then another lot for the people?"

I have already fully answered the last question. The scape-goat gives us the special application of the Lord's work to the people of Israel in the last days. In the offering for the priests, under which we come, there is no *scape-bullock*; a fact which its having been "long since remarked by others," (as our correspondent observes,) does not surely deprive of significance. It shows that the sins of the priestly family are as completely borne and borne away by the bullock for a sin-offering as those of the people by the scape-goat. If this be *not* so, then they are *not* borne away. If it *be* so, then the goat which is Jehovah's lot, and which is expressly offered for a sin-offering (*v.* 9) must be equally capable of such an application. What else is the universal meaning of a sin-offering, but an offering for people's sins? What else, if not a substitutionary sacrifice?

But surely it is easy to see that that does not destroy its significance as the "Lord's lot" in contrast with the scape-goat, in which simply the effect for the people is marked out, and there is no proper *sacrifice* at all! How could so simple and necessary a distinction fail to strike any careful reader? Nor does the fact of substitution being found in the sin-offering hinder, surely, its having

the Godward aspect which as propitiation it necessarily has. It is, as I have shown, what the *nature* of God requires (as distinct from His moral government) presented to Him. Thus alone can it "reconcile the holy place." But the glorifying of God in its full character I must still maintain is brought out rather by the bullock for the priest than the goat for the people. Our correspondent says of this,—

"May not the fact of there being a bullock for Aaron and his house teach us that none of the various families or classes . . . of God's redeemed enter so fully into God's thoughts and estimate of the work of His Son as those whom Aaron and his house typify? Is not *value* the thought presented in the bullock?"

But surely the meaning of the bullock is perfectly well ascertained. The apostle gives us the key in 1 Corinthians ix. 9, 10, and it seems (after the manner of Scripture) very uniformly maintained. That of the goat Matthew xxv. 33 gives, in perfect harmony with what we have seen as to the offerings. The contrast between the two is full of significance in the case before us; while the fact that both apply to the same blessed work should prevent the fear, which seems to lurk under these criticisms, that there is thus any lowering of the character of this. If the goat, the Lord's lot, speaks of propitiation, so must (at least equally) the bullock for the priesthood. And why should not the character of the latter be higher than that of the former? Is it not of necessity that it should be so?

Now as to the extent of propitiation and substitution:—

"How can substitution have a universal aspect if He is not a substitute for all? 'He is the Substitute of His people' (p. 254). Quite so: but they were His people before He bore their sins. He bore their sins because they were His. You will call this limited atonement; and so it would be if atonement and substitution were the same thing. You assume, not prove, that they are."

That they are equal *in extent* (not the "same thing") in the type before us needs little examination to perceive; and wherever a sin-offering was offered, it was the same thing. Whatever proof to the contrary may be adduced from elsewhere, it will not be found here. If we take the type before us, it is as simple as possible that the atonement, the propitiation, was as limited as the substitution was; it was for the priests and people of Israel. On the

other hand, if a Gentile came in and was circumcised, he came among those for whom the substitution was made and availed. Propitiation did not *avail* for those outside. Both the substitution and the propitiation were thus available for all that desired to come,—had so far a universal *aspect* alike; were, *in effect*, limited alike. What difficulty is there here?

“But they were His people before He bore their sins: He bore their sins because they were His.”

True; but the confusion lies in the thought of an exactly defined number—in bringing in the truth of election into a place to which it does not belong. Of course *election* is of a definite number; but the provision made in atonement is not merely for the elect. It is the provision of a substitute, not for a definite number of *individuals*, but for a certain *class*. There is no better word to define what is meant.

The substitution of the Lord in death and under judgment for His people is of course effectual for them, and is the way in which He bare our sins. I apprehend that here lies the root of the misapprehension in our correspondent's mind, as in many others, that he thinks of such a measurement of the exact due of these sins as there will be in the day of judgment—so much suffering for so much sin,—and so many sins being thus accounted for, and no more, these and no others must be remitted. *Were another to be saved, it would have been necessary in this way for the Lord to suffer more!* Now this is in entire opposition to Scripture, which asserts, as in the trespassing (where the offense *is* thus actually measured against the government of God) that there is in fact an *overpayment*. The sacrifice is not of measured but of *measureless* value. Only in this way could it be said, “a propitiation for the sins of the whole world.” No more suffering would be needed for the actual salvation of all men; and the treasure of divine grace is thus really without limit.

Yet He did not bear the sins of all men, or become a substitute for the world, as I have again and again said, but for a people who, while they may be indefinitely numerous, are still His people. I need not therefore further reply to what is urged, that “if substitution is not

for a limited number, then it is for all; and, according to your own argument, all must be saved." We have only to define this "limit" and this "all," to see the mistake. "If substitution is not for a limited number [a number limited to just so many millions], then it is for all [the world]:"—this does not follow; for the number may be limited another way, namely, to those who will accept the Substitute, without a rigid exact number being at all implied.

It is not necessary therefore to limit the provision made by the actual number brought in by a grace whose sovereignty I believe as simply and fully as my correspondent can. I have no thought of disputing the truth and necessity of election; but what I deny absolutely is that in fact provision is made only for the elect. The sufficiency of the atonement for all must be a real one to make the general call founded upon it sincere.

The quotation from page 254, that "Christ's resurrection is the justification of all for whom He died," is misunderstood by being separated from its context. It is of substitution I am there speaking, and this is surely true with regard to all those for whom as their Substitute He died. "Who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification." The letter before me seems to ignore this altogether.—

"Romans iii, iv. show God's grace to be the source, Christ's blood the basis, and faith in us the principle of justification. We are justified when we believe, and not before, though the work that justifies us was done eighteen hundred years ago, and our sins borne then."

The resurrection of Christ is here left out, and yet that is the sentence of justification, or what do the words "raised again for *our* justification" mean? No doubt our correspondent cannot comprehend "our justification" by Christ's resurrection in view of our justification when we believe. What he is contending against is the key to the understanding of any seeming incongruity. Our justification *as a class* was given in the one case, our justification *individually* is when by faith we come into this class—among the people for whom the substitutionary sacrifice has been accepted.

KEY-NOTES TO THE BIBLE BOOKS.

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

MY purpose is, if the Lord enable me, to reach the Old Testament by way of the New, reversing thus the order in which our Bibles present them to us. The object I have in this is simply that we may first of all have before us what is best known to us; in which the principles already now put forth may be best tested, both as to their truth and practical value. But to begin with, let us look at the Old and New Testaments in their character as God's twofold witness to men. And here we see at once how thorough is the contrast they present to one another, and how thus they the more completely and surely testify to the various wisdom of their blessed Author.

Taken by itself, the Old Testament, however plainly bearing the divine imprint, is stamped, at the same time, with the characters of narrowness and imperfection. "The law made nothing perfect" is the inspired comment upon it. As the introduction to the full "perfection" (Heb. vi. 1) of Christianity, it was necessarily so. Even as to its moral standard our Lord could say, "Moses for the hardness of your heart gave you this precept;" and in contrast with what was said to them of old time, present His own commandments as the fullness of the law.* Nor was man's conscience satis-

*"I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. v. 17): which means "to complete," "give the fullness of."

fied, nor his heart set at rest, nor grace manifested, nor God declared. The Old Testament looks forward to the coming of One who alone could accomplish this,—without whom it could not be. Its contrast with the New Testament is its witness to it. In matter, style, and even language is this contrast found.

Let us first look at that which would first strike any one who held the original in his hand—the language.

Difference of language began at Babel. The tongues of fire at Pentecost declared, as others have remarked, the grace which was now surmounting the-effects of man's sin. The language of the Old Testament is Hebrew;* of the New, Greek,—or, as the Jew might have called it, Gentile. "Greek" and "Gentile" are, in the New Testament itself, synonymous terms. God was now going outside the narrow limits of Judaism, to those who had no promise or claim. The apostle, Paul is thus at once the apostle of the Gentiles, and the minister of the gospel in the fullest character of it.

This use of the Greek is clearly seen in the first chapter of John's gospel,—that in which, all through, we find Judaism set aside—where the words "Rabbi," "Messiah," "Cephas," are all significantly interpreted for Gentile use. A Jew could not for a moment doubt the significance of the fact of a revelation from God in the Greek language.

But the language of the Gentile world-power it

* Ezra iv. 8—vi. 18, vii. 12—26, Jer x 11, Dan. ii. 4—vii. 28, are in what is ordinarily called Chaldee; in Scripture, Syrian, or Aramaic. And this, like Greek, is a Gentile language, used for a special purpose in each place. But I cannot enter upon it here.

was not. Greece had for some time already passed away as the representative of that before the New Testament was written. Not the mighty, as such, does the gospel call. The Scripture-characteristic of the Greeks the apostle gives us where, speaking too of the ministry of the gospel, to them, he says, "The Greeks seek after wisdom." So late in the history of the world, they were seeking still,—had not found, but sought. And on this, in the same passage, he lays special emphasis: "When in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe." The Greeks were they in whom this character of the world's trial had reached its appointed, necessary end in the discovery of utter ruin. With them, culture had done its best when, amid the myriad deities of Athens, Paul could yet preach a God unknown. There God's wisdom met and displaced in grace to men the proved vanity of human wisdom.

But the use of Greek had also another significance. The revelation now to be made required for its conveyance to men all the power of human speech. In the Greek, the providence of God had formed a language able to express as no other could, with the most delicate precision, all the possibilities of human thought. God was going to speak no longer from the distance, or with reserve, but fully, intimately, of all that was in His heart. The simplicity of Hebrew, as all scholars know, favors a certain ambiguity, which is one of the great difficulties in the translation of the Old Testament. The translator must be in measure the interpreter also. He must, to some considerable extent at least, find elsewhere the key with which

he unlocks its treasures.* But Greek is known for its faculty of clear and full expression. And this answers exactly to the different character of the communications which are given in these languages. The New Testament open, luminous, sun-like, with the glory of God revealed there; and which when we bring to the Old Testament, its lineaments become defined, and shine with a new expression.

For the medium of divine revelation, it is no wonder if every natural language should be inadequate, however, and in this respect Greek is no exception. The classic speech, with all its beauty, needs the creative breath of God to inspire it for His use. Its natural poverty betrays the bankruptcy of moral ruin unto which man is fallen. Christianity had to transform, mould, adapt, supplement, impregnate, to make, after all, a fitting instrument for that which in its inner essence was "spirit and life" for the recipient of it.

If we look at the style of these two parts of God's one Word, we shall find a corresponding difference. In the Old Testament we have history, prophecy, and those psalm-books, full of the exercises, experiences, and sorrows of human life. These indeed, poured out before God, find their answer from Him, and are mingled with strains of most fervent adoration. The New Testament begins with the record of one Life, in contrast with all else,—Life, indeed, the light of men,—of one

*And this is true in measure of the New Testament, and of the Greek also. It is he who knows best, and is most penetrated with, the truth of Scripture who will be able best to penetrate its meaning. Great scholars may nevertheless be utterly incompetent as translators because they know not in their own souls the divine realities with which they deal. Yet the comparative estimate of the two languages as given above remains unaffected.

death, by which alone the Life could be communicated as light in the soul of man. The history after this is the history of the power and effect of this, the springing up of the corn of wheat which has fallen into the ground and died, that it might not abide alone. Then we have epistles, the tender, familiar ministry to the redeemed of the Spirit of Christ now come. Lastly, one book of prophecy plants us where we in the light of eternity and of the cross may read the history of the Church and of the world on to its consummation in eternal life or no less eternal judgment.

In the letter of it, the Old Testament is the heritage of a nation; the New, of a family. The first is the word of God enthroned, the Eternal, the Almighty; the second, the word of the Father, whom the Son has manifested to those in the place and endowed with the Spirit of sonship. Here the throne is not removed, but clouds and darkness are no longer about it; or if they remain, faith pierces through them to the presence of the unchanged, unchangeable God. Exercises and experiences there yet may be; but for him who has learned the open secret of Christianity, their character is henceforth altered. Man—the flesh—is known: object simply of divine judgment, but of a judgment for faith passed, and beyond which he stands in the untroubled peace which Christ has made. The cross has unveiled at the same time God and man, and it has brought us to God. In this sense, exercise is over.

The world too is passed away, and there is no preacher-king to lament over it. It is crucified in the cross, and we glory in that in which it is crucified to us. The writers of the New Testament are

no longer the leaders of nations, kings, and great ones of the earth. The later prophets already show us God choosing men of another class; and here we find manifest God's call of the poor. Even the towns and villages chosen to have revealed in them the light from heaven are those which for the most part have otherwise no name or history; and Jerusalem itself is only an apparent exception to this. It is John, mainly, who speaks of the Lord's sojourn there; and he is the one, of all the evangelists, who most insists upon the doing away of Judaism. His chapters are but a series of pictures in which the Jewish rites and ordinances are only the background upon which to display the glory of Him who has taken the place of all the shadows of the past dispensation. In Rome, the capital of the world, the apostle of the Gentiles finds a prison; and from that Roman prison the word of God, which is not bound, goes forth with the sweetest, fullest disclosures of divine grace ever made to man.

But let us look more closely still at the difference in matter between these two parts of that one blessed whole, the Word of God. The word "*Testament*" should be rather (according to the usual meaning of *διαθηκη*, which it translates) "*Covenant*," as a glance at 2 Corinthians iii. will show. Israel's covenant, written upon the tables of stone, was the *old* covenant, with which the apostle contrasts that which he ministers: "Who hath made us competent ministers of the new covenant, not of letter, but of spirit." It is from such passages that the appellation has arisen for the books which contain this ministry, while, in contrast, the books of Scripture previously written are the books of the old covenant—that is, of the law.

We must guard against a common misapprehension here. The apostle expressly says, in Romans ix. 3, that to Israel,—his “kindred after the flesh,” which excludes all possibility of spiritualizing,—belong the *covenants*; not the old covenant merely, but all of them. And in Hebrews viii. he quotes Jeremiah’s prophecy, which in plain terms declares the new covenant to be made, in a day still future, with Israel and with Judah,—words which again absolutely refuse any so-called spiritualization. It is all-important for our souls to deal uprightly with the Word of God; and it would seem impossible to read the passage in Jeremiah, and its context, without owning that to Israel it belongs. What, then, of our part in the new covenant? for the passage in Corinthians affirms with equal clearness that we have one.

The answer is to be found in the *character* of the new covenant and its blessings. The ministry of it is a ministration of life, of righteousness, and of the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 6, 9),—in a word, of all that a guilty soul needs, and that grace alone can bestow. But if *grace*, then, bestows this, and upon those, therefore, without claim or merit, it may bestow it when and where it will. Israel, nationally, has rejected Christ, and remains for the present shut up in unbelief. The new covenant will yet be theirs, for God has declared it; but meanwhile, He is pleased to minister its blessings freely to faith any where. Who can deny His right? Thus, then, they are ours; but I may add that more also than new-covenant blessings are ours; and that when the apostle speaks of Christian ministers as “stewards of the mysteries of God,” he speaks of what is not to be found in the new covenant at all.

The new-covenant character of absolute grace indeed attaches to them all; but that grace to us abounds over all promised blessings. But the time to speak of this will be found more fittingly a little further on.

The books of the old covenant were, without controversy, addressed to Israel, a nation in the flesh, with whom it pleased God in a special way to connect Himself as their God. With His purpose in so doing we are not now concerned, but with the fact alone. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," He says by Amos (iii. 2); "I am a Father to Israel," by Jeremiah (xxxii. 9). And in a passage in the New Testament already referred to, the apostle of the Gentiles himself distinctly affirms that to them belong "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." The last is a decisive word as to the interpretation of Old-Testament prophets, which accordingly show us, ever in the forefront of the picture of predicted blessing for the earth, the people who, if now "enemies as touching the gospel," are none the less still "beloved for the fathers' sakes, because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom. xi. 28, 29.)

The prophetic outlook is of blessing for the earth, which the one book of New-Testament prophecy supplements with the heavenly portion for the heavenly people to whom it is given. The heavenly city here replaces the earthly: the Morning Star is the closing promise of the New-Testament prophecy, as the Sun of Righteousness is of the Old. But the renewed earth shines as the reflection and type of the opened heavens, and the para-

dise of God exhibits the fullness of that to which the garden dressed by God's hand for man at first points across the whole interval. The wonderful series of types indeed link the Old Testament with a clasp, impossible to be sundered, to their fulfillment in the New. Of all these Christ is the key; to Him all ages minister; the old creation passes to give Him place; of the new He is the foundation and the Head alike; from the glory from which He descended to the cross, from eternity to eternity, He fills all things.

WHOLLY FOLLOWING.

"Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; because they have not wholly followed Me; save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun; for they have wholly followed the Lord." (Num. xxxii. 11, 12.)

TWO men, out of all that came out of Egypt in full-grown manhood—two men, and only two, beloved reader, entered Canaan. Out of about six hundred thousand men, two only! How startling is this fact! It is "eleven days' journey," as we are carefully told, "from Horeb," to which they had safely come, "by the way of Mount Seir, unto Kadesh-barnea" on the border of the land (Deut. i. 2); and what was but eleven days' journey cost them forty *years*, and (save two persons) the whole host of adult males. What a disastrous issue of an expedition which began so triumphantly! What was the cause of this? Did the wisdom fail that planned for them? or the power that sheltered

them? or the love that cared for them? Not one of these. With an almighty, all-sufficient Leader, who in fact accompanied them every step of the way to their journey's end, this was yet the result to that whole generation. What could be the reason? It is given us with unmistakable plainness in the words at the head of this paper: *they did not wholly follow the Lord.*

Now "these things," the apostle says, "happened unto them for types; they are written for our admonition" (1 Cor. x. 11). In what way? perhaps you ask; for if we are Christians, is it not certain,—has not divine grace,—have not the work of Christ and the Word of God assured us,—that we shall get to heaven at last? Assuredly, if you are Christ's: I do not desire to encourage a moment's doubt,—that is, a moment's unbelief,—on that score. Doubt as to this never secures holiness, nor does aught but hinder it. It may produce plenty of tormenting fear, and the fruit of that fear may be abundance of slavish work, for self really, and not for God; but *faith* worketh by *love*; and other than by faith it is "impossible to please God."

Why, then, does the apostle warn Christians as to this?

First, because, alas! in the gravest of all matters terrible mistakes are not seldom made. The faith that is really in Christ makes none. *He* cannot fail; and true faith is in Him, in His Person and work alone. But there are souls whose confidence (little or much as it may be) is in themselves as Christians rather than in Christ, on the ground of orthodoxy, of their good life, of some experience gone through in the past, of even their undisturbed self-satisfaction in the present. How many of these,

without the possession of eternal life, die in the wilderness! Yet it is not my purpose to speak of these just now. In the rest who are really Christ's, the temptations, trials, experiences of the way, work on to what would be oftentimes, save for divine grace, spiritual shipwreck. With how many who once started well do we now find a sad lack of vigor, of progress, a weariness in the way, nay, a decay and decrepitude, in which their life is passing and perhaps may end! Alas! if the question be of following the Lord fully, what proportion would the Calebs and Joshuas of any generation bear to the rest? It is a very practical question for us all. May God in His grace give it edge for our consciences while for a few moments we consider it.

What it is to follow wholly there is no need of many words to explain. It is probable that in the case of most of those of whom I have just spoken, they would acknowledge that they hardly did do this. They might try to justify themselves by a general confession of failure in which they would take in the large mass of Christians with themselves; and if that were any right satisfaction, they would, it is to be feared, have abundant cause to be satisfied. The generation in the wilderness had this kind of satisfaction, in a much greater degree. They might have said, and had divine warrant for it, that not three men among them were doing this. It did not save them from condemnation for it, nor enable them to escape the righteous consequence. Nor will the same plea fare any better at the present time.

Eternal life may be secure indeed, and heaven be theirs at last. Effort of their own could not

secure these, failure in this cannot deprive of them. Alas! for those who can use such an argument to go on with the less earnestness and decision! Present loss, and eternal too, there surely will be; for grace has never ordained that there shall not be reaping for the sowing, whatever the sowing be. And here I am not speaking in any wise of what is usually called sin. I am not supposing unrighteous or immoral conduct as between man and man. Terrible it is to think how quiet the conscience can be in such a case, leaving God almost out, or easily satisfying itself with a certain half-hearted service, as a man might put some of his loose pennies into His contribution-box.

I am supposing only a state in which one would own perhaps, without a thought of real self-judgment for it, that he was not where once he had been with God; that first love was no longer there. In this state, other things will have usurped that first, supreme place in the affections that He has lost. This we will be slower in acknowledging to ourselves, no doubt; but the practical life will tell, if we are honest with ourselves, that the world has now the place, perhaps under the name of "duties," which once Christ had.

Can it be wondered that where once this is the case the whole character of the life is changed, and we find ourselves shut out (as to power of enjoyment) of what is our own? Israel, tested at Kadesh-barnea, refused to go into the land to which God had destined them, and for that were condemned to learn what the wilderness, which they had chosen instead, really was. How many of God's people are there thus occupied with that which in the occupation only brings fresh barrenness into the

soul, and yet smitten with an inability to divorce themselves from it, and to return to that in which they confess all blessing is. So they go on sowing for continual sad harvests till (suddenly, it may be) they wake up to face a loss irremediable.

Barnabas, a good man and full of the Holy Ghost, exhorted the disciples that with purpose of heart they should cleave to the Lord. How simple, yet how needed, and how pregnant an exhortation! If we cleave to a living Lord, we shall unfailingly go forward. And how safely, how joyfully, in those green pastures where the good Shepherd ever leads His sheep! Our fear, as well our love, may well keep us close to His almighty arm who says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand."

Would we knew more of that intimacy with a living Lord which shines out so in the history of the Acts. To Paul it seems no strange thing to have the Lord stand by him in the night, and say, "Fear not, Paul." And Ananias without confusion talks familiarly to that dear Master of his of how he had heard about this persecutor, Saul. Are these days in the dim distance? But the heart that seeks our intimacy is unchanged, and the quick ears of faith may still hear deep in the inmost soul a Voice which the whole being owns in adoration. Oh were we free from all other things for Him, as but few are, how would it fill our lives, and bless them! How would the eternal life, already ours, develop in us! for "this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

ATONEMENT.

The Testimony of the Psalms.—Continued.

THE next psalm of atonement we find in the last section of the second book. And here, whatever difficulty of interpretation may attach to it otherwise, there is nothing to dim the assurance that the sixty-ninth psalm gives us the trespass-offering. The very word for sins—"My sins are not hid from Thee"—should be rather "trespasses." While the restitution character of the trespass-offering comes out with unmistakable plainness in the fourth verse,—"*Then I restored that which I took not away.*" In the words of the eleventh verse we may discern with little more difficulty the ram of the trespass-offering. The difficulties of the psalm belong rather to its exposition, which I am not attempting here. With this brief notice, therefore, we may pass on to the final psalm.

This is the hundred and second, whose place in connection with the book to which it belongs is full of interest. The fourth book speaks, as the fourth book of Moses does, of the world as the scene of man's strangership through sin. Its first psalm, the ninetieth, shows him thus; his link with eternal blessedness snapped with his link with God. It is a strain of the wilderness, a lament over that generation of men who because of their unbelief died there, and who thus could be used as a fit exemplification of the general condition. The Lord, man's dwelling-place, has been forgotten. He who brought man from the dust bids him return to it. Sin and God's righteous anger explain this terrible anomaly. "*Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy*

countenance; for all our days are passed away in Thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told." The psalm concludes with a prayer: "Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants;" but no ground is given for such repentance till we come to the following psalm.

And here we have, not the first man, but the second; and in plain contrast to the first. Man has forgotten the name of his God: how clearly this comes out in Moses' question at the bush!—"And Moses said unto God, 'Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto me, What is His name? what shall I say?'" (Ex. iii. 3.)

But this lost name of God is the key to man's condition. It reveals him as a wanderer (how far!) from the Father's house, "without God in the world; without, therefore, a hiding-place from the forces of nature now in league for his destruction! How wonderful that "a *Man* shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest,"—a Man, but the "Second Man"! It is He who, abiding in the secret place of the Most High, shall lodge under the shadow of the Almighty; He who in the path of faith takes Jehovah for His refuge and fortress, His God, in whom He trusts. Here is One who, at least for Himself, can claim fully the divine protection—an unfailing, perfect Man.

But how does this avail for *men*? God's name revealed is "Jehovah;" and "Jehovah" is "the God of redemption"—the name under which He intervened to redeem His people of old. Redemption,

too, by power is seen in the following psalms. Jehovah's throne is established upon earth; the wicked are destroyed; the righteous flourish. The earth also is set upon a permanent ground of blessing—"The world also is established, that it cannot be moved." Jehovah comes (xcvi.-c.) to His restored creation; which claps its hands, rejoicing in His presence.

This closes the first half of the book, but the fullness of the blessing is not yet told out, nor the ground of it. This, redemption not by power but by purchase, and at the hands of the Kinsman-Redeemer, can alone disclose.

In the hundred and first psalm we find accordingly once more the Second Man, into whose hands now the earth is put, King of Israel evidently, but with another name and a wider title soon to be declared. For in the hundred and second psalm, not only Zion's time of blessing is come, but for the earth also to be blessed, "when the peoples are gathered together, and the kings also, to serve the Lord."

But all this blessing waits upon One who in the meanwhile is seen, not only in human weakness, but under the wrath of God. Alone in the presence of His enemies, His heart smitten and withered like grass; and why? "Because of Thine indignation and wrath; for Thou hast lifted Me up and cast Me down."

But how then is the blessing to come, if Israel's King, the Second Man, upon whom all depends, is cut off under the wrath of God? "He weakened My strength in the way; He shortened My days. I said, 'O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days: Thy years are throughout all generations.'"

What, then, is the answer to this prayer? It is the amazing declaration as to this humbled One:—

“Of old hast *Thou* laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of *Thy* hands: they shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end.”

Thus Creator and Redeemer are the same wondrous Person; Jehovah, whose throne is set up upon earth, is that very Second Man into whose hands the restored earth is given; and this, and the blessings resulting from it, the hundred and third and hundred and fourth psalms celebrate. This weakness of man is the power and grace of God for man's salvation. God's name is indeed decisively declared, and man finds his happy hiding-place in God Himself, never to be a wanderer again.

How fit a conclusion to the picture of atonement which the Psalms, and indeed the whole of the Old Testament, present! May our joyful adoration grow in equal pace with our apprehension of them.

It is very consolatory to the heart of the poor weary pilgrim to be assured that every stage of his wilderness journey is marked out by the infinite love and unerring wisdom of God. He is leading His people by a right way home to Himself; and there is not a single circumstance in their lot, or a single ingredient in their cup, which is not carefully ordered by Himself.

CONSCIENCE.

I.—ITS NATURE AND ORIGIN.

THERE is in man, as man,—as the creature of God,—a “moral sense,” as it is called; a faculty of perception of moral quality in whatever comes into the field of view. This, of course, was his before the fall; indeed, without it, a fall would not have been possible. He would have been a mere beast, for which it is impossible to be *im*-moral, just because it is *un*moral, with no capacity of moral perception or reflection at all. Such a being could not *fall*. “Man that is in honor, and *understandeth* not,”—here spoken clearly, not of rational, but of moral discernment,—“is like the beasts that perish” (Ps. xlix. 20). That is the character of the beast, then. Had man gained by the fall a moral sense, it would have been really, in the phrase of a modern infidel, a “*fall upward*;” it would have brought him into a higher condition than that in which he was created.

When God said of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, “Thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” this was surely not to be understood by Adam as a mere consequence which would follow a certain course, a mere appeal to self-love, and no more! Had it been so, and he had merely understood it as an alternative proposed to him, he might have chosen the alternative, however fatal, yet without sin. But in this case “thou shalt not” could not have been said: the prohibition would have sunk into mere advice. Sin could not then have been,

nor possible fall. The innocence in which man stood,—as made “upright” (Eccl. vii. 29),—was not the immaturity of a babe which we call such. To confound the reality of innocence in upright Adam with the shadow of it only in the fallen creature would be to accuse the Creator and make the record of the fall an unintelligible mystery.

What, then, does the knowledge of good and evil, as acquired in the fall, imply? For it is of this that the very name of the prohibited tree speaks; it is this that the serpent proposes, “Ye shall be as God,* knowing good and evil;” and it is this that the divine word after the fall assures us had resulted: “the man is become as one of Us, knowing good and evil.” What, then, is this knowledge? It is, as all the inspired Word is, put before us to understand, and it will be a gain to us to understand it.

When the prohibition was first given, it is plain it was in a scene where God had pronounced every thing, without exception, which He had created, “very good.” Evil there was not any where then to be perceived. The faculty of perception did not, of course, create the object to be perceived. Evil there yet was none. I do not mean that angels had not fallen. The whole history assures one that they had. But that did not necessarily introduce it into the world. This was, with all in it, very good; and as such was committed into the hands of man its head. Upon his obedience the condition of all within this realm of his depended. Save through him, evil could not enter; for the presence of the devil in the serpent was not an entrance in the

*“*Elohim*,” which may be, indeed, “God” or “gods,” but the latter would be surely as yet too unmasked evil to be in the devil’s mouth. The former is confirmed by the words “as one of Us” afterward.

sense in which I speak of it. Man himself alone could really bring it in.

It may be asked, however, Did not the prohibition itself suppose (and so imply the knowledge of) evil as possible, at least? To us, alas! it does; and here, indeed, is the great difficulty for us: how can we put ourselves back into that lost estate of innocence, so as to form any right conception of it at all? Prohibition to us, alas! awakens at once the thought of possible disobedience, and in the fallen nature the lust of it. But Adam had no lust; and no conception as yet of possible disobedience. This need not imply any mental or moral feebleness, but as to the latter (taking all into account), the very opposite.

To know good and evil means simply to discern the difference between these two; but for this to be, the two must be *together* within the field of vision. It was just the perfection of Adam's world that in it there was none, and in himself none. He could abide in good, and enjoy it, without thought of its opposite; a state for us difficult of conception, no doubt, but not impossible to conceive. Gratitude he could have and feel, without thought of ingratitude; believe, praise, love, and adore he could, without realizing even the possibility of the opposite of these, and with a moral nature which could yet recognize them immediately they were presented.

The history of the fall confirms this. The serpent's first approach is by a question, which under the form of a question of fact, suggests a moral one: "Yea, [is it so] that God hath said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" But to entertain a moral question as to God is fatal. Im-

plicit confidence in God is gone, and evil is already there known in the soul of her who entertains the question. The woman's answer already shows the consequence of this. "Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, and ye shall not touch it, lest ye die." Here, in her mind the prohibited tree had displaced the tree of life, the prohibition, increased to harshness in the manner of it, is weakened in the certainty of its attending penalty. God's love and truth are obscured in her doubting soul; and the devil can say, "Surely ye shall not die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat of it your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil."

Here it should be plain that faith in God, receiving all at His hand, prohibition and all, as good alike, would have foiled the enemy, and remained master of the field. By faith, from the first, and of necessity, man stood. All dispensations are, in this, alike. The evil that gained entrance into the world began as unbelief in the woman's soul, and this having speedily ripened into the positive transgression, conscience awoke,—the inward eyes were opened: they knew evil in contrast with good,—knew it in themselves, and their actions show plainly that they did so: "they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons."

The evil that had come in was in themselves alone, for of moral evil man alone is capable. And thus the moral perception in man is become a judgment of good and evil in himself, and of himself in view of it: and this is conscience. There is

always in it a reference to one's self.* It is always, as it were, testifying to our nakedness. It is the inheritance of fallen Adam's children, to whom innocence is no longer possible: a watch set upon us by God as under His just suspicion. It is the knowledge of good and evil as found in one who has obtained it by disobedience.

Yet how the grace of God to man shines out already here! "The man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil." How significant in its connection with that eternal purpose which was even then, when these words were spoken, beginning to be declared! A return to innocence was indeed impossible, but holiness might yet be, if divine love so willed. And thus out of the ruin of the first a new creation yet more glorious was indeed to spring.

(To be continued, D. V.)

GOD delights in those who appreciate and enjoy the provisions of His love—those who find their joy in Himself.

God sees us, thinks of us, speaks about us, acts toward us, according to what He Himself has made us and wrought for us.

Is it the real purpose of your soul to get on, to advance in the divine life, to grow in personal holiness? Then beware how you continue, for a single hour, in contact with what soils your hands and wounds your conscience, grieves the Holy Ghost and mars your communion.

*As may be seen in such passages as Hebrews x 2, where "no more conscience of sins" means no more apprehension of them as standing against us, and x 22 similarly, "sprinkled from an evil conscience," one that brings us in guilty. So Acts xxiv 16—"a conscience void of offense."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ETERNAL LIFE,

AS POSSESSED BY THE BELIEVER IN ALL DISPENSATIONS,

THE question of a correspondent as to the consistency of the assertion that Old-Testament saints had eternal life with our Lord's words in John xvii. 3, is one being raised by many at the present moment, and deserves a fuller reply, therefore, than otherwise would be at all necessary. It is one capable of a clear and scriptural answer; and it is only a matter of astonishment that so many, well taught in the Word, should be so little clear,

But first, what exactly is meant by "eternal life"?

The answer awakens the deepest gratitude and adoration in the heart of a believer: it is *divine* life; the life in the fullest sense *eternal*, existing *from* eternity *to* eternity in God Himself. It is the communication of this life which makes all who receive it, not children of God by *adoption* merely, but children of God by *birth*—by life and nature.

Of so wondrous and blessed a fact so many of these have so little apprehension, that it will be necessary to produce scripture to vindicate such a statement from the appearance of presumption of the most daring kind. God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, and the riches of His grace toward us are far beyond any possible prior conceptions of our own. The truth is plainly declared by the apostle that "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." But how in Him? Scripture answers: in Him, as what belonged to Himself ever,—His own life! Thus, "in Him"—the Word—"was life; and the life was the light of men" (Jno. i. 4); "for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the

Father and was manifested unto us" (1 Jno 1 2) And thus as possessors of the life which is in His Son we are "in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ" (1 Jno v 20)

Thus it is plain how low and gross and incomplete is the thought that eternal life is mere eternal existence, or immortal life, as so many are saying, or even eternal, happy, and holy existence, as is the common thought. It is *divine* life, eternal in a sense no other is. Christ is our life, and now raised from the dead, His work accomplished, is the "last Adam," the life-giving Head to a "new creation," to which he who is in Christ already belongs (1 Cor xv 45, 47, 2 Cor v 17)

As really as we get our natural life from the first Adam, so really do we get a supernatural new life from Christ the last Adam. The divine human Personality of the new creation Head explains how the life that links us with the new creation links us at the same time to God in a higher and more blessed way than any creaturehood as such could give. "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb 11 11)

Eternal life and life in the Son are thus different terms only for that divine life, as being partakers of which we are children of God. And life in the Son expresses the double fact that only through the Son, the Mediator, could the life be ever ours, and also that as possessing it, we possess it not independently or in separation from its source. As another has said, "It is not an emanation from [God], a something given out from Him, as life was breathed into Adam at the first, but on the contrary, the believer is taken into communion (joint participation) of the life, as it continues to dwell in the Fountain head itself."

This, then, is eternal life, which we have as born (and from the first moment, therefore, that we are born) of God. If new birth then was from the beginning of God's deal-

ings in grace with men on earth, then the Old-Testament saints were necessarily partakers of eternal life, of life in the Son, as we are

But to this some oppose the Lord's definition of eternal life in John xvii 3 "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee,"—the Father—"the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" "How could this," they ask, "be true of saints before Christ's coming? Had they this knowledge of the Father and Son, which is the New-Testament revelation?"

The answer to this may be given without any difficulty or hesitation they had not Does this, then, settle the point in question? Surely it would be hasty to imagine this in view of consequences so serious as must follow

For if the Old-Testament saints had not eternal life, new birth must have been with them a very different and an infinitely lower thing than it is with us Nay, they could not have been, in the sense in which we are called so, children of God at all! *What* life had they then? and when did true eternal life begin to be in men? When Christ came and faith received Him first? or when He rose from the dead, having accomplished His work?

Not, certainly, the latter, for it would exclude the people of whom the Lord affirms it to be true, in the very prayer in which these words are found "I have manifested Thy name," He says, "unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me, and they have kept Thy word *Now they have known* that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me, and *they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me*" (vv 6-8) Here, the knowledge which the Lord declares to be eternal life He declares that His disciples already had,—had therefore eternal life before redemption was yet accomplished

They were, as far as the life essentially was concerned,

still what Old-Testament saints were, nor do the Lord's words imply any thing else, although Old-Testament saints could not have had the knowledge He speaks of. It is a mode of speech with which we are perfectly familiar, to speak of a thing in its full and proper *development* as if it were alone the thing. A babe, if you distinguish it from other creatures, is a *man*; but we rightly reserve the name in ordinary parlance for the being come to maturity and manifesting the powers of a man. In the babe, you do not yet see what the man *is*. I say, man is the highest creature of God on earth, both for mental and physical endowments. Is not that true? Surely. Is the babe, then, a *man*? We must answer both ways really—Yes and no!

Apply this to the passage before us, and it is simplicity itself. If we think of eternal—*i. e.*, divine—life, what does this imply but divine acquaintanceship,—the knowledge of God? If we think of life in the Son, what but acquaintance with the Father? But the life gives not the knowledge: it gives the capacity for it. Manhood, the possession of human nature, gives not the knowledge of a man, but the capacity for acquirement. The knowledge must be ministered from without; and so must the knowledge of God. The knowledge ministered of the Father and the Son alone gives the life its true character; displays it; *shows what it is*. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

Christ has "brought life and incorruption to light by the gospel." We may surely say, not only objectively revealed it to us, but subjectively also revealed it in us. And the two things are connected. The hindrances to growth and development which the darkness of the dispensation imposed are removed; the true character of the life within us is manifested. And yet even to us Scripture speaks of it as, *in a sense*, a future thing: "In the world *to come*, everlasting life" (Luke xviii. 30); so, "He that hateth

his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (Jno. xii. 25); so, "Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. vi. 22). Thus, while it is a possession, it is still a hope; and exactly as the character of it as now possessed is being taken to deny its possession of old, so is the hope of it taken by some to deny a present possession: with just as much and as little truth in the one case as the other. We possess it now, yet in a sense have it not but wait to enter upon it as a future thing. And so, precisely, the Old-Testament saints had it essentially, yet in its true character waited for it as a thing yet to be entered upon. Now, as revealed, it is revealed in its true character in connection with Him in whom already it has found its perfect display, and in us brings it out also in its reality. Yet we still hope for it *as if* we had it not, although we have it and know we have it. In the full reality of what it is, eternity alone can declare it to us.

I would add, while not intending to enter into it at large, that the word "life" is used in various senses both in Scripture and elsewhere. There are even two words in the Greek to express on the one hand the life in us, (which is *ψυχή*), and on the other, the practical, displayed life (which is *ζωή*). This applies only to natural life, but the same distinction exists really as to the spiritual. The displayed life is that of which the Lord speaks in the verse in question.

I would add also, with regard to the views of another that have been appealed to in this connection, that they are entirely misjudged. Certain passages, whose meaning has not been really weighed, have been quoted from the "Examination of the 'Thoughts on the Apocalypse'" (Coll. Writ., Proph., vol. iii, pp. 39-42, n.), as where he speaks of it as a "fundamentally false principle" that "if life be there, inasmuch as it is always of God, or divine

life, it is always essentially the same, whatever official distinctions there may be as to dispensation." He replies, "The difference is very great indeed as to man. It is every thing as to his present *affections*, as to his *life*. Because God puts forth power—power, too, which works in man through faith, according to the display He makes of Himself. And therefore the whole life, in its *working*, in its *recognition of God*, is formed on this dispensational display. . . . Because all this is what faith ought to act upon, and the life which we live in the flesh we live by faith, for 'the just shall live by faith.' Hence," he adds, "the Lord does not hesitate to say, 'This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.' *That could not have been the life of those before.* Had they, then, not life? Nay, but it could not be stated in that way—their life was not that; and to undo these differences is to make a life without affections, character, responsibility,—in a word, without faith. You cannot do it, for to us to believe is to live."

It is surely plain that here it is the practical life which is in question. He owns fully that it is divine life in all; in its practical character as a life of faith, different, according to the revelation of God, which faith receives. This is clear enough; but at p. 554 of the same volume he is still more explicit. "And if it be said, But were they not quickened with the *life that was in Christ*? *No doubt they were.*" "He [Mr. N.] holds now that there was the same life essentially in all of them [heavenly and earthly saints]. *With this I fully agree.*"

And this is all that has ever been contended for.

Is God known, loved, and trusted? If He be, the heart will delight in the most absolute dependence upon Him.

THE PROCLAMATION OF PEACE.

"And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." (Eph. ii. 17.)

IT is well and commonly said that the simplicity of the gospel is its difficulty with souls. God's ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts. We do not know ourselves even, until the Word of God reveals us to ourselves, and we resist the revelation as long as it is possible at all to do so. Hence repentance, *i. e.*, the bowing in heart to the judgment which the Word has pronounced concerning us, is in God's order absolutely necessary to the reception of the gospel. It is not, and cannot be, as some in the present day would have it, "Believe the gospel and repent," but as we find the Lord Himself preaching it (Mark i. 15)—"Repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Faith in the Word must thus, however, precede repentance, for only from faith can repentance flow; and as soon as faith is in the soul, its fruits begin to manifest themselves. Conversion is the turning of the man to God. Naturally, his dependence is upon himself and not upon God; and it is as his face is turned Godward his back is turned upon himself. Thus repentance, the soul's judgment of itself according to the Word, is never absent where faith is—comes as it were with it, and yet is the fruit of it.

But it is as the soul is thus turned from its self-confidence,—as it receives and bows to the judgment of God upon itself,—that the gospel becomes clear, suitable, necessary, and how precious! None could have *imagined* it ever. The greatness of our necessity is no argument in itself that God could come so far to meet it,—no revelation of the way

by which it could be met; but the way being revealed, and the love of God declared in the gift of His Son, the knowledge of our necessity prepares us to apprehend and receive the joyful news of salvation, otherwise unintelligible and untrusted. It is then and thus it becomes simple. John the Baptist in this way comes with the baptism of repentance to prepare the way of the Lord, and the Lord Himself begins His ministry with a John-Baptist strain; and while Pharisees murmured at His grace, all the publicans and sinners drew near to hear Him.

The gospel, with all its freedom, is thus selective. There are tender arms of love for sinners: what could be freer? But the "sinners" that drew near, were they the whole mass of a guilty world? "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost;" but out of a hundred in the wilderness, *one* sheep is lost, *one* sinner repents.

Yet the gospel is free, as the heart of God is gracious, and as the work of Christ is infinite in value. He has "made peace through the blood of His cross," and the gospel of peace is to be preached, not simply at large in the world, but individually "*to every creature.*" The grace to all is emphasized to each. It makes no demand but for reception. It does not preach of effort to be put forth, or experiences to be learned, or attainment to be made. The story of man is ended with the cross; it is now the story of over-abounding grace that is being told out; and grace is not *claim*, but *gift*,—gift yours if only you will have it, with all its blessedness, which no apprehension or experience can ever reach to, "the unsearchable riches of Christ," the fullness of a "love, that passeth knowledge."

There are two aspects of the proclamation of peace which the gospel makes which I desire to consider now, and by the putting of which together, some may find, that have not yet found, the real apprehension and enjoyment of it in their souls. These two aspects give us two things which it is of the greatest importance to keep together—the supremacy of God and the blessing of man. The whole condition of the world at every point is the result of subjection to God being thrown off. Only through the grace of God is a return from this condition practicable at all, and only by the power of the Spirit of God is it ever effected; but in no way which does not involve a return to the spirit of obedience could blessing for him be found. It is this that conscience insists on with us, and rightly; but if that be all, legality in some shape will become our vain resource. The gospel alone can really deliver us from our own ways, and, by a proper reconciliation, put us in the place of blessing.

When Israel of old went against a hostile city, they were to proclaim, according to the word of the Lord, peace unto it; and if it made answer of peace, and opened its gates, it became tributary and served. Here there was no original duty of service; but the world has revolted from a yoke obnoxious to it, and refused just obedience to the divine claim. They have turned every one to *his own* ways—so dear to pride, as that. How plainly do we see it in Israel's refusal of that law which by every tie of interest and gratitude bound them to One who had shown openly His power before their eyes, and in their behalf. Yet their history is little more than one of wanderings from Him.

Nor is this even merely human fickleness. Those who served other gods were *not* thus fickle: "*Hath* a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but My people have changed their glory unto that which doth not profit."

And when Christ came, after the rejection of a long series of God's messengers, as the last resource He had, and He sends His best-beloved, saying, "They will reverence My Son:" what was the answer? "This is the Heir: come, let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance." Thus the cross was the final expression of long-manifested enmity, not on Israel's part only, but on that of the world: "Now is the judgment of this world," the Lord says; and "the friendship of this world is enmity against God." (Jas. iv. 4.)

From the grave, in which man would fain have sealed Him up, He comes forth with all authority in heaven and earth His, and to take His seat at the right hand of God. "God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified," says the apostle, "both Lord and Christ."

He is Lord, and every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess that He is such; but He is Christ, a Saviour, and whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Into this judged and hostile world a message of peace is sent, antedating the sure day of coming judgment. God preaches peace by Jesus Christ, and where an "answer of peace" is returned, the soul owning in Him its rightful Lord, judgment is removed, and peace established as its proper possession.

Pause here, beloved reader, and ask yourself, have you in truth of heart owned this blessed One? Is He to you, *in more than name*, "Master and

Lord"? To repeat those titles formally, as do so many, is of course worse than worthless; but if indeed and in truth you have surrendered to Him, if you have confessed with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believed in your heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved (Rom. x. 9).

Peace then is yours from God. His controversy with you is over. It is not a question of your feeling about it, although He tells you of it, that you may enjoy it without suspicion, that no contrary thought may arise in your heart. Give Him full credit for what He has said, who could not possibly deceive you, and then you will realize it as *peace within your heart*, unchallengeably and inalienably yours; for "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The world is divided into two hostile camps. Neutrality is not possible to any. "He that is not with Me is against Me." And this of course must be real: it is not profession but confession that is called for; and belief with the heart and confession with the mouth the apostle links together; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. If, then, you have truthfully accepted Christ as your Lord, He will be your Saviour also. Peace is proclaimed in His name, that if you return an "answer of peace," submitting yourself to Him, you may know on God's part that His controversy with you is over, and be practically at peace in your own soul.

But observe, that while these are the terms upon which peace is yours, and you have positively nothing more to do than to throw down your arms and surrender to Christ to have this wonderful

mercy shown you, yet on God's part much was needed to be done in order that He might righteously be able to assume this attitude toward you. This peace *proffered* had first to be *made*; and it is made: He hath "made peace through the blood of His cross." That which for us is free, involved for Him this wonderful sacrifice. On man's part, the cross was the very height of desperate rebellion; on His own, "No man taketh My life from Me," He says, "but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again: this commandment have I received of My Father." Judgment is pronounced upon the world for what is man's act; but for that which is His own in it, not judgment but divine grace to man flows out. "Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." By One dying a sinner's death, a work of infinite value is accomplished which not only God can *accept*, but in which He finds the fullest delight. No place but His own right hand for Him who has done this work can express worthily His delight in it; and this flows out once more in the welcome every returning prodigal receives. Who that believes that it is the fruit of *Christ's* work that he receives can wonder at the freeness or the greatness of the gift bestowed? And the work of the cross, for *whom* was it? death and curse, for whom did the Holy One take these?

The character of this work makes it humility as well as faith to own that for us He died. The value of it is our title to all the wealth that Scripture reveals as the portion of the believer. Faith in it is the destruction of legality in our approach to God. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to

every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man that doeth these things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise: Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring down Christ from above;) or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)"—And this is the work needed, if work is to be done! What a rebuke of the thought that by legal effort aught can be attained! Don't think of bringing Christ down to do once more His blessed work! or of raising Him from the dead, after His work accomplished! It needs not, blessed be God! it is already, and once for all, done.—“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy heart and in thy mouth; (that is, the word of faith which we preach :) that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

It is to the call of grace, then, that we are bidden to surrender. The throne to which we bow is a throne of grace; and herein is its sweet effectual compulsion found; hence is its power to mould our lives by engaging our affections, and winning our hearts to the God whom it displays. “We joy *in God* through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation. The fruit we are to produce springs from the seed of the gospel, necessarily first received in order to produce it.

Peace is proclaimed: to enemies, that they may bow and so receive it; to those no longer enemies, that they may enjoy the assurance of what is theirs.

but theirs through the work of Another, dying even for His enemies. "Peace I leave with you" were the words which anticipated the work of the cross; "Peace be unto you," the words with which He returned from the dead; and then showed them His hands and His side, the wound of that conflict by which the rest of victory is assured to us. How sweetly sovereign the manner in which He thus makes over the fruit of His work to His beloved people! It is the relation in which they stand eternally with God; stable as the value of that by which it has been made: "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is proclaimed to you, beloved reader, whoever you are: reconciliation on the basis of Christ's accepted work, if only on your part you will be reconciled to God (2 Cor. v. 20). It is no question whether He will be reconciled to you, but only if you will be to Him. If your heart can say, How glad would I be—how thankful to accept this! you need have no doubt whatever of this happiness being yours. Peace He publishes to you through the work of His Son, and it is for *you* to say whether there shall be peace. If you accept His terms,—if you bow indeed to the Lord Jesus Christ,—if *you* will be reconciled, then God *is* at peace with you, and Christ is your peace: He has made it by the blood of His cross; made it for sinners, for enemies, that you may be no more such, but reconciled to God through the death of His Son. How dear and tender a pledge of what is in His heart toward you—"For God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we may be made the righteousness of God in Him"!

KEY-NOTES TO THE BIBLE BOOKS.

THE NEW-TESTAMENT "MYSTERIES."

THE word "mystery" in Scripture does not speak of any thing *in itself* impossible or even difficult to be understood, but of what is secret except to those to whom it is revealed. Thus the apostle says of the gospel, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a *mystery*, even the *hidden* wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

Again, in Revelation i. 20, John is told to "write the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

Even to believers, the New-Testament truths,—those proper to it—were thus mysteries; and so the apostle again and again applies the word. "According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by prophetic scriptures made manifest to all nations for the obedience of faith." "The mystery which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." "The mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, and now is made manifest to the saints." And so, speaking generally of the New-Testament mystery, he says, "So let a man think of us as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." (1 Cor. iv. 1.)

It is evident, then, that the New Testament as a whole gets its character from these mysteries, which are its own proper and distinct truths. The

apprehension of these, and of these *as* distinct, must be of the very greatest importance to every one who desires the knowledge of the Word of God. The apostle does not even scruple to say of the "mystery of God,"—the sum of these various mysteries,—that therein "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."* For it is what is distinctively Christian truth which is required to make us in knowledge and in practice Christians.

Alas! the extension of the term backward to include all believers from Abel down shows how what is distinctive has been well-nigh lost, to the great injury of souls. Let us, then, with the more care, consider what this mystery of God is.

The first time the word occurs in the New Testament is in Matthew xiii. 35. Already rejected of Israel in fact, spite of the mighty works which showed conclusively who He was, the Lord has declared that spiritual relationships were those which now He could alone acknowledge. "But He answered and said unto him that told Him, 'Who is My mother, and My brethren?' And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, 'Behold My mother and My brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is my mother and sister and brother.'"

Now this is what Christianity affirms—a relationship purely spiritual, which Judaism never was. Accordingly the Lord now leaves the house

* Colossians ii. 2, 3. The words that follow "the mystery of God" are greatly in question, and the editors differ. Some add, as in our version, "and of the Father and of Christ," some, "even Christ," some, "which is Christ," some, "the Father of Christ." The probability is, these are different versions of an attempt to explain what the mystery of God is, and that they ought really to be left out.

and sits by the seaside; and there He begins to speak of that saying of the Word of God broadcast among men which was to introduce and characterize the gospel dispensation. The parabolic form is significant of the rejection of Israel. "Therefore speak I unto them in parables, because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." And to His disciples He says, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

Israel rejected, the word goes out addressed to faith any where, and the kingdom in the meanwhile taken from them, assumes another aspect from that announced by the Old-Testament prophets. It is a kingdom with a king absent; set up, not in power, but in patience; in a scene in which Satan, flesh, and world are leagued against it: this is closed by the coming of the Son of Man in person, and the casting out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity,—a coming which introduces the form in which Daniel sees it. Here, therefore, the New-Testament mystery of it ends.

If Daniel be referred to, and connected with the book of Revelation, it will be found how thoroughly this explains a difficulty which has long perplexed the interpreters of prophecy. The seventh of Daniel shows us four great empires, and only four, stretching from the prophet's own day, until the setting up of Messiah's kingdom. These four empires, it is almost universally agreed, are Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The empire of Rome, then, exists when the Son of Man comes in the clouds of heaven. But here is the obvious difficulty, that the Roman empire has in fact al-

ready passed away, and the Son of Man is not yet come. Various efforts have been made to surmount this. Some would fain make the spiritual power of the pope the continuation of the civil imperial power; some would make the coming of the Son of Man a spiritual coming only, and the kingdom of course a spiritual one also. It is not needful for us here to argue as to either of these theories, for theories alone they are. The book of Revelation gives a wholly different and a complete solution. There we find, once more, Daniel's fourth beast, and in connection with the Lord's personal pre-millennial coming (ch. xix. 19). But in what shape does this Roman beast appear? As one whom he sees rising up afresh out of the sea, expressly as one revived out of death (ch. xiii. 3, 12, 14). Beast and woman—civil and ecclesiastical power—are here distinct (ch. xvii.), and the announcement angelic illumines with divine light the Old-Testament prophecy: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; *and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition*; and they that dwell upon the earth shall wonder, whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, *and shall be present*." So, and not "and yet is," should the last words be read.

Here we see that the whole time of the national existence of the Roman empire is omitted from the Old-Testament prophecy, and that this gap of omitted time corresponds with the development of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven of which our Lord speaks. The ecclesiastical power which has so long ruled Rome finds its place in connection with these in the *New-Testament* prophecy;

while for the same reason the kingdom of Christ spoken of by Daniel cannot be the spiritual kingdom of the Christian mysteries, which were then unrevealed. Concerning all these parables of the kingdom, the evangelist quotes and applies the prophet's words: "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

These two phases of the kingdom, the present and the millennial forms, should not for a moment be confounded by any attentive reader of Scripture. The parables of the thirteenth of Matthew show us clearly the one ending with the other beginning; and the Lord distinguishes them in His address to the church at Laodicea as the times of His sitting on the Father's throne, and of His taking as Son of Man His own. So we are translated into the kingdom of *God's* dear Son (Col. i. 13); while Daniel speaks of the coming of the Son of Man, and similarly the Lord in the parables—"The *Son of Man* shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of *His* kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." (xiii. 41.)

This, then, is the first of the New-Testament mysteries, and with this it is easy to see how their ends, named as such, coincide: thus the apostle speaks of the "mystery" of the partial blinding of Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in; so too of "the mystery of the gospel" (Eph. vi. 19), as concerning which they are enemies for the Gentiles' sakes (Rom. xi. 28).

Basis of this gospel is the "mystery of godliness, He who was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory."

The actual coming of the Lord in fulfillment of prophecy takes its place thus in the front rank of Christian mysteries. Christ come in flesh; justified in Spirit, personally at His baptism, in testimony to the acceptance of His work when raised from the dead; a spectacle to angels; proclaimed beyond the range of Judaism, to those without claim or promise—those in grace; a testimony believed in the world; received up in glory, and abiding there: this is indeed the mystery by which men's hearts are won to God, and their lives changed to some reflection of His life which is itself light. In this way the Church becomes the "epistle of Christ, written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."

"The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles is Christ among you, the hope of glory." (Col. i. 27, *marg.*) Christ among Gentiles no Old-Testament prophet ever spoke of, and the glory here is another than that which pertained to Israel. Heaven, which is opened to receive Christ, has received in Him the Forerunner of a heavenly people. For men on earth, it is a hope,—not an attainment yet, but a hope how bright!

In Ephesians he develops more distinctly this mystery of Christ among the Gentiles: "Which in other ages was not revealed unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. iii. 5, 6). Three things are now declared, which are all outside the older revelation:—

1. The Gentiles fellow-heirs: on equal terms with Israelites in a heavenly inheritance.
2. Gentiles and Jews made members together of the body of Christ.
3. Gentiles and Jews partakers together of His promise in Abraham's seed, by real identification with that seed, which is Christ.

These three wonderful blessings are all unknown to the Old Testament; they are divine mysteries which the "ministers of Christ" alone can speak of.

1. Of Gentiles being fellow-heirs with Jews no Old-Testament prophet ever spoke. It implies necessarily the setting aside of all such distinctions; whereas the promise in the Old Testament to Israel is, that "as the new heavens and new earth which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain" (Isaiah lxvi. 22). The apostle has already assured us that to Israel, his kindred after the flesh, these promises belong. So, again, Micah declares, "The law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. . . . And I will make her that halteth a remnant, and her that was cast afar off a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even forever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem" (iv. 2, 7, 8). Many more passages might be quoted, but it needs not. Any one can turn to almost any of the prophets, and read them for himself.

2. But the Church itself, the body of Christ, exists also as yet neither in fact nor in promise. In fact, for "we are all baptized by one Spirit into

one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13); and this baptism of the Spirit, prophesied of by the Baptist as the future work of Christ, was announced by the Lord before His ascension as to take place "not many days hence." Not yet had He taken His place as Head in heaven, for it was then, when God "set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places," that He "gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 20, 22, 23). At Pentecost, this wonderful relationship was first established, and to the saints of the present dispensation it entirely belongs. The distinctive promises to Israel which we have just been looking at are absolutely inconsistent with membership in the body of Christ.

3. Our place in Christ is another thing. It is only as in Christ that we are accepted before God at all. But God's way of blessing us thus, by a new Adam in a new creation, was hid in God until the time that God made it known by Paul. Thus he alone speaks of justification even as before *God*; for of course James gives us not this, but that before men, by fruit which man can see.

To follow this out would lead us into too large a field; but it is easy to understand that by this truth of new creation is explained what the first chapter of Ephesians gives us: "The mystery of God's will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself for the dispensation of the fullness of times to gather together in one [more literally, "to head up,"] all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." We see fully in all this how the mysteries are but the outbeaming glory of Christ, "the Father of

Eternity;" "for Him," as well as "by Him, all things were created."

But the epistle to the Ephesians gives us yet another mystery—the relationship of the Church to Christ, as the Eve of that new creation of which He is the last Adam. This is based upon that of the body to the head; but it is a different thing, as we may easily see by reference to the type in question: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; 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. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but loveth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church; for we are members of His body."

Here the Lord is said to present the Church to Himself. Eve was presented to Adam by God; but the divine glories of the last Adam shine out every where; so also in this, that He gave Himself for His Church. "God caused," we read, "a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man made He a woman, and brought her unto the man." Who can fail to see in Adam's significant sleep that sleep of death, deeper and more mysterious, of Him upon whom it could never have fallen had He not "loved the Church, and given Himself for it"? In this way only could the Church come into being; and as

Eve was the very flesh of Adam, so is the Church the body of Christ. But Eve, by being Adam's flesh, was only thus prepared for being his wife; and so with the Church. We are already His body, but only by anticipation His bride,—“espoused,” as yet not married. These, then, are two things, very closely connected, not to be confounded.

There is one more mystery, so called in the Word: “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) This plainly and closely connects itself with what the apostle, if he does not use the same term, gives distinctly as a new revelation “by the word of the Lord (1 Thess. iv. 15-17), that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep; for the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord.”

This is what closes, not indeed the mystery of the kingdom, (which goes on until the Lord appears and sets it up in power; and there is a most important interval, although a short one, between these two things;) but it closes the Christian dispensation, and introduces the “end of the age,”—that is, of the *Jewish* age,—the preparatory of discipline and judgment for Israel and the earth, the fruits of which will be found in a remnant

ready to inherit the blessing when He that shall come comes, and the times of restitution begin "from the presence of the Lord."

These, then, are the Christian mysteries; not one of them foretold or known in the Old Testament: although when known from the New, the types of the past dispensation catch and reflect back brightly many a gleam of the new glory. It is the same blessed God all through, with the precious grace in His heart from the beginning of those ways which lead steadily on to their full and glad accomplishment. These things, fully at last revealed, characterize, even more than do new-covenant blessings, the "new-covenant" books.

CONSCIENCE.—*Continued.*

2.—ITS OFFICE AND CHARACTER.

It is evident, and easy to see, that conscience *reveals* nothing. It simply declares the character of whatever is presented, and that according to the light it has. As the eye is the light, only as it is the *inlet* of light, to the body, so the conscience is simply the *inlet* of whatever light morally there may be for the spirit. And just as disease may, to any extent, affect the bodily eye, so may it affect also the spiritual. Alas! the solemn consideration is, that sin *has* thus affected, to a greater or less degree, the consciences of all men. Yet in none, perhaps, is it altogether darkened, and its power will manifest itself often in the most unexpected and striking way in those who, notwithstanding, resist to the last its convictions.

The scribes and Pharisees, plotting to entrap the Lord by the case of the adulteress condemned by Moses' law, are thus driven out of His presence by the simple yet penetrating words, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (Jno. viii. 7, 9). Conscience in Herod sees in Christ the murdered Baptist risen from the dead (Mark vi. 16). Stephen's adversaries, on the other hand, rush into murder, cut to the heart by the conviction that they have resisted the Holy Ghost (Acts vii. 54). Thus, in the midst of the most frantic opposition to the truth—nay, *by* this, the power of the truth over the conscience is clearly shown.

Scripture declares it in doctrine as well as example.—"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God" (Jno. iii. 19-21). Here is the principle of which the example last given is the illustration. The evil-doer is aware of the light when he shuns it; would quench it, if possible, because he is aware of it. In it he is not, because he flees, not welcomes it; yet in fleeing, carries the unmistakable witness of it in his heart.

Again, in the parable of the sower the Lord declares the same thing in another form. Of the seed sown by the wayside He says, "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.

This is he which received seed by the wayside." (Matt. xiii. 19.) Now this is one apparently quite unconvinced; he does not understand; the seed lies merely upon the surface of the ground, inviting the fowls of the air to catch it away. The heart of this man, hard as the roadside with the traffic of other things, if you could say of any that it was untouched by the Word, you could say it here; yet the Lord expressly says, "Taketh away that which was sown *in his heart*." Even here, the Word has not only touched, but *penetrated*. The heart, unchanged by it, has rejected it: true, but it has *had* to reject it. Satan is allowed to remove the Word, and it is taken away; but its rejected witness will come up in terrible memory at another day.

And this exactly agrees with the words of the apostle: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are perishing; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which *believe not*, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) Here again the unbelief which refuses the gospel shuts the unbeliever up into the enemy's hand. The blinding of the mind by the god of this world, like the removal of the seed by the fowls of the air, is the direct result of this first rejection of unwelcome testimony.

How immensely important, then, to the soul the treatment it accords to whatever it has to own as truth, little or much as it may seem to be! For God is the God of truth; and, where souls are themselves true, the possession of any portion of it is the possession of a clue-line which leads surely into His presence; the giving it up is the deliber-

ate choice of darkness as one's portion. And this applies in measure to every one, sinner and saint alike, and to every truth of revelation. Every truth really bowed to in the soul leads on to more; every error received requires, to be consistent with it, the reception of more. It is darkness; and darkness is a kingdom, as the light is,—part of an organized revolt against God. As the truth leads to and keeps us in His presence, so error is, in its essence, departure from Him.

Of course, the truth may be received intellectually merely, not believingly; and if trifled with, it is no wonder if it result in terrible hardening of the heart. The more orthodox Pharisees were worse persecutors of the Lord than the infidel Sadducees. And the Jews every where led the heathen in their early attacks on Christianity. But in these cases it was still rejected truth that stirred up their opposition. But the truth is really and decisively rejected where its claim over the heart and life is allowed in word, and in word only. He who to his father's claim of service said openly, "I will not," yet afterward repented and went; while he who respectfully answered, "I go, sir," never went.

And this is the character of truth, that stirs up opposition. It speaks, prophet-like, for God, affirming His authority over the soul, and abasing the glory of man in His presence. Unbelief says, as Ahab of Micaiah, "I hate it, for it does not prophesy good of me, but evil." And even in the believer, it runs counter to all that is not faith within him; and alas! how much within us is not faith! Thus, among Christians themselves, the truth in any fullness stumbles so many, and at

every fresh unfolding of it some who had followed thus far are left behind: it is even well if they do not become active opponents of it. Thus He who in the angel's announcement brings "peace on earth," brings in fact, nevertheless, because of man's condition, "not peace, but a sword." The fellowship of saints is disturbed and broken up: the thousands drop to hundreds in the very presence of the enemy. Romanism boasts, with a certain reason, of her unity at least in outward organization; while Protestantism proclaims the sanctity of conscience, and divides into a hundred sects.

Yet if conscience be in any respect given up, all is. For its principle is obedience to God, and to God only; and this is a first necessity for a walk with God. Conscience is, above all things, therefore, individual. It refuses to see with other eyes than its own; and refuses, too, subjection or guidance without seeing. It will easily incur in this way the reproach of obstinacy, contumacy, pride, self-will; while on the other hand there is constant danger of mistaking these for it. It is thus a thing which all ecclesiastical systems find it difficult to recognize or deal with, and which makes large demands for wisdom, patience, and forbearance with one another. "We see in part; we prophesy in part:" and what we see may seem in ill accord with what is really truth seen by others, just for want of knowledge of a larger truth embracing both. But even if we see not, and but think we see, still conscience, because it touches our practical relationship with God, is a solemn thing to deal with: he who meddles with it interferes with God's rights over the soul, and usurps a vicegerency which He commits to no one.

Yet the voice of God, let us carefully remember, conscience is not. It is an ear to hear it only, and which may be dull and deaf, and hear with little clearness after all. God's voice is that which utters itself by the Spirit through the Word. But this voice speaks to the individual, to him that hath an ear to hear. None can, but at his peril, resign his responsibility in this to another; and none can, but at his peril, require this to be done. Yet, alas! how often, in various ways, consciously and unconsciously, is this required and yielded to!

3.—PURGED AND PURE.

"To serve the living God," the conscience must first of all be "purified from dead works." (Heb. ix. 14.) A soul alarmed on account of sin is driven by conscience into effort to escape from the wrath which it foresees as the necessity of divine holiness.

In an unawakened condition, not so much conscience drives from God as the heart, estranged, refuses One in whom it finds no pleasure. Its pleasure is in banishing Him, if possible, from the thought; aye, terrible as it is to realize, sin as sin, as offense to Him whom it counts an enemy, is a real pleasure. Many, it is true, are quite ignorant of this, and would resent the imputation of it; for the heart is deceitful above all things, as it is desperately wicked, and who can know it? But when we wake up to realize our condition, we shall assuredly begin to realize it to be so, and none who has been truly brought to God but will own with the apostle, the remarkable example of it, that "when we were *enemies*, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

When awakened, the holiness of God is seen as necessary wrath against sin; and then effort begins to secure shelter from it. And naturally this takes the shape of an attempt to keep those commandments of God hitherto despised and broken. Ignorant of how complete the ruin sin has caused,—ignorant of the unbending requirements of God's holiness,—ignorant of the grace which has provided complete atonement, the soul persists (often for how long!) in trying to bring to God some fruit that He can accept, and which will secure, or help to secure, the one who brings it. But this is only "*dead work*." It is neither "*work of faith*" nor "*labor of love*." It is self-justification, the fruit of fear and unbelief: hence truly "*dead work*," the mere outside of holiness at the best, with no life—no inward spirit in it to make it acceptable to the "*living God*." It is rather itself an offense, and thus a necessary defilement of the soul.

The blood of Christ therefore it is that purifies the conscience from dead works. Justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Brought to God, and to God known in Him, there is "*no more conscience of sins*" in the rejoicing worshiper. Free from the load of guilt, he is able to welcome the light fully and without reserve—yea, with eager desire. The yoke of Christ is rest and freedom. Thus the apprehension of grace delivers from a morbid self-occupation to enable one for real holiness. The conscience is purified so as faithfully to receive, without partiality or distortion, the communications of the Father's will. "*The fruit of the light* [as we should read Ephesians v. 9,] is in all goodness and righteousness and truth."

And if that were all, how blessed—how wholly blessed would be this condition! “Light is good” indeed, “and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun.” If in this all nature rejoices, how the new nature in that which is the “light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Thus the fruit of the light is found in this eternal day and summer of the soul.

From the side of God there is no need of change or variation more. His grace is perfect; His gifts and calling are without repentance. Here, in the enjoyment of its own things, the soul is called to abide; here all its own interests summon it to abide. What might be expected then but continual growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Alas! that this rightful expectation should be so little fulfilled; but in whom is it perfectly fulfilled? in how many do we see almost the opposite of it, retrogression instead of progress! and how many are there who remain apparently almost stationary, although in reality of course with loss of zeal and fervor, year after year! What is the cause of all this, which we find acknowledged in apostolic times as in the present? for the Galatians were no solitary example of those who “did run well,” being hindered from steadfast obedience to the truth. At Rome, those whose faith had once been “spoken of throughout the whole world,” we find testified of by the same witness as *all* seeking their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ (Rom. i. 8; Phil. ii. 21). And later he says of them, “At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me” (2 Tim. iv. 16). Corinth went into worldliness and immorality. Ephesus lost its first love. Of some of

these it may be pleaded that it is assemblies that are spoken of, not individuals, but the two ordinarily go together, and the magnitude of the departure shows that the plea can hardly avail. The general fact is as plain as it is intensely solemn.

But the decay of the fruits of faith means the decay of faith itself. And this decay of faith, whence does it proceed but from failure to maintain the purity of conscience? In the case of some, (who had, no doubt, got far away,) the apostle argues this: "Holding faith and a *good conscience*, which [*i.e.*, the latter,] some having put away, concerning *faith* have made shipwreck" (1 Tim. i. 19). It is easy to show how heresies and false doctrines, and the reception of these by others, spring from a conscience defiled: but this is not now my point. For simplicity of faith itself, a good conscience must be maintained. As another apostle says, "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things; beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God" (1 Jno. iii. 20, 21). And so the Lord, in view of Peter's greivous fall, and the natural result of it, assures him, "I have prayed for thee, that thy *faith fail not*" (Luke xxii. 32). How vital, then, to the whole spiritual condition is the maintenance of a pure conscience!

But again, this pure conscience can only be maintained by *exercise*. "Herein do I *exercise* myself," says, once more, the apostle of the Gentiles, "to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men" (Acts xxiv. 16). How many mistake—how easy, therefore, is it to mistake—a conscience dulled by neglect, for one that is really "good"! How many persuade themselves all is

well with them, while they are simply not near enough to God to detect the evil!

"As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord," we are admonished, "walk ye *in Him*" (Col. ii 6). This alone is the Christian "rule" (Gal. vi. 16); and that is alone a good conscience which keeps to the measure of this. Yet how easy to have the theory, nay, in certain respects, the faith of where we are, without this becoming the real measure for conscience of practical walk!

In the sanctuary, with God alone, we find the light in which things take their true shape and character. In Israel's sanctuary of old, the light of common day was jealously excluded. The light of the golden candlestick guided the priests alone in their daily service. For us, the light of the holiest is that of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And in this, things look very differently indeed from the mere common light in which the natural conscience views them. Yet many Christians are able to be at peace with themselves merely because they are judging themselves by a standard little beyond the common one. They even ignorantly bring in the grace of God to quiet the stirring of self-accusation, which they suppose legality, and go on in a careless dream as far as possible removed from the peace of communion,—the "peace of Christ." But the apostle was not legal when he said, "Wherefore we *labor*, that, whether present or absent, we may be acceptable to Him" (2 Cor. v. 9, *Gr.*), nor in his exercise to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men.

(To be continued, D. V.)

"THE LEADER AND PERFECTER OF FAITH."

(Psalm xvi.)

IN the eleventh chapter of Hebrews the apostle gives a long list of examples of what faith is, as found in men of old. Each one in some characters of it had manifested this, and God had owned them in it as those of whom He was not ashamed. But every example was imperfect, every witness defective, nay, as we know, with positive blemishes and contradictions in their lives to what yet characterized their lives. In the twelfth chapter, in contrast to them all, the apostle urges an example with positively no defect, One who led in and completed the whole course of faith; and that is the meaning of the expression in the second verse,—"The author [or Captain, leader,] and finisher [or completer, perfecter,] of faith." It is this divinely perfect course that the sixteenth psalm gives us in its principles; and these I desire to dwell a little on now, for our enjoyment and admonition both.

The sixteenth psalm gives us Christ Himself as the Speaker, as is evident from the tenth verse, which exclusively applies to Him. He *alone* is that Holy One who as such could not see corruption in the grave. David, as the apostle Peter shows the Jews, personates in this prophetically Another, greater than himself, although his Seed; and it is the same blessed Person throughout the psalm, as the least consideration will convince every Spirit-taught soul. He who knows Christ will recognize at once the features of his Beloved. It is in this way we shall find the deepest blessing in it for our souls. It is indeed a *Michtam*,—"a golden psalm."

There are five divisions: the human number thus

giving us the "Man, Christ Jesus." And these divisions, in their combined significance, are a little Pentateuch. For the Pentateuch,—Moses' five books,—as seen in the new light of Christianity, covers the whole of man's spiritual life here, from its beginning to its end, and to that judgment-seat of Christ, where all will be rehearsed in its reality, as were Israel's wanderings in the plains of Moab.

First, in one verse, you have the characteristic of His whole life, (so strange for Him, when we consider what He was,) as a life of dependence, a life of faith: "Preserve Me, O God, for in Thee do I put My trust."

Then, two verses (2, 3,) show Him taking distinctly His place, not as God in divine supremacy, but as man in obedience, and for men,—for the saints,—in goodness which flows out to them as objects of His delight.

Next, three verses (4-6) proclaim the Lord Himself His whole portion; His lot therefore maintained by Him in pleasant places.

Fourthly, two verses (7, 8,) speak of Him as led by divine wisdom ministered to Him, His object before Him being only God; and thus of the unfaltering steadfastness of His steps always.

While, lastly, three verses trace the path to its end in glory; a way of life found through death itself into the fullness of joy in the presence of God,—the pleasures at His right hand for evermore.

The Lord enable us with wisdom and with reverence to look at these things a little in detail, and may our "meditation of Him" be "sweet" indeed.

I.

The theme of Genesis is *life*, and that not of

fallen and ruined, but of restored and renewed man. Of this those biographies of which it is so largely composed very plainly speak. This new life, as developed in a world departed from God and under death, manifests itself in a life of *faith*, whose springs and resources are in the unseen things, which are, in contrast with the seen, the things eternal.

In us, life begins with a new birth; and, where it exists, is found in contrast with another principle within us, Cainlike, the elder born. The "works of the flesh," too, alas! are found disfiguring the life of faith, how much! We are now to contemplate the perfection of One in whom nature was never fallen, in whom there was no principle of evil, and upon whom (after thirty years passed in the world,) the Father could set the seal of perfect approbation. There is no dark preface to His spiritual history; and yet, as truly as,—more truly than—with any of us, His life was a life of *faith*. Hard as it may be (just because of what we know and own Him to be,) to realize this, Scripture assures us of it in the fullest way. The epistle to the Hebrews, in giving the proofs of the brotherhood of the sanctified to Him by whom they are sanctified, brings forward, as applying to Him, a text exactly similar to the one before us:—"I will put My trust in Him" (Heb. ii. 13); and again, in the passage with which we began, asserts Him to be the "leader and perfecter of faith." The glory of His Godhead must not therefore obscure for us the truth and perfection of His manhood. He is One of whom it could be said, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given," while at the very same time "His name shall be called . . . The

mighty God." And the gospel of Luke declares Him, as a child, to have *grown in wisdom* and in stature. How impossible for any uninspired writer to have given us such an account of One who is "God over all, blessed forever"! But God is earnest to have us know the full grace of Him who descended for us into the lower parts of the earth. He is seeking intimacy. He is assuring us of His ability to sympathize with us in every sinless human experience: "in all things tempted like as we are, apart from sin." (Heb. iv. 15, *Greek*.)

This too is His perfection, which could not be manifest in the same way if not subject to real and full trial. Explain it, reconcile it with His Godhead, we may be quite unable to: we are not called to do it. The blessed truth we need, and can accept, reverently remembering that "no one knoweth the Son but the Father" (Matt. xi. 27). The depths of His love are revealed in the abysses of His humiliation; and here we find our present sustenance and our joy forever. We must not for a moment suffer ourselves to be deprived of it: we must not allow its reality to be dimmed.

"Preserve Me, O God! for in Thee do I put My trust" is the language of One as absolutely in need of God, and hanging upon Him, as any one who-soever. He has come down to man's world, such as sin has made it, not to hide Himself from its sorrows in any wise, but to know them all. Power may be in His hand, and manifested without stint in behalf of others; but to satisfy the hunger of forty days He will not make the bread for Himself which the need of others shall gain from Him without seeking. Conscious of the bleakness and barrenness of the scene into which He has come,

"In Thee," He says, "do I put My trust;" or, more vividly, "In Thee have I taken refuge." The "dove in the clefts of the rock" (Cant. ii. 14) is not only our emblem; it was His also, in days of real sorrow and distress, when, "though He were Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. v. 8). Precious assurance for us! Christ the very pattern of faith in its every character, in every circumstance of trial: "in all things tempted like as we are, apart from sin."

II.

In the next verses (2, 3,) He declares Jehovah to be His Lord. He to whom obedience was a strange thing has taken the place of it. We had swerved from the path even in Eden,—as soon as put on it; had turned every one to his own way, as if it were well proved that our wisdom was more than God's, and as if we owed Him nothing who created us. He, the Creator, here comes down Himself to take up and prove the path of His own ordinance for us, not as He had ordained it even, but with the thorns of the curse in it; amid all, to show how for *Him* it could be meat and drink to do the Father's will; to approve and vindicate it at His own cost when it cost Him all.

"Lo, I come to do Thy will, O My God" was the one purpose of His heart on earth. We allow ourselves many objects. We shrink from the intolerable thought of an absolute sovereign will with a claim upon us at all times, and one defined path from which there is to be no wandering. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" But God revealed as He is now revealed makes His sover-

eighty the joy of a soul which knows that His will can only be according to His nature. For us, love, able to show itself as that, characterizes all His ways with us. But what was it for Him who had to meet, as we have not to meet, the prior demands of righteousness upon us, that love might act toward us? *His* path was not that which love to *Him* would have dictated. Would not a man spare his own son that serveth him? Would not God, then, spare His own beloved Son? Nay, "He spared *not* His Son, but delivered Him for us all." How wondrous a Leader have we, then, in the path of obedience, who could come expressly to do *this* will; "by which *we* are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"! (Heb. x. 10.)

Thus He says also to Jehovah, "My goodness extendeth not to Thee;" words which are explained by what follows: "but unto the saints which are upon the earth, and unto the excellent, in whom is all My delight." He does not take the place before God to which His perfection would entitle Him. It is not to avail Godward for Him to give Him upon earth the place due to His absolute obedience; otherwise the death of the cross,—death in any wise,—could never have been His portion. This obedience of His,—this goodness manifested in obedience,—was for the saints, the excellent of the earth, in whom was His delight. For this, it must be "obedience unto death,"—going as far as that (Phil. ii. 8). He must empty Himself of all, sell all that He has, if He would have what to Him is "treasure" (Matt. xiii. 44).

Thus He dignifies His poor people with those titles,—the saints and the excellent. Nothing but

grace in Him could account them so. Not that there is not in them true spiritual worth and moral beauty: they surely are what He calls them. Yes; *but they are made so by His call*. And His heart looks on to the time of perfect consummation, when the glory of His workmanship shall be seen in them. "According to the time shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel"—measuring the distance between the natural and the spiritual, the Jacob and the Israel,—"*What hath God wrought!*" Thus we shall be not only "to the praise of the glory of His *grace*," but also "to the praise of His *glory*" (Eph. i. 6, 12,) which then shall be seen in us.

Thus, then, the Lord descends to a path which displays His love to His own, and not His personal claim on God; giving up that claim, that we might *have* claim. These two verses give, therefore, fittingly, the Exodus-section of this psalm, which, as applied to Him, exhibits, not redemption, but the Redeemer. Not yet indeed how low His grace must stoop is seen: the twenty-second psalm, for the first time, fully discloses that. Here it is His personal love which puts Him upon that path which, to accomplish such a purpose, cannot end but with the cross.

III.

Now we enter the sanctuary. The Levitical section (4-6) shows us what God is to this perfect Man. He is His all: most beautifully told out in the words, "the *measure* of My portion and of My cup." So it literally reads. As it was said of the Levites (Deut. xviii. 2), "The Lord is their inheritance," so here Christ is seen as the true Levite. "Jehovah is the *measure* of My portion,"—its

whole contents. But who can measure this? It is an infinite measure, infinite riches.

“My portion and My cup:” what is the difference? The “portion” is what belongs to me; the “cup,” what I actually appropriate or make my own. Eating and drinking are significant of actual participation and enjoyment. Many a person has in this world a portion which he *cannot* enjoy; and many a one has a portion which (through moral perversity, it may be,) he *does* not enjoy. With the Lord, indeed, His portion and His joy were one. Jehovah was the measure of both. He *had* nothing beside; He *wanted* nothing beside. These two things should be found, through grace, in the Christian also. For all, it is true that God is the measure of our portion,—we have no other. Oh that it were equally true that He was the measure of our cup,—of our enjoyment!

How strange and sorrowful that for us both should not be equally realized! How wonderful that we should seek elsewhere what cannot be found, while we leave unexplored the glories of an inheritance which is actually our own. We covet a wilderness while we neglect a paradise. “My people have committed two evils,” says the Lord Himself; “they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and they have hewn out to themselves cisterns,—broken cisterns, which can hold no water.”

And this is the reason why, when we turn to God, and would fain comfort ourselves in Him, we do not find the comfort. Our portion does not yield us for our cup. Would we wonder if we saw an Israelite returning from the worship of Baal refused acceptance at Jehovah’s altar? “Covet-

ousness is idolatry," says the apostle. But what is covetousness? It is just the craving of a heart unsatisfied with its portion, for which the thing sought becomes an end that governs it; their lust, as you may see in many a heathen deity, becomes their god. "Their god is their belly,"—the craving part,—says the apostle again, "who mind earthly things."

But "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." So here the voice of our blessed Forerunner: "Thou maintainest My lot." It is a sure abiding possession that does not leave the heart to unrest. And how blessed a portion! "The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." It is the Son of God down here in a fallen world who says this. "He that hath received His testimony hath set to His seal that God is true."

IV.

Now comes (7, 8,) the proving by the way,—the wilderness-history of the Son of Man. And again how true a man is He! "I will bless Jehovah, who hath given Me counsel; My reins also instruct Me in the night-seasons." It is the same Person who speaks in the prophetic word of Isaiah: "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I may know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning; He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learner."* How real was thus His dependence,

* Same word as "learned" before; but the sense requires the change, as others have suggested. If "taught" were substituted in each place, there would be no need of change.

walking by the daily counsel of God, His ear early wakened to receive it. We remember how in His temptation by the devil He applied to Himself the saying in Deuteronomy, that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live." So did He live then, even as we, only in a perfection all His own. On the one hand, there was this direct guidance of the word of God; on the other, His own Spirit-led thoughts, the fruits of that word digested and assimilated, by which all His practical life was formed. What a place with Him had that Word! "Scripture" which "cannot be broken," as He said of it once in the face of unbelief. What a place should it not have with us!

This retirement with God; this meditation by night; this daily sought, daily found guidance from God: how much of it do we really know, in days of so much outward activity as these? The sweet communing of the soul with a living Counselor and Lord, how much is it to be feared that it less characterizes the Christian's life than it did of old,—in days that we deem much darker. Yet nothing can really make up for such a deficiency. It is in secret the roots of faith lay hold of the sustenance that can alone mature into fruit in the outward life. "The secret of the Lord," which is "with them that fear Him," may we not say, is imparted in secret? How much does the Lord insist upon this secret life before God in His sermon on the mount, before "your Father, which seeth in secret." Surely, there is little of it as there should be, and must we not fear that it is becoming less?

It is literally, "My reins *bind* Me,"—My thoughts

hold Me fast; those deep inner thoughts in which what we are in inmost reality expresses itself. Do such thoughts hold you fast, beloved reader? and if so, what is their character? Do they speak of joy, or sorrow? of peace, or anxiety? of earth, or of heaven? Does the Word of God blend with them in harmony, or reprove them? In that season when God continually withdraws the soul into its individuality, apart from the intrusion of all outer things, does it freely, gladly rise to Him? or where does it wander?—where else does it seek a more congenial companionship? Can you say, with the delight of one of old, "When I awake, I am still with Thee"?

Look now at the purpose which all this implies: "I have set the Lord always before Me." That is not, "I am saved: I am at peace about my sins." Surely that is a fundamental point to be assured of; but is it not to be feared that many stop there, with little thought of really living to God as their redemption implies? "He died for all, that they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again." Such alone is Christian life: its liberty is liberty to serve; its "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." What else can reconciliation to God imply but a return to glad, whole-hearted service?

"He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked." And who can doubt how the Man Christ Jesus walked? If we have other ends before us,—if we have set money before us, or a good name, or a life of ease, or whatever else it may be, is not our life in its whole principle different from His? You say, We

all fail: true; but failure in the carrying out of a right principle is one thing, and having a wrong one is quite another. "I have *set* the Lord before Me" expresses the purpose, the choice of the heart; and *He* could say, "*always*," which we cannot. The essence of sin is, "we have turned each one to *his own way*;" and if "the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all," it was not that, delivered from the curse of it, we might go on under its bondage, still less, freely following it. No; if it be iniquity, it is written, "Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

And for Him who could say, "I have set the Lord always before Me," what was the sure result? "Because He is at My right hand, I shall not be moved," or perhaps better, "I am not moved." It was what by daily experience He found. There was no tottering, no unsteadiness in His steps: no circumstances, no power of the enemy, could hinder or turn Him aside. All other aims may be defeated, all other hopes frustrated; but where God is before the soul, it can never miss its aim, it is the secret of all prosperity and success. If we have set the Lord before us, we may go forward with the fullest and most assured confidence. And this is in fact found in such a path. What hinders faith like a double mind? what strengthens it like a single eye? How can we trust God for a selfish project? how doubt that He will fulfill His own mind? In the path of faith it is we find faith, and there alone.

V.

And now comes the final, the eternal result (9-11). The principles of divine government

secure the blessing or the curse, as the contrary goals of obedience or disobedience; and this is what Deuteronomy insists upon. The whole course through the wilderness is retraced by Moses in the plains of Moab, and the judgment of God as to it shown; and this is given as wisdom for the land upon which they are now to enter. So for us the judgment-seat of Christ will recount our lives before we enter heaven, and the lessons of time be for eternal wisdom.

For Him whom we have now before us, the government of God could have no mingled results, no doubtful or hypothetical blessing. If death were before Him, it was what was taken in the path of obedience simply, as the Father's will. From it the Father's glory necessitated the resurrection of His Holy One. "Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoiceth; My flesh also shall rest in hope; for Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [or hades]; Thou wilt not suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption."

There was but One who could come up out of death upon such a ground; He who, not for His sins, but in His matchless grace, went into it. "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death, and was heard for His piety (*marg.*); though He were Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." (Heb. v. 7-9.) Thus as Captain of our salvation was the One personally always perfect perfected. In the psalm, we do not see it indeed, this descent

into death as atoning work, but we do see it as part of a path which His love to the saints had made Him enter. But thus our souls recognize it as indeed "the path of life" trodden by Him as Forerunner and Representative of the host of His redeemed. "Thou wilt show Me the path of life; in Thy presence, fullness of joy; at Thy right hand, pleasures for evermore."

The path of life is the path that leads to it, for "life" in its full reality can only be enjoyed where God its Source is. Death is separation from the source of life. When the soul departs to God that gave it, the body left behind is dead; for soul and life are in Scripture one. But the soul therefore is *not* dead. So man, departed from God,—for here departure is on the reverse side,—spiritual death becomes his condition. And the world takes its character from this: it is out of correspondence with God. The breach is witnessed of through its whole frame; on account of it the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together; and we too, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves also groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Thus, though we have life in us, it is a life whose proper display cannot yet be, a life hid with Christ in God, until Christ our life shall appear. Meanwhile, our path leads up to it: opened for us through death itself, by Him who, going into it, has abolished it, and brought life and incorruption to light by the gospel.

"In Thy presence, fullness of joy." What indeed to Him who says this? The Son of the Father in His self-assumed exile; His face toward the glory which He had with Him before the

world was! There is really no "in," and to leave it out brings out perhaps better the force: "Fullness of joys, Thy presence! at Thy right hand,"—the place of approbation,—“pleasures for evermore.”

So for us the joy of heaven is defined in this: “We shall be ever with the Lord;” “Where I am, ye shall be also.” “Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.” The knowledge of the Father, and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, characterizes now for us eternal life. Life in its fullness means, then, for us this knowledge in its own proper home. “In My Father’s house are many mansions,” says the Lord to His disciples; “*if it were not so, I would have told you*: I go to prepare a place for you.” He would not have suffered them unwarned to have enjoyed so dear an intimacy with Himself if eternity were not to justify and perpetuate. And for us, every taste of communion now, every moment of enjoyed intimacy, is the pledge of its renewal and perfection in the joy beyond. “If it were not so,” He would not have permitted it. The glory into which He is gone could not change the heart of Him who once left it for our sakes. The One who descended is the same also who is ascended up. The Glorified is the once-Crucified. We shall see in His face above the tender lowly condescension of the days of His flesh; “we shall see Him as He *is*,” only to find Him as He *was*: nearer as better known.

“At His right hand” too, we shall all be. What-

ever special rewards there are, there will be gracious approbation for all. It is sweet to know that whatever differences may obtain among us, the common joys will be also by far the deepest and greatest joys. Fruits of our own work which we may have, what can they be compared with the fruit of His work which we shall enjoy together? Children of God we all shall be alike, and the Father's heart and home alike for all; to be members of Christ, and His bride, and joint-heirs with Him will be our common portion; "kings and priests unto His God and Father" also, His love has made our common privilege. There is an unhappy legal tendency to make special rewards mean what is real distortion of all this, as if some, after all He has done for them, might be yet in comparative distance from Him. Even the "many mansions" of the Father's house have been made to minister to this thought. Nothing could be less like what is the real purport of those blessed, assuring words, which emphasize the room for all, the taking all in, not leaving any out, not banishment of any into comparative distance.

For us, the joy into which He has entered is joy that awaits us now, how bright! how near! nearer and brighter with each day that passes.

ON SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN EXPLANATION.

"IN order to a satisfactory result when one person has to explain any thing to another, it is chiefly necessary that the person to whom the

explanation is offered *should really and sincerely try to understand what the other would express.*

It is very desirable that the explainer should use such words and such manner as shall best express his mind; but, though he spake never so clearly, if the other is listening without that real desire to understand, language will always afford to a disputer opportunities of raising questions, and of misrepresenting assertions, and of so confounding (as the disputer thinks) the other, but really he himself is the confounded one; for the other still knows what his own meaning is, though he may be grieved at his failure to lead his friend to understand it and profit by it, while the disputer has missed what perhaps might have been a real increase of wisdom or knowledge to him, and certainly what would have been an opportunity of manly, friendly, and wise intercourse and exchange of ideas.'

There surely is wisdom in these observations, and we Christians would do well to lay them to heart. Is it saying too much to assert that there is amongst us a lack of that patient waiting, both on God and each other, that would result in mutual edification and happy communion? 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name.' (Mal. iii. 16.) What a contrast this scripture presents to the case described in the above observations!"

CONSCIENCE.

3.—*Continued.* (PURGED AND PURE.)

IN the thirteenth chapter of John we find the Lord full of the thought of going to the Father: "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hand, and that He was come from God and went to God;" and "knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Full of these thoughts and of this love, He expresses the desire of His heart in their behalf in an action the significance of which they were afterward to apprehend. According to His own words at the time, it represented what was necessary that they should have "part with Him" (v. 8),—that is, communion. Part *in* Him they had already; part *with* Him was to be maintained and insured by that which He signified in this wonder of lowly condescension upon His part, when "He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded."

Water-washing in its spiritual reality is "by the Word," as the apostle tells us (Eph. v. 26). Hence the significance of this action is simple for us. The Word of God must have its power over our life and walk, that we may be able to enjoy the intimacy with Him to which He has called us. Grace can never dispense with the necessity of this, but enables us for it: "grace *and truth* have come by Jesus Christ." Thus only is our deliverance in full reality accomplished: our hearts brought back to God, now as never before known,

our feet to walk with Him in the liberty of His blessed will.

But what we want to realize in this picture before us is, that it is He Himself in whose hand the water and towel are. The Word itself, apart from His living presence, will have no real efficacy. *He must apply it to us*: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." Our feet must be in His hand, yielded to Him. It is not at all that we are to judge our ways according to our apprehension of the Word and its requirements, but *He* must interpret and apply the Word. We must be with Him about it; and if with Him, then seeking no compromise, but that He tell us all the truth: He, Master and Lord of all; and we, absolutely and implicitly subject to Him.

In what unupbraiding grace—yea, in what tenderness of a perfect and holy love He will do all this, let the narrative here assure us. And we all, have we not known the chastened joy of moments such as these, when, searched out in His presence, we realized the faithfulness of so great a Friend, and felt how His love was claiming and cleansing and delivering us for Himself? Surely every Christian heart has known these. But we want to be given up wholly to this soliciting of divine grace; and what would not be the blessing of it!

The action of the thirteenth of John is not the remedy for declension or failure merely, and we shall lose immensely if we limit it to this. It is rather the perpetual provision for daily need. We want day by day to be in quiet retirement thus with Him, opening our hearts to the light as the flower opens its petals to the sun. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light." It is thus the life that

is ours unfolds and declares itself. Faith becomes mature, and love contemplates and embraces its object. Alas! the superficiality and lightness of the times are seen in the little apprehension of the need even of this: little retirement, little examination of one's ways before God, little intimacy with Him. Surely we want to be reminded of the words of the apostle, "Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, have made shipwreck concerning faith."

4.—THE CHURCH AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

THE maintenance of conscience being thus of such necessity to the whole spiritual life of the believer, it deserves now to be considered how it is to be accomplished amid the complication with the duties of relationships in which we stand to one another. It is evident how often here individual responsibility is forgotten and individual conscience given up, as it is thought, in necessary sacrifice to the consciences, or even to the *want* of conscience on the part of those with whom we are associated, whether by our own wills or by God's, in Church-relationship. How then does Scripture speak as to this? How is our individuality to be preserved in harmony with such place and connection?

And here the question cannot be ignored or escaped from, *Is* Church-relationship a matter of one's own will, or God's? It is rightly of God's *only*. The Church is Christ's body; membership in that, the only membership that Scripture owns. No doubt it is a day of confusion, and the Church as a practical gathering together of the members as such is not to be found. We have now sects in

which these are scattered, and *by* which they are scattered. Still it is practicable for those who own only the body of Christ to gather together in this character; and such a gathering cannot be a sect. Nor is this unimportant to the point before us, for if man's will be allowed in the very first place to define the circle and the terms of our association with others, it will be of necessity admitted a certain place in all that connects itself with this; and how large a place who shall say?

The Word of God is given thoroughly to furnish us unto *all* good works, and certainly could not omit such a matter as this. Simple enough, too, it all is: our circle, that of all God's saints; the terms of our association, mutual subjection to our Head and Lord. Here there can be no bondage and no compromise: the exercise of conscience and freedom for it are alike secured.

With a circle less or other than this, the terms must be a human creed, confession, formulary, compact of some sort. Conscience is then bound to the confession,—*i. e.*, not to the Word of God *as such*, even were the confession wholly scriptural. Thus even the scripturalness of the creed does not give the conscience its rightful fealty. But if it be unscriptural, then the conscience is bound as much to maintain the error as the truth; and where practical laxity in this respect may be winked at, this (as laxity) is scarce more favorable to real godliness of walk.

Where, with the code adopted, a governing body regulates as to ministry, etc., appointing sphere of work and character of service, and where between minister and people the common stipendiary engagement of the day exists, the con-

science is more and more fettered and perverted. The simple being before God becomes impossible. I grant that Scripture being supposed to sanction this system enables a good conscience to be retained. Yet the results of it will be found, in proportion to the real exercise of this before God, in constant embarrassment and perplexity; until, there being no end, at last the yoke is wearily acquiesced in without effort to escape.

The blessedness of truth is that it brings to God, and establishes in the holy liberty of His presence. Thus, how simple and blessed is the thought of Scripture, "As every man hath received the gift, so let him minister the same, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God"! To serve with whatever I have is my privilege; and that is my duty also. I dare go to no one to ask for leave to serve, or to have my sphere of service defined to me. All this must be ascertained between my Master and myself, and He will recognize my service and sustain me in it. Here, faith is necessary at every step, and a good conscience necessary to faith.

Wherever ecclesiasticism comes in, the individual conscience is oppressed or ignored. And this is quite as true of its republican as of its aristocratic or monarchical forms. God's Church is none of these: it is a pure theocracy. No head but Christ, no authority save His Word, no power save that of His Spirit. Alas! it is no wonder that for aught but faith this should be confusion. And wherever faith is not in exercise, confusion will in fact soon be found. God values no mere external order where it is not the product of His Spirit; and where mere external order is, the action of the

Spirit may be first of all to break this up. This often causes His work to be in suspicion even among Christians. For practical faith and exercised consciences are after all how little to be found among the people of God! It is complained of as a strange and terrible thing if, according to His word, the truth of Christ divides the members of a family. But in fact how little is this seen, compared with what would be if souls were real! Too commonly, and as a matter of course, the power of nature is more exhibited in a time of testing than the power of the Spirit or the Word. Wives go with husbands, children with parents, friends with friends, assemblies as a whole, swayed by the power of some master-spirit, move submissively hither and thither, be the direction right or wrong. *But in God's path really nothing but faith is found.* Lot was no Abraham when he walked with Abraham. And thus God allows often sifting to go on, and more breaking up to come, when we were fain to hope all was now set right and we were past the need of it.

But for faith there is no path but God's, be it smooth or rough: its roughness is better than the smoothest that could be found elsewhere. The blow of the flail is only blessing to God's wheat, and stormy wind fulfills but His word: the north wind, no less than the south, causes the spices of His garden to flow out. What has been the path of His people ever? Where is the truth that does not first bring conflict? And when this ceases, and it is received without this, it will be found to be received as tradition, not properly as truth at all.

The importance of maintaining the individuality of conscience cannot, then, be insisted on too

strongly. We can never rightly devolve its guidance upon any man or set of men, upon any leaders however gifted, upon any unanimity of the church or churches. God has claim to be heard, apart from all this, and is ready to make His voice heard in my soul. The maintenance of conscience means the maintenance of His sole supremacy; and to give up my conscience to another is to worship Him in His deputy. But He has none; and the attempt is real and essential idolatry; while to give up conscience for the sake of peace is to choose peace with Satan and with Him conflict.

The truth, not conscience, is authoritative for the soul; but the conscience is the recipient and the guard of the truth.

THE BRIDE.

MIDST the darkness, storm, and sorrow,
One bright gleam I see :
Well I know the blessed morrow,
Christ will come for me.

Midst the light and peace and glory
Of the Father's home,
Christ for me is watching, waiting—
Waiting till I come.

Long the blessed Guide has led me
By the desert road ;
Now I see the golden towers—
City of my God.

There, amidst the love and glory,
He is waiting yet ;
On His hands a name is graven
He can ne'er forget.

There, amidst the songs of heaven,
Sweeter to His ear

Is the footfall through the desert,
Ever drawing near.

There, made ready, are the mansions,
Glorious, bright, and fair ;
But the Bride the Father gave Him
Still is wanting there.

Who is this who comes to meet me
On the desert way,
As the Morning Star, foretelling
God's unclouded day ?

He it is who came to win me
On the cross of shame ;
In His glory, well I know Him,
Evermore the same.

Oh, the blessed joy of meeting,
All the desert past !
Oh, the wondrous words of greeting
He shall speak at last !

He and I together entering
Those bright courts above ;
He and I together sharing
All the Father's love.

Where no shade nor stain can enter,
Nor the gold be dim,—
In that holiness unsullied
I shall walk with Him.

Meet companion then for Jesus,
From Him, for Him made ;
Glory of God's grace forever
There in me displayed.

He who in His hour of sorrow
Bore the curse alone ;
I who through the lonely desert
Trode where He had gone.

He and I in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share ;—
Mine, to be forever with Him ;
His, that I am there.

T. McK.

REPENTANCE AND LIFE.

WE can no more separate repentance, faith, and life in their beginning in the soul than we can make a division in time between a footfall and the track that is left. The track was made by the footfall; so repentance is a sign of faith and life, and an immediate accompaniment of these: for "the entrance of Thy Word [which is *faith*] giveth light," and the light must show me what I am—a sinner, which is *repentance*. And by the same Word I am born again,—that is, have *life*. How long it may be ere the soul is *clear* in its apprehensions is another thing. *Quickened* is made alive—born again, and there can not be life from God, divine life in the soul, without activity of the new life toward God. There could not be, therefore, life without repentance (however much the repentance may be deepened afterward,) any more than repentance without life. There may be conviction and exercises, and the will yet unbroken, but that is not conversion; it is not life, not repentance, not faith,—like the prodigal pinched by famine, but not yet broken—not yet come to himself. When he is, he says, "I *perish*:" that is repentance; and "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare!" that is faith. And he turns to go to his father's house; he is converted. That is, conversion, life, repentance, and faith are different features (though this is an inadequate term) of what begins in the soul by the entrance of the Word. The soul is quickened by the Word, which is light; and could not enter without producing repentance.

E. S. L.

HUMILITY OF MIND.

"With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." (Eph. iv. 2.)

SURELY there was great need that the prisoner of the Lord should put these qualities first, before those whom he besought 'to walk worthy' of their vocation, and to 'keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'

Can any say it is a distinguishing feature amongst us now? Are we to whom the *third* verse is so precious ignoring the force of the *second*? Is there not a quiet self-assertion, a tone of superiority, often shown in speaking to other Christians, that only betrays to them, and to our Lord, how far we are in heart from the spirit of the apostle? We find that his ministry (who was gifted and honored above all others,) was marked by '*humility of mind*' (Acts xx. 19). Is ours?

We find the Lord was '*lowly in heart.*' Are we? He '*humbled Himself.*' Is 'this mind' in us?

Have we put on 'as the elect of God, humbleness of mind'?

Are we all of us 'clothed with humility'?

It is greatly to be feared that such a spirit, such a state, is becoming rare amongst us. Time was when the ruin of all was so felt that our only position was in the dust. But the truth of the 'one body,' accepted in the head instead of searching the conscience, has 'puffed up' instead of humbling those who *thus* hold it. How painful must it be to Christ, who loves and yearns over His whole Church, that those whom, in His grace, He has called around Himself to feel and own its utter

ruin on earth should carry a high head, a self-satisfied air, and be 'exalted' by the very greatness of His love! Is not this indeed in principle the *Laodicean brand*?

May God give us to shun and dread spiritual pride (that subtle vice) in every shape and form, and enable us to show true brokenness of spirit, that His dear children around may see that there is a little company in their midst whose hearts deeply feel the ruin of all dear to Christ in this scene.

Surely, beloved brethren, He is allowing things to take such a course, even in our midst, that we have nothing left but shame and confusion of face, our only relief being to look upon His glory, that which nothing shall ever dim or mar.

The more Thy glories strike mine eyes,
The humbler I shall lie;
Thus while I sink, my joys shall rise
Immeasurably high."

FRAGMENT.

"WHAT does *Christ* think? This is the question. Not, What does So-and-so say? but What does Christ in heaven think, who is patiently following with His loving eyes (which are yet as flames of fire) all our thoughts and ways? What does He think of our present attitude, both with regard to *Himself*, *one another*, and *our fellow-Christians*? Oh, brother, whoever you are, listen to what Christ will tell you of His thoughts about it all, and remember His word, 'Follow *thou* Me.'"

“LIFE ABUNDANTLY.”

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it abundantly.” (Jno. x. 10.)

I.

THESE words make an evident distinction between two conditions of life,—alike the fruit of the incarnation and the cross. It is my desire to show, as fully and plainly as possible, this distinction, which is in fact between life as possessed by the saints of old and as possessed in the present dispensation: one life, in conditions very different; one life, always dependent upon the Lord's coming and work; the conditions differing as the work was only prospective or now actually accomplished.

The manifestation of the life itself is the fruit of the “Word of life” having actually come into the world. In Him it first shone in the world, the light of it. In His gospel He has for others now “brought life and incorruption to light.” It was there before, but hidden; not only, as it still is, to unbelief, but hidden to faith itself. There was, there is, in Old-Testament scriptures, no revelation of it. It is vain to expect to find it there, therefore; and as vain to argue that it did not exist because we do not find it there. We do not find there that they had been born again, and yet “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” They were never able to take the place of children of God, and yet we know that children of God they were (Gal. iv. 1–6). And these two things are closely and inseparably connected together,

and with the possession of life itself,—are involved in it; and their possession, while yet unmanifested, involves that of life also; while the present manifestation of these three things, in contrast with their former hidden condition, already begins to disclose the real character of what is meant by "abundant" life.

Born of God,—children of God,—they were. We may start with this as a plain and admitted truth. Our Lord declares as to this that while "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," "that which is born of the Spirit is" no less "spirit." The flesh communicates its own nature; *the Spirit, its own*. This is, of course, no exclusive privilege of Christianity, and our Lord is not so applying it. "Marvel not that I said unto you, *Ye*"—ye Jews, as declared by Ezekiel's prophecy (xxxvi. 25–27),—"Ye must be born again." But while Ezekiel prophesies of new birth thus, true to the character of the Old Testament, he does not announce the *divine element* in it, as the Lord does. *He* alone affirms the communication of the divine nature in new birth,—"that which is born of the Spirit" to be "spirit," as truly as "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." *Now*, that which before was *true* is *manifested*, as we have seen; and this is the eternal life itself as received by man,—*divine* life: "eternal" in the full sense of what has no more a beginning than it has an end. The "spirit" life, communicated by the Spirit of God, is, nothing less or lower than *divine*.

It is thus, indeed, alone that men become children of God. The natural relationship is no more real than is the spiritual, of which it is the type. We are not merely *adopted* into His family, as

strangers, but *born* into it, born (or begotten, *ἐκ θεοῦ*), of God. This language of the Word must not be taken in a mere vague way. We are accustomed to use such terms loosely, and Scripture itself sanctions that use. Jabal is the father of all such as dwell in tents, and Jubal of such as handle the harp and pipe. Abraham is the father of all them that believe; and the apostle could say to the Corinthians that in Christ Jesus he had begotten them through the gospel. By many, new birth is confounded with its effects, and a change of heart (that is, of feelings, affections, disposition,) is supposed to be the whole thing. The process is thus taken to be merely one of persuasion,—a work *upon* man, not a real communication to him. The reality of new birth is missed; it becomes a figure of speech merely. Eternal life becomes only a vivid term for an immortal heavenly existence, ours now in hope more or less assured, but actually only hereafter. All the terms by which Scripture would depict and emphasize the wonder of this divine work, as "new birth," "quickening from the dead," "a new creation," pale into colorless phantoms which cannot be fixed or defined. And with many who are familiar enough with and use the term "eternal life," and who speak of it as a present possession, it is merely a practical *life we live*. They utterly ignore what in natural things they could not fail to remember—that there must be also a life *by which* we live, the life which in new birth we receive, and that by which alone we become the children of God.

It is this upon which the Lord insists in His account of what new birth is. Born of water and Spirit, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

There is a real communication of a divine nature from Him by whom we are thus begotten; and thus, when He goes on to declare the present truth, that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have *eternal life*," He is not contrasting this and new birth, but only giving the latter its true significance. The vail is here removed which had so long been over it. The Lord, Himself the Life eternal, manifests the life.

No other spiritual life was there ever: "In Him was life" (Jno. i. 4); not "*eternal life*" simply, but "*life*." There was no other. So He declares, when now a Man come into the world, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have *no life* in you;" not no "*eternal life*" merely, but no life at all. True spiritual life for man and eternal life are never distinguished, much less contrasted; but (as here) identified. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have *no life* in you: this on the one side. Now on the other, "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath *eternal life*." *Eternal life*, or *no life*: so the Lord Himself declares.

But this applies (it may be objected) only to the present time. That is quite true as to John vi. 53, 54. What as to John i. 4? "In Him was life" applies, surely, to all the past. Was it in Him as a repository of blessing uncommunicated until He personally appeared? Was life from some other source communicated in the meantime? Assuredly the words mean that all spiritual life there ever was was in Him, and in Him alone. "Life was in Him:" not this life or that life, but "*life*."

The life communicated by the Spirit we have seen to be divine life,—“spirit,” from the Spirit. But this, then, was the life in Him, necessarily,—divine life. In Him especially, as the foreordained Mediator, the Word, the Revealer of the Father’s mind. Before He was the Man Christ Jesus in actual accomplishment, He was yet the Man of the divine counsels; and before the fulfillment of His blessed work, even from the beginning, the fruits of that work were bestowed upon and tasted by the sons of men. If it could not have been so, what blessing could have been theirs? If it could have been, why not then the life that was in Him? But indeed we are assured of its being so. By the fact that they were born again,—by the fact that they were children of God,—we are assured that divine life was theirs, and in no other way could it be theirs than in the Son.

Is this reasoning merely,—inference? I am not afraid of inference. I am assured that those who continually object to it in others use it themselves freely, and rightly use it. What else enables us to interpret parable or type? What else gives us the application of any Scripture-principle to any case before us? Take Scripture, and how many lines will you read of it without coming upon some use—some sanction therefore,—of reasoning? Who reasoned with the Pharisees and Herodians about Cæsar’s image? with the Sadducees about the resurrection? with them all about David’s Son being David’s Lord? Who is it says to men, in His condescending grace, “Come, and let us *reason* together”? Of course, we may abuse all this, as what else may we not? But the remedy is not in denying us one of the faculties which God in His

goodness has bestowed upon us, but in insisting that inferences in divine things shall be inferences *from Scripture*, and *clear*, not doubtful inferences.

"God hath given to us eternal life," says the apostle; "and this life is in His Son." It is only to say, then, what the Word says, to say that eternal life is in the Son. But we have seen that there is no life for us now certainly but eternal life. It is this life we receive, then, in new birth. Was it different with the saints of old? Scripture says that ever "life was in Him." *Before* it was communicated at all, and *when* it was communicated. The spiritual life communicated in new birth is thus life in Him,—that is, eternal or divine life: it is this alone by which we become the children of God.

The possession of eternal life is not, then, affected by any dispensational difference. Always, "life was in Him;" always, "that which was born of the Spirit was spirit;" always, those who were born of God were children of God. This, then, assures us that eternal life was theirs. When the Lord says, "I am come that they might have life," He declares simply "life" to be for any the result of His coming; but this, as many other of these results, could be bestowed before He came, and was. Otherwise we must deny them not only to have had *eternal* life, but life at all; for it is of life simply He speaks, distinguishing it from life abundantly. He came that men might have the one as well as the other,—"that they might have life, *and* that they might have it abundantly." If, therefore, from such words you deny that the saints of old had eternal life, you must go further, and deny that they had any spiritual life at all,—you must deny they were born again at all. In all this, you

are not only “reasoning,” but reasoning against the plain Word of God itself.

Life for fallen man is the fruit of Christ’s coming and work. Had the Old-Testament saints a life that was *not* that? Surely that would strike at all necessity for atonement. None would, surely, contend for men possessing life apart from this; but why could they not, then, possess eternal life, although necessarily that they might have it the Lord must come?

Manifested it was not, until He who is the Life came. It was possessed, but possessed in the midst of hindrances of the most effectual kind to manifestation, as we may presently see. This is a question of the condition of the life, not of the life itself. The babe does not “manifest” what the man is, yet it has the life and nature of the man.*

In the Son, then, come into the world, the eternal life was first and fully manifested. It was seen in Him in that knowledge of and communion with the Father, which was in Him perfect and never clouded for a moment. And by Him it was revealed as the portion of those who in faith received Him; for now that He had come, there was no faith that did not receive Him. He that believed on the Son had eternal life; and he that believed not the Son should not see life, but the wrath of God abode upon him.

Thus eternal life now declared to men was necessarily connected with faith in Him. Nor,

*To urge “Which was *with the Father*, and was manifested unto us,” as if it meant that the life was only in heaven before its manifestation, is surely a mistake. “With the Father” is not a question of locality, but of nearness of intimacy and communion; and thus it leads to what the apostle would bring us into by faith in the revelation,—“*communion with the Father*, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.”

observe, did it wait for redemption to be accomplished. "The hour is coming, *and now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. *For* as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." Thus already He was quickening dead souls with the life in Himself; and in His prayer to the Father in which He declares that "this is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent," He declares also that this knowledge they already had: "They have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me."

Clearly and unmistakably, then, does Scripture assure us that eternal life men already had before the Lord died and fulfilled His atoning work. Nay, it was even already being exhibited in its true character, already men knew the Father and the Son. Yet this was not yet, however, the life in its full "abundance." Its *character* was exhibited as a life of divine acquaintanceship and communion. But for this communion to be enjoyed aright, it needed to be freed from many great and terrible hindrances; the cross had to be accomplished, the resurrection from the dead the answer on God's part to the claim of righteousness there made good, that now as risen with Christ we might be possessors of a life triumphant over death, and justified from all that had brought in death, in a recognized place of nearness to God unknown before.

II.

So far, we have been following exclusively the

line of truth which is given us by the apostle John. He speaks in general of the family of God, of new birth, and eternal life; of relationship, and communion by the Holy Ghost; not generally of standing and position. These last are Paul's special themes, whose gospel is the fullest presentation of the work of Christ and its efficacy for us that we have in Scripture. An illustration of the difference between the two apostles, in close connection with our present subject, is in their respective use of the words "child" and "son." John uses "child" only; Paul, both, but more frequently the latter, while adoption"—putting in the place of sons,—is exclusively used by him of all the New-Testament writers. This last word shows plainly the distinction. A "son" may be that by adoption; a "child," only by birth. The one speaks of relationship; the other, of place and privilege. Thus, "because ye are *sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Had he said "children," it would have brought in the Old-Testament saints. So the Spirit is the Spirit of *adoption*; yet He "bears witness with our spirit that we are [not sons merely, but] the *children* of God."

But while Paul it is who brings out distinctly the effect of the work of Christ in establishing us in our place with God, there are points in which the doctrine of John approaches closely to that of Paul. Thus, in the fifth chapter, a world spiritually dead is awaiting judgment; but the Son of God comes into it, the One into whose hand judgment

* τέκνον is child by natural descent; adoption, υιοθεσία, placing as son. In the Authorized Version, Rom. ix. 26, Gal. iii. 26, Eph. i. 5, Heb. xii. 5, "children" should be "sons;" and in Jno. i. 12, Phil. ii. 15, 1 Jno. iii. 1, 2, "sons" should be "children."

is committed; and he that heareth His voice lives: he shall not come into judgment; he is passed from death unto life (24, 25). Here, quickening, possession of eternal life, brings at once outside the whole sphere of judgment. "Life and standing are inseparable," as another has said.

This prepares the way for the doctrine of the eleventh chapter, where for the first time we hear of a present power of resurrection. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." Martha was thinking of a far-off resurrection. The Lord brings before her Himself as One in whom life was to be found already in resurrection,—not life and resurrection, but resurrection and life. Thus, while as to the past the Old-Testament saint, the dead believer, had to go through death, and find resurrection afterward, "at the last day,"—the living believer in Him *had not death to pass through*. Receiving life in resurrection, death was already behind him, met by Another, not for him to meet.

Now here, while the Lord proclaims Himself for all the *one only life*, (applying this blessed text to all believers, dead or living,) He speaks of it as now possessed in a new *condition*,—a power and fullness hitherto unknown. But this supposes His coming in the flesh, and His death, although He does not yet state this. In the next chapter He does: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Life must come out of death, must be resurrection life in result for all, however different may be the application in the meantime.

This, as I have said, connects closely with Paul's doctrine. Freedom from judgment, and the power of death; and this connected with the Lord's death in absolute necessity. Paul also speaks of quickening out of death, and resurrection,—“quicken together with Him,” “raised up with Him” (Col. ii. 13; iii. 1; Eph. ii. 4, 5).

Now this is an advance upon the doctrine of Romans, with which it unites, however, in complete harmony. Nor is the aspect even so different as it may seem. Colossians, as it is well known, combines the “dead with Christ,” “buried with Christ” of Romans with the “quicken together with Christ,” “raised up with Christ,” of Ephesians. And surely there is no incongruity. The man first seen in Romans as a living responsible sinner, a man in the flesh, is not left until we see him as “alive in Christ,”—identified with Him, that is, in life. But this is a true life which he possesses himself; not independently, indeed, but in dependence on Another. He is alive in a life which identifies him with the Head of a new race, a new creation. It is true the term is not in Romans, but the Head is seen, the One of whom the first Adam was the figure (v. 14). Ephesians gives us the full truth of new creation,—“*created* in Christ Jesus” (ii. 10). Thus the two epistles unite; Romans introducing us into that of which Ephesians completes the presentation.

“Alive,”—truly *alive*,—and alive in *Christ*, identified in life with Him,—who cannot see that from hence “quicken together with Him” receives its full and simple interpretation? Our life as in the last Adam, *in the condition in which we now receive it*, began when Christ our Representative

and Head was quickened from the death in which for us He lay. We are identified with Him in that life of His (a life actually received and enjoyed by us) which began there. The life is eternal, divine life, which *as that* never began, but which began then to be for us *in a Man, risen from the dead*. This shows how fully and simply the truth in Romans unites with that in Ephesians. The one completes the other. Possessors of life in Him, we are quickened together with Him.

This again shows how, in the language I have quoted from another, "life and standing are inseparable." Necessarily, as identified with Him who has done for us His blessed work, its value attaches to us, and attaches to us from the first moment of our possession of it. Alive in Christ, we are dead with Christ; alive in Christ, we are justified in Christ; we shall not come into judgment, we are passed from death unto life.

Thus, if we are not to make systems of our own, as we are surely not, there is a *harmony* of truth, (because it is one, and God's truth,) which we may be permitted without suspicion of irreverence to trace, and which should awaken in us the deepest adoration. How different from any patchwork of our own is God's truth when we behold it thus in His Word!

But we are not only "quickened together with Christ," we are "*raised up* together," and this brings us to the full reality of the life which we now partake of. Quickening, although out of the dead, is not yet resurrection. The apostle, in Colossians ii. 12, 13, gives us the difference in the contrast which he draws. "*Buried* with Him," "raised up with Him;" "dead," "quickened."

Death is in contrast with life; *burial*, with resurrection. For burial, there must be already death. We take a dead man, and we say, "He is a dead man; he must not remain among living men." So we bury him; put the dead in the *place* of the dead. Resurrection is the converse of that: a man is quickened among the dead; he is alive, he must not remain among the dead, *he* is brought by resurrection into the place of the living.

In quickening, then, is effected the deep internal change with which all begins, a change of *condition*; in resurrection is effected a corresponding external change, a change of *position*. Alive in Christ, we possess a *risen* life,—a life in the liberty and reality of its enjoyment, a life freed from the shackles of death. All question of sin and of flesh, of act and nature, has been settled forever by Him who has for us met all, died and risen from the dead, and in whom we now live, identified with Him in all the value of that death of His. Hence, we are not only, as all saints from the beginning were, children of God: we are children in the *place* of children, *sons*, as no saints before were; we have life, as all had, but we have it abundantly, as they had not; we have, as they, the nature, but we have also the place as well as the nature. And not only are we *sons*, but *because* we are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

This is life abundantly: life, not only in the Son—divine life,—but in the Son become Christ, a Man, come up in the power and value of a work accomplished for us, which attaches now to the life communicated and possessed in Him. The Old-Testament saints had life, but not yet the

justification now attaching to it, not yet the recognition of the place with God which it implies; not yet the knowledge of the Father and the Son; not yet the Spirit of adoption, the power of the blessed life. How great the difference is this! Yet it is one, not of nature, but condition simply. It is the same life, but now "abundantly." May our hearts adoringly lay hold, ever with deepening wonder and delight, of this abundance.

THE PSALMS.

Series 2.—First Five (Ps. xxv.—xxix.).—*Continued.*

PSALM XXVIII.

Trust in the Lord, answered by Him in whom the heart trusted, so that it rejoices in and celebrates Him.

[*A psalm*] of David.

UNTO Thee I cry, Jehovah, my rock! be not silent to me: lest, if Thou be silent to me, I be like them that go down to the pit.

2. Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry unto Thee; when I lift up my hands toward Thy holy oracle.

3. Draw me not away with the wicked, and with workers of vanity, speaking peace with their neighbors, while evil is in their hearts.

4. Give them according to their works, and according to the evil of their practicings: give them according to the works of their hands, render to them their recompense.

5. Because they discern not the works of Jeho-

vah, nor the operations of His hands, He shall break them down and not build them up.

6. Blessed be Jehovah, because He hath heard the voice of my supplications.

7. Jehovah, my strength and my shield! in Him I trusted and am helped; and my heart exulteth, and with my song will I celebrate Him.

8. Jehovah is strength for such; and the stronghold of salvation for His Anointed is He.

9. Save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance; shepherd them, and bear them forever.

Text.—(8) "Such:" *lit.*, "them."

PSALM XXIX.

The mighty called to give glory to the Mightier, sitting upon the water-floods, and King forever, and who gives strength and peace to His people.

A psalm of David.

GIVE unto Jehovah, ye sons of the mighty, give to Jehovah glory and strength.

2. Give unto Jehovah the glory of His name; worship Jehovah in the beauty of holiness.

3. The voice of Jehovah is on the waters; the God* of glory thundereth; Jehovah is on the great waters.

4. The voice of Jehovah is with power; the voice of Jehovah is with majesty.

5. The voice of Jehovah breaketh the cedars: yea, Jehovah breaketh up the cedars of Lebanon.

6. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young aurochs.

7. The voice of Jehovah cleaveth the flames of fire.

8. The voice of Jehovah shaketh the wilderness; Jehovah shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

9. The voice of Jehovah maketh the hinds to labor, and strippeth the forests; and in His temple, all of it speaketh of glory.

10. Jehovah sitteth upon the flood; yea, Jehovah sitteth King forever.

11. Jehovah giveth strength unto His people; Jehovah will bless His people with peace.

KEY-NOTES TO THE BIBLE BOOKS.

THE GOSPELS.

THE Gospels are plainly the Genesis of the New Testament. They furnish the great facts of our Lord's life, death, resurrection, and ascension, upon which all Christianity is built. The coming of the Holy Ghost as a fact is not found; but it is promised, and its significance in large measure made known. The Church also, in one character of it, is prophetically announced.

The four gospels have each (with all other books of Scripture,) their characteristic differences, but the first three are more widely separated from the fourth than from each other; on which account they are often called the "synoptic" gospels, as giving a similar view of the history they narrate. There are thus two clear divisions, the fourth gospel being not a fourth according to its spiritual meaning, but the full Christian gospel in contrast

with the rest. All, I need not say however, have their necessary place; each bringing out some perfection which otherwise would be lacking in the general picture. The divine numbers (3 and 1) are stamped on the two divisions.

Four views of the Lord's person and work are found in the gospels, and in connection with each aspect presented, the presentation of perhaps all other truth has characteristic and important differences.

The order of the books is doubtless also providentially given, and is most probably that in which they were written. Matthew is the evident link with the Old Testament, which it cites continually, and with which its subject and character correspond; while John is as evidently that which opens out the deepest and fullest glories of the Lord's person, as well as the highest character of His work. Mark, again, comes nearest to Matthew, plainly; while Luke, with all his differences, opens the way to John.

If our view of the application of the Scripture-language of numerals be at all correct, we should expect Matthew to speak of divine *sovereignty*; Mark, of divine interference in grace for us; Luke, of our being brought to God. We shall not find these expectations disappoint us.

Matthew begins with the Lord's legal genealogy, which proves Him to be Son of David, heir to the throne in Israel. But He is also announced as Son of Abraham, through whom the blessing of all nations is to come, and here the introduction of four women's names, significantly all Gentiles, prove His title spiritually. But the throne of Israel is Jehovah's throne; the coming kingdom,

heaven's kingdom: the blessing for Jew or Gentile requires salvation to be wrought for both; and so immediately we are assured that He who is come is Immanuel—"God with us," and *Jesus*, because He should save His people from their sins.

In this threefold character, then, Matthew presents Him, the last not developed as in John, but underlying the others. His first title is what is first insisted on. He is come to His own. When they do not receive Him, the kingdom passes in the meantime to the Gentiles, His Son-of-Abraham title is made good; always, however, with a prophecy of blessing and fulfillment of promise to Israel in the time to come. The first two chapters in this way give us the character of the book. Israel's King is hailed by Gentiles while rejected by His own. Jerusalem is alarmed, the Magi worship, the Lord takes in Egypt the place of rejection, yet there begins again *for God*, the nation's history, the secret of that remarkable quotation of Hosea, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." It is on this representation by Another all their blessing depends.

The King and kingdom are thus the characteristic thoughts in Matthew, its link, plainly, with the Old Testament. Two and thirty times its distinctive-phrase is found—"the kingdom of heaven." God is on the throne; and though made known as Father, nearness of intimacy there is not with Him. The work of salvation is intimated, but as to be accomplished. There is no present joy of it as yet. Discipleship, and its responsibility in walk and life, are emphasized; but the outflow of the heart of God does not awaken man's heart in response as yet it will. Over all these is a certain

restraint and reserve. Forgiveness of sins is governmental, and may be revoked (xviii. 34). The shadow of law has not yet given place. Only when we reach the cross we find the intimation of a blessing which the other gospels go on to develop. The aspect of the cross in Matthew we shall consider later.

Mark's gospel, which seems in some respects almost an abridgment of Matthew, is nevertheless, in the view of His person, in entire contrast. He is at the very outset declared to be the "Son of God," but this to give its character to the lowly service in which throughout He is found. The "kingdom of God" we have still, but now never "of Christ" or "of the Son of Man." Save as accusation on the cross, He is never even "King of the Jews." His title of "Lord" is very seldom taken. But He is the Son of God in service, with divine power and riches in His hand, serving in love, which requires nothing but power to entitle it to serve. There need be, and is, therefore, no genealogy. The earnestness of His service is marked by the frequency of the word "immediately." Half of all the occurrences throughout the New Testament of the Greek word which this translates are found in this gospel. The singleness of His service is seen in His knowing nothing of His Master's business save that which is given Him to communicate (xiii. 32). The tenderness of it in all the smaller features of His ministry: how "He was moved with compassion;" how He was "grieved with the hardness of their hearts," how He touched one, lifted up another; how "He marvelled because of their unbelief." Here too, as in Luke, the ascension is given as the fitting close to

His path of humiliation,—“the right hand of God;” even then His service being unceasing as His love, so that we read, “And they went forth and preached every where, the *Lord working with them*, and confirming the word with signs following.”

But in Mark, as in Matthew, there is not yet the nearness to God we shall find in the next gospel. The Father is mentioned as such but five times, and “your Father,” only in one place (xi. 25, 26). Not the children’s but the servant’s place is here, although it is recognized that the servants are children. Governmental responsibilities and rewards are before us as in Matthew, but there, of disciples, each for himself subject; here, of laborers for the accomplishment of divine purposes: ministers, after the pattern of Him who, as “Son of Man, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

The shadow that lies upon both these gospels is revealed, as soon as we look at the cross, where in each the Lord’s cry is found, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” The fourfold view of the cross which the Gospels present, it is now long since that I have endeavored to show to be that of the early chapters of Leviticus. There, omitting the meat-offering, which is not sacrificial, we have just four sacrificial offerings. Two of these, the burnt and peace-offerings, are “for sweet savor:” the peace-offering, that which speaks of peace and communion with God; the burnt-offering, of the perfection of the work itself *to God*. Luke and John, I have no doubt at all, give us respectively the peace and the burnt-offerings: of this, by and by. But in the two other,—the sin

and trespass-offerings,—the judgment of sin is the side dwelt upon, the necessary result of divine holiness, but not that which is sweet savor to Him. In the trespass-offering, sin as *injury* rather,—whether as regards God or man; in the sin-offering, sin as *sin*. The one has to be *repaired*; the other, *expiated*.

Which, then, does Matthew present? and which, Mark? I have been accustomed to take Matthew as the sin-, Mark as the trespass-offering; latterly, with some doubt, indeed, but still not such as to make me alter the judgment which had been long formed. I am now convinced that this is wrong, however, and that it should be reversed. Matthew, I am now clear, represents the trespass- and Mark the sin-offering.

The difficulty lies mainly in this, that in the type, the sin-offering alone is that which shows us the full judgment of sin in the outside place in which the victim is burnt upon the ground. But *both* gospels show our blessed Lord in this outside place: the cry of forsaken sorrow is as much in one as in the other. There is perhaps no such thing in Scripture as a mere repetition of the same thought; and this, while a perfection of the Word itself, is a difficulty in the interpretation of it. What has pressed upon me of late is this, that the trespass-offering (as I have elsewhere said,) is a question of divine *government*; the sin-offering, of the divine *nature*. Now Matthew we know to be the gospel which speaks of government. We see too in this why the trespass-offering can put on the aspect of the sin-offering; because the claim of divine government requires the display of the holiness of the divine nature.

In Matthew we find the double answer of God to the work of Christ. Having gone for us into the outside darkness, it is dispelled: the vail of the temple is rent in twain from the top to the bottom. The glory of God can shine out: the way in to God is opened for man.

But the Lord gives up His spirit also: the double portion of man is death and judgment. Judgment He takes first, and, having exhausted this, dies: the answer to this is seen in the resurrection of many of those who slept, who after His own resurrection go into the holy city and appear unto many. Now death is the stamp of divine *government* upon the fallen creature, as the cup of wrath is the necessary outflow of His holiness against sin. Matthew and Mark both give the rending of the vail, but Matthew alone the resurrection of the saints. This shows again that Matthew gives the governmental view of the cross, the trespass-offering.

There is another indication in the fact that in Mark the grace which is the result of the cross is not only fuller—"the gospel to every creature," preached with the signs of the enemy's work overcome, and the effects of man's judgment at Babel overruled,—but also it is grace *unmixed*. Compare in this way Psalm xxii. with Psalm lxix. So in Mark there is no prophetic Aceldama, no "His blood be upon us and on our children," no judgment even of the traitor. "Who is to be judged," as another has well asked, "for Gōd's laying our sin on His beloved Son?" In the governmental gospel these things have their right and necessary place, and their omission would be as much a defect in Matthew as it is a perfection in Mark.

Again, even the threefold witness to the Lord in the traitor who betrayed Him, the judge who gave Him up, and of Heaven in the dream of Pilate's wife seems to me now more in accord with the governmental trespass-offering than with the sin. Mark entirely omits them, and by what it omits as well as what it brings forward thus concentrates our attention on the one point of that forsaking of God which is the essential feature of the sin-offering.

In Luke we find the manhood of the Lord emphasized, as His deity is in John. Thus His genealogy is traced from Adam, not merely from Abraham. Not only His birth is dwelt on, but His childhood also; and how He grows in wisdom and in stature. His prayers are noticed where in the other gospels they are omitted, as at His baptism and at His transfiguration. So, His being "full of the Holy Ghost." Seldom is He the Son of David here; and Mary has the prominence in the early history which in Matthew belongs to Joseph.

Taking thus a place among men as Man, it is no wonder that angels tell, not simply of God's "good will toward," but rather of His "good pleasure *in* men," for so it should be read. And accordingly the peace-offering aspect of the work of Christ is what Luke's gospel gives. God and man meet together and are at one, as in that characteristic fifteenth chapter, in which all the mind of Heaven displays itself in joy in the recovery of what was lost,—“joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,”—joy which reflects itself in the heart of that repentant sinner, and fills the mouth of the dumb with song.

Thus Luke opens with a burst of melody. Elizabeth, Mary, Zacharias, the angels, the shepherds, Simeon, Anna, are all praising; and the burden of their song is what the former gospels had nothing of—a present Saviour and a realized salvation. So in the synagogue at Nazareth, the opening of the Lord's ministry is the declaration of present grace to heal and save,—the acceptable year of the Lord proclaimed as *come*. Again, in the seventh chapter, the forgiveness of a sinner of the city; in the tenth, the parable of the Samaritan; in the eighteenth, of the Pharisee and publican; in the nineteenth, the story of Zacchæus,—all speak the same language. But the cross, as we might expect, has pre-eminently this peace-offering character. There is no cry of one forsaken any more. It is not even "My God," but "Father." The shadow may be over the land, but no more on the soul of Him who in peace is interceding for His murderers, and opening paradise to a poor sinner at His side.

Thus peace, grace, remission, salvation, are all (as compared with the former gospels,) characteristic of the present one. The blessing is there for man, made over to him, filling his heart with joy and praise. Compare, in Matthew, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," with Luke's "Blessed are *ye* poor;" or the words at the institution of the supper in Matthew and Mark, "This is My blood, shed for *many*," with those in Luke, "This is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for *you*."

And now John's gospel comes to complete the picture, and fill the whole scene with the glory of the Only Begotten, God manifest in the flesh. Man is seen to be dead utterly. The Light come into the world fully manifests its condition. Hence

the law given by Moses, useless here, is only contrasted with the grace and truth come by Jesus Christ. Judaism, whose principle was law, is over also—its privileges and its responsibilities. The very language of a Jew is treated as a foreign tongue, and translated into Gentile language, the common speech of men. For we start in this gospel with the fact of that rejection of Christ which the former ones had proved. The world, made by Him, was ignorant of its Maker. This, Luke has shown. His own, to whom He had come, received Him not: this is Matthew. All this made it a scene in which God indeed could work, but He alone. Thus the fact and meaning of new birth are what we find in John, and alone of all the gospels: here it meets us at the threshold. Men must be born of God. The Life must not only shine in the world, but quicken souls, that they may see and rejoice in it. So quickened, there ensues another thing: children of God as born of Him, they are given the *place* of children, and the Spirit of His Son takes His place within them. Hence the apprehension of the revelation made to them by One declaring Him whom none as yet had seen, but who now declares Him as in His bosom, the Only Begotten of the Father.

Hence Christ is here the Word, God and with God, Eternal Life, and who, if made flesh, becomes in the world the Light of it. He is Quickener of the dead, Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, the true Witness, that we may have fellowship with Him.

Then, as to the aspect of His work, it is the Burnt-Offering, the type of the perfections for the heart of God of that in which we are accepted. His own witness is given that the work He came

to do is finished. The blood and water show the result for man, and the Spirit also testifies, because the Spirit is truth.

In John there is no transfiguration, and no vail rent at the cross. The reason is apparent—that the glory has been shining out all through, and not exceptionally: not glory conferred on Him as Son of Man, but the glory of full Godhead.

"TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH."

(Revelation ii)

IN the case of "the church in Smyrna" (*vv.* 8–11), they had begun the downward course; but the Lord had come in most graciously, and arrested the decay by tribulation. I say most graciously, for one goes wonderfully quickly down hill unless a strong hand stop us.

The souls were in tribulation, poverty, and persecution, and how does the Lord reveal Himself? As the One whom nothing can touch, not all the clouds and storms, the difficulties and trials, affect (like the sun, bright before the storm and after it), "the FIRST and the LAST." (*v.* 8.)

"Yes," it may be said, "this is true of Him; but then, the storm rolls over us, and threatens to overwhelm: we have no power against it." But He reveals Himself not only as "the First and the Last"—the One therefore on whom we may lean for eternal strength,—but also as "He which was dead, and is alive." He says, as it were, "I have gone through it all: I have entered into the weakness of man, and undergone all the power that could come against it, all the trials even unto

death,—I have entered into every thing, for I have died, and yet I am alive.”

There is nothing that the Lord has not gone through: death is the last effort of Satan's power; it ends there for the sinner as well as for the saint. The unconverted even are out of Satan's power when they die; if they die in their sins, of course they come under the judgment of God, but Satan has no power in hell. He may have pre-eminence in misery, but no power there (his reigning is some poet's dream; it is here he reigns, and that by means of the pride and vanity, the evil passions and idleness, of men); he is “the ruler of the darkness of this world,” not of the next.

But whatever may be the extent of power which he seeks now to exercise against the children of God, the Lord says, “I have been under it—I have been dead.” Therefore it is impossible for us to be in any circumstance of difficulty or of trial through which Jesus has not been. He has met the power of Satan there, and yet He is alive. And now He “is alive for evermore,” not only to sustain us while passing through the storm, but to feel for, to sympathize, as having experienced more than all the heaviness of the circumstances in which we are. He can pity with the utmost tenderness, for He came into the very centre of our misery.

* * * * *

There were all sorts of opposition to the faithful in this church, but what does the Lord say to them? “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.” (v. 10.) It is the constant effort of Satan to produce in us fear and discouragement when passing through trial; but the Lord says, “Fear none of those things.”

In like manner the Philippians are told to be "in nothing terrified by their adversaries;" again, in Peter we read, "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." Our wisdom is ever to rest confidently in Him who is "the First and the Last," who rises up in as great power at the end as at the beginning. The Lord does not say to this church, "I will save you from suffering," for suffering was needful in order to prevent it from tumbling headlong into decay; just as Israel was obliged, in consequence of its sin, to go a long way round the desert; and yet the Lord says, as it were, to some among them who were faithful, "Do not be the least uneasy." So here His word is, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer."

In the beginning of the failure in "the churches" the promise to "the overcomer" in the midst of the decay was, that he should eat, in security and peace, of the "tree of life;" so again here, in a time of especial suffering and trial, there is held out, as a stimulus (to the new man of course), a recompense of reward. If they lost every thing, they should gain every thing. The Lord's own voice encourages—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." He may be hurt of the first death, but not of the second—the only real exclusion from the presence of God.—(*Coll. Writ. of J. N. D.—Practical.*)

KEY-NOTES TO THE BIBLE BOOKS.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

MATTHEW has seven main divisions, which again are subdivided into a number of sections.

I.* THE KING. (Chap. i, ii.)

I. (Chap. i.) *His title proved.* The first chapter reveals to us the titles and glories of the King. The genealogy is placed first, for it is the Son of David and of Abraham who is to be before us. But this is but as the outer court of the temple: His true glory is that He is Immanuel, "God with us." The genealogy is no doubt Joseph's—the legal one, His title naturally. Joseph, not Mary, is prominent in these chapters, and carefully reminded of his royal birth. That it is the legal genealogy, only makes the more impressive its containing (just in the undeniable part too, for any one claiming to be king in Israel,) the four women's names mentioned in it. All are probably, —most, certainly, Gentiles. And in each case their connection with the Lord's descent brings out some striking feature of the gospel. Tamar's *sin* connects her; Rahab's *faith*; for Ruth, the law is set aside; while Bathsheba, specially mentioned as Uriah's wife, shows us a believer's sin unable to set aside the purposes of God toward him. Thus the Lord is shown as the true Seed of Abraham.

* The figures appended to these sections, whether the larger or smaller ones, are always given as significant, according to the principles already established from the Word. It is not to be expected that their significance will in general be dwelt upon. They are given to be tested by those whose habit it is to test by the only standard all that is presented to them. Let my readers remember the apostle's words as to all Christians: "Ye have an unction from the holy One, and need not that any man teach you,"—*i. e.*, are not dependent upon the teacher as an authority.

And this is a specimen of Matthew's way of stating the gospel, in the veiled style of the Old Testament, from which of course all this is taken.

Thus far the genealogy, marking out the Son of David according to the flesh. The three divisions of the genealogy (*v.* 17) show us, first, how God had elevated Jacob's seed into a kingdom; secondly, how they had declined into utter ruin; thirdly, God's bringing back a people to wait in ruin and darkness, without a history, Him by whom alone all could be restored.

But now we are made to know (*vv.* 18-25), in the same wondrous Person, the One "without genealogy" (*Heb.* vii. 3, *Gr.*); born, as we are *new-born*, of the Holy Ghost, the predicted Son of a virgin, Immanuel, God with us. Such is Heaven's King, who to fulfill His divine title must be *Jesus*,—a Saviour. Thus we have full introduction to Him already in all the characters in which this gospel presents Him to us.

II. (*Chap. ii.*) The second chapter intimates at once His history. The Gentile magi, come up to do homage to the "King of the Jews," find His capital city first ignorant, then troubled by the news. They can designate Him scripturally enough as God's Shepherd-King for His Israel, out of Bethlehem, the "house of bread." But the Edomite is in the place of power, and the Edomite hatred, unchecked and against God, fulfills His word in judgment upon the guilty people. Bethlehem that had no welcome for her Saviour, finds none from the destroyer now. He who is cast out in fact by Israel herself, departs from the guilty people.

The Gentiles meanwhile have worshiped and presented their gifts, "gold and frankincense and myrrh," significant gifts, no doubt, whether those who offered them were conscious of it or not. Gold is the symbol of divine glory; frankincense, of the precious humanity whose trial by fire only brought forth the odor of a sweet smell, acceptable to God; while the myrrh, used in embalming, speaks of the death by which He was to save His people from their sins.

Gone down into Egypt, the Lord assumes the place of the true "Israel" (Isa. xlix. 3, 4), and begins again the history of the people from the beginning, as their Representative for the eye and heart of God. In this way Hosea's words apply to Him (xi. 1). Out of it God calls Him into the "land of Israel," (the only place in the New Testament where it is called so,) that, because it is indeed Immanuel's land (Isa. viii. 8).

But He comes back to Galilee,* where, still according to Isaiah's prophecy (ix. 1, 2), the light breaks forth, for "Galilee of the Gentiles" is the place where, the ruin of the people being manifest, God can come in with help. There, then, He abides, "in a city called Nazareth," the place of all others out of which comes no good. He is "sent to the *lost* sheep of the house of Israel."

II. THE KINGDOM ANNOUNCED. (Chap. iii.-vii.)

I. (Chap. iii. 1-6.) *The herald of the kingdom.* It is striking that only in Matthew is John seen as proclaiming the *kingdom*. Outside of Jerusalem and her religious service, his place in the wilder-

* "Galilee" means "circuit." Is it because here the lost blessings return? Certainly none of these Scripture-names are without significance.

ness, in dress and food apart, he baptizes to repentance in the river of death, preparing the way of the Lord. The people return to him, not he to them.

II. (Ver. 7-12.) *His testimony.* In the Pharisees, religious pretension asserted itself among a people in spiritual ruin; in the Sadducees, open unbelief. To these, the leaders of the people, John declares the ax at the root of the fruitless tree. They must not claim to be Abraham's children,—for a Jew, the loss of all his privileges,—and God would nevertheless act in power to raise up children to Abraham, as it were out of the stones. The Lord before whom John went would baptize with the Holy Ghost, but also with the fire of judgment, and thoroughly purge Israel, His floor.

III. (Ver. 13-17.) *The proclamation and anointing of the King.* Then the Lord comes to take His place in death for those He finds there, not as one whose due it is, but to "fulfill righteousness." It is His pledging Himself to that more solemn "baptism" to which for the people of His love He must needs stoop. And He who could give an argument to the Father's love in thus laying down His life (Jno. x. 17) is thereupon owned by the Father as His Son, in whom He has found His delight, the Spirit as a dove anointing Him for His work. The bird of heaven, the bird of love and sorrow, in whose silver wings—for redemption brought Him down—is the sheen of the gold, the display of divine glory, is His fitting type.

IV. (Chap. iv. 1-11.) *His proving in the wilderness.* Thus proclaimed and anointed, He is exposed to the tempter, led up of the Spirit, not of His own

will. The Second Man, blessed contrast to the first, is tempted in a wilderness, not in a garden, fasts to meet the devil,—for complete exposure,—not, as others, to meet God. His forty days' proving, not fed with manna, but ahungred, reveals Him perfect in the knowledge which in forty years of lessons Israel had failed to learn. He answers Satan out of Deuteronomy, in which the moral of their wanderings is declared, taking ever the place of man in dependence, out of which by the truth of His divine glory Satan would seduce Him.

The flesh, in Him sinless, is the first point of attack. Here is found, in One come into the world only to do God's will, no motive in the hunger of a forty days' fast to provoke a will to satisfy it. Man lives by the word of God, not bread; so He in dependent willlessness.

The second temptation is as Messiah, to whom the promise quoted confessedly belonged. But the devil mutilates it, for the blessed word of God could not in any honest usage be a means of temptation. He would lead the Lord aside from His "ways," to prove (as if He needed proof) that God was for Him. But if Israel had thus tried God, He, perfect in faith, could not do so.

Finally, and at once, all the kingdoms of the world are set before Him, by the sudden dazzle to throw Him, if possible, off His guard, if but for a moment, and seduce His heart from its allegiance to God. But here Satan has disclosed himself, and being disclosed, is defeated. He departs, and angels come and minister to the Conqueror.

V. (Chap. iv. 12-vii.) *The principles of His kingdom.*

(1) iv. 12-25. *The proclamation of the kingdom by the King.* And now, according to Isaiah's prophecy, the light shines in Galilee. The King Himself proclaims the kingdom, gathers around Him those who are to be the heralds of it, and exhibits the power by which evil shall be banished from the earth under Messiah's sway.*

(2) v. 1-16. *The character of the heirs of it.* Thus manifesting His title to the kingdom, in the presence of the multitude He instructs His disciples in the characteristics of it. This is the "sermon on the mount." The kingdom here, we must remember, is that which the prophets of the Old Testament had announced, in which Jerusalem shall yet be, more gloriously than ever, "the city of the great King" (v. 35), and "times of refreshing shall come from the *presence* of the Lord;" not as now, the kingdom in the time of His *absence*. Yet in principle the Lord's words apply to us often with more force on that account, as we may easily see, if we apprehend the difference of dispensation.

He begins with describing the character and blessedness of the heirs of the kingdom, a character formed by the hope of that they see not yet, as given in four beatitudes (*vv.* 3-6), and displaying the more specific divine lineaments which are found in all God's children, given in three (*vv.* 7-9). "Poor in spirit," because their heart is set upon what is beyond; "meek," as claiming nothing in the present (see Ps. xxxvii.); "mourners," as their Lord was, in a world of sin and its attendant misery; "hungering after righteousness," as feel-

* "The powers of the world to come" (Heb vi. 5) The word "powers" being one commonly used in the plural for miracles; and "the world to come," the regular phrase for Messiah's kingdom (upon earth).

ing the divorce between it and judgment now (see Ps. xciv. 15). These are the first four. The merciful and the pure (in *heart*, not externally merely,) answer in measure to the divine character as "love" and "light;" while the third and last of these final beatitudes shows the *activity* of these, and hence the "peacemakers shall be called the children of God."

Two beatitudes follow of those who incur the opposition of the world for their practical *conduct* and for their *testimony*. Persecuted for righteousness' sake, they are yet the "salt of the earth," and for *Christ's* sake, they are its light. They are to let that light (their testimony to Him,) shine before men, that they may *thus* see their good works, and glorify their Father.

(3) v. 17-48. *The law maintained and perfected.* Next, the law is maintained in its integrity, not a jot or tittle removed. It is to be written on Israel's heart according to the terms of the new covenant (Jer. xxxi. 33). The Lord's "fulfilling" it means that He brings out the fullness of it. He applies it to the thoughts and intents of the hearts, and completes it by the repeal of what had been of old time suffered for the hardness of them. By the manifestation of love even to enemies they are to show themselves the sons of their Father in heaven.

(4) vi. 1-18. *Righteousness before the Father.* Three special characters follow of a righteousness* which is to be before God, not men: alms, as practical righteousness *manward*; prayer, the evidence of dependence *Godward*; and fasting,—mortification,—*selfward*.

* "Alms" (v. 1) should be as in the margin, "righteousness."†

In the first case, it is important to note that mercy, from those who are the simple recipients of mercy, is simple righteousness (comp. xviii. 32, 33). And not only are deeds of mercy not to be blazoned before the world, but to be done as it were in unconsciousness to ourselves of their being done (comp. xxv. 37-39).

In the second case, the prayer our Lord teaches the disciples is not in His name (Jno. xvi. 24), nor from the stand-point of Christianity. It could not yet be. But it is the perfection of prayer in the place in which they then stood. The thought of divine government runs through the whole, but the most complete subjection of heart to Him who is on the throne, who is the Father. The first petition is that that name may be hallowed; the second, that His kingdom come; the third, to which this necessarily leads, that His will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. How blessed the condition of soul in which such like desires seek foremost utterance before its own personal need! Then how simply and beautifully is this expressed! The owning of dependence, without desire to escape out of the place of it, looking for daily bread—no more. The sense of sin needing forgiveness from God, leading to the manifestation of a spirit of forgiveness toward others. Lastly, a sense of *infirmity* which deprecates trial and the evil it may elicit.

In the third case, fasting, it is well to remember the apostle's word to us, "If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Of this, fasting was the expression, though in a form of sorrow unsuited to the joy of the Bridegroom's presence (ix. 15). And it still remains as this expres-

sion in times of solemnity and trial and exercise of soul before God (chap. xvii. 21; Acts xiii. 2).

(5) vi. 19-34. *The eye and the object.* Now the Lord goes deeper, and lays bare the heart, detected in that which governs it. As the eye is the inlet of light to the body, so *faith* to the soul. Here heaven contains our treasure, and our one Master is God. To admit another object means divided service (in which God is not really served at all,) and a darkened eye. On the other hand, as to all here, our Father's care leaves us without the need of care to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness alone.

(6) vii. 1-12. *Met'ing the measure we would receive.* A principle of divine government is now insisted on. By the hands of men God metes men their own measure. Therefore beware of harsh judgments, and the measure you mete; while nevertheless you must not loosely abandon spiritual things (as men have the so-called "sacraments,") to those incapable of valuing them. So may you look for God to give you what to you shall be of value; and what you want to have done to you you must do.

(7) vii. 13-29. *Practical treading the path pressed, and building upon the Word.* Finally, entering in is pressed, a practical treading the path, though narrow, and refused by the mass. False prophets would come also, deceiving souls. Mere lip-honor to Christ would avail nothing in the day which was coming to test all; nor any thing but such acquaintance with Himself as would be shown by practical building on His words. Here alone was true wisdom, as would then be fully proved.

ATONEMENT.

CHAPTER XVII.

Atonement in the New Testament. The Gospels.

WE now come to the New Testament. We have already carried its doctrine with us in the interpretation of the Old; for our object has been, not to trace the gradual unfolding of the truth from age to age, but to get as completely as possible for our souls that truth, as Scripture, now complete, as a whole presents it to us. Thus we have already anticipated much of what would otherwise now come before us. Yet we shall find, if the Lord only open our eyes to it, abundance of what is of unfailing interest for us, and that the substance here goes beyond all the shadows of the past.

In the Gospels, however, the doctrine of atonement is but little developed. We have instead the unspeakably precious work which wrought it. The Acts also, while devoted to the history of the effects of its accomplishment, speaks little directly of the atonement itself. It is not till we come to Paul's writings that we find this fully entered into, and its results for us declared. He is the one raised up to give us the full gospel message, as well as the truth of the Church, of both of which he is in a special sense the "minister" (Col. i. 23, 25).

The gospel of John, however, more than all the rest together, does dwell upon the meaning of the cross; and here it is mostly the Lord Himself who

declares it to us. John's is, in a fuller sense than the others, the Christian gospel; and in it, we may say, we enter into that holiest of which they see but the vail rent at the end; while for John, the glory typified by that of the tabernacle of old shines out all through.* It is necessary, then, to show how this is possible, man at the same time being fully shown out for what he is by the light in which he stands. Before we speak of this, we must take up, however, the "synoptic" gospels, and briefly examine their testimony.

Their direct teaching is scanty indeed. The Lord's own declaration that "the Son of Man . . . came to give His life a ransom for many," and that His blood was "shed for many," is given in all; Luke indeed changing this last into "shed for *you*," and Matthew adding, "for the remission of sins." The doctrine of atonement is quite plain here, however little enlarged on. Luke gives us beside how, after His resurrection, He appears to the two on the way to Emmaus, and reproves them for their unbelief of all that the prophets had spoken, adding, "'Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?' And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Afterward, to the eleven He says, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name, beginning at Jerusalem."

When we look more deeply at the work pre-

* John i. 14, where "dwelt" should be, as in the margin of the Revised Version, "tabernacled:" it is a plain reference to the glory of old.¹

sented in these three gospels, we find in them respectively, as I have elsewhere shown, the features of the trespass, sin, and peace-offerings respectively. The trespass-offering unites with Matthew's gospel of the kingdom as being the governmental aspect of atonement—the reparation for *injury* rather than judgment for *sin*; yet this in its Godward side reaches of necessity to the vindication of the holiness of His *nature*, so that Matthew and Mark alike give the forsaking of God. But while the three gospels show the rending of the vail, and the holiest opened, Matthew alone shows the meeting of death for us, the graves giving up their dead; for death is governmental infliction, and so belongs to Matthew's theme. So, evidently, does that view of the cross which is found in the two parables of the kingdom, the treasure and the pearl, where the work is looked at as a governmental exchange—a purchase: “went and sold all that He had and bought it.”

Mark, while it has the forsaking of God also,—the characteristic features of the sin-offering,—omits these governmental features. It is the Son of God in the glory of His voluntary humiliation, obedient even unto death, glorifying God at His own personal cost,—as the bullock is the highest grade of the sin-offering,—but therefore glorified of God in consequence, so that He ascends to the right hand of God (xvi. 19). But His humiliation is most absolute. He does not, as in Matthew, “dismiss His spirit” (xxvii. 50, *Gr.*), as One that had power to retain it, but, in true sin-offering character, “expires” (chap. xv. 37, *Gr.*). Even in His cry upon the cross there is a note of difference which is significant. He says, not “Eli,”—literally,

although it be a name of God, "*My Strength*,"—but "*Eloi*," "*My God*."*

So the results of the cross are characteristically different in Mark from Matthew. It is not a commission given to disciple into the kingdom, but to preach the gospel, with power over the enemy and over the consequences of sin accompanying the simple believing in this precious word.

In Luke, the peace-offering character is everywhere plain, as it is in the cross most manifestly. It needs scarcely comment. The Lord's cry is "*Father*;" and He openly assures a dying thief of a place with Him in paradise. But further exposition would belong rather to a sketch of the gospels than of the doctrine of atonement, and it has been given elsewhere.

The gospel of John introduces a subject in the Old Testament unrevealed,—eternal life. Personally, the Lord was this, and among men the light of men. But this only disclosed the truth of their condition. The world—and the Jews in this light were only part of the world,—lay in a darkness which no light merely could reach, for it was the darkness of death; but a spiritual death of sin which not even life alone could reach. Guilt must also be met. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone," are our Lord's words. Life must spring for man out of an atoning death. The water of cleansing and the blood of expiation must come out of the side of a dead Christ. The Spirit thus bears record that "God has given to us eternal life."

The first word as to atonement in the gospel of

*In the twenty second psalm it is "*Eli*," not "*Eloi*," but I think it clear that the latter, in this connection, is the deeper word.

John is in the Baptist's testimony: "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." This is the broad general view of Christ's work and its effect. By and by, a "new" earth—not *another* earth, but the earth made new as to its condition,—will be eternally the abode of righteousness (2 Pet. iii. 13). To us, how wonderful a condition for this world, which for nearly six thousand years has been the abode of sin, to be the abode of everlasting righteousness! What will have accomplished this? The precious sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Every inhabitant of that new earth will be one redeemed by the blood of Christ, and secured eternally by its value. Sin will be completely banished. Its memory only will remain, to give full melody to the praises of the saints.

But who is this Lamb of God? "This is He," says the Baptist, "of whom I said, 'After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" After in time as a man, yet the One inhabiting eternity! It is God Himself who is at the cost of redemption, and that when not power merely could redeem, but only blood! Therefore a man, incarnate, to be in meek surrender of Himself a Lamb slain. This is what is of moral value to fill the earth with righteousness, and to lift to heaven also those made members of Christ by the baptism of the Holy Ghost (i. 33).

In the next case, the need of man has just been fully exposed in the Lord's words to Nicodemus. He must be born again, as Ezekiel had already witnessed; although not able to declare the full truth and magnitude of this work of God in man. But One was come from heaven to declare it, Son of Man on earth, yet still in heaven. Nor only to

declare it, but to make this work possible; for "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so also must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

The imperative necessity of atonement is here affirmed. The Son of Man *must* be lifted up, and faith in Him be the way of everlasting life. The type of the brazen serpent shows in what character "lifted up;" for Moses' serpent clearly represented that by which the people in the wilderness were perishing. At bottom, for them as for men in general this was sin, the poison of the old serpent, which has corrupted the nature of every one born of flesh. For this, "made sin," Christ was "lifted up,"—offered to God a sacrifice,—that men might have, by faith in Him thus offered, not a restoration of mere natural life, but one spiritual and eternal.

But again we are assured of who it is effects the sacrifice. Not only it must be One who as Son of Man *could* be lifted up, but "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is not only the Son of Man, lifted up to God, but the Son of God in the full reality of this, the *eternal* Son, the *only* begotten, sent down, God's gift, from God.

Thus eternal life is ours who believe. The character, privileges, and accompaniments of which are detailed for us in the chapters that follow. The sixth chapter shows it to us as a life enjoyed in dependence, lived by faith, maintained by the meat given by the Son of Man—*meat* which endures to everlasting life, as long as the life itself does. But this meat is the bread from heaven; and

the bread is His flesh, which He gives for the life of the world. But this involves His death,—bloodshedding; so that “except ye have eaten the flesh of the Son of Man, and *drank His blood*, ye have no life in you; he that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life,—abideth in Me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me.” (*vv.* 53, 54, 56, 57.)

We must notice a difference here which neither the revised nor the common version makes apparent. The first expression—“*have* eaten,” “*have* drunk,”—speaks of *once* partaking, the others of continuous. The once having eaten and drunk insures eternal life, but it is maintained as a practical life of faith by continuous eating and drinking. It is a life dependent though eternal, and what communicates it sustains it also.

The tenth chapter presents the Lord as the Shepherd of the sheep, giving His life for them, in perfect freedom, and yet as fulfilling the commandment of the Father. He is thus able to give a reason for the Father's love (*v.* 17), and they are saved, have eternal life, and can never perish, nor any pluck them out of His hand. In the twelfth chapter, again, He compares His death to that of a corn of wheat which dies to produce fruit; but I pass on to consider the character of the closing chapters.

Here, what is a feature every where, is just this voluntariness of self-surrender which the tenth chapter has declared. No one takes His life from Him: the men sent to take Him fall to the ground before Him, and while giving Himself up, secures the safety of His followers by an authoritative

word. To Pilate, He declares His kingdom founded on the truth, and which every true soul would recognize; while the authority of the governor over Him existed but by divine permission for a special purpose. Upon the cross, there is no darkness and no weakness. He declares His thirst, to fulfill one final scripture, then announces the perfect accomplishment of His work, and delivers up His own spirit to the Father. The soldiers' errand doubly fulfills the prescient word of God, who on the one hand guards the body of His holy One from mutilation, while on the other giving to man the threefold witness of completed atonement. All this speaks of the offering for acceptance (Lev. i. 3, 4, *Rev. Vers.*), the voluntary burnt-offering.

To this the account of the resurrection answers also perfectly. Relationship established, the corn of wheat having died to bring forth fruit, the Lord owns His "brethren," ascending to His and (thus) their Father, His and their God. He assures them of peace, the fruit of His work (xx. 19, 20); of their new-creation place in connection with Himself, last Adam (v. 21; comp. Gen. ii. 7, 1 Cor. xv. 45), and of their qualification therefore to "receive the Holy Ghost." All this is the testimony of perfect acceptance in the value of His completed work.

The Acts, while speaking throughout of the *fruits* of atonement, give little of the doctrine of the work itself. We may therefore pass it over. I am aware of no new aspect in which it is presented to us in it.

SOME THEMES OF THE SECOND PART OF ROMANS.

I.—“IN ADAM” AND “IN CHRIST” (chap. v. 12-21).

MY desire is to take up and discuss as simply as possible, and yet as fully as may be necessary, some of the leading truths of the epistle to the Romans. My aim is not controversy, as I trust, but edification; yet on this very account I shall seek to remember all through the need of those who have been exercised by questions which have of late arisen. Exercise is not to be deprecated. It is well to be made thus to realize how far we have really learned from God, and our need of being taught in His presence that which cannot be shaken. There is an uneasy dishonoring fear in the hearts of many as to submitting all that they have apparently learned, through whomsoever or in what way soever learned, to be afresh tested by what seems “novel” and in some measure in conflict with it. But it will only be found, by those who in patience and confidence in God allow every question to be raised that can be raised, and seek answer to it from Him through the Word, how firm His foundation stands, and how that which seems at first to threaten more or less the integrity of our faith only in result confirms it. Difficulties are cleared away, things obscure made to take shape and meaning, the divine power of the Word to manifest itself, Christ and His grace to be better known. Much too that we looked at or were prepared to look at as fundamental difference in another’s view turns out to be only the emphasizing

(though perhaps the *over*-emphasizing) of what was really defective in our own. And so "by that which *every* joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part," there is made "increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love."

Let us now look at what is surely the key-note to the interpretation of what is known to many as the second part of Romans (ch. v. 12–viii.), the two contrasted thoughts, "in Adam" and "in Christ." This is what we start with in chap. v. 12–21, though as yet we have neither term made use of. Indeed the first term occurs but once in Scripture, and that not in Romans, but in 1 Cor. xv, where the first Adam and the last are put in emphatic contrast.

The statements of chap. v. 12–21 are the exposition of the doctrine:—

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

"If through the offense of one the many be dead."

"The judgment was by one to condemnation."

"By one man's offense death reigned by one."

"By the one offense toward all men to condemnation." (*Greek.*)

"By the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners."

"Sin hath reigned in death." (*Greek.*)

These are the statements as to the first man and the consequences of his sin. They show that his sin has affected not himself alone, but many with him; that it brought in death as a present judgment upon a fallen race, and tending to merge in final condemnation.

Two things as to present fact: a race of sinners;

death as God's judgment-stamp upon this race. The final outlook or tendency for all, utter condemnation.

The first man was thus in a very real way the representative of his race; not indeed by any formal covenant for his posterity, of which Scripture has no trace; but by his being the *divinely constituted head of it*. As the father of men, he necessarily stood as charged with the interests of his posterity; from his fall, a corrupt nature became the heritage of the race, and thus death and judgment their appointed lot, the final issue no uncertain one. Thus in a real way he represented them before God; but, as I have said, not by any formal covenant on their behalf. His representative-character was grounded in what men call natural law, which is nothing but divine law, and which is both evident in nature and asserted in the plainest possible way in Scripture. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one," expresses the law. "What is man, that he should be clean? and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." The Lord's words in the gospel fully and emphatically confirm these sayings of saints of old: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." What men now call, The principle of "heredity," is thus affirmed, and it is the whole scriptural account of the matter. The theories of a covenant with Adam for his posterity, and the imputation of his sin to them, are simply additions to Scripture, and as such, not only needless, but an obscuring of the truth, as all mere human thoughts of necessity are.

"By one man sin entered into the world, and

death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."* Such is the apostle's statement here. It speaks of death as with every individual the result of his own sins, although his being made (or "constituted") a sinner was the result of Adam's disobedience (v. 19). I know it has been argued that this could not apply to infants, who if they sinned could only have done so in Adam. But the apostle is not speaking of infants, nor did their case need to be considered here. Sinning in Adam is not a doctrine of Scripture, and it is not allowable to insert words of such a character and importance in this place. The apostle is addressing himself to believers, to show the application of the work of Christ to such, as delivering them from all that attached to them by nature or practice. From this the case of infants may be easily inferred, but it is not his object to speak of it, and it cannot be shown that he does so at all.†

Sin, then, came in through Adam. The nature of man was corrupted; by his disobedience the many were made sinners: and thus death introducing to judgment was the stamp of God upon the fallen condition. Adam was the representative of his race by the fact that he was the head of it, and thus, as it is put in 1 Corinthians xv. 22, "in Adam all die."

This expression, though found but once, is of great significance, because it is contrasted with

*The marginal reading, "*in whom* all have sinned," will hardly be now justified by any scholar.

† For those "that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression" (v. 14) are not infants, as many have supposed, but those who had not sinned against positive law as Adam had. For Adam's law in its nature could not be that of his posterity, who, until Moses, had none. The words "from Adam to Moses" show what is meant.

and throws light upon another expression which is of the highest importance to us, and which the following chapters of Romans use repeatedly. "For as in Adam all die, even so *in Christ* shall all be made alive." We are now prepared to understand how "in Adam all die." In his death was involved and insured the death of all men. As head of the race, his ruin and death was theirs, and so "in him," their representative, they die. "In Adam" speaks of place,—of representation; as the apostle argues as to Levi and Abraham (Heb. vii. 9, 10): "And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, *paid tithes in Abraham; for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedek met him.*" We too were in the loins of Adam when he fell and sentence of death was passed upon him; and in him we die. Thank God, we have heard the voice of Another, Head and Representative too of His race, which says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." (Jno. xiv. 19.) In Adam we die: in Christ we live.

As in Adam, then, we are completely ruined. We are "constituted sinners"—sinners by constitution. Death and judgment are our appointed lot. This is what has to be met in our behalf, if Christ comes in for us. It is not enough for Him to be a new head and fountain of life for us from God. He must not only be our new Representative in life, but our Representative in death, and under curse also, taking the doom of those whose new Head He becomes. Hence comes a distinction which we must bear in mind. In life, He is our Representative that with Him we may live and inherit the portion He has acquired for us: in death, He is our Representative that we may *not*

die, because already dead with Him. This last is *substitution*. He dies for us, and He alone: in life He lives for us, and (blessed be God!) lives *not* alone.

Now let us look at the apostle's statements. And first,—

Adam "is the figure of Him that was to come." (v. 14.)

Thus it is that in 1 Cor. xv. 22 "in Christ" is set over against "in Adam," and that in ver. 45 again "the last Adam" is seen in essential contrast to the "first:" "The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit."

But what, then, does a "last *Adam*" mean? The head of a new race. And thus "if any man be *in Christ*"—set over against "in Adam" in the verse already looked at,—"it is a *new* creation." (2 Cor. v. 17, *Gr.*, comp. marg. Rev. Vers.) The first Adam was the head of the old creation; the last Adam is the Head of the new. "In Christ" means to belong to the new creation and the new Head.

I merely link these terms together now. I do not propose to examine here what exactly the new creation is. The term is not used in Romans, though in Galatians (its kindred epistle, though wider in scope,) it is. But it should be obvious that the first Adam, as "the figure of Him that was to come," figures Christ as "the last Adam," the representative Head of a new race. As such, the apostle compares the results of the obedience of the One to "the many" who stand in Him, with the results of the first man's *disobedience* to "the many" who fell with him.

But we must pause before proceeding with this, to make it perfectly clear to any who have a doubt

that Scripture speaks of the last Adam as really the Head of a race. Spite of the term "last Adam," some *have* doubt of this. They say, "We are never called children of *Christ*, but of God;" which is true, because it is divine life that is communicated, and "children of Christ" would imply only human life. "The last Adam is made a quickening Spirit" surely proves, however, that in this character He quickens (or gives life), while at the same time it shows the character of the life communicated; for "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And this action of the last Adam we find imaged by the Lord in resurrection breathing upon His disciples when He says, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The first Adam was but a "living soul" into whose nostrils God breathed the breath of life, that he might become so. The last Adam breathes upon others; He is a quickening Spirit, not merely a living soul.

Isaiah also, foreseeing the glory of the Lord, declares, "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, *He shall see His seed*" (liii. 10). And again, in words which are quoted and applied to Christ by the apostle, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me" (ch. viii. 18; Heb. ii. 13).

There is surely no more need to prove that Christ as last Adam, like him whose antitype He is, is the Head of a race. It is the key to all that follows in Romans v. and the two next chapters, where "in Christ" as Corinthians gives it, is in contrast, yet antitypical correspondence, with "in Adam."

Now, as in Adam's case we have traced the results of the disobedience of the one to the many, let us trace the results of the obedience of the

new Representative-Head to the many connected with Him.

"Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."

"The free gift is of many offenses unto justification."

"They which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

"By the one righteousness toward all men to justification of life." (*Gr.*)

"By the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous."

These are the statements corresponding to, yet contrasted with, the former ones which we considered. One thing we must remember in considering them, that these two accounts do not exhibit a mere balance of results. "*Not* as the offense so also is the free gift" (*v.* 15). If righteousness be shown in dealing with sin, the "free gift," while of course it must be righteous, absolutely so, is yet measured only by the grace that has given Christ for us. Hence His work by no means merely cancels the results of sin, but lifts us into a place altogether beyond what was originally ours. Let us see what we have here, although even here the tale is not fully told.

First, we have "life;" and this in the next chapter (*v.* 23) is expanded into "*eternal* life in Christ Jesus our Lord." It is not merely life from another source, but life of an entirely new character and quality; not a restoration of the failed and forfeited life, but a life infinitely higher—a divine life. There is but one life which is eternal, and "in Christ Jesus our Lord" declares its source to be in a

divine Person, and now become man. Nor only so, for the force of the expression is precise. It is not correctly given in our common version, but in the revised it is, as I have quoted it. It is "in," not, as the common version, "through;" and "Christ Jesus," not "Jesus Christ." Such differences, minute as they may seem, are in Scripture never without significance. "Jesus Christ" is the Lord's personal name emphasized; "Christ Jesus" emphasizes His official title. It speaks of a place now taken through His work accomplished. In the eleventh verse it should read similarly, "alive to God in Christ Jesus." Again we have it in the eighth chapter, "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus;" and in the second verse, "life in Christ Jesus." Elsewhere we have "sanctified" and "saints in Christ Jesus," "created in Christ Jesus," "of Him are ye in Christ Jesus," and so repeatedly. Except once—Peter (1 Pet. v. 10), no inspired writer uses this order of words, but only Paul. "In Jesus," or "in Jesus the Christ," we are never said to be, but only "in Christ," or "in Christ Jesus." The special force ought to be therefore clear.

Our life, then, is not only in Him, but in Him as now having accomplished His work and gone up to God. There, as Peter on the day of Pentecost bears witness, He is made Lord and Christ (Acts ii. 36), actually reaching the place which was His already by appointment, but to be reached only in one way. The last Adam becomes Head of the race after His work of obedience is accomplished, as the first Adam became head when his work of *disobedience* was accomplished. And as in the one case, so in the other, the results of the work be-

come the heritage of the race. The head of the race represents the race before God. The ruin of the head becomes the ruin of the race. If the head stands, so does the race.

In either case, the connection of the head and the race is by life and nature, a corrupt nature being transmitted from the fallen head, a divine life and nature, free from and incapable of taint, from the new head, Christ Jesus. Death and judgment lay hold upon the fallen creature; righteousness characterizes the possessor of eternal life.

But here there is another need to be met; for these possessors of righteousness in a new life are by the old one children of Adam, and under wrath and condemnation because of manifold sins. Christ, the Son of the Father, is not stooping to take up un-fallen beings, and bring *them* into a new place of nearness to God, but He is taking up sinners. For these, then, He must provide, along with a new life, a righteousness which shall justify them from all charge of sin. They must not only be delivered from inward corruption by a principle of righteousness imparted; they must be delivered from guilt also by a righteousness *imputed*. There must be a "justification of life,"—that is, a justification belonging to the life communicated: "by one righteousness toward all men,"—God's grace offering itself for acceptance by all,—"unto justification of life."

Here, then, comes in, not representation simply, but *substitution*,—representation under penalty for those who had incurred the penalty. He who is our Representative-Head in life must be our Substitute in death also. He must be "obedient unto death," standing in our place, that **we** may stand

in His,—in the place He has won and taken for us with God.

His obedience avails for much more than negatively to justify from all charge of sin: it has its own infinite preciousness before God, in virtue of which we have a *positive* righteousness measured by this. *He* “of God is made unto us righteousness” (1 Cor. i. 30). We “receive *abundance* of the gift of righteousness,” as the passage before us says, and “shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ.”

Thus are the effects of the fall for us removed, and we stand in a new place under a new Head. We are in Christ, not Adam; and this, as we have seen, speaks of place in a representative,—that by virtue of headship of a race. Our connection with Christ is now, as formerly it was with Adam, by the life which we receive from Him, and of which we partake in Him,—that is, by belonging to the race of which He is head. This and its consequences are unfolded further in the following chapters, to which this doctrine of the two Adams is the key.

(To be continued, D.V.)

“IF your honest purpose be to get on in the divine life, to progress in spirituality, to cultivate personal acquaintance with Christ, then challenge your heart solemnly and faithfully as to this. Make Christ your habitual good. Go, gather the manna that falls on the dew-drops, and feed upon it with an appetite sharpened by a diligent walk with God through the desert.”

“CHRISTIAN, see carefully to it that you are not only saved by Christ, but also living on Him.”

SOME THEMES OF THE SECOND PART OF ROMANS.

II.—JUSTIFICATION AND DEAD TO SIN.

THE doctrine of justification is developed mainly in the first part of Romans, but extends, in a certain very important application of it, into the sixth chapter, while the latter part of the fifth, which we were last considering, connects it with the doctrine of the two Adams therein given. It is as in Christ we find it, accompanying the new life by which we are made of His race as last Adam:—"justification of life." For this reason a glance back will be here in place.

The truth is developed in this epistle in the order of application to the soul's need. And the first part accordingly begins with that which is its first conscious need, the guilt of sins committed; the second part takes up what is a later discovery and distress, the sin inherent in a fallen nature. The first of these is met by the application of the blood of Christ, justification by His blood. The second is met by the application of the death of Christ: "our old man is crucified with Christ;" "he that is dead is justified from sin" (vi. 6, 7, *marg.*).

These are two different applications of the same work of Christ, which avails in all its fullness for every believer. No one can be justified by the blood of Christ who is not at the same time justified by the death of Christ. The blood is already the sign of death having taken place, and only as that could it avail for us. It is only as that that it could put away our sins, so as to give us effectual peace with God at all.

Justification is the act of divine righteousness. It is for this reason that the righteousness of God is so prominent in the first part of Romans, while

it is not found at all in the second part. Righteousness is that quality in God which has of necessity to say to sin, and on account of which the soul conscious of its guilt trembles to meet Him. No one, whatever be his guilt, is afraid of God's love; but how great soever that love may be, the awakened conscience at once begins to realize that it is *righteousness* must have to say to sin. The glory of the gospel is this, that it takes up just this character of God to put it on the side of the believer in Jesus, so as to make it his very boast and confidence. "I am not ashamed of the gospel [the glad tidings]," says the apostle; "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." And how this power? "For therein"—in these glad tidings to guilty men,—“the *righteousness* of God is revealed, by faith, to faith” (chap. i. 16, 17, *Rev. Vers.*). It is the revelation of divine righteousness in a gospel to the guilty, faith alone being required to receive the gospel, it is this which is the power of God for the deliverance of souls.

In the third chapter it is more fully made known as divine righteousness declared by the cross “in the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God” (iii. 25, *R.V.*), and at this time, “that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus” (v. 26). The righteousness of God is that, then, which makes *Him* righteous in pronouncing righteous the believer in Jesus. This righteousness of God becomes as it were a house of refuge with its door open “unto all,” and its protecting roof, impervious to the storm, “*over*”*

* ἐπὶ, “over,” or “on.” There is indeed a question of reading here, and some would leave out “and over all;” but we need not consider this now.

all them that believe,"—over all that have fled to the cross for refuge (*v.* 22).

It is the righteousness of God which repels every charge against the believer in Jesus. His justification is an act of righteousness, for the blood that is before God is the token of the death of his Substitute in his behalf. The penalty of his sins has been endured by Another, who, if "delivered for our offenses," "was raised again for our justification." This is the public sentence of it which declares on God's part His acceptance of the work. The *ground* is the blood; the *sentence* is the resurrection of our Surety. This sentence is God coming in to manifest Himself for us on account of the work of Christ accomplished. Faith rests in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

This might seem all that is needed. Assuredly the work of Christ meets every need, and His resurrection is the token of complete acceptance. What is needed is not in fact something more than this, but the fuller bringing out of what is involved in it; that in our Substitute we have therefore passed away as on the footing of the first man, identified with Adam, and are in Christ on the footing of the Second Man, alive in Him to God. For faith, therefore, I am dead to sin; because He died to it, and cannot live in what I am,—though for faith only,—dead to. This approves the *holiness* of the doctrine, as the seventh and eighth chapters show its *power*. It answers the moral question with which the sixth chapter opens.

Let us notice the way the doctrine is unfolded. The objection is started, "If then grace abounds over sin, then the more our sin the more His

grace. Shall we then continue in sin, that grace may abound?" To which he answers, "We are dead to sin, how can we live in it?" This is conclusive against the abuse of the doctrine, although it is only for faith that we are dead: for then *faith* in it must tend to holiness, and not unholiness. The truth is ever according to godliness.

But how then are we dead to sin? He bids them think of what was involved in their baptism. Baptized to Christ Jesus,—again the order of words whose significance we have seen before,—we were baptized to His *death*: to have our part in this, according to the ordained testimony of it upon earth. Burial is just putting a dead man into the place of death: "we are therefore *buried* with Him by baptism into death." Our place in natural life is ended: upon earth we have but our part in the death of Jesus. But He is risen; the glory of the Father necessitated His resurrection from among the dead, and this is to give its character to the new life in which henceforth we are to walk; "for if we have come to be identified* [with Him] in the likeness of His death, we shall be also on the other hand in the likeness of His resurrection." That is, if our baptism—the "likeness of His death"—have real meaning with us, we shall be, in the character of our walk, in the likeness of His resurrection.† One thing will be the result of the other; "knowing this, that our old man"—all that we were in that old fleshly life—"is crucified

*I follow the London New Translation. "United," which the Revised Version gives, does not give the full force. It is literally "*grown together*" (not "planted") so as to be one. "With Him" is evidently to be understood.

† Observe the *γεγονήμεν*, "we have become," in contrast with the *ἐσόμεθα*, "we shall be,"—not "become." But this is only moral "likeness," not the full being "risen with Him" of Ephesians and Colossians.

with Him,, that the body of sin might be destroyed,"—"nullified," rather, "brought practically to nothing,"—"that henceforth we should not serve sin."

The "knowing this" connects with the sentence before, and confirms the meaning of "the likeness of His resurrection" as a present moral result. Our old man received its sentence of shame and condemnation from God, (for this is what the cross means,) where Christ died for us. We know and have accepted its setting aside thus.

But here we must inquire the exact force and meaning of "our old man." Many take it as the expression of the "natural corruption or unholy affections of men," or "the old nature." But Scripture has a different term for the old nature, and for the principle of evil in it. It speaks of the "flesh," and of "sin in the flesh." Between person and nature there is an essential and important difference; and if we are to take the inspired words as a perfect guide, (which we surely are,) "the old *man*" is person, and not nature. The importance lies in this, that responsibility (because the real *activity*) belongs to the person, not the nature. It is not *nature* that acts, although it may give character to the actions; and we as Christians are exhorted not to "walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit:" practically—though with an important difference too, which we may by and by consider,—not after the old nature, but after the new. The responsible person is distinguished as such from *both* natures,* which are together in him.

* "Nature" (from *natus*, "born,") means the character derived from birth; and we are born, and born again. The man of Romans vii. 17, 18, although new born, and able to distinguish himself from "the sin that dwelleth in" him, still must say, in his "flesh dwelleth no good thing."

So, in full accordance with this, we read of "the flesh with its affections and lusts," and even of "the *works* of the flesh" (Gal. v. 24, 19),—*i. e.*, fleshly works; but "*doings*" (*πράξεις*) are attributed to the "old man" only (Col. iii. 9).

Moreover, the old man is never said to be in the Christian, but always to have been "put off," as in Ephesians iv. 22, *Gr.*, Colossians iii. 9, or as here, "crucified with Christ" (vi. 6); while the flesh, on the contrary, (though he is not in it,) is always recognized as in him.*

The "old man" is not, therefore, "the flesh"—the old nature, but the person *identified with the nature*. It is myself as I was under the old head,—as a living responsible child of Adam. It is as such the Lord stood for me upon the cross, and dying, ended for me the whole standing and its responsibilities together. He died for *me*, not for the old man, to restore it, but for me, that as the sinner that I was, I might find, in nature and activities together, my rightful condemnation in the cross, and have my place in Himself before God, and not in Adam. Responsibility *as a Christian* of course only here begins, but as a child of Adam it is over. My Substitute has died, and death ends the whole condition to which responsibility attaches. Eternal judgment is only for the deeds *done in the body*; and, my Substitute having died, I have died with Him—have passed out of the whole sphere of accountability in this respect.

We see how well it may be said, "Much more,

* Galatians v. 24 may be objected to this, where it is said that "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." But this is not the same thing with Romans vi. 6. *There*, it is "with Christ,"—the effect of His cross: *here*, it is *they that are Christ's* have done it, as accepting in heart and mind their place as His.

then, being now justified by His blood, *we shall be saved* from wrath through Him." Every thought that might raise a question is indeed for the once-justified one completely gone; and, in Christ, we live because He lives.

And what is the consequence of this crucifixion of the old man? It is that "he that is dead is justified from sin." So the Greek, and the Revised Version rightly now. We see how truly it is a question of person and personal standing all through here. Justification is of course that, but it is a justification more complete than in the first part of the epistle. No lust, no sin of thought, no evil passions, belong to a dead man—to a corpse. And this shows in how far we are dead to sin. Nothing of all this can be imputed to one dead with Christ. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." The life now begun is as much involved in and dependent upon His life as the death we have been considering is involved in His death. Changeless, eternal, past the power of death it therefore is: "knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over Him; for in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God."

He has died to sin, but what sin? In Him there was none, but on the cross—standing there for us—He had to say to it, and as "made sin for us" died. But thus He has passed away from it forever, to live ever to Him now from whose blessed face, when bearing the burden of it, it had necessarily separated Him. For us He died, and died to sin: this death and this deliverance by death belong to us. But in Him also we live, in the life He lives,

a life wholly to God. "Even so reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (v. 11, R. V.).

We are to "reckon" this so, not feel, find, or experience. It is not a matter of feeling or experience that Christ has died to sin. By faith we know it, and by faith also that He lives to God beyond the power of death. It is a most certain fact; but faith alone can apprehend it; and faith alone can apprehend our death with or our life in Him.

But here let us pause a little to consider some things that have been in dispute of late, and their application to what is before us. Is it condition, or standing, to be in Christ before God? or is it perhaps both together? The doctrine already considered, if it be clearly according to the Word, will enable us, surely, conclusively to settle this.

What is meant by "standing"? Clearly it is the same as position or place,* but in a certain aspect which makes it practically somewhat narrower. The last words are not found in Scripture in the present application, and in the New Testament in any real application to what we call *Christian* standing, the former possibly three times.† Two passages say it is *in grace* we stand; one speaks of standing "faultless in the presence of His glory." In Romans v. 1 it is "*this* grace," referring, not necessarily to what has gone before, but to present known grace—the free and absolute

*The same verb, ἵστημι, in certain tenses means "to stand," and in certain others, transitively, "to make to stand—to set, or set up, establish, etc."

†Rom v 1, 1 Pet v 12, Jude 24. In the last case it is in the transitive form, "present," or "make you stand." We must not confound with these such passages as Rom xi. 20, 1 Cor xv. 1, 2 Cor i 24, Col. iv 12, etc., the force of which is really different. The text in Peter is doubtful—many read "stand," not "ye stand."

favor of God. Further than this, if we insist on the direct use of the word, Scripture does not carry us.

But the force of the word is simple, and its legitimate application does not seem hard to reach. As I have said, "standing" is position in a certain aspect, namely, in view of its *capability of being maintained*. Thus it is used often for continuance, as in opposition to falling. "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot *stand*."—"I *continue* [or 'stand'] unto this day." "Standing" is used, therefore, of position where there might be question of such continuance, and the question before God being as to the claim of His righteousness being met, and the claim of His righteousness being the demand of His throne, I believe "*position before the throne*" would fitly express what would be meant by "standing."

It does not follow that this will be negative merely, however,—a mere question of guilt. For the throne of God is surely as much that which appraises righteousness as guilt; nay, it is this which involves the other. Our standing before God is much—how much!—more than as justified from sins or sin, it is "the abundance of the gift of righteousness,"—the *best* robe for the Father's house.

But we do not ordinarily,—and I think, rightly—speak of standing as sons, or as members of the body of Christ. The terms of the throne we do not apply to the family, or to Church-relationship. Standing is what we call a forensic term, and does not convey the whole truth of our position.

Now if we speak of condition, it is simple that this may refer to either a fixed or a variable state. If born again, *that* is a condition which abides un-

changeable, while there are states, as of feeling, etc., which may change in the lapse of a few moments.

In the application of this to what we have before us, what does this speak of? standing, or state, or both—"dead to sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus"?

Now being "dead" is state—the state of one who has died. I have died with Christ to sin, as real a fact as can be; and though He lives, and death has no more dominion over Him, yet *as to sin* He remains still separated from it by death, *to it* still and ever dead: and this is my condition too as dead with Him. Though faith alone can realize it, it is a state in which I am unchangeably. So also, and of course, as to being "alive unto God:" that is unmistakably a condition contrasted with the other.

But what is implied in being "dead to sin"? The apostle answers, "Being *justified* from it." "Our *old man* is crucified with Christ." It is I myself as one standing on the old ground,—myself as *identified* with the old nature and its fruits alike—who have come to an end, and come to an end in deserved judgment: crucified; yes, and crucified *with Christ*. It is Christ who has stood for me, died for me: the old *standing* is gone. In this "dead to sin," condition and standing are inseparably united.

What then about the other side? If the old condition and standing are removed together, what replaces these? A new condition—"alive unto God; inseparably connected with a new standing—"in Christ Jesus." This, and this alone, is the complete answer. I have before remarked upon the order of the words. "In Christ," in

contrast with "in Adam," speak of a new Head of a new race, who is at the same time the Representative of it, as Adam of his. "In Adam" we die: "in Christ we live,"—our life bound up with His life: "Because I live, ye shall live also."—"If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." This life is already begun: by faith we know, and reckon it so. We are "dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus."

This gives us the new standing, and the positive righteousness which is ours before God. As Head of His race, He stands before God in the perfection of the work He has accomplished, in the value of that matchless obedience, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us wisdom from God,—even righteousness." This is not merely guilt removed; it is the *best* robe in the Father's house.

(*To be continued, D. V.*)

"WE are bent upon doing something which God does not want us to do at all; upon going somewhere that God does not want us to go. We pray about it, and get no answer. We pray again and again, and get no answer. How is this? Why, the simple fact is that God wants us to be quiet, to stand still, to remain just where we are. Wherefore, instead of racking our brain, and harassing our souls about what we ought to do, let us do nothing but simply wait on God."

KEY-NOTES TO THE BIBLE BOOKS.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.—*Continued.*

III.

THE MANIFESTATION AND REJECTION OF THE KING. (Chap. viii.—xii.)

1. *The signs of His presence* (viii, ix. 34). The character of His kingdom being thus announced, the next two chapters give at full length the signs which show the presence of the Deliverer and King. And here again at the outset, in two typical cases, is exhibited His rejection by Israel and His reception by the Gentiles.

The leper, an Israelite, but whose place was forfeited (as theirs had been,) by his condition, is the significant representative of his nation. The Lord heals him by *touch*, as One locally present for man's need, sending the healed man to the priest, as Jehovah's ministers to certify the cure,—the witness of Jehovah's presence among them,—for a testimony to the people. To this there is no response; but then a Gentile, the centurion, appears, whose faith, going beyond any in Israel, accredits Him with power to heal, not merely present, but *absent*, by His word. This is characteristically the faith of the present dispensation, and the Lord announces thereupon the nations coming and sitting down in the kingdom with the heirs of promise, while the children of the kingdom should be cast out. These two cases seem preliminary to the general account which follows of the signs which certify His power and title in the midst of the people.

We find Him, therefore, again healing by touch, in the case of Peter's wife's mother, and in the

evening casting out devils by His word, and healing all the sick; fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy with a sympathetic love manifested in power for all who came. Multitudes thus come *about* Him, but not really to follow; and he who would do so must follow Him as One without where to lay His head. None the less is His claim to absolute obedience, nor His power to secure those who follow Him amid whatever opposition. This the storm on the Sea of Galilee bears witness of, where He is at first not actively present, but asleep. Finally, roused by their unbelieving entreaties, (how much unbelief is often expressed by our prayers!) He interferes for them, and the winds and waves subside at His word. In general, for us now, the character of power expressed for us is that which kept them while He was asleep. At His active interference when presently He shall wake up, all the fury of the storm shall cease.

This seems to me, then, parenthetical, not part of His self-manifestation in the midst of Israel, which is resumed on the other side of the sea. Here the power of the enemy is met, demonstrated, and foiled with ease. Man's terrible captor is compelled to give up his prey. Alas! the people, more alarmed at the presence of Jesus than of the devil, beseech Him to depart, and He departs. Then, in His own city, He reaches down to the deepest need of all, the sin which is at the bottom of man's helpless misery and subjection to the evil one, and He works a miracle to give them suitable proof that "the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." But here it is in answer to the accusation, "This man blasphemeth." Thus, the more He manifests Himself, and although in

blessing, the more manifest is His rejection at the hands of men.

But it only compels Him, as it were, to openly declare His grace. He calls a publican to follow Him, as the witness of it, and sits down in his house with publicans and sinners. He declares Himself come to call these, not as the law which required righteousness. In truth, not only were they ignorant of who was in their midst, and strangers to the joy of the Bridegroom's presence, but would have the true righteousness He came to give merely made a patch for the holes in the rags of man's own legal one. The new wine of His grace must be put in other than the old skins of the law.

Again, most beautifully, a dispensational picture follows here. Israel, while He is on the way to heal her, is in fact discovered to be dead, as is Jairus' daughter. For Israel also He has therefore to go beyond a law which could not give *life*. But then upon that principle (as Rom. iii. 29, 30,) God, if dealing in grace, could come in for need wherever found, and faith could be welcomed freely to avail itself of the power in Christ. This brings in the Gentiles, who find their figure in the poor woman healed, in fact before Jairus' daughter. Yet she is raised up also, as Israel will be, in the power and grace of Him in whom alone, after all, her hope is.

Having vindicated thus His title as Son of God, (for resurrection marks Him out as this with-power for man, Rom. i. 4,) He can appear as Son of David, for this title, as we have seen, He can only take as connected with the other. The blind men own Him as this, although they are forbidden,

because He is really rejected, to spread His fame as such. The dumb man who speaks when the devil is cast out seems, again, a picture of what caused the nation's silence when they should have hailed their King. But the Pharisees consummate their wickedness by imputing to Beelzebub His miracles of power and grace.

2. *The messengers of the King* (chap. ix. 35-x.). The Lord's pity for the scattered sheep now makes Him send forth messengers throughout Israel. The testimony is distinctly for them, not to Samaria or the Gentiles, and "powers of the world to come" still attest the coming kingdom. It is a testimony which, while in abeyance during the present dispersion of Israel, will be taken up again after the Church is removed to heaven, and not completed until the Son of Man be come again (x. 23). This final testimony will be above all in the face of trials and persecutions of the severest kind; but the Lord is with His messengers, to reward or punish those who, in them, receive or reject Himself:—a principle applied to the Gentiles in chap. xxv. 31-49, among whom a similar testimony will be given at the same time.

3. *Rejected, yet grace lingering and inviting* (chap. xi.). We have now the direct witness of His grace in spite of opposition and rejection. Even the Baptist seems to waver, while the people in general had rejected both John's testimony, coming in the way of righteousness, and the Lord's in grace. Wisdom has found her children only among publicans and sinners; and the cities privileged to behold His mighty works, have only used the opportunity to increase their judgment beyond that of Canaan or of Sodom.

Yet His heart rests. It is right that from the wise and prudent of this world should be hidden what the Father reveals to babes. What wisdom of man merely could pierce the mystery of the Son incarnate? Yet into His hands the Father had given every thing, and by Him alone could the Father be revealed. Let those laboring and burdened come to Him, and He would give them rest; and learning of Him who, with all the glory of His person, trod Himself in meekness the path of obedience, they would find rest in taking the yoke He gave; for His yoke was easy, His burden light.

4. *The rejection of the nation for the rejection of Him* (chap. xii.). Now the guilt of that generation is summed up, and their doom pronounced. The Lord shows them that the Sabbath, the sign of God's covenant existing with them as His people, is gone for those who had broken the covenant, and lost the place of relationship with God. David being rejected, God's link with the people in his day, the holy things ceased to be such, so that his followers could partake of the holy bread. On the other hand, in the service of the temple, the priests could without blame infringe the ordinance of the Sabbath. Mercy more than sacrifice was God's own mind; and the Son of Man, greater than David or the temple, was Lord of the Sabbath day.

In the synagogue the same question arises, and the Lord convicts them of the heartlessness of their opposition to divine grace. The Pharisees seek to destroy Him. Again, the blind and dumb, made so by Satan's tenancy, bears witness to the Son of David, and again the Pharisees utter their awful blasphemy. The Lord exposes their folly and

warns them as to the result of blaspheming the Holy Ghost. The bad fruit showed the whole tree bad, even the idle words for which men must give account in the day of judgment.

Finally, when they seek a sign, He tells them they shall have none but that of Jonah. Jonah, after three days and nights in the whale's belly, had appeared at Nineveh with the word of judgment. The Son of Man, rejected, and three days in the grave, would be in His day a similar sign of judgment to His rejecters (comp. chap. xxiv. 30). The external reformation which had taken place on their return from Babylon, when the unclean spirit of idolatry had left his house, would not avail; the house was empty still, and he would return with seven other spirits worse than himself, and take possession (comp. chap. xxiv. 15, and 2 Thess. ii. 4).

The Lord closes with the solemn breaking of all fleshly ties. It was He who should do the will of His Father in heaven whom alone He could now recognize as in relation to Himself. This is a principle of Christianity, and prepares the way for that view of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,—the kingdom during the rejection and absence of the King, which the next section of the book discloses to us.

THE PSALMS.

Series 2.—(Remnant Psalms)—Second Five.

PSALM XXX.

*The heart made to rejoice in God Himself rather than
in the prosperity given by His hand.*

A psalm; a song of dedication of the house. Of David.

I WILL extol Thee, Jehovah; for Thou hast raised me up, and hast not made my foes rejoice over me.

2. Jehovah my God! I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me.

3. Jehovah, Thou hast brought up from hades my soul; Thou hast revived me from among them that go down to the pit.

4. Sing psalms to Jehovah, ye godly ones of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.

5. For His anger is for a moment, in His favor is life; weeping may lodge at evening, and for morning there be a song of joy.

6. And I, in my prosperity I said, "I never shall be moved."

7. Jehovah, in Thy favor Thou hadst made my mountain to stand strong: Thou hiddest Thy face; I was troubled.

8. Unto Thee, Jehovah, I cried; even to Jehovah I made supplication.

9. What profit will be in my blood if I go down to corruption? will the dust give Thee thanks? will it declare Thy truth?

10. Jehovah, hear and be gracious to me; Jehovah, be my helper!

11. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: Thou hast loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness;

12. To the end my glory may sing psalms to Thee and not be silent: Jehovah my God, I will give Thee thanks forever.

Text.—(5) Lit., "There is a moment in His anger."

(7) Lit., "Thou hadst established strength to my mountain."

(8) Lit., "I cry," "I make supplication."

PSALM XXXI.

In Jehovah's hand and not in the enemy's, however it might seem.

To the chief musician. A psalm of David.

IN Thee, Jehovah, have I taken refuge: let me never be ashamed, deliver me in Thy righteousness.

2. Bow down Thine ear to me, rescue me speedily; be to me a rock of strength,—a house of defense to save me!

3. For my rock and my fortress Thou art! and for Thy name's sake lead me and guide me!

4. Draw me out of the net they have laid privily for me; for Thou art my stronghold.

5. Into Thine hand I commend my spirit; for Thou hast redeemed me, Jehovah, God* of truth.

6. I have hated those who observe lying vanities; and as for me, in Jehovah have I trusted.

7. I will rejoice and be glad in Thee; for Thou hast seen my affliction, Thou hast known my soul in straits,

8. And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; Thou hast set my feet in a large place.

9. Be gracious to me, Jehovah, for I am in a strait; mine eye is consumed with vexation, [yea,] my soul and my belly.

10. For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.

11. I am become a reproach because of all mine oppressors, even to my neighbors exceedingly, and a dread to mine acquaintance: they that see me without flee from me.

12. I am forgotten as a dead man, from the heart; I am like a vessel which is marred.

13. For I have heard the murmur of many,—shrinking on every side; while they counseled together against me,—they plotted to take my life.

14. But as for me, I have trusted in Thee, Jehovah: I have said, Thou art my God.

15. My times are in Thy hand: rescue me from mine enemies' hand, and from my persecutors!

16. Make Thy face shine upon Thy servant: in Thy mercy, save me!

17. Jehovah, let me not be ashamed, for I have called upon Thee: let the wicked be ashamed, let them be silent in hades.

18. Be dumb the lying lips, which proudly and contemptuously speak hard things against the righteous!

19. O how great Thy goodness, which Thou hast stored up for those who fear Thee! [which] Thou workest for those whose refuge is in Thee, before the sons of men!

20. Thou concealest them in the covert of Thy presence from the compacts of Men: Thou hidest them in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

21. Blessed be Jehovah, because He hath distinguished His mercy to me in a fenced city.

22. As for me, I said in my alarm, "I am cut off from before Thine eyes:" nevertheless Thou hast heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto Thee.

23. O love Jehovah, all ye godly ones of His: Jehovah preserveth the faithful, and plentifully recompenseth the proud doer.

24. Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all ye that hope in Jehovah.

A SONG IN THE DESERT.

N EARLY now the last stage trodden of the desert way;
All behind them lies the darkness, all before—the day.
But some hearts were weary traveling, murmuring at the
road;

Half forgetting their deliverance by the mighty God.

“Naught,” they said, “there lies around us but the desert
sand;

Oh to see once more the rivers of Egyptia’s land!”
Then God’s heart of deep compassion sent the message
free,—

“If the people look for water, gather them to Me.”

Forty years of desert-wandering, proving man was vain;
Turning back in heart to Egypt when a pressure came.
Forty years of desert-wandering, mercies sweet and new
Every day their path surrounding, proving God was true.

Now the journey almost over, trial well-nigh past,
He would have them, as when starting, raise a song at last.
Naught but desert sand around them—not one spot of
green,

But the glory of His presence lighting up the scene.

Desert weariness forgotten by that mighty throng,
As around that springing water voices rise in song.
Not a song of “victory” only now their voices fill,
But the deeper blest experience—“God is with us still.”

* * * * *

Nearly now the last stage trodden of the desert way;
All behind us lies the darkness, all before—the day.
Wondrous day of glowing promise, dimming all beside,
When the One who died to win us comes to claim His
bride.

And while watching for His coming, waiting here below,
He would have us in the desert find the waters flow.
Streams of sweet and deep refreshment gladdening all
the throng,
Giving us, when gathered round Him, blessing and a
song.

A. S. Q.

ATONEMENT.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Romans and Galatians.

THERE are four of the epistles of Paul which introduce us by successive steps to the height of Christian position. They are those to the Romans, Galatians, Colossians, and Ephesians. As our position before God is in the value of Christ's work for Him, we shall necessarily find in these epistles the exposition fully of the doctrine of atonement. In fact, a concordance is enough to show that only in Corinthians and Hebrews beside, of Paul's fourteen epistles, is the *blood* of Christ spoken of, and only in Philippians additionally is the cross. Hebrews, indeed, speaks more of the blood of Christ than any other book of the New Testament. Its doctrine we shall hope to consider at another time, however.

Of the four epistles I have mentioned, Romans and Galatians are most nearly connected together, and Colossians and Ephesians. The negative side of deliverance by the death of Christ is the topic of the former; the positive side of what we are brought into as identified with Him in life, that of the latter; although Colossians unites the "dead" and "buried with Christ" of Romans to the "quickened" and "raised up with Christ" of Ephesians.

Romans and Galatians differ mainly in this, that while Romans through the ministry of Christ's work establishes the soul in peace, and delivers it from the power of sin, Galatians takes up the moral principles of Judaism and Christianity as a

warning to those made free by grace, not to entangle themselves again with the yoke of bondage. In pursuance of this end, Galatians takes one important step beyond Romans, although clearly involved in the doctrine of the latter. Romans says we are dead with Christ to sin and the law; Galatians adds that we are crucified to the *world*, and a *new creation*.

The doctrinal part of Romans is found in the first eleven chapters: the part with which we have to do here is the first eight, and these divide into two portions at the end of chap. v. 11. Up to this, we have the doctrine of the *blood* of Christ as justifying us from our *sins*. Beyond it, we have the doctrine of the *death* of Christ as meeting the question of our *nature*.

Yet the blood is the token of death, and as this alone, has meaning. The difference is mainly in this, that the blood is looked at here as what is *offered to God*; the death, as what *applies to us*. It is, in fact, the death of our Substitute which is offered to God in the blood of propitiation. We look Godward to see the effect for us as to peace; we look at the sacrifice to realize the power and fullness of what has satisfied Him. The two are bound together in the most indissoluble way. To him for whom the blood of Christ avails, the death of Christ at the same time applies; while the order of apprehension is undoubtedly that in which the epistle treats of these. The first question with the soul is, Is all settled forever Godward? The next is, If this be so, *how* is the evil *in* me looked at by God? Much else connects itself with this, but our theme here is the atonement, and to this I confine myself at this time.

In accordance with what has just been stated, we find in chap. iii. 23 Christ first of all spoken of as a "propitiatory," or "mercy-seat,"* "through faith in His blood." Access to God is the point, with ability to stand before Him. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"—the glory that abode upon the mercy-seat, but from which all in Israel were shut out. This language of the old types is as simple as it is profound in its significance for us. The ark with its mercy-seat was the throne of Him who dwelt between the cherubim, of whom it was said, "Justice and judgment are the foundation of Thy throne," but at the same time "mercy and truth go before Thy face." (Ps. lxxxix. 14.) How then could the reconciliation of these toward man be accomplished? Only by the precious blood typified by that toward which the faces of the cherubim looked, the value of which the rent veil has witnessed, and through which the "righteousness of God" is now "toward all," the sanctuary of His presence is become the place of refuge for the sinner. By the sentence of His righteousness we are justified according to His grace, a sentence publicly given in the resurrection of Jesus our Lord from the dead, "who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification."

"Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." This is of course His life as risen for us, as He

* *ἱλαστήριον*, the regular word for "mercy-seat" in the Septuagint, not *ἱλασμός*, "propitiation," as 1 Jno. ii. 2.

says Himself, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

This leads on to the second part of Romans, where our death with Him and our life in Him are dwelt upon. And as the first part has given us the blood of the sin-offering,—blood which alone could enter the sanctuary,—so the second gives us the burning of the victim upon the ground, the passing away in judgment of all that we were as sinners before God. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Thus we have a new place and standing in Christ wholly, the old relationship to sin and law being done away.

Propitiation and substitution characterize thus these two parts of Romans respectively. The connection shows us clearly what we have before looked at, that it is *by* substitution that propitiation is effected. The propitiation is indeed marked as for all, though of course effectual only for those who believe. The door is open for all into the shelter provided, but he who enters finds in the substitution of Another in his place the only possible shelter. Upon all this it does not need now to dwell, as this has been done elsewhere, and we may now pass on to look briefly at the epistle to the Galatians.

Galatians, as to the doctrine of atonement, adds but little to Romans. The apostle, opposing the introduction of the law among Christians, insists strongly upon his own authority as one raised up of God, in His grace, out of the midst of Judaism, the incarnation of Jewish zeal against the Church, called to be an apostle of the revelation of Christ which he had independently received. He was an apostle, neither from men nor through man, and

had got nothing even from other apostles who were such before him, and who had been constrained to recognize the grace that had been given to him. Peter, moreover, at Antioch, had been openly rebuked by him for giving way to the legal spirit which he was now opposing; and here he repeats the doctrine of Romans which he had then maintained, that not only we are "justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law," but also that "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God; I am crucified with Christ."

Afterward, he goes on to show more particularly the purpose of the law, and, as illustrating this, the manner in which God had given it, with its character as shown by all this. The promise to Abraham had been made four hundred and thirty years before the law, in which God had declared that the blessing for all nations should be through his Seed—Christ, and on the principle of faith. But law is not faith; its principle is that of works, righteousness through these, but therefore for man only curse for every one who was upon that principle; and that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles God had to remove this curse of the law out of the way, Christ taking it when hanging upon the tree, for the law had said, "Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree."

Two things need a brief notice here. First, that (as should be obvious, but to some is not,) the hanging upon the tree is not *itself* the curse, but only marks the one upon whom the curse falls. The curse itself is no external thing, but a deep reality in the soul of him that bears it. This was the wrath upon sin which Christ bore for us, the

forsaking of God, which, had it not been borne, assuredly no blessing could have been for any.

Secondly, therefore, *it was not for Jews alone*, or those under law, that the curse of the law was borne. The words of the apostle are surely plain here: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, . . . *that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ*; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Clearly he says that blessing could not have been for Gentiles had Christ not borne the curse of the law, and this is as simple as possible, as soon as we see what essentially the curse is.

It is not the question whether Gentiles were under the law. It is quite true that God never put them there; and the apostle, in the passage before us, distinguishes those redeemed from its curse from the Gentiles of whom he speaks. But the law was only the trial of *man* as man, and Israel's condemnation by it was, "that *every* mouth might be stopped, and *all the world* become guilty before God." (Rom. iii. 19.) It is to miss fatally the point of the law not to see in it this universal reference. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." The condemnation of the Jew is the condemnation of all: the law's curse, only the emphasizing of the doom of all. And had not this been met and set aside, the blessed message of grace could have no more reached the Gentile than the Jew himself.

This is the very purpose of the law, for which it was "added" to the promise before given, not as a condition for it to be saddled with, but to bring out the need of the grace which the promise im-

plies. "It was added *for the sake of transgression*" (v. 19, *Gr.*); not to hinder but to *produce* it, ("for where no law is there is no transgression,") to turn sin into the positive breach of law, and thus to bring out its character, and bring men under condemnation for it. But it was added also for a certain time,—"*till* the Seed should come to whom the promise was made."

But if God were thus testing man, it was by "elements of the world" (chap. iv. 3), necessarily bondage only to the believer, and the cross is that by which we are "crucified to the world" (chap. vi. 14). For "in Christ Jesus, neither is circumcision any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (v. 15). And Christ "died for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." (chap. i. 4).

It is evident that Galatians takes up and completes the doctrine of Romans by adding that of deliverance out of the *world* to that from sin and law, as well as our place in new creation, involved already in the truth of the first Adam being the figure of Him that was to come, in whom we are.

"WHETHER fallen man gets a privilege or a law, a blessing or a curse, it is all alike. His *nature* is bad: he can neither rest with nor work for God. If God works and makes a rest for him, he will not keep it; and if God tells him to work, he will not do it. Such is man; he has no heart for God.

Nothing can exceed the desperate unbelief and wickedness of the human heart, save the superabounding grace of God."

SOME THEMES OF THE SECOND PART OF ROMANS.

III.—“IN THE FLESH” AND “IN THE SPIRIT.”

THE doctrine of chap. vii. 1-6, which is the key to all that follows, is that of the fourth verse—that “ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should belong to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God.” It is the same doctrine of our being dead with Christ, dead in His death, but differently applied.

First of all, as a fundamental necessity for holiness, the spirit of *lawlessness* is met by the doctrine that we are dead to *sin*. Here, as a step further in the same direction, the spirit of *legality* is met by the doctrine that we are dead to the *law*. In either case it is holiness—fruit-bearing—that is in question; not justification from sins, and peace with God, which the former part of the epistle has already answered. Here, it is “that we may bring forth *fruit*,” “that we may *serve* in newness of spirit.”

The sixth chapter deals with the objections of unbelief, whether outside or inside the profession of Christianity. The seventh chapter deals with the objections of earnest but self-occupied hearts, ignorant of God's way of liberty and power. The objections in the one case are of those who have *no* experience, as we may say; the objections in the other are drawn *from* experience, but yet unenlightened by the Word. In the one case, the apostle can appeal *to* the experience of men who had found no fruit in things of which now they were ashamed (vi. 21); in the other, he appeals *from* experience to the truth of the place which

God had given them, and which faith, and only faith, could receive.

We are not now to look at the whole argument, (for argument it is,) but at two pregnant expressions, which must be understood, rightly to apprehend it. "For, *when we were in the flesh*, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." "But *ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit*, if so be that the Spirit of Christ dwell in you; now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

What is it, then, to be in the flesh, and what to be in the Spirit,—these two evidently contrasted and mutually exclusive conditions? In the one, (if Christ's,) we are not; in the other we are. In the one, we "cannot please God;" in the other, if we live, we have yet to walk in order to please Him (Gal. v. 25).

Turning to the doctrine of the seventh chapter, it would seem the simplest thing possible to define what is meant by being "in the flesh." To be in the flesh is to be just a *living man*. We have it twice applied in the natural sense—Gal. ii. 20, Phil. i. 22. Here in Romans it is the condition of one who has not *died with Christ*. It is as "dead by the body of Christ" that the apostle can say with all Christians, "*When we were in the flesh*" (vii. 4, 5).

Condition and standing, as we have seen, are here inseparable. Condition is, in the context of the passages before us, the thing most dwelt upon; but it is *the condition of one in the standing*, and of no other. "When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to *bring forth fruit unto death*." This

is what we find in the sixth chapter: "What fruit had ye *then* in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the *end of those things is death*. But *now*, being freed from sin, and made servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the *end everlasting life*." The man in the flesh is one on the road to death.

Again in the eighth chapter: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit; for the mind of the flesh is *death*, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind of the flesh is *enmity against God*, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: so then they that are in the flesh *cannot please God*." (viii. 5-8.)

They that are in the flesh are thus in a state of spiritual death, going on to eternal death. They are "after the flesh"—characterized by and identified with it. They are mere natural men: flesh, as born of flesh.

Here, then, was no fruit, while we were in this condition. The law is what applies to it, but is no remedy for it. "The law was not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane" (1 Tim. i. 9, *R.V.*). Moreover, "the law is not of faith:" faith is not its principle (Gal. iii. 12); and "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse" (*v.* 10). To be "under the law" and "under grace" are things exclusive of one another (Rom. vi. 14).

It is true that God had once a people under law, for His own purposes of unfailing wisdom. As the "ministration of death" and "of condemnation"

(2 Cor. iii. 7, 9), it was a "schoolmaster" under which in Israel even saints were "kept, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed" (Gal. iii. 23, 24). The wholesome lessons of man's natural helplessness and hopelessness were taught by it, God saving of course all the time by a grace which He could not yet declare openly. But to believers it was necessarily bondage, "added" only "till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made," and when "faith came," as God's openly acknowledged principle, they were "no longer under the schoolmaster" (v. 19, 25). We are henceforth disciples of Christ and not of the law, although we have the good of the tutorship under which others were of old.

For the child of God, from the first moment of his being that, "faith" and "grace,"—the opposites of law,—are God's linked principles of unfailing blessing. The ministry of the new covenant is the "ministration of life" and "of righteousness" (2 Cor. iii. 6, 9). "The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord,"—a new standing and a new condition. The power of His death attaches to the gift of His life, and he who lives in Him has died with Him. This is death to sin and to law* alike.

The law was in Israel, then, that to which man was linked, a link from which fruit was looked for, nay, demanded. In fact, only "passions of sins" were "by the law" (v. 5), the full account of which the apostle gives afterward (vv. 7-13). The law is not merely the ministration of condemnation; it is

*It may be urged that God never put the Gentile under law at all and this is true. The apostle addresses himself especially to Jewish converts. Yet the practical freedom is the same for all. And the Gentile needs the apprehension as well as the Jew, as we are witness to ourselves.

also "the strength of sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56). "Sin shall not not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace" (vi. 14).

Death to the law is therefore absolutely necessary for fruitfulness. The death of Christ is the believer's effectual divorce, that he may be free to be linked with Christ raised up from the dead, that thus there may be fruit.

But here, the doctrine goes beyond that of the sixth chapter. For the figure is that of marriage,—of union; and a divorce from the law must have come first in order that we may be united to Christ. We cannot be *disunited* by what unites us to another. It is not, therefore, by life in Christ that we are *united* to Christ, nor is this what could be figured by marriage. For this, we must go on to what really unites Christians to their Lord,—the gift of the Spirit. It is the contrast of chap. viii. 9 to which this brings us. "In the flesh," the link is with law; the fruit, the passions of sins; the end, death. "In the Spirit," we are linked with Christ, the fruit is holiness, the end everlasting life. "If ye *through the Spirit* mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

I pass over the experience of the seventh chapter entirely now to consider the statement of chap. viii. 9, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you;" to which is emphatically added, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

It seems *unaccountable* how any one, except by some preoccupation of the mind, should see in this the statement that we only cease to be in the flesh by the indwelling of the Spirit. To take the figure

already used by the apostle: one alive in the flesh is married to the law; if by the Spirit he is now married to Christ,—does he die to the law by the new marriage? must he not be dead to the law to be *free* for the new marriage? Surely it is as clear as noonday that a new marriage cannot dissolve an old one, but that the old, as long as it existed, would forbid the new!

On the other hand, what more simple than to argue that if you are in the new bond (the Spirit), you are not in the old one (the flesh), without at all implying that the new bond had *destroyed* the old? It only shows, and that conclusively, that the *old does not exist*.

The “old man”—what for a Christian is now such—is a man in the flesh, as the sixth chapter has already shown us. He is the man “corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,” and “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Is it in such the Spirit comes to dwell? They may think so who suppose the indwelling of the Spirit to be only tantamount to being born again; but Scripture is of course clear that it is “*having believed*, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. i. 13, *R. V.*), the very form of expression showing that it is that which began at Pentecost (Acts i. 4, 5) that is referred to, and not the common possession of believers of all time.

God’s order is, first, new birth, then sealing; first, the preparing of the house, and then dwelling in the house prepared; not simply a new life for us, but a divine Person dwelling in us: and this is the testimony to the perfection of the work now accomplished for us, for *God’s seal can only be set on perfection*. Having believed, we have already

seen that we are in the value of Christ's work before God, sin and flesh completely gone from before Him, ourselves dead to sin, alive to God in Christ. It is here the Spirit of God can seal us, and unite us to Christ as His. And where one is found upon whom the value of that work is, there is but one thing for which He waits, and that is the *acknowledgment* of Christ as Lord and Saviour, before He takes possession of His dwelling-place, and unites that soul to Christ on high.

Hence, *among those owning Christ* it can be said, "If any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." The seal of the Spirit is Christ's mark upon His own; therefore among those professing to be His, if the mark is not, it is a false profession.

Thus there is no thought in the New Testament of a class of believers in Christ who have not,—or may not have,—the Holy Ghost. It is in vain to seek elsewhere for a class of persons the existence of which the apostle here denies. To the Corinthians he writes in the most general way, so as to include *all* bowing really to the name of Jesus,—“To the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, *with all that* in every place *call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*, both theirs and ours.” And what does he ask of all these? “*Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*” (1 Cor. i. 2; vi. 19.) Surely, this is the prescience of the divine Word, to settle all controversy. Who will say, in face of this, that one who in heart calls on the name of Jesus Christ his Lord has not the Holy Ghost?

But then Romans viii. 9 becomes simplicity itself, and the many questions raised receive their absolute settlement. Our eyes have not to roam over christendom, lamenting that in so few of Christ's people the work of God is no more than half accomplished. That there is so little *manifestation* we may still lament, as even at Corinth the apostle could, and we may urge upon men still, with the apostle to the Galatians, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (v. 25), for these still are different things.

Does it make less of the gift that it is so little realized? or would it be more honoring to God to suppose that He has not bestowed it, where there is so little manifestation of it? Surely, surely, it is no such thing. Let the grace, and the responsibility of the grace, be pressed upon Christians; for it is faith that works for God, not doubt. Oh for a voice of power to cry in the ears of slumberers, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" Ye belong to Christ—ye are Christ's, and the seal of God is upon you. Lord, wake up Thy beloved people to the apprehension of Thy marvelous gift!

"ALTHOUGH the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." (Hab. iii. 17, 18.)

KEY-NOTES TO THE BIBLE BOOKS.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.—*Continued.*

IV.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM. (Chap. xiii.—xx. 28.)

1. *The kingdom of an absent King: its prophetic history* (chap. xiii. 1–52). The mysteries of the kingdom disclosed in these parables are “things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.” A *parable* of the kingdom supposes Israel rejected (*vv.* 13–15), and a form of it which the Old Testament did not contemplate (*vv.* 34, 35). This we find accordingly. It is a kingdom not set up in power, but the fruit of the sowing of seed, the word of the kingdom (*v.* 19), committed to the care of men (*v.* 25), and characterized by patience and long-suffering, until closed by a day of divine interference and discriminating judgment by angels’ hands (*vv.* 41–43), a day which is the “completion of the age” (*vv.* 40, 49, *Gr.*) before the coming and kingdom of the Son of Man, according to Daniel’s prophecy (*vii.* 13, 14). These mysteries include the whole intervening time, therefore, of the Lord’s absence.

These parables give the history of the kingdom up to this: a history of perfect failure on the part of man to whom its administration is intrusted, God’s purposes of course not failing. The contrast here gives us the two sections of the chapter. The first part, to *ver.* 35, the external history, told in the presence of the multitude; the second, God’s un-failing purposes, to the disciples in the house.

The first parable gives the sowing of the good

seed by the Son of Man, and its various success amid the opposition of Satan (*v.* 19), the flesh (*vv.* 20, 21), and the world (*v.* 22). Here, only a fourth part produces real fruit; but the second parable goes further, and shows us a counter-sowing of the enemy, not of the Word, of course, and which produces tares *among* the wheat,—opposers of the truth, in a Christian garb: a work which (as to its results in the *field* of the world) cannot be undone till the day of the harvest.

These two parables give us what is individual, although the whole is of course affected. The next two give us what is general. The character of the whole sowing, as if it were one seed, in the third; which recalls, and is intended to recall, Daniel iv. and Babylon. Out of the little gospel-seed, so unlikely to produce it, is developed an earthly (tree-like) system, in which the powers of evil (the birds,—comp. *vv.* 4, 19,) find secure lodgment. While the fourth parable exhibits the “woman,” the professing church, corrupting the word of Christ (the meat-offering, Lev. ii. 11) with the leaven of false doctrine (chap. xvi. 12; Mark viii. 15).

The picture is one of general and progressive deterioration, and which judgment ends; and it is what has indeed taken place, the evident, open thing which scarcely needs disciples’ eyes to see. Now on the other hand, three parables give us the divine purpose working out under all this failure. First, however, the secret of the tare-field, and its judgment fully, which requires anointed eyes to see. Then, the history of christendom being closed, the parables of the treasure, the pearl, and the drag-net, containing, I believe, God’s thoughts with regard to the three parties of chap. xxiv, xxv,

and in the same order,—Israel, the Church of God, and the Gentiles.

Israel is God's "treasure" (Ex. xix. 5; Ps. cxxxv. 4), "hidden" indeed as such, when the Lord came and for a moment disclosed it, hiding it again, however, and going to the cross, selling all He had to buy the field of the world, in which it was and where it is yet to be displayed.

The pearl is "*one*,"—one Church,—brought up out of the waters (always the figure of Gentile nations,) and possessed at the expense of the life that produced it; it is the fit figure of the glory of a grace abounding over sin, of which the Church is the chief vessel of display.*

The net seems to me to speak of the going forth of the "everlasting gospel" to the Gentiles, after the removal of the Church, the fruit of which is seen in the sheep found among them according to Matthew xxv, when the Lord appears.

This prophetic history is now followed by scenes which (while of course real occurrences,) are designed to give us typically various features of the kingdom in its mystery-form.

2. *The path of disciples* (chap. xiii. 53–xiv.). In the next chapter we have, I think, essentially a twofold picture: first, of the ministration of blessing, to which, in spite of rejection in a day of evil, those who know the power and grace of Christ are called; secondly, of the individual walk of faith, the Lord being absent.

* Pearls "are caused by particles of sand or other foreign substances getting between the animal and its shell; the irritation causes a deposit of nacre generally more brilliant than the rest of the shell. The Chinese obtain them artificially, by introducing into the living muscle foreign substances, such as pieces of mother of pearl fixed to wires, which thus become coated with a more brilliant material." How beautiful a picture of grace investing a sinner with the beauty of Christ!

Prefatory to these, and as characterizing the scene amid which the walk is, we have the Lord's rejection at Nazareth, where He had grown up, and then the death of His forerunner at the hands of Herod. The first of these is from the pride of men, the latter from their lusts. The Lord takes His place as rejected in the desert, where the people coming out to Him are met and ministered to by His grace. He counts upon disciples' faith to use His power for this, and in fact in spite of their unbelief employs them in this ministry. This gives us still our privilege and responsibility. In the next picture He is gone up to take His place of intercession on high, and the disciples are on the sea alone, tossed with waves, and the wind contrary; as, with Satan "prince of the power of the air," it has ever been. The boat represents the human means by which, when faith has not Christ personally before it, we maintain ourselves upon the waters. These means are essentially Jewish, no doubt; and the disciples, when left on earth by the Lord, were in fact at first a Jewish remnant. From this boat Peter, recognizing the Lord upon the waters and drawing nigh, separates himself to be with the Lord (the true Church-position), and the Lord and Peter return together to the boat, the *wind then ceasing*. Those in the boat,—a remnant of Israel, who will be by grace prepared to receive the Lord when He comes again,—own Him as the Son of God (always the test for Israel); and the boat coming to shore, His power in blessing is made known through all the country, as the world will know it after He comes again.

3. *The way of blessing* (chap. xv.—xvi. 12). The

next chapter shows us God's way of blessing in opposition to man's traditional teaching, by which conscience is perverted, and the heart is cured by washing the hands! For it is the heart, alas! out of which all evil comes, and only evil. Grace alone can reach and bless in this case; and in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, a Canaanite, of a race under the curse, finds the blessing which she seeks, not as claim, but as grace—as a dog. If man even will give crumbs, what will God not do? The safe appeal is to His heart, and grace alone is the manifestation of what is there. The feeding of the multitude follows and is connected with this: *seven* loaves,—a perfect provision, inexhaustible by man; *seven* baskets left over and above when all are filled. The Lord's warning to the disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees is the supplement to this.

4. *The principles of the kingdom in its mystery-form* (chap. xvi. 13–xvii. 21). And now we get what Peter speaks of in his second epistle as the principles of our calling (i. 3). We are called “by glory and virtue [courage];” glory before us, courage needed for the difficulties of the way. The cross for the Master means the cross for the disciple. To save one's life is to lose it; for Christ's sake to lose it is to save it forever.

Once more we are brought face to face with the unbelief that rejects Christ; the best natural thoughts incompetent, the Father's revelation needed to declare to us the Son of the living God. Upon this Rock, the Lord declares He will build His Church, giving Peter at the same time a name which connects him with this building (comp. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5). But *as* this also, he receives the

“keys of the kingdom of heaven,” for the Church administers the kingdom (see chap. xviii. 18).

But the King is rejected, and the Lord announces His cross, and that as marking the principle of His kingdom in its present form. Disciples too must bear their cross, His way for them to the glory beyond. But the glory is not only at the end of the way; as now revealed, it shines already upon it. Of this, the transfiguration is the testimony to the disciples, in which “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” are made known to “eye-witnesses of His majesty” (2 Pet. i. 16–18). Moses and Elias, the ministers of a former dispensation, here make way for the Son of God, to whom the Father’s voice testifies out of the “bright cloud” of the “excellent glory.”

From the wonder of this vision they come down to meet the devil at the foot of the mount; and here is seen the failure of disciples (through lack of prayer and fasting—dependence and self-denial,) to use the power intrusted to them. There is still resource in the Lord as there ever is.

5. *The responsibilities of grace* (chap. xvii. 22–xx. 28). We now come to see in detail the responsibilities of the grace declared to us. Again at the outset we are bidden to remember the cross in its character as rejection at the hands of men (vv. 22, 23). Then, on the occasion of the temple-tribute, the Lord teaches Peter on the one hand the place of sons, and associates him with Himself as that, and on the other not to insist on the recognition of claim in a world which “knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.” (1 Jno. iii. 1.)

Then a little child is made to illustrate conversion and true greatness in the kingdom. With

such little ones the Lord identifies Himself: for them the Son of Man came, and the Father's will is their security.

But holiness must be maintained as well as grace, and among recipients of this. For this purpose the assembly—if it be practically but two or three gathered to His name,—is intrusted by the Lord with the administration of His kingdom. Himself is in the midst to supply their need and authenticate their acts. Moreover, grace has itself an imperative claim upon the recipients of it, a claim which will be maintained finally in the judgment of those who do not manifest the spirit of forgiveness when accepted as forgiven ones. It is here, of course, of what is governmentally administered on earth that the Lord is speaking, not as if there were a question of the final safety of those absolutely forgiven in divine grace. But then in these this grace will produce its fruits.

In the nineteenth chapter natural relationships are sanctioned fully in connection with the kingdom, and freed from that which Moses had to yield to the hardness of men's hearts. Grace maintains God's order in the first creation, as it enables men, if need be, for the kingdom of heaven's sake, to walk superior to the natural instincts. Little children too are received by Christ and blessed, as those who by grace belong also to His kingdom.

The doctrine of rewards is given in the closing section of this part of the gospel (xix. 16–xx. 28). But first, we see in the case of the rich young man that salvation itself is *not* a reward. No purchase can be made of this, no bargaining secure it. He who would do this finds the price still too high,

and however sorrowful, must give it up. A *rich* man—and such only could expect to *buy*—“can hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.” But this is not a question of salvation, and when the disciples ask in astonishment, “Who then can be *saved*?” the Lord answers that salvation is in God’s hands alone, and to Him all things are possible.

Peter then raises the question of rewards; and here, while every one who for *Christ’s* sake forsakes aught shall receive an hundredfold and inherit everlasting life, yet the principle is, “The last shall be first, and the first last.” In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, those who are simply debtors to grace for whatever they might receive get proportionately much more than those agreeing for so much. The first in their own account are last in God’s.

The cross and the giving up of all is what is before the Lord’s eyes, the right and left places beside the Lord in the kingdom before the eyes of the disciples. They will take even the cross, if it be as the pathway to personal exaltation; but not in this can self-seeking obtain its end. When the rest of the disciples are indignant at James and John, the Lord further warns them that places in His kingdom are not such as would satisfy ambition. His kingdom is not like the kingdoms of men. The highest there is He who came to serve in lowliest fashion; “for even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

THE PSALMS.

PSALM XXXII.

The blessedness of one forgiven, with God his hiding-place from trouble, and guided by His eye.

[A psalm] of David, for instruction.

HAPPY is he whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

2. Happy is the man to whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

3. While I kept silence, my bones wasted, because of my roaring all the day.

4. For day and night Thy hand was heavy on me: my sap is turned into a summer drought. Selah.

5. I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not covered: I said, "I will confess my transgressions to Jehovah," and *Thou* forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

6. On this account shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee, in a time Thou mayest be found: surely in the flood of many waters, they shall not reach unto him.

7. Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt preserve me from strait: Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

8. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou goest; I will counsel [thee], Mine eye upon thee.

9. Be ye not as the horse [or] the mule, which has no understanding; its ornament bit and bridle to bind fast [or] it will not come near thee.

10. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but

he that trusteth in Jehovah, mercy shall compass him about.

11. Be glad in Jehovah, and exult, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye upright of heart.

Text.—(9) Some would have as the Authorized Version, “*lest* it come near thee.”

Remarks.—(Title.) This is the first of the *Maschil* psalms, or psalms for instruction. Now considering that the whole book of psalms looks on specially to the last days, and that in Israel in that day there are divinely raised-up teachers who are given this same name of *Maschilim*, (Dan. xi 33, 35, “they that understand;” xii. 3, 10, “the wise,”) and considering the peculiar character of these psalms themselves, it seems to me that they are special instruction for this very class. Revelation xiii. 18 and xvii 9 are, I believe, distinctly marked as similar instruction: *nota bene* for their eyes; while of course this in no wise prevents our use and application of them. Compare the *Maschil* psalms lii–lv, which reveal the character of Antichrist. But then how beautiful is it to see the first page turned down for them here, in which both the blessedness of forgiveness is dwelt on, and Jehovah their hiding-place, and His guidance for them. First lessons for *Maschilim* of all time to receive and give!

(1, 5) When *I* have *not* covered, *God* covers.

(5) “*I said*, ‘I will confess’”—not “*did* confess” Divine love, prompt to meet us (“he *ran*”), anticipates the confession. (Comp. the father and prodigal, Luke xv. 17, 18, 20, 21.)

(7) The “music and dancing” of Luke xv.

PSALM XXXIII.

God for us: Creator, Governor, Disposer of all things; so as to make practically independent of the world's resources, as well as master over all that sin has caused in it.

SHOUT for joy in Jehovah, ye righteous: for the upright, comely is praise.

2. Celebrate Jehovah with the harp; with the ten-stringed lyre sing to Him psalms.

3. Sing to Him a new song: play skillfully with a loud noise.

4. For right is Jehovah's word; and in faithfulness all His work.

5. He loveth justice and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of Jehovah.

6. By Jehovah's word were the heavens made; and all their host by the breath of His mouth.

7. He masseth as a heap the waters of the sea; He layeth up the depths in treasures.

8. Let all the earth fear Jehovah; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him!

9. For HE spake, and it was done; HE commanded, and it stood.

10. Jehovah bringeth to naught the counsel of the nations; He disalloweth the thoughts of the peoples.

11. The counsel of Jehovah standeth forever; the thoughts of His heart from generation to generation.

12. Happy is the nation whose God Jehovah is,—the people He hath chosen for His inheritance.

13. Jehovah regardeth from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men.

14. From the place of His habitation He looketh close upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

15. He who fashioneth their hearts together, who understandeth all their works.

16. There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by great strength.

17. The horse is a vain thing for safety, and by his great strength he shall not deliver.

18. Lo, Jehovah's eye is toward them that fear Him, toward those who hope in His mercy;

19. To rescue their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

20. Our soul hath looked for Jehovah; our help and shield is He.

21. For our heart shall be glad in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name.

22. Let Thy mercy, Jehovah, be upon us, according as we hope in Thee.

Remarks.—This is a psalm which anticipates somewhat one of the themes of the fourth book, of which the hundred and fourth psalm is a full expression. "Jehovah" is the covenant-name of God, the name by which He takes up in grace His people. But Jehovah is the Creator-God, in whose hands all His works are. The fourth book dwells upon the fact that in Christ these two are one—the breach between Creator and creation healed, and more: the Creator Himself has done this. This gives its character to the coming of Christ as Jehovah, who yet is Second Man, to take possession of all. The present psalm gives only the effect for faith now of the Covenant-God of grace being Creator and Sovereign of all.

THE REPENTING SINNER'S RECEPTION.

THE great supper of Luke xiv. speaks of what God has treasured up in Christ for us. He sends out an invitation to tell men they are perfectly welcome to come and enjoy it: but having in hand present things—God's things really, which they treat as their own,—they excuse themselves. Seeking enjoyment in what they claim to be their possessions, the better and higher joy God invites to they care not for and refuse.

Where, then, will God find His guests? How the answer bows the soul and heart in adoration! There are among men some who are not enjoying present things, such as the despised man of the streets, the destitute inhabitant of the lanes, and the wretched child of poverty, who, by dire necessity, has been driven to seek shade and shelter beneath the hedge: to such God turns; it is such He seeks and finds and brings to His table,—men who have no excuses to bring. but whose necessity makes them willing to be simply receivers—debtors merely to simple grace.

In the beginning of chapter xv, our blessed Lord is in the midst of a company of such people; and who can measure His joy or theirs as He eats and drinks with them? If there are some among men who cannot be happy with sinners, God can: nay, more,—it is such, and only such, He receives. Dear reader, do you complain of this? Does your heart murmur against the grace that stoops down to meet publicans and sinners? Are you Pharisee enough to speak sneeringly of such grace? God grant you may not be; but whether or not, He finds His joy in His love to sinners, and vindicates Himself against every murmur lurking in the heart of all who scorn to be called sinners.

The parables of this chapter show us this. The first two tell us of the joy there is in heaven, and before the angels, over a sinner who repents. In the first of these, God is a seeker, and the sinner is a wanderer, who goes on and on, and further away, until, not only the joy of his own way vanishes, but worn out by the roughness of his road, he is at last content to be served by the God of all grace; who, finding him as such—a needy one, takes him up in the arms of His love and rejoices over him with a joy immeasurable, though divinely expressed.

In the next, God is a seeker still; but we have more the means and methods used to bring the sinner where God in His grace can meet him. As walking after the course of this world he is morally dead,—*i. e.*, he has no apprehension in his soul of God or of his true condition before God. The lighted candle of the word or testimony of God, and the broom of circumstances, which are wholly under the ordering of God, whatever agencies may be employed in producing them, brings the sinner forth a heap of dirt and rubbish, which only divine grace can meet, and in which only God Himself can find the silver—*i. e.*, one for whom Christ died to be his redemption. As being simply *that* God finds him; thus we learn it is the sinner who repents that God finds; and such, and only such, are the occasion of the joy with which all heaven rings in full accord with the heart of God.

The last parable describes, for our profit and learning, the wondrous welcome and reception God gives the sinner who repents, and in connection with this we are shown what repentance is. The younger brother having received his portion of his father's goods goes to the far country. He

now belongs to the class who in the fourteenth chapter made excuse. He has in his hand what he wants to enjoy; but in the far country it soon goes; all is soon squandered and lost. A famine comes, and he is in want; his hand is empty now; he has nothing to enjoy. But why does not the father go and meet him now? Simply because he is not yet the sinner that repents. He does not yet think himself the suited object for pure grace, and so he goes and joins himself to a citizen of that country, to try and see if he can retrieve his lost fortune; but, thank God! this cannot be done. When we have spent all our goods, and lost our reputation and our character, no effort, no reformation, can possibly regain what we have lost. We have written our history, and it is irreversible; we belong now to the men of the streets, lanes, highways, and hedges. Our names as being sinners are indelibly stamped upon us, and in spite of every thing we can do we find ourselves put where we do not wish to be. Happy is he who submits to it; for until then, we must remain strangers to the welcome and reception of the God of all grace.

At last the prodigal bows; he submits to his necessity. He thinks of the grace and plenty that is with his father, and he says, That is just what I need. It just suits him now. A hungry, perishing sinner needs the grace of God. He says, "I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." He is a sinner now—a man of the streets. He has accepted the counsel of God against himself; he will let

God tell him all things that ever he did; but having bowed to this, he bows to the grace that meets it all. He renounces all worthiness of his own. Not knowing the character of the grace he submits to, he says, "Make me as one of thy hired servants;" but so saying, he shows he is willing and content to be indebted to grace. This is repentance. The prodigal is now a sinner that repents; he has risen up to go to his father.

We will now look at his welcome and reception. As soon as the prodigal has started for his father, the father is on his way to him. "When he was *yet* a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." How wonderful! Until he repented, the father could not go to meet him; but just as soon as he repents, the father hastens to him. Beloved reader, this is a picture of the way God meets a sinner. He is not austere, demanding of sinners to cease to be sinners. He invites them to come as sinners—as being simply sinners and nothing else; and the moment they take Him at His word, and consent, in the reality of their souls, to meet Him as simple sinners, needing, by that very fact, His grace, He comes to meet them just as here,—“When he was yet a great way off,” *i. e.*, still in the far country—a sinner in his sins, “he saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.” How blessed that!

But this is not all. God not only comes and meets the returning, repenting sinner to welcome him back, but He at once, without the least delay, appropriates to him all the provision He has made for sinners in Christ, set forth here by the best robe, ring, and shoes. So fully has Christ an-

answered before God for all the sinner's need, that as soon as a sinner takes his place with God as one of those for whom Christ died, all the fullness of the provision of God in Christ for sinners is his, and his forever; God having met and welcomed him to His bosom, bears witness to him that all is his—his at once. When a sinner tells God he has no worthiness, God answers, I will clothe you with worthiness; I will put worthiness upon you; just as here, when the prodigal says, "I have sinned, and am no more worthy," the father replies, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it upon him." How wonderful! A sinner in his rags—his sins, in the full consciousness of having nothing else but his sins, in God's presence telling him so, and God at once giving him a change of raiment, even the worthiness and beauty of Christ, accepting him in His beloved, so that he is now henceforth forever before Him without blame—the blamelessness of Christ on him, in the eye of God. Oh, what grace! and how full and perfect! Dear reader, it is the grace of God, and nothing short of it, would suit him. It is a grave mistake to suppose *any delay* on God's part in making over to the sinner that repents the provision of His grace in Christ, as if He were waiting on sinners to cease being sinners, to become saints, ere He could give them His provision for them. God does not invite sinners to come to His great supper and then tell them when they come they cannot partake of it until they have passed through certain experiences, and made certain attainments. Such a thought is thoroughly derogatory to God. It makes the gospel only a half gospel; it falsifies the character of God, and denies His full and per-

fect grace. It is sinners He seeks; it is sinners He calls to repentance. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." So too the sinner that repents He receives and rejoices over. It is the ungodly that He justifies. Those who come *as* ungodly—as without strength and as lost, He meets, and that, too, in the very place they take before Him; and, meeting them thus, He assures them of a full and hearty welcome, and that every thing He has provided for them in Christ is theirs. The kiss upon the cheek of the prodigal is the token of the full and hearty welcome, and the best robe, ring, and shoes speak as clearly of the unreserved appropriation to the returning one of all that God has in Christ for sinners.

Beloved reader, have you ever received God's kiss of welcome? and do you know its full meaning? And further, have you ever gone to God without any reserve in your soul to tell Him all your heart—all your care and trouble, and all your sins? Ere your tale was fully told did you not find yourself in a change of raiment, shining before the eye of God in all the beauty and brightness of Christ? Truly yes, for then it was God accepted you in His beloved. Having thus received you and robed you, how He rejoiced over you! Already, from your meeting Him—at the very moment of your reception, God—the blessed God is merry and glad over you. It is His joy to have you in His family; it is yours, too, to be in it; and the joy thus begun is without end—eternal.

May our hearts know better the reality, depth, and blessedness of it.

"WE WILL BE GLAD AND REJOICE IN THEE."

AH, Jesus, Lord, Thou art near to me,
Great peace flows into my heart from Thee;
And Thy smile of joy fills me so with gladness,
This weary body forgets its sadness
For thankful joy.

We see Thy countenance beaming bright;
Thy grace, Thy beauty, by faith, not sight;
But Thou art Thyself to our souls revealing,
We love Thee, Thy presence and favor feeling,
Although unseen.

Oh who would alway, by night and day,
Be set on joying in Thee alway;
He could but tell of delight abounding
Through body and soul, one song resounding,—
"Who is like Thee?"

To be compassionate, patient, kind,
Thy pardon, leaving our sins behind,
To heal us, calm us, our faint hearts cheering,
Thyself to us as a friend endearing
Is Thy delight.

Ah, give us to find our all of joy
In Thee! Thy service our sweet employ;
And let our souls with a constant yearning
In need and love to Thyself be turning
Without a pause.

And when we are weeping, console us soon;
Thy grace and power for Thy peace make room;
Thy mirrored likeness Thy praises telling;
Thine own true life in our bosoms dwelling
In love be seen.

Truthful in childlike simplicity,
Guileless, arrayed in humility,
Be the holy wounds of Thy tribulation
The fount of our peace and consolation
In joy and woe.

KEY-NOTES TO THE BIBLE BOOKS.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.—*Continued.*

V.

THE COMING IN HUMILIATION. (Chap. xx. 29-xxiii.)

1. *The final presentation of the King* (chap. xx. 29-xxi. 17). At Jericho we find the Lord once more as Son of David, a title we do not find on the lips of Israelites from chap. xii. till now; and it is as this He gives sight to two blind men, the witnesses of His power and goodness. The willing hearts of His people answering His claim upon them, He rides into Jerusalem in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, "Meek, and sitting upon an ass." The evangelist omits in his quotation "just, and having salvation," as in fact the unbelief of the nation prevents the manifestation of this power in their behalf. All the city is moved; but although the words of the hundred and eighteenth psalm are upon their lips,—words with which, in a future day, they will welcome their Deliverer,—as yet, there is no real recognition of Him. He cleanses the temple, become now a place of robbery instead of prayer, and there heals the blind and the lame; but the leaders of the people reject Him, and out of the mouth of babes and sucklings only is His praise perfected. He leaves the city, and going out to Bethany, (for the first time mentioned in this gospel, linked so abidingly with the well-known glorifying of the Son of God by resurrection out of death,) He lodges there.

2. *Rejection of the people for their fruitless profes-*

sion (chap. xxi. 18-46). It was significantly from Bethphage—the “house of unripe figs,”—that the Lord had entered the city. On His return to it in the morning, a fig-tree whose promise of fruit is not fulfilled is made the type of a judgment for similar fruitlessness coming upon the guilty nation. In the temple, the chief priests question Him as to His authority, but He refuses answer till they have settled the prior question of the baptism of John. In fact repentance—the burden of John’s testimony—must be the way to salvation by Christ. For a repentant sinner there is but one Saviour, and no babel of discordant teaching can drown for such the voice of Christ. But despite their seeming respect for divine authority, the publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of God before the Pharisees. The parable of the vineyard is the history of the nation which God had cared for and blessed, and admonished by a long succession of prophets. Now, after having rejected one after another the servants He sent to them, they were about to consummate their guilt by slaying His Son.

3. *Rejection of the people for their rejection of the offers of grace* (chap. xxii. 1-14). Yet patient mercy would not stop even here, as the following parable of the kingdom shows. The very death of Christ would furnish forth a table where the King could invite guests to the marriage of His Son,—guests already bidden by the voice of prophecy. But the Jews (these bidden ones) still reject, persecuting to death the messengers of grace. Then the limit of divine forbearance is reached, and the city burned up, while to supply the place of the rejecters a general call goes out to all men. This gathers

many, among whom, however, when the King comes in to see the guests, some are found whose type is the man who has not on the wedding-garment,—the covering, that is, which grace provides. And indeed out of all whom grace invites the few only are chosen, not the many.

4. *The trial and exposure of the leaders of the people* (chap. xxii. 15-46). After this, the various parties among the Jews come up before Him, seeking to entangle Him in their talk, but in fact out of their own mouths to be judged. The Pharisees and Herodians are condemned by Cæsar's image on the tribute-money. They had subjected themselves to Cæsar for their own gain; they must therefore accept the position in which their sin had placed them. The Sadducees are convicted of ignorance of Scripture and of the power of God. The lawyers are made to recognize as the great commandment of the law that which proved them most of all guilty. Finally, the Lord puts before them the fundamental question which convicts them of ignorance of the true dignity of their Messiah,—of David's Son,—whose enemies would yet be made His footstool.

5. *Their judgment* (chap. xxiii.). Then the Lord turns upon the convicted and silenced leaders, and denounces them as the hypocritical destroyers of the people. Jerusalem, refusing the love which would so often have gathered her children under its secure shelter, is left desolate without Him until they shall say, as yet out of their distress and misery they shall be made to say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Then, even after so long resistance, divine grace shall save them.

VI.

THE COMING IN GLORY. (Chap. xxiv, xxv.)

1. *Seen in its relation to Israel* (chap. xxiv. 1-42). And now, in answer to the disciples' question, His coming in glory is put in contrast with His coming in humiliation. It is important to note, for the understanding of the prophecy, that Matthew, in contrast with Luke, is occupied almost exclusively with what is even yet future. A kind of partial anticipation there has been in what has already taken place, and this is after the manner of prophecy in general, which finds in the signs of the present the portents of the future. But every where in it the end is what is in the mind of the Spirit, and we misinterpret if we do not connect it with the end.

Here, the disciples' question is one which plainly speaks of His coming, and of the end (not of the world physically, but as in chap. xiii.) of the *age*. The Lord does not speak of any destruction of Jerusalem, nor of armies encompassing it from without, but of idolatry within—the antichristian abomination of the latter days. This is the beginning of unparalleled tribulation, so severe, that if it were not shortened, no flesh should be saved. Immediately after this short time of trouble, the Son of Man comes; and therefore the taking of the city could not be it, for that by no means was the end of the trouble. Besides, He comes in the clouds of heaven with His angels, and gathers Israel His elect from their long dispersion to the four winds of heaven. Then that generation (of unbelievers among the people*) passes away; and

* "This generation" is often used, as here, in a moral sense,—for a race,

not till then. But the fig-tree, the figure of the nation, is putting forth leaves, and fruit is found, at that very time, in which the judgment of God, as in Noah's day, will sweep away the impenitent.

2. *Seen in relation to christendom* (chap. xxiv. 42-xxv. 30). In the beginning of the twenty-fifth chapter, we have again a parable of the kingdom of heaven, which shows, as we have before seen, that the Lord is now once more speaking of things kept secret from the foundation of the world,—that is, of the present interval of christendom. With this, too, the latter part of the twenty-fourth chapter is in evident connection. We have thus the Christian side of things to chap. xxv. 30. The blessing upon watchfulness, and the result of the heart pleading the Lord would delay His coming, are first exhibited. The assumption of lordship over fellow-servants, and association with evil, are the consequences of the latter, as they have plainly been in christendom. In the following parable, we have the falling asleep of the whole professing church which had at first gone forth to meet Him, the cry which at midnight wakes them, and the rejection of the foolish virgins. The next parable gives us the reward of service, and the judgment of him who in the place of a servant had not the faith in his Master needed for service.

3. *Seen in relation to the Gentile nations* (chap. xxv. 31-46). Lastly, we find the judgment of the quick—the living nations, or Gentiles,—when the Son of Man is come. Christians are already with

with certain moral characteristics,—and without the time-sense often attaching to it. Thus Psalm xii. 7: "Thou shalt preserve them from this generation *forever*." (Comp. Ps. xxiv. 6; lxxiii. 15; Prov. xxx. 11-14.) In Phil. ii. 15, "nation" is the same word. To apply it in the time sense in the prophecy above is impossible.

Him when He comes, and the judgment of the wicked is not till the great white throne at the end of the millennium, when the earth flees away. This is at the commencement, and of the living only. There is here no resurrection, and no examination of all deeds done. They are judged simply according to their treatment of Christ's "brethren"—the Israelitish messengers, as it would seem, of the "everlasting gospel," going forth in the interval between the taking away of the saints to be with the Lord and His coming in glory with them. This interval is the time of the quickening for blessing upon the earth.

VII.

THE PURCHASE OF ALL BY THE ONE OFFERING.

(Chap. xxvi.-xxviii.)

1. *The presentation* (chap. xxvi. 1-56). And now the hour of the Lord's betrayal is at hand. He is aware of it and master of all: no one takes His life from Him, but He lays it down of Himself. Her prescient love who anoints Him for His burial brings out the traitor in the person of one of the twelve. The Lord indicates him at the final supper, where He institutes beforehand the memorial of His death, and explains its deep and blessed meaning. He predicts the scattering of the sheep, and to Peter his fall. Through all this part, nothing is more apparent than His entire control of all through which He moves.

Gethsemane (the "oil-press") has another character. His shrinking from the cup before Him was here part of His perfection. He could not take it as His own will, but only as His Father's. Sorrowful unto death, He finds none to watch with

Him. The shadow of the cross is beginning to isolate Him from those who are the chosen companions of His path. The last dread isolation is yet to come, but the presence of it is already in the depths of His soul. He is perfect in entire surrender to His Father's will, while His followers only show their want of accord with it. Sleeping when they should be waking, they are fighting when He is giving Himself up. What could their swords do but dishonor Him who could have had twelve legions of angels for His defense had not the Word of God claimed His fulfillment of it? They forsake Him next and flee.

2. *The offering* (chap. xxvi. 57-xxviii.). He had now presented Himself for the offering, and it must be manifested as an unblemished one. The false witnesses cannot prove His guilt even before His enemies. He must be condemned for His own true witness, and that alone. As Son of God it is that the Jewish tribunal reject Him, without and against all evidence, and He hides not His face from shame and spitting. Peter's fall only fulfills His prophetic words. The traitor comes forward to attest His *innocence*—the highest witness he is qualified to give. But the Jews consummate their guilt, buying Aceldama with the price of blood: a potter's field to bury strangers in, the involuntary prediction of that to which they were self-condemned; the world has been for them ever since a burial-ground for strangers.

The charge before the Gentile governor is that He claims to be King of the Jews. His accusers again prove nothing, and He answers nothing. The double witness of the judge himself, and of Heaven in his wife's dream, is that He is a 'just

man." At the passover, (a beautiful intimation of its meaning,) a prisoner is released. Pilate, anxious to save Jesus, makes it a question whether He shall release Him to them, or Barabbas, a noted sinner. The people choose Barabbas, and the Lord takes the cross instead of him, another striking testimony of the meaning of His death. Pilate washes his hands and delivers Him up. The infatuated Jews imprecate His blood upon themselves. Mocked of the soldiers, gall mingled with His drink, His vesture parted, He is crucified. His salvation of others, His faith in God, is thrown in His teeth, and even by the malefactors with whom He is numbered.

But now the true and exceptional character of the cross comes out. The darkness for three hours over the land is but the type of the deeper darkness, the due of our sins, which is upon His soul. *God* has forsaken Him: the solitary exception in all God's ways with the righteous. Crying again with a loud voice of unexhausted strength, none taking His life from Him, but laying it down of Himself, "He dismisses His spirit."

The effects of His death are immediate. The vail which forbad access to God is rent from top to bottom. The darkness into which He went He has displayed, and God is in the light. His power raises the dead, the governmental witness, as we have already seen, to the removal of sin. The Gentile believes, but the Jews hardened in unbelief, which is soon to be the most effectual witness to His glory, seal up the stone and set a watch against the third day.

3. *The acceptance of the offering* (chap. xxviii.). And now we have the full and formal acceptance

of His work made known by resurrection. Galilee, not Jerusalem, is here the appointed meeting-place with the eleven, although the women see Him and receive His message. The chief priests bribe the soldiers to tell an incredible story to their own shame. The nation is exhibited in obdurate unbelief. He whom they reject has all authority in heaven and earth, and sends forth His disciples to disciple unto His kingdom, but in the triune name, the revelation of which marks the new dispensation as now come. He Himself is with them in unchanging faithfulness and love "unto the end of the age."

THE "ONLY BEGOTTEN" AND THE "FIRST-BORN."

"**W**HOSOEVER denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father," says the apostle: solemn words of warning, which we shall do well to take with us in our consideration of the relationship of the Son to the Father. We have also to remember the Lord's own words, that "no one, save the Father, knoweth the Son." This is not intended to prevent our search into what Scripture gives us as to the person of the Lord, but only to give us reverence—a reverence which implies, surely, attentive heed to what has been written in it.

Two of the most popular commentaries of the day—that of Adam Clark and that of Albert Barnes—deny the eternal Sonship of the Lord. From this the doctrine has spread among others, and confusion and indistinctness are in the minds of many at the present time—indeed, creeping over the minds of those once apparently clear. I take up, there-

fore, this truth, fundamental as it is, afresh to inquire what the Word of God, ever and alone authoritative, declares. And may we, as we look, be given at least to behold more brightly, the "glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

It is not of the deity of the Lord that I am now supposing question. Those of whom I am speaking are, thank God! as clear as we can be, that Christ is in the fullest sense God,—to be honored even as the Father is honored. Nay, it is on this very account that they demur to the "only begotten Son" being His title in Godhead. I do not intend to take up their views or arguments, however, but simply to look at the Scripture-doctrine by itself.

Now it is His Sonship that the apostle insists upon a distinguishing the Lord even as man from the angels (Heb. i. 5): "For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee?" It is clearly as man born into the world that He is addressed; for "this day" is time, and not eternity; and so the apostle's quotation of it in the synagogue of Antioch (Acts xiii. 33) implies. It is the more remarkable because angels too are called "sons of God," as in Job i. 6; xxxviii. 7. Here, the sonship common to all spiritual beings created by the "Father of spirits" (Heb. xii. 9) is distinguished from the real relationship of a "begotten Son." This is carefully to be marked, insisted on as it is in the announcement of the angel to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called

the Son of God." Here is in creature-condition One who is more than creature. Men may be "offspring of God," and angels sons, and yet neither of them touch this place or inherit this name.

So, as the apostle argues, to none of the angels is it said, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to Me a son." This is once more spoken of Him in manhood. "*I will be to Him a Father*" would be of course quite impossible to be said of Him in any other character. But here also a real and full relationship is indicated beyond that of a mere creature. "Begetting" is the distinct basis of this relationship, and declares the reality of it. Such was the Lord even, as man.

This Sonship as man has been confounded by perhaps the mass of Christians with His deity. *Founded* upon His divine relationship it is, and yet carefully distinguished from this, as we have seen. His title in this respect is, in Scripture, the "First-born," as in *divine* relationship He is the "*Only Begotten*." The one title as clearly maintains what is exclusively His as the other asserts His sharing it in grace with others. The words used, we should notice too, are different. "Begotten" speaks of the Father; "born," of the mother:—the first, alone of divine paternity; the second naturally reminds us of another element than the divine.

In wondrous grace there are others also, not among angels, but among men, and fallen men,

* *Μονογενής*, "only begotten," a compound of *γεννάω*, "to beget;" *πρωτότοκος*, "first born," from *τίκτω*, "to conceive." It cannot be asserted that this is the exclusive force of either word. *Γεννάω* is applied also to the mother, and *τίκτω* more rarely to the father; yet the force of the words in general is undoubted, and throws light upon the constant use in Scripture. We have never *πρωτόγονος*, never *μονότοκος*.

who have been chosen to be born of God. Who, as born of the Spirit, are partakers of that which is spirit,—of a divine nature. It is with these, the fruit of His work, the Lord is associated as First-born: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29). And their link with Him as "brethren" is distinctly declared to be on account of their being "of one [origin]" with the Lord Himself: "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are *all of One*: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, 'I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee'" (Heb. ii. 11, 12).

We must here remember that the title of "First-born" does not necessarily speak of priority in time, but of place and dignity. The actual first-born might lose his place, and another obtain it, as we see in Jacob and Esau, Reuben and Joseph; and so God says of David, "I will *make* him My first-born, higher than the kings of the earth" (Ps. lxxxix. 27). So with the "assembly of the first-born ones, whose names are written in heaven" (Heb. xii. 23), which is without doubt the Christian assembly in plain distinction from the "spirits of just men made perfect," who are the saints of the Old Testament. Yet it is the latter who are the first-born in *time*, while the former have the precedence in place and privilege. And it is thus I understand the language in Colossians i. 15, where, speaking of the Lord, the apostle calls Him the "image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." Here, it is in manhood that He declares the Father;

and He who has thus become man, yet Creator of all, as the apostle goes on to say, if He take His place, in marvelous condescension and love, in His own creation, must needs do so at the head of it. It is His pre-eminence, not priority in time, as many have thought, that is asserted. That "He is before all things," the seventeenth verse it is that plainly says.

The same passage in Colossians distinguishes also two things that are in danger now of being, by some, confounded: "And He is the Head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born *from the dead*; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." This is stated as another thing from being "first-born of every creature," although for us the two things have now become practically one. But He was the "Second Man" before He was the risen Man, as we also are born again before the quickening of our bodies.

Between us and Him there is this plain and immense difference, that we as first-born ones even are the fruit of His work; whereas His being first-born is grounded in His deity. So the apostle says explicitly. "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; *for* 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." It is to this, then, His title as First-born is due; and this points clearly to incarnation, not to resurrection. Scripture is clear, therefore, as to the application to this for us so precious title of our Lord, while all through shines

the glory of a more wondrous relationship to the Father, distinct and wholly divine, "the glory," as the apostle John says, "of the *only* begotten Son in the bosom of the Father."

This title is *only* used by the apostle John, and by him five times, while that of "First-Begotten" is, in his gospel and epistles, never used,*—a fact at once of the greatest significance, for John's peculiar theme is the deity of the Lord. But we are not left to this, for the passages themselves exclude all possible doubt. A truth of this kind could not be allowed to remain in the least obscure; and to those content to take Scripture as it stands, without rationalizing, there is no possibility of mistake.

The first passage is alone decisive: "And the Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us, (and we beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten with the Father,) full of grace and truth." I give what is more literal than our common version, and preserves the all-important connection with the tabernacle of old. In that, the glory of God had dwelt; in the darkness, not in the light; shut up, and inaccessible to man. Here now was a tabernacle—the flesh of Christ, in which dwelt the fullest glory of Godhead, and most accessible, —divine glory now to be approached and looked upon, because revealed in grace and truth. And what was the glory thus revealed? It was the glory as of an only begotten with the Father; that was its character; the glory of the Only Begotten is the very glory of God. Nothing could surely be plainer than this declaration.

*Once in the book of Revelation, a book of very different character, we have "the first-born of the dead."

It is reiterated in the apostle's emphatic manner in the seventeenth and eighteenth verses: "For the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Here, we have the same contrast with the law, when God dwelt unseen in the darkness; the same grace and truth as the character in which Christ had now come. And who is it that declares, or tells out, the Father only now revealed? It is the only begotten Son, the One being in the Father's bosom. Not "who is" now; that is not the force of the expression, but the "One being"—or who is always—there. Here, to deny His being Son forever would be as much to deny the Father being the Father forever. It would be the denial of divine relationship; the making the "Father" not the real and essential name of God, but only a character assumed by Him in time. It would lower immeasurably the whole character of the revelation. But it is the *only begotten* Son who is thus in the bosom of the Father; it is He, and no other: not always incarnate, but always the Only Begotten,—the divine, eternal Son.

Once more, in the third chapter, we have the truth of this divine relationship doubly pressed, according to the apostle's manner. The familiar words of the seventeenth verse imbed this in the very heart of the gospel: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is the signal proof of this love of God that it was His only begotten Son He gave; and then all blessing depends upon

the reception of this gift: "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned; he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Solemn words these for those who deny or pare down the truth of eternal Sonship! The "name" implies the doctrine—the truth of this.

It is the eternal Son that John speaks of in all his writings. This is the glory which he has told us faith sees irradiating the tabernacle of His manhood. The title of "Only Begotten" is only once used again by Him, and that not in his gospel, but in his first epistle; but there, the connection is as solemn as in this passage already before us: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." Here, how plain is it that He was the only begotten Son before he came into the world; and divine love was manifested in God thus sending the object of His love.

I have done little but cite the Scripture-texts, which are so clear and plain that comment of any length could only obscure them. Our *faith* in this will show itself only rightly in the joy of our worship here in the presence-chamber of the God to whom we have been brought.

"EVERY thing that presents Christ in His own proper excellence is sweet and acceptable to God. Even the feeblest expression or exhibition of Him, in the life or worship of a saint, is an odor of a sweet smell, in which God is well pleased."

THE FAMINE IN SAMARIA, AND HOW IT WAS RELIEVED.

A Gospel Address.—2 Kings vi. 24—vii.

AFTER speaking of many of the events of Israel's wilderness-journey, the apostle assures that a divine hand was over all this history, shaping it and the record of it in such a way as to convey spiritual meaning to us in these Christian times. "Now all these things," he says, "happened unto them for ensamples"—"types" is the true force of the word,—"and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [or ages] are come." We may well believe that this is of wider application than just to the special events of which he speaks; and in fact we find other things similarly referred to in Scripture itself. Nor are these always explained as to their spiritual meaning, but quite as often left for spiritual wisdom to interpret, as are many of the Lord's own parables, where we can have no doubt that a spiritual significance there really is. The interpretation in these cases must speak for itself to him who has ears to hear, the truths which explain them being found in the plain words of Scripture elsewhere. It is thus that I am going to apply the history before us, a most striking picture of that precious gospel which in every possible way God so delights in telling out.

We read here of a famine in Samaria, the capital city of a country most highly favored, most deeply guilty in her abuse of the patience and goodness of a long-suffering God. And now the judgment that must needs overtake iniquity was falling upon her. The enemy was besieging her in her gates,

and already we see her in most extreme distress: "they besieged it till an ass's head was sold for four score pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of doves' dung for five pieces of silver." In this awful strait, the words of Moses' prophetic denunciation were fulfilled, and that took place which Jeremiah records in his moan of anguish over a still greater calamity, "The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children." The king rends his clothes in agony at the terrible disclosure, and the people see sackcloth within upon his flesh; but in the depth of his despair, his heart, really unhumbled, breaks out against God in the person of His prophet: "God do so to me and more also if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day." He repents indeed of this rashness, and hastes after his messenger to save the prophet's life, but it is only to break out once more in impatience against God: "Behold, this evil is of the Lord; why should I wait for the Lord any longer?"

Strange it seems to our natural thoughts that just here should come the announcement of blessing: "And Elisha said, 'Hear ye the word of the Lord: thus saith the Lord: To-morrow, about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.'"

"God's ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts." No, but because as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts. We look at the wickedness of man exhibited here, and we ask, What possible reason could there be here for the coming bless-

ing? and we can only answer, None, surely; absolutely none: whatever misery there might be to draw out His pity, goodness there was none to plead on man's behalf; and it was at the very time when the evil which had provoked His judgment was laid fully bare that it pleased God to bring in His mercy. Is there here, then, any exception to His ways? or is there not here rather a principle of His ways? With an unchangeable God there is no exception. Let us look, then, and see if we can find the principle.

Of God's pity and love we may be sure,—a love that delights ever to come in and show itself,—that must be hindered by some necessity of His holiness if it do *not* show itself in behalf of His needy creatures, whose need should have been but the occasion of their learning more the heart of their Creator. And though sin has brought a dark cloud over all this, God has made this but the background upon which all the brighter the character of His love may be read. His Son has been the messenger and witness of a love that would clasp all in its embrace.

God is showing grace. He has title to show it, apart from any ground in man whatever. It is grace, the essential opposite of works, of any works at all as a condition: for “if it be of grace, it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; and if it be of works, it is no more of grace, otherwise work is no more work.” It is impossible, then, to mingle these two principles: if you attempt it, the one destroys the other. So also of necessity “the law is not of faith.” “Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” On the other hand, the gospel-

principle is, "They that *hear* shall live." Law requires: grace gives. The obedience of the law is giving to God: the obedience of faith is receiving from God. "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse;" but "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us . . . ; that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

But what, then, can hinder the reception of grace? Nothing, surely, but the rejection of it. And is it possible that there should be the rejection of grace? Can God's free gift woo us in vain to its reception? Alas! there is a condition here; to man, the most galling: to receive grace, he must give up self-righteousness. He must humble himself to receive what he has never earned; he must be content as a sinner to find the Saviour. And here fatal pride prevails to the ruin of how many souls! It is what makes the Lord insist so strongly upon the necessity of repentance, for repentance is just this bringing down of creature-pride to receive, as needing it, God's salvation. The "ninety and nine just persons" of whom He speaks in the parable "need no repentance:" the figure of a repentant sinner is "a sheep that was lost." Such lost ones the tender grace of Christ goes after "till He finds." Confessedly lost sinners now, they are finally never lost. On the other hand, even His lips must say, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Now, if we come back to Samaria, and God's bestowal of His blessing there, we can easily see how God's announcement comes in most suited

order just where it does. The king stands, here, as ever in Israel, as the representative of the equally guilty people. And this king, the wicked descendant of as wicked ancestors, awakened to his danger, although not his sin, had put on the garb of repentance,—Job's sackcloth without Job's self-abhorrence. He talks piously of the Lord: "If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?" And all this, not as hypocrisy—the sackcloth is not outside for the people to see, but "within, upon his flesh." He is seeking to establish a claim upon God by that which is the sign that he has *no* claim. And how many, not in the least hypocrites, are doing that! They will turn their repentance itself into a kind of righteousness, when the very meaning of repentance is that we have none. And God waits, and defers the blessing which it is in His heart to give, because if He gave it, He would be putting His sanction upon what is quite untrue. The king's sackcloth was, in this way, the very hindrance to blessing. To have given it before this was stripped off would have been to have obscured His precious grace, and to have turned into wages His free gift. He delays, therefore, the blessing, lets the ungodliness of the king's heart come out, and then, when all pretension upon man's part is entirely excluded, brings in His grace as grace, without a stain upon its glory, to be a witness of the principles of His gospel to us to-day.

Blessed be His name! every soul that has a true sense of sin will thank Him for it adoringly. Is there not some soul that listens to me now who will now accept for the first time this free and priceless grace,—not now a temporal but an eter-

nal salvation? "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat! yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price!"

But God has much more to speak of in this precious history, and still more will emphasize for us the riches of His grace. We have now to mark the way the blessing actually comes. For this purpose God takes up "four leprous men," outcasts even among the wretched inhabitants of the city, just as God took up once the chief of sinners, Saul of Tarsus, to preach the fullest, sweetest story of grace that has ever been published to the world. If the shadow of death had fallen on all the city, how must it have pressed upon these forlorn men! And it is out of their despair their hope arises. Who else would have found hope in going out to the camp of the Syrians? But for them death compassed them around; "and they said one unto another, 'Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall into the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.'"

It was the very place and power of death for that besieged city, and out of it was to come that which would save alive Samaria's starving multitude. Out of the eater was to come meat; out of the strong, sweetness. And so for us also that riddle of Samson's must be fulfilled. For ourselves, our natural portion is death and judgment; and which of us has any ability to meet these? Death is the stamp of a ruined world, and if God enter into

judgment with us, no flesh living shall be justified. Here is the stronghold of the enemy against us; and thus through fear of death men are all their lifetime subject to bondage. At a distance from it, although we know full well what awaits us, we may, with the incredible stolidity which belongs to man, think little perhaps about it. In Samaria for some time doubtless the dance and the song went on. Nay, even as the certain doom drew near it may be there were those who only held more frantically to the revels that for the moment could still divert them from what they dared not contemplate.

A mighty work God had been doing for Samaria, but these we may be sure knew nothing of it. It pleased God to communicate the secret of what He had done, to these four leprous men: "And they rose up in the twilight to go unto the camp of the Syrians; and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there. For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host; and they said one to another, 'Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.'" God had worked alone, and no one with Him, needing no help, and for those wholly unable to give it. And thus for faith Christ has abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel." "He has spoiled principalities and powers;" "has led captivity captive, and

given gifts unto men." Alone He has done it. "Whither I go," He says to Peter, "thou canst not follow me now." But the work accomplished, we are welcome to share the fruits of His victory. They are as free to us as the camp of the Syrians to those four leprous men. Absolutely free it was: "They went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver and gold and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it." How sudden the change from the death that stared them in the face to this abundance! How surpassingly wonderful for him who finds himself reaping the spoil of death, the fruit of Christ's victory! It is all ours without reserve, nothing kept back, "silver and gold and raiment"—things which have very plain significance in the Word of God. Let us try and spell them out, and see what our riches are, although after all their value may no man tell.

It is not enough for God to deliver, He must enrich also those whom He delivers. The deliverance itself too is, in the way of its accomplishment, infinite riches to us; and of this first the *silver* speaks. The atonement-money was silver, the witness to redemption, which for us "is not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Redemption is the testimony of what is in the heart of God toward us: If we needed the ransom, God has not thought even such a price too great. What infinite blessedness to find ourselves of this value to One to whom all worlds belong: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." Prodigals, beggars, bankrupts as we are, the whole of the universe does not equal the price

that has been paid for us. Who can tell our riches, then, in this, when what we have cost Him is the measure of the love which invites and welcomes us—the “love of Christ that passeth knowledge”!

And then the “gold:” gold is divine glory, the outshining of what He is who is light, and now *in* the light. The darkness in which for the moment He was hidden who for us went into it is for faith past, and already the true light shines. Our inheritance is in the light. We know God—are already worshipers in the holiest of all—can worship in spirit and in truth, for we know whom we worship.

What wealth is ours in this glory which streams out upon us! In which we live; which brightens all our path, glorifying even now all the clouds which hang over it; which illuminates even such as we are to reflect it: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give *out* the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” It is thus we know Him, in righteousness, in truth, in unfailing, everlasting love; and then the light of an eternal day has risen upon us, and a wealth beyond that of unnumbered worlds is in our hands.

“And raiment:” for then, too, is the shame of our nakedness removed; we are clothed with that which not only completely covers us in the sight of God, but with the best robe even in the Father’s house; for we are clothed with Christ Himself; we stand in Him, accepted in the Beloved, seen in the value of that priceless work which has maintained, in fully tried perfection, the character of God in the very place in which He suffered for the sins of men. We thus in Christ before God are made, not

only the display of His grace, but of His righteousness also,—“made the righteousness of God in Him.”

How sudden the change, I say again, for these poor lepers, from famine and destitution to this abundance verily theirs to lay hold of as they list! God had wrought alone for them, and they had but to enjoy the fruits; and that place of death had changed for them its character wholly; it was the place of life, and peace, and marvelous riches. But it is only, after all, the feeble picture, however blessed, of what God has done for us. Beloved, is it, through God's grace, indeed our own? and if so, how far are we realizing our infinite possessions?

But a thought strikes them in the midst of their happiness, and while after all it is in them a selfish one, we shall do well to heed the lesson of it: “Then they said one to another, ‘We do not well; this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some evil will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may tell it to the king's household.’”

If we have been able to follow thus far the interpretation of this, should it be needful to make the application here? Surely the need around should sufficiently appeal to those who by grace are partakers of an infinite treasure, which in sharing with others we only realize ourselves the more! Think of needing to be stirred up as to this! And yet we do need; and because of our lack in this respect, does not evil come upon us too under the holy government of God? If “he that withholdeth corn the people shall curse him,” what is the responsibility of those who hold back from perishing

souls the "word of life"—the good word that can make glad the saddest heart,—yea, make the tongue of the dumb to sing for joy?

Back, then, they go to the city, and tell the well-nigh incredible story, none the less true. I pass over the reception of it, the wisdom of the king which counts it but deceit, the need of the people which forces to test if it be not true. God invites this experimental test, beloved friends. Christianity is a religion of experiment, and if only there be lowliness and need on the part of the seeker, he shall not be turned away. But I pass on to just one final word, which we must not miss; for the Spirit of God emphasizes, by minute repetition of the sin which brought it down, the judgment of God upon the scorner of His precious grace. More solemn than any words which I could use are the words of the inspired historian, to one who died in the very midst of the abundance which the prophet had predicted;—"So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord. And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate; and the people trod upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said who spake when the king came down to him. And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, 'Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to-morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria;' and that lord answered the man of God, 'Now, behold, if the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, 'Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.' And so it

fell out unto him; for the people trod upon him in the gate, and he died."

Thank God for the blessed word which says, "He that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die"!

THE APPROBATION OF THE LORD.

IT should be joy to any one who loves the Lord Jesus to think of having His individual peculiar approbation and love; to find He has approved of our conduct in such and such circumstances, though none know this but ourselves who receive the approval. But, beloved, are we really content to have an approval which Christ only knows? Let us try ourselves a little. Are we not too desirous of man's commendation of our conduct? or at least that he should know and give us credit for the motives which actuate it? Are we content, so long as good is done, that nobody should know any thing about us—even in the Church to be thought nothing of? that Christ alone should give us the "white stone" of His approval, and the new name which no man knoweth save only he that-receiveth it? Are we content, I say, to seek nothing else? Oh, think what the terrible evil and treachery of that heart must be that is not satisfied with Christ's special favor, but seeks honor (as we do) of one another instead! I ask you, beloved, which would be most precious to you, which would you prefer, the Lord's public owning of you as a good and faithful servant, or the private individual love of Christ resting upon you—the secret knowledge of His love and approval? He whose heart is specially attached to Christ will respond, The latter. Both will be ours, if faithful; but we shall value this most; and there is nothing that will carry us so straight on our course as the anticipation of it.

(J. N. D.)

KEY-NOTES TO THE BIBLE BOOKS.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

MARK, in many respects so similar to Matthew, is in many respects also its perfect opposite. It is, as already said, the gospel in which we have the Lord in the humiliation so wonderful in view of His true glory, and which yet in fact glorifies Him so much. Only one so high could stoop so low; and Mark is the gospel of His service, even to the giving of His "life a ransom for many." The gospel divides, as it seems to me, into three parts, of nearly equal length: the first giving the character and results of the Lord's active ministry among the people (chap. i.-v.); the second, the characteristics of discipleship to a rejected Master (vi.-x. 45); the third, His service perfected in suffering and death, even the death of the cross (x. 46-xvi.).

I.

THE CHARACTER AND RESULTS OF THE LORD'S MINISTRY. (Chap. i.-v.)

1. (i. 1-13.) *The Person who comes to serve.*

(1) 1-3. *Promised.* Mark's gospel does not begin with a genealogy, nor contain one. Love needs no *title* to serve, except the power. In the power which He is to serve man, when we consider the greatness of his need, the true dignity of Him who ministers becomes apparent. Thus Mark starts with His title in the forefront,—“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the *Son of God*.” As this also He is announced by the prophets: it is Jehovah Himself whose way the predicted messenger bids prepare. Nor is this but a specimen; all former time has prophesied of Him.

(2) 4-8. *Heralded.* In fulfillment of this, John comes, and as remission of sins is the blessing to be brought, so it is by the baptism of repentance—in bowing to this—the way is to be prepared. And this is partially accomplished. Multitudes flock out to Jordan, the river of death, to acknowledge, in taking their place there, their just due, “confessing their sins.” Separate as he himself is from the multitude in food and clothes, he proclaims a greater distance between himself and the One of whom he is but the unworthy herald. But his voice has in it here no note of denunciation: the baptism of fire is not found, as in Matthew; “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.”

(3) 9-11. *Attested.* Then the Lord comes Himself to submit Himself to the baptism of John, taking His place, in grace, in that death which was the due of others; and there He is sealed with the Spirit, the witness of a perfection which the Father’s voice proclaims, along with the full divine dignity which is His: “Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased.” It is here not as in Matthew, however, a witness to the people, but to Himself, as the words show.

(4) 12, 13. *Proved.* Thus attested, He is “driven” by the Spirit into the wilderness, and is there for forty days tempted of Satan, and in circumstances of lowest humiliation, “with the wild beasts.” At last, His perfection proved, ministered to by angels as to His bodily need, He is ready for His blessed service.

2. (i. 14-iii. 6.) *The character of His ministry.*

(1) i. 14-20. *The Word, and human instrumentality.* His ministry begins with the presentation of the

Word, with that gospel of which He is Himself the substance. This must of necessity be, of course, but it is well to notice it. John's message is confirmed, and his testimony—with a suited difference—taken up. Every new dispensation thus puts its seal on that which has gone before; while, throughout all, the Word maintains its place as the judge and arbitrator in every question that can arise. It is blessed to see the Lord Himself not refusing this test, but appealing to it on every occasion.

We next find Him gathering around Himself the human instruments, who, delivered themselves, are to be the means of delivering others. Men are to be fishers of men. How glorious here is the triumph of the gospel! how sweet and perfect the precious grace of God! It is, as another has said, "the fact in itself" that is given here; not the details, for it is the fact itself which is intended to have significance for us—a striking and blessed one.

(2) i. 21-39. *The power of Satan met.* In the next place, and first in the actual story of accomplished deliverance, we have the record of the power of Satan, man's terrible captor, met and foiled. It was the type of this which was the first sign by which Moses was to be made known to Israel as the deliverer raised up of God for them—the rod of power cast out of the hands of him to whom it belonged become a serpent, yet yielding itself with necessary submission to that hand put forth once more to claim it for its master. Man is captive in the grasp of one stronger than he. In the very synagogue is a man with an unclean spirit: terrible proof of Israel's condition! But the "Holy One of God"—tested and attested as this—has power to which the baffled enemy can only yield, the

more unwillingly the more manifestly. The man is freed; and next, the diseases, so often his work, are healed, and we hear of devils every-where cast out. All men seek for Him; and He is found, having "risen up a great while before day," in a solitary place, in prayer. The pride of independence is the spirit of Satan. The Conqueror of Satan is the dependent One. It is thus Scripture, in its perfection, declares Him. Who would otherwise have dared to imagine it? Perfect Man as perfect God, how does His example speak to us in this!

(3) i. 40-45. *Man's corruption cleansed.* The root of man's condition is next reached; for leprosy is the well-known type of that for which it was so often inflicted—sin, as seen in its corruption, in its tendency to spread, in its contagious defilement, in its sure end which only God could avert. It is remarkable that here we have the *second* sign God gave to Moses; and here as there, though with how great a difference, the healing is by *touch*. It is the same story of redemption, however varied. Here how plain the assurance that to cleanse us from the sin by which we are inflicted there is needed, not simply the word of divine power, but the contact, so to speak, of *incarnate* deity! How wondrous this warm, assuring, health-giving touch! But the cross alone is that in which this "I will" of the blessed Lord could express itself; and in this it is He touches the leper. Who, more than he, could have imagined this "I will"?

(4) ii. 1-12. *Man's impotence removed.* Next, and in perfect order, the impotence of man is met; and here, so beautifully, the place of human instrumentality is indicated. Powerless ourselves to

heal or save, our one part is to bring the helpless one into the presence of Jesus. Is not this what must be the effect of all true preaching, as of all true prayer? and in both, is not faith the real worker? and does not Jesus still "see faith"?

Then the secret of power is, first of all, forgiveness. Power is not wanted to *obtain* forgiveness, but it is an after-result for those forgiven. Power is to be indeed the *sign* of this, as we see in the palsied man; but more, it is to be in the face of the blasphemies of unbelief a *witness to Christ*, that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, as still He has. How vain to expect this, then, where no present forgiveness, perhaps no forgiveness on earth at all, is known!

(5) ii. 13-22. *The exchange of law for grace.* But this involves much more, which the Lord now openly announces: it is indeed the secret grace all along now openly announced. He calls Matthew from the receipt of custom,—a publican, the very type of a sinner, and to be not merely a recipient of salvation, but a special messenger to declare it to others. A feast at Matthew's house would be well understood in its significance for publicans and sinners. The Pharisees find fault. "How is it that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" How perfect and beautiful the answer! how it encourages, and how it exposes at once!—"They that are whole are in no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

But this was the reason why for so many the joy of the Bridegroom's presence was unknown. How should they know it who had no need to be relieved by His hand—need that no other could

relieve? It is in the consciousness of sin that we learn grace, and in grace, the God who alone can show it. How readily a soul that has come to a genuine sense of utter ruin can distinguish the voice of Christ from every other! For a lost sinner, can there be two Christs? Here, in self-judgment, man escapes out of the devil's snare, and out of the perplexity in which so many are hopelessly involved, and enters into the light where God is! But the awful isolation of a soul on its way to God is gone in the new eternal joy of having found Him. How impossible to such an one the dull routine of legal ritualism! How could the disciples of the Lord fast like the Pharisees, or even John's disciples? The ignorance of the questioners was the gross spiritual darkness of those who knew neither themselves nor God. But in truth the legal righteousness could not be patched with the new gospel one, nor the wine of this new spiritual joy be put into the forms of the old ordinances. The new wine must find new skins to hold it. Judaism with its forms was now to pass away.

(6) ii. 23-28. *Man's need beyond ordinances.* With this the question of the Sabbath necessarily connects. The Pharisees find fault with the disciples for plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath day. The Lord brings forward, as in Matthew, the example of David; but He presses specially the point of need—"when he had need,"—and adds the words, so decisive, and so characteristic of Mark, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath;" and that "*therefore* the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day." Man's need is more with God than the maintenance of ordinances, as ministers to which in fact they were

even ordained. To the "Son of Man," therefore, become that in pitying recognition of that need, and to relieve it, the Sabbath itself is subject.

(7) iii. 1-6. *The prerogative of good.* In the case of the man that had the withered hand is added another consideration, more closely appealing to the conscience,—the prerogative of good. "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day, or to do evil; to save life, or to kill?" They hold their peace, guiltily silent where the case was clear. The Lord answers His own question by healing the man.

3. (iii. 7-v.) *Results.*

(1) iii. 7-19. "*Whom He would.*" The results of His work in detail are now to be brought before us. And here we must remember, and as of wider application, the words prophetically spoken of Him by Isaiah as to Israel: "Then I said, 'I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain:' yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." Not only was it true of Israel, but all through the present time, apparent failure attaches to His work. Until He comes again in the clouds of heaven, the world remains the scene of His rejection, and none the less because whole countries are covered with nominal Christianity. Heaven is filling indeed with the fruits of His travail. The salvation of countless multitudes has not failed, but on earth we shall find His own warning words assuring us of what must be owned as failure. Yet neither His power fails nor His love. The end shall surely speak for Him; but in the meanwhile, faith and patience are needed constantly.

In the opening verses here, multitudes proclaim His power and goodness, and we find Him taking measures for the extension of His ministry by means of His disciples. No power can possibly be lacking to Him who is in His humiliation the Servant of the eternal counsels of divine love itself: "He calleth unto Him whom He would, and they came unto Him." He serves here who is sovereign. "And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach"—again the Word of God takes its place in His thoughts—"and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." A divine place is here assumed, for who could give authority of this kind except God Himself? But it is in service that it is displayed,—in love that has made Him serve.

(2) iii. 20–30. *Rejection.* But from the outset, and most manifestly, He is the rejected One. His very kindred treat Him as out of His mind, and would lay hold of Him; while the scribes, with malignant wickedness, ascribe the glorious works, which it was impossible for them to deny, to the power of Satan. The Lord rebukes them with the unanswerable argument that Satan could not be divided against himself, and warns them that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost would never be forgiven.

(3) iii. 31–35. *The link with Christ spiritual, not natural.* Upon this, His mother and His brethren come, and, standing without, send unto Him, calling Him. He uses this to declare the true link of relationship with Himself as spiritual—a link which the new dispensation was openly to make known. Subject Himself to, and supremely delighting in, the will of God, it is he who does that

will who is brother, sister, mother, to Him. The consequence of His rejection by the world is the necessary separation of His people from it.

(4) iv. 1-34. *The Word testing men, and faith in it the only possible condition of bearing fruit.* A dispensational change, then, is now announced; but even here it is the moral character that is insisted on. The Word of God dropped into the heart of men tests the state it finds, and faith is the indispensable condition of fruit-bearing—of this relation with Christ. In fact, three parts of what is sown are destroyed by the influence of the devil, the flesh, and the world. And this in the kingdom of God, outside of Israel, to the nation to which as a whole “all these things are done in parables.” “These are they which are sown on good ground: such as hear the Word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit;” though here also, alas! in different measures, for the influence of these opposing forces is but too plainly felt.

The rest of the parables given in Matthew are omitted in Mark, save one, and that very evidently in moral connection. On the other hand, we have one added here that no other gospel gives, and which plainly enforces the lesson of responsibility, which the Lord inculcates in plain words at this point. There is nothing hid which shall not be manifested, nor kept secret, but to come abroad at last. To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken even that he hath. The kingdom of God itself is to be committed into the hands of men, as if He who begins thus the seed-sowing were asleep, or ignorant of all they did. Yet the harvest will come, and the hand of the first Sower will put in the sickle. In the mean-

time it will have changed form and character, and grown into the likeness of a kingdom of the world. This is a parable to many still, and yet the fulfillment is before the eyes of all. "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear."

These four sections give the result of Christ's work which are manifest and external. We now pass to three which give us more what is internal and spiritual—the divine view; and this is as well known, the common division, and common character of the division, of such sevens.

(5) iv. 35–41. *The security of faith amid whatever peril.* The first of these results is the perfect security of those who are with Christ, whatever the seeming peril. Faith, alas! may fail, and does often, how miserably! Did they think the waters had power to engulf the Lord? He may seem asleep while the storm rages, but if with Him—and let our only care be practically to be with Him,—He on the throne of heaven is embarked with us in the vessel, and no wave can rise over the throne of God!

(6) v. 1–20. *Deliverance, rest, clothing, and a right mind.* Four precious things come now together, and who has words to tell their worth?

First, deliverance from Satan's bondage; in which naturally all are, although not as obviously as the Gadarene demoniac. His condition is most striking, dwelling among the tombs,—and the earth to which men cling is more a place of the dead than of the living; impossible to be kept bound, or to be tamed,—and so are all laws and civilizing processes unable to restrain or tame Satan's poor captives. Then, "cutting himself with stones," self-torturer, and looking upon the Son of God as a

tormentor! The deliverance is complete, decisive; then, what a change! Restlessness has given place to repose; his nakedness is clothed; his mind is cleared. How he clings to that dear Lord his Saviour, and would fain be with Him! but the word for the present is, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."

(7) v. 21-43. *Life out of death.* Finally, we have, as in Matthew, (but here, surely, not with a dispensational meaning as in Matthew,) two histories intertwined. In Jairus' daughter we have man's state in its full reality discovered, his deepest need which must be met. The Lord is here the life-giver; and He is "declared the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead." The dead hears the voice of the Son of God, and lives. This is the divine side, and man is necessarily merely passive and recipient. But there is another side, and this, it seems to me, the woman with the issue represents. Here, faith relies upon the Saviour for its need, and the issue is staunched. To adjust these things fully—the divine and human sides—may transcend our power, but both have their place.

"THESE two things are found running together through Scripture: *the Word of God and prayer.* Mary sat at the Lord's feet and heard His *word.* The Lord said, 'Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.' In the next verses, the Lord teaches His disciples to *pray.*"

THE PSALMS.

PSALM XXXIV.

Faith is thus enabled to bless at all times; the sure government of God secures the deliverance from whatever trials of the man who fears God and departs from evil.

[A psalm] of David when he changed his behavior before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed.

ALEPH.

I WILL bless Jehovah at all times; continually shall His praise be in my mouth.

BETH.

2. In Jehovah my soul shall boast: the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.

GIMEL.

3. O magnify Jehovah with me, and let us exalt His name together.

DALETH.

4. I sought Jehovah and He answered me, and rescued me from all my fears.

HE.

5. Men look unto Him and are lightened, and their faces are never ashamed.

ZAIN.

6. This poor man cried, and Jehovah heard him, and saved him from all his distresses.

CHETH.

7. The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.

TETH.

8. Taste and see that Jehovah is good; happy the man who taketh refuge in Him.

JOD.

9. Fear Jehovah, ye His saints; for there is no want to them that fear Him.

CAPH.

10. The lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that fear Jehovah shall not want any good.

LAMED.

11. Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of Jehovah.

MEM.

12. Who is the man that desireth life, that loveth [many] days, that he may see good?

NUN.

13. Guard thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking deceit.

SAMECH.

14. Depart from evil, and do good: seek peace and pursue it.

AYIN.

15. The eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous, and His ears toward their cry.

PE.

16. The face of Jehovah is against them that do evil, to cut off their remembrance from the earth.

TSADDI.

17. Men cry, and Jehovah heareth, and delivereth them from all their distresses.

KUPH.

18. Jehovah is nigh to the broken of heart, and the contrite of spirit He saveth.

RESH.

19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but out of them all Jehovah delivereth them.

SCHIN.

20. He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.

TAV.

21. Evil shall slay the wicked, and the haters of the righteous shall be desolate.

22. Jehovah redeemeth the soul of His servants, and none of them that take refuge in Him shall be desolate.

Text.—(5, 17) "Men" is not expressed in the original; it is simply "they."

An alphabetic psalm with one letter (*Vav*) wanting, and a verse added at the end to make up the number: a structure exactly like psalm xxv, even to the initial *Pe* of the concluding verse.

WHAT IS OUR PLACE? AND WHAT OUR RESPONSIBILITY?

A Letter to a Friend.

BELOVED BROTHER,—

Many thanks for a sight of the letter you inclose. If I do not consider the question raised quite as important as the writer does, it is only because I think there is misapprehension in his mind as to what he is commenting on; and even then, the difference that remains is really important. I shall therefore give you my thoughts somewhat fully, and with all the simplicity of which I am capable; so that if I be in error, at least that error may be made clear, although I cannot say for myself that I have any doubt of the truth of what is stated in the paper in *Help and Food* which our brother quotes. I do not, of course, mean by this that every expression used is of the wisest.

Of one thing our brother may be assured at the outset, that with the doctrines with which he connects me I have no sympathy in reality whatever. I have long lamented their spread, and protested, as far as I could, against them. There is no need

to dwell upon this here. Let us see that we do not, in the earnestness of our protest, give up what is in fact true. For truth and error come oftentimes near enough together, to make this a real danger. The most specious, and so most perilous, forms of error are indeed but the exaggeration, and so the distortion, of truth; and so I believe it to be very much in the case we are speaking of. The Lord will, I trust, overrule the differences which at the present time obtain among us, to make us look the more narrowly at all that we have learned; and may we, in the matter of doctrine as all else, know how to take forth the precious from the vile, for only thus shall we be as Jehovah's mouth.

The first passage in our brother's letter which has to do with me refers to the expression in the paper on Romans in the July number of *Help and Food*, "Our place in natural life is ended." He asks, "Is this true either in fact or for faith? If so, what becomes of natural relationship, natural affections, eating, drinking, marriage, etc.?" He argues, therefore, we must not press our being dead with Christ beyond the Scripture-application of being "dead to *sin*," "to law," to the "rudiments of the world." Christ actually died and went to heaven, but we are living on earth with our natural life.

Our brother might have gone further. He might have shown, without possibility of dispute, that our constant standard of walk is "as He walked" when Himself down here, not of course as ascended; and no higher standard of walk is possible for us. To me, the supposing any higher, or any other, is really so monstrous, stands at once so self-condemned, that I did not in fact suppose it necessary to guard my language from such interpretation.

No doubt it might have been guarded, or so expressed as not to need this; but if our brother will consider once more the whole paper from which he takes those words, he will surely see that it is of *place and standing* I am speaking; and I think he will hardly deny, *in that connection*, that what I have said is truth. By our "natural life" he will surely see that our life as in the old nature—our life in the flesh—is intended. The standard of walk is nowhere in question throughout the paper. Nor is it a question of being *men*, but of whether identified with the first man or with the second. Christ down here in the world was always this, amid earthly relationships and responsibilities which He surely owned, and which we too are to own and walk in according to God. Our *place* in natural life—or in life naturally, if that be better,—was in Adam, the first man: that is ended; thank God, it is! Our brother may perhaps say, That is a condition, not a place. This I need not take up now, however, as my concern is here only to clear my meaning. It will come out more clearly still as we proceed.

The next question raised is as to the "old man," which our brother understands to be a "personification of the whole body of sin as a master, which found its complete and final condemnation at the cross of Christ," and he refuses the thought of the cross being "my" condemnation, as what would make it no better than law. He quotes Rom. viii. 3—"condemned," not me, but "sin in the flesh," and adds, "I am saved by Christ as my substitute, not condemned in my substitute." The last sentence seems little more than a difference in words, yet it has an evident bearing on the subject of the old

man. But is it true that as a sinner I am not condemned in the cross? Is there any contradiction between being saved by a substitute and condemned in one? Was it not my condemnation that Christ bore? or did He bear wrath *without* condemnation? Surely, the very fact of being condemned *in a substitute* implies my personal escape from this, does it not? And yet our brother says that it is all the same thing to be condemned by the law, and to be condemned *in a Saviour*!

Scripture is plain that "by *nature*, we were children of wrath, even as others," and that "he that believeth not is condemned already." Surely, therefore, as long as we are unbelievers, wrath and condemnation attach to us. Could there be escape for us without another taking this? In what, then, was Christ our substitute? For the "body of sin personified" He was not a substitute, surely! Does not our brother confound the *effect* of substitution with the fact of it? I am sure he would contend most earnestly for both; and yet is there not a real danger of letting slip somewhat of what we all acknowledge as necessary truth?

Christ represented *me* upon the cross, not the body of sin in me, but me the sinner; and He represented me in death and curse, bearing my sins in His own body on the tree; and only thus could justification or deliverance come to me; and thus "our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Notice how the inspired word brings out the difference I am insisting on. It is our *old man* that was crucified with Christ: here our brother owns personification; I maintain, the person. But when

that which was our master is spoken of, there is *no* personification: it is not "that our old man," or "that *he* might be annulled," but that the "*body of sin*" might be. Why this change in the apostle's language? Why personification in the case in which the cross is before us, and this dropped at once where it is simply the thought of mastership, or bondage? Does it not suit, at least, well with the thought of the cross as atonement, and of atonement as that by which deliverance necessarily comes, and has come? And that this is the fact and truth intended, the whole argument of the seventh chapter bears unmistakable witness. It is in seeing that Christ died, not for my sins only, but as my substitute in the full reality of that, putting me entirely away—sins and sinner—from the sight of God, and giving me my new eternal place wholly in another, in Christ before God,—it is this, I say, that takes me out of myself, and as the law of the Spirit, frees me from the law of sin and death. It is the law of "*life in Christ Jesus*" that does this, and it is of the greatest consequence to see this: it is a method, a power, a law, and a revealed law, which does this. I fear any casting of the least cloud over the revelation.

Our brother thinks that it being "*our* old man" shows that it is something which has to do with us still as Christians. I have shown in the paper in question, as others have done before, that it is always in Scripture spoken of as for us done with, put off, crucified, never recognized as in us, as sin or the flesh is. This, surely, is a difficulty in the way of supposing them one thing. While it is easy to understand that, in looking back upon "my" former self, I should call it "my" old man. And this falls

in with the whole purport, not merely of the chapter preceding, where our connection by nature with the old head is reasoned upon and made the ground of a comparison as to our link by new nature with the new Head.

I cannot, therefore, accept that our old man being crucified with Christ means, "not the person, but the condition of sin which characterizes and governs the person; and by being judicially dealt with by God at the cross is a reason for not serving as a slave sin, as once the person did." Nor do I think it possible to take "He that has died is *justified* from sin" as being "discharged" from a master's service. I believe "justified" means always cleared from *guilt*, and that this is the great point. I do not know an instance in which it means discharged from service. And, moreover, is it not plain that to make "he that has died" to be the master, is to make it in that case the *master* which is discharged? Surely this alone should be decisive as to the whole matter. If he that has died is the one discharged, and so the passage says unmistakably, then our brother, and every one else, must see that it is I, not my master, who died, as it is I, not my master, who am discharged. There can be no clearer proof that our "old man" is not our old master, but our old *self*.

Galatians vi. 14 is not in point, however much at first sight it may seem so. When the apostle speaks of being by the cross crucified to the world, and the world to him, it is not a question of justification or of atonement at all. The shame of the cross, along with its being a final thing, as death is with us here, these are the thoughts present to him. The world has put its brand upon Christ; well

then, it has branded me, he says. But it is the world that has the real brand. In slaying Him, it has slain me, and the separation is final. But here, as I have said, there is no thought of atoning efficacy in the cross, or of justification. In this case the responsibility must cease. You could not say, The body of sin has been condemned in the cross, therefore I am justified from sin. *Condemning it does not justify me*; the law condemns it too, but does not justify at all. But myself receiving judgment in another, my Substitute, *does* justify me, and that is what the apostle says.

I think I need no more dwell upon this, then; but there still remains the question of responsibility to be looked at. I agree fully with what our brother says as to this, that it attaches to the creature as such, and that the condition of the creature does not affect this. There is no—absolutely no—difference whatever as to this. And that redemption does not end our responsibility, I own fully. With all that, I do surely believe that my *judicial* responsibility,—for of that it is evident I am speaking only,—was so taken by the Lord as dying for me, that as to “eternal judgment” it is as if we had passed out of the body, and that in our Substitute we *have* done so. Is it not so? I confess I am greatly astonished that so plain a truth could possibly be disputed by one who knows his security in Christ. Our brother must surely, some way, have missed my thought. It is no question, of course, as to our being actually in the body, nor should I have dreamt of guarding against a mistake of this kind. I was talking expressly of what substitution implies; and if it does not imply this, then, I confess, I know not how any real

peace with God is possible at all. I believe, too, that this death of a substitute being the death of those for whom the substitution is is the key to the expression in the following chapters, "when we were in the flesh," and "ye are not in the flesh." Not that I confound the "flesh" and the "body:" I do not. It is of course the body of sin of which the apostle speaks. Yet as we carry this with us till death, and at death escape from it, so in Christ's death being ours, we have already found our escape judicially, and are no longer identified with it before God. I trust, in this, I speak no strange language to my brethren, but what is more fully realized by them than by me. And surely our brother could not mean to deny it.

But then if, in this way, I have died with Christ, my accountability as in this sense living, is surely over; I have said, "as a child of Adam," and to this our brother objects. Of course it will always remain true that I, and all other men, have sprung from Adam. No change can possibly alter that. Men, too, we shall always be; but "the first man is of the earth, earthy; the Second Man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." We are already heavenly—of the new race, although in the image of it we are not. And this is what I meant by our accountability as children of Adam being over. As a fact, although a fact only known to faith, we are in Christ—in the Second Man, not the first; and if it is asked, "What about the sins committed afterward?" I answer, If the death of Christ did not take them all into

account, I know no way at all for their settlement. But is there any doubt it did?

Responsibility goes on, of course; for the creature is, as it has been well said, always responsible. But I am responsible, as having received Christ Jesus my Lord, to walk in Him; as maintaining in my walk always, that is, the place in which His work has set me. And the standard of my walk is His walk down here,—to walk as the Second, heavenly Man, not as the first. This, as already said, will be owning, as He did, the duties and relationships which we have to one another upon earth, yet as those sanctified and sent into the world—therefore first taken out of it. This fully owns that we are in the world, while it emphasizes the fact of redemption. I am still a man, but a redeemed man,—a man belonging by birth as well as adoption to the race of the Second Man, not the first. I have, alas! still the old nature; I am still in the guise of the first man's family; I own fully the laws which God gave to creation when He established it in that perfection from which it has departed: but I am under another Head, and so of another family. And thus, while of course as to fact we are children of Adam yet, our place and accountability are, as I fully believe, not what this implies.

I have now, I think, taken up the points of our brother's letter, save one, to which, indeed, he merely alludes, and not in direct reference to myself,—the doctrine of new creation; too important an one to enter upon at the close of a letter, already long enough. Let me say, in conclusion, that I believe the free discussion of such points as these, in brotherly love and confidence, would do only

good, and great good. Souls are exercised about them. If we seek truth, and are willing humbly to confess error wherever it may be made apparent,—if we can look at Scripture, not as desiring to maintain views of our own, but the authority of God's Word only, remembering there is no infallibility for us any where, but only there,—then, I say again, the good will be great. Soon, all thoughts of our own merely will have passed away forever. Do we not even now desire that they may be? Is it too late now, in the nineteenth century of Christianity, to look for a little company, at least, of those who in perfect freedom and faithfulness can approach each other upon topics of supremest interest and importance without forgetting the infinitely precious bonds that unite them to one another, or that dear Master whose word to us all is, "By love, serve one another."

If we seek unity of mind and judgment, it will be found in this way, not in the repression of free utterance by external authority, of whatever kind. In freedom the Spirit of God alone can find the atmosphere He wishes,—only the freedom of children in the Father's presence, whose inheritance is in the light.

It is in this spirit I have sought to reply to our brother's letter, thankful to him for the honest expression of what he feels and fears, and of his own views as he has given them. May the Spirit of truth show us each the truth where we have failed as yet to reach it, and may there be power from Him to sanctify us by it.

I am, my beloved brother,

Affectionately, in Christ,

F. W. G.

FAITH WITNESSING AND WITNESSED TO.

Hebrews xi. 1, 2.

I. THE PRINCIPLE.

HOW blessed a thing is faith! In a world like this, where we come out of darkness, only for sight and sense to return to darkness again; where in the meantime we walk amid a strife of jarring passions, interests, elements, which at every turn beset and harass us,—the world with all its beauty yet in strange, dread isolation from the universe and its Maker;—how blessed is that which at once transforms every thing for us; by which the mouths of lions are stopped, the violence of fire is quenched, the dead are raised up, or, more wondrous still, we find strength to endure whatever evils, because of the joy before us! Surely, to man, such faith is “precious faith.” And to God how precious! for faith means the heart’s return to Him from whom we all had fallen. The isolation, the darkness, the evil, are no necessary parts of the inheritance designed for us, but the tokens of our shame and of our sin. The light which faith perceives is the light of a new life begun in the sovereign grace of God from out of death in trespasses and sins.

No wonder, then, if we turn with ever-fresh interest and delight to the record of faith’s actings in by-gone days, in sympathy with those who lived and walked and suffered in the power of it; and to learn for ourselves, encompassed with the trials through which they have preceded us, the lesson of their conflict, and the secret of their victories. God uses them thus with us, knowing our weak-

ness, encouraging us by those whose kinship with our weakness is that which most encourages us, as the apostle reminds us even of an Elias, that he was a man of like passions with ourselves; Scripture hiding nothing of the failure and infirmities which show how truly he was that, for the purpose of preserving for us in full power the sweetness of that assurance. .

In this chapter, we have a long catalogue of things which faith wrought in the saints of old, expressly given to stir our hearts by the remembrance; and it is my purpose, if the Lord will, to take them up one by one, and see what virtue He may give to distill out of them for blessing to souls. We may not seem to have fallen upon days susceptible of some shapes in which that which we seek exhibited itself in them. Perhaps it may only serve the more to appeal to us, when our danger is that of laxity, and timid shrinking from penalties not to be compared with theirs. It is good to remember that, however circumstances alter, they do not affect the reality of that for which God is seeking as earnestly as ever, that it "may be unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

What, then, is faith? "Faith is the substance"—or "substantiation,"—says the apostle, "of things hoped for, the evidence [or conviction] of things not seen." This was the principle of lives so dear to God, so bright to us: "for by it the elders obtained a good report." They had their eyes upon the unseen; and more, they had their hearts in it. Drawn by what was theirs beyond mortal sight, they were in the darkness of the world as stars that shone out of a black sky. Their lives were

not so much better in degree than other men's, as they were different in character. And as with stars of varying magnitude, each star was yet a star, not to be confounded with any other thing.

And no less still is the life of faith entirely different from any other life. It may be found in a garret, and very often is, for "God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith;" but wherever it is, its true character and dignity will shine out. It is like nothing else in the world, for its glory is not of the world.

The heart and life under the power of things unseen! This is not honesty, justice, uprightness, benevolence, or any or all other things in repute among men; although it will produce all this, no doubt. So too to these may be added an orthodox belief and profession of Christianity. Men may believe in Christianity and in Christ, with never a doubt intruding, and yet never faith. "Many believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did; but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, for He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." It was "in man" to believe after this fashion,—all thoroughly human, and no more. But it is not to such a class I am addressing myself now, although the reminder may help to fasten inquiry upon our souls, if we do not,—although believers to whom Jesus *has* committed Himself,—mistake often for the life of faith a life of moralities and benevolent activities, covered with a Christian dress: a life in which, we shall discover, if God stir our hearts to look, none of the trials, difficulties, rejection by the world, which a life of faith supposes, and on the other, little of the presence

of Jesus, or of the glow upon the spirit of him who said, "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God."

The light of heaven shines only on the pilgrim-path, and faith is ever and only in this world a pilgrim. A path narrow indeed, but opening out in prospects of unutterable glory just there where for men at large rests impenetrable darkness. And then faith has, not a king's highway, and on the other hand, not merely guide posts along the road, but a living Leader, whose word must be sought at His mouth, and followed often into strange places, where no path may be but by a rift in the sea, and every resource of our own fail us.

For the Christian, there is but one hindrance to faith in reality, for every other finds its strength in this. Faith is subjection, dependence, and so confidence; and this is the order of its development in us. Self-will is its opposite and enemy ever, the one means and method of attack of the whole power of Satan and the world. Self-judgment—the opposite of *self-occupation*—is that which maintains faith in simplicity and power therefore. If we complain of weakness of faith, the real reason is here, in not suffering that which God declares fully to control us. Christ, if received by us, must be sovereign in us; and the sovereign source of supply, if indeed out of our bellies shall flow rivers of living water.

Let us ask ourselves, then, as we begin these histories, and if we are satisfied that we live by faith, Do we *walk* by faith? Are our lives honestly surrendered to Christ their Lord? For it is certain a path of faith can have no meaning for us if it be not so; that we cannot have faith for any

thing but God's path. And for each one of us, whatever our circumstances, to take that path will individualize us, bring conscience into thorough exercise, make all kinds of difficulties for us which nothing but the wisdom and power of God can meet, cast us upon Him, therefore, in a very real way, which will not leave us in the least doubt of what is meant by a walk of faith; and what its issue will be, let faith say. Surely no saint of ancient or modern times would give a bad report of the way the Lord led him, any more than of the end to which He led. No witness here but beckons us forward. First of all, Leader of all, He who coming from the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, tells us from the depths of such a humiliation,—“My *meat* is to the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.”

(*To be continued, D. V.*)

FRAGMENTS.

“LEAKY vessels hold no water. If in Christ, you will be full of water. A vessel with no bottom to it can be kept full of water if *in* a fountain. Out of Christ, we are broken vessels, holding none. There is nothing in the vessel apart from Christ.”

“How little our hearts love things according to their nearness to *Christ*! How little thought we have of the preciousness of Christians because they are dear to Christ! We ought to love good things for Christ's sake, and not only for the dew that distills from them for our refreshment.”

G. V. W.

KEY-NOTES TO THE BIBLE BOOKS.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK.—*Continued.*

II.

DISCIPLESHIP TO A REJECTED MASTER. (Chap. vi.—x.)

IN the face of rejection, the Lord now sends out His disciples; chosen before, but now actually sent into the field of labor. This characterizes, I do not doubt, the second part of Mark. It gives us, first, in the sixth chapter, the features, for faith, of a world in which Christ has been rejected, but in which divine love manifests itself in none the less energy, while its ways suit themselves to the condition of things. Secondly, to the ninth verse of the eighth chapter, we have the religious opposition, which ignores man's true need, as well as the authority of God, in contrast with divine grace, which recognizes both. Thirdly, to chapter ix. 8, we find the person of Christ confessed by faith, with the cross as present result, the glory the final one. Fourthly, to the end of the same chapter, lowliness and self-judgment are insisted on as the sole way of power and blessing. Lastly, in the tenth chapter, the original divine order in creation is restored, marriage cleared, and its fruits received and blessed, while the fall and need of salvation are maintained, and the principles of reward and rule with Christ announced.

I. (Chap. vi.) *The activity of divine love in a scene of rejection.*

(1) vi. 1-13. *Limited by unbelief, yet with full power for men, and seeking them.* At the outset, we find

the Lord rejected in His own country; spite of His mighty works, refused, because of the lowly, familiar way in which He appeared among them. The prophet is not without honor save in his own house. He recognizes this, yet marvels; hindered by their unbelief, can there do no mighty work: yet what they will let Him do He does; He lays His hand upon a few sick folk, and heals them. Still seeking them in patient grace, He goes round about the villages teaching.

It is in face of this unbelief He now sends out the twelve. "He who could not work mighty works, because His service was dependent on divine conditions, on which God could found and carry on His intercourse with men, in order to reveal Himself, now gives power to others over all unclean spirits, a power which is divine. Any can work miracles if God gives the power, but God alone can give it. They are to lack nothing, for Emmanuel was there; and to announce judgment if their message was rejected. Divine love had made Him entirely a dependent Servant; but the dependent Servant was God, present in grace and righteousness," *

They who are sent forth are identified then with this gracious activity of divine love toward men; take up their Master's word, and manifest the power given them over the enemy.

(2) vi. 14-29. *The power of the world in opposition.* But here the evangelist turns aside to exhibit the character of the world in opposition to the message of God. At Herod's court the Lord Himself appeared at another time, to find him only hardened by resistance to the present prick of con-

science. The scene here is without Christ, in awful antagonism. But such is the rule of the "prince of this world" during the whole present time of long-suffering goodness, until the revelation of the Lord from heaven ends it. How easy to see here the real ruler is not Herod! How marvelous to find Satan using the conscience that would not bow to the word of truth and God, to make him bow to the mandate of a wicked woman against one he knows to be "a just man and a holy"! This, too, was among the professing people of God, by one who swore to Him the oath by which the prophet died. Since then the powers of the world may be professedly Christian, and that only disguise, not hinder, the real rule of Satan.

(3) vi. 30-45. *Wilderness ministry.* We now return to the Lord, who brings His disciples out into the wilderness for rest and refreshment. This is what still for us the wilderness is made to yield. But here, too, they find a multitude of needy ones, who, seeing them depart, have come out thither after Christ. The day will soon declare how much the wilderness has been the meeting-place between Christ and the souls He serves, and how the Church, in this her necessary place if she will company with Him, has been used for the communication of blessing to those seeking Him. Little, it may seem, they have, but if God's grace be there, five loaves and two fishes feed five thousand men, while each of those distributing has his precious basket of fragments left,—more than what he began with. For true ministry does not *exhaust* the one who serves, but furnishes him, if (that is) it be received from Christ. Let us remember the command also to make men *sit* to eat; and that

none that come but find a welcome: him that cometh He in no wise casts out.

(4) vi. 36-52. *His way in the sea.* What follows represents His care for His beloved people toiling across the sea, the wind contrary, (for Satan is the prince of the power of the air,) Himself absent: how He comes to them upon the sea, and they know Him not, but take Him to be a spirit, one conquered of death, not conqueror; how He makes Himself known and is received into the ship, and then the wind ceases. Our general and our individual histories repeat this story often; and how often do we find, when the new trial comes, that we are no more prepared than formerly to recognize the One who comes to us, and when He makes Himself known, it is as great a wonder! Our hearts are, how often, hard and unbelieving as these disciples—indeed, more strangely so.

(5) vi. 53-56. *The final blessing.* But at last the sea is passed, as when He joins us in the end it will be passed, and then the blessing comes, even for the earth, when it, like Gennesaret, shall "know" the One upon whom it all depends, and the blight upon the whole frame of things shall pass, with the spiritual sickness it attends and indicates. For us in His presence also, the former things shall have passed away.

2. (vii.-viii. 9.) *The religious opposition, and the grace that alone meets the need of man.*

(1) vii. 1-23. *Human tradition against God and man.* We have now the opposition of the religious leaders, always to be met under whatever different forms, until Christ comes. Human authority, first derived from the authority of the Word in-

terpreted, soon and surely displaces the authority of God Himself; and superstition darkens and perverts the natural conscience. It is easier to wash the hands than to purify the heart, and, a priesthood having taken the place of God, their profit may be found in that which sets aside His glory. But man's true need is where all human help is powerless, in a heart from which nothing but evil comes.

(2) vii. 24-30. *The grace which meets man where no claim is possible.* But then in God alone man's help is, and where no claim is possible at all. Of this the Syrophenician woman is the example. A Canaanite, of a race under the curse, and under the power of Satan in her daughter, she is not of the privileged family, but outside—a dog: man's true position whosoever he is. But he has only to *take* this, to find his sure resource in the grace of God, which cannot possibly fail the one who counts on it. So the woman finds, and from such need Christ cannot be hid.

(3) vii. 31-37. *The gift of hearing and of speech.* But this is not all, nor the worst of man's condition. His deepest need is just that which leaves him without voice to cry, or ears to hear the word that comes to him. It is here we find the Lord oppressed with the state to which He ministers. This is indeed the fullness of grace, yet it is that of which every saved soul is the recipient. Here the election of grace is marked, the man being taken apart from the multitude when he receives healing. And this, it seems to me, connects this with the miracle that follows in which is emphasized—

(4) viii. 1-9. *The divine sufficiency of the provision*

made for man. We have a similar miracle indeed to that in the sixth chapter, but the numbers tell a different tale. It is now seven loaves, instead of five, and the baskets—large baskets, and not as before,—are seven also. Before, the numbers 5 and 12 point surely to the human instrumentality employed. Seven speaks rather of divine perfection, although still the grace of God employs men as instruments. This is the fitting close of what is the subject of this second section.

3. (viii. 10–ix. 8.) *The confession of Christ, leading to the cross in this world, and to the glory beyond.*

(1) viii. 10–13. *The unbelieving Pharisees seek a sign.* Again the section opens with the question of unbelief on the part of the leaders of the people. The Pharisees seek a sign from heaven—some wonder which would command the attention and secure the homage of men at large. The sign of the Son of Man in heaven will be this at last, but too late then. Their former religiousness had no need of the cross, and could not recognize the lowly self-humiliation to which divine love had stooped for men. But of necessity that love must keep its own way, and Christ must be a stumbling-block to those whose pride could not interpret grace. To such a generation no sign could be given.

(2) viii. 14–26. *The leaven of the Pharisees.* But not only in enemies did these things work; the leaven of the Pharisees acted as hindrance to faith in the hearts of the disciples also, and the Lord's warning words to them as to it only serve to bring it out. They prove themselves ignorant of the proper power and glory of Him in whom yet they

sincerely believe. They see, but as through a veil, "men as trees." This condition is no doubt represented in the blind man at Bethesda. But the Lord does not leave incomplete that to which He has once put His hand, and at last the man is restored and sees every thing clearly.

(3) viii. 27-30. *Faith's confession.* Save in those brought thus by personal need into contact with the Lord Jesus, there was nowhere any true faith. those who thought to do Him honor only equaled Him with John the Baptist, Elias, or some other prophet. For truly convicted souls, blessed be God! there is but one Christ. Peter, divinely taught, then confesses Him. But for Israel, as for man in nature, all was over therefore, and as Messiah, He charges them that they should tell no man of Him. Through depths of suffering and distress the way lay open to higher glory,—the glory from which He had stooped, and to which He was to return with the joy for which He endured the cross.

(4) viii. 31-38. *The way of the cross.* And now the Lord begins to speak openly of His rejection and death; and immediately the unbelief which can be so strangely mixed with faith begins to show itself in Peter. He "took Him, and began to rebuke Him"! but the Lord at once rebukes as of Satan Peter's opposition, and announces this cross of His as a pattern and principle for His disciples also. "Whoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's," (observe how legality is swept away by the very terms,) "the same shall save it. . . . Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and

sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

(5) ix. 1-8. *The glory at the end.* The revelation of the glory closes, therefore, this section. Three disciples are taken up into the mount of transfiguration to see the kingdom of God come with power. All the elements of the kingdom are in the scene,—the saint who has passed through death; the saint who, like another Enoch, was translated without seeing death; the saints on earth in natural bodies, yet with the glory openly revealed; the "bright cloud," the Shekinah, soon declared as the place of the Father's presence; but Jesus, the Son of Man, proclaimed once more, as at the beginning of His ministry, the Son of God, is the object before the eyes of the astonished disciples, who, if they for a moment put their lowly Master upon some sort of equality of footing with Moses and Elias, are at once warned by the voice from the "excellent glory," "This is My beloved Son; hear Him."

4. (ix. 9-50.) *Lessons of the Path.*

(1) ix. 9-13. *The lesson of resurrection from the dead.* The Lord has already spoken of resurrection, but now He refers them to the time when the Son of Man should be risen from the dead as the time when the glory just unveiled to them should be matter of public testimony and of common joy. But before this, the Son of Man must suffer; as Elias, for that John had already come and been cut off. Thus resurrection *from* the dead, at which they wonder now as a new thing announced, is indeed the foundation of the power and blessedness

of Christianity. It is the witness of Christ's work accepted for us; it is that in which we too are risen with Him; it is that which gives character to our walk through the world. These meanings are not here, nor could be yet, unfolded; but to us, they connect necessarily with what the Lord speaks of to His disciples.

(2) ix. 14-29. *The lesson of power to use power.* On their descent from the mountain, they find a multitude gathered, and the scribes questioning with the other disciples. The power of Satan is manifesting itself unchecked by that which the Lord had intrusted to them. It is this that causes His exclamation, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" Still there is resource in Himself. The only lack of power, as He assures the father of the afflicted child, is in the lack of faith. The devil is cast out; and the Lord, in answer to the question, "Why could not we cast Him out?" points out the root of failure to be in want of prayer and fasting. Dependence and self-denial is the secret of power, without which we do not practically possess what in fact is ours. We have seen, in the beginning of His ministry, the Lord Himself meeting Satan as the dependent One; how necessary, then, that His followers should do so!

(3) ix. 30-37. *The lesson of greatness.* The Lord we find full of the cross and of resurrection; the disciples, shrinking from this, are occupied with and dispute about which of them should be the greatest. The Lord bids them understand that the desire to be first would put one last of all. He takes a child as His fitting representative, and assures them that whosoever receives one such little

child in His name receives both Himself and His Father also. Self-seeking is surely the antipodes of greatness, as every conscience needs must own. And yet how far asunder are heart and conscience here!

(4) ix. 38-41. *A lesson on "not following us."* An important lesson comes next as to the largeness of heart by which alone we are competent for a narrow path. John answers the Lord, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbad him, because he followeth not us." It is self in a subtle, religious way, none the less offensive upon that account. Think of devils being actually cast out in the name of Christ, and a disciple of His forbidding it! But liberality is not enjoined, as men enjoin, upon the ground of any uncertainty as to the path itself. *They* could not be—how could it be supposed they could be—uncertain of their own path. The Lord puts His answer upon different ground entirely. "No man can do a miracle in My name that can lightly speak evil of Me." In the midst of a world which rejects Christ, how simple and necessary should be the recognition of all that is of Him. It is the joy of the Spirit to take forth the precious from the vile, supposing there be the vile. And as to the Lord Himself, there is not a cup of water given to a disciple in His name but He will acknowledge it in due season.

(5) ix. 42-50. *Salting with fire.* On the other hand, woe to him who causes to stumble one of Christ's little ones; and whatever in you causes you to stumble, cut it off: for every one shall be salted with the fire of divine holiness. If it be in this present life, the result will be holiness eternal;

but if not, in Gehenna the flame of remorse will accompany the eternal fire which will subdue all opposition. "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another."

5. (x. 1-45.) *The moral restitution of a fallen world.*

(1) x. 1-12. *The divine order of marriage restored.* We find now the moral order of the kingdom of God, in which the defects of the law (which made nothing perfect) are removed, and the institutions of God in creation are freed from the perversions of man, fallen and corrupt. In answer to the Pharisees, the Lord restores the primitive meaning of marriage, and forbids the divorce which Moses, for the hardness of their hearts, had allowed.

(2) x. 13-16. *Children received and blessed.* Children are next received and pronounced of the kingdom of God, while whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

(3) x. 17-27. *The need of salvation affirmed.* But if only as a little child can the kingdom be entered, the power of man to earn it in any shape is excluded. His goodness is set aside. Not the rich but the poor enter, and that by the very grace of God,—by salvation. Thus the natural amiability, which even drew out the regard of Jesus, when tested, proves only the more decisively the complete ruin of man. "There is none good but One, that is, God." The first-born of fallen man is Cain, "possession;" for the heart dropped away from Him who alone can satisfy it, seeks its good where death reigns over all, where all is vanity. Possessed of this, God is all the more shut out by it

out of his heart, and "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." But "who then can be saved?" asks the disciples. That is indeed what is needed—salvation; but that is entirely in the hands of God: "with men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."

(4) x. 28-31. *The principle of reward.* Peter then begins to say to Him, "Lo, we have left all and followed Thee." The heart of a disciple is quite capable of turning the rewards of grace into earning, and so destroy their whole character. Divine love will in fact reward, but only what is done for Christ, not for the reward. "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, *for My sake and the gospel's*, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come, eternal life." But then all depends upon the motive; and thus, in result, "many that are first shall be last, and the last first."

(5) x. 32-45. *The kingdom of God no kingdom of the Gentiles.* Again the Lord begins to put before them the cross. It was that which had they known in its inner meaning, of necessity would have delivered them from the spirit they immediately manifest; for James and John come unto Him now seeking the places on the right hand and the left in His glory. The Lord puts to them the question of their ability to drink of the cup He was to drink, and be baptized with the baptism with which He would be baptized. They answer, though they had shrunk from it just before, that they are able. He replies that they shall do this, but that the places

they seek are not His to give, except to those for whom they are prepared of His Father. When the ten hear it, they are much displeased, for the same spirit really animates them all; and then the simple blessed truth is stated, so clear and necessary when made known, so impossible to conceive beforehand, that God's kingdom is not like a kingdom of the Gentiles—the places in it not such as would satisfy the pride and ambition of men. The highest there is He who as the “Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.” The spirit of service is that which qualifies for a rule which is service still, the ministry of love which values the wealth that is in its hand as power to minister.

THE WOUNDS OF CHRIST.

(Extracted.)

TURNING to Zechariah xiii. 6-9, we find a scene described of which the likeness to that in John xx. cannot be considered accidental. The question is the same—the identification of Christ, this time in His royal glory; and the inquiry, “What are these wounds in Thy hands?” with the answer, “Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends,” are so profoundly suitable to the occasion of our Lord's second presentation to His people that one marvels and worships to read them as written full five centuries before His first coming to suffer that wounding at their hands. Wonderfully, too, the passage closes with the greeting of restored relationship that follows, on His recognition by signs such as these,—“And I shall say, It is My people;” and they shall say, “The

Lord, my God!" Here, then, we discover the solemn truth that the wounds of Jesus will, at His coming in His kingdom, prove His title to the homage of the repentant nation at whose hands He received them—a truth further taught in the previous chapter, where the familiar words occur, "And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn," etc.; a word of prophecy repeated in almost similar terms by the same Spirit six centuries later, and after the piercing had taken place: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of Him." (Rev. i. 7.)

With this also agree the strange words of the prophet Habakkuk, who (if we may accept the marginal reading of chapter iii. 4.) describes the coming of God and the Holy One thus: "His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise; and His brightness was as the light, and He had bright beams out of His side;" that is to say, that not only will the wounds of Jesus be His identification, commanding the obedience, submission, and worshiping love of His nation, but those very wounds will be themselves His highest glory, and from them, as from the stricken thunder-cloud, will issue forth "bright beams" of light, to the joy of His reconciled people, and the confusion and destruction of His enemies.

If, then, the wounds of Jesus—kept open, so to speak, in our love-feasts' from week to week, through all the ages of this present interval—shall fulfill so glorious a function at His coming back to the earth to reign over Israel, can we be surprised to find that in the still further future, at His as-

suming universal sway, His wounds will again prove His title to that throne of glory?

Opening at Revelation v, this scene is portrayed—portrayed in purpose so divine, in effect so dramatic, in language so wonderful, as to confound, overpower, and yet inspire and elevate, our minds as often as we read it. For there it is told how, when every creature in heaven, in earth, and under the earth had failed to qualify to claim the title-deeds of universal sovereignty,—when the eyes of the seer flowed with bitter tears to think that earth's long hopes of redemption from her cruel subjugation were to be disappointed,—a Lamb, a little Lamb, a little *wounded* Lamb, a Lamb *as it had been slain*, stood out in the midst of that glittering circle of glory, and, *by right and title only of those visible wounds*, took the book from off the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, and heard the joyful acclamations of all the great wide universe, which had now at last beheld its Redeemer.

Such, briefly, are the tremendous issues that have turned and shall turn upon the wounds of Christ, which in our commemorative supper we love to discover symbolically shown forth. May it not be that hereafter, when faith shall change to sight, we shall make the personal proof of their identifying power which one has sought to convey in the beautiful lines that follow:—

“But how shall I then know Thee

Amid those hosts above?

What token true shall show me

The object of my love?

Thy wounds, Thy wounds, Lord Jesus,—

These deep, deep wounds will tell

The sacrifice that frees us

From self, and death, and hell!” (G. F. T.)

FAITH WITNESSING AND WITNESSED TO.

2. ABEL. (Heb. xi. 3, 4.)

THE apostle begins the examples of faith by one not taken from the past, but from the present. He does not speak of the elders, but of ourselves, and claims all his hearers as belonging to this company of witnesses. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things that are seen are not made of things which do appear." It seems strange associating what now we deem simple and common belief with the list of precious fruits which follow; and we ask ourselves naturally, What is the meaning of such a preface? But in fact, a living faith in creation is one more connected with the elders than at first we may perceive. Creation is that with which the Old Testament begins, and it is the basis of the truth of all revelation. No heathen ever understood it; and to understand it is to do what faith must ever do—put God in His true place as the One upon whose mere word all things, whatever they may be, depend. It is an immense principle, if realized in the soul, not simply the unseen things known, but known as that upon which the things seen are absolutely dependent. One walking in this spirit has alone the secret of endurance, the key of all just reasoning as to created things. I am supposing, of course, his relationship assured to Him without whom thus not a sparrow falls to the ground, and who is our Father. But this ascertained, then to walk before One at whose word the worlds sprang into being,—consciously to live and walk and have one's being

in Him,—how sweet is the realization of this to the heart! In what corner of His universe shall we not then be with Him? or which of all the subject elements shall be our foes? “If God be for us, who shall be against us? . . . Shall even tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor *any other creature*, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

What encouragement for the pilgrim path is this! Moving through a world where things seen are entirely dependent on the unseen, not unknown, Source! True, sin has come in, and there is not only apparent but real confusion,—that is a thing none the less true, and to be ever kept in mind; but the rod of power belongs still to the shepherd-hand that will once more claim it, and justify Himself from all the suspicions that His creatures now may entertain. Meanwhile faith has learned deeper lessons from the One smitten with the rod than if smiting with it. He has stripped Himself that He might enrich us with His poverty, and yet shall have His own returned with usury in the glory soon to be revealed.

For the path of faith, then, the third verse of this chapter has great significance.

We come now to the examples which for our admonition and encouragement the apostle sets before us. And here it will be at once seen that there is an order of connection between them which it is for our profit to observe. The first

example begins where every thing begins with us—with acceptance with God; and it lies at the threshold of history, speaking aloud in the solemn circumstances attached to it, which, for the fifteen hundred years before the flood, would make it impossible to be forgotten, and which the Spirit of God has recorded for the ages afterward. The way of Cain has indeed been constantly man's unhappy choice; but God has distinctly marked His approval of Abel's way,—no self-devised one, surely, or it could not have been the way of faith. "By faith 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."

There are some words in the sermon on the mount, which it is instructive to compare with this. There, the Lord speaks of a gift which cannot be accepted; not for any thing wrong with it, but because of wrong in the giver,—that is, of a gift which the state of the giver may discredit, if it cannot accredit: while here, we are told of a gift which accredits the giver. "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

Now it may seem strange to some who read this, for me to say, what is but the simple truth, that this last gift is really the saint's gift; while the one in Hebrews is the sinner's. If I come to God as a saint, with something to present to Him, there must needs come in the question, Is it with clean hands I bring it? but a *sinner* has a gift which if

he will he may bring to God, and no question of the cleanness of his hands be raised at all! How could it be the question with a sinner, of clean hands? That he is a sinner necessarily settles that. But is there not a way by which a sinner, as such, may draw near to God? Indeed, blessed be His name! there is. Faith is his resource, even as it was Abel's; and Christ, of whom the firstlings of the flock which Abel brought speak, is the precious gift which no hands of ours can soil when we bring it to God! Abel's was just the sinner's sacrifice; which his faith made what it was, for in fact it was but in itself a mere slaughtered beast, of no possible value to take away sin: faith made it what it was for God—the token of an infinite sacrifice to come. Thus offered, it stood for him—he was accepted in it: “He obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.” So too can any other be accepted.

Our text is a precious and uncontrovertible evidence of *what* gave value to the offerings of the saints of Old-Testament times. Had they brought simply in blind obedience what God had bidden, it would have been at best their faith which God accepted and testified of: the testimony would have been to themselves, not really to their gift. Had faith not been needed, God could not have testified but to the mere value of the beast itself, which for the purpose could have had none. Thus that in faith they brought—that to which, and *not* to their faith, so brought, God testified, shows that what they in their faith really saw and brought was Christ; for only to the value of Christ could God bear witness. Doubtless it was through a haze of distance that they mostly saw; not clearness, but

reality of faith was necessary, as now also it is: but to Christ only could God ever witness. Could He to the cattle upon a thousand hills, or to man's faith itself, whatever it were, as making a sinner righteous before Him?

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad:" such are the Lord's conclusive words. Moses, says the apostle, "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect to the recompense of the reward." How much they knew it may be impossible for us at all to understand; but such statements as these are given us that we may recognize our brethren in these saints of an elder day, and that faith's object in all times may be seen as ever and only in Him of whom the seed of the woman, from the first moment of the fall, has spoken on God's part to men.

Acceptance by faith and acceptance in Christ are, in Abel, one; and this significantly begins the record of Old-Testament worthies. It begins, surely, every path of faith, the whole world over, and in every time. This testimony is sealed with the blood which declares too, from the beginning, into what a world God's grace has come. Six thousand years have past, and still He waits, and the long-suffering of God is still salvation.

(To be continued, D. V.)

"THAT the world may know that Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." Do you believe that? If you do not, it is positive unbelief.

"THEREFORE we labor that, whether present or absent, we may be acceptable to Him."

ATONEMENT.

CHAPTER XIX.

Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Corinthians.

THE epistle to the Colossians has for its key-note the ninth and tenth verses of the second chapter—"In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him." It is the fullness of Christ for the Christian. The first chapter gives us the first part of this, which it anticipates: "For all the fullness *was* pleased to dwell in Him." The second and third chapters show our completeness in Him: His death for us delivering us from our natural portion; His resurrection bringing us into our portion now with God.

In the first chapter, the work of atonement is represented as for the reconciliation of heaven and earth, as well as having accomplished the reconciliation of all believers: "And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself,—by Him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven. And you, that were some time alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight."

This doctrine of reconciliation is important as showing how far the need and value of the cross extend. In Romans already there is the statement that "when we were enemies, we were reconciled

to God by the death of His Son;" but here it extends much more widely, and has to do, not merely with persons even, but with things—all things, both in heaven and in earth. There are no persons in heaven to be brought back by the work of Christ, "for verily He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold" (Heb. ii. 16, *Gr.*). It is not, therefore, of persons that the apostle is speaking here, but of the frame-work of things put out of joint, as it were, through sin, as far as sin has reached, and which the work of Christ was needed to set right.

In this application of reconciliation two things are plain: first, that it is not merely a moral effect on man that is intended by it, (although this moral effect there is, and it is a great truth too;) and secondly, that it was in the nature of God Himself that the deepest need of atonement lay. Going on to Ephesians, we find the apostle speaking of "the redemption of the purchased possession" (i. 14); and in Hebrews ix. 12, saying, "It was necessary, therefore, that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." Here, the heavenly things, then, are spoken of as purchased, purified, reconciled, redeemed. In whose eyes were they, then, impure? Clearly, in His to whom alone all true sacrifice was ever offered. It was the nature of God which required atonement, His holiness that needed satisfaction in it. In a deeper sense than probably Eliphaz knew could it be said, "The heavens are not clean in His sight" (Job xv. 15). The work of Christ enables Him to lay hold upon all that with which sin has been connected,

and restore to more than all its pristine beauty and excellency. How unspeakable is the value of that work which not only does this, but actually glorifies Him in filling the heavenly places with those redeemed from the fall, and made the very "righteousness of God in Christ."

As for Christians, they are already reconciled through the work of Christ: "You . . . hath He reconciled." It is done, although not yet are all the fruits reaped of this. Already are we before God in Christ, "accepted in the Beloved," waiting for the adoption, the redemption of the body, to put us in our place every way, in the very image of the heavenly. Reconciliation on our part necessarily includes the change from enmity, the natural state, to love, as here and in Romans both: "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son;" "You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled." The moral effect is what is needed as to us. The power of the display of the love which has so wonderfully met our whole necessity brings our hearts back to God. Love wins love: "we love Him because He first loved us." Hence, for this effect, the freeness and fullness of the gospel are essential. "'Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him most?' 'I suppose that he to whom he forgave most.' 'Thou hast rightly judged.'" Question of the love that calls forth my love is fatal to this effect. I must be delivered from the necessity of seeking my own things, in order to live, not unto myself, but unto Him who died for me and rose again. This, the apostle tells us, was the secret of his life, such as we know it was: "The life which I live in the flesh

I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Reconciliation was needed thus on our part, and in order that it might be, the death of Christ must meet the demand of divine righteousness; but on this very account it is never said in Scripture, as it is so often in human creeds, that *God* is reconciled by the work of Christ. He had not changed, but we. God had never enmity to the work of His hands, however fallen away from Him. He had not, then, to be reconciled; and so, even where the reconciliation is of things, not persons, it is still these that are said to be reconciled, as we have seen. As to man, reconciliation is pressed upon him on the ground of Christ's work: "We pray, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God; for He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

The second part of Colossians gives, as I have said, the effect of the work of Christ for us, bringing in His resurrection and life beyond death as giving us our new place in the efficacy of it with God. We have "dead with Christ," "buried with Christ," almost exactly as in the second part of Romans, our death being called here "the circumcision of Christ," or Christian circumcision. While the "alive in Christ" of Romans is here carried back to its commencement in our being "quickened together with Christ." Our life in Him is thus seen, from its first moment, to be the result of atonement. The blotting out of legal ordinances, which were contrary to us, and the spoiling of principalities and powers, are connected also with His work. Risen with Him, we are in spirit to

be outside the scene we are passing through,—to “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.”

Ephesians, as is well known, carries us one step beyond this. We are not only risen, but ascended, “made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Here, “with” can no longer be said, as is evident. We are not actually, but as yet only represented, there: it is “the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.”

This is individual, of course. And though, as in Colossians, “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace,” yet the meeting our responsibility in grace is not the special subject of Ephesians, but the new creation which we are made in Christ, and this in its heavenly character the epistle sets before us. It is not within our scope just now to enter upon this. In connection with it, the effect of the cross is spoken of as breaking down the middle wall of partition between both Jew and Gentile, both man and God. This middle wall of partition is the law, which the apostle calls, therefore, by a strong figure, the “enmity,” and its abolition, our peace and reconciliation: “Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” There is nothing here but what is simple

enough, and needs no comment. Nor does Ephesians present us with any further development of the doctrine of atonement.

The texts we have had before us naturally connect themselves with one already quoted in connection with them, but to which we must give now more particular attention. It is 2 Corinthians v. 21. The whole passage runs thus: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us, we pray in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

Notice, first, there is no statement here of the world having been reconciled. It is of the attitude which God took in Christ come into the world, of which the apostle is speaking. What Christ was doing when here, he says, we are doing as His representatives, "in His stead," now He is no longer here. But that attitude is of beseeching men *to be* reconciled,—not telling them they are. In this way God was not imputing their trespasses to them, inviting them to draw nigh to Him, not forbidding access.

Now this same liberty of access is proclaimed, but the ground of it is an already accomplished work: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." The main feature of atonement is

here very clearly given; and the force is made plainer by the contrast of words and thought. In the same sense was Christ made sin for us as that in which we are made righteousness; and as the sin was the sin of man, so the righteousness is the righteousness of God. Moreover, as it was not in Himself that He was made sin, for He knew none; so not in ourselves are we made divine righteousness, but in Him. The antithesis in all this no one can doubt to be designed; and it makes evident the meaning of the whole. Christ who knew no sin was identified with it upon the cross; we as the fruit of His work, in our place in Him, are identified with the righteousness of God. In Him dying upon the tree is seen the sin of man; but the righteousness of God is seen, wonderful to say, in sinners being accepted in the Beloved.

But you may say, Is not the righteousness of God seen also in the cross? Surely it is; and so the third of Romans states: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness;" but in what respect? "That He might be righteous, justifying"—pronouncing righteous—"him which believeth in Jesus." That we might be in Him, it was necessary that He should be made sin for us; the righteousness of God no less could satisfy. That we are in Him declares therefore the cross God's method of salvation—affirms that righteousness, now our shelter and defense, "the righteousness of God over all them that believe." With this, then, we are identified forever: forever we shall display it, as we shall "the exceeding riches of His grace."

“GOD IS LOVE:” “GOD IS LIGHT.”

1 John.

'T WAS not in worlds of light above
That God made known His way of love ;
'Twas not in scenes unsullied, bright,
That He revealed that God is light :
'Twas not amidst the ambient air,
'Midst glowing suns, or moonlight fair,
Nor where the myriad creatures creep
Who move amidst the untrampled deep.

'Twas not in Eden's garden fair,
Where all was good for man to share ;
Whence sprang each tree to please the eye,
To lend its shade, its fruit supply,
Where Nature, in her tenderest ways,
Diffused her joys in myriad rays :
Not all creation's glories bright
Could tell that God is love, is light.

Not there came forth the light divine,
Not there did God's full purpose shine,
Not there did He who dwelt above
Reveal Himself as light and love ;
But in those scenes of ceaseless shame,
Where sin still burned unholy flame,
Where in its fierce and fiery breath
Man wasted, moth-like unto death.

There Jesus came—the incarnate One—
God's peerless, perfect, lowly Son,
Where 'midst sorrow, sin, and shame
He showed His Father's holy name.
His life shone there in purest light,
As light 'midst darkness, burning bright,
Then crowned by death His life of love
To bring man up to God above.

T. McK.

ASSEMBLY-ACTION :

ITS CHARACTER, ITS SPHERE, AND HOW FAR TO BE RECEIVED.

THE first question that seems needful to ask is, What is assembly-action? There is no doubt, or should be none, that the Lord has given to even two or three gathered to His name the power to act in a certain sphere and within certain limits, and that to resist such action, where scripturally taken, would be to resist the authority of the Lord Himself. Insubjection and self-will are here, as ever, most serious for the soul of him who displays them. The assembly is not a set of people gathered by their own wills, or governed by rules enacted by mutual agreement, and which may be canceled in the same way as made. In it the Lord's will must have supremacy alone, the Word of God being its expression alone, and the Spirit of God its sole interpreter. When the decision of an assembly fulfills these conditions, then alas for the man whose pride and independency would set it aside! On the other hand, where its decision does *not* fulfill them, then it violates its own character, and humility is shown, not in accepting, but refusing this.

But what is assembly-action? This is of first importance to consider. I assume here the knowledge of what the assembly is, and of course it is the *local* assembly of which we are speaking,—those who are the members of the body of Christ in a given place, or the “two or three” who alone may be actually gathered as that. This action, it is very simple to understand, is the action of those gathered,—*ideally*, of *all* gathered, in intelligent agreement with one another.

That this is the perfect ideal should need no discussion. If, for instance, *one* of those coming

together were not consulted,—were left out,—it would no longer be the assembly. But more than this, if the consent of one or more of these were brought about by other means or inducements than the apprehension of Scripture and its application to the facts of the case, it is plain they would still be practically outside. For the decision of an assembly, if rightly so, is not merely an agreement that such a thing *shall* be, but also that it *ought* to be,—in accordance with the mind of the Lord, and in subjection to His word.

How solemn, for those who pronounce it, therefore, is the decision of an assembly! Let us pause here for a brief word of application, before we proceed further. It is strange and sad how readily the most simple results of obvious truths escape us. It is clear that the woman, whatever practical restriction the Word may enjoin as to her public part in the assembly, yet *belongs* to it as fully as does the man. No action of the men alone (whether formally or virtually such) is the action of the assembly. The conscience of the woman is to be respected exactly as is the man's; for her obedience to the Lord is as necessary as is his. But on this account, the woman is to be made acquainted with what is in question as much as is the man. Nothing can relieve us of our individual responsibility in that in which we are to act for God, and no one can, therefore, devolve his individual responsibility upon another, or upon any number of others: not the wife upon her husband, for instance, or the child upon his parent. Each one of us must give an account of himself to God; and any interference, whether by constraint or *neglect*, with the claim of God upon another is really and only sin, whatever the plea.

This does not at all set aside the value of "*guides*" in this as in every other matter. Guidance supposes the intelligence and conscience both in exercise; and assisted, *not suppressed*. As another has said, "It is not the seeing leading the blind, but the seeing leading the *seeing*." Thus none can dispute, surely, the use of brothers' meetings for preparing a matter for the assembly so that confusion may be avoided, and a godly judgment more easily attained. But this has need to be closely watched lest officialism and clerisy come in by this door, and the decision be virtually *made* here, only to be *announced* for formal approbation afterward. Such a meeting has no claim of *right*, but is only a matter of wisdom—of expediency. Those meeting in it are servants of the assembly, not its lords; to be respected and honored for their *service*; as lords, to be peremptorily rejected and refused. How easily here may custom grow into claim! Dangers beset us every where, and helps readily become hindrances. The assumption of brothers' meetings has been so great as to throw doubt even upon their expediency, however undeniably useful in their place they may be. At least, *authority* from Scripture they have none.

The first requisite for assembly-action, then, is, that it should be really the assembly that acts. God would have neither unexercised consciences nor violated consciences. To secure this, patience and forbearance toward one another have to be displayed, and no decision come to while one honest-hearted person remains unconvinced. Slow work this, some will object; but what if it entail much more waiting upon God, more tender care of each other, than we have been accustomed to:

is it not better to reach slowly a decision in which all concur than to sow the seed of future self-accusation, dissension, and doubt among brethren? May not the slowness of some be a needed guard against the haste of others,—a most real help against rash and ill-considered judgment? Does not the endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, too, necessitate this? Can we really claim the authority of the Lord for that which is the result of pressure put upon the weak, the timid, the ignorant—nay, even of the unconcern of the indifferent? Alas! we may; but will He that is holy, He that is true, confirm with His authority the fruit of disregard for His own precepts, and carelessness for His people?

I am aware that 2 Corinthians ii. 6 is pleaded, where the punishment of the man put away from among them is said to have been “inflicted of many,” or “of the greater part.” It has been hence pressed that a majority had Scripture-ground for giving their judgment as that of the whole. It has been also pressed that the point to be reached is the Lord’s mind, which not even unanimity, much less a majority, could secure. This last is evidently true, and upsets the other. The decision of the majority cannot be taken as necessarily the Lord’s mind, for the majority in an assembly may not be the most spiritual, or the secret of the Lord with them. As a matter of fact, at Corinth, the apostle was in doubt about many; (chap. xii. 21,) and could not speak of the action of the assembly as being in truth of heart the action of all; although this by no means shows that all had not outwardly consented to it. To plead this for a decision by majority would surely be all wrong. On the other hand, a unanimous judgment may be wrong also:

there is no infallibility of the assembly. And it is the Lord's mind that is to be sought and found. The question is, are any number, few or many, entitled to act as having the Lord's mind, because of their own conviction of having it, apart from the concurrence of the assembly as a whole?

The thing is plain, that if any number assume to be the assembly, they deny the claim of those who dissent from them to be *of* the assembly at all. Practically, they cut them off. And in so doing, they must be prepared to establish to their brethren elsewhere the claim they make; not simply the rightness of their decision on the point in question, *but of this cutting off of those who dissent*. They cannot justify this by the rightness of their decision as such. The question is, why did they disregard the consciences of the rest? why is the unity of the Spirit violated? or, on which side really is the responsibility for the breach?

But now, supposing the action to be unanimous, how far and in what cases are all assemblies bound by it? how far is it authoritative for all who will be subject to the Lord?

Now of course if an assembly go beyond the limits of its authority, it has none; nay, is itself in insubjection, and to be resisted and rebuked, not listened to. If it undertake to decree doctrines, or bring in principles in opposition to the Word, the conscience of the weakest babe is under obligation to refuse such action altogether. Of *principles* we are bound to judge. Here, the whole church, and every believer in it, are to be subject to the Word of God alone. Every act of discipline, though it were in an assembly at the end of the earth, requires to be so tested. The maintenance of false

principles destroys the claim of any action in which they are found to be valid before God or man. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" applies not here. We are in no wise in this case to "hear the church," but the Scriptures, which alone are "able to furnish thoroughly unto all good works."

But again, the Lord's words cannot avail to show that an unrighteous judgment is bound in heaven. The plain principles of truth and righteousness are never, and can never be, violated in any path of duty. If grace reigns through righteousness, does not set it aside, how much less can an act of judgment set aside righteousness, and yet God require my subjection to it! Of course, I must be very sure of my steps here, and that my own judgment is just of the case before me. In a conflict of views, humility will in general go right, where pride is certain in some way to go wrong. The point we are upon is not the manner of dealing with evil, but the very simple principle that the authority of the Lord can never be pleaded to make me bow to it. That is impossible. I can never do it without defilement and dishonor to the Lord, whose holy name it is blasphemy to connect with the upholding of sin.

An assembly-action, then, if the assembly be not (as it is not) infallible, must be judged of as every human act is. If there is in it no unscriptural principle, then in most cases we are bound to accept it, not as infallible in any wise, but as an assembly act. The body is one, and what they have done we have done. We do not affirm it to be righteous, and it is capable of being recalled and repented of, if shown to be unrighteous. Questions

of fact can in general only be settled there where the matter judged occurred. It is manifestly impossible to carry it round the world for fresh decision in any place where question may be raised. Such a course would prevent any thing being ever settled, would transform every assembly into a court of appeal in every case that may arise, and load every gathering with the burdens of all. Moreover, it would set gatherings at issue with one another throughout the world, and destroy all practical unity whatever. For the act of another assembly is our act, and if it be not according to God, the remedy is not to set up another against it, but to reverse and repent of what has been wrongly done. There, where the wrong is, it should be righted, and in this way every gathering should be open to listen to and weigh any godly representation from another gathering. Has it not been from a straining of the words, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," that an assembly-act has been so much looked upon as practically irreversible, and that such a thing as the repentance of an assembly is hardly recognized?

The thought leads plainly to an implication of infallibility in the judgment which the Lord (it is supposed) maintains, and this, in turn, leads to practical carelessness in judging. How can they repent of what they say, with unintentional blasphemy, is bound in heaven? And what a millstone upon the assembly must be such unrepented sins. No wonder they should be easily taken in any snare of Satan afterward, who have thus far yielded already to him!

Let the real responsibility of assemblies be rec-

ognized, and the duty of public recall and repentance insisted on for what is done amiss, and in this the Lord will be really honored, and His authority maintained, and there will be blessing accordingly. But this high-church pretension is but the haughty spirit that precedes a fall.

On the other hand, independent action is division begun, and this is only justified in the last extreme, when otherwise we should be ourselves involved in evil against which protest is no longer of avail. We must be sure also that God has really put a matter into our hands for judgment, before we undertake to be the judges; else it is no wonder if we err grievously. If evil be *plain*, God would never involve us hopelessly in complicity with it, although patience and lowliness will be absolutely necessary in any right course. In the presence of evil, to be in lowliness and self-judgment before God is above all things requisite. In fleshliness we cannot rightly deal with flesh. We must "put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

The principle should be plain, that we recognize the act of any two or three gathered to the Lord's name as our act, save only if obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ require otherwise. If that act involve unscriptural principles, we are bound to refuse it; and if evil can be shown in the act itself, apart from this, remonstrance and protest are called for while they may avail, and only in the last resort can there be rightly a contrary judgment given elsewhere. In this case, separation from evil has necessitated division, and that which necessitates it for ourselves must justify it to our brethren.

KEY-NOTES TO THE BIBLE BOOKS.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK.—*Continued.*

III.

THE LORD'S SERVICE PERFECTED IN SUFFERING AND DEATH. (Chap. x. 46—xvi.)

THE closing verse of the last section is the one which opens the following one. The Son of Man is now about to complete His earthly ministry by the giving of His life a ransom for many. The divisions here are in general simple: first, from chap. x. 46—xiii, we have the doom upon the people, which He Himself is going to take, to deliver them from; then, chap. xiv, xv, He stoops under the necessary judgment of sin, bearing it in His own body on the tree; and then, as in the other gospels, resurrection becomes the public witness of acceptance (chap. xvi.).

I. (x. 46—xiii.) *Judgment and Deliverance.*

(1) x. 46—xi. 26. *The Lord's entry into Jerusalem.* In each of the three synoptic gospels it is at Jericho, and with the healing of the blind man, that the story of the Lord's final sufferings begins. Bartimæus is, so to speak, the herald who announces to the people the character of the kingdom which they are invited to receive. Here, for the first time in the gospel, the Lord is appealed to as Son of David, and answers the appeal. Power is put forth in his behalf, and faith makes him whole. Alas! in the nation at large there is none.

We next find the Lord entering the city according to Zechariah's prophecy. The multitude hail Him who cometh in the name of the Lord, but not

as in the future they will from their heart do so. The Lord enters the temple, simply looks around upon all things, and departs. It is striking that no overt act of rejection is recorded as yet. It is not the national or dispensational question, but one much deeper. He then pronounces judgment on the fruitless fig-tree. True, the time of figs was not yet, but the leaves professed to the eye what was not justified to the hand that tested it.

Once more in the temple, He denounces the shameless traffic which polluted the house of God; and in the morning the disciples find the fig-tree dried up by the roots. The Lord uses this to strengthen their faith in God.

(2) xi. 27-xii. *The judgment of the people.* The leaders of the people now question His authority. He convicts them by a counter-question as to John's baptism, and then in a parable exposes their refusal of the divine claim, and of Him in whom it was presented to them. Yet how vain, as well as causeless, was this enmity! It was already written that "the stone which the builders rejected" was to "become the head of the corner."

The only result is another attack, concealed with the most consummate hypocrisy, of the Herodians and Pharisees together. The Herodians found their gain in what was their shame, while the Pharisees resisted what was the punishment for their sins. God was on both sides alike forgotten. The holy wisdom of the answer confounded their serpent-cunning: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

The infidelity of the Sadducees is next rebuked by the unexpected witness of that part of Scripture which alone they acknowledged: "I am the

God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," was said when the patriarchs had long been to men dead. Yet this word of Moses exhibited God still as owning relationship to them, who therefore *to Him* lived. The Lord bases His argument for resurrection upon the fact of a separate state. The Sadducees, as consistent materialists, denied both.

Thus is man told out,—infidel, worldling, or under whatever form of religion, still at heart a rebel to God's rightful claim. The first of all the commandments was, "Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God," and yet men had difficulty in realizing the comparative importance of this compared with "all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices." He who discerned it is pronounced by the Lord Himself as "not far from the kingdom of God."

And if the law was clear, so were the prophets. The Christ who was to be David's Son is owned by David himself to be his Lord, and set by God at His own right hand. But the secret of unbelief is in the lust of place and power and gain and reputation; while with Him who quietly watched and weighed men's actions, two mites in faith and self-denial given to God were of more value than a myriad costly gifts.

Such was, such is, man; and being such, redemption can only be for him through the cross. The Son of Man must be lifted up.

(3) xiii. *The second coming* "*apart from sin unto salvation.*" But before that is shown us, we have, as in Matthew and Luke both, the Lord's announcement of His coming the second time, not as one having to say to sin any longer, but in power and glory, for the full deliverance of His own in Israel,

oppressed at once by the unbelief and wickedness of the people, and the calamities which this entails. It is plain that the character of the gospel is observed here as elsewhere, and that it is with disciples as such that the Lord is occupied throughout. On the other hand, Israel is exclusively in sight. The references to Christianity and to the Gentiles which are found in both Matthew and Luke are entirely omitted here.

2. (xiv, xv.) *Judgment borne (the basis of deliverance).*

(1) xiv. 1-52. *The cup in view.* In Mark's relation of the last supper, the Lord's sovereignty over circumstances is not dwelt on, as in Matthew, while His foresight of them is much more so. In Matthew and Mark both, the cup He is about to take is more simply in view than in the other gospels, which speak more of the fruits of it. Here, if the shadow is deeper, the surrender is absolute; and it is beautiful to notice that it is in these two gospels alone that the hymn is mentioned which they sing before they go out to the mount of Olives. From the darkest shadow the fullest praise! In both, also, in striking relief of the present sorrow is the anticipation of the new wine to be drunk with His own in the kingdom of God.

In the garden, we have the trial of a perfect will, which could not but abhor the awful doom of sin, yet could not but accept a Father's will, even to the drinking of such a cup. This was the pure linen garment with which alone the priest could go into the holiest. How wonderful the light which the absolute Light must needs carry with Him in the darkest place—nay, which there would shine

out in fullest lustre! Only He *could* be "*made sin*" who Himself knew none. "He is there as a man—glad to have His disciples watch with Him, glad to isolate Himself, and pour out His heart into the bosom of His Father, in the dependent condition of a man who prays. What a spectacle!"

"All forsake Him and flee; for who beside Himself could follow this path to the end? One young man indeed sought to go further; but as soon as the officers laid hold upon him, seizing his linen garment, he fled and left it in their hands. Apart from the power of the Holy Ghost, the farther one ventures into the path in which the power of the world and of death is found, the greater the shame with which one escapes, if God permit escape." (*Synopsis.*)

(2) xiv. 53—xv. 15. *The cup taken.* Before the high-priest the Lord is condemned for His own true testimony, the false witnesses being able to do nothing but manifest their mutual contradiction. Jesus is distinctly refused as Son of God, though the Son of God could alone redeem; but of their own need they know no more than of His glory. Peter makes evident that none can follow Him now, breaking down before the accusations of a maid and vindicating himself with oaths and curses from the suspicion of knowing Him whom to know is eternal life. The crow of the cock alone awakes him to his sin and shame, but to the grace of the Lord which had anticipated and provided for all, and he is brought to repentance.

Before Pilate, the account of what takes place is briefer than in any other gospel. The charge itself is scarcely distinct even, for the question is here of another kind. The people's choice of Barabbas,

on the other hand, instigated by the priests, is clear and decisive. They refuse the Prince of Life, and desire a murderer to be granted to them. The state of man is every way made plain, and for this, a willing sufferer, Jesus dies.

(3) xv. 16-47. *The cup drunk.* The only thing that remains, therefore, is the cross itself. First, in mere causeless brutality, He is mocked by the soldiers, then led out to be crucified, another bearing His cross, whom the Lord well remembers in his sons, Alexander and Rufus, known men afterward in the Church. Then the usual stupefying drink is offered and refused. He had come expressly (blessed Lord!) to suffer; might have had twelve legions of angels and have gone to the Father, and would not. Then they crucify Him, casting lots upon His garments; and the scripture is fulfilled which saith, "He was numbered with the transgressors." We have very exactly the scene of the twenty-second psalm, all other sufferings only bringing into prominence that great suffering which alone interprets the darkness—the being forsaken of God. He expires, and the vail of the temple is rent in the midst. The Gentile centurion owns Him as the Son of God. And now, His work accomplished, the ministry of His own begins once more, and the rich man's new tomb receives its brief-tarrying Guest. The peculiar character of Mark's relation has been already dwelt upon.

3. (xvi.) *Resurrection, the acceptance of the work of atonement.*

(1) xvi. 1-8. *The re-establishment of the connection between the Lord and the poor of the flock in Israel, a*

remnant who by and by become the nation. The conclusion of Mark's gospel divides manifestly into two parts; a fact which criticism has laid hold of to deny the authenticity of the last part. In truth, they are widely different, the Lord being in these verses, if we may so say, in Old-Testament connection, in the following ones in New. In these first verses He is not actually seen at all, but is promised to appear to them in Galilee, a place constantly connected with the blessing for Israel in the latter days. To this it no doubt points—a blessing in reserve, its foundation already laid.

(2) xvi. 9–20. *The Lord in New-Testament connection announces the results of His atonement.* In the second part, faith in testimony is insisted on, for ours is the greater blessedness of those who have not seen but believed. The gospel is sent out to every creature, and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. The signs that follow are tokens of Satan's power subdued; the division introduced by disobedience among men removed in grace; the serpent's bite, the poison of sin, annulled; the power of death, too, canceled; and the blessing received to be communicated to others.

Finally, as the guarantee of all, fit answer to the humiliation into which, though it be His glory too, He has come down, "the Lord therefore, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." But He is not divorced thus from the service which He loves; and the gospel ends in character as it began: "And they went forth and preached every where, *the Lord working with them*, and confirming the word with signs following."

FAITH WITNESSING AND WITNESSED TO.

3. ENOCH. (Heb. xi. 5, 6.)

THAT acceptance with God must precede a walk with God is a thing so evident that it should not need a moment's insisting on. To walk with God, one must first *be* with Him; to be with Him, one must first have come to Him,—have sought Him out, and found Him; for, alas! naturally, with Him we are not. A breach has taken place between God and His creatures; and in the far-off country in which man is, both *what* He is and *that* He is can be debated questions: "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that seek Him out."

The way of acceptance, Abel has already declared to us. That way, as it alone meets the need of a truly convicted soul, so it discovers God to the soul. Henceforth, He is known, and as known, rejoiced in, loved, and worshiped. Henceforth, the world, once so dark and empty, is lighted, cheered, and peopled by His presence. Henceforth, our walk is to be characterized as a walk with God.

How marvelously does Scripture present in these three brief words the whole practical life of faith! Into how many volumes may they be—nay, have they been, expanded, without exhausting their significance! The moral character, the spirit, the power, the joy, the triumph, of such a life are all here indicated. Take any other feature, how utterly defective would it be! And this is the statement as to Enoch to which the apostle refers apparently as the "testimony that he pleased God." What indeed pleases the love that seeks us, so much as the heart's answer of practical delight in Him intimated in such a walk! Let us consider it

in some main features, then, and the Lord give us an understanding heart! Enoch, translated that he should not see death,—Enoch, caught away before the flood in which the old world perished,—and of whom is recorded the first, far-off prediction of the coming of the Lord,—is surely, as many have seen, the type of that Church which, in contrast with Jewish saints as such, is not removed from the earth by death, but caught away alive “to meet the Lord in the air.” To us who are expecting Him, therefore, Enoch should be an example, appealing to us in the strongest way. In his days, indeed, we read of but one Enoch. In ours, in the full brightness of a revelation such as has been vouchsafed to us, how many should there be!

And yet the first characteristic of a walk with God is that it is in a certain sense necessarily alone. On this it is needful continually to insist. It is that which passes in secret between the soul and God that gives it its character for Him, and measures, so to speak, what the life is. Faith, even in the midst of a crowd, individualizes—isolates us. On the “white stone” of approval the name written—the name by which He knows us,—speaks of something secret between our souls and Him: “a new name written, which no man knoweth, save he who receiveth it.” When His glory is revealed to us, it makes us in such sense His as He can share with no other. In the deepest exercises, the most ecstatic joys, we must be alone. And the path of faith is ever that in which His word comes to us alone. “What shall this man do?” if asked, as we are prone to ask it, as if it affected our own course in any wise, must be met by the rebuke of

the Lord, as in the case of Peter: "What is that to thee? follow thou *Me*."

A walk with God of necessity means for us one only Master. In the presence of God, could there be even a second? Every heart that knows it will say at once, Impossible! The yoke of discipleship, easy as indeed it is, is in this respect imperative: he that forsakes not all that he hath cannot be Christ's disciple. This implies a path not only individual, but at all costs individual; the maintenance of one will only, which we are responsible to learn, too, from Himself. How great a matter is this individuality, when in it is involved the whole question of Christ's authority over us,—of a true, divine path!

If the walk be with God, the moral character of it is of course guaranteed. By which, it surely is *not* meant that the assumption of being with God is to be allowed to justify whatever may seem inconsistent in it; but contrariwise, that unrighteousness and evil in the path negative its being of God necessarily. This should be too simple to need saying, yet in fact the application seems often strangely difficult to make. The first thing, before faith and love, which the apostle exhorts Timothy to follow, is "righteousness:" "Follow *righteousness*, faith, love." It is the first, and if you will, the lesser thing, but the only way by which the greater can be reached, and the road traveled by the pure in heart.

Righteousness levels the road; faith determines its direction; love is faith's goal; for if it works by love, it is on that account *toward* love that it works. And let us remember, we do not know the road by the people who walk on it, but by its own

characters; and the pure in heart, by their walking on the road.

Again, therefore, a walk with God determines our associations. How strangely significant is the inability of Christians often even to understand this! If one's walk is really with God, does it not necessarily follow that only those who walk with Him are to walk with us? Are we not otherwise seeking impiously to make Him walk with the evil that He hates? It is impossible. His own words are express: "Come out from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and"—thus, and not otherwise,—“I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

These, then, are tests as to the walk with God. How many, alas! do they disqualify! yet who that knows the blessed One to whom we have been brought can think without astonishment and dismay of the people bought with the precious blood of Christ bartering the joy of communion for the world that cast Him out; and turning their dear-earned service into the enemy's advantage? “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider.”

But “Enoch walked with God.” Let us look a little more closely at what is implied in this, for as yet we have only looked at it from the outside, as it were, and seen more what attaches to it than what it is in itself.

In the first place, then, it means, *relationship with a living Person*.

Now, of relationship in the Christian sense Enoch knew nothing. He was one of those who,

although children, had not yet the place of children. He had not the Spirit of adoption, could not cry, Abba, Father, knew not of the fullness of salvation now preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; and yet the word of God is express, he walked with God. Noah too is said to have walked with God; and Abraham is called by God Himself His "friend." Enoch was in relationship with One who as a living Person walked with him. And God and he were agreed; for "how can two walk together, except they be agreed?" It is a great thing to be with God as one agreed with Him. Do we all who know redemption, and the child's place with God,—know yet much of what it is to walk thus with Him?

For, therefore, this is not to cry, Abba, Father, to pray to Him and be heard, to receive from His blessed hand: all these there may be, and no walk with Him at all. It is quite another thing to walk from day to day as of one mind with Him, in known accord. This is a life of wonderful joy and power and dignity: to be at one with His interests upon the earth, and maintain them in practical devotedness of intelligent service. How many among Christians even can speak much from actual knowledge of such a life? With a large number, salvation—nay, even their own salvation, is the important matter: a personal interest absorbs by far the greatest part of their attention. With how many, indeed, a steady pursuit of their own blessing is their avowed principle, which they suppose will suffice to justify any course of conduct! Spiritually, they do not imagine it to be what the apostle would reprove,—that they, "seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ."

How many, again, have no very distinct thought at all of any thing beyond what they feebly call their "duty;" in itself, no doubt, a word which embraces all that it is possible for any to do, and immensely more than any one ever does, for "When ye have done all," says the Lord, "say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it is our duty to do." And "if any one knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." We can never, then, by any possibility, get beyond duty, and the word is one full of power and sweetness, when it stands for the debt so impossible to cancel, so sweet ever to owe—to Him who has bought us for His own with the shedding of His precious blood. But in truth, how little it often stands for,—a cold, fancied measurement of the immeasurable, a pacifying of conscience with nothing very particularly wrong, where yet nothing either is right! It would surely be impossible to bring a walk with God under the idea merely of duty. Duty to walk with Him!

The first requisite of such a walk is surely that we appreciate it. Think of *who* it is that invites us to living companionship with Himself! Can a cold-hearted half-response suit the blessed Person who seeks us for Himself? If the answer on our part be not frank and sincere, must not all the vigor of the life be lost? What He wants is heart, not service,—He whom all things gladly serve!

And yet appreciation can only be shown in surrender of will and life to Him. We can walk with Him on no other terms than that He shall be master; and in this there is nothing dreadful, nothing but what, if indeed we know Him, we must know to be as good as it is necessary. "His

commandments are not grievous." Do we need that to be argued out? The blessedness of eternity is stated in just such a brief sentence as that "God is all in all." And this is perfect order, holiness, happiness, all in one. Yet we look at the cross, and we shrink. Into what depths, we think, may it be His will to lead us. Marah lies with its bitter waters at the very entrance of a road which is all the way through the desert. True, but it was *sweetened* Marah; "and there He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them, and said, 'If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and wilt keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee.'" How sweet a promise that true obedience should be the way of blessing and of good; that as Marah did, things that seemed contrary should change into their opposites for them—bitter to sweet, and sorrow to joy! "And who is he that shall harm you," asks the apostle, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

He anticipates an objection here: "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, *happy are ye*;" and, "if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, *happy are ye*." Such sufferings he will not put down among sorrows. Would Paul have given a doleful account of the road he traveled? Those who look at it from outside may think it hard; but do we, any of us, ever think of pitying Paul? Do you pity Israel at sweetened Marah?

Suffer we shall, no doubt, for who can escape? The only question is, are we to suffer on the path

with God, where suffering itself has its joy and fruit, or suffer for sin and without Him? Is it not strange indeed that for the child of God there should be a moment's hesitation?

A walk with God means oneness of mind with Him. True, we have to be taught it; for naturally, His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts. Yet how precious the lesson, day by day, to learn by fresh and wonderful discoveries the perfection of those ways and thoughts! To be taught of His Word and guided by His eye, while carried, too, in what grace, in the arms of His strength: "they go from strength to strength" therefore,—no wonder! Carried on to final victory, sure from the first; where dependence means, not discouragement, but rest.

How far-seeing an Enoch thus could be we know by the record which Jude gives us: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, 'The Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.'" How keen the eye of faith exercised by the iniquity around as it looks over the intervening centuries to that consummation for which still we wait! You may say, That was prophecy; but we should do wrong, nevertheless, to separate the prophetic office from the soul of the prophet. There might be a Balaam, no doubt, whom the wisdom of God might use for its own purposes: of such I do not speak. Elijah, the man of God, jealous, as he says to Him Himself, for Him, the man whose effectual fervent

prayer availed much, though he were of like passions with ourselves, as James pointedly reminds us,—such is the model of the Lord's prophets. Of these it could be said, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." How blessed the place of those who have chosen their path with God ever! For Enoch, it ended in heaven without seeing death; and so with Elijah. "*By faith*," says our passage in the Hebrews, "Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated Him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Surely it was not to the dispraise of others that they went to heaven by a very different road. It pleased God thus to give testimony to Enoch; to others in very varied ways: but it was a blessed end of a path as blessed, the seal upon a life upon which no shadow of death passes. How simple and beautiful,—a walk with God here, passing as without necessity of change into a walk with Him in joy forever. And we who wait for such a transition as was Enoch's, should we not make it our care to walk with Him now even as Enoch did?

(*To be continued, D. V.*)

"BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY:

Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God; and I will write upon him My new name." (Rev. iii. 11, 12.)