

HELP AND FOOD

FOR THE

Household of Faith.

Vol. V.

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Help and Food

FOR THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.

ANOTHER YEAR.

ANOTHER year is dawning!
Dear Master, let it be,
In *working* or in *waiting*,
Another year with Thee.

Another year of *learning*
Upon Thy loving breast,
Of ever-deepening trustfulness,—
Of quiet, happy rest.

Another year of *mercies*,
Of faithfulness and grace;
Another year of *gladness*
In the shining of Thy face.

Another year of *progress*;
Another year of *praise*;
Another year of *proving*
Thy presence "all the days."

Another year of *service*,
Of witness for Thy love;
Another year of *training*
For holier work above.

Another year is dawning!
Dear Master, let it be,
On earth, or else in heaven,
Another year *for Thee*!

F. R. H.

"PRAYER AND FASTING."

Matthew xvii. 1-21.

HERE we have the privileges of the saints in contrast with their failure through unbelief. A mountain is the place of privilege, and a *high* mountain the place of *great* privilege, grace, or favor—special blessing. Such a place was the Mount of Transfiguration, or "the holy mount," as Peter calls it; covered as it was with the overwhelming glory of the Son of Man. Such glory as no human eyes had ever beheld was here shown forth; and in it, with Jesus, even Moses and Elias, God's holy ones of the by-gone age, still living and panoplied in glory with the Son of Man, and holding sweet fellowship and holy converse with Him there!

To the sight of this glory, Peter, James, and John only of the twelve apostles were admitted. Jesus "*taketh*" them, not the nine others. Mark says, "Jesus taketh and *leadeth* them *up into a high mountain, apart by themselves*!" It was *up* into the place of great privilege, and it was *in separation* from the other apostles. It was for these alone. Why? The narrative does not say why; but let the Holy Ghost answer to our hearts, as He will, if we are abiding in Christ. We know that "According to your faith, so be it unto you" is a principle of Christianity; also, "To him that hath shall more be given," are only accessible to the highest faith.

We find the nine *below* in the vale, where they had not faith to use the power that Jesus had so freely bestowed upon them. "I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him." In chap. x. 8, we see that the Lord had conferred

upon them power for this very work; and even more: the power to cast out devils, and even to raise the dead; but here we find them unable to use the power. The Lord's rebuke gives the reason—"O *faithless* and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you?" But plainer still when they ask Him *why* they could not cast him out. He says, "Because of your unbelief."

How delightful it is to know that great privileges are still open to God's saints on the earth. Every thing in and of Christianity may be said to be gracious privilege. It is all of God, and all freely given to us of Him. It is a great privilege to know your sins all put away, that you are justified before God, and that in this grace you stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory! So also is it to know that in the cross of Jesus the old sin-nature is put away also, and that we have passed out of the old standing in Adam, over into the new creation in Christ Jesus—crucified with Him, dead and buried with Him, and raised up out of death with Him by the power of God, and in Him seated in the heavenlies! (Eph. i. 19-20; ii. 6.) This is the high mountain *up into* which the Lord Jesus Christ, now seated in glory, "taketh" and "leadeth" His *faithful* and *obedient* saints. They are God's new creation, for an eternity of fellowship with His Son in the glory, where He is. He is gone to prepare a place for them; and if He goes and prepares a place for them, He will come again and take them to Himself, that where He is, there they may be also. The substance of this blessed hope is realized here in this wilderness-world by faith, and faith is the gift of God, as all things else in Christianity, and comes

in power to the submissive ones—the obedient and faithful saints (Jno. xv. 7).

Oh how much of blessing, privilege, and power we lose by our unbelief! Like the nine, we remain down in the valley, and cannot go up into the place of privilege, or even use here the power so freely given for testimony! Is power lacking? It may be power for testimony, for preaching the gospel, for teaching, or even for thanksgiving and worship. If so, it is because of our unbelief (v. 20).

"But this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Prayer, true prayer, is in true dependence—a full consciousness of helplessness in ourselves, and power and grace in another. Fasting is self-denial—the end of self before God; no power, nothing good, in the flesh. The flesh done with—put away in the cross of Christ, brings us into the place of true dependence before God, where we can receive from Him. This is the place of prayer and fasting, and here alone is His power given. It is to the humble, submissive, dependent saints that power is granted for all things: it is to these that faith is given to do all things required to maintain a testimony for Him in the earth. Faith comes in the path of obedience, and our obedience is the precise and accurate measure of our faith. "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and *do those things* that are pleasing in His sight." (1 Jno. iii. 22.)

The place of privilege—yea, even of high privilege, is therefore at our own command. Let us, then, by the help of God, yield ourselves up more unreservedly to Him, that He may the more freely and fully work in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

J. S. P.

HERE A LITTLE AND THERE A LITTLE.

John i.

NO more wonderful chapter can be found in God's Word than this—whether in the revelation of *God*, the range of divine *truth*, or the view of God's *ways* (dispensationally and morally) that it gives us!

1. First, "In the beginning"—as far back as mortal thought can carry us, we read of One who *was*—who never had beginning; and thus we learn of eternity, and of Him as the "Eternal." How precious that to mortals like us—yea, more, rebels (for such we were,) such is made known! First, He "*was*," when all things and persons knew a beginning; hence, was eternal—self-existent—Deity. Next, was "*with God*"—a distinct *Person* in the Godhead; and further, lest we think less of Him than is due, we read, He "*was God*." And of whom, we may ask, is all this spoken? THE WORD—the full and perfect expression of the heart of God. Thus, in one simple word, He tells us what He *is*.

2. Next, what has He *done*? "Made all things;" for as none but He could declare the character of God, so none other could impart life or create—"speak, and it was done; command, and it stood fast." "In Him was *life*"—ever there, and only He who had it in Himself could impart it or create anew, whether in a ruined world or as to fallen man.

3. Then, "He was *in the world*," He who was its Maker, and "it *knew Him not*." "He came unto His own," with the kingdom for His desolate Zion, and it would not have Him—"they received Him not." Will He leave them to their unhappy lot and choice? No; He lingered still,—"*waited to be*

gracious," would not "break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax," till judgment has to be His work—His strange work—at last.

4. "Made flesh, and dwelt among us,"—*tabernacled*—pitched His tent among men. Blessed and wonderful step further in this onward course of grace, that "though He was *rich*, yet for our sakes became *poor*, that we through His poverty might become *rich*"!

5. But even this is not all! "The *next day*, . . . 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the *sin* of the world!'" how beautiful and perfect the *order* given us. How many have learned that God is, has created, sent His Son (thus giving witness of Himself), and yet have not reached this "*next day*" of rest in Him in learning that "*He bare our sins*"! And if we indeed have so learned, how often we stop short with it, and "receive the *grace of God in vain*"!

6. "Again the *next day* . . . two disciples follow Jesus"—they call Him "Master" whom they have already learned as Saviour, and ask "*Where dwellest Thou?*" Do we who know and trust this Saviour inquire this too? *How* shall we receive His answer? Just as they. "He saith unto them, '*Come and see.*'" His word leads to Himself and to the secret of His presence. May we thus follow and inquire, and then abide with Him!

7. Another thing: "The day following, Jesus would *go forth*," etc. He leaves the "secret place," where only faith can know Him, and comes to display His glory in the kingdom long foretold, soon to be realized in power. He "*comes again*," and "when He shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." We have, then,—

1. His eternal *personality* and *Godhead* Eternity.
2. His creative *power* and *glory* Creation.
3. His *incarnation* (life and light for men).. Incarnation.
4. His tabernacling here (display of *grace*
and *glory*) Life.
5. His sacrificial *death*—"taking away sin." Cross.
6. His *secret* place (rejection here, glory
above) Glory.
7. His *coming* again, "*appearing* in glory." Coming.

Thus have we here the divine record of facts of eternal value, sayings "faithful and true" (*historical*); next, the display therein of the ways of God with the world at large (*dispensational*); and last, His dealings with ourselves from the first knowledge of Himself as Creator until presented to Christ in glory, His bride, and the sharer of His throne (*moral*). May we learn it so, and delight our hearts in glories that thus cluster around His holy person—The *Eternal Word*—our own beloved Lord!

B. C. G.

"THE WELL IS DEEP."

(John iv.)

THE well is deep.

Look back into the purposes of God,
And scan eternity. Trace to their source
His wisdom and His power. Fathom, if thou canst,
His everlasting mercy. Should thy brain
Grow dizzy, and refuse to sound such depths,
Confess thy feebleness, and meekly say,—
The well is deep.

The well is deep. Take for thy longest line
The cords of vanity—the rope of sins
Unnumbered. Choose then the heaviest weight;
Take thee thine own poor hardened heart of stone;
Now plumb the depths of God's unbounded love.
Thy lead seems light—thy lengthened line run out;—

E'en with such instruments thou hast but plunged
Beneath the surface of the tide. Below,
Far, far below, in depths unfathomable,
Springs undisturbed the ceaseless flow of love,
Embosomed in eternity. Here rest,
And humbly bend the knee, and own again,
The well is deep.

The well is deep. Mark now the wounded side
Of Him who hung upon the tree. Haste thee
To hide within that cleft; and, as the springs
Of living waters from the riven rock
Gush freely forth, ponder the depths of woe
From whence they rise. Behold that broken heart!
Say, canst thou find the measure of His grief?
Hear that loud bitter cry from off the cross,
"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"
Think of those awful words, "I thirst," when He,
The mighty God, tasted the serpent's food,
And ate the dust of death. Search thus His depths
Of woes profound, and worship and exclaim,—
The well is deep!

Thus bursts the Well of Life from these three springs :
God's infinite decree, His boundless love,
And all those deep unuttered woes of Christ.

Drink! stranger, drink! and quench thy thirsty soul,
From out of depths which ceaselessly abound.
The more thy need, the fuller still the fount;
No sealèd fountain this; no spring shut up;
But, flowing forth to every child of want,
It cries, "Come unto Me, and drink,"—invites
The heavy-laden to repose;—cleanses
Whilst giving life, and gladdens whilst it heals.

The thoughtless sinner, who, at Jacob's well,
Tasted the living waters fresh from God,
Has yet to learn, through all eternity,
The truth of words she ignorantly spake
Touching Samaria's failing earthly spring,—
The well is deep.

PRESENT THINGS,

AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

The Book and Its Subject. (Chap. i. 1-3.)

THE book of Revelation is the one only book of New-Testament prophecy. As the completion of the whole prophetic Scriptures, it gathers up the threads of all the former books, and weaves them into one chain of many links which binds all history to the throne of God. As *New-Testament* prophecy, it adds the heavenly to the earthly sphere, passes the bounds of time, and explores with familiar feet eternity itself. Who would not, through these doors set open to us, press in to learn the things yet unseen, so soon to be for us the only realities? Who would not imagine that such a book, written with the pen of the living God Himself, would attract irresistibly the hearts of Christians, and that no exhortation would be needed for a moment to win them to its patient and earnest study?

It should be so, assuredly. How little it is so, the book in its first words is witness to us; for no book is so full of just such exhortation. And especially the first part, with which we are to be for the present occupied, abounds with solemn warnings to attention, regularly appended to its several sections: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Why is it that just here, where at first sight we have only addresses to the churches of far-distant times, these calls should be multiplied? Why but because there was just this danger to be guarded against? why

but because the Spirit of God foresaw that a generation of men, most blind to their own interests when most wedded to them, would slight the very words of Christ Himself unless thus directly made over to them? What shall we say of those who with all this warning slight them still?

Scripture is thus ever prophetic, not in its plain predictions merely, but in its manner also. Why should *Peter* be the one to tell us that all Christians are "a holy priesthood," but in view of those who should misuse his name in after-times? or why should he be the one to announce to us that we are born again by the word of God, which is preached in the gospel, thus with two blows destroying ritualism to its foundations? or why should Mary never prefer a request to her Son and Lord but to be checked for it, save for an after-rebuke to those who should think to avail themselves of the Virgin's intercession?

So too is not the very title of this book, with its subject announced, and encouragement both to reader and hearer? How could words be better suited to rebuke the neglect, into which so many have fallen, in which so many still are found, of what is Christ's own "revelation," given to Him by God, "to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass"? Does a "revelation" hide, or *reveal*? Is that which is revealed to servants, to be kept (*v.* 3) by them in their service to their Lord, given in so doubtful a manner as to be more perplexity than guidance? Is not this an accusation of Him who has forbidden to His people doubtful paths, because "whatsoever is not of faith is sin"?

Strange is the mistake that "the Revelation of

Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him," means His "appearing," because His appearing is the central theme of the book! No doubt it is so, and that His appearing is spoken of elsewhere as His revelation; but here, that "which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass," is plainly the book itself, and defines its character. It is not simply an *inspiration*, as all Scripture is, but something *revealed* for the instruction of the saints. Many are too little clear yet as to the difference between the two. But revelation is that in which is a direct communication from God to man—a fresh discovery of truth otherwise unknown; while inspiration is that which preserves from error, and assures that all that is written is for true profit and blessing to man.

"Jesus Christ's revelation" emphasizes the book before us, as what is from the Lord Himself in a peculiar way, of special importance and value where all is of value; and it is received by Him from God, as One who all through takes the place of Man, and as such is exalted of God, never exalts Himself. True pattern for His servants! He asks them to walk in no other path than He has trodden, and where they may have fellowship with Him.

This book is the servant's book. So it is plainly stated: "To show unto *His servants*." We may not expect, therefore, to be shown, except we come under this title; and indeed every child of God has the responsibility and privilege of service,—has something, no doubt, of the reality of it, as the Lord says, "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is who loveth Me" (Jno. xiv. 21). And so the apostle: "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 Jno. v. 3). Both

passages maintain that the only right measure of love is that of practical obedience. Emotional glow, warm feelings, are indeed to be desired—nay, to be expected, from those conscious of redemption by the blood of Christ; but these vary with different natures, vary in the same person at different times, may even deceive very much the subject of them, while obedience is the test of the judgment-seat itself. Words and deeds we read of then as alone in question.

Yet there is need of a counter-check here too; for how much frequently goes under the name of service which is in truth even disobedience and self-will! How much also is there of legal drudgery and pretentious claim, which the light of God's holy presence will shrivel into nothing! "Lo, these many years do I serve thee" is the language of one to whom the music of the father's house was a strange and unaccustomed sound; and "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess," was said by one less acceptable to God by far than the despised publican, who could only groan out in His presence, "God be merciful to me the sinner!"

The service of love and the service of claim are opposites. "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again." This is the moral power of Christianity—the fruit of grace, and only that. For if still there is a possibility of condemnation in the day of judgment, fear stirs me to self-interest, I work for myself to escape the condemnation. "Faith worketh by love"—an entirely opposite principle. Such service is necessarily freedom, the more so the more it rules me,

and entire happiness. In exact proportion to love will be the desire to serve the object of our love: as we read of the "*work* of faith," so we do of the "*labor* of love." But earnest and self-sacrificing as this labor may be, it can never be drudgery, never aught but joy. If such is our service, the thankful offering of those knowing themselves washed from their sins in the blood of Christ, then Revelation, with its survey of the whole field of labor, and its communication of the mind of Christ as to all,—Revelation, with its windows open toward Jerusalem, and its eternal sunshine for our souls,—Revelation, with its throne of God and the Lamb, and the stimulation of its encouraging words to the overcomer,—is the very book for us, surely. We shall enter with rapt hearts into the truth of this: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the book of this prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein."

It is the book for *all* servants. We have many and different fields of service, it is true; and happy as well as important it is to recognize this fact. There are high positions and lowly ones; positions before the eyes of multitudes, and positions hidden from almost all eyes, save His who are in every place. But every where it is a joy to know that we are accepted, not according to the place we are put in, but the way we fill it—the way we do the Master's work there. Lowliness and obscurity will be no discouragement to those in the communion of the Father and the Son: they cease to have meaning there. And publicity and prominence are how unspeakably dangerous, if the soul is not correspondingly before God; like the tree which spreads its branches and lifts its top toward

heaven, if its roots are not proportionately deep in the unseen depths below.

Whatever the field of service, the book of Revelation is for all. All need alike the warnings, all need alike the encouragement. From the most hidden retirement, He whom we serve in love would have our hearts with Himself, busy with all that is of interest to Him. In the place of intercession Himself above, He would have us in fellowship with Him below; our prayers rising up for all parts of the earth His Word is visiting, and where the true "irrepressible conflict" is going on between the evil and the good; our praises, too, returning to Him for all He is daily accomplishing. In Revelation is given us the one "mind of Christ" about all, that our prayers may be the intelligent guiding of the Holy Spirit, and our hearts giving their sympathies aright, our energies going forth in channels of His own making. Little indeed, in many of the systems of interpretation of this book, may be found, it is true, such help as this; and quite unable we may be to extract the spiritual blessing to be found in seals or trumpets which speak only of Alaric the Goth, or Attila the Hun: but for the simple ones who believe God, the mere direct label of this book for Christ's servants may certify that there is something deeper while simpler than all this for souls that seek it. There the words stand for faith to receive and rejoice in,—“Jesus Christ's revelation, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass.” Join us in prayer, beloved reader, ere we pass on, that we may give His people from these pages real help and blessing drawn from this precious book!

"Things which must shortly come to pass." This would now no doubt impress us, as we look back from the end of eighteen centuries fulfilled since it was written, with the belief that already some, if not much, of what is here spoken of must already have come to pass. And this we shall find confirmed fully in the sequel. But two things we should guard here carefully,—the possibility on the one hand, and the profit on the other, of tracing with certainty, in the light of the prophetic Word, things which have *not* come to pass, and even will not while we are upon the earth. These two things, it is plain, hang very much together; for if there be not profit in it, it would seem clear that God would not enable us to do it; while of course there can, on the other hand, be no profit to us in a thing we cannot do.

But this impossibility of knowing can only be meant seriously as applying to details, and to a *certain extent* every Christian would allow this. Events are not so mapped out and put together for us as to make us able to see otherwise than "through a glass darkly"—the apostle's own emphatic word. We can see only as one behind a window, and in twilight, and are apt to fall into mistakes. Many have been thus made, which have thrown the study of future prophecy, for some, into utter disrepute. Yet who would say, or think the apostle meant to say, that "through a glass darkly" nothing, or nothing to the purpose, could be seen? The uncertainty applies mainly to the smaller features; there is much certain, much that grows always clearer as we look upon it. Who that would use the mistakes that have been made for discouragement from prophetic study *has ever been a student of it?* I dare

to say, none. Granted, the mistakes: let us use them for humility, use them as arguments to more prayer, more careful searching, then, after all, they will be helpful in the end. We can see already why and how many of them came about; we can see how better to avoid them also in the future, and that the Word was not to blame, is not the less trustworthy, because we made them. We see that we trusted it too little, trusted ourselves too much.

Then as to the profit. All our blessings lie in the field of unfulfilled prophecy. What are all our promises but this? And then as to the earth, and what is to take place upon it, it is true that such interpretations as are common in many popular books leave one with the profound sense that they minister rather to spiritual dissipation than to profit. What can be supposed more unprofitable than the question if the antichrist is to come of the Napoleon family?—a great and grave point with many for years past; or whether the stars falling from heaven might be fulfilled in a shower of meteors? Such things seem to be utterly barren, and unworthy of a book so solemnly announced, so commended to us as is this.

Surely "he that prophesieth speaketh to the church to edification and exhortation and comfort" might not be an inapt word to condemn such profitless speculation; and there is abundance of it in popular commentaries. But here the question is really not of fulfilled or unfulfilled prophecy. Such supposed fulfillment may be brought forward to vindicate Scripture—which has no need of it—or a certain system of interpretation, which it more justly would set aside. But unfulfilled prophecy, as we find it in the Word of God, even when it

speaks of earthly events, and such as cannot be while we are upon the earth, always gives them morally; as what can be more practical for us than to trace out in the future, as men are constantly seeking to do, the results of the present? In this way we may find the *scriptural* fall of stars to have the deepest significance.

That all here is in the fullest way practical is very clear, from the blessing pronounced on those who "*keep* the things which are written" in the book. This "keeping" is observing them in such a way that our practical conduct shall be governed by them. Indeed we shall find that the wisdom of them we must be content to "buy," with what men would call many a sacrifice. There are costs to be counted if we would possess it really. And this is the demand that all truth makes upon us. It requires subjection to it as the first thing. We must not trifle with the words of our Lord and Saviour, nor set Him limits as to how far we shall obey Him. It is this, however little avowed, that darkens the minds of saints, diminishing all spiritual perception. It is this that is at the bottom of all doctrinal heresy. We will not have the truth, and seek out inventions to cover our nakedness; or at least we have not the soldier's "virtue," which is courage, and so cannot "add to" our "virtue knowledge."

I would warn my readers that the book of Revelation makes great demands upon those who keep its words. But I may assure them, on the other hand, that the more the demand the greater the blessing. Can it be otherwise when Christ it is who is speaking to us of that easy yoke and that light burden, in which, as we take them, we find

rest to our souls? Will any that know their Lord charge Him with being a "hard man," or a task-master? Our givings up are here in reality only gains. We have that in Him which we are never called to give up, and which the more we prove the more its sufficiency is found for all conditions; the more we give up for it the deeper the endless joy.

But submission there must be. Absolute submission is what He rightly calls for; and it is well to search our hearts, to see if our desire and purpose are, to give Him that without reserve. How blessed to be among those who in uprightness of heart can say, "I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way" (Ps. cxix. 128).

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

ARE WE CLEAR?

CAN we look at the ignorance that abounds and say we are clear? Indeed, indeed we cannot. We too often forget that the actions of *time* have a solemn bearing on eternity; hence we are exhorted not to be "weary in well doing," and are assured that "in due season we shall reap, if we *faint not*." And again, "Redeeming the time, [or buying up the opportunity,] because the days are evil." The present is the seed-time of eternity. Now we are "to go forth bearing our precious seed," and though often we may be compelled to weep while we sow, we shall "doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us." Our opportunities at best are but few, they are therefore *invaluable*. Buy them up, let the price be what it may. Sup-

posing we can do good to souls at the expense of personal ease—worldly respectability, or the good opinion of our worldly friends, still we should go forth. The opinions of men are of small consequence, and almost sure to change. Devotedness to God is of the greatest moment, and will be honored by our gracious Lord.

When the second temple was building, by Ezra, a most lovely sight was presented, for every one was at his work; not only did every one work, but every one did *his own work*. So there is a place in the body of Christ for every believer, and we read of “the effectual working in the measure of *every part*,” and each one should aim to be in his own proper place, for there he may be useful and happy, but in no other. There is work for every one, and every one should be at *his own* work, and do it; for in so doing, he will be honorable and valued—by the Lord at least.

And now, let us inquire of conscience, Am I at work for God *daily*? Do I work as immediately under *His eye*? Do I work from love to Jesus, and pity for the souls of men? Are my motives pure—am I doing “all in the name of the Lord Jesus”? Am I working as one that must “give an account to God”? Do I know what is meant by “travailing in birth for souls”?

A. E. B.

EXTRACT OF LETTER.

“MY dear ———: I was very glad indeed to hear from you again, and my heart went to God in thanksgivings as I read your letter. This scene we are passing through is to us what the

desert was to Israel—a place where they were made to prove that their only resource was in God. But if He was their *only* resource, He was a *never-failing* one: The manna never failed, the water was ever ready to flow, their garments wore not out, and their foot swelled not. All this telling a story of infinitely deeper things about us who are ‘blessed with all *spiritual* blessings in *heavenly* places.’ But there too they learned *themselves*, and that is the dark side of the picture. However, it is not so dark after all to learn self when we know it is no more a question of *acceptance* with God, but of *acquaintance* with Him. Our acceptance was forever settled by the cross—the blood on the door-post, and the crossing of the sea. The first covering our *sins*, the second our *old man*, from the eye of God. Thus the only question which remains is, Am I anxious now to get acquainted with the God I have found?—a God who is light and love! If so, I must taste the lessons of the wilderness. I must learn to ‘glory in tribulation, knowing,’ etc. (Rom. v. 3–11.)

“In reading Gen. l. yesterday, I was struck with ver. 15, and the answer it called forth from Joseph at the end of ver. 17. So perfectly was their sin passed from *his* heart that to recall it made him weep. How comforting when we reflect that this is but the shadow of the heart of Christ toward us! May we learn to think His thoughts. They are Manna indeed. But we sometimes have to pass through great sorrows, to humble us, and put us in a moral condition where we can turn from ourselves and our sins to feed upon the love of God, and lay hold of Himself and His glory through the forgiving and restoring grace He makes known to our souls. Thus our lives, in connection with God,

are not, cannot be, lives of ease; but rest—the *rest of God* is near. ‘The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.’ What incentive to persevering energy and patience of faith!”

* * *

CHRISTIANS.

Exhortations from an old Christian to younger ones.

NEVER neglect daily, private prayer; and when you pray, remember that God is present, and that He hears your prayers. (Heb. xi. 6.)

NEVER neglect daily, private Bible-reading; and when you read, remember that *God* is speaking to you, and that you are to believe and act upon what He says. I believe all back-sliding begins with the neglect of these two things. (Jno. v. 39.)

NEVER let a day pass without trying to do something for the Lord. Every night reflect on what He has done for you, and then ask yourself, What am I doing for Him? (Mark v. 15–19.)

IF ever you are in doubt as to a thing being right or wrong, go to your room, and kneel down and ask God’s blessing upon it (Col. iii. 17). If you cannot do this, it is wrong. (Rom. xiv. 23.)

NEVER take your Christianity from Christians, or argue because such-and-such people do so-and-so, that therefore you may (2 Cor. x. 12). You are to ask yourself, How would *Christ* act in my place? and strive to follow Him. (Jno. x. 27.)

NEVER believe what you *feel* if it contradicts God’s Word. Ask yourself, Can what I feel be true if God’s Word is true? and if *both* cannot be true, believe God, and make your own heart the liar. (Rom. iii. 4; 1 Jno. v. 10, 11.)

EXTRACT FROM "EARTH'S EARLIEST AGES."

"And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect."
(Gen. iv. 4, 5.)

THE reason of this difference is fraught with the deepest interest to us; for there are many in these latter days who, according to the prophecy of Jude, have gone "in the way of Cain." The theology of the first murderer is that of a large and increasing school of our times. He neither denied the existence of God, nor refused to worship Him, —nay, he recognized Him as the Giver of all good things, and brought an offering of the fruits of the ground as an acknowledgment of His bounty. *But he went no further than this;* and therefore, though he may have passed among his fellows as a good and religious man, he failed to satisfy God. For being yet in his sins, he presumed to approach the Holy One without the shedding of blood; he was willing to take the place of a dependent creature, but would not confess himself a sinner *guilty of death*, and only to be saved by the life of a substitute. He is a type of the many in these times who will descant upon the benevolence of the Creator, and are ever ready to laud Him for those attributes, and claim the benefit of them without any reference to their own unworthiness and sinful condition,—without a thought of that perfect holiness and justice which are as much elements of God's character as love itself. But the Most High did not accept the sacrifice of Cain; for none may approach to worship Him except through the shedding of blood, even the blood of the Lamb which He has provided.

The sin-offering must come *first*, then the thank-offering. We can enter into the Holy of Holies, and cast ourselves before the mercy-seat, *only* by passing through the rent vail of the flesh of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

"AT HIS FEET."

PENITENTS, DISCIPLES, SUPPLICANTS, WORSHIPERS.

(Read Luke vii. 36-50; x. 38-42; Jno. xi. 28-46; xii. 1-9.)

1. **I**N the first of these cases, we have one with no name in Scripture save that of *sinner*, thus suiting each of us, who, through grace, have learned to judge ourselves as such. But she is "at *His* feet" who, in that very time and place, and to herself, and in the presence of enemies round about, declared Himself *Saviour*, and of her "whose sins were many." How blessed, then, to be there, and in such a case as proved by her that day, and by how many since with like result!

Sins were alone her title—sins great and many; and coming thus, He would not, could not spurn her,—“in no wise cast her out;” but “at *His* feet” would teach her that sins brought there were sins “*forgiven*.” Blessed fact! a sinner's sins and a Saviour's love can thus meet together, and to such an end, for “He is faithful, and *cannot deny Himself*.”

There she weeps tears of penitence, doubtless realizing that “the sacrifices of God are a *broken* spirit; a broken and a *contrite* heart He will not despise.” (Ps. li. 17.)

But not only are her tears shed upon Him, but

for Him as well. He who "receiveth sinners" such as she has no welcome where she finds Him. A feast is spread, 'tis true, but not for a Saviour's *heart*; and there she scans with love's sensitive eye the neglect with which He has been treated, and supplies the lack unbidden. Her *heart* poured out in tears will wash His feet, her *hair* (a glory to her) serves to wipe them, her *lips* press their kisses upon them, and her *hands* anoint them.

This, Simon had not done;—asked Him to "eat with him," but had not received Him to his heart, as witnessed thus: "no water for His feet," as to a guest—no kiss in greeting, as to a friend—no anointing, as to one he delighted to honor. But a sinner supplies all, and better far than Simon's hands and lips could, even had they performed it as their task.

Thus we view her, sinner above sinners, "at His feet," and with what blessed results! He declares her, before all, to be forgiven—"frankly forgiven"—many sins forgiven, and to herself what words!

"Thy sins are *forgiven*"..... Pardon.

"Thy faith hath *saved* thee"..... Salvation.

"Go in *peace*"..... Peace.

All hers; for "where sin abounded, *grace* did much more abound;"—unsearchable riches of Him who "though rich, for her sake became poor, that she through His poverty might be rich."

2. Next, Mary of Bethany sitting "at His feet," a learner. Martha had "*received* Him into her house," so it is not the question of a Saviour here; and she too is busy serving, so it is not that of owning Him as Master, but of *receiving from* Him as Benefactor and Friend. And Mary "sat at His feet, and heard His word," thus choosing "that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Blessed though it be to trust Him as our Saviour, or seek to serve Him as our Lord, yet happier still to give Him His "better" place of Giver, and we to be receivers of His grace, who had come from heaven, not to be enriched by us, but to impart treasures of eternal good. Mary realized this fact, saw that He had come, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister,"—owns that He, whose place was the Father's bosom, has come amongst us, not to receive from, but to enrich us; and thus takes her place and gives Him His—"the less to be blessed of the better."

Oh, to learn well her lessons!—"sitting at His feet," one looking up into His face, expectant from Him, "hearing His word;" thus learning what is in His heart, and what is His will concerning us, through being in communion with Himself. How truly "*that good part*," estimated so by our Lord Himself, and yet, alas! how often missed by many of us (equally dear to His heart, and welcome to be as near,) we may truly own! Oh, that we may reach it more and more, earnestly desiring His approval and this place where alone we can learn what merits it, "receiving with meekness the ingrafted Word," "as newborn babes, desiring the sincere milk of" it; "nourished up in the words of faith," "sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by" it, having it "discern the thoughts and intents of the heart," and "dwell in us richly in wisdom and spiritual understanding."

3. Again, Mary of Bethany, but sorrow and death o'ercast with gloom the scene which now we view, as often it may be with us. Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, has been sick, and their yearning hearts send word to Jesus that he

whom He loved was sick; but He has failed to come to them. "Two days still He abode in the same place where he was," and delayed His journey. At last He comes, but to find Lazarus asleep in death, and the sisters bowed in their deep sorrow; but yet herein only to find the more fitting occasion to display His tender love and mighty power. Martha meets Him first, but failing to enter into His thoughts, runs to tell Mary, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee;" and at once, on hearing this, she goes forth hastily to meet Him. Casting herself "*at His feet*," she weeps out her tale of sorrow, as Martha previously, and in answer, hears His groans and sees His tears of blessed sympathy, and later, His power to deliver.

Such are the sorrows of our pathway through this world. Sorrows we cannot miss; and happy are we if found, as Mary, "at His feet," while passing through them. Be they of what character they may, this is the place to bring them all, pouring out our hearts "in prayer and supplication, making our requests known unto Him." Have *we* not too beloved ones who are sick, or still unsaved, who lie heavy on our hearts, and sorrows of many kinds in which to seek His sympathy and learn His love? Have we not many too who, though "alive from the dead," are bound in garments of death—entangled by the world? Let us, then, also cry unto Him who is able to deliver, on their behalf, and prove His readiness to hear and answer, honoring all the faith that trusts Him. ♦

4. Again, at Bethany, and surrounded by those His grace has befriended, a feast is made for Jesus. Lazarus is *seated* at the table with Him, Martha *serving* Him, and Mary once more "at His feet"—

not now to hear as a learner, to supplicate as a mourner, but impart as a worshiper, "anointing His feet with ointment, and wiping them with her hair." The dark shadow of the cross is forecast upon this happy scene, dark plans of enemies, who hate Him for all His love. Mary's heart, with the true instinct of love, can recognize, and now feels she must use this moment to express her heart's affection ere it pass, and the opportunity has fled.

How long it may have taken this lowly and devoted heart to gain her precious treasure, with which she now "anoints Him for His burial," we may not know; but, with the full wages of a laborer, it would take a year; and for her, a woman, and in such humble circumstances, how much longer still! But this we know, precious and costly though her treasure is, now must it be given, put into the grave, as it were, with Jesus, and yet willingly she yields it up. Some may find fault, and charge her with waste, and neglect of others; but He absorbs *her* heart, and her action and devotedness of love well suits *His* own. "Let her alone," is His stern rebuke for those who interfere with so sacred expression of her love and appreciation of His worth; "against the day of My burying bath she kept it." His loving commendation of her faith as well, that knew "when to keep and when to cast away;" and thus He sets honor upon the grateful outpouring of our heart's love and adoration, whether now or then.

Thus may we be led to find our place, from first to last of our journey here below, from the moment of our souls' trusting Him as Saviour, until received to Himself above, as *penitents, learners, supplicants,*

and *worshippers* "at His feet," and to Him be all the praise!

B. C. G.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. 33.—"Was Judas a Christian?"

Ans.—No, not in the true sense of the word; he was a *disciple*, which implies, "follower of Christ," but not a "*disciple indeed*," or he would have *continued* in Christ's word (Comp. Jno. viii. 31). From what motive he became such, we are not told, but nevertheless clearly shown that from the beginning he was "without part or lot in the matter." Being in the ranks of the *disciples*, he was chosen by Christ to be an *apostle*; thus given power with the others to work miracles and cast out devils in His name. All this, however, was quite possible without being "born of God" (as our Lord took men up on the profession they made), and was merely official,—i. e., related to the *place* he was in, not to the state of his heart toward God (See Matt. vii. 22, 23).

The following statements are made concerning him by Him "who trieth the reins and the heart;" and as to them, there can be but one meaning:—

- | | | |
|--------|---|----------------------|
| He was | (1) An <i>unbeliever</i> . | } (Jno. vi. 64, 70.) |
| | (2) A <i>devil</i> . | |
| | (3) A <i>thief</i> . (Jno. xii. 6.) | |
| | (4) <i>Unclean</i> . (Jno. xlii. 10, 11.) | |
| | (5) The <i>son of perdition</i> . (Jno. xvii. 12) | |
| | (6) The <i>traitor</i> , or betrayer. (Matt. xxvi. 48.) | |
| | (7) A <i>murderer</i> . (Acts i. 25.) | |

In the last scripture given, his *fall* is shown to be, not as Peter's—"falling *into sin*" through unwatchfulness, from which the Lord's grace restores (Luke xxii. 31, 32); nor "falling *from grace*," to which all Christians are liable, as the Galatians, returning to the bondage of the *law* (chap. v. 4); but "*falling away*," or apostasy, from a place or position of light and privilege into which we may have entered in the Christian *profession*. In order to the "rightly dividing of the word of truth," we need to carefully distinguish between being in the *sphere* of Christianity and having the *power* of it in us. Alas! how many now, as in former times, are content with but the first,—"*having the form of godliness*, but denying the power thereof"—"*a name to live*, while dead."

B. C. G.

THE MODE OF CHRISTIAN WARFARE.*

(Josh. vi. 6-21.)

"Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God." (2 Pet. iii. 12.)

THE action of Israel as the army of God begins immediately after the command is given by the Prince of the host of Jehovah. Up to this point the book of Joshua describes God's work in bringing His people into Canaan, and giving them of its food preparatorily to their active service in war. So the establishment of the Christian in grace is of necessity antecedent to his being an effective soldier of Christ. God's work for the believer must be rested in, and His work in him must be unhindered, before the soldier of Christ is fit to fight for Him. A child of God doubting his sonship, or engaged in spiritual struggles with himself, is not an effective soldier for Christ. He may wear the uniform, but he is unable to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and wield it in the might of the Lord; for so long as "I" is the burden of the soul, offensive warfare is impossible. "The things that I would, I do not; and that I would not, that do I," is the expression of inward struggling to be free, and a proof that the standing in Christian liberty, without which spiritual conflict cannot be waged, is still not enjoyed.

Again, if Christian liberty be known as a matter of faith, through grace, there must be holy living in order to maintain spiritual conflict. A right state before God is requisite, as well as faith in our being blessed in Christ. Subjection to God and

*A chapter from "THE BOOK OF JOSHUA," a new book by H. F. Witherby, now being published by Loizeaux Brothers.

obedience to the Scriptures are necessities for true Christian warfare. We must walk with God if we would war for God. Suppose the Spirit, who indwells us, is striving with us because our ways are not pleasing to God, could we be truly contending for God at such a moment? Impossible. There may be a semblance of true conflict in such a case, but it will be but the semblance. Christian soldiership demands that there should be both faith in what God has wrought for us and a yielding to His working in us.

Both the blessing of the believer in Christ and the healthy state of the Christian's soul, as seen in the types and figures of our book, are preliminaries to the active warfare which now opens up. The passage of the Jordan showed us, in figure, the believer's entrance into the heavenly places, and Gilgal likewise figured his true place of liberty; while the partaking of the feast of the passover, of the unleavened bread, and the corn of the land proclaimed true feeding on Christ; and upon these great realities came the vision of the drawn sword and the commands relative to the overthrow of Jericho.

It would appear that Joshua gave his orders to Israel immediately upon receiving them from the Captain of the Lord's host. Faith is equally balanced in its energy and patience, for faith is simply carrying out the mind of God. To the priests, the word of command was, "Take up the ark;" to the armed men, "Pass on, and compass the city; and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord."

Soldiers of Christ our Lord in heaven, let us stir up our souls to faith. The Lord has promised th-

victory as He promised it to Israel. They believed Him: "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down." Faith grasps God's strength: "all things are possible to him that believeth." Let the soldier of Christ, at his Lord's bidding, go forth to fight for Him, and let him be as assured of victory as was Israel, before whom the ponderous walls fell down flat.

Soldiers of Christ, stir up the soul to courage! Christian courage tells upon adversaries as nothing else does. Christian courage is the first-born son of Faith. Again, let us stir up our souls to hardness. Warriors do not fight upon feather-beds, nor stretched at ease in arm-chairs, and the Christian soldier must expect hardship. Moreover, he must not entangle himself with the affairs of this life, but please Him who has called him to be a soldier. Life's duties must be honorably performed, but we are forbidden to entangle ourselves with them. There are many "indispensables," as they are called, which are really entanglements, and which a Christian, zealous for Christ, learns to discard. He cannot afford to be occupied, during the few hours of active service he is called to on earth, with things which once engrossed his thoughts and time. Like the racer, he lays aside every weight. Weights and entanglements are sore hindrances to Christian service. Any thing that keeps the mind busy to the exclusion of Christ's interests should be suspected.

In Christian conflict, the armed men ever go on in the front, the gathering host make up the rear. God has always His front-rank men—men able to use the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God;—men, too, who expose themselves to Satan's attacks.

A good soldier loves his profession, and a true

Christian soldier loves Christian warfare; it is his joy, his delight, to take pleasure in hardships and weariness. He enjoys what feather-bed Christians regard as self-inflicted penance, or as unnecessary trouble. "Forward! ever forward!" is his cry. It is no burden to him, but rather his happy service, to spend and to be spent for his Lord; it is heavenly rapture to him when sinners are made captive for Christ,—when Satan-bound souls are loosed, and pass from death unto life, from the power of Satan to God. Idleness and ease are a distress to the one who is fired by eternal prospects, energized by the Holy Ghost, and constrained by Christ's love. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel," is his reply to the countless efforts to damp his ardor and to quench his zeal. Eternity! eternity! he whispers to himself, when his weary body almost resents carrying out the orders of his soul. Such a spirit marks the front-rank men. May God bring Christ's soldiers to the front, and especially may the young Christian who reads this page be fired by the prospects of eternity, and be filled with holy zeal the entire period of his short life below.

Expectation is the offspring of faith: small expectations are born of small faith; but where God is before the soul, expectation of blessing exists, and result follows. We do not say immediate result is always visible; but working for God without expecting Him to bless is like sowing seed without looking for the harvest, or firing at a fortress without hoping to hit it.

An army without faith in its leaders is sure to be discomfited: without faith in their Lord, Christ's soldiers strike no good blows. Alas for the pointless, aimless, self-satisfied routine which goes

the name of fighting for God! Such parade-duty is not warfare. The untutored eye may consider both very much alike; however, when men fall down wounded, and cry for mercy, we know it is not the effect of mere human energy, but the work of God the Holy Ghost.

Joshua gave orders for the day only: "Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord." So all work of faith is day-by-day work, step-by-step progress; and this is the only true and happy way of living for God. In the happy satisfaction that they had obeyed God, Israel's first day ended; a comfort which we trust may be ours, each one, daily; and as to the rest, let the men of Jericho think as they please.

Early in the morning of the second day, Joshua arose, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord.

A fresh fact is now presented, and one which is of practical moment. The seven priests "went on continually and blew with the trumpets." No voice was uttered by Israel, and the only sounds the army gave forth were the continual tramp of its many feet and the loud and penetrating blast of its trumpets—the grand herald-notes of the kingdom of God. We may fairly assume that such a mode of warfare, such a continual trumpeting, was to the men of Jericho, shut up and secure within their defenses, as consummate folly as is the joy of the gospel to the infidel world. A huge army betaking itself to marching round a strong city, and ever giving out such joyful sounds, was, to the eye and ear, fanaticism. No casting up of mounds, no construction of battering-rams, no scaling-ladders,—nothing but the trumpets of jubilee! And what

their blasts meant, the men of Jericho knew no more than does the world *to-day* understand the joy of the acceptable year of the Lord and of the coming kingdom of Christ.

The notes of our trumpets of jubilee, like those of Israel, are few and simple: "Christ is coming!" "Christ is coming!" But they are joy-notes, uttered from the heart by true souls who long for the Lord and His return. Let the world man its great walls of infidelity and superstition, let it boast in its improvements and development; Christ is coming! Let reasoners say, "Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were;" Christ is coming! Let scoffers cry, "Fanaticism!" be the life-answer of the Christian to all the arguments of unbelief, these notes of love and joy,—

Christ is Coming!

H. F. W.

A WISH RECALLED.

I WISH I were an angel bright,
To stand before the throne in light,
And join the myriads that proclaim
The honor of th' ascended Lamb.
But stop! what loser should I be!
I could not sing, "He died for me!"

Ah, no! I'd not an angel be:
A sinner saved 's the name for me,
I'd rather debtor be to grace
Than fill e'en Gabriel's honored place,
And, washed in Calvary's precious flood,
Owe all to Christ's atoning blood.

J. G. D.

PRESENT THINGS,

AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

The Style and Character of the Book.

(Chap. i. 4-8.)

WE now come to the opening words of the book itself. It is in form a letter from the beloved apostle to "the seven assemblies which are in Asia." This Asia was the Roman province called by this name, being the west coast of what is now, for the sins of christendom, Turkey in Asia. The churches in it were even then, though traditionally the scene of John's as in the Acts of Paul's labors, already departing from the faith and spiritual power of Christianity; and this, as we may see more hereafter, gives at once a certain character to the book. Whoever they were of whom Paul in his very last epistle says, "This thou knowest, that all they which be in Asia are turned away from me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes," it is clear that Asia was thus the scene of a revolt from that "apostles' doctrine and fellowship" which it was a marked feature of the bright Pentecostal times to maintain.

The salutation shows at once the style of the book. It is not "grace and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ," but "from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, and the First-born* of the dead, and the Ruler of the

* As there are many (smaller or greater) inaccuracies in the common version of the book of Revelation, I take advantage of the difference here (though not a textual one,) to say that I follow, wherever it is possible, the new revision. Wherever I may not be able to do this, I hope to note the fact, and my reasons.

kings of the earth." Here, it is evident, we are not in the intimacy of children, but in the character of servants, according to what the previous verses have announced. The book is the book of the throne—of divine government; and that, not merely of the world, but of Christians no less. Indeed, where should divine government be more exemplified and maintained than among the people of God. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," says God to His people of old; "therefore will I punish you for your iniquities." It is true that toward us now grace is fully revealed, and the throne is a "*throne* of grace," but its holiness is none the less inflexible. Would it *be* grace if it were not so? or do we desire to be delivered from the conditions of holiness, or from the sovereignty of God? No; grace enables for the conditions,—does not set them aside; and it sets God fully on the throne for us, makes the "shout of a King" to be in our midst. Children with the Father, where should there be whole-hearted, unreserved obedience if not among these?

The throne here is Jehovah's throne, for "who is, and was, and is to come" is just the translation of the covenant-name of Israel's God. "Grace and peace" salute us from this unchangeable One—this eternal God. The new revelation has not displaced, nor *mended*, (as rationalism would have it,) the God of Israel for us! It has *declared* Him: displaced shadows, filled in gaps, perfected the partial and fragmentary into the glorious God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! taught us to see in the older Scriptures themselves a fullness of meaning of which those who wrote them could have no possible perception. Do David's psalms yield us less

than they yielded to faith of old? And if the New Testament has no corresponding book, is it not because, now that the Spirit of God is come, our psalmody is to be found in *every* book, which for us He has combined into one harmony of praise and triumphant joy?

Yes, the One who is *was*, and is to come. Our present God is He who from first to last abides, in every generation, amid all changes changeless; sitting on high above all water-floods; whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. What a resting-place for faith! "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations!"

But not only are grace and peace breathed from this ever-living One, but also "from the seven Spirits which are before His throne." We all recognize at once that these seven Spirits stand for the plenitude of the Holy Spirit; and in the fourth chapter they are represented as seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, while in the fifth they are the "seven eyes" of the Lamb, "sent forth into all the earth." This, again, evidently connects with Isaiah xi, where these seven Spirits are seen to be energies of the Spirit which are found in the Man, Christ Jesus, as reigning over the earth.

"Grace and peace," then, from these—how blessed! All the ministries of divine government upon the earth working in blessing toward us; all the course of things as guided and controlled by God, spite of all hindrances, all puzzles and perplexities, still working in one harmony of grace and peace toward His own. How easy to be bold and patient both, if we believe this!

Then also "from Jesus Christ, the *faithful* Witness, and the First-born of the dead, and the Ruler

of the kings of the earth." "Faithful" is emphasized here, for our encouragement surely, if grace and peace are from such an One, but yet in contrast with other witness too, as that of the Church, so little faithful. Is it not a needed word for those oppressed with the sense of failure,—almost ready to give up what are *His* principles, because of the break-down of those who have undertaken to carry them out? In such a case, how good to remember that on the one hand we are servants and not masters, with no liberty to dispense with one even of His commandments, and on the other, that we serve One who Himself is faithful, however we have failed. Shall we go to Him and say, "Master, Thy principles are impracticable for a world and a time like this"? or shall we lack in courage when results are in His hand who has *never* failed, and never will, while He oftentimes submits to *apparent* defeat. Such was the cross, the victory of victories, and we must submit, here as elsewhere, to the rule of the woman's Seed. To this are we not in fact brought in the next words? "The First-born of the dead" unites us with Him as the later-born, and resurrection is the mode of His triumph over apparent defeat. But it is *divine* triumph, in which not alone evil is vanquished, but God is manifested in His resources and in His grace.

Grace and peace are ours from One who is conqueror over death, and who brings us into the place into which as Forerunner He has entered, while already He is, as risen, and on the Father's throne, Ruler of the kings of the earth,—the scene through which in the meantime we are passing. In a little while, when He takes His own throne, we shall share also in this.

Thus are we furnished at the outset for present service. Placed before the living and eternal God, the energies of His Spirit ministering to us, the Captain of our salvation cheering us on with the joy of already accomplished victory, the pledge of certainty as to our own. Now for the response of our hearts to this before we start: without our hearts are in tune, and we can go cheerily into the battlefield—for it is a battlefield into which we go, and not as spectators merely,—we should only expose ourselves there to our shame. The singers must be in the forefront of the Lord's army, as in Jehoshaphat's of old, and then there will be good success. So the saints' answer to their Captain's voice here is with a song:—

“Unto Him who loveth us,
And hath washed* us from our sins
In His own blood,
And hath made us a kingdom,
Priests to His God and Father,—
Unto Him be glory and might
Unto the ages of ages.

Amen.”

This is a sweet response of loyal hearts on the edge of the battlefield. It is the good confession of His name, and of the debt we owe Him, which has made us His own forever. Good it is, the open joyful maintenance of this, which at once separates us from the world that rejects Him, and puts us in the ranks of His witnesses and followers. “By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to

*“*Washed us*,” I believe, is right. The Revised Version puts it, however, into the margin, and “*loosed us*” into the text. Most of the modern editors agree with this, and it has the weight of the oldest MS. authority in its favor, although the great mass of MSS. give “*washed*.” The latter seems more in the apostle's manner as 1 Jno. i. 7; Rev. vii. 14 (though in the latter case it is not persons, but robes).

God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, confessing His name." No such wholesome, invigorating, gladdening work as is confession.

"Unto Him who *loveth* us," not "*loved* us," as the common version reads. It is a present reality, measured only aright by a past work—"and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood." Let us take care we measure it ever so! Not by our own changeful feelings or experiences, as we are so prone to do, but by the glorious manifestation of itself thus: an infinite measure of an infinite fullness; for who knows aright the value of the blood of Christ?

"And hath washed us from our sins:" what an encouragement for those who have to go into a world full of temptation and defilement! We have *known* sin as sin—known it as needing the precious blood of Christ to cleanse us from its guilt, and known ourselves too as thus cleansed. If we are "idle and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," it can only be because we have "forgotten that" we were "purged from" our "old sins."

But more: He has "made us a kingdom,* priests to His God and Father." Israel was promised, conditionally upon obedience, "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." (Ex. xix. 6.) They failed in obedience, and Levi's spe-

*All authorities, upon the warrant of the three oldest MSS. and some ancient versions, give this instead of the "kings and priests" of our common one. The reference to Exodus xix. is plain, but I do not see how in either passage we have the equivalent of the other reading. A "kingdom of priests" does not convey the thought of "*kings* and priests," which we have, however, undoubtedly, in chap. v. 10. Is it not rather a people who own God's sovereignty, instead of being a rabble of independent and rebellious wills, as once? Well may we praise Him who has done all this for us! Internal criticism, however, as opposed to authorities, might suggest the defensibility of the "Received Text." The MSS. are evidently here also in some confusion.

cial priesthood was the consequence of their failure, while, as part of this failed people, not even the priesthood could pass within the veil. Grace has now given us as Christians that access to God to them denied, and to God fully revealed as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who has thus revealed God has given us our place in His presence—a happy, holy place of praise and intercession. “To Him be the glory and might unto the ages of ages!”

An “Amen” is added here, that we may as individuals join our voices to the voice of the Church at large. It is a blessed thing to be part of the innumerable company who have a common theme and a common joy; but it is also blessed to have our own distinct utterance and our own peculiar joy. The more distinct the better. Would the apostle have felt it the same thing to say, “Who loved *us*, and gave Himself for us,” true as it might be, as to say, “Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*”? Assuredly he would not. The “chief of sinners,” realizing himself that, had something which was individual to himself, and which would not be lost or overlooked in the general song. And we have, each one of us surely, special experiences to call forth peculiar praise. Note, too, that the power of the life lived to God is associated by him with this individualization: “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave Himself for me.”

Thus, then, the heart gives out its response to its beloved Lord. Now, then, it is qualified for testimony to Him. “If we be beside ourselves, it is to God; if we be sober, it is for your cause.” The soul in company with Christ turns necessarily to

the world with its testimony of Him: the Enoch-life is joined with the Enoch-witness. For it was he of whom it is written, "he walked with God, and he was not, for God took him," who "prophe-sied, saying, 'Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all.'" The Church it is who is called, like another Enoch, to walk here with Him whom she is soon to be called away to meet and be ever with; and the next verse in Revelation puts into her mouth her similar testimony:—

"Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him."

This is evidently not the Church's hope, but the Church's testimony. It takes up the theme of the Old-Testament prophets, with direct appeal even to their prophecies; for Daniel saw of old the Son of Man come with the clouds of heaven, and Zech-ariah declares how Israel look upon Him whom they have pierced, and how the tribes of the land mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and are in heaviness as he that is in heaviness for his first-born." (Dan. vii. 13; Zech. x. 10, 12.)

I do not doubt that, while the words in Revelation repeat the very language of the older prophets,—for "kindreds" in the common version is literally "tribes," and "earth" and "land" are, both in Hebrew and Greek, but the same word,—yet that in the passage before us a wider application is to be made than this. Not only shall they see who have pierced Him, but "*every* eye." Naturally, therefore, not the tribes of the land only, but of the earth at large, shall wail on account of Him. The testimony is neither to nor of Israel only, though including

these. And while the mourning in Zechariah is unto repentance, the word here is large enough to admit of the wail of despair as well as of repentance.

The Church's testimony is addressed to all. Christ is coming; the day of grace running out; judgment nearing with every stroke of the hour. A testimony which we know from Scripture, as we may realize every day around us, wakes only the scorn of "scoffers, walking in their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Whose, then, is this Voice which here solemnly confirms the testimony of approaching judgment? It is surely none other than the voice of God Himself:—

"Yea, amen: I am Alpha and Omega, saith the Lord God, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

The "Yea, amen," are not, as our books give them, part of the seventh verse, but commence the verse following; and the words "I am Alpha and Omega, the Eternal, the Almighty," exhibit fully the One with whom men's unbelief brings them into controversy. *He* challenges all unbelief. Is He not doing so to-day, when on every side signs political, ecclesiastical, moral, and spiritual warn men, if they will but attend, that the Lord is at hand? Why, the cry itself is a sign—"Behold the Bridegroom!" Can they deny it has gone forth? Call it a mistake; call it enthusiasm; call it high treason to the world's magnificent and immense progress; still it stands written,—

"And at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold the bridegroom! go ye forth to meet him!' . . . And as they went to buy, the *bridegroom came*."

He who speaks is Alpha and Omega, whose word is the beginning and end of all speech: all that can be said is said when He has spoken; at the beginning, who spoke all things into being, and whose word, "It is done," will fix their eternal state.

He who speaks is Jehovah, the covenant-keeping God, unchangeable amid all changes, true to His threats and to His promises alike.

And He who speaks is the Almighty, lacking no power to fulfill His counsel. This is He who says, "Yea, amen," to the testimony that He who was crucified in weakness shall come again in power, and every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

F. W. G.

ADVICE TO BEGINNERS.

By a Plain Man.

I WANT to say a few plain things to you that are young in the way. It won't do us "old ones" any harm either, for we have all of us got an uncommon love for keeping "just inside" the wicket-gate; as if religion was nothing but standing still when once you're through that.

Well, first, *be sure that you are in the right road.* Put that down. You will never get along at all if you keep stopping and wondering whether it is the right road. I was over to Stithians the other day; and coming home, I lost myself—or thought I did. Ah, 'twas poor speed with me then. I was afraid that I should have to go back again, and so I went on at a snail's pace. Well, I came to a directing-post, but it was all weather-beaten and

worn, and didn't help me a bit. Very soon I saw a man coming. "This the way to Penwinnin?" I called out. "Yes, straight on." Ah, I was off then, as fast as I could get over the ground. You'll never get on till you are quite sure that you are in the right road.

Now, you beginners must get into the way of resting on Jesus without any doubt. Don't ever go trying to be content with good feelings and good desires and good resolutions. They are all very well, and thank God for them; but good feelings are turned into bad failings when we put our trust in them. Get into a way of looking straight up to the cross for salvation—morning, noon, and night. Bright or dull, glad or sad, there it is for us always,—“in Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

The devil keeps thousands of people in prison all their days, by getting them to look away from Jesus. “Come, he says, “come—you are not so happy as you used to be;” or, “you are not so happy as you ought to be. You must come to jail.” And there he keeps them, letting them out of the cage, once in a while for a bit of fresh air, when it is wonderful fine weather. And all the time the blessed Lord Jesus has finished the work for every one of us. Why, there are times when I've got to buckle those words about me like a life-belt—“He loved me and gave Himself for me.” When my good feelings and my good every-thing-else are clean swept away, I must hang on that.

Next, *don't go thinking that the road to heaven is all up-hill.* I can't bear to hear people go talking bravely and cheerfully about every thing in the

world except Christ; *that's* always doleful and dismal and hard. They can put a bit of cheerfulness into their work, but begin with Christ—they'll groan directly. The man can do his ten hours, and more than that at a pinch; and the woman can manage the washing, and look after the baby, and cook the dinner too, and not think that is any thing very dreadful: but when 'tis in the Lord's service, listen to them then:—They are such poor weak creatures; and they have got so many troubles, and so many trials, and so many temptations; and they are so full of their doubts and their fears; and the devil he is so busy. That's it, that's it;—smart enough and strong enough an' clever enough for every thing else in the world except the one thing that they were made for—*serving the Lord!*

Don't any of you young folks get into such dreadful ways. You are poor, weak creatures—of course you are; and saying so a hundred times a day won't make you any stronger. You have got temptations and trials—of course you have, and groaning over them will only make them look more and bigger. But what else have we got? Ah, folks stop there, and that is how they fail.

Don't get into a way of looking always upon that side, as if that is all. Ah, bless His name, what about *Him*? The glorious Lord, who can make lame folks run, and blind folks see, and dead folks live!

Talk about your temptations and trials if you like, but do talk about *Him* too who is able to keep us from falling, holding us all the way with His right hand. Do let us count that we are upon the winning side: get into the way of thinking about the mighty Jesus, and keep there. Bless Him, He

has brought ten thousand thousand safe home, and He can set you and me there too, with white robes, and crowns, and palms of victory. If a man can go along cheerfully any where, let him go along brave and cheerful in the road to heaven. Ah, what company! "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Listen to that, and then think how it finishes—"And, lo, I am with *you* alway, even unto the end of the world."

Then I want you to mind *one day at a time*. Seeming to me that our heavenly Father has given us our life in *days*, because He sees that we can't manage more than that at once. People might get on very well if they were content to take life like 'tis given; but they go wondering whatever they shall do next week, or whatever will happen to them next year, and so they get frightened, and think that 'tis no good their trying—not a bit.

Don't go trying to put your arms round a year, and don't go troubling about next week. Wake up in the morning and think, Here's another day come. Whatever I do and whatever I don't do, Lord, help me to do this—help me to live to Thee!

Then, *be sure and get a good start*. A good start goes further than any thing to make a good day. Let the Sun of Righteousness rise all fair and clear in the soul, and 'tis easy to walk in the light all day then. Here, young folks, I've seen bits of rhyme about the weather, so as to help people to remember it better; and here is a bit for you to think of every morning:—

"Between six and eight
You have sealed its fate."

Tell me how a man gets ready for the day, and I'll tell you how he gets through it.

Ah, there's poor Bro. Meanwell; he will read a chapter in the morning, but he never thinks about it. He will kneel down to pray, and it is the same old set of words exactly, day after day and year after year,—all so pat and so smooth, but there is no *bite* nor *grip* about them.

"Making very poor speed?"—I should think so, when you can scarcely stay to get a bit of breakfast for the soul, and then go starving it till supper-time.

Next, *set out with a good courage*. Poor Littlefaith wakes up with a sigh and a shiver. "I am so different from most people," says poor Littlefaith; "and here is another day come, and there are so many cares and so many hindrances!" I want you young folks to get into a way of setting out feeling quite sure that God is for you; and not just when you go to meeting, but in your work and your worries—in wants and cares like yours and mine.

Littlefaith forgets this. He is like those folks that go out in the water ankle-deep, and then wonder how it is that they can't float and swim like other people do. Plunge right into the sea of His grace, young folks. Start the day thinking, There'll be nothing to-day but He will help me; there'll be no where to-day but He will be with me, no temptation but He can deliver me, no burden but I can cast it upon Him. Let the music of His precious promises ring in our souls. Go out into the day thinking how the loving Father looks all along it, and knows what we want.

Then mind this, young folks: *When you're getting*

ready for the day, get alone. There are not many forms and ceremonies laid down in the New Testament; but there is one that the Lord Jesus has laid down so clear that we dare not neglect it—it is in the sixth chapter of Matthew: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret."

Get away *alone with the Lord.* We want to shut our ears as well as our eyes. A man can lift up his heart to the Lord any where; but if he wants to have a real bit of prayer, he must get away alone with the Lord. Abraham rose up early in the morning—when there was nobody else stirring, I expect, and he'd got it all quiet; and the blessed Jesus Himself sent the disciples away across the sea while He went into a mountain *apart* to pray. *Do get alone somewhere with the Lord.*

Then *get a bit of the Word in your heart every day.* If we want to be right in all the things of our life, there is only one thing that will do it: *meditate upon the Word.* Come winter as well as summer; come spring as well as autumn; there's fruit, and fruit in his season—the right sort of fruit. Stick to the Word, young folks,—every thing else almost will grow out of that.

Then the next thing is about *praying.* Mind that too. There's a lot of things going by the name of gold, but it is only in the looks. So there is a good deal of what people call prayer, but it will only do for them that don't know the real thing.

For years, I used to fancy that it was proper to begin to pray and go right on without stopping till I had done altogether; but one day, I was down at Redburn Market, and as soon as I had got one

thing that I wanted, I asked myself, "What next?" then, "And what besides?" Since I have done that, my prayers are more real; and it has brought me into a way of telling the Lord about the day's work and things, that is very helpful.

Oh, do open your hearts to Him, young folks. Don't let there be any secrets from Him. When you are kneeling down, ask yourselves, "What more do I want?" and "What besides is there?"

And *be real*. Don't be afraid to call things by their right names. *Do be real when you pray.*

FORGOTTEN WORKERS.

THEY lived, and they were useful; this we know,
 And naught beside;
 No record of their names is left, to show
 How soon they died.
 They did their work, and then they passed away,
 An unknown band;
 But they shall live in endless day, in the
 Fair shining land.

And were they young, or were they growing old,
 Or ill, or well,
 Or lived in poverty, or had they wealth of gold,—
 No one can tell;
 Only one thing is known of them—they *faithful*
 Were, and true
 Disciples of the Lord, and strong, through prayer,
 To save and do.

But what avails the gift of empty fame?
 They *lived to God*;
 They loved the sweetness of another Name,
 And gladly trod
 The rugged ways of earth, that they might be
 Helper or friend,

And in the joy of this their ministry,
Be spent, and spend.

No glory clusters round their names on earth ;
But in God's heaven

Is kept a book of names of greatest worth,
And there is given

A place for all who did the Master please,
Though here unknown ;

And there, lost names shine forth in brightest rays
Before the throne.

Oh, take who will the boon of fading fame !
But give to me

A place among the *workers*, though my name
Forgotten be ;

And as within the book of life is found
My lowly place,

Honor and glory unto God redound
For all His grace !

(*Selected.*)

THE WORLD THAT PERISHED, AND THAT NOW IS.

BESIDES the awful picture of the apostasy of men before the flood presented us in Gen. vi, we have the description of their state connected with the prophecy of Enoch in the epistle of Jude, and another tradition concerning them, recorded by divine inspiration, in the book of Job. The moral picture of the antediluvian world is thus strikingly presented to Job in the way of question:—

“Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood: Which said unto God, ‘Depart from us!’ and what can the Almighty do for them? Yet He filled their houses with good things.” (Job xxii. 15–18.)

And this bounty of God to “the unthankful and

the evil," "filling their houses with good things," is expressly pointed out in the words of Christ concerning that period: "In the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, . . . *even thus* shall it be in the days of the Son of Man."

Thus it is plain that the last hour of this present world is to answer both in its restless activity and its moral character to the last hour of the world before the flood. There is, however, a promise of the Church's preservation from the world's last temptation and judgment (Rev. iii. 10 with 1 Thess. iv. 16-18) by the taking up of its last members into heaven before the final current of human iniquity and the divine wrath that follows it shall set in upon the earth (2 Thess. i. 7-12). And in what state was the old world before the awful close?

It was a world in the full enjoyment of the gifts of God's providence, yet "murmurers and complainers" (Jude 14-16); a world suffering from human violence, yet "having men's persons in admiration;" a world which heard the "preacher of righteousness," yet continued "walking after their own lusts;" a world which was told of the Lord's coming, yet persisted in their "ungodly deeds" and "hard speeches." It was a world that had its fair women and its mighty men; its architects, its musicians, and its artificers, as well as its shepherds and its husbandmen, men dwelling in cities and men dwelling in tents, men of renown and men of violence. But their renown, where has it placed their names? They are not remembered in heaven or earth; they lie deep in the records of hell. Their might, what was it when the flood "came and took them all away"? Waters gushing from

beneath, waters rushing from above! Deep called unto deep. "*The triumphing of the wicked is short.*"
(*Selected.*)

"A SHADOW FROM THE HEAT."

ISAIAH XLV. 4.

WHEN the cares of life oppress thee,
And thy spirit longs for rest;
If thy friends should disappoint thee,
E'en the dearest and the best;
Then the time has come for learning
Lessons which are learnt alone
In the *Master's* secret presence,
All thy sorrows made His own.

Lessons which will, in the learning,
Turn thy bitter into sweet;
Marah shall be left behind thee,
Elim greet thy weary feet.
Who can comfort as He comforts?
Never sorrow was like His;
'Twas in love for thee He bore it,
Who can offer love like this?

If on bed of pain to languish
He should gently bid thee lie,
Think of His surpassing anguish,
Think of all His agony:
Not a grief but He has measured,
Not a tear He doth not see;
Oh, as one his mother comforts,
So the Lord will comfort thee!

If some loved one turn and leave thee,
Think how He was left by all;
Well He knows—who else so truly?
What it is in vain to call,
In the hour of deepest sorrow,
For a loving friend to cheer,
And because He *knows*, has *felt* it,
He to thee is ever near.

And when thou has learnt the lesson
 How to trust a love so strong,
 Learning how thy best conception
 Of His goodness did Him *wrong*,
 Falling far, how far below it!
Seeing Him, thy song shall be—
 "Oh, the *half* of all His beauty,
 Never hath been told to me!"

PRIESTLY OFFERINGS.

"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee."
 (1 Chron. xxix. 14.)

IT is beautiful to see the grace with which we are brought to give God *His own*.

Three sacrifices are to be offered by God's priests (a class that embraces every believer, young or old):—

1. *Themselves*.—The apostle beseeches, and that "by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies *a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable to God, which is your intelligent service." (Rom. xii. 1.) For "ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Cor. vi. 20.) See for example 2 Cor. viii. 5—they "first gave *their own selves* to the Lord."

2. *Their Worship*.—As holy priests, "to offer up *spiritual sacrifices*, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me," says Jehovah. "By Him therefore let us offer *the sacrifice of praise to God* continually," etc. (Heb. xiii. 15.)

3. *Their Goods*.—"But to do good and to communicate [*i. e.*, of your substance—Gal. vi. 6; 1 Tim. vi. 18] forget not; for with *such sacrifices* God is well pleased." (Heb. xiii. 16; Phil. iv. 18.).

BIBLE LESSONS ON MATTHEW.

Chapter iii.

"IN those days came *John* the Baptist." Israel have not cared for their Messiah, and, in the person of Herod, have sought His life; and John's voice is to call them to a judgment of their ways, and turn their hearts to God,—“the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.” His was a separating testimony—from and to—from the national rejection, and to the rejected One. All for their blessing was there in the Lord's person, but there was moral fitness needed to receive it, and this John comes to produce by his testimony of *repentance*. Personally, and in his circumstances and testimony, all speaks of being *outside* the nation's condition,—“In the *wilderness* of Judea,” saying, “*Repent ye* ;” thus fulfilling the word of the prophet Esaias, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness [an outside place], ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.’” There the message reads, “All flesh is *grass*,” which “*repent ye*” really means,—turn from all that you are, as judged of God, to own “the Hope of Israel.” And what grace and truth mingle in His appeal—“O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help”! (v. 4.) The one who calls upon others for preparedness of heart to receive the Lord must be personally the exponent of what his testimony is to them.

“The same John... { Raiment of camel's hair.
 { Leathern girdle about his loins.
 { Meat, locusts and wild honey.”

In apparel, no diversity of texture; girded to his loins—distinctly upon him, and concentration of purpose, as “the man of God;” meat, independent of human supply, and from two opposite sources; the very *plague* of eastern countries, and nature's sweet, both made to serve his need. All in perfect accord with his testimony and abode, and exactly reproducing the inspired record of Elijah, in “whose spirit and power” he had come. All is found where his lot is cast—in the *desert*, as with Israel, long before, when Jehovah fed them, and “their raiment waxed not old, neither did their foot swell for forty years.”

How blessed that in such circumstances can be found thus, clothing and sustenance—the lives of others yielding it, and even nature's sweet God can bestow, for John is one self-governed, and devoted to Him! Are we thus true enough in heart to be intrusted with such? (See Deut. xxxiii. 13; Ps. lxxxi. 16.)

B. C. G.

“THE world will allow the mere statement of any doctrine provided no attempt be made to put it in practice. It is only when *faith* begins to produce *works* that the Christian is confronted with bitter antagonism.”

“JESUS was not popular. The multitude might follow Him for a moment, because His ministry stood connected, in their judgment, with ‘the loaves and fishes,’ which met their need; but they were just as ready to cry, ‘Away with Him!’ as ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’”

PRESENT THINGS,

AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

THE SON OF MAN AMONG THE CHURCHES.

(Rev. i. 9-20.)

WE come now to the vision which introduces the messages to the seven assemblies which with it constitute the first part of the book. The second part is similarly introduced by the vision of the fourth and fifth chapters. There is a very evident and characteristic difference between the stand-points of the two. In the one case it is John, companion with the saints in tribulation and endurance, and the scene is on earth; in the other case he is called up to heaven, and the scene is there.

The apostle writes, not as such, but as one in the common fellowship of the martyrs of Jesus, with whom testimony and suffering were linked necessarily together, the kingdom to be reached through tribulation. He being in Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, the word of God is afresh communicated to him, and the testimony of Christ anew committed into his hands. Is it not the abiding principle, only in a more than usually eminent example, that "to him that hath shall more be given"? Did ever any one find himself so in Patmos without learning something of the revelations of Patmos? Surely it could not be. Joseph becomes in his prison the "revealer of secrets;" Moses in his wilderness banishment sees the burning bush; David in his affliction develops the sweet singer of Israel; Paul gives out the mystery of the Church from the place of his

captivity; John follows only in the footsteps of these; and those who have followed him, though at a humbler distance, and with no fresh revelations because the Word of God is complete, have they no unfoldings of the Word, no nearer views of its Subject and Revealer, to more than compensate for the sorrow of the way—rhapsodies though they may seem to those of days of less demand and less enthusiasm?

Yet when the apostle puts himself down thus simply as “partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience in Jesus,” does he not expect us also, and invite us, as it were, into this fellowship? and must we not in some true sense be there in order to profit aright by this communication? If we will be friends with the world, can we expect to understand or be in sympathy with the prophet of Patmos? And if it be a Christian world we think of, the words have nothing but an evil significance, if we take the significance from Scripture. But among the many tongues with which for our sins we are afflicted, how few are content to speak simply the language of Scripture!

“*I became* in the Spirit on the Lord’s day,” it should be. It was not simply in the right and normal Christian state in which John found himself, as so many think, but carried out of himself by the power of the Spirit; his senses closed to other things, his spirit awake to behold the things presented to him, and hear the voice that speaks to us also in him. The expression is found again in the beginning of the fourth chapter, at the opening of the vision there.

“On the Lord’s day” does not mean, as some suppose, the prophetic “day of the Lord,” for which

there is a different expression, and which would not really apply at all to this first vision and what follows it. It is the Lord's day, the day of Christian privilege, in which in the joy of His resurrection we look back upon His death. Yet this does not surely shut out the looking forward to His coming: "ye do show forth the Lord's death till He come." This is the only right attitude for the Christian to be in, as one that expects his Lord. And this is indeed why, as it would seem, the voice that John hears speaks *behind* him, and he has to turn to see the One who speaks to him. His attention is to be directed to the present state of the Church; turned back, therefore, from the contemplation of the coming glory, to what to one so engrossed is a thing behind.

He turns, and sees seven golden candlesticks, or "lampstands," as the word is. They answer in number to the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, the significance of which we have already seen. They represent, as we are told, the seven assemblies (v. 20), and, plainly, as responsible to exhibit the light of the Spirit, during the night of the Lord's absence. The reference to the golden candlestick of the sanctuary is evident, and the contrast with it is as much intended for our notice, and should be as evident. The candlestick of the sanctuary was one only, its six branches set into the central stem, and it speaks of Christ, not the Church. The seven candlesticks are for lights, not in the sanctuary, where Christ alone is that, but in the world. And while there is a certain unity, as representing doubtless the whole Church, yet it is the Church seen, not in its dependent connection with Christ, but historically and externally, as

"churches." Each lampstand is set upon its own base, stands in its own responsibility, as is manifest. To speak of the Son of Man in the midst as the invisible bond of union is surely a mistake. He is judging, not uniting.

Moreover, it is the Church in the larger, not the narrower sense here. Sardis as a whole is dead, and not alive. Christ is *outside* of Laodicea. Individually, they are local assemblies, which, as we shall see, stand each for the professing church of a certain epoch, or what in it characterizes the epoch. To see in them but Ephesus and its contemporary churches, as a large mass of interpreters still do, is indeed to be blind, and not see afar off; but the proof as to this comes naturally later. They are *golden* candlesticks, as set for the display of the glory of God (of which the gold speaks); but this is not what of necessity is displayed by them; they have the privilege and responsibility of it, but the candlestick may be, and in fact is, removed.

But the vision here is not simply, nor mainly, of the candlesticks—the churches; it is of One rather from whom alone they receive all their importance,—"One like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle." The attire is that of a priest, but not in service, for the girdle is not about the loins, and the dress hangs loosely to the feet. As Priest, He is therefore a son of man, but He is more; and this the words, "One *like* unto the Son of man," indicate. Why "like unto" this, if He were indeed only this? The precise expression, moreover, is from Daniel, as what follows unites with it the features of the Ancient of days as pictured there. Thus it is the divine-human Priest,

the true Mediator between God and men, as God and Man.

Yet He is not interceding. The characters which follow show Him as when He comes to judge the world, and these are applied, in the third and fourth addresses, to the judgment of the churches. "His head and His hair were white as white wool, as snow;" this marks Him as the Ancient of days, the perfection of holy wisdom; "and His eyes were like a flame of fire"—with the same absolute holiness searching all things; "and His feet like unto white [-hot] brass, as glowing in a furnace*,"—judgment following, as inexorable against evil; "and His voice as the voice of many waters,"—the sound of that ocean which reduces man so easily to his native littleness and impotence.

Such is He who in grace has become the Son of man, but whose holiness is as unchangeable as His love is perfect. All judgment is committed unto Him, because He is the Son of man. The Church and the world alike are in His hand whose glorious uprising will bring, in a short time, summer to the earth. "And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth goeth a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance was as the sun shineth in its strength."

All this exhibits the Lord as just ready to come forth and take the kingdom; it is as if He had left the sanctuary, and were clothing Himself in the cloud with which He returns. And so Scripture, when urging our responsibility upon us, carries us constantly on to the day of His appearing, when the result of conduct will be brought out and mani-

*On the whole, this seems the sense; but a word unknown to the lexicons perplexes the commentators.

fested to all. There is a wide distinction always recognized between this and His coming to receive us to Himself, with which nothing but grace is associated. *This* is the time when we receive the fruit of His work; and beautiful it is to see, and unspeakably comforting it is to realize, that first of all—before any thing else, His heart must have its way, and the sufficiency of His cross be shown to set the believer in full, unchallengeable possession of eternal blessedness, before ever a note of judgment has sounded, or a question as to *his* work been made. And this is plain from the fact of what the resurrection of the saint is stated to be. “It is sown in corruption”—the body of the dead saint;—“it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.” And we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, we shall be changed like them into the image of the heavenly, and caught up together with them, to meet the Lord in the air. Thus incorruption, glory, power, are ours before ever we see the face of the Lord or are manifested before His judgment-seat.

But with His *appearing* is associated the recompense of works; and thus all exhortations, warnings, encouragements, contemplate this. And so the Lord is seen in the vision here, though among the churches. In this way all is simple, and we cannot confound His being “in the midst of the assembly” with His being in the midst of the assemblies, or seek for principles of gathering in what is of a totally different nature. “Who *walketh* in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks” is the Lord’s own word to the church in Ephesus. How different is the thought of His *walking* in the

midst from His being in the midst as the centre of gathering!

Principles of church-order and discipline are not to be sought in the book of Revelation. It is most important to realize that God's Word, if it be beyond our systems, has a system of its own; and that He has so arranged His truth that His people may know where to look for it, and find it with more simplicity than in fact we do. Each book has its line of truth, distinct from, however much connected with, every other one. The first of Corinthians is the book of church-order and discipline. Revelation is the book of the throne, and divine judgment. And the simplest view of the vision before us agrees with this, which will only be more manifest the deeper we look.

The vision of glory overpowers the apostle: "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, 'Fear not.'" How the Christ of the gospel comes out here! What words more characteristic of Him than this, "Fear not"? "Perfect love casteth out fear," and such love is His who speaks, not alone to John in this, but to all who, realizing more His majesty than His grace, would put Him back into the distance and darkness from which He has come out to us. What *we* are is no more in question; the cross has manifested that fully: all for us lies now in what He is; and the cross has revealed that too. Word and deed witness for Him and unto us, and His right hand of power acts with His word: "Fear not; I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and of hades."

Here again divine and human characters are mingled. The First is Cause of all; the Last, the end of all. "All things were created by Him and for Him:" no expression of divinity could be clearer or fuller than this. Then the Living One is necessarily also the *Source* of life,—living and life-giving. But this Living One has died, gone into death to become its Conqueror. Alive for evermore, He has the keys of death and of hades,—that is, of that which holds the body and that which holds the soul of the dead.* Thus man's condition is plumbed to the bottom, for death is the seal of that condition. Only that which meets the condition can break the seal of it.

He, then, who has been in death for us has turned its awful shadow into morning, not to bring back indeed out of its grasp the first creation, but to open for us the door into infinitely higher blessing. The gates of strength† have yielded to our Samson, and more: out of the eater comes forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness. How beyond measure is this love of One who, though the Living One, has been in death for us! How rich have we become through this voluntary poverty! And "He who descended is the same also who ascended up, far above all heavens, that He might fill all things."

He goes on:—

"Write, then"—with this assurance,—*"the things*

*A similar connection of death and hades is found in the twentieth chapter: "Death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them"—the one, the soul; the other, the body. "Hades" is never "the grave," as our common version sometimes renders it, and never "hell," which is its alternate rendering. "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell," as spoken of the Lord (Acts ii. 27, 31), agrees with neither. The distinction in these terms shows very simply that it is the body only which really dies, or over which death has its proper empire.

†"Gaza" means "the strong."

which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be after these; 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 are the seven churches."

These words give us the division of the book. "The things which are" must needs apply to the seven assemblies and their state. "The things which shall be after these"—not "hereafter," which is too vague,—to the things which follow from the fourth chapter on. This is evident, whatever view we take of the interpretation of these sections. With the first of them only have we to do here,—“the things which are,” or present things.

Present, then, in what sense? present at that time merely, and now long past? or, as many now consider, present still? Do the addresses to the churches give only such lessons for us here to-day as must necessarily be found in what is said to Christian gatherings of by-gone days by One who with perfect wisdom, knowledge, holiness, and love speaks to just such as we are? Or is there, beside all this, as many believe, a more precise, designed correspondence between these seven Asiatic assemblies and as many successive periods in the history of the Church at large—a prophetic teaching for all time, until the Lord come, and our path here is ended? Let us look briefly at what has been urged as to this latter view.

Against, it has been urged that the addresses are not given as a prophecy of the future, but simply as to churches then existing, now long passed away. This is undoubtedly the most forcible objection that has been made; for imagination is unholy

license in the things of God, and the addresses have not the general style of prophecy, as must be admitted. We do right, then, to be watchful here.

But answer has been made to this: in the first place, that at the very beginning of the book, we have the whole of it called a *prophecy*: "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of the book of this *prophecy*, and keep the things that are written therein." It seems, therefore, that we *have* distinct warrant for holding the addresses to be prophetic, and that we should rather require it for refusing them this place.

Beside this, the disguise which confessedly they assume may be accounted for. The Christian's privilege and duty are, to be always expecting his Lord. He who says in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming, is a "wicked servant." There was to be left room for this expectancy, as the best help against discouragement, the most effectual remedy against settling down in the world, the best means of fixing the eyes upon Christ and things above. This was not to beget false hope or encourage mistake, for the time of the Lord's return they were assured they did *not* know: "Watch, *for* ye know not when the time is." But thus to put before men a prophecy of a long earthly history for the Church would be to destroy what was to be a main characteristic of Christians, to take out of their hands the lamp of testimony to the world itself, the virgin's lamp lighted to go forth to meet her Lord.

And it is blessed to see that now, if, in the end of the days, the full meaning is being revealed, and we are shown how much of the road we have actually traveled, the effect is, after all the long delay, to *encourage* expectation, not to damp it. That we

are nearing the end is sure; that any part of the road remains before us to be trodden, we have no assurance. The very thing which to past generations would have been an evil too fully to disclose is now for us as great and manifest a gain.

For the prophetic view is further urged the constant emphatic appeal to our attention with which every one of these addresses ends. Was it only for men of that day and place that it is written, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches"? No part of Scripture is so emphasized beside. Again, are there no candlesticks amid which Christ walks except those of these Asiatic churches? The very number 7 is characteristic of this book, as it is significant of completeness also. As the seven Spirits speak of the complete energy of the one blessed Spirit, do not the seven churches stand for the varied aspects of the one Church of God on earth?

And to them as representatives of this one Church is the whole book committed,—not for their own use merely, but for ours. As John is the representative servant, so the churches are representatives of the Church.

But the great proof of the correctness of the prophetic view is (what as yet it would be premature at any length to enter on,) the real correspondence between the picture given of the seven churches and the well-known history of the professing church. We have the successive steps of its decline—first hidden, then external; the judaizing process by which it was transformed from a company of saved and heavenly people into a mixed multitude uncertain of heaven, clinging to the certainties of earth; away from God, and com-

mitting the sacred things, for which they are too unclean, to an official class of go-betweens. Then open union with the world, once persecuting, now friendly, Balaam-teachers for hire promoting and celebrating it. Then the reign of Jezebel, inspired and infallible, her cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. Then Protestantism, soon forgetting the things which it had heard, sunk into its grave of nationalism, though with a separate remnant as ever, dear to God. Then an era of revival and blessing, the Spirit of God working freely, outside of sectarian boundary-lines, uniting to Christ and to one another. Then, alas! collapse and threat of removal, Christ rejected and outside, the lukewarmness of water ready to be spued out of His mouth.

Such is the picture: does it appeal to us? In the midst of all this, in the central church, the centre of the darkness, *at midnight* surely, there begins a cry, faint though at first, but gathering strength as the time goes on, "Go ye out to meet Him!" In Thyatira first, "Hold fast till I come!" To Sardis, "I will come on thee as a thief." To Philadelphia, —more as in haste now,— "I come *quickly*." Then Laodicea, and the end!

Does this appeal to us? What follows then? Briefly: a scene in heaven, and a redemption-song before the throne; a Lamb slain, who as Judah's Lion unseals the seven-sealed book; churches no more on earth, but once more Jews and Gentiles; and out of these, a multitude who come out of the great tribulation; until, after the marriage of the Lamb has taken place in heaven, its gates unclose, and the white-horsed Rider and His armies come out to the judgment of the earth.

This to many even yet may read as strange as any fiction. I cannot of course enter on it now. But there are those who object that by this view the relative importance of events is quite inverted. Two chapters give us the whole course of christendom; the largest part of the book by far is taken up with the details of some seven years after the Church is removed to heaven: why so rapid a survey of what so immediately concerns us?—so lengthy a relation of what will not take place till after the saints of the present time have passed from the scene?

But how often are we mistaken in the relative importance of things! God seeth not as man seeth; and the common view which appropriates seal after seal to the succession of Roman emperors, trumpet after trumpet to the inroads of Goths and Vandals, vial after vial to the French revolution and. Napoleonic wars, has surely missed His estimate of importance. But more: the events which fill so many chapters have indeed for us the very greatest significance. The time is that “end of the age” which is the harvest of the world; it is the judgment for which all around is ripening, and in which every thing comes out as He who judges sees it. Is it not for us of the greatest possible moment to see that final, conclusive end of what is now often so pretentious and delusive? Here we may surely gather, if we will, lessons of sanctification of the most practical nature. Indeed we are sanctified by the truth; and whatever is of the truth will sanctify.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

FAITH'S PARADOXES.

"As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." (2 Cor. vi. 9, 10.)

I OFTEN weep, yet I am not sad;
Often in sorrow, I yet am glad;
Chastened sore, yet I shall not die;
Poor I am, yet how rich am I!
Naked, but clothed in fairest dress:
Nothing I have, yet I all possess.

Losses and troubles upon me rain;
I count the losses my richest gain:
I am a fool in the world's esteem;
Folly and madness my choice they deem:
Christ's reproach is my richest prize;—
God's folly makes me divinely wise.

I pass through rivers, yet am not drowned;
I walk the waves as on solid ground;
The hottest fires cannot singe or burn;
The hosts of darkness cannot o'erturn:
While He that dwelt in the bush is near,
And God is with me, what should I fear?

Say, is the devil more strong than God?
Or Pharaoh's sceptre than Moses' rod?
Lo! in the river and in the sea,
In the hot furnace, He's still with me:
In the dark valley, and in the grave,
Jehovah-Jesus is strong to save.

Soon shall the weary night be o'er,
The sun will rise to set no more;
Soon shall the winter's cold rain be past,
The turtles be heard in the land at last;
And soon shall the glorious Bridegroom say,
"Arise, My fair one, and come away."

Oh, what a moment the past will seem!—
 Vanished away like a troubled dream;
 Not worth a sigh will its grief be thought,
 When to His presence we're safely brought;
 Praise, our employment ceaseless be;
 Chiefest among ten thousand He!

J. G. D.

BIBLE LESSONS ON MATTHEW.

Chap. iii.—*Continued.*

THEN went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa," etc. John commences here, our Lord with "Galilee of the Gentiles;" John, to show that God must have Israel in confession before Him; Jesus, to show that all being of Him that showeth mercy cannot be confined to Israel, and that they themselves must be debtors to the same grace that blesses Gentiles.

"Were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins"—separation from Israel's guilty and unbelieving condition, owning the just judgment of God upon themselves.

"When he saw many Pharisees," etc. John had not come to own Israel nationally, or these surely had claim above others, but "to make ready a people *prepared* for the Lord (Luke i. 17); hence he claims *conscience*-work, not worldly patronage;—they were not to think divine blessing was theirs by *birthright*, but only in the confession of their forfeiture of all by their sins, and coming to God in self-judgment. Their only valid claim was a *moral* one—"fruits meet for repentance." God was able of the stones to raise up children unto Abraham, for the sovereign grace which took him up was equally free to bless others also.

"*And now already* the ax is laid unto the root of the trees." *Grace* is sovereign, and works above all question of human merit; but yet must it be realized that *judgment* is deserved. "The ax is laid at the *root*:" hitherto there had been but the *fruit* dealt with in God's government; now *that* which only brought forth "evil fruit" must be also. Another thing—it had been tilled and nurtured, "but brought not forth *good* fruit"—all had been spent upon it in vain. So with men universally—even the heathen "did not like to *retain* the knowledge of God" which they had, but became "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them;" hence all the darkness and corruption that ensued. (See Rom. i., ii.)

"*Hewn down* and cast into the *fire*,"—not only ceasing to have a place in blessing as hereto, but judged of God—cut off as to the kingdom and its blessings here, and consigned to judgment. But John's testimony was not alone to judgment, but the "*mercy* that rejoiceth against it" also. "I indeed baptize you with *water* unto repentance"—putting them in the place of confession before God, in their consciences having entered into His judgment of them; "but He that cometh after me shall baptize with the *Holy Ghost* and with *fire*." John could but bring them into *their* true place before God; the Lord Jesus, mightier than he, into *His* own place before Him. Those who bowed to the Word, instead of the deserved judgment of their sins, getting the fruit of Christ's work—indwelling of the Holy Ghost; those rejecting it, the baptism with *fire*—symbol of the consuming judgment of God.

B. C. G.

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

EIGHT months ago, I came to Scotland the most miserable of men, and now stand here one of the happiest on this side "the glory." My life since boyhood has been passed in foreign lands, where, immersed in the cares and pleasures of this world, unable to understand the ways of God about original sin, and uncertain as to the truths of Christianity, I lived entirely without God, and drank at all the fountains where the world finds pleasure, only to find them, as Solomon did long ago, to be "vanity and vexation of spirit."

I had gold enough to satisfy me, and there was absolutely nothing on earth I cared for. I was weary of my life, and now conscience, lulled hitherto almost to sleep, woke up with this terrible truth, "You knew your duty, and you did it not." I feared this would ring in my ears through a lost eternity, for I never doubted the immortality of the soul, or imagined, with some modern philosophers, that men are irresponsible descendants of monkeys. These strivings of conscience I now believe to have been the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in answer to the prayers of many real Christians, who constantly pleaded with God for me.

You will wonder, dear Christian friends, why in my wretchedness I did not at once come to Him who gives rest to the weary. Ah, I was where the world with all its boasted knowledge is (Jno. xvii.)—I "knew Him not"!

I was told that God was love, yet saw the whole earth full of misery:—a child but a few days old, for example, suffering intensely through the faults of its parents. "Surely," I thought, "if God were

love, this world would not be the scene of suffering which I see it is." And besides, I had been taught that Christianity was intended by God to regenerate the whole world, and fill it with peace and joy. I had sad proof before me every where that it had totally failed so to do.

I had read in "Gibbon" what Christians were in the primitive days—a separate, peculiar people, devoted to God, having no home here, rejoicing to die and get away to Christ, or waiting for Him to come for them. "What a contrast," thought I, "with the christendom of to-day!"

I had stood in the churches of South America, amid thousands of kneeling Christians (so called) most assiduous in performing their religious duties, yet knew that the whole population were sunk in the most complete moral depravity, the priests being the worst of the community. Their religion was evidently an empty form, which had totally failed to improve them. How could this corrupted Christianity be that which God had intended for the regenerating of the world?

Coming to Protestant lands, I found all manner of sects detesting one another, yet all professing to be Christians. "Surely," I thought, "if the Bible were from God, there could not be this disparity of belief and form, and disunion among those professing to be taught by it." I saw also that, though there was an almost universal profession of Christianity and church-going, etc., practically men and women lived as though the world, not God,—time, not eternity,—were the aim and object in life. These professing Christians were almost entirely occupied with those worldly things all of which I had found to be "vanity and vexation of spirit." In

these sad circumstances, what else could I think but that this so-called Christianity was almost as great a farce in Protestant Scotland as in Romish Peru; that, far from regenerating mankind, as I had been taught it would, it had itself become corrupt and worldly, and had most completely failed to purify the people, and separate them from the world *to God*. How could it be from God? Such was my thought.

Still conscience said, "However these things may be, *'you knew your duty, and did it not.'*"

My deliverance began by learning that the gradual conversion of the world during this age was an entirely human invention, totally opposed to the statements of the New Testament, which invariably represents the true Church of Christ as "sheep among wolves"—a "little flock," while "*the whole world* lieth in wickedness;" that the good seed, though sown by the Son of Man Himself, would yield but very little fruit; that the devil would be allowed to render the most part of it unproductive, and to sow tares among the wheat, to leaven the whole of professing christendom with his false doctrine; that Christ did not pray for the world, but for the little flock which believes on Him; that the mystery of iniquity was already at work in Paul's day, and would continue till the open manifestation of *the wicked one*—"the man of sin;" in fact, I saw that these days in which we live are called by the Holy Ghost (Gal. i. 4), "*This present evil age*," (it is *aion*—a period of time, not *kosmos*—world); and that *the devil* is "*the god of this age [aion]*" (2 Cor. iv. 4), and will continue to be so until its close.

Beloved friends, these terrible truths, themselves

astounding and inexplicable to us, settled the whole difficulty for me. It was exactly what I had found this present scene to be—the *devil's age*. That being the fact, I must not look during this period for the *immediate* righteous government of God *manifested* on the earth. God is *silent* now, though (Ps. i.) the foundations of the earth are out of course. The devil being captain of the ship called "*This present evil world*," she must go on to destruction at that "great and terrible day of the Lord" when our blessed Lord will come to bind up Satan, and execute righteous judgment on those who have rejected His grace.

If the question, "Why is all this?" be asked, we answer, At the tomb of Lazarus, the Judge of living and dead groaned within Himself and wept, not about Lazarus, whom He was going to raise from the dead, but on account of this scene of ruin and death. This gives perfect rest to the heart. We can then say that, *though not understanding God's ways, we know God's heart.*

When God's spirit opened my eyes to see that the Bible told me exactly the true state of things around and within me—that this *age*, with its *corrupted* Christianity, is the devil's work, and that I was a guilty and lost sinner, I had no more doubt that it was divine; I believed in the love of God who had given His only begotten Son to die for the guilty and the lost, for enemies, and thus entered into rest.

The infinite God has spoken, let finite man lend an attentive ear. And oh, what a message of love and grace has reached a guilty world, and brought by such a Messenger! (See Jno. i.) The *Lamb* of God! what a name for the almighty Creator of

all things—Jehovah's Fellow! What so gentle, so innocent, as a Lamb? Then, whence came this wondrous Messenger? From "the bosom of the Father." Oh, beloved, what words of love are these—*Lamb! Bosom! Father!* What word in our language like "*bosom*"? A little child hides its face in its mother's bosom, and knows no fear. Then "*Father!*" What word so suggestive of perfect confidence and rest? And when the meek and lowly Man of Nazareth was to be baptized by the Spirit for His work here below, what form did that Spirit assume? The fiery tongues of Pentecost? Nay, upon the gentle Lamb of God descended the Spirit like a gentle *dove*, and the Father's voice was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Oh, beloved, would not these words alone show us the heart of our blessed God? Lamb, bosom, Father, dove, have to my ear a melody divine—a melody which, in the riches of His grace, God blessed by the Spirit to the salvation of my soul.

But more, what message did this heavenly Stranger bring? "GRACE and TRUTH came by Jesus Christ." The whole truth that I am a lost ruined *sinner*, totally unable to help myself; and then the only thing suitable for such an one, *grace*—free, undeserved favor. The law said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God;" Grace says, God loves you. How do we know it? The law *demand*s, but grace *gives*. He has given us His only-begotten Son. Oh, beloved, how is it possible to distrust such a God, or not to love our blessed Kinsman-Redeemer, who has given us Himself and all that He has, washed in whose blood we stand before our God and Father, accepted in the Beloved,

loved as Jesus is loved, one with Him; and best of all, to be with Him forever, being even now seated in Him in heavenly places, and soon to be conformed to His image, in body as well as soul, and sit with Him on His throne. (Rev. iii. 21.) Meantime, the King is not yet upon His throne as the acknowledged Lord of all, but, seated at God's right hand, awaits the day known to God alone, when He shall come to meet us in the air, and take us to His Father's house.

At present, His kingdom exists in a mystery (Matt. xiii.), and necessarily so, seeing that the rightful King has been rejected, and that a usurper, the devil, is practically "*the god of this age.*" Oh, how sad to think that so many professing Christians should be nestling down in the devil's world, as if it were well with them, and, like the Gadarenes of old, not desirous that Jesus should come to drive the devil away!

All this inexplicable scene of sorrow and suffering is an anomaly which will be terminated when the earth's rightful King has come. Meanwhile, let us remember that we are espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ. Shall we make ourselves at home among the murderers and despisers of our Lord? We are pilgrims and strangers here, our citizenship being in heaven. God has no earthly people now, these being the times of the Gentiles; but when the saints have been taken up to the Father's house (Jno. xiv. 3), God's earthly people, the Jews, will be restored, put in grace under the new covenant, and under the reign of the true seed of David, shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

We who believe in a risen Christ, who is gone

into heaven, are a heavenly people, and our hope is heavenly; for "from thence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it shall be fashioned like unto His glorious body." For that day we wait; for that day Paul and his dear Philippians, and all the ransomed saints of God who have "fallen asleep in Jesus," are still waiting in heaven; and for that day our blessed Master also waits upon His Father's throne. (Rev. iii. 21; Heb. x. 13.)

Oh, beloved, as we often sing, "this world is a wilderness wide;" and it is so to us mainly because He whom our soul loveth is not here. Is it not the one great desire of our hearts to see that meek and lowly Man of Nazareth, who sat by Sychar's well, who wept human yet divine tears over human sorrows, who "loved us and gave Himself for us," and who has left us those lovely words (Jno. xiv. 3), "*I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also*"? "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

"THINE EYES SHALL SEE THE KING IN HIS BEAUTY."

"Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off."

(Is. xxxii. 17.)

THINE eyes shall see!—yes, thine, who blind ere-while
 Now trembling toward the new-found light dost flee;
 Leave doubting, and look up with trustful smile,
Thine eyes shall see!

'Thine eyes shall see! Not in some dream Elysian,—
 Not in thy fancy, glowing though it be,—
 Not even in faith, but in unvailed vision,
Thine eyes shall see!

Thine eyes *shall* see! Not on thyself depend
 God's promises, the faithful, firm, and free;
 Ere they shall fail, earth, heaven itself, must end:
 Thine eyes *shall* see!

Thine eyes shall *see*! Not in a swift glance cast,
 Gleaming one ray to brighten memory,
 But, while a glad eternity shall last,
 Thine eyes shall *see*!

Thine eyes shall see *the* King! The very same
 Whose love shone forth upon the curseful tree,—
 Who bore thy guilt, who calleth thee by name;
 Thine eyes shall *see*!

Thine eyes shall see the *King*—the mighty One,
 The many-crowned, the light-enrobed! and He
 Shall bid thee share the kingdom He hath won.
 Thine eyes shall *see*!

And *in His beauty*! Stay thee, mortal song,—
 The "altogether lovely" One must be
 Unspeakable in glory,—yet, ere long,
 Thine eyes shall *see*!

Yes! though the land be "very far" away,
 A step—a moment—ends the toil for thee;
 Then, changing grief for gladness, night for day,
 Thine eyes shall *see*!

F. R. H.

"THE MAN-CHILD."

(Rev. xii.)

THE Man-child who is to "rule all nations with a rod of iron" embraces both Christ and the Church; the interval from *His* ascension to that of *hers* not being looked upon as time, and both taken as one event, of which *His* was "the *first-fruits*."

The portion of the Church is to reign over the nations in *His* heavenly glory, when the earth will be brought into ordered subjection in the "admin-

istration of the fullness of times"—the millennial kingdom.

"Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" says the apostle. This is, then, the portion of the Church. But she has a sweeter portion than that of judging the nations,—she has the Bridegroom Himself as her *heart's* portion—"the Bright and Morning Star."

When Christ asks for the heathen, according to the second psalm, He will have the Church safely in the glory, and she will be joint-heir with Him, the bride of the Lamb.

Many passages might be cited in the Old Testament which show that where Christ is spoken of, there the Church is included *as seen in Him*.

She herself is never spoken of.

She was hidden in God's own counsels.

This is "the mystery" (Eph. v. 32) which, until it was revealed by Paul, was "kept secret"—"was not made known"—"hid in God." (See Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. iii. 5-9; Col. i. 26.)

Thus, to resume, when passages only true of Him are imported into the New Testament, we find them applied to the Church—as, for instance, this second psalm.

We may compare, with this thought in our minds, Isaiah xlix. 6, where it applies to Christ only, with Acts xiii. 47, appropriated by Paul in the New Testament for the Church.

Also Isaiah l. 8, 9, where Christ is before the mind of the Spirit, with Rom. viii. 33, 34, which is the portion of the saints. Comp. also Is. xlix. 8 with 2 Cor. vi. 2; and Eph. vi. 13-17 with Is. lix. 17, etc.

This will help us in understanding these "unsearchable riches of Christ."

How sweet, then, that when we read of Him in the Old Testament, we find the Church's portion, *as united to Him*, bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh, by the Spirit sent down at Pentecost!

(Selected.)

FRAGMENT.

POOOR worn, tempest-tossed child of God! art thou weary? Listen. "The Lord God hath given **Me** the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." O blessed Lord Jesus—Saviour, what rest!—a rest that comes from naught else, none other but *Thee*! Child of care, pillow thy weary head on that bosom, and rest for evermore. Do the trials of the pilgrimage-way discourage thee? does the great storm of temptation arise? do the waves of sorrow beat into thy troubled bark? Listen again, as, with divine majesty, the Son of God arises from His sleep and rebukes the wind, and says to the sea, "Peace: be still!" and find thy rest in the great calm and sure haven of His breast. Art thou weary—heavy-laden? art thou sore distressed? "Come to *Me*," saith One; and, coming, *be at rest*.

Anon.

ALONE WITH GOD.

ALONE with Him! how sweet the rest!
 While in His presence, I am blest;
 When but Himself, none else I see;
 I "sup with Him, and He with me."

'Tis *fellowship* of sweetest sort :
 To Love's own banquet I am brought,
 While in "His *hands*" and "*visage marred*"
 I read my title to "my Lord."

'Tis *peace*! The spear had ope'd the way,
 The blood to flow—the wrath to stay
 My sins deserved ; and God doth please
 To own the work, and give me peace.

Communion too with both in one—
 The Father and His blessed Son,
 The Holy Ghost the link between
 The "Man called Jesus" and the throne.

Ah! this is *rest* sublimely sweet!
 A sinner with his God to meet
 In Jesus! and in Him alone,
 With Him at rest, with Him at home.

C. E. H.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. 34.—"Have the Old-Testament saints resurrection-life now? and can it be said that they are seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus?"

Ans.—The life of all saints is in Christ, and therefore the same life in all. That it is *resurrection-life* has, I suppose, its special force for us who are still in mortal bodies, and walking by faith on earth. According to the Lord's words in John xi. 25, power of resurrection is manifested for Old-Testament saints when they are raised up from the dead. The conscious security and liberty of justified men, which is involved for us, no one would, that I know, deny to those who are the "spirits of just men" departed to God.

As to the second question, they are in Christ, as we are ; but we are *only* in the heavenlies *in Christ* : they are in paradise *themselves*. This again gives a special force for us in the truth of Eph. ii. 6.

Q. 35.—“What is the nature of the oneness in Hebrews ii. 11? Is it oneness of *life*, or oneness of sanctified position?”

Ans.—It is oneness of life surely. “For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one”—(ἐξ ἑνός, out of one,) of one father—a well-known use of the preposition, and which seems here to be settled by what follows:—“for which cause He is not ashamed to call them *brethren*”—to own them as His Father's children. The expression, “He is not ashamed,” is a difficulty with some as to this interpretation; for in this case, it is said, He could not do otherwise than call them brethren. But surely the possession of divine life by the redeemed leaves yet so immense a distance between them and Him, as to leave abundance of room for the condescending grace of such a title given to them by Him. These poor children of the dust, partakers too of a *fallen* nature, did it not require an eye and a heart such as His to recognize in them His brethren? And at any rate, was not the link there, and when He says, “Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and to your Father,” can it be believed that the very thing which makes His Father our Father is not in His mind?

As to the other thought, of a position as man sanctified to God, His as true Man by incarnation, and ours as by His work set apart, it certainly accords less with “My Father and your Father,” and with the passage itself. “For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one” makes the sanctification to be only the *state* of the sanctified, while it is the *work* of the Sanctifier. To say “all of one *class*,” which, or some equivalent word must be introduced in this case, would certainly not give the idea of “one in sanctification,” and how else it is implied, I do not see.

Q. 36.—“Rom. xi. 25: ‘Until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in;’ does that mean the completion of the Church?”

Ans.—Practically that: it is the full number of those grafted in in the place of the cut-off Jewish branches.

F. W. G.

PRESENT THINGS,

AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES.

Ephesus, the Decline of the Church.

(Rev. II. 1-7.)

IT is not in any wise as being the metropolitan church of Asia that we find Ephesus first addressed. This, which has been the thought of many, has assuredly no countenance from the Word. The Church of God, which is Christ's body, is not composed of churches, but of *members*, united together by that blessed Spirit which unites all to Christ the Head. Hence, the "churches," or "assemblies," are only local gatherings of so many Christians as find themselves, in the providence of God, actually together. Each of these is, according to Scripture, the Church in that place, as the true text reads invariably in these two chapters. This expanded would be, as in the epistle to the Corinthians, the "Church of God" in such or such a place. The place adds nothing to this title, nor is one gathering of its members superior or inferior in privilege or responsibility to any other.

It is true that the Church of God is not only designated as the body of Christ in Scripture, but also as the House of God—the place of His abode. But here, again, it is the Church at large that is so. There are not *bodies* of Christ, but "one body." Just so there are not *houses* of God, but "the house." In each place, the local assembly *represents* the Church at large, as being indeed the local Church, —what of the Church at large is in that place. And

this may vary, from time to time, in numbers, spirituality, and many other ways: and thus there will be peculiar local responsibilities, differences, and privileges, as is recognized in the chapters before us; but the *standing* in each the same.

No doubt we must not forget, as indeed we are not allowed to forget, the immense difference between profession and reality. A dead Sardis could not be in reality of the body of Christ at all. But this is nevertheless what the Church means, if it means any thing according to Scripture. The professing church is this, or it is a lie; and how solemn a lie!

No, the reason why Ephesus stands at the head of those addressed here is of another nature. It is to be found, not in any external supremacy over the rest, but in its original spiritual eminency, and as the church to which the truth as to the Church had been first of all committed, and this, *not* as to its order upon earth, but as to its *heavenly character*.

The Ephesians had been addressed by Paul, as now at a much later date they are by the Lord Himself; and it is in comparing the tenor of these two epistles that we find the significance of its being Ephesus, and no other, with which we here begin. The epistle to the Ephesians is that which carries us up to the height of Christian position, quickened out of death in trespasses and sins as following the course of a world governed by Satan, —and quickened with Christ, raised up together, and seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is individual, true of all believers, if there were no Church at all; but God has done more, and as united to Christ by His Spirit, we are members of His body, the fullness of Him who

fillet all in all. Both as body of Christ and habitation of God, the apostle develops the doctrine of the Church in this epistle; while in the fifth chapter he carries us back to the beginning, and shows us once more the Church under the type of Eve, espoused to Him who will yet present her to Himself a glorious Church.

These are the truths, given to all saints, no doubt, but of which the Ephesian disciples were counted worthy to be the first recipients. And the apostle could write to them in this way as "faithful" ones, communicating what the spiritual state at Corinth or Galatia or among the Hebrews would have hindered his making known to them (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2; Heb. v. 11-14). If Corinth headed a list of churches declined from first love, we should not marvel; but can we fail to realize the significance of its being Ephesus, the special custodian of the truth of the Church itself, in its heavenly reality?

The style of the address is, at the very outset, a sign of distance, as unusual as full of significance on the part of the Lord toward His people. There can be no proper question that the churches are themselves addressed, for this is directly stated at the conclusion of each epistle: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Yet the Lord's words are, "To the *angel* of the church" in each case, and to this the style of the address fully corresponds. The responsibility of every thing that is wrong is ascribed to the angel; it is he that has them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, or of the Nicolaitanes; it is he that suffers the woman Jezebel; it is he who is threatened with the removal of his candlestick. It is quite plain that he represents the church in

some way, and it is urged that the word "angel" has this force of a representative wherever it does not stand for the heavenly beings so called, who though higher naturally in the scale of creation, yet minister to the heirs of salvation.

The word "angel" means, as every one knows, simply "messenger," and is applied to the spirits of heaven as God's messengers to men. But it is plain that the messenger does *represent*, so far as his errand is concerned, the one who sends him. "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." Thus this meaning of the word is easily derived from its original one.

However, the representative character of the angel here is plain. It is natural enough that the advocates of episcopal or presbyterian order should find, as they do with equal facility, the bishop or the pastor in this representative-angel. In Scripture elsewhere it is impossible to find either of these things, largely as they are now believed in, and therefore as impossible, if we cleave to Scripture, to read them in here. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers we read of as gifts to the Church at large, though a Peter might especially address himself to the circumcision as a Paul to the Gentiles. But where have we the apostle of this place or that? Just as little have we the pastor of this church or of that. Bishops and deacons, it is true, we do find with a local office; still, never the bishop of an assembly, but the bishops; with whom it is allowed that the elders were identical.* "They ordained them elders in every church" (Acts xiv. 23). The one representative

* Acts xx. 17, 28 ("overseers," the same word as "bishops"); Tit. i. 5, 7.

of each assembly supposed to be signified by the angel cannot be found in Scripture elsewhere.

Ephesus had its bishop-elders long before this, as we see in Acts xx. Its diocesan bishop at the time when this was written tradition makes the apostle John himself! He, then, cannot be the angel to whom he is told to write, nor will the search be more successful in other directions. All that can be truly urged is that this address to the angel is in accord with what we know to have been the state of things a century or so after the time of Revelation. And this is quite in accord with its sad significance.

We have epistles to individuals, as to Timothy and Titus, never to the church *through* these. We have the epistle to the saints in Christ at Philippi, *with* the bishops and deacons, not to the bishops and deacons for the church. The constant method of address is to the church as such; and suppose here the "angel" were to stand for the bishops of Ephesus, how evident would it make the contrast between the first epistle (perhaps of thirty-odd years back,) and this second one!

No more the direct address of familiar intimacy, though now from the very lips of the priestly Mediator. Yet His love has not changed; the change, then, has been in His people. The strange style is from One whom they have treated as a stranger. Sadly it tells of the close of the old intercourse which he who seeks will find as invited to, if it were Laodicea, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Turn to the Acts, and see how free, how tender, how as a thing of course—which deepens, not lessens, the wonder of it,—this intercourse can be. Or look back even to Genesis, if you will, and learn how truly God's last

thought is His first thought. It is man who has driven back these approaches upon God's part, and forced Him into the cloud and darkness. The Church has but repeated the old history, though now, because the Light has come, the darkness is more strange and terrible.

But it is important to ask, Has He for our sins, then, given up His Church to this? and does the "angel" speak of distance maintained on His part toward even one, the least of all His saints? With whom, as with the angel, does He still speak face to face? Is it with an official class who interpret Him to those beneath them? Does the sun, as in winter-time, no longer reach the valley-bottoms, but only gild the tops of the hills with light? or is it to some gifted men that Christ reveals Himself, who, as planets, shed the little of His radiance they can reflect on others? Ah, no; it is not men of gift, still less an official class, who are indicated by the angel. The heart of those who know their Lord shall answer, It is not. No; nor, alas! is it any longer the church as a whole either; very far from that! Read the superscription "*to the angel*" in the light of the subscription, "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*" and you will find that still the question of who are nearest Christ is answered by another, who has ears and eyes and heart for Him. He still speaks as of old to those who as of old listen. His ways, His attitude, His heart, can know no change. The stars that shine in His firmament are the overcomers of the darkness, not of the world now merely, but of the church,—planets that know their orbit and are held by their centre, and shine by the light of Him who shines on them. "The

seven stars are the angels of the seven churches."

If to the opened ear Christ speaks, it is plain that the responsibility of hearing is as much as ever that of all. None are released from it. And yet it is not to the mass that He can speak any more, or the overcoming would not be in the church, as it clearly is. Already it is the few that listen, and the constraint in the Lord's manner is but the indication of His sense of this.

It may seem strange, however, that if the "angel" stands for these who listen to Christ's voice, He should hold them responsible, as we have already seen, for all the evil in the church with which they are connected. How, it may be asked, can He thus burden with the sins of the whole the few who have an ear to hear? The responsibility of an official class is more readily recognized than of those who may be, however spiritual, the feeblest possible to accomplish any change in the condition of things around them. But this is not the question. It is true we are powerless to alter the general state. The ebb-tide of ruin can be stemmed by no hand of ours, and this feebleness of ours may seem an available plea to withdraw us from responsibility as to it. But not so teaches the word of the Lord. Our associations are here distinctly recognized as part of our general condition. We are to "depart from evil," not be unequally yoked with unbelievers, purge ourselves from vessels to dishonor, and follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, *with* those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. For association with evil we are therefore ever responsible. It may be said that such principles, carried fully out, would involve a very narrow path and a wholesale giving up of spheres of use-

fulness. But be it so or be it not so, it is not ours to choose. Our path is defined for us. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams; for *rebellion* is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry."

Yes, "rebellion"! How gladly would we call an obedience limited by our own wills by some lighter name than that! Yet what else, in truth, was that which brought out Saul's true character, and lost the kingdom to him and to his seed forever? What he left undone was a mere trifle to what he did. And the sheep and oxen had been spared to sacrifice to the Lord. What fairer excuse have people now to offer for much disobedience—evil plausibly intended to bring forth good? And how hard is it to understand that while we may obey in much that in fact costs us little, the true test of *obedience* is just in that in which we are called to renounce our wills and our wisdom, perhaps to forfeit the esteem and companionship of others, by doing what has only the Word of God to justify it and must wait for eternity to find right appreciation!

But now to listen to His word to Ephesus, who "holdeth the stars in His right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." The one point of the address is plain, and it is left to stand in sufficient, solemn, decisive contrast with all else that is unmingled commendation. Works, labor, patience, abhorrence of that which is evil, trying fearlessly those who put forth the highest claims, bearing for Christ's name's sake, and not fainting,—all this, put in the balance with one solemn charge: "Thou hast left thy first love." And this follows: "Repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee, and will remove thy

candlestick out of its place, except thou repent."

Let us look at these things more closely. Their interest for us is of the deepest, for upon this one root of evil has grown all that has ever been in the Church's long decline through the centuries which have intervened between that day and this. And this it is which, as we see, brings about her removal from the place of witness for Christ on earth. This it is too which is the secret of decline in every individual Christian. For us all, it should rouse the earnest, heart-searching inquiry, "Is it I?" For, if it can be truly said of any of us, "Thou hast left thy first love," it is vain for us to think that other things can be really judged. The single eye is wanted even to see them with. We must get back to this, or there is no real recovery. Two masters, the Lord says Himself, we cannot serve.

How much there was He could commend at Ephesus! "I know thy works" is commendation clearly. But not only had they works, they *labored*. Do you think there are really so many of whom it could be said, they *labor*? We have recognized, what is so precious to understand, that we have our different spheres of service, and that there is no mere secular work, if really done for Christ. But to labor is to work with energy—to "toil," as the Revision gives it. How many of us *toil* for Christ?

Then they had patience—endurance. Many begin well, like the Galatians, but in the face of unforeseen difficulties give way. It is the mark of divine work that it endures. Human energy quickly spends itself: faith draws upon a stock that never decreases. It was true faith that wrought in these Ephesian saints.

Patience, too, is apt to degenerate into a tolera-

tion, more or less, of evil. Finding it on every hand, and no where perfection, the very contact with it is apt to dull the spiritual sense. Charity would fain put also the mildest construction upon every thing. We are bidden to "*take forth* the precious from the vile," but we learn to tolerate the vile because of the precious. We become liberal where we have no right. The Lord praises the Ephesians for the opposite conduct: "Thou canst not bear them which are evil." And where there was the very highest assumption, they did not fear to test it: "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."

But more, it was true love to Christ which wrought in all this: "Thou hast patience, and hast borne for My name's sake, and hast not wearied." Yet here it follows: "Nevertheless I have against thee,"—not "somewhat," as if it were a little,—"*that thou hast left thy first love.*"

But how dreadful a dishonor to Christ is this, to lose one's first love! It is as if at first sight He was more than He proved on longer acquaintance! Is not here the very germ of final apostasy? I do not, of course, mean that the Lord will allow any of His redeemed to be lost out of His hand. "*God is faithful, who hath called us into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ;*" and this faithfulness of God is our security: "*the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*" Nor only so; if we are born of God, we have that within us which cannot suffer us to become what we were before: "*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*" Yet while this is true on the one side, in the child of God as identified with the divine

nature by which he is such,—still, on the other side, it is no less true that in the believer also there remains yet the old nature. In him still there is that which lusts against the Spirit, and only if ye “walk in the Spirit, ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

Here is what makes the world to us such a battle-field. Capable, on the one hand, of enjoying all the joys of heaven; capable, on the other, of being attracted by that which lies under the power of the wicked one,—the eye affecting the heart,—day by day we are solicited by that which daily lies before us and from which there is no escape. Our danger here is first of all distraction, some gain to us which is not loss for Christ, or that dulling of the spiritual sense we just now spoke of; the dust of the way settles upon the glass in which Faith sees her eternal possessions. Our remedy is the presence of Him who with basin and towel would refresh His pilgrims, cleansing away the travel-stains that they may have part with Him.

Here alone first love is maintained. Here, in His presence, we learn His mind. The holiness of truth is accomplished in us. What is unseen but eternal asserts its power. The illusions of the prince of this world pass from us. The glory of Christ is revealed, and the eye here also affects the heart; He becomes for us more and more the light in which we see light, the Sun which rules the day, not only enlightening but life-giving: the light in which we walk is the “light of life.”

Now here, as I have said, first love cannot but be maintained. Who could be daily in His presence, ministered to by Him, having part with Him, and yet grow cool in response to His love? It is impossible. Where this is the case, intimacy has not

been kept up. We have not permitted the basin and towel to do its work. Assurance of heart before Him has been replaced by an uneasy sense of unfitness for His presence, the true causes of which we have not been willing fully to face, and for which the remedy has therefore not been found.

In this state there may be yet much work and labor and zeal, and true love at the bottom. Fruit may be on the tree, plentiful as ever, but not to the Master's taste as once, not *ripened* in the Sun. Form and bloom and beauty may be little lacking: this was the state at Ephesus. But the Lord says, "Repent, and do the *first* works."

What is the test, then, of "first love"? Not "work"—activity in outward service; this they had at Ephesus: not even "labor," for this too they had: no, nor yet "endurance"—though a more manifest sign than either of divine power in the soul. Not zeal against evil, nor boldness to examine and refuse the highest pretensions; not suffering even for Christ's name, and that unwearied. All this is good and acceptable to God, and the Ephesians had it all, and yet says the Lord, "I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love."

What, then, is the test of first love? It is in the *complete satisfaction of the heart by its object*. You know what power often there is in a new thing to take possession of one for the time being. And in first love, it is characteristic that it engrosses the subject of it. The Lord claims again and again the power to give this complete satisfaction of heart to His people. "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but he that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a fountain of

water springing up unto eternal life." "He that cometh unto Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." "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."

Now this it is that will give a peculiar character to the life which nothing else will. It is of this the apostle speaks when he says, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." It is this satisfaction with a heavenly object of which he is giving the effect when he says, "This one thing I do: forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto that which is before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

This is the secret of happiness, who can doubt? That for which he counted all else dung and loss must have given him surpassing, supreme happiness. And happiness such as this, derived from nothing in the world, is power over the world. The back is upon it. The prize is elsewhere. The steps hasten upon a path that glows with the light of heaven. Holiness is found, as it only can be found, in heavenliness.

Such was the apostle, and Christianity is nothing else to-day. Blessed be God, it is not something either to be found far on in the Christian course, but at the beginning. It is *first* love which has these characteristics. In Christ Himself, at once

for present need, all fullness is found, as His own words declare. "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." It is in drinking of other streams that the old thirst comes back upon him who does so. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" are "all that is of the world." He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again. So the world holds its own by their very misery.

But we are not speaking of the men of the world. It is to Ephesus—to the saints there—the Lord is speaking: to those to whom the heavenly truth had been unveiled, the depositaries of it upon the earth, the representatives of the Church at large. And it is to the Church at large, through Ephesus, that this is now addressed. Can any doubt the truth of such an application? Would that it were even possible! but we have not to go beyond the New Testament itself to find the application confirmed, and to hear the prophetic announcement of still further departure even to the very end. The epistles of Paul, long before Revelation, reveal a state of things already beginning, such as it is hard to realize of those early days. In one of the very earliest comes the statement, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work," and "that day"—the day of the Lord—"shall not come, except there come a falling away first." The two epistles to the Corinthians are the next in time to those to the Thessalonians, and at Corinth there is sin such as was not named among the Gentiles, with divisions beginning, and some denying the resurrection of the dead. Next, Galatia is backsliding from Christ under the law, and receiving another gospel. Then, to the Romans he has to write, bidding them avoid

those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine they have learned. His next epistles are written from a Roman prison: but here he has to say of those to whom he had written that their faith was spoken of through the whole world, "All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ." The epistles to Timothy may close the sorrowful picture: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me:"—Paul ends his course like His Master. Not alone at Rome: "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia have departed from me." But now all that will be vessels of honor, fit for the Master's use, are to purge themselves from the vessels to dishonor. Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse; and in the last days perilous times shall come, men throwing the Christian dress over their unchanged natures, having the form of godliness but denying the power thereof. From such they must turn away.

Peter, John, Jude, add each some fresh feature to the terrible picture; but we need not dwell upon it more. We see the professing church is ruined and doomed. The true-hearted are already a remnant. By the "many antichrists" then present, the latest apostle decides that it is the last time. We look beyond even the Ephesian epistle here to see the hopelessness of the thought of any general repentance. And the word abides, "I will take away thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent."

The promise to the overcomer meanwhile rings out its words of cheer, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of My God." There is to be no yielding, however the difficulties of the way increase. God's stars shine by night as by day,

and the darkness only makes them more apparent. It is no new thing, the darkness. The path of faith has been in all ages essentially alike. The incentive comes from beyond, and no sorrows of the way can mar the beauty of the paradise of God.

The tree of life in the garden of old meant clearly *dependent* life, which was to be ministered to Adam by its means. In himself, innocent as he was, there was no continuance apart from this. God would thus remind him of the essential mutability and dependence of the creature—a safe and wholesome lesson.

For us too, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and possessors of eternal life, this is still life in dependence; and herein is the secret of its eternity. It is life in Christ, in the Son who is alone essential Life. Of the fruits of this we shall partake forever. How suited an appeal to those in the state addressed in this epistle! It is failure in maintaining the place of dependence, in receiving out of His fullness in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, that is the very secret of their condition. The mind, the will, the heart, are in independence. He who keeps close to Christ overcomes. How suited, then, the encouragement to one who knows already the blessedness of this place, to look on to the time when in far other circumstances the full results of it shall be attained,—when eternally it will be ours to know the joy of that dependence which secures His ministry of love to us forever! “For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

REWARDS.

NO part of Scripture can be overlooked, we know, without loss. And if a wrong principle is imbibed,—as, for instance, that it is selfish and legal to think of rewards,—the scriptures on that subject are robbed of their power for us, in some measure at least. Not altogether so, for we are happily inconsistent often with our own theories; but in some degree we must be losers if in any way we are unprepared to submit, take heed to, and profit by every side of Scripture.

But we do not suppose that any really deny that rewards are mentioned in Scripture. They are too prominently mentioned to be overlooked, but is it not a line of truth that has been a good deal slighted amongst us? and are not many under law against using and profiting by such scriptures at all rather than in danger of a wrong use of them? I think we shall see that the danger of wrongly using them is less than that of slighting them altogether.

Now, when once we have known grace in the soul, there is no longer confusion as to the place that belongs to good works before God. I need not dwell upon that point for those for whom this is specially written. Not to win heaven and glory and escape judgment do we serve (a hard bondage that!), but to please Him and to obey Him in all things who has chosen us. But nevertheless we must acknowledge on every side there is danger, and so here,—that in our service, self-sufficiency, self-seeking, and assumption creep in and turn the heart from simplicity; and hence the jealousy, no doubt, of many lest the dwelling upon rewards

should serve to develop this too natural tendency.

But when we look more carefully at the subject, what presents itself? In the first place, and above all, as already necessarily suggested, Scripture has spoken—God has spoken, and it is for us to submit, not to be wise above what is written. The Lord has not feared (if we may use that term,) to hold forth rewards; we, then, need not hesitate to be heartily occupied with them,—nay, we are bound to be so, as a matter of obedience, as well as of liberty and joy.

And in the second place, when we consider the exercises of the heart natural to us in this connection, is it not comparing ourselves with ourselves and with others, walking in the sight of men, and seeking honor from them, that is our constant snare, rather than the thought of rewards in the day of Christ? Indeed, it at once occurs to the mind that the thought of reward from the Lord is that which indeed truly corrects the other tendency, and puts to flight selfishness, assumption, legalism, and all the sadly common and evil tendencies that so readily spring in our foolish hearts when walking before men. Let it be a small thing to us to be judged of men and of man's day, for we are seeking reward from Christ. What will His "Well done!" be in that day. What will it be to have His approval, the holy and the true One, who says, "I know thy works"? But it may be said, "All will agree that we are to seek His approval." Yes, but let it be definitely before the heart that rewards are held forth, and encouragement to seek to win them. Let their character be what they may, they are to be considered as such, and to be sought for as such. Consider the effect of this

doctrine upon us at any time,—to make it definite, say to-day,—I have been occupied with service (and our whole life is that, of course,) this morning, and the scripture comes to mind, "The Lord will reward His servants," "*knowing* that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord." (Eph. vi. 8.) What is the effect upon me? Very often I would be checked by the thought, and the heart would confess that the service had not been so much for the Lord as in some subtle way for myself, or, what is perhaps very common with us, in a mere cold and legal round of daily doing;—sadly common and truly sad condition! so dishonoring to Christ, and so different from the patient joy of true service! Or, I might be found doing something that the thought of reward from the Lord would cause to appear in its true color, and show it to be something that I ought to have done with if I would seek His approbation and not the satisfaction of self-will or the approval of others as unspiritual as myself; "for if a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully"—a solemn while sweetly solemn scripture to test many and all of our doings! It will be a sharp pruning-knife in that day, and it is meant to be such for our own use now, in the soberness and simplicity of honest and God-fearing self-judgment.

But if our service is found to be truly to the Lord, as far as we have light to judge, then the heart is truly gladdened and precious encouraged in the way; and the knowledge that He has "eyes as a flame of fire" is welcome to the deeper instincts of the heart; and the thought of receiving from Him the "white stone," and the new name

written in it known only to the receiver,—what can we say about it? Shall we say we are not to be occupied with rewards after such a promise? What can we do but bow our hearts and seek grace to honestly and joyfully respond to such a solemnizing and heart-filling encouragement from the One whose side was pierced?

Is it not clear, then, that the thought or truth of definite rewards, whatever our tendency to misuse every truth, (and may we be always on our guard,) —nevertheless, is it not clear that this truth is emphatically one that really guards against the very legalism and assumption that a superficial consideration might lead us to think it would produce.

The twenty-third chapter of second Samuel presents a striking illustration of this subject of differing rewards in the names and deeds of those recorded in the roll of honor of David's mighty men. Even the differences between those who all greatly excelled is carefully noted. There were three mighty men who broke through the host of the Philistines for David's sake. They had had a previous training and previous victories, and now they join with one mind to take their lives in their hands for their master. It was "keeping his words," for he had but breathed a desire, and they sprang forward to fulfill it. It was intimacy with their master that enabled them to know his desire, and love led on to service. But note what follows. "And Abishai, the brother of Joab, . . . was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among three. Was he not most honorable of three? therefore he was their captain: *howbeit he attained not unto the first three.* And Benaiah, . .

. . had the name among three mighty men. He was more honorable than the thirty, but he attained not to the first three."

How precious the love and grace that so carefully notes the devotedness of poor failing followers! Devoted to the master who was their shelter when, discontented and in debt, they had fled to him for refuge and consolation.

But Abishai, though having honorable mention beyond many, yet attained not to the first three. Perhaps no scripture presents in a more striking way the truth of rewards and distinctions of rewards in the day of Christ, the true David. Love—devotedness to David was of course the motive that led to these mighty deeds; but the Scripture bids us *know*—keep in mind—that for every good thing that a man doeth, that shall he receive of the Lord. "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons." But the Lord's estimate will be different from man's, and much that has a name to-day will have none in the day of Christ. Joab, who commanded David's armies in the victory over Absalom while David was an outcast from Jerusalem, gained no reward from David in the day of his return to his throne and power; but the king kissed Barzillai (2 Sam. xix. 39), an aged and infirm man who loved David, and had provided sustenance for him in the day of his rejection.

Let the thought of His love and of His reward encourage and sustain us in the path of willing obedience and diligence of spirit. Self-indulgence, unholiness, covering of sin, serving selfish interests, running unsent, seeking great things before men abroad but ourselves a stumbling-block at home,

mere routine of work without heart, will all appear such then, but every deed of love, however little noted now, will have its reward.

E. S. L.

"BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING."

Philipplaus iv. 6.

WE are sure to bring unmixed sorrow upon ourselves when we take ourselves, our circumstances, or our destinies out of the hands of God. Thus it was with Jacob, as we may see in the sequel of his life. (Gen. xxvii. 35.) Whoever observes Jacob's life after he had surreptitiously obtained his father's blessing will perceive that he enjoyed very little worldly felicity. His brother purposed to murder him, to avoid which he was forced to flee from his father's house. His uncle, Laban, deceived him, as he had deceived his father, and treated him with great rigor. After a servitude of twenty-one years, he was obliged to leave him in a clandestine manner, and not without danger of being brought back, or murdered by his enraged brother. No sooner were these fears over than he experienced the baseness of his son Reuben in defiling his bed. He had next to bewail the treachery and cruelty of Simeon and Levi toward the Shechemites; then he had to feel the loss of his beloved wife; he was next imposed upon by his own sons, and had to lament the supposed untimely end of Joseph; and to complete all, he was forced by famine to go into Egypt, and there died in a strange land. So just, wonderful, and instructive are all the ways of God.

As to Rebekah, she was called to feel all the sad

results of her cunning actings. She, no doubt, imagined she was managing matters most skillfully; but, alas! *she never saw Jacob again*. So much for management! How different it would have been had she left the matter entirely in the hands of God! This is the way in which faith manages, and it is ever a gainer. "Which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?" We gain nothing by our anxiety and planning; we only shut out God, and that is no gain. It is a just judgment from the hand of God to be left to reap the fruits of our own devices; and I know of few things more sad than to see a child of God so entirely forgetting his proper place and privilege as to take the management of his affairs into his own hands.

The birds of the air and the lilies of the field may well be our teachers when we so far forget our position of unqualified dependence upon God.

"Commit thy ways unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass."—(*From C. H. M.'s Notes.*)

BE STILL, MY SOUL!

BE still, my soul! the Lord is on thy side;
 Bear patiently the cross of grief and pain;
 Leave to thy God to order and provide;
 In every change, He faithful will remain.
 Be still, my soul! thy best, thy heavenly Friend
 Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul! thy God doth undertake
 To guide the future as He has the past;
 Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing shake,
 All now mysterious shall be bright at last.

Be still, my soul! the waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

Be still, my soul! when dearest friends depart,
And all is darkened in the vale of tears,
Then thou shalt better know His love, His heart,
Who comes to soothe thy sorrow and thy fears.
Be still, my soul! thy Saviour can repay,
From His own fullness, all He takes away.

Be still, my soul! the hour is hastening on
When we shall be "forever with the Lord,"—
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul! when change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed, we shall meet at last.

Be still, my soul! begin the song of praise
On earth, believing, to thy Lord on high;
Acknowledge Him in all thy works and ways,
So shall He view thee with a well-pleased eye.
Be still, my soul! the sun of life divine
Thro' passing clouds shall soon more brightly shine.

MONDAY MORNING.

IF I mistake not, fellow-Christian, there is a *special* test often connected with the above-mentioned season of our lives. Very much it seems to one sometimes like the descent of the disciples from the *top* of "the holy mount," where they saw the Lord "transfigured in glory," to contact with the power of Satan at the *bottom* of it. And how many similar cases does the Word of God record! Next unto Noah's altar of thanksgiving and sweet savor, where he gets God's covenant of "His bow in the cloud," is his vineyard of wine, and becoming

drunken to the exposure of his shame. Next unto Abraham's tent and altar between Bethel (house of God) and Ai (ruins) is his going down to *Egypt* (the world) because of Canaan's famine, and there his denial of Sarai (grace) and the bringing up of the *bondswoman* (law). Next unto Moses' "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt," and "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God," is his estimate of them as a *burden* that he cannot carry, and later, calling them "rebels." Next unto Israel's song of triumph because of their redemption is, as a sad refrain, "they *murmured* against the Lord" because of Marah; and the time would fail one to tell of all the "Monday mornings," in some sense so, (what they too often, alas! *are*, rather than what by grace they *should* and *may* be,) recorded on the pages of Scripture. But with so much to hint our meaning, we will now turn to *our own*; and what *are* they, fellow-Christian? "Down to the depths," is it, as to spiritual experience, when our Lord has said equally for this as for the day before, (in which how often we have found "His joy our strength"!) "My grace is *sufficient* for Thee," and "as thy *days*, so shall thy strength be"? How is it thus? Whatever can it be that makes that bright-faced, happy Christian who then praised God for all that Christ is and has done for us, and "worshiped Him in the beauty of holiness," now droop beneath the trials of the way, and join the ranks of "the murmurers and complainers," saying, "All these things are against me"? Is there not a *cause*? There *is*, and this it is, I humbly venture to suggest: *Then*, our faith looked up to Him who is our *strength* as well as our salvation, and thus our ranks were closed

against the enemy; *now*, our eye is upon the way, ourselves, others, or the world around us—"winds and waves boisterous," and we begin to sink. Or, as Bunyan's "Christian" climbed the hill Difficulty, there to get a good view of all beneath, and a fresh draught of purer air, thus to "thank *God* and take courage," when, alas! now the arbor placed by the King of the pilgrims for his rest and joy becomes a snare, and he takes his ease, forgets his journey, and loses his precious roll.

"Well, how shall it be otherwise? for things do seem to go so crooked sometimes, and especially *then*" (Monday mornings), say some who desire to please the Lord, but this special season of ordinary life has oft proved too much for them. Well, *how*? we echo; and an apostle, speaking of what he knew, and testifying what he had seen, furnishes the divine answer: "I can do all things through *Christ which strengtheneth me*." Say not in thine heart (for "the word of faith" dispels all reasonings, where God and His power are in question,) that he knew not *your* trials, it may be of to-day,—the getting up late—the breakfast half served—family out of sorts—but little time for the morning reading, and then the question rising, "Will a man *rob God*?" and how little confidence in Him for the path through the day! More than the aggregate of all this he knew, and yet said, "*Every where* and in *all things* I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." "I have learned, in *whatsoever* state I am, therewith to be content." (Phil. iv.)

Blessed word this,—"*CONTENT*"! but to how many of us it seems like a far-off shore we even scarce hope to reach. May we not, then, again

well ask, Is there not a *cause*? There is, again we reply,—this: "*Content*" is chapter *four*, and the way thereto is well marked out as "the path of the just, that shineth brighter and brighter to the perfect day." Chapter *one*, "To me to live is Christ;" *two*, "The mind which was also in Christ Jesus;" *three*, "This one thing I do: . . . I *press* toward the mark." Little wonder, then, that *four* is, "I have learned to be content; I know how to be abased and to abound; I am instructed to be full and hungry, to abound and suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Thus, Christ for *life, pattern, object*, is—yes, *must* be, Christ for *rest* and *stay* of heart! As in an Old-Testament day with the prophet Habakkuk, who at first says, "O Lord, how long shall I cry . . . ! Why dost Thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me; and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth." But ere long he learns a lesson as to what seemed a greater calamity still—"a bitter and hasty nation marching through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling-places that are not theirs," and says, "Art Thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? we *shall not die*. O Lord, Thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, Thou hast established them for correction." And later on, betaking himself to his watchtower, as he tells us, "to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd [argued with]," he learns the secret of all true rest of heart

for sinner and for saint alike—"The just shall live by his *faith*." Then, hearing God's sevenfold woes upon the wicked, adds, "The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him," and pours out his heart's plaint there,—“O Lord, I have heard Thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.” Then, in conclusion, saying, “When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that *I might rest in the day of trouble*:” ending with “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*. The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places.” May it be ours, then, beloved brethren, to learn from these “things *new and old*,” and in the strength of our God, equally for this our day as for that, that “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even *our faith*,” and thus shall our “Monday mornings” become but so many fresh occasions in which to realize the power of His might, and become “*more than conquerors* through Him that loved us.”

Be it so, for our present joy and future reward as well, and above all that “God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

B. C. G.

"BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY."

"I will seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." "And there shall be one flock and one Shepherd." (Ezek. xxxiv. 12; Jno. x. 16.)

LORD, Thy sheep are sadly scattered,
And the world is strange and cold;
Many lambs, with piteous bleating,
Cry for some protecting fold.
Jesus, gentle Shepherd, come!
Gather all the wanderers home.

Some are straying on bleak mountains,
Where the grass is dry and dead;
Wolves have entered, and have spared not;—
What sad havoc they have made!
Jesus, gracious Shepherd, come!
Call Thy wayward wand'ers home.

Over all, where'er they're straying,
Ever watchful Thou dost keep;
Thou dost mark the faintest bleatings,
And the wand'rings of Thy sheep.
Follow them, where'er they roam,
And Thou 'lt surely bring them home.

Some are feeding in the valleys,—
Where the grass is tender, sweet;
Tracing out the unseen footprints,
Sitting at the Master's feet,
Looking, Lord, for Thee to come.
Come, and take Thy loved ones home.

Keep their hearts, the while they're waiting,
Ever faithful, Lord, to Thee.
Filling up the fleeting moments,
Ere Thy glorious face we see,
Shepherd of Thy scattered sheep,
May we patient vigil keep.

H. McD.

JONATHAN'S SERVICE AND SAUL'S DECREE.

"And Saul answered, ' . . . thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.' " (1 Sam. xiv.)

JONATHAN had vanquished the enemy in the service of God, and had tasted of honey *with the blessing of God*; but Saul's decree was disregarded, and he is condemned. It is a solemn example for all time of the disastrous effect of human will thrusting itself in as religious authority between the true servant and God.

The Spirit of God has made it a very plain one for our warning and instruction.

Jonathan is led by the Spirit of God, but Saul's decree condemns him. But there is more than this—the people rescue Jonathan, manifestly by the good hand of God. "And the people said unto Saul, 'Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid! As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day.' So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not."

The people had been distressed in seeking to obey the foolish decree—toiling in battle, but unused. But God allows matters to come to a head, and the unrighteousness and folly of the decree is openly manifest when Jonathan must die. True instinct rouses them to indignation, and the misused authority is spurned by the people, as before it had had no control over Jonathan. We must obey God rather than men. It was open resistance to authority, but a resistance approved of God. Submission would have been folly worse than Saul's.

Such a true instinct in an emergency is noble—it is love, and is of God. To talk of submission and docility at such a time is craven and nerveless, and would simply have left full sway and swing to evil and shame; it is not love, nor the true spirit of subjection, but paralysis and confusion, or a perverted mind.

The lack of a ready instinct to reject evil is a thing to be heartily ashamed of.

It is the coldness of a formalist, or a judgment perverted, and God has not His place of authority, and what He is—light and love—is not apprehended in governing power over the soul for the time being.

The senses are not exercised to discern good and evil.

Then evil triumphs, and God is dishonored, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.

This is Satan's triumph—the success of his wiles.

Note how God allows the lot called for by Saul between himself and the people to fall upon himself and Jonathan, and then between himself and Jonathan it falls upon Jonathan. We might have thought God would give no answer, but it is the answer of condemnation, not of fellowship. Saul had made the decree, and now was in the place of authority, and step by step he is allowed to push on to the shameful but consistent result of his first departure.

While it was merely irksome to the people, it was borne; but when the end of it was, to "condemn and kill the just one," God was with His people to abhor and reject it. "Abhor that which

is evil: cleave to that which is good." And again, in John's third epistle, (short, but full of solemn import,) when *casting out* was in progress, and John himself rejected—"Receiveth us not, . . . neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the assembly"—the word for guidance is, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good"—the same principle as the oft-quoted one in 2 Timothy—"Depart from unrighteousness." Whether it be Diotrophes, or Saul as king, or a whole assembly, that would bind unrighteousness upon the saints, it is no virtue to hesitate then. "Abhor that which is evil." "And this is love, that we walk after His commandments."

Let us be humble, and willing to have our conclusions tested by the Word at every step, and seek to make all allowance in love. But there is such a thing as a lack of discernment of evil when manifest, and the seeking of peace before righteousness—which is neither love nor spirituality, and unfits for doing battle when the enemy is encroaching in power, and has gained a foothold amongst us.

"But Jonathan *heard not* when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; *and his eyes were enlightened*. Then answered one of the people, and said, 'Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food this day.' *And the people were faint* [the effect of legality]. Then said Jonathan, 'My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened ["Christ

hath made us free"—Gal. v. 1], because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

Behold the effect of human decrees and creeds—they fetter the conscience and the heart, and they famish the soul—and not a servant of Christ has been raised up to stand in the gap for the truth in a day of shame and trembling but this imposing power of Satan would intimidate and drive him from the path of faith, and turn victory into confusion and defeat; stirring up even the devout and honorable to array themselves unwittingly against their own souls' interest and the purposes of God for blessing.

"Let brotherly love continue," but let us have our eyes open and the heart undeceived. Saul got no answer from God, and none from the people, before appealing to the lot. It was his own will he was pressing to the bitter end.

Saul sets forth the Pharisee in power at Jerusalem when the Lord was crucified, and "the burdens which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear" corresponds to the fainting of the people under Saul's decree.

Step by step, in the Lord's life of service and manifestation of Himself—of the truth, was manifest also increasingly the irreconcilable and bitter enmity of the traditions of the Jews against Him and what He did. He could not deny himself, and tradition and the carnal mind could not change, and the cross was the issue. So Jonathan goes through death in a figure, and is delivered by the

power of God. How much it costs to bear witness for the truth! How plainly it indicates who is behind the scenes in opposition!

So deceived may the heart be that the ruler of the synagogue can rebuke, and put in the place of an offender, the Lord of glory as a breaker of the Sabbath.

There is something truly precious in the word, "Jonathan *heard not* when his father charged the people with an oath." The diligent soul, in happy liberty, occupied with God and the word of His grace, is not imposed upon by human creeds, nor hindered by tradition from receiving and declaring the whole counsel of God.

He was "without the camp," and *heard not* the legal decree.

Let us beware of tradition. In every age it has thrust itself in between the saints and the free enjoyment of the Word of God; for we easily become drowsy, and prefer the *old wine*, and rest in what is in vogue among us, and cling to it tenaciously, until error is so enthroned that it cannot be called in question—but at the peril of the one who would do it.

But there are dangers in more than one direction; therefore let us apply these principles and lessons from Scripture with moderation and judgment and self-distrust, as ready to go to extremes; and if we have escaped one extreme, as specially liable to the other. The Lord give us wisdom and humility here. But let us not fear to obey God and to follow Christ, though Satan raise a storm that makes the waves mount up high above the ship.

E. S. L.

FAMILY PRAYER.

"Pour out Thy fury upon the heathen that have not known Thee, and upon the families that call not upon Thy name." (Jer. x. 25.)

FAMILY prayer is a most important matter, and has often proved one of the greatest blessings which a family could enjoy. It is not enough that we pray as *private* individuals in our closets; we must honor God in our *families*. Twice in the day if we can, at least once, every family where Jesus is professed should be called to bow before the Lord together,—parents and children, master and servants. The head of the family should lead the devotions if present, and his wife should be absent. Family prayer should never be omitted if there be one of the family at home who can call upon God, even if the language be broken, and the time occupied be very brief. The "spirit of prayer" always grows by use, and smallness of gift is no lawful excuse for omitting family prayer. If we cannot pray eloquently, we may pray *earnestly*, which is much better; if our language does not flow freely, we need not be long and tedious. Prevailing prayers are often short prayers. Family devotions should generally be *short*, especially where there are young children. Read a portion of God's holy Word. One may find it profitable sometimes to read also a few striking remarks on the subject by an approved author. If those present can sing, a few verses of praise greatly refresh. Along with this, prayer: a direct address to God, offered with fervor, under a sense of His presence, and edifying and blessing

surely follow. God approves, an enlightened conscience commends, and all are benefited.

Family prayer will prevent much sin. It keeps up a remembrance of God's presence, it brings important truths before the mind, it teaches the prayerless what prayer is, it leads children and servants to think, and brings down the blessing of God upon the house. We are to pray "with *all prayer* and supplication in the Spirit;" but this we cannot do if *family* prayer is neglected. We are to "pray *every where*, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting." This cannot be observed if we do not pray in our *families*. He who would excuse himself from *family prayer*, should expect to be excused from *family blessings*.

Reader, have *you family prayer in your house*? If not, allow me to ask, do you profess to be a *Christian*? Have you considered the solemn passage at the head of these remarks? If God was to pour out His fury upon the families which call not upon His name, and you have not family prayer, how could *your family* escape?

You ought to own God in your *house*, and daily should you acknowledge your dependence upon Him and obligation to Him. All your domestic comforts, all your temporal mercies, and all your spiritual privileges, flow from His love and grace; and will you daily as a family receive, and never as a family praise? The heathens have their household gods, and will not you have your family altar? Shall they honor idols of wood and stone, and must it be said of you, "The God in whose hands thy breath is *hast thou not glorified*"? An old writer says, "*A family without prayer is like a house without a roof, open and exposed to all the storms of*

heaven." Again, "Family prayer bolts the door against dangers at night, and opens it for the admission of mercies in the morning." Private prayer was never intended to set aside family prayer, nor should family prayer be made an excuse for the neglect of private. The one is for the *person*; the other, for the *household*. Both are necessary, and, properly conducted, both are means of blessing.

(*Selected.*)

"To God, most worthy to be praised,
Be our domestic altars raised;
Who, Lord of heaven, scorns not to dwell
With saints in their obscurest cell."

"WE talked that day about erecting a family altar, and I want to tell you that was the first thing that I did in the Lord's strength, and it has become the most blessed place to me of any on earth. Oh, the comfort there is in taking the family and going to the Lord with all our trials and troubles! I tell you, Bro. G., although that family altar is erected in a poor man's house, it is gilded all over with the glory of God."—*C. D. B.*

[The above lines, received lately from one but a month old "in the faith," I add to the above paper, trusting it may provoke unto love and to good works" some other, that they may "go and do likewise." In this day of much profession and vaunted words as to "high truth" and "true ground," it is well for us to remember "He showeth grace unto the *lowly*, but the proud He regardeth afar off." Oh, that we may be more humble followers of Him who even was "*heard for His piety*"!—*B. C. G.*]

PRESENT THINGS, AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)

Smyrna: the Double Assault of the Enemy.
(Rev. II. 8-11.)

THE decline of the Church opens the way for the power of the enemy to display itself; and the assault is a double one—from without and within at the same moment. The result is, however, very different in the two cases. The outside assault is failure, for it is impossible that the Lord should leave His saints to be subdued by power beyond their own; while the defeat of Satan's wiles is another matter. Here they must put on the whole armor of God, that they may be able to stand in the evil day. We shall be able from this point to trace an instructive correspondence between the history of the kingdom as developed in the first four parables of the thirteenth of Matthew and that of the Church in the first four addresses here. There also the failure (or partial success) of the good seed is the first fact insisted on, and then follows the inroad of the enemy. The two are put in connection by the words, "*While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat.*"

Here, as not in the parable, the open assault is connected with the secret and inward one, and we shall see, if the Lord permit, that the two are really parts of one whole, the one favoring the other. The roar of the lion is well calculated to frighten souls

into the secret snare; and in this regard we could not say that it had no success. God, on the other hand, suffers it to alarm His people into their place of refuge; and with true souls this would be its effect. The test is permitted to manifest the condition of things, and it is His way to allow such tests ever, as in all dispensations we shall find to be the case. Alas, for the invariable result as to man! but He will be glorified through all.

Let us look briefly first at the open attack which, as it makes a figure in ecclesiastical history, gives us a date to attach to the period before us. Even those who do not see the historical application of these addresses generally admit a reference in the "tribulation ten days" to ten persecutions under the Roman emperors. That there were just so many can hardly be made out, and the expression need not be pressed so literally. It is quite plain, nevertheless, how the address to Smyrna suits this period, which lasted from Domitian's persecution now begun, right on to Constantine,—that is, for over two centuries. This was undoubtedly the martyr-age of the Church as a whole, although the persecution may have been more bitter locally in other periods. The power of Rome, absolute as it was throughout her wide-spread empire, when wielded against Christianity, left little room for escape any where, while as a heathen power it was antagonistic to all that professed the name. The address to Smyrna, therefore, comes exactly in place here; and the very name—"myrrh,"—used, as this was, in the embalming of the dead, reminds us of how "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Indeed this is manifest all through the address.

It is as "the First and the Last, who" yet "was dead, and is alive," that He speaks to them. In the voice of One who though divine stooped down to death and is come out of it, and who gives them thus only to drink of the cup of which He has drunk, and to be baptized with the baptism wherewith He has been baptized. How fully can *He* say, "I know thy tribulation"! and how sweet the commendation, "I know thy poverty, *but thou art rich*"! Yea, "blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake: rejoice, and be exceeding glad."

The times are so changed, we look back with a shudder to the sufferings endured at these times, unable, as it would seem, to comprehend the blessedness of this link of sorrow with the Man of sorrows. And yet we can see, even through the lapse of intervening centuries, how the "Spirit of glory and of God" rested upon these sufferers. The Captain of their salvation was at all charges for them, and as the sufferings of Christ abounded in them, so their consolation also abounded by Christ. They had heard His voice saying, "Fear not those things which thou shalt suffer; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Multitudes were thus faithful; but we are apt to form a wrong estimate of the times gilded by the glory of this faithfulness. Just so, in the address to Smyrna, the Lord's undisguised and tender sympathy with His own under persecution hides from the eyes of many the evil which is pointed out by Him as there in terms of indignant reprobation. By most, "The blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not" is supposed to refer to the

well-known and constant enmity of the unbelieving nation against the followers of their rejected Messiah. It is evident that they are treated as outside of those whom the Lord is here addressing, and that the "angel" is not, as elsewhere, charged with responsibility for their presence. But so neither are the Nicolaitanes, or the followers of Balaam at Pergamos, or the woman Jezebel at Thyatira, addressed directly by the Lord, while no one doubts, nor can it be doubted, that they formed part of the respective assemblies. The question of responsibility is a more difficult one, and we shall be obliged to consider it a little later.

"Those who say they are Jews and are not" might be taken, no doubt, as parallel to the apostle's words that "they are not all Israel which are of Israel," and "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly." Still it would not seem that they would so much need to profess themselves such, if they were of the nation really; nor does it seem that so much would be made of the falseness of a profession for which there was after all a certain justification. If this, too, were really the character of those in question, there is no significance, that one can see, in the appearance here as regards any divine judgment of the churches.

The moment we realize the adversaries here spoken of as *Judgizers within* the professing church, we find that we have in them as much the formal root of decline as in first love left we had the internal principle. The mention of them at this point becomes a necessity really for the perfecting of the picture of what has in fact taken place. With the heart-failure first reproved, it is the key to the condition of things which is all around us, it charac-

terizes the state of ruin which has come in. It is this which has robbed Christians of the enjoyment of their place with God; it is this which has put them back into the world out of which grace had called them; it is this which has built up once more a priestly hierarchy as necessary mediators between a mixed and carnal people and a far-off God. It is this which is indeed the triumph of the great adversary, although God be as ever sovereign above it; and no name could more fitly designate the instruments by which he has degraded the Church of God into the synagogue than the name by which the Lord brands them here—"the *synagogue of Satan*."

The title precisely indicates the change accomplishing. The Church of God is indeed every way the precise opposite of Satan's synagogue. The word which we translate "church" is, as well known, properly "assembly,"—a title which, if it had been retained in our common version, would have prevented the possibility of some significant perversions. The assembly could not be confounded, for instance, with a material building, though spiritually indeed God's house. Nor could it be the clergy merely, as from Romanism, though by more than Romanists, it has been made to signify. These applications of the term are but indications of the very change of which we are now speaking. The assembly of God in Scripture is Christ's body, the fellowship of those who are His members, and of none but these. It is true that the responsibility of this place may be assumed by those who are not such, and so we find the assembly in Sardis pronounced by the Lord to be dead, and not alive. Yet in the divine thought this is

what the assembly is, and at the Lord's table every one declares this: "we being many are one bread, one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."

Thus it is the assembly, or gathering, of those who are Christ's members, *called out* by grace out of the world, and this is what the word used means. "*Ecclesia*" is the assembly of those called out; while "*synagogue*" means merely a "gathering *together*," no matter of whom. The latter, of course, was the Jewish word, as the former the Christian; and they exactly express the difference between the respective gatherings. Christ died, "not for the nation [of Israel] only, but also that He might gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad." Outside of the Jewish fold He had sheep to bring in, and inside of it not all were His sheep. Judaism did not unite the children of God as such, as is plain, and its separation was not of believers from the world, but of Israel from the Gentiles. So, consequently, the children of God were not given their place with God, and had no Spirit of adoption—did not cry, "Abba, Father." God was saying, "I am a father to *Israel*"—and this which comes nearest to Christian knowledge shows in fact the contrast. Relationship was by birth, not *new* birth, and did not mean justification and eternal life, as it means now. Those who belonged to the family of God might perish forever, and those outside His family might be saved eternally.

Judaism decided the eternal state of none. As a dispensation of law, it could give no assurance, it could preach no justification. For if the law says on the one hand "the man that doeth these things

shall live in them," it says also "there is none righteous—no, not one." And that was not merely the effect, but the designed effect: "We know that whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." It was thus ordained for the probation of man, a probation necessary before grace could be proclaimed; but on this account it could but as a means of salvation bear witness to its own incompetency. The announcement of that *new* covenant under which Israel's sins and iniquities would be no more remembered was such a witness.

Thus, as the law could not justify, it could not bring to God. The unrent vail is the characteristic of Judaism as the rent vail is of Christianity. "Thou canst not see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live" is the contrasted utterance to His who says, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;" as is "who can by no means clear the guilty" the opposite declaration to that of the gospel, that we "believe on Him who justifieth the ungodly." The darkness is passed from the face of God, and the true light—for God is light—shineth. We walk, therefore, in the light, as God is in the light, and have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin.

The Judaizing of the Church means therefore, first of all, the putting God back (if that were possible; possible for our hearts it is) into the darkness from which He has come forth; replacing the peace which was made for us upon the cross with the old legal conditions and the old uncertainty. Darker than the old darkness this, inasmuch as the

Christ for whom they only looked is come, and come but to put His seal upon it all: come, and gone back, and declared little more, at any rate, than was said before, and only definitively shut out hope of any further revelation.

Thus in the Judaizing gospel confidence is presumption. "No man knoweth whether he is worthy of favor or hatred" is quoted as if from Paul instead of Solomon. In fact, is not Ecclesiastes scripture as well as Romans? and will you make scripture to contradict scripture? Did not Christ say, also, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill"? and ought we not to follow Him?

Peace is of course lost, and in the dread uncertainty that every-where prevails, who can distinguish any longer between God's children and the world? Yet Judaism had its family of God, its ordinances which separated them from those around, its absolutions by the way which encouraged hope, while yet, as continually needed, they sanctioned no presumptuous assurance. The Christian family could still exist, baptism and the supper of the Lord take the place of the old Jewish ordinances, the Christian ministry conform to the Levitical priesthood, and the Church become more venerable by her identification with that of the saints from the beginning, and richer for the inheritance of all the promises from Abraham down.

This is assuredly the transformation that has taken place, and that began so early that we have but few traces of the manner of its accomplishment, or its agents either. We open the page of uninspired history, and the terrible transformation has been already achieved. * In fact, so fully, that it presents the only difficulty in the application of the address

before us to the period of heathen persecution. One would hardly suppose from the Lord's words here that (as it would appear) the witnesses for Him, faithful to death as they were, were nevertheless thoroughly implicated in this descent from Christianity to Judaism. It would hardly seem as if the "blasphemy" or slander of this Jewish party had been directed against them, or that the Lord could ignore their reception of these satanic doctrines.*

The real question is, how far could we expect the history, meagre in proportion to its earliness, and which has come down to us through centuries of darkness and hostility to the truth, to reveal to us the struggle with these Jewish teachers, so generally successful as they were? I do not think we could expect it. An age which would forge the names of those in repute to spurious documents, often with the express design of giving authority to some favorite doctrine, would hardly hesitate to remove the too suspicious traces of opposition to prevalent views and practices from the history of the early church. That there should have been no such struggle is scarcely to be credited. And the words of our Lord here may well be taken as an encouragement rather to believe that there were even many who were doubly faithful in this time of trial; faithful amid the outside persecution, and faithful also against what could and did soon develop into no less bitter persecution within the professing church.

Of one thing we may be sure, that the true

* For I cannot accept, as some do, that "but thou art rich" is a reproof. And the blasphemy against them surely should acquit them of complicity with those who slander them.

history of the Church remains to be written, or is written only before God. That which fills men's histories is hardly, save in responsibility, the Church at all. Solemn it is to realize the completeness of the ruin, almost from the first; and yet this has been the case in every dispensation. How long did our first parents live in paradise? Of the generation before the flood, what was the record? and what of Noah's sons? Of Israel in the wilderness, but two of all that as men left Egypt got into the land. In the land, how soon does Bochim succeed Gilgal! The priesthood fail on the day of their consecration. The first king falls on the battle-field, an apostate. The hands that have built the temple to the true God build the shrines of idols. The remnant brought back from Babylon murder one of their latest prophets (Matt. xxiii. 35), and the awful history of the chosen people closes with the crucifixion of the Son of God.

What hope, then, for the Church? And here the blessing bestowed only makes the ruin the more awful: the corruption of the best becomes the worst corruption. "The annals of the Church," says the Romish historian, "are the annals of hell." How solemn a witness to the application of the words here, "who say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan"!

Not that we must brand with this name the masses who fell into the snare prepared for them, still less the generations afterward succeeding to the fatal heritage. It is applied, as we may easily see, to the earnest and active propagators of the heresy rather than to those whom they seduced to follow them. The Word of God, while teaching us to be open-eyed as to the character of things

around us, teaches us carefully the need of making a difference as to those who may profess the very same principles. Indeed, as to persons, love will ever hope the best that it is possible to hope. It will not be blinded into putting good for evil, or sweet for bitter; and for evil principles it never can have even the smallest toleration: can it tolerate poison in that which is men's food? But it is another thing when the question of what is in the heart is raised. We are never really called to judge what is in the heart, while we are called to judge what is manifest in the life and ways. "I wot that through ignorance ye did it" was said to those who had had part in crucifying Christ; and it was but the echo of the Lord's own plea for them.

But whatever our judgment may be as to persons, the evil abides, and its effects are in the present day all around us. The Judaizing of the Church means the vail replaced before God, souls at a distance, in uncertainty and darkness; the Church and the world confounded, the children of God deprived of their place and privileges, the world made Christian in form, the Church more and more degraded to its level. The development we shall see at length in the after-addresses.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

EXTRACT OF LETTER.

"MY beloved brother,—

* * * * *

"It gave me joy to hear what you say in your letter, and I trust blessing is attending the Word.

The great thing, I believe, for the present testimony is a holy, consistent life, which is before all men—a carrying into practice the precious truth we have and proclaim. Of course, it has always been so, but it is especially so now, as *knowledge* has increased, and many can tell a good deal about truth, and preach, etc., while leading worldly lives, or worse, so that *this* has ceased to be a test of one's christianity. At one time, for a man to *talk* about Christ and know a little of the Bible was a pretty sure sign of real godliness; but no more now. The testimony must be in the uprightness of life, meekness, humility, heavenliness of walk, and every mark of *Christ dwelling in us*. God will be with them who do this to the end, and use their testimony.

“The passage, ‘O wretched man that I am!’ does not, I believe, refer at all to the question of the redemption of the body at the Lord’s coming but to a *present* deliverance from the *power* of sin. As the first chapters of the epistle were occupied with the deliverance from the *guilt* of sin, so now the sixth and seventh with the deliverance from the *power*. It is the passage of the Red Sea, where the people pass out from under the bondage of Pharaoh. They are now free to go and *serve* God—they are no longer under their old taskmaster. So we, having now learned that not only ‘we are justified freely by His grace,’ but that also we are ‘dead to sin,’ and ‘dead to the law,’ which is the strength of sin, we can go forth to serve God in newness of spirit, ‘reckoning ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord.’

“This sets us in all the blessed state of the eight

chapter, where, in the liberty of sons, we can not only enjoy God and His grace, but also feel every thing which is unsuited to Him—our own weak, sinful body, a sinful world, a groaning creation,—in a word, every thing which jars with the peace and holiness of His presence. This makes us groan and long for the only event that will set every thing right,—*i. e.*, the coming of the Lord Jesus.

“Ver. 29 and 30 of the eighth chapter show God’s purpose toward them that believe. He has predestinated them ‘to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.’ He did not predestinate us to be *angels*, and make Christ the Archangel, but He did to make us *like His Son*, so as to make His Son ‘the *first-born*,’—*i. e.*, the chief one of an immense *family*, where *love* is the prevailing element. Grand, blessed purpose! This being so, all whom He has called are like Christ in His eyes: He is no more under our sins on the cross, and therefore we are justified from them: He is glorified, and therefore we are glorified. All that is true of Him as the Man who suffered for sin, and rose again, and is now in the glory, is true of us who believe on Him. Who, then, will accuse? God Himself is for us.

“May the Spirit of God fill our souls with the *reality* of all this grace, and make goodly fruit to abound in us. . . .

“Yours affectionately, in Him,”

* * *

THE TRANSFERRED BURDEN.

"If our transgressions and sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 10.)

IF they are upon us, how can we live? "For mine iniquities are . . . as a *heavy burden*; they are too heavy for me." "The burden of them is intolerable." It is not the sense, but the *burden* itself which cannot be borne; no one could bear his own iniquity without being sunk lower and lower, and at last to hell, by it. It is only *not* felt WHEN the very elasticity of sin within us keeps us from feeling the weight of the sin upon us, or when the whole burden, our absolutely intolerable burden, is known to be *laid upon another*.

If this burden be upon us, we cannot walk in newness of life, we cannot run in the way of His commandments, we cannot arise and shine.

"If"! But *is* it?

It is written, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." On Jesus it has been laid—on Him who alone could bear the intolerable burden; therefore it is *not upon* His justified ones who accept Him as their Sin-bearer.

This burden is never divided. He took it *all*—every item, every detail of it. The scape-goat bore "upon him" all their iniquities.

Think of every separate sin—each that has weighed down our conscience—every separate transgression of our most careless moments, added to the unknown weight of forgotten sins of our whole life, and *all this* laid upon Jesus, instead of upon us. The sins of *a day* are often a burden indeed, but we are told in another type, "I have

laid upon Thee the YEARS of their iniquity." Think of the years of *our* iniquity being upon Jesus. Multiply this by the unknown but equally intolerable sin-burdens of all His people, and remember that "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us *all*," and then think what the strength of His enduring love must be which thus bare "the sins of many."

Think of His bearing them "in *His own* body on the tree," in that flesh and blood of which He took part, with all its sensitiveness, because He would be made like unto His brethren in all things; and that this "bearing" was entirely suffering (for He "suffered for sins"), and praise the love which has not left "our sins upon us."

We cannot lay them upon Him. Jehovah *has done that already*, and "His work is perfect." "Nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it." "The Lord *hath* laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "He hath done this." We have only to look up and see Him bearing the iniquity for us; to put it still more simply, we have only to *believe* that the Lord *has really done* what He says He has done.

Can we doubt the Father's love to us, when we think what it must have cost Him to lay that *crushing weight* on His dear Son, sparing Him not, that He might spare US instead?

The Son accepted the awful burden, but it was the Father's hand which laid it upon Him. It was death to Him, that there might be life to us. And these sins being "laid on Him," how shall we *now* live? "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."

“On Thee the Lord
My mighty sins hath laid,
And against Thee Jehovah's sword
Flashed forth its fiery blade.
The stroke of justice fell on *Thee*,
That it might *never* fall on me.”

But in this new, forgiven life there must be growth; the command is, “Desire the sincere milk of the Word, that *ye may grow* thereby.” Real desire must prove itself by action. By the Word we shall grow in the knowledge of Christ. How do we come to know more of any one whom, having not seen, we love? is it not by reading and hearing what he has said and written and done? How *are* we to know of Jesus Christ if we are not taking the trouble to know more of His Word?

It says, “Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in ALL the scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Let us ask that the Holy Spirit may take of *these* things of Jesus and show them unto us, that we may grow in “the knowledge of the Son of God.”

“The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life”—quickenings and life-giving words. We want to be permeated with them; we want them to dwell in us richly. Jesus Himself has given us this quick and powerful Word of God, and our responsibility is tremendous. He has told us distinctly what to do with it; He has said, “Search the Scriptures”! Now, are we substituting a word of our own, and merely *reading* them? He did not say, “Read them,” but “*search*.” The devil is very fond of persuading us that we have “no leisure so much as to *eat*,” when it is a question of Bible-study.

We are solemnly responsible for the mental influences under which we place ourselves. "Take heed what ye hear" must include *take heed what ye read.*" "Lead us not into temptation" is "vain repetition" when we walk straight away into it.

Let me, then, be always growing,
 Never, never standing still,
 Listening learning, better knowing
 Thee, and Thy most blessed will ;
 That the Master's eye may trace,
 Day by day, my growth in grace.

F. R. H.

EXTRACT

From D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation.

LUTHER had sent out his theses, and they had created a stir on every side. The Canon of Augsburg had written him, "Beware of tempting God;" Krauz thought the appropriate sentiment for Luther should be, "God have pity on me;" his friends feared for him; the Bishop of Brandenburg appealed to him; the Elector also. Luther is at first daunted, but recovers himself and says,—

"Who knows not that one rarely sets before the public a new idea without exhibiting the appearance of pride, or without being accused of seeking to raise up disputes. . . . Wherefor were Christ and all the martyrs put to death? Because they have appeared proud despisers of the wisdom of their times, and have advanced new things without having beforehand humbly consulted the organs of ancient notions. . . . Let not the wise men of this day, therefore, expect from me so strong an exhibi-

tion of modesty (or rather of hypocrisy) as will encourage me to ask their advice before publishing any matter my duty calls upon me to establish. That which I do shall not be done through the prudence of men, but by the counsel of God. If the work be from God, who shall stay its progress? if it proceeds not from Him, who shall advance its purpose? . . . Not my will, not theirs, not ours, be done; but Thy will, O holy Father, who art in the heavens."

D'Aubigne' adds,—

"What courage is here displayed! how much enthusiasm! how much confidence in God! and especially what truths do not these words contain for the use of all times!"

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. 37.—"Kindly reply to the following in correspondence of *Help and Food*: Some say, 'I left system, to maintain the unity of the body,' what do they mean by it?"—*J. C. L.*

Ans.—The expression quoted is plainly at fault, when we remember it is "by *one Spirit* we are all baptized into one body," and also that "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever:" nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it, because a *divine* work, therefore unalterable. And yet it is well not to make any "an offender for a word," and if we can but apprehend their true meaning, accept it. Is it not this: we are exhorted in Eph. iv. "to *endeavor to keep* the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"? This unity being the "*gathering together in one* of the children of God which were scattered abroad," which Jesus died to accomplish, and formed by the descent and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. If, therefore, we are seek-

ing obedience to this divine command, of necessity it must be in owning what *God has formed* as the only true and right thing, and neither adding to nor taking from it by forming or upholding something other than it, of *human* origin. This in its practical carrying out would lead to "*gathering together to the name* of our Lord Jesus Christ," and alone as "*members of His body*," owning, of course, all who are *His* as entitled to the same privilege, and as far as seeking to *follow Him*, welcoming them in His name. Being thus gathered, 1 Cor. xii.—xiv. furnish us with very precious instruction for the further carrying out of the truth as to this matter in three distinct things.—

1. *The sovereignty of the Spirit of God.* "All these [gifts] *worketh* that one and self-same Spirit, *dividing* to every man severally as He will.

2. "*The love of the brethren*," seeking not our own, but "every one to please his neighbor for his good to *edification*."

3. *The authority of the Word of God*, as to "*the assembling* of ourselves together," laying down but two rules in brief, pointed simplicity. "Let all things be done *unto edifying*, . . . *decently, and in order*." The first, relating to the welfare of one another, and the second, to the holiness of Him "*who is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints*, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him." In other words, that nothing should be done except with a view to the good of others and the glory of God. This, in brief, gives the practical bearings of this important and too-little-accounted-of matter, which if humbly and seriously acted out, will most surely bring its blessing from the Lord. For an example of it, see Acts ii.—"They continued steadfastly in the apostle's *doctrine and fellowship*, and in *breaking of bread*, and in *prayers*;" and as to its abiding obligation, even though the house of God has become in disorder, 2 Tim. ii.—"Follow *righteousness, faith, charity, peace*, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." May the Lord so enable us for His name's sake!

B. C. G.

“PRAYING ALWAYS.”

(From a Letter to a Friend.)

TWO things are essential to the nurture and maintenance of a fresh and healthy state of soul,—the reading of the Word, and prayer; nor can we afford to neglect either the one or the other, if we desire that our hearts and lives may answer to the grace bestowed upon us. If the reading of the Word be neglected, there will be the danger of our prayers becoming the expression of mere natural desires instead of “intercession according to the will of God.” We need to have our desires even for spiritual blessings formed in the atmosphere of the Word, in fellowship with the Lord Himself, and by the power of His Spirit; while where this is lacking, the more earnest the soul is, the more danger will there be of a zeal that is not according to knowledge. An opposite danger on the other hand is, that the reading of the Word without prayer tends to a spirit of INTELLECTUALISM, ending in a cold, barren state of soul in which there is neither power nor joy, but abundance of spiritual pride. There is nothing more deadening to spiritual vitality than to have the mind occupied with divine truth while the heart and the conscience remain strangers to its power; and this is sure to be the case just in proportion as prayer is neglected. There can be no surer and more certain sign of a low, unhealthy spiritual state than the absence of prayer, and there can be no better proof that a man is “filled with the Spirit” than to know that he “gives himself unto prayer.”

Let us consider HIM, our blessed example and pattern. He commenced, carried on, and ended His ministry with prayer. We read of Him praying at the time of His baptism (Luke iii. 21); "He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed" (Luke v. 16.); "He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke vi. 12); "He was alone praying" (Luke ix. 18; "He took Peter and James and John, and went up into a mountain to pray" (Luke ix. 28); "He was praying in a certain place" (Luke xi. 1); "He kneeled down and prayed" (Luke xxii. 41); "He prayed more earnestly" (Luke xxii. 44); and finally, at the very close of His marvelous life, amidst the agonies of the cross, He prays for His enemies (Luke xxiii. 34).

Consider Paul, who has exhorted us to be followers of him, even as he also was of Christ. When we think of his arduous and unremitting labors in connection with the ministry of the Word, while pursuing at the same time, when necessary, his calling as a tentmaker, we almost wonder how he found any time for prayer, and yet as we read his epistles it seems as though he did indeed "pray without ceasing." (See Rom. i. 9, x. 1; 2 Cor. xiii. 7; Eph. i. 16, iii. 14; Phil. i. 4, 9; Col. i. 3, 9; 1 Thess. i. 2, iii. 10; 2 Thess. i. 11; 2 Tim. i. 3; Philem. 4.)

Remember the repeated exhortations of the Word,—**"PRAYING ALWAYS** with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication." "In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of

thanks be made for all men." "Continuing instant in prayer." "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." "Brethren, pray for us." "Praying in the Holy Ghost." "Pray without ceasing."

Think of the blessed results that have ever followed the expression of dependence upon God in united or individual prayer. The Pentecostal baptism with the Holy Ghost took place at the close of ten days spent in continued prayer and supplication. The disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, and made bold to speak the Word of God "after they had prayed." (Acts iv.) The angel of the Lord delivered Peter from prison in answer to the prayer which "was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him." (Acts xii.) Scripture is full of instances of the prevalence of prayer. 2 Chron. xxxii. 20 and Jas. v. 17, 18 are conspicuous examples. And, without doubt, when the history of the Church is surveyed from the glory, it will be seen that every wave of blessing to saints and salvation to sinners has been preceded by the effectual, fervent prayers of many whose labors are better known in heaven than on earth. Men and women like Epaphras (Col. iv. 12), who have prevailed with God in their closets, and like Jabez (1 Chron. iv. 10), have had granted to them that which they requested.

Again, (and, brother beloved, I would press this upon you with all the earnestness of which I am capable,) *meditate upon the unspeakable need of the present moment.* Look at the appalling condition of the Church of God. That which was the wondrous subject of His counsels long before the world's foundations were laid—destined to be the

magnificent display of His glory to admiring myriads of His unfallen creatures in ages yet to come—even now, in spite of its ruin, the object of His unceasing solicitude and His measureless love. Oh, brother, think of the Church! Torn asunder by a hundred factions; paralyzed by a practical infidelity; stupified by the deadening influence of an indifference to Christ, which is as general as it is deplorable; bound hand and foot with tradition, organization, and human arrangement; desolated by worldliness; and shorn of that HEAVENLY aspect and beauty which is her own peculiar portion, she nevertheless vaunts herself in the midst of her ruin, and is ready to say, with the apostate whore, "I sit a queen, and am no widow." Awful picture! Then consider the state of individual souls. How few of those quickened by divine grace have settled peace with God! How few are personally in the enjoyment of the liberty wherewith Christ makes free! How many doubts and fears are entertained by God's people, to their own loss and His dishonor! Dear brother, can we cease to pray?

Lastly, remember that God is gathering out His elect by the preaching of the Word, and ours is the blessed privilege of interceding for the salvation of the lost. The consideration of the realities of heaven and hell, a perishing world, a loving God, a waiting Saviour, and a world-wide gospel, surely should constrain us to *more prayer*.

The word is, "Praying always," by which I understand that a believer, though not always in the act, should always be in the spirit of prayer. His constant state is one of dependence, therefore his constant spirit should be that of prayer. But there are special seasons when, either alone or with

others, the soul turns aside from all else to have to do with God Himself, and pour out its desires and requests to Him. Suffer me, in conclusion, to beseech you to embrace every opportunity of thus continuing instant in prayer. Redeem every moment, and you will be surprised to discover how many opportunities for a few minutes of prayer you have hitherto suffered to pass idly away.

THE OLD SCOTCHWOMAN'S FAITH.

BY the side of a rippling brook, in one of the secluded glens of Scotland, there stands a low, mud-thatched cottage, with its neat honeysuckle porch facing the south. Beneath this humble roof, on a snow-white bed, lay, not long ago, old Nancy the Scotchwoman, patiently and cheerfully awaiting the moment of her release. By her bedside, on a small table, lay her spectacles and her well-thumbed Bible—her “barrel and her cruse,” as she used to call it—from which she daily, yea, hourly, spiritually fed on the “Bread of Life.” A young minister frequently called to see her. He loved to listen to her simple expressions of Bible truths; for when she spoke of her “inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away,” it seemed but a little way off.

One day the young minister put to the happy saint the following startling question: “Now, Nancy, what if after all your prayers and watching and waiting, God should suffer your soul to be eternally lost?” Nancy raised herself on her elbow, and turning to him a wistful look, laid her right hand on the “precious Bible,” which lay

open before her, and quietly replied, "Ae, dearie me, is that a' the length you hae got yet, man?"—and then continued, her eyes sparkling almost with heavenly brightness, "God would hae the greatest loss. Poor Nanie would but lose her soul, and that would be a great loss indeed; but God would lose His honor and His character. Haven't I hung my soul upon His exceeding great and precious promises? and if He brak' His word, He would make Himself a liar, and a' the universe would rush into confusion!"

Thus spake that old Scotch pilgrim. These were among the last words that fell from her dying lips, and they were like "apples of gold in baskets of silver." Let the reader consider them. They apply to every step of the pilgrim-path, from the first to the last.

By faith the old Scotchwoman had cast her soul's salvation upon God's promise in Christ by the gospel. She knew that His dear Son had said, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." She knew that God had said, "By Him [Christ] all that believe are justified from all things," that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin;" for "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree." This was the first step. And all through life the Scotch pilgrim hung upon His "exceeding great and precious promises," for all things and in every hour of need. The divine argument of Rom. viii. was hers by faith: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" In every sorrow she

had found Him a "very present help in trouble;" and now, about to leave the weary wilderness for her everlasting home, could she think that He would prove unfaithful to His word? No. Sooner than poor old Nancy's soul be lost, God's honor, God's character, God Himself must be overturned, and "a' the universe rush into confusion!" Dear old pilgrim!

WORLDLINESS OF THE PROFESSING CHURCH, AND ITS RESPONSIBILITIES.*

THE last view we have of the Church in Scripture is where her attitude and desire as the bride of Christ are expressed in those memorable words, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.) Assuming that it is to Christ, the Bridegroom, that the first invitation is addressed (and to whom should the bride say, "Come," but to the Bridegroom?) what a view does this passage afford us of the proper attitude and desire and hope of the Church! As actuated by the Spirit, she cries to her Lord and Bridegroom, "Come." She calls on any who may hear—individual saints, really part of the Church, but not knowing as yet the Church position and relationship—to join in the cry. But then, as already indwelt by the Spirit, and set to testify the grace of her absent Lord, she invites any who are athirst—yea, and whosoever will, to come to those waters of life and refreshing which flow so freely from the Head, through the members, to any poor thirsty souls who may be drawn to Jesus by the ministry of

* An extract from a pamphlet entitled, "*Christ and the Church*," published by Loizeaux Brothers, 63 Fourth Avenue, New York. Price, 8 cts.

reconciliation with which she has been intrusted. The Church as here presented has but one object—Christ. Whether she invites Him to come, or invites poor parched and thirsty souls to come to Him, He, He alone, is her object. But this may well lead us to consider, a little more minutely and attentively, the responsibilities of the Church connected with and flowing from all that has now been passing under review. The Lord grant us a lowly spirit and a tender conscience in turning to this practical view of the subject.

One remark it may be requisite to make, to prevent misapprehension. While it is impossible that any but those who are vitally united to Christ, as His body, by the Holy Ghost, should live and walk as becometh the Church, the responsibility to walk thus may be shared, and is shared, by all who profess to be the Church. None but those who have really been quickened and raised up together with Christ, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him, can manifest the heavenly spirit and walk suited to such a position. But then this is the position of all true Christians; and whole nations, alas! profess to be such, and thus place themselves under responsibility to live and act according to this profession. How unspeakably solemn, in this point of view, is the present state of the professing world—of what is popularly designated “Christendom”! As to all who really compose the Church, the fact of their being a part of it,—that is, of their being one body and one spirit with Christ, makes their final salvation sure; still, what cause for shame and humiliation and self-reproach have all such, that there should be such a total failure to manifest the real place and portion and character and object of the Church! It is not as being less guilty than one’s brethren that one ventures to give expression to such thoughts. Far from it. But is it not our place to ask ourselves—the place of all who really know the Saviour—Are we fulfilling the end for which we have been called of God into such nearness to Himself?

What is the first great responsibility of the Church? Surely it is to keep herself for Christ! Is she not betrothed to Him as His bride? Has He not loved her, and given Himself for her, that He might present her to Himself, a glorious Church, unspotted, and without wrinkle or blemish? When and where is this presentation to take place? Where is the One to whom she is betrothed—the One who has loved her, and washed her in His own blood? Ah, He is not here, but in heaven. Rejected by the earth, the right hand of God is where He waits, till His enemies are made His footstool. But is it only for the subjugation of His foes that He waits? No; He has gone to prepare a place for His Church, His bride; and He waits for the moment when He is to present her to Himself unblemished and complete. "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." Is such the language of our Lord? Enthroned above all height, the object of heaven's deepest homage, His heart still yearns to have with Him and beside Him, in the glory, the Church that He has purchased with His blood! And what is the response, my brethren, which He receives from us? Heaven, where He is owned and worshiped, suffices not for Him till we are there, to behold His glory and share His blessedness. But does it not often seem as though earth would satisfy us? Stained though it be with the blood of Jesus, characterized though it be, to this hour, by the haughty, scornful rejection of His claims, the contemptuous neglect of His dying love—how do our treacherous hearts still linger amid its delusive scenes! What a fearful power there is in its false glitter and glory to arrest our attention and to detain our hearts! Alas! for us, to make such returns to our heavenly Bridegroom for all His self-consuming, self-sacrificing love to us!

What is the Church's place? How the Holy Ghost provides an answer to this question in the yearnings of

the heart of the apostle over the saints at Corinth, who had been the fruit of his ministry and the seal of his apostleship!—"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." (2 Cor. xi. 2.) Could any language more touchingly express the deep, devoted, single-hearted affection for Christ, and weanedness from all else, which constitute the only fitting response to the love wherewith He has loved the Church in espousing her thus to Himself? Ought even a converted world, if He were not personally present in it, to satisfy the heart of the one who is thus espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ? How do the laborious efforts, even of sincere, devoted Christians, to show that what is before us is a spiritual millennium, without Christ's personal presence, make manifest the condition into which the Church has sunk! Can any thing but her Lord's presence satisfy the heart of the faithful spouse? Then see the effect of this our departure in heart from the true scriptural hope of the Church as the spouse or bride of Christ. Adopting for our object, as the Church at large has done, the rectification of the world in the absence of *its* rightful Ruler and *our* Lord and Bridegroom, we naturally avail ourselves of all the means and influences within reach to bear upon our object; and hence the strange—the anomalous sight of the professed bride of an earth-rejected Lord possessing, using, and seeking still further to possess and use, the appliances of worldly rank and authority and wealth and learning and popular influence, to hasten on, as is affirmed, the epoch of the world's regeneration. The Church forgets her own calling—to wait as a widowed stranger in the world whence her Lord has been rejected, and where He is still dishonored and disowned; and soon, instead of thus keeping herself for Him, she is found in guilty dalliance with the world whose hands are yet stained with His blood! She proposes, indeed, to convert the world; but it is the world

that has converted her. To comfort her and sustain her heart amid rejection by the world, her absent Lord assures her that when He reigns she shall reign with Him—that when He triumphs she shall share His triumph. But alas! the world holds out the bait of present power, present influence, present glory,—yea, and consents to adopt Christ's name, and allow, and even patronize, an outward, superficial regard for that name, as an inducement to the Church to enter into the unholy compact. And has she accepted the unhallowed proposals? My brethren, has she not? We know that the false church says, (and, alas! to what an extent the true is mingled with the false!) "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Let us never forget that it was in the true Church the mystery of iniquity began to work; and how soon it had assumed this character of self-glorification and living deliciously, contented and at rest in the present state of things! "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us; and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." (1 Cor. iv. 8.) That is, the apostle longed for the time to come when, as saints, they should really reign with Christ; for then, he knew, he should reign with them. But until then, he was content with his Master's portion here. And if at so early a period he could say to the Corinthians, with how much more emphasis might he now have said to us, "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised"! If, my brethren, he could institute such a contrast then, between the results of faithfulness to Christ in himself and the other apostles, and the commencing indications of departure from Christ in the worldliness of the Corinthian saints, what could he have said to us in the present day? Who so realized as the apostle Paul what the true

place of the Church is, in fellowship and union with Christ? And what was the present result in his earthly condition? "Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labor, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." If the opposite of all this among the Corinthians called forth from the apostle such a pathetic warning—"I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you,"—what must he have said to us, I would again inquire, in the present day? If these things were not written to shame *them*, they surely do shame *us*! The tide of worldliness which then was setting in has since rolled on with such resistless force—it has so swept away all the old landmarks, and effaced every vestige of the Church's separation from the world—that now, saints are diligently taught to use every lawful effort to improve their circumstances, and raise themselves in the social scale; while he is deemed the best Christian who seems to approach the nearest to the practically giving Him the lie who has said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

W. T.

THE Word of God is adapted to man, though he be hostile to it—adapted in grace (blessed be God!) as well as in truth. This is exactly what shows the wickedness of man's will in rejecting it. And it has power thus in the conscience, even if the will be changed. This may increase the dislike of it, but it is disliked because conscience feels it cannot deny the truth. Men resist it because it is true. Did it not reach their conscience, they would not need to take so much pains to get rid of and disprove it. Men do not arm themselves against straws, but against a sword whose edge is felt and feared.—*J. N. D.*

PRESENT THINGS,

AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)*Nicolaitanism, or the Rise and Growth of Clerisy.**

(Rev. ii. 6, 15.)

THE address to Pergamos follows that to Smyrna. This next stage of the Church's journey in its departure (alas!) from truth may easily be recognized historically. It applies to the time when, after having passed through the heathen persecution, and the faithfulness of many an Antipas being brought out by it, it got publicly recognized and established in the world. The characteristic of this epistle is, the Church *dwelling* where Satan's throne is. "Throne" it should be, not "seat." Now Satan has his throne, not in hell, which is his prison, and where he never reigns at all, but in the world. He is expressly called the "prince of this world." To dwell where Satan's throne is, is to settle down in the world, under Satan's government, so to speak, and protection. That is what people call the establishment of the Church. It took place in Constantine's time. Although amalgamation with the world had been growing for a long time more and more decided, yet it was then that the Church stepped into the seats of the old heathen idolatry. It was what people call the triumph of Christianity, but the result was that the Church had the things of the

*The present paper is almost entirely a reprint of one formerly published. I feel I could add little to it.

world now as never before, in secure possession: the chief place in the world was hers, and the principles of the world every-where pervaded her.

The very name of "Pergamos" intimates that. It is a word (without the particle attached to it, which is itself significant,)—really meaning "marriage," and the Church's marriage before Christ comes to receive her to Himself is necessarily unfaithfulness to Him to whom she is espoused. It is the marriage of the Church and *the world* which the epistle to Pergamos speaks of—the end of a courtship which had been going on long before.

There is something, however, which is preliminary to this, and mentioned in the very first address; but there it is evidently incidental, and does not characterize the state of things. In the first address, to the Ephesians, the Lord says, "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the *deeds* of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate" (ii. 6). Here it is more than the "deeds" of the Nicolaitanes. There are now not merely "deeds," but "doctrine." And the Church, instead of repudiating it, was holding with it. In the Ephesian days, they *hated* the deeds of the Nicolaitanes; but in Pergamos, they "had," and did not reprobate, those who held the doctrine.

The question now before us is, How shall we interpret this? and we shall find that the word "Nicolaitanes" is the only thing really which we have to interpret it by. People have tried very hard to show that there was a sect of the Nicolaitanes, but it is owned by writers now almost on all sides to be very doubtful. Nor can we conceive why, in epistles of the character which we have seen these to have, there should be such repeated and emphatic mention of a mere obscure sect, about

which people can tell us little or nothing, and that seems manufactured to suit the passage before us. The Lord solemnly denounces it: "Which thing I hate." It must have a special importance with Him, and be of moment in the Church's history, little apprehended as it may have been. And another thing which we have to remember is, that it is not the way of Scripture to send us to church histories, or to any history at all, in order to interpret its sayings. God's Word is its own interpreter, and we have not to go elsewhere in order to find out what is there; otherwise it becomes a question of learned men searching and finding out for those who have not the same means or abilities, applications which must be taken on their authority alone. This He would not leave His people to. Besides, it is the ordinary way in Scripture, and especially in passages of a symbolical character, such as is the part before us, for the names to be significant. I need not remind you how abundantly in the Old Testament this is the case; and in the New Testament, although less noticed, I cannot doubt but that there is the same significance throughout.

Here, if we are left simply to the name, it is one sufficiently startling and instructive. Of course, to those who spoke the language used, the meaning would be no hidden or recondite thing, but as apparent as those of Bunyan's allegories. It means, then, "*Conquering the people.*" The last part of the word ("*Laos*") is the word used in Greek for "the people," and it is the word from which the commonly used term "Laity" is derived. The Nicolaitanes were just those "subjecting—putting down the laity"—the mass of Christian people, in order unduly to lord it over them.

What makes this clearer is, that,—side by side with the Nicolaitanes in the epistle to Pergamos,—we have those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, a name whose similarity in meaning has been observed by many. "Balaam" is a Hebrew word, as the other is a Greek; but its meaning is, "*Destroyer* of the people," a very significant one in view of his history; and as we read of the "doctrine of the Nicolaitanes," so we read of a "doctrine of Balaam."

You have pointed out what he "taught" Balak. Balaam's doctrine was, "to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication." For this purpose he enticed them to mixture with the nations, from which God had carefully separated them. That needful separation broken down was their destruction, so far as it prevailed. In like manner we have seen the Church to be called out from the world, and it is only too easy to apply the divine type in this case. But here we have a confessedly typical people, with a corresponding significant name, and in such close connection as naturally to confirm the reading of the similar word, "Nicolaitanes," as similarly significant. I shall have to speak more of this at another time, if the Lord will. Let us notice now the development of Nicolaitanism. It is, first of all, certain people who have this character, and who (I am merely translating the word.) first take the place of superiors over the people. Their "deeds" show what they are. There is no "doctrine" yet; but it ends in Pergamos, with the *doctrine* of the Nicolaitanes. The place is assumed now to be theirs by right. There is a doctrine—a teaching about it, received at least by some, and to which the Church at large—nay, on

the whole, true souls have become indifferent.

Now what has come in between these two things,—the “deeds” and the “doctrine”? What we were looking at last time—the rise of a party whom the Lord marks out as those who said they were Jews and were not, but who were the synagogue of Satan: the adversary’s attempt (alas! too successful) to Judaize the Church.

We were looking but a little while since at what the characteristics of Judaism are. It was a probationary system, a system of trial, in which it was to be seen if man could produce a righteousness for God. We know the end of the trial, and that God pronounced “none righteous—no, not one.” And then alone it was that God could manifest His grace. As long as He was putting man under trial, He could not possibly open the way to His own presence and justify the sinner there. He had, as long as this trial went on, to shut him out; for on that ground, nobody could see God and live. Now the very essence of Christianity is that all are welcomed in. There is an open door, and ready access, where the blood of Christ entitles every one, however much a sinner, to draw near to God, and to find, in the first place, at His hand, justification as ungodly. To see God in Christ is not to die, but live. And what, further, is the consequence of this? The people who have come this way to Him,—the people who have found the way of access through the peace-speaking blood into His presence, learned what He is in Christ, and been justified before God, are able to take, and taught to take, a place distinct from all others, as now His, children of the Father, members of Christ—His body. That is the Church, a body called out, separate from the world.

Judaism, on the other hand, necessarily mixed all together. Nobody there can take such a place with God: nobody can cry, "Abba, Father," really; therefore there could not be any separation. This had been once a necessity, and of God, no doubt; but now, Judaism being set up again, after God had abolished it, it was no use, it *is* no use, to urge that it was once of Him; its setting up was the too successful work of the enemy against this gospel and against this Church. He brands these Judaizers as the "synagogue of Satan."

Now we can understand at once, when the Church in its true character was practically lost sight of, when Church-members meant people baptized by water instead of by the Holy Ghost, or when the baptism of water and of the Holy Ghost were reckoned one, (and this very early became accepted doctrine,) how of course the Jewish synagogue was practically again set up. It became more and more impossible to speak of Christians being at peace with God, or saved. They were *hoping* to be, and sacraments and ordinances became means of grace to insure, as far as might be, a far-off salvation.

Let us see how far this would help on the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. It is plain that when and as the Church sank into the synagogue, the Christian people became practically what of old the Jewish had been. Now, what was that position? As I have said, there was no real drawing near to God at all. Even the high-priest, who (as a type of Christ,) entered into the holiest once a year, on the day of atonement, had to cover the mercy-seat with a cloud of incense that he might not die. But the ordinary priests could not enter there at all,

but only into the outer holy place; while the people in general could not come in even there. And this was expressly designed as a witness of their condition. It was the result of failure on their part, for God's offer to them, which you may find in the nineteenth chapter of Exodus, was this: "Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine; and ye shall be unto Me a *kingdom of priests*, and a holy nation."

They were thus conditionally offered equal nearness of access to God,—they should be *all* priests. But this was rescinded, for they broke the covenant; and then a special family is put into the place of priests, the rest of the people being put into the background, and only able to draw near to God through these.

Thus a separate and intermediate priesthood characterized Judaism, as on the other hand, for the same reason, what we should call now *missionary*-work there was none. There was no going out to the world in this way, no provision, no command, to preach the law at all. What, in fact, could they say? that God was in the thick darkness? that no one could see Him and live? It is surely evident there was no "good news" there. Judaism had no true gospel. The absence of the evangelist and the presence of the intermediate priesthood told the same sorrowful story, and were in perfect keeping with each other.

Such was Judaism; how different, then, is Christianity! No sooner had the death of Christ rent the vail, and opened a way of access into the presence of God, than at once there was a gospel, and

the new order is, "Go out into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." God is making Himself known, and "is He the God of the Jews only?" Can you confine that within the bounds of a nation? No; the fermentation of the new wine would burst the bottles.

The intermediate priesthood was, on the other hand, done away; for all the Christian people are priests now to God. What was conditionally offered to Israel is now an accomplished fact in Christianity. We are a kingdom of priests; and it is, in the wisdom of God, Peter, ordained of man the great head of ritualism, who in his first epistle announces the two things which destroy ritualism root and branch for those who believe him. First, that we are "born again," not of baptism, but "by the Word of God, that liveth and abideth forever;" and this, "the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you." Secondly, instead of a set of priests, he says to all Christians, "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (ii. 5.) The sacrifices are spiritual, praise and thanksgiving, and our lives and bodies also (Heb. xiii. 15, 16; Rom. xii. 1); but this is to be with us true priestly work, and thus do our lives get their proper character: they are the thank-offering service of those able to draw nigh to God.

In Judaism, let me repeat, no one drew really nigh; but the people—the laity (for it is only a Greek word made English,)—the people not even as the priest could. The priestly caste, wherever it is found, means the same thing. There is no drawing nigh of the whole body of the people at

all. It means distance from God, and darkness,—God shut out.

Let us see now what is the meaning of a *clergy*. It is, in our day, and has been for many generations, the word which specially marks out a class distinguished from the "laity," and distinguished by being given up to sacred things, and having a place of privilege in connection with them which the laity have not. No doubt in the present day this special place is being more and more infringed on, and for two reasons. One is, that God has been giving light, and, among Protestants at least, Scripture is opposing itself to tradition,—modifying where it does not destroy this. The other is a merely human one—that the day is democratic, and class-privileges are breaking down.

But what means this class? It is evident that as thus distinguished from the laity, and privileged beyond them, it is real and open Nicolaitanism, if Scripture does not make good their claim. For there the laity has been *subjected* to them, and that is the exact meaning of the term. Does Scripture, then, use such terms? It is plain it does not. They are, as regards the New Testament, an invention of later date, although, it may be admitted, as imported really from what is older than the New,—the Judaism with which the Church (as we have seen,) was quickly permeated.

But we must see the important principles involved, to see how the Lord has (as He must have) cause to say of the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, "Which I also hate." We too, if we would be in communion with the Lord in this, must hate what He hates.

I am not speaking of people (God forbid!): I am

speaking of a thing. Our unhappiness is, that we are at the end of a long series of departures from God, and as a consequence, we grow up in the midst of many things which come down to us as "tradition of the elders," associated with names which we all revere and love, upon whose authority in reality we have accepted them, without ever having looked at them really in the light of God's presence. And there are many thus whom we gladly recognize as truly men of God and servants of God in a false position. It is of that position I am speaking. I am speaking of a *thing*, as the Lord does: "Which thing I hate." He does not say, Which people I hate. Although in those days evil of this kind was not an inheritance, as now, and the first propagators of it, of course, had a responsibility, self-deceived as they may have been, peculiarly their own. Still, in this matter as in all others, we need not be ashamed or afraid to be where the Lord is;—nay, we cannot be with Him in this unless we are; and He says of Nicolaïtism, "Which thing I hate."

Because what does it mean? It means a spiritual caste, or class,—a set of people having *officially* a right to leadership in spiritual things; a nearness to God, derived from official place, not spiritual power: in fact, the revival, under the names, and with various modifications, of that very intermediate priesthood which distinguished Judaism, and which Christianity emphatically disclaims. That is what a clergy means; and in contradiction to these, the rest of Christians are but the laity, the seculars, necessarily put back into more or less of the old distance, which the cross of Christ has done away.

We see, then; why it needed that the Church should be Judaized before the deeds of the Nicolaitanes could ripen into a "doctrine." The Lord even had authorized obedience to scribes and Pharisees sitting in Moses' seat; and to make this text apply, as people apply it now, *Moses' seat* had of course to be set up in the Christian Church; this done, and the mass of Christians degraded from the priesthood Peter spoke of, into mere "lay members," the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes was at once established.

Understand me fully, that I am in no wise questioning the divine institution of the Christian ministry. God forbid! for ministry in the fullest sense is characteristic of Christianity, as I have already in fact maintained. Nor do I, while believing that all true Christians are ministers also by the very fact, deny a special and distinctive ministry of the Word, as what God has given to some and not to all—though for the use of all. No one truly taught of God can deny that some, not all, among Christians have the place of evangelist, pastor, teacher. Scripture makes more of this than current views do; for it teaches that every true minister is a gift from Christ, in His care, as Head of the Church, for His people, and one who has his place from God alone, and is responsible in that character to God, and God alone. The miserable system which I see around degrades him from this blessed place, and makes him in fact little more than the manufacture and the servant of men. While giving, it is true, a place of lordship over people which gratifies a carnal mind, still it fetters the spiritual man, and puts him in chains; every where giving him an artificial conscience toward man, hindering

in fact his conscience being properly before God.

Let me briefly state what the Scripture-doctrine of the ministry is—it is a very simple one. The Assembly of God is Christ's body; all the members are members of Christ. There is no other membership in Scripture than this—the membership of Christ's body, to which all true Christians belong: not many bodies of Christ, but one body; not many Churches, but one Church.

There is of course a different place for each member of the body by the very fact that he is such. All members have not the same office: there is the eye, the ear, and so on, but they are all necessary, and all necessarily ministering, in some way or sense, to one another.

Every member has its place, not merely locally, and for the benefit of certain other members, but for the benefit of the whole body.

Each member has its *gift*, as the apostle teaches distinctly. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. *Having then gifts differing* according to the grace that is given to us," etc. (Rom. xii. 4-6.)

In the twelfth chapter of first Corinthians, the apostle speaks at large of these gifts; and he calls them by a significant name—"manifestations of the Spirit." They are gifts of the Spirit, of course; but more, they are "manifestations of the Spirit;" they manifest themselves where they are found,—where (I need scarcely add that I mean,) there is spiritual discernment,—where souls are before God.

For instance, if you take the gospel of God, whence does it derive its authority and power?

From any sanction of men? any human credentials of any kind? or from its own inherent power? I dare maintain, that the common attempt to authenticate the messenger takes away from instead of adding to the power of the Word. God's Word must be received as such: he that receives it sets to his seal that *God is true*. Its ability to meet the needs of heart and conscience is derived from the fact that it is "God's good news," who knows perfectly what man's need is, and has provided for it accordingly. He who has felt its power knows well from whom it comes. The work and witness of the Spirit of God in the soul need no witness of man to supplement them.

Even the Lord's appeal in His own case was to the truth He uttered: "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" When He stood forth in the Jewish synagogue, or elsewhere, He was but in men's eyes a poor carpenter's son, accredited by no school or set of men at all. All the weight of authority was ever against Him. He disclaimed even "receiving testimony from men." God's Word alone should speak for God. "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." And how did it approve itself? By the fact of its being truth. "If I speak the truth, why do you not believe Me?" It was the truth that was to make its way with the true. "He that will do God's will shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." He says, "I speak the truth, I bring it to you from God; and if it is truth, and if you are seeking to do God's will, you will learn to recognize it as the truth." God will not leave people in ignorance and darkness, if they are seeking to be doers of His will. Can you suppose that

God will allow true hearts to be deceived by whatever plausible deceptions may be abroad? He is able to make His voice known by those who seek to hear His voice. And so the Lord says to Pilate, "Every one that is *of the truth* heareth My voice." (Jno. xviii. 37.) "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;" and again, "A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers." (Jno. x. 27, 5.)

Such is the nature of truth, then, that to pretend to authenticate it to those who are themselves true is to dishonor it, as if it were not capable of self-evidence, and so dishonor God, as if *He* could be wanting to souls, or to what He Himself has given.

Nay, the apostle speaks of "by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to *every* man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. iv. 2); and the Lord, of its being the condemnation of the world, that "light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (Jno. iii. 19). There was no lack of evidence: light was there, and men owned its power to their own condemnation, when they sought escape from it.

Even so in the gift was there "the manifestation of the Spirit," and it was "given to every man to profit withal." By the very fact that he had it, he was responsible to use it—responsible to Him who had not given it in vain. In the gift itself lay the ability to minister, and title too; for I am bound to help and serve with what I have. And if souls are helped, they need scarcely ask if I had commission to do it.

This is the simple character of ministry—the

service of love, according to the ability which God gives, mutual service of each to each and each to all, without jostling or exclusion of one another. Each gift was thrown into the common treasury, and all were the richer by it. God's blessing and the manifestation of the Spirit were all the sanction needed. All were not teachers, still less public teachers, of the Word; still in these cases, the same principles exactly applied. That was but one department of a service which had many, and which was rendered by each to each according to his sphere.

Was there nothing else than that? Was there no ordained class at all, then? That is another thing altogether. There were, without doubt, in the primitive Church, two classes of officials, regularly appointed, or (if you like) ordained. The deacons were those who, having charge of the fund for the poor and other purposes, were chosen by the saints first for this place of trust in their behalf, and then appointed authoritatively by apostles mediately or immediately. Elders were a second class,—elderly men, as the word imports,—who were appointed in the local assemblies as “bishops,” or “overseers,” to take cognizance of their state. That the elders were the same as bishops may be seen in Paul's words to the elders of Ephesus, where he exhorts them to “take heed to . . . all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*.” There they have translated the word, “bishops,” but in Titus they have left it—“that thou shouldest ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee; if any be blameless, . . . for a *bishop* must be blameless.” (Acts xx. 28; Tit. i. 5, 7.)

Their work was to "oversee," and although for that purpose their being "apt to teach" was a much-needed qualification, in view of errors already rife, yet no one could suppose that teaching was confined to those who were "elders," "husbands of one wife, having their children in subjection with all gravity." This was a needed test for one who was to be a bishop; "for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?" (1 Tim. iii. 1-7.)

Whatever gifts they had they used, as all did, and thus the apostle directs—"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine (v. 17). But they might rule, and rule well, without this.

The meaning of their ordination was just this, that here it was *not* a question of "gift," but of authority. It was a question of title to take up and look into, often difficult and delicate matters, among people too very likely in no state to submit to what was merely spiritual. The ministration of gift was another thing, and free, under God, to all.

Thus much, very briefly, as to Scripture-doctrine. Our painful duty is now to put in contrast with it the system I am deprecating, according to which a distinct class are devoted formally to spiritual things, and the people—the laity—are in the same ratio excluded from such occupation. This is true Nicolaitanism,—the "subjection of the people."

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

"THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE."

THE dawn of day is breaking;
Behold, it streaks the sky,
And hearts for Him are waking
Who soon shall fill each eye.
Soon, soon, in brightness beaming,
"The Day-Star" shall appear!
With glory round Him streaming,
His joyful shout we'll hear.

Our eyes are looking onward
To see the One we love,
Our feet are pressing forward
To tread those courts above;
Our hearts exult with pleasure
As nearer comes the day
When love beyond all measure
Shall beckon us away.

Then "face to face" beholding
The One who came to die,
His glory all unfolding
Before each raptured eye.
With nothing there to hinder
The heart's deep, full employ,
But all to call forth wonder
And ceaseless bursts of joy.

There on His bosom resting,
(Oh! deep and full repose!)
No more a time of testing—
No more to meet our foes;
But there, in brightest glory,
To gaze upon His face,
And ever tell that story—
"The glory of His grace."

“ABBA, FATHER.”

THE oneness of these two words together will have been marked by most of those who read these pages. Most will have known too that each of the words signifies the same, so that “Father, Father” would be the literal translation. One is Hebrew, or Aramean, and the other Greek, in the New Testament.

Three times are the two words brought thus together, and nothing is without its importance which God has given us in His Word. In Mark's gospel, chap. xiv. 36, we have the first occurrence, in the Lord's intercourse with the Father in the garden; but nothing in the use of the words appears there to help us to the understanding of their import. The other two passages are Rom. viii. 15 and Gal. iv. 6. Both these epistles deal with the foundation-truths of Christianity. The one unfolds, in a systematic way, the grace of God visiting the two great divisions of the human family with salvation, upon the common basis of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which God had been pleased to meet the need alike of those under law, as well as of those who had no law, with a righteousness of His own providing, through faith. The other, Galatians, presenting the same truths in a somewhat different way, and rescuing the truth from the perversions of enemies, or of *the enemy*, through his agents, treats of the same things in great degree, and shows alike Jew and Gentile sharing in the blessings of the gospel by faith. In both these epistles, then, we have, as the Holy Spirit's utterance in the heart of the believer—the Spirit of adoption, or sonship, these words:

"Abba, Father." Surely, it is plain that this is nothing else than to teach us our common brotherhood with the family of faith, and is the cry of the Jew and the Gentile, as we read in Eph. ii. 18, "Through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father." Not that the Jew says, "Abba," and the Gentile, "Father;" but each uses the double form, each recognizes by the words of his cry that the enmity between Jew and Gentile—that deep hatred nothing else could destroy—is gone, and in his access to a common Father, each owns the other's share in all that that name implies. Thus the gospel, as alike to Jew and Gentile—to all that are afar off as well as to those that were nigh, is given us in these precious and oft-used words. And may we not well believe that the Lord's use of these word's in Mark xiv. 36 is but another of the beautiful and distinctive features of that book in which Jesus our Lord is presented in His servant-character, ministering the gospel of God.

"'Abba, Father!' Lord, we call Thee,
(Hallowed name!) from day to day;
'Tis Thy children's right to know Thee,
None but children 'Abba' say."

R. T. G.

"HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE."

(A lesson from an incident.)

HAVING occasion recently to take a journey by an early train, on awaking ere it was light enough to see the time by my watch, I could see quite plainly upon the wall opposite a luminous match-safe, at least the word "matches" upon

it, vivid and clear. Thinking, "*That* is just what I need!" I groped my way to it, and felt in both sides of it, but in vain—none were there, and was about returning to bed to await other indications of the hour. Ere doing so, however, I took my watch, and holding it close to the window, strained my eyes to discern the figures, but once more the effort was fruitless. Just then I bethought me of a pocket match-safe I had with me, in which I knew there were some, if I could but find it; but as to this, memory gave the answer—it was in a satchel not in the room. All resources alike had failed me;—the luminous one, bearing its testimony brightly enough to *itself*, but a vain hope as to light for others; the light of day, which because not yet *arisen*, the approach of it was not sufficient; and the pocket-safe, while with plenty in it, not at hand, and so, equally useless for the time and purpose. Each and all alike had raised my hopes but to fail me and to leave me in the darkness still.

Musing over the connection of these things with lessons of the "*light of life*" in which the Lord would lead His beloved people, I then awaited the call of "mine host" as promised me, and a little of the result, beloved reader, I now pass on to you:—

As to the first case, have we not what fits in the apostle's word, as showing his testimony to be otherwise?—"We preach not *ourselves*, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. iv. 5), and illustrations of the same beautifully in John the Baptist, when asked, "*Who art thou?*" answering, "*I am not the Christ;*" and of Peter, saying, "Why look ye so earnestly on *us*, as though by *our own power or holiness* we had made this man to walk;" and of Paul and Bar-

nabas, saying, "We also are men of *like passions with you.*" (Jno. i.; Acts iii. and xiv.) The luminous safe, like much, alas! that bears the name of Christ, *professed* what it *possessed not*, and proved all confidence in it to be misplaced. As to this, how solemn the words of Scripture—"Having a *form of godliness*, but denying the power thereof"! "They *profess* that they *know God*; but in works they deny Him, . . . unto every good work reprobate." "A *name* that thou livest, and art dead." "Because thou sayest, 'I am *rich*, . . . be *zealous*, therefore, and *repent.*'" (2 Tim. iii.; Tit. i.; Rev. iii.)

Next, as to the second case, how well we know that, both morally and physically, "the *dayspring* from on high" is "to give *light* to them that sit in darkness"! and yet in this case it did not, for the haze of the morning caused by the mists of earth came in to hinder. With how many is this the case as to their both *receiving* and *giving out* the light to others! The world, with its *attractions* and *distractions*, intervenes, and they need to hear in power in their souls that word which alone can make all bright—"Arise! shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. . . . The Lord shall be unto thee an *everlasting light*, and thy God thy *glory.*" (Is. lx.) "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore it saith, 'Awake, thou that sleepest! and arise from the dead! and Christ shall give thee light.'"

Then, as to the last case: alas, for the record of many, if not most of us! are we not as the match-safe—*furnished*, but not "*ready* to every good work," because often not near enough to our blessed Lord and Master, who *went about doing good*"? Of how few can it be truly said that they

are "scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, who are like unto a householder, which *bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old*"! Many of us possess no little stock as to acquaintance with the truths of Scripture, and as so often spoken, a "knowledge of divine principles," but how often only to "minister questions rather than *godly edifying, which is in faith*"! Oh, beloved, may we, through His grace who loved the Church and gave Himself for it, and still *nourishes* and *cherishes* it, seek to be ever "holding forth the word of life"—"READY always to *give an answer* to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear"—"READY to *distribute*, willing to communicate"—"READY to *every good work*." (1 Pet. iii.; 1 Tim. vi.; Tit. iii.) Thus may we each, constrained by the love of Christ, both "*persuade* men," "*beseech* them to be reconciled to God," and as to His own dear people, that "they receive not the grace of God in vain," remembering Him who "came, not to be ministered unto, but to *minister*, and to *give His life* a ransom for many."

B. C. G.

"SOME time after Mr. Jno. Newton had published his *Omicron*, and described the three stages of growth in religion, from the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear, distinguishing them by the letters *A*, *B*, and *C*, a conceited young minister wrote to Mr. N., telling him he read his own character accurately drawn in that of *C*. Mr. N. wrote in reply, that, in drawing the character of *C*, or full maturity, he had forgotten to add, till now, one prominent feature of *C*'s character, namely, that *C* never knew his own face."

PRESENT THINGS,

AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)*Nicolaitanism, or the Rise and Growth of Clerisy.*(Rev. II. 6, 15.)—*Continued.*

AGAIN I say, not only that ministry of the Word is entirely right, but that there are those who have special gift and responsibility (though still not exclusive) to minister it. But priesthood is another thing, and a thing sufficiently distinct to be easily recognized where it is claimed or in fact exists. I am, of course, aware that Protestants in general disclaim any priestly powers for their ministers. I have no wish nor thought of disputing their perfect honesty in this disavowal. They mean that they have no thought of the minister having any authoritative power of absolution; and that they do not make the Lord's table an altar, whereon afresh day after day the perfection of Christ's one offering is denied by countless repetitions. They are right in both respects, but it is scarcely the whole matter. If we look more deeply, we shall find that much of a priestly character may attach where neither of these have the least place.

Priesthood and ministry may be distinguished in this way: Ministry (in the sense we are now considering) is to *men*; priesthood is to *God*. The minister brings God's message to the people,—he speaks for Him to them: the priest goes to God *for* the people,—he speaks in the reverse way, for

them to Him. It is surely easy to distinguish these two attitudes.

"Praise and thanksgiving" are spiritual "sacrifices:" they are part of our offering as priests. Put a special class into a place where regularly and officially they act thus for the rest, they are at once in the rank of an intermediate priesthood,—mediators with God for those who are not so near.

The Lord's supper is the most prominent and fullest expression of Christian thankfulness and adoration publicly and statedly; but what Protestant minister does not look upon it as his official right to administer this? what "layman" would not shrink from the profanation of administering it? And this is one of the terrible evils of the system, that the mass of Christian people are thus distinctly secularized. Occupied with worldly things, they cannot be expected to be spiritually what the clergy are. And to this they are given over, as it were. They are released from spiritual occupations, to which they are not equal, and to which others give themselves entirely.

But this must evidently go much further. "The *priest's* lips should keep knowledge." The laity, who have become that by abdicating their priesthood, how should they retain the knowledge belonging to a priestly class? The unspirituality to which they have given themselves up pursues them here. The class whose business it is, become the authorized interpreters of the Word also, for how should the secular man know so well what Scripture means? Thus the clergy become spiritual eyes and ears and mouth for the laity, and are in the fair way of becoming the whole body too.

But it suits people well. Do not mistake me as

if I meant that this is all come in as the assumption of a class merely. It is that, no doubt; but never could this miserable and unscriptural distinction of clergy and laity have obtained so rapidly as it did, and so universally, if every where it had not been found well adapted to the tastes of those even whom it really displaced and degraded. Not alone in Israel, but in christendom also, has it been fulfilled: "The prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule through their means, and *My people love to have it so!*" Alas! they did, and they do. As spiritual decline sets in, the heart that is turning to the world barter readily, Esau-like, its spiritual birthright for a mess of pottage. It exchanges thankfully its need of caring too much for spiritual things, with those who will accept the responsibility of this. Worldliness is well covered with a layman's cloak; and as the Church at large dropped out of first love, (as it did rapidly, and then the world began to come in through the loosely guarded gates,) it became more and more impossible for the rank and file of christendom to take the blessed and wonderful place which belonged to Christians. The step taken downward, instead of being retrieved, only made succeeding steps each one easier; until, in less than three hundred years from the beginning, a Jewish priesthood and a ritualistic religion were every-where installed. Only so much the worse, as the precious things of Christianity left their names at least as spoils to the invader, and the shadow became for most the substance itself.

But I must return to look more particularly at one feature in this clerisy. I have noted the confounding of ministry and priesthood; the assump

tion of an official title in spiritual things, of title to administer the Lord's supper, and I might have added also, to baptize. For none of these things can scripture be found at all. But I must dwell a little more on the emphasis that is laid on ordination.

I want you to see a little more what ordination means. In the first place, if you look through the New Testament, you will find nothing about ordination to teach or to preach. You find people going about every where freely exercising whatever gift they had; the whole Church was scattered abroad from Jerusalem except the apostles, and they went every where preaching (literally, evangelizing) the Word. The persecution did not ordain them, I suppose. So with Apollos: so with Philip the deacon. There is, in fact, no trace of any thing else. Timothy received a gift by prophecy, by the laying on of Paul's hands with those of the elders; but that was *gift*, not authorization to use it. So he is bidden to communicate his own knowledge to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also; but there is not a word about ordaining them. The case of elders I have already noticed. That of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch is the most unhappy that can be for the purpose people use it for; for prophets and teachers are made to ordain an apostle, and one who totally disclaims being that, "*of men or by man.*" And there the Holy Ghost (*not* confers power of ordaining any, but) says, "Separate *Me* Barnabas and Saul for the work whereto I have called them,"—a special missionary journey, which it is shown afterward they had fulfilled. (See Acts viii, xi, xiii, xviii; 1 Tim., etc.)

Now, what means this "ordination"? It means much, you may be sure, or it would not be so zeal-

ously contended for as it is. There are, no doubt, two phases of it. In the most extreme, as among Romanists and ritualists, there is claimed for it in the fullest way that it is the conveyance, not merely of authority, but of spiritual power. They assume with all the power of apostles to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands, and here for priesthood in the fullest way. The people of God as such are rejected from the priesthood He has given them, and a special class are put into their place to mediate for them in a way which sets aside the fruit of Christ's work, and ties them to the Church as the channel of all grace. Among Protestants, you think perhaps I need not dwell on this; but it is done among some of these also, in words which to a certain class of them seem strangely to mean nothing, while another class find in them the abundant sanction of their highest pretensions.

Those, on the other hand, who rightly and consistently reject these unchristian assumptions do not pretend indeed to confer any gift in ordination, but only to "recognize" the gift which God has given. But then, after all, this recognition is considered necessary before the person can baptize or administer the Lord's supper,—things which really require no peculiar gift at all. And as to the ministry of the Word, God's gift is made to require human sanction, and is "recognized" on behalf of His people by those who are considered to have a discernment which the people as such have not. Blind themselves or not, these men are to become "leaders of the blind;" else why need others to be eyes for them, while their own souls are taken out of the place of immediate responsibility to God, and made responsible unduly to man? An artificial

conscience is manufactured for them, and conditions are constantly imposed, to which they have to conform in order to obtain the needful recognition. It is well if they are not under the control of their ordainers as to their path of service also, as they generally are.

In principle, this is unfaithfulness to God; for if He has given me gift to use for Him, I am surely unfaithful if I go to any man or body of men to ask their leave to use it. The gift itself carries with it the responsibility of using it, as we have seen. If they say, "But people may make mistakes," I own it thoroughly; but who is to assume my responsibility if I am mistaken? And again, the mistakes of an ordaining body are infinitely more serious than those of one who merely runs unsent. Their mistakes are consecrated and perpetuated by the ordination they bestow; and the man who, if he stood simply upon his own merits, would soon find his true level, has a character conferred upon him by it which the whole weight of the system must sustain. Mistake or not, he is none the less one of the clerical body,—a minister, if he has nothing really to minister. He must be provided for, if only with some less conspicuous place, where souls, dear to God as any, are put under his care, and must be unfed if he cannot feed them.

Do not accuse me of sarcasm; it is the system I am speaking of which is a sarcasm,—a swathing of the body of Christ in bands which hinder the free circulation of the vitalizing blood which should be permeating unrestrictedly the whole of it. Nature itself should rebuke the folly—the enormous inference from such scriptural premises as that apostles

and apostolic men "ordained elders"! They must prove that they are either, and (granting them that,) that the Scripture "elder" might be no elder at all, but a young unmarried man just out of his teens, and on the other hand was evangelist, pastor, teacher—all God's various gifts rolled into one. This is the minister (according to the system, indeed, *the* minister,)—the all in all to the fifty or five hundred souls who are committed to him as "*his* flock," with which no other has title to interfere! Surely, surely, the brand of "Nicolaitanism" is upon the forefront of such a system as this!

Take it at its best, the man, if gifted at all, is scarcely likely to have *every* gift. Suppose he is an evangelist, and souls are happily converted; he is no teacher, and cannot build them up. Or he is a teacher, sent to a place where there are but a few Christians, and the mass of his congregation unconverted men. There are no conversions, and his presence there (*according to the system*) keeps away the evangelist who is needed there. Thank God! He is ever breaking up these systems, and in some irregular way the need may be supplied. But the supply is schismatical and a confusion: the new wine breaks the poor human bottles.

For all this the system is responsible. The exclusive ministry of one man or of a number of men in a congregation has no shred of Scripture to support it; while the ordination, as we have seen, is the attempt to confine all ministry to a certain class, and make it rest on human authorization rather than on divine gift, the people, Christ's sheep, being denied their competency to hear His voice. The inevitable tendency is, to fix upon the *man* the attention which should be devoted to the word he

brings. The question is, Is he accredited? If he speak truly is subordinated to the question, Is he ordained? or, perhaps I should say, his orthodoxy is settled already for them by the fact of his ordination.

Paul, an apostle, not of men, nor by man, could not have been, upon this plan, received. There were apostles before him, and he neither went up to them nor got any thing from them. If there were a succession, he was a break in the succession. And what he did he did designedly, to show that his gospel was not after man (Gal. i. 11), and that it might not rest upon the authority of man. Nay, if he himself preached a different gospel from that he had preached, (for there was not *another*,)—yea, or an angel from heaven (where the authority, if that were in question, might seem conclusive), his solemn decision is, "Let him be accursed."

Authority, then, is nothing if it be not the authority of the Word of God. That is the test—Is it according to the Scriptures? "If the blind lead the blind, shall they not *both* fall into the ditch?" To say, "I could not, of course, know: I trusted another," will not save you from the ditch.

But the unspiritual and unlearned layman, how can he pretend to equal knowledge with the educated and accredited minister devoted to spiritual things? In point of fact, in general he does not. He yields to the one who should know better; and practically the minister's teaching largely supplants the authority of the Word of God. Not that *certainly*, indeed, is thus attained. He cannot conceal it from himself that people differ—wise and good and learned and accredited as they may be. But here the devil steps in, and, if God has allowed

men's "authorities" to get into a Babel of confusion, as they have, suggests to the unwary soul that the confusion must be the result of the obscurity of Scripture, whereas they have got into it by *disregarding* Scripture.

But this is every where! Opinion, not faith;—opinion to which you are welcome and have a right, of course; and you must allow others a right to theirs. You may say, "I believe," as long as you do not mean by that, "I know." To claim "knowledge" is to claim that you are wiser, more learned, better, than whole generations before you, who thought opposite to you.

Need I show you how infidelity thrives upon this? how Satan rejoices when for the simple and emphatic "Yea" of the divine voice he succeeds in substituting the Yea and Nay of a host of jarring commentators? Think you you can fight the Lord's battles with the rush of human opinion instead of "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God"? Think you "Thus saith John Calvin, or John Wesley," will meet Satan as satisfactorily as "Thus saith the *Lord*"?

Who can deny that such thoughts are abroad, and in no wise confined to papists or ritualists? The tendency, alas! is, in the heart of unbelief ever departing from the *living* God,—as near to His own to-day as at any time through the centuries His Church has traveled on, as competent to instruct as ever, as ready to fulfill the word, "He that will do His will shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." The "eyes" are "of the *heart*," and not the *head*. He has hidden from wise and prudent what He reveals to babes. The school of God is more effectual than all colleges combined,

and here layman and cleric are equal: "he that is spiritual discerneth all things," and he alone. Substitute for spirituality there is none: unspirituality the Spirit of God alone can remedy. Ordination, such as practiced, is rather a sanction put upon it, —an attempt to manifest what is the manifestation of the Spirit, or not His work at all, and to provide leaders for the blind, whom with all their care they cannot insure not being blind also.

Before I close, I must say a few words about "succession." An ordination which pretends to be derived from the apostles must needs be (to be consistent,) a successional one. Who can confer authority (and in the least and lowest theories of ordination authority *is* conferred, as to baptize, and to administer the Lord's supper,) but one himself authorized for this very purpose? You must, therefore, have a chain of ordained men, lineally succeeding one another. Apostolic succession is as necessary on the presbyterian as on the episcopal plan. John Wesley, as his warrant for ordaining, fell back upon the essential oneness of bishop and presbyter. Nay, presbyterians will urge against episcopalians the ease of maintaining succession in this way. I have nothing to do with this: I only insist that succession is needed.

But then, mark the result. It is a thing apart alike from spirituality and from truth even. A Romish priest may have it as well as any; and indeed through the gutter of Rome most of that we have around us must necessarily have come down. Impiety and impurity do not in the least invalidate Christ's commission. The teacher of false doctrine may be as well His messenger as the

teacher of truth. Nay, the possession of the truth, with gift to minister it and godliness combined, are actually *no part* of the credentials of the true ambassador. "He may have all these and be none; he may want them all and be truly one nevertheless.

Who can believe such doctrine? Can He who is truth accredit error?—the righteous One unrighteousness? It is impossible. This ecclesiasticism violates every principle of morality, and hardens the conscience that has to do with it. For why need we be careful for truth if He is not? and how can He send messengers that He would not have to be believed? His own test of a true witness fails; for "he that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh *his* glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." His own test of credibility fails, for "If I *speak the truth*, why do ye not believe Me?" was His own appeal.

No: to state this principle is to condemn it. He who foresaw and predicted the failure of what should have been the bright and evident witness of His truth and grace, could not ordain a succession of teachers for it who should carry His commission unforfeitable by whatever failure! Before apostle had left the earth, the house of God had become as a "great house," and it was necessary to separate from vessels to dishonor in it. He who bade His apostle to instruct another to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart," could not possibly tell us to listen to men who are alien from all this as His ministers, and having His commission in spite of all. And thus notably, in the second epistle to Timothy, in which this is said, there is no

longer, as in the first, any talk of elders or of ordained men. It is "*faithful men*" who are wanted, *not* for ordination, but for the deposit of the truth committed to Timothy: "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Thus God's holy Word vindicates itself to the heart and conscience ever. The effort to attach His sanction to a Romish priesthood or a Protestant hierarchy fails alike upon the same ground, for as to this they are upon the same ground. Alas! Nicolaitanism is no past thing—no obscure doctrine of past ages, but a wide-spread and gigantic system of error, fruitful in evil results. Error is long-lived, though mortal. Reverence it not for its gray hairs, and follow not with a multitude to do evil. With cause does the Lord say in this case, "Which thing I hate." If He does, shall we be afraid to have fellowship with Him? That there are good men entangled in it, all must admit. There are godly men, and true ministers, ignorantly wearing the livery of men. May God deliver them! may they cast aside their fetters and be free! May they rise up to the true dignity of their calling, responsible to God, and walking before Him alone!

On the other hand, beloved brethren, it is of immense importance that all His people, however diverse their places in the body of Christ may be, should realize that they are *all* as really ministers as they are all priests. We need to recognize that every Christian has spiritual duties flowing from spiritual relationship to every other Christian. It is the privilege of each one to contribute his share

to the common treasury of gift, with which Christ has endowed His Church. Nay, he who does not contribute is actually holding back what is his debt to the whole family of God. No possessor of one talent is entitled to wrap it in a napkin upon that account: it would be mere unfaithfulness and unbelief.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Brethren in Christ, when shall we awake to the reality of our Lord's words there? Ours is a never-failing spring of perpetual joy and blessing, which if we but come to when we thirst, out of our bellies shall flow rivers of living water. The spring is not limited by the vessel which receives it: it is divine, and yet ours fully,—fully as can be! Oh to know more this abundance, and the responsibility of the possession of it, in a dry and weary scene like this! Oh to know better the infinite grace which has taken us up as channels of its outflow among men! When shall we rise up to the sense of our common dignity,—to the sweet reality of fellowship with Him who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister"? Oh for *unofficial* ministry—the overflowing of full hearts into empty ones, so many as there are around us! How we should rejoice, in a scene of want and misery and sin, to find perpetual opportunity to show the competency of Christ's fullness to meet and minister to every form of it.

Official ministry is practical independence of the Spirit of God. It is to decide that such a vessel shall overflow though at the time, it may be, practically empty; and, on the other hand, that such another shall *not* overflow, however full He may have filled it up. It proposes, in the face of Him

who has come down in Christ's absence to be the Guardian of His people, to provide for order and for edification, not by spiritual power, but by legislation. It would provide for failure on the part of Christ's sheep to hear His voice, by making it as far as possible unnecessary for them to do so. It thus sanctions and perpetuates unspirituality, instead of condemning or avoiding it.

It is quite true that in God's mode of treating it the failure in man's part may become more evident externally; for He cares little for a correct outside when the heart is nevertheless not right with Him, and He knows well that ability to maintain a correct outside may in fact prevent a truthful judgment of what is our real condition before Him. Men would have upbraided Peter with his attempt to walk upon those waves which made his little faith so manifest. The Lord would only rebuke the littleness of the faith which made him fail. And man still and ever would propose the boat as the remedy for failure, instead of the strength of the Lord's support, which He made Peter prove. Yet, after all, the boat confessedly may fail,—winds and waves may overthrow it; but "the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters—yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." Through these many centuries of failure, have we proved Him untrustworthy? Beloved, is it your honest conviction that it is absolutely safe to trust the living God? Then let us make no provision for *His* failure, however much we may have to own that *we* have failed! Let us act as if we really trusted Him.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

“THREE DAYS” IN SCRIPTURE.

“THREE days” seems to be commonly mentioned, and it may be interesting and profitable to trace it, as an ordeal for the soul that we may call the experience of death and the delivering power of God manifest at the close. The “third day” is of course resurrection, and “three days,” death and resurrection; but what we find in Scripture in the frequent occurrence of the three days is something more definite than this—that is, as above first suggested, we shall find that it very plainly brings before us death realized in the soul—the experience of death as regards all human power—death to the flesh, but gone through, or realized in the power of what is only manifest at the end of the three days—the power of God—resurrection-power, of course.

Abraham rises morning after morning for three days, with the death of Isaac in prospect; he expected to offer him, but accounting that God was able to raise him even from the dead. It was the end of self—of all human possibility.

Joseph’s brethren are put in ward three days (Gen. xlii. 17), and learn to confess their sin before being set free. Three days into the wilderness before the children of Israel learn the deliverance of God at Marah. In the third month (Ex. xix.) they came to Sinai, and until the third day they are kept waiting for the giving of the law. The law was not deliverance, but the delay was waiting for deliverance none the less, and opportunity given to realize their helplessness during the time of waiting.

In Numbers xix., the water of separation applied

the third day shows realization of sin in the power of resurrection—that is, real restoration of soul.

In Joshua i. 11, they are told that within three days they would pass over Jordan. They were in face of Jordan, the river of death, for three days before realizing the power of God to take them through. It is true Joshua says on the third day, "To-morrow, the Lord will do wonders among you," still they were to cross that same day: "This day will I *begin* to magnify thee."

Rahab bids the spies (ii. 16) hide themselves three days;—three days they were under the shadow of death, but preserved in the power of God through faith.

In 1 Sam. ix. 20, Samuel tells Saul that the asses lost three days before were found.

In 1 Sam. xx. 19, David, who had escaped Saul's javelin, was to hide three days, when Jonathan was to come (as he did) with the awaited tidings.

After three days, David and his men (1 Sam. xxi.) came to the house of God, and take the show-bread and the sword of Goliath—priesthood and victory over death in the power of life.

In 1 Sam. xxx., David and his men rejected by the Philistines; when he had fled from Saul, comes to Ziklag the third day; and finding all in ruins, his soul is restored in the midst of distress, and he pursues and recovers all. And the Egyptian, the servant of an Amalekite, who directed them to the enemy, was revived when he had been three days without food or drink (a precious type of a saved sinner); he follows with David to victory, delivered forever from Egypt and Amalek.

In 2 Sam. xxi., we have not three days, but three years—three years of famine, and God's deliver-

ance to David and his people when atonement has been made for Saul's sin against the Gibeonites by the death of seven of Saul's sons.

In 1 Chron. xxi. 12, we have brought together "three years," "three months," "three days;" where David, having sinned in numbering the people, is given his choice between three years of famine, three months of war, or three days of pestilence, and chooses the latter. And God's deliverance comes at Ornan's threshing-floor (testing and sifting), where Abraham offered Isaac, and where the temple was to be built (Gen. xxii. 2; 2 Chron. iii. 1), where David confesses his sin and offers sacrifice. An awful three days!—a going through death truly in spirit for the spared as actually for those cut off! but the end is the complete establishment of the ground of everlasting worship and peace. "The tabernacle of the Lord, which *Moses made* in the wilderness, and its altar" (v. 29), is left behind forever now. "David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the Lord;" with it was the terror of the law. But now David stands upon new ground, where atonement was made, the redemption-price paid, the sword of vengeance sheathed. To have gone back to the tabernacle of Moses at Gibeon would have been to have met the sword of the destroying angel; but now, having passed through the waters of death and judgment, and standing on new ground, David declares, with the boldness of one who has come to the knowledge of God in grace, "This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel," though the building was not even begun, but God had accepted his offering and answered by fire.

In Ezra viii. 15, 32, we have three days' solemn pause before a great or solemn undertaking. The people and priests gather with Ezra at the river Ahava for three days before starting for Jerusalem: Nehemiah abides three days at Jerusalem before going out by night to survey the ruins of the city wall.

Esther calls upon the Jews in Shushan to gather together and fast for her for three days. "I also, and my maidens, will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish." "Now it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, . . . and the king sat upon his royal throne," and "she obtained favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand." What a clear and impressive setting forth, in type, of intercession based upon death and resurrection as the salvation of God for His people! The Jews were condemned to death through the subtlety of their enemy; and Esther, at the end of three days of facing death, enters the king's presence, is accepted, and intercedes for her people, who are delivered without the repealing of the law by the word of the king—annulling him that had the power of death. The new decree permits the Jews to stand for their lives; and again we have the three days, for the Jews in Shushan (ix. 18) maintain the conflict against their enemies until the third day, when they rest, and make it a day of feasting and gladness. And they were to celebrate a memorial of this occasion, as a time when they rested from their enemies, and when their sorrow was turned into joy, and their mourning to a good day. There was to be feasting and joy,

and sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.

May we remember this, and may the song of praise be ascending from our hearts. And may we be so full as to be always ready to send portions to one another, and so in communion with the Saviour as to be able to preach the gospel to the poor. It was a celebration to be maintained throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city—it was not to fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial perish from their seed. The fastings and the cry were to be remembered, "and it was written in the book," and the glorious end of the despised but faithful Mordecai's influence and Esther's intercession was the wealth of his people and the peace of all his seed.

Let me go a little beyond my subject here to speak of the tempered tone of the joy of God's people in view of His judgments. The joy of God's people is a joy tempered and deepened by solemnity—the solemn sense of the awful judgments of God due to us, but from which we are forever sheltered by the blood of the Lamb, but which are about to fall upon the world through the wrath of the Lamb.

"And ye shall observe this thing (Ex. xii. 24) for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever. . . . And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. . . . And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt; . . . this is

that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations."

In this day of pride and folly, when man is scouting the thought of judgment to come, and saying, "Peace and safety," let us turn to the fountain of holy writ, and refresh ourselves with the company of the apostles and prophets, whose testimony is one, "Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments. . . . And again they said, 'Alleluia!' And her smoke rose up forever and ever. . . . And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.'"

There is "the acceptable year of the Lord," and there is also "the day of vengeance of our God."

The song of praise will go up forever and ever, but the mouth of them that speak lies will be stopped. "The shout of a king is among them" is forever true of the redeemed of the Lord; but there are blind leaders of the blind, so perverse that they must be let alone, and they shall both fall into the ditch. The joy, therefore, of the people of God is deep-toned and solemn. Upon dry ground themselves, they behold the dreadful walls of water that are to overwhelm the enemies of God forever.

Mighty the deliverance of God that will come at the end of this scene of affliction and Satan's wiles! and grand the chorus of praise that will be heard, in a mighty volume, from the Red Sea, from many a victory in the land, from the persecuted prophets and martyrs, from the Church in all ages, from the feeble and despised, who out of weakness

waxed strong—victory by the blood of the Lamb! The pent-up song will go forth then unhindered any more forever. There will be a sort of glad vengeance taken upon our own folly that that song due to the Lord of glory should have been so often choked and silenced here by the subtlety of Satan, and that we should have so little lived out the word, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

"As true as God's own Word is true,
Nor earth nor hell, with all their crew,
Against us shall prevail.
A jest and by-word they are grown;
God is with us—we are His own,
Our vict'ry cannot fail.

"Amen, Lord Jesus, grant our prayer;
Great Captain, now Thine arm make bare,—
Fight for us once again;
So shall Thy saints and martyrs raise
A mighty chorus to Thy praise,
World without end. Amen."

Of Jonah, and of the resurrection of the Lord the third day, we need say but little. Upon the latter, all is based, and all that has come before us from the Old Testament pointed onward to it.

Paul being three days blind, and neither eating nor drinking, before he was baptized and filled with the Spirit, is in the same line of teaching. And so as to a thorough experience of its kind, the Lord's experience of Satan's power over man in this scene of death, where He says, (Luke xiii. 32) "Go ye, and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.'" And this in response to

the word, "Herod will kill Thee," and followed by the word, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets."

We may appropriately close this review with the utterance of Jonah, giving his experience of death—of utter helplessness in the fish's belly—in the deep—the very embrace of death for three days and three nights, before he is cast out upon the dry ground of resurrection.

"Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, and said, 'I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and He heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and Thou heardest my voice. For Thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all Thy billows and Thy waves passed over me.' Then I said, 'I am cast out of Thy sight; yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottom of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about [or, closed upon] me forever: yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption ["In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,"], O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.' And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land."

E. S. L.

"IN QUIETNESS AND IN CONFIDENCE
SHALL BE YOUR STRENGTH."

(Is. xxx. 15.)

WHO like Thyself could be so patient, Lord,
With me? I know not how to ask aright;
But 'neath Thy love, Thy willingness, Thy might,
And trusting in Thy never-failing word,
What can I do but wait, while I believe
That what I ask, if best, I shall receive.

And I may come to Thee by night, by day,
With all my wants, and all my weaknesses;
My folly, and my sins,—yea, all confess,
Nor could I be content to stay away;
For all this weight a weariness would be,—
Unbearable, could I not come to Thee.

Oft I've no words, when most I feel my need;
But just to know Thee near, and feel Thy care,
Is oftentimes answer to my unframed prayer.
The while the very silence seems to plead,—
"Empty my heart of all but Christ, and prove
It, Lord. I know that I can trust Thy love."

Which of my earthly friends could I invite
Into the secret chambers of my heart
Unflinchingly, nor bid the guest depart?
My Father, Saviour, Friend, be my delight
That when alone with Thee, to let Thee speak
Thy will, Thy smallest wish my joy to seek.

Thus may it ever be,—my soul above
The chilling frosts of unbelief and sin,
And let Thy presence lighten all within
My breast, and may the ardor of Thy love
Burn there, self to subdue, and keep at bay
All that would seek to steal my peace away.

H. McD.

JESUS AND THE BLIND MAN.

(John ix.)

THE story of a sinner's need is the fitting prelude to the precious tale of the Saviour's grace, and in the instances of it with which Scripture furnishes us, this is usually the order. But here in *John*, not so, for the stream of blessing flowing from the heart of God out to us is seen on *His* side first,—“*down from above.*” “The good and perfect gift,” of which we are by grace receivers, is viewed first in its *source* “from *above*, and cometh down from the Father of lights, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,” and not, as often presented, come to *us* in our need, and then, by the heart that learns its blessing, traced back to its source in Him.

Turning to our chapter, we find this divine order. “And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth.” Connected with the close of the previous chapter, what a tale is told us in these words! There, man's heart of enmity, as being the bond-slave and child of Satan, is seen finding expression in hatred to the Light, which had searched him out; and as fuller and clearer its rays of searching—and yet blessing—illuminated the moral darkness, they finally “took up stones to cast at Him.” But Jesus (albeit He “had authority to execute judgment also,”) trod His lowly path of grace to men and of submission to His Father's will, hiding Himself and “going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” No flight of haste or fear was His, but the path of humility and yet confidence in God,—removing Himself from the hands of those who desired Him not, and so putting Himself into the Father's for the next service

of love assigned Him to do; and here He finds it. "As Jesus passed by, He saw a man," etc. Whose heart but *His*, receiving for all His love, hatred, and for His grace, rejection of it all, would ever have expressed itself in such a way? Yes, who but *Jesus* would have been at leisure from himself at such a moment?—His own sorrows forgotten, to think of others—His own will lost in that of Him "whose compassions fail not," whose name, words, and works He came to witness of; and how blessedly His works declare Him—they *all* yield Him praise. "*He saw*," as once in the chaos of the first creation (Gen. i.), a ruin for which He only could bring the remedy—"a man, *blind from his birth*." Once more His Spirit, as He who had then "commanded the light to shine out of darkness" was about to shine upon the darkened vision, and, better still, into the darkened heart, before Him. No mere chance was it that had befallen him, to which human skill might apply itself, but a *ruin* complete—the very nature and being wrong, hopeless and irremediable in human account—"blind from birth;" on this Jesus looks, and with a compassion equaling His power, and a wisdom that directed all His love. But here, as, alas! so often since, *disciples* are in His way, indulging the reasonings of their poor minds, instead of thankfully and humbly waiting to see what the Lord would do, and whither, as it were, the pillar of His glory *led*, and following it, not going on before it to merit His rebuke. They make their inquiries, and receive His gracious answer, revealing Himself more fully to their hearts; and this at least could be said of them, and well if it can of us,—with all their mistakes, they loved and confided in Him,

and were counted *blessed*, for it is written, "Blessed are *all they* that put their trust in Him." But Jesus passes on His way to do His *Father's* work, telling them as He does so where the only light for this dark world is ever found, Thus doing, He takes up the case of need before Him, which first His *eyes* saw, His *heart* compassionated, and now His *hands* would heal. All the activities were on *His* side; He saw, spake, spat upon the ground, made clay, anointed his eyes, and said unto him, "Go, wash,"—He did *all*. "By Himself" met all his need, as also we read as to ourselves, "purged our sins," and then "*sat down*," in token of His completed work. And be it marked, we read of no appeal to Jesus here, as with the blind man at Jericho, who cried, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"—no cries or tears or groans had moved His heart to pity, but the mute and hopeless misery His eye had seen spake loudest to His heart, for how truly He could say, "Mine eye affecteth mine heart"! God's fair creation marred—the creature He had exalted fallen—the being whose eyes once met His unabashed, of whom God could say surely, if of all the works of His hands "*very good*," now a libel upon His character and the glory of His name, and Jesus, as *vindicator* of His Father's character, as well as the *doer* of His will and the *declarer* of His name, cannot suffer it. All the stirrings of His heart are seen, and with the majesty of God He acts, if with the lowliness of Jesus, and "*none* can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?"

But the *way* of His working still further declares Him. "He *spat*" (expression of abhorrence) "on the *ground*," thus significantly expressing the divine

judgment of "sin in the flesh," for "the end of all flesh has come before" Him, and God's estimate of it is given—"All flesh is as grass." Thus must all man's glory be declared as shame, and his need and helplessness be made fully manifest ere the remedy of grace be further realized. All the actions doubtless are significant; and if the first speaks of *judgment*, which is the necessity of God's holy nature where sin is in question, how plainly does the next of *grace*, turning the former to account to further His blessed work! Oh to know better the meaning of all He *does* by knowing *Him* better! we may surely say. The blind man made blinder, if possible, by the clay put upon his eyes, (at least so if receiving sight is in question,) His works then are "made manifest." Throughout, He is declared to be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." The blind man but *submitting* to His dealings (as ourselves to the righteousness of God now—Rom. x. 3),—giving nothing, but receiving all; thus according Christ His rightful place as God the *giver*.

May His words become the true language of *our* hearts also—"I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." The Lord grant it to us, and to hear Him say, "*As I do, so shall ye do.*" Amen.

B. C. G.

AN ILLUSTRATION.

IF we compare the scene of the cross in Matthew and Mark (trespass and sin-offering),—forsaken of God, mocked and derided by priests, people, and thieves,—with the account in John (burnt-offering), where in divine calmness and

majesty He commits Mary to John, says, "I thirst," to fulfill the Scriptures, and, "It is finished," and yields up His spirit; it is like two different accounts of a vessel passing through a storm at sea,—the one, relating the awful roar of the elements, the screaming of the wind through the rigging, the thunder of heavy seas, the plunging of the vessel, the hiss of the water over the deck; the other account simply stating the fact of the vessel having steamed steadily on her way through the most awful storm on record. A third account could be given, to complete or enlarge the parallel, corresponding to Luke, the peace-offering side of the cross, where the thief "calls upon His name" and is "saved,"—that is, the account of what is going on in the ship—the officers and men calmly doing their duty, the passengers taking their meals, and enjoying intercourse, reading, or meditation. He hath made peace for us by the blood of His cross.

E. S. L.

PROFITS OF AFFLICTIONS.

WE are told that the Lord "doth not afflict *willingly*, nor grieve the children of men." It is certain, however, that all those who have been raised up to excel in any thing good, and to be useful among men, have always had an uncommon portion of trials, reproaches, persecutions, and sufferings. But what would have been the consequences to themselves and others had they not experienced these things, or had a less portion of them fallen to their lot? How little of that goodness found in them would have existed had they not had these trials! and how much less useful would they have been to others! Not a particle of trouble or affliction was appointed to them, or permitted to come upon them, but what was nec-

essary for their well-being, or that would turn to their benefit and advantage.

Why was it that the apostle Paul underwent so great afflictions? and why was it that a thorn was given to him in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, *to buffet*, or (as it signifies) to strike him with the double fist? which was so painful and annoying to him that he "besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him." The apostle tells us the reason why this grievous trial was permitted to him. "*Lest*," says he "*I should be exalted above measure* through the abundance of the revelations." How good and beneficial, then, was this affliction to the apostle, though painful and distressing to him in the extreme. And so it will be with every trial and affliction that shall come upon a sincere person. They all tend to his benefit and advantage, and are permitted to come upon him only for his furtherance in what is right, and are but evidences of the Lord's gracious and merciful intentions toward him. No truth is more certain or more fully supported by scriptures than this. "For whom the Lord *loveth*," says the apostle, "He chasteneth;" and he tells us, moreover, that He chastens us "*for our profit*, that we may be partakers of His holiness." Hence it is that the Scriptures so repeatedly speak of the blessedness of trials and afflictions, and so many under the New-Testament dispensation have been enabled to rejoice in them. "My brethren," says the apostle James, "count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." The apostle Paul also exhorts to be "patient in tribulation," and in writing to the Romans says, "We glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope."

The apostle Paul, after he learned for what reason the messenger of Satan was permitted to buffet him, says in reference to it, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my *infirmities*, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Cor. xii. 10.)

"OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION."

"**L**ORD, dost Thou call this our affliction *light*?
Is all this anguish *little* in Thy sight?"

"Child, bring thy balance out; put in one scale
All thine afflictions; give them in full tale:
All thy bereavements, grievances, and fears,
Then add the utmost limits of man's years.
Now put My cross into the other side,—
That which I suffered when I lived and died."

"I cannot, Lord, it is beyond my might;
And lo! my sorrows are gone out of sight."

"Then, try another way:—Put in the scale
The glory now unseen within the veil,
The glory given to thine own estate;
Use the exceeding and eternal weight.

Which brings down the beam?"

"Ah, Lord, *Thy word is right!*

Thus weighed, my sorrow doth indeed seem light."

* * * * *

God's plans like lilies pure and white unfold;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart:
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.

And if through patient toil we reach the land
Where tired feet with sandals loose may rest,
Where we shall clearly know and understand,

I think that we will say, "*God knew best.*"

(Selected.)

PRESENT THINGS,

AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)*Pergamos: the Church united with the World.*

(Rev. II. 12-17.)

WE have seen, then, two main steps in the Church's outward decline, after the loss of first love had made any departure possible. First of all, the divine idea of the Church was lost. Instead of its being a body of people having, in the full and proper sense, eternal life and salvation, children of God, members of Christ, and called out of the world as not belonging to it, it became a mere "gathering together" of those for whom, indeed, the old names might in part remain, but who were, in fact, the world itself with true Christian people scattered through it. Children of God, no doubt, they might be by baptism,* and by it have forgiveness of sins also, but that was no settlement

* "The prodigal son answers," says Chrysostom, in his first homily on Repentance, "to those who fall after baptism: he does so inasmuch as he is called a son; for none are sons apart from baptism, with which are connected all the benefits of heirship, and a community of interests with the family. He is called, moreover, the brother of him who was approved; but there is no brotherhood without the spiritual regeneration" (baptism).

In another place: "Although a man should be foul with every vice—the blackest that can be named, yet, should he fall into the baptismal pool, he ascends from the divine waters purer than the beams of noon."

"As a spark thrown into the ocean is instantly extinguished, so is sin, be it what it may, extinguished when the man is thrown into the laver of regeneration."

I quote from Isaac Taylor's "*Ancient Christianity*," (Philadelphia edition, pp. 343, 325, 326,) on "the means of estimating the quality of the Nicene theology," where much else of the same character may be found. It is significant that the Nicene Creed, with all its Trinitarian orthodoxy, knows nothing but "one baptism for the remission of sins."

for eternity at all. They were confessedly under trial, uncertain as to how things would finally turn out,—a ground which all the world could understand and adopt, with sacraments and means of grace to help them on, and prevent them realizing the awfulness of their position.

Of course this immense change from Church to synagogue was not at once effected. Yet the church, historically known to us outside of the New Testament, is but in fact essentially the synagogue. The fire of persecution combined with the fidelity of a remnant to prevent for awhile the extreme result, and to separate mere professors from the confessors of Christ. Still, through it all, the leaven of Judaism did its deadly work; and no sooner was the persecution stopped than the world's overtures for peace and alliance were eagerly listened to, and with Constantine, for many, the millennium seemed to have arrived. Could the Church of the apostles have fallen into the world's arms so? Their voice would have rebuked the thought as of Satan, as indeed it was. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?"

The second step we saw in the rise of a clergy, a special priestly class, replacing the true Christian ministry, the free exercise of the various gifts resulting from the various position of the members in the body of Christ. The clerical assumption displaced the body of Christian people,—now a true laity,—as at least less spiritual and near to God: a place, alas! easily accepted where Christ had lost what the world had gained in value with His own. As Judaism prevailed, and the world came in through the wider-opening door, the distance be-

tween the two classes increased, and more and more the clergy became the channels of all blessing to all the rest. Practically, and in the end almost openly, they became the church; and the Church became, from a company of those already saved, a channel for conveying a sacramental and hypothetical salvation.

We now come to look at the issue of all this when circumstances favored. In Pergamos, the change in the Lord's position is noteworthy and characteristic. He presents Himself no longer in the tender and compassionate way which He exhibits toward His suffering ones in Smyrna. It is now "These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges." His word is a word of penetrating and decisive judgment. It is with this two-edged sword that He by and by smites the nations (chap. xix.), so that there can be no question as to its meaning. And while it is of course true that it is not His own at Pergamos who are smitten with it, yet it is those whom He charges them with having in their midst (*v.* 16).

The characteristic thing in Pergamos is that they are dwelling where Satan's throne is. "Throne," not merely "seat," is the true word, though our translators, as it would seem, because of the strength of the expression, shrank from using it. To what it referred in the actual city, no commentator can tell us. Trench remarks, "Why it should have thus deserved the name of '*Satan's throne*,' so emphatically repeated a second time at the end of this verse—'*where Satan dwelleth*,' must remain one of the unsolved riddles of these epistles." But did the Lord bid him that hath an ear to hear what must remain an unsolved riddle? Assuredly not. It is

one of the characteristics of the prophetic view in these epistles, that it delivers one from the necessity of waiting until some archæologist shall be found who can explain such things, and gives us one for our profit both clear and satisfactory, derived from Scripture itself. But not only so. The practical worth of the archæologic rendering would be very likely little, if it could be gained. Of what value would it be if we believed with Grotius that this expression had reference to the worship of Æsculapius, whose symbol was a *serpent*? Surely of very little. Whereas the prophetic view flashes light upon the whole condition.

Satan reigns in hell, according to the popular belief; and Milton's picture, while it reflects this, has done much to confirm and make it vivid. But hell is a place of punishment, and Scripture is quite plain that he is not confined there. Then he must have broken loose, is the idea. God's prison was not strong enough! One might ask, How do we know, then, it will ever be? Think of the government which allows the chief malefactor to reign in his prison over those less evil than himself, and to break prison, and roam freely where he will! God's government is not chargeable with this. In hell, Satan will be, not king, but lowest and most miserable there; and once committed to it, no escape will be permitted. But this will not be till after the millennium, as Rev. xx. assures us.

But this idea permits people to escape from the thought—an appalling one, no doubt,—that he is still what the Lord designates him—"prince of *this world*:" "the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me."

True, He does speak so, some one may suggest;

but does He not also say, when predicting the effect of His cross, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out"? has he not, then, been cast out of his kingdom? and are we not "translated into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ"?

The latter is true; but as to the former, the Lord only predicts the certain effect of the cross, and the "now" simply declares it to *be* the effect. Here one startling expression of the apostle Paul, going beyond even that which the Lord uses, is decisive as to the matter; he calls the devil—long after the cross—"the *god* of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4).

And indeed the expression is stronger even than this. For the margin of the Revised Version is assuredly right, and it is the word "age," not "world," which the apostle uses. "The god of this age" is surely a very solemn title to be given to Satan after the Christian dispensation, as we call it, had already begun. Yet there it stands; and "Scripture cannot be broken."

Yes, it is over the world, and in these Christian times, that Satan exercises this terrible sway, and this is what makes the expression here, "dwelling where Satan's throne is," so sadly significant.

For "*dwelling* in the world" is another thing from *being* in it. We are in the world perforce, and in no wise responsible for that, but to be a *dweller* in it is a moral state: it is to be a citizen of it, the condition which the apostle speaks of in Philippians as obtaining among professing Christians: "For many walk, of whom I have told you before, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things: for our citizenship is in heaven,

from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Their characteristic is that they are enemies, not of Christ personally, but of the *cross*—that cross by which we are crucified to the world and the world to us. Their hearts were on earthly things, which, not satisfying them, as earthly things cannot, made their god to be their belly; their inward craving became their master, and made them drudge in its service.

The Christian's citizenship is in heaven. That delivers him from the unsatisfying pursuit of earthly things. But little indeed is this understood now. Even where people can talk and sing of the world being a wilderness, you will find that in general the idea is rather of the sorrows and trials of which the world is full, and which Christians are exposed to like the men of the world themselves. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward;" and pilgrimage in their minds is a thing perforce. The world passes away, and they cannot keep it; so they are glad to think that heaven is at the end. In the meanwhile, they go on trying (honestly, no doubt, if you can call such a thing honest in a Christian,) to get as much of it as they can, or at least as much as will make them comfortable in it.

But a pilgrim is not one whom the world is leaving, but who is *leaving it*. Otherwise the whole world would be pilgrims, as indeed they talk about the "pilgrimage of life." But this is the abuse of the term, and not its use. We can be pilgrims in this sense, and find all the world companions; and such, in fact, had got to be the idea of pilgrimage in the Pergamos state of the Church. They talked of it, no doubt, and built their houses the more

solidly to stand the rough weather. *God said* they were dwelling where Satan's throne was.

It was the history of old Babel repeating itself. You may find the vivid type of it in Gen. xi., where men "journeyed," indeed, but not as pilgrims, or only as that till they could find some smooth spot to settle down in. They "journeyed," as colonists or immigrants on the look-out for land; from the rough hills beyond the flood, where human life began; "from the east"—with their backs, that is, toward the blessed dawn; "and they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they *dwelt there*."

Such was, alas! the Church's progress—from the rough heights of martyrdom down to the level plain where there were no difficulties to deter the most timid souls. There the Church multiplied, and there they began to "build a city, and a tower whose top should reach to heaven." But "a city" was not Jerusalem, but Jerusalem's constant enemy; not the "possession of peace," but a city of "confusion"—Babel.

Yet it prospered: they built well. True, they were away from the quarries of the hills, and could not build with the "stone" they had there been used to. They did what they could with the clay which was native in that lower land. "They had bricks for stone, and bitumen for mortar." We have seen some of this work already. It looks well, and lasts in the fine climate of these regions quite a long time: human material, not divine,—"bricks," man's manufacture, "for stones," God's material. They cannot build great Babylon with the "living stones" of God's producing. Man-made Christians, compacted together, not by the cementing of the Spirit for eternity, but by the human motives and

influences whereby the masses are affected, but which the fire of God will one day try. So is great Babylon built.

Now it is remarkable that the word "Pergamos" has a double significance. In the plural form, it is used for the "citadel of a town," while it is at least near akin to *purgos*, "a tower." Again, divide it into the two words into which it naturally separates, and you have *per*, "although," a particle which "usually serves to call attention to something which is objected to" (Liddell & Scott), and *gamos*, "marriage." Pergamos,— "a marriage though."

It was indeed by the marriage of the Church and the world that the "city and tower" of Babylon the Great was raised; and such are the times we are now to contemplate.

Before we proceed, however, let us to this double proof unite another, that the threefold cord may not be broken. The parallel between the first addresses to the churches and the first four parables of the kingdom in Matthew xiii. I have referred to before. The first parable gives the partial failure of the good seed, as Ephesus gives the initial failure of the true Church. The second parable gives the direct work of the enemy—the tares sown among the wheat, as the address to Smyrna does the "synagogue of Satan." But the tares and wheat are separate, and the view is, in the first two parables, an individual one; the third parable is entirely different in this respect. *One* seed stands here for the whole sowing, and what is seen is now the aspect of the whole together. The little mustard-seed produces, strange to say, a tree, in which the birds of the heaven lodge, and the tree is a type of

worldly power. Turn to the fourth chapter of Daniel, and you will find in Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, such a tree. Surely it is significant that in every direction in which we look from here there is a finger-post which points to Babylon! And here in Pergamos, as in the mustard-tree, it is the Church as a whole which is spoken of. It is established, as men triumphantly say: it is *fallen* is the lament from heaven.

For this is not the Church's establishment upon its Rock-foundation, where the gates of hades cannot prevail against it, but in the world's favor; and if Satan be the prince of this world, what must be the price of this?

As a consequence, we find not only Nicolaitanism fully accepted, but the doctrine of Balaam also. They are still what is called "orthodox." "Thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful witness, who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth." For these are the Nicene times, the time of the first Christian council called (at Nicœa) by a Roman emperor, and which maintained the deity of Christ against Arianism. It was a sight, they said, to see at the council the marks of the confession of Christ in those who had endured the late persecutions. The Nicene period was that of two, at least, of the creeds substantially acknowledged by the faith of Christians every where since. But theirs was an orthodoxy which, while maintaining (thank God!) the doctrine of the Trinity, could be and was very far astray as to the application of Christ's blessed work to the salvation of men. Orthodox as to Christ, it was yet most unorthodox as to the gospel.

Where in the Apostles' Creed, so called, do you find the gospel. "The forgiveness of sins" is an article of belief, no doubt, but how and when? In the Nicene creed is acknowledged "one *baptism* for the remission of sins," but there is entire silence as to any other. In the Athanasian, it is owned Christ "suffered for our salvation," but how we are to obtain the salvation for which He suffered is again omitted. Practically, the belief of the times was in the efficacy of baptism, and so painful and uncertain was the way of forgiveness for sins committed afterward, that multitudes deferred baptism to a dying bed, that the sins of a lifetime might be more easily washed away together.

The Lord goes on to say, "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them which hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a trap before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication."

Balaam, the *destroyer* of the people, is a new graft upon Nicolaitanism. A prophet, in outward nearness to the Lord, while his heart went after its own covetousness,—a man having no personal grudge against the people, but whose god was his belly, and so would curse them if his god bade:—one whose doctrine was to seduce Israel from their separateness into guilty mixture with the nations and their idolatry round about. The type is easily read, and the examples of it distressingly numerous. When the Church and the world become on good terms with one another, and the Church has the things of the world with which to attract the natural heart, the hireling prophet is a matter of course,

who for his own ends will seek to destroy whatever remains of godly separateness.

It is one step only in the general, persistent departure from God never retraced and never repented of. Solemn to say, however much individuals may be delivered, such decline is never recovered from by the body as such. At every step downward, the progress down is only accelerated. "Have ye offered Me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. There were many reformati^ons afterward, more or less partial, but no fresh start.

So with the Church. Men talk of another Pentecost. There never was another. And the first lasted for how brief a season! "Unto thee, goodness, if thou *continue* in His goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

From Constantine's day to the present, world and Church have been united in christendom at large; and wherever this is found, there in truth is Babylon, though Rome be the head of Babylon, as indeed she is.

Let us look about us with the lamp the Lord has given us, and see whereabouts we are with regard to these things. How far are we individually keeping the Church and the world separate? How far are we really refusing that yoke with unbelievers which the passage in 2 Cor. vi. so emphatically condemns? Our associations are judged of God as surely as any other part of our practical conduct and "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" is His word. He cannot, He declares, b

to us a Father as He would, except we come out and be separate! Solemn, solemn words in the midst of the multiplicity of such confederacies in the present day! Can we bear to be ourselves searched out by them, beloved brethren? Oh, if we value our true place as sons with God, shall we not be only glad to see things as they are?

Now this "yoke" forbidden has various applications. It applies to any thing in which we voluntarily unite with others to attain a common object. Among social relations, marriage is such a yoke; in business relations, partnerships and such like; and in the foremost rank of all would come ecclesiastical associations.

To take these latter, now: There are certain systems which, as we have already seen, mix up the Church and the world in the most thorough way possible. All forms of ritualism do:—forms where in a person is made by baptism "a member of Christ and a child of God." Where that is asserted, separation is impossible; for no amount of charity, and no extravagance of theological fiction, can make the mass of these baptized people other than the world.

All national churches in the same way mix them up by the very fact that they are national churches. You cannot by the force of will or act of parliament make a nation Christian. You can give them a name to live, while they are dead. You can make them formalists and hypocrites, but nothing more. You can do your best to hide from them their true condition, and leave them under an awful delusion, from which eternity alone may wake them up. That is much to do indeed, and it is all in this way possible.

All systems Jewish in character mix them up of necessity. Where all are probationers together, it is not possible to do otherwise. All systems in which the church is made a means to salvation, instead of the company of the saved, necessarily do so. When people join churches in order to be saved, as is the terrible fashion of the day, these churches become of course the common receptacle of sinners and saints alike. And wherever assurance of salvation is not maintained, the same thing must needs result.

Systems such as these naturally acquire, and rapidly, adherents, money, and worldly influence; and among such, the doctrine of Balaam does its deadly work. The world, not even disguised in the garb of Christianity, is sought, for the sake of material support. Men that have not given themselves to the Lord are taught that they can give their money. It is openly proclaimed that God is not sufficient as His people's portion. His cause requires help, and that so much, that He will accept it from the hands of His very enemies. There is an idolatry of means abroad. Money will help the destitute; money will aid to circulate the Scripture; money will send missionaries to foreign parts; money will supply a hundred wants, and get over a host of difficulties. We are going to put it to so good a use, we must not be over-scrupulous as to the mode of getting it. The church has to be maintained, the minister to be paid. They do not like the principles that "the end sanctifies the means"—but still, what are they to do? God is in theory of course sufficient, but they must use the means, and the nineteenth century no longer expects miracles.

But why go over the dreary round of such godless and faithless arguments? Is it a wonder that infidelity bursts out into a triumphant laugh as Christians maintain the impotence of their God, and violate His precepts to save His cause from ruin? Nay, do you not in fact proclaim it ruined—irredeemably, irrecoverably ruined, when His ear is already too dull to hear, and His arm shortened that it cannot save?

Money will build churches, will buy Bibles, will support ministers,—true. Will it buy a new Pentecost? or bring in the millennium? Will you bribe the blessed Spirit to work for you thus? or make sheer will and animal energy do without Him? Alas! you pray for power, and dishonor Him who is the only source of power!

But what is the result of this solicitation of the world? Can you go to it with the Bibles you have bought with its own money, and tell it the truth as to its own condition? Can you tell them that "the whole world lieth in wickedness"?—that "all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father, but is of the world"? Can you maintain the separate place that God has given you, and the sharp edge of the truth that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God"? Of course you cannot. They will turn round upon you and say, "Why, then, do you come to us for our money? You ask us to give, and tell us it will not please Him our giving! It is not reasonable: we do not believe it, and you cannot believe it yourselves!"

No: the world does not believe in giving something for nothing. Whatever the Word of God may say, whatever you may think of it in your

heart, you must compromise in some way. You must not maintain the rigid line of separation. Balaam must be your prophet. You must mix with the world, and let it mix with you; how else will you do it good? You must cushion your church-seats, and invite it in. You must make your building and your services attractive: you must not frighten people away, but allure them in. You must be all things to all men; and as you cannot expect to get them up to your standard, you must get down to theirs. Do I speak too strongly? Oh, words can hardly exaggerate the state of things that may be every-where found, not in some far-off land, but here all around us in the present day. I should not dare to tell you what deeds are done in the name of Christ by His professing people. They will hire singers to sing His praises for admiration and to draw a crowd. They will provide worldly entertainments, and sit down and be entertained in company. And as more and more they sink down to the world's level, they persuade themselves the world is rising up to theirs; while God is saying, as of His people of old, "Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people: Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not,—yea, gray hair are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not. And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face and they do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek Him for all this" (Hos. vii. 8-10).

It is a downward course, and being trod at an ever-increasing pace. Competition is aroused, and it is who can be the most successful candidate for the world's favors. The example of one emboldens another. Emulation, envy, ambition, and a host of

unholy motives are aroused; and Scripture, the honor of Christ, the jealous eyes of a holy, holy God—ah, you are antiquated and pharisaic if you talk of these.

There is one feature in this melancholy picture I cannot pass by briefly thus. *The ministry*, or what stands before men's eyes as such, how is it affected by all this? I have already said that Scripture does not recognize the thought of a minister and his people. Upon this I do not intend to dwell again. But what, after all, in the present day has got to be the strength of the tie between a church and its ministry? Who that looks around can question that money has here a controlling influence? The seal of the compact is the salary. A rich church with an ample purse, can it not make reasonably sure of attracting the man it wants? The poor church, however rich in piety, is it not conscious of its deficiency? People naturally do not like to own it. They persuade themselves, successfully enough, no doubt, that it is a wider and more promising field of labor that attracts them. But the world notoriously does not believe this; and it has but too good reason for its unbelief.

The contract is ordinarily for so much money. If the money is not forthcoming, the contract is dissolved. But more, the money consideration decides in another way the character of man they wish to secure. It is ordinarily a *successful* man that is wanted, after the fashionable idea of what is success. They want a man who will fill the church, perhaps help to pay off the debt upon it. Very likely the payment of his own salary depends upon this. *He will not be likely most to please who is not influenced by such motives*; and thus it will be only

God's mercy if Balaam's doctrine does not secure a Balaam to carry it out. But even if a godly man is obtained, he is put under the influence of the strongest personal temptation to soften down the truth, which, if fully preached, may deprive him of not only influence, but perhaps even subsistence.

Will the most godly man be the most popular man? No; for godliness is not what the world seeks. It can appreciate genius, no doubt, and eloquence, and amiability, and benevolence, and utilitarianism; but godliness is something different from the union of even all of these. If the world can appreciate godliness, I will own indeed it is no longer the world. But as long as the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life still characterize it, it is not of the Father, nor the Father of it. And then, why in that passage does the apostle say "*the Father*"? Is it not because in thinking of the Father's relation to the world, we must needs think of the *Son*? As he says again in another place, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the *Son of God*?" And why? Because it is the Son of God the world has crucified and cast out; and that the cross, which was the world's judgment of the Son of God, is, for faith, *God's* judgment of the world.

Was Christ popular, beloved friends? Could He, with divine power in His hands and ministering it freely for the manifold need appealing to Him on every side,—*could He* commend Himself to men His creatures? No, assuredly. But you think perhaps those peculiarly evil times: they understand Him better now, you think. Take, then, His dear name with you to men's places of business

and to their homes to-day, to the work-shop and the counting-houses, and the public places—do you doubt what response you would get?

"In the churches?" Oh, yes, they have agreed to tolerate Him there. The churches have been carefully arranged to please the world. Comfortable, fashionable, the poor packed in convenient corners, eye and ear and intellect provided for: that is a different thing. And then it helps to quiet conscience when it will sometimes stir. But oh, beloved, is there much sign of His presence whose own sign was, "*To the poor* the gospel is preached"?

Enough of this, however; it will be neither pleasure nor profit to pursue it further. But to those with whom the love of Christ is more than a profession, and the honor of Christ a reality to be maintained, I would solemnly put it how they can go on with what systematically tramples His honor underfoot, yea, under the world's foot,—falsifies His gospel, and helps to deceive to their own destruction the souls for whom He died. The doctrine of Balaam is every where: its end is judgment upon the world, and judgment too upon the people of God. If ministers cannot be supported, if churches cannot be kept up without this, the honestest, manliest, only Christian course is, let the thing go down! If Christians cannot get on without the world, they will find at least that the world can get on without them. They cannot persuade it that disobedience is such a serious thing when they see the light-hearted, flippant disobedience of which it is so easy to convict the great mass of professors, while it is so utterly impossible to deter them from it. "Money" is the cry; "well, but we want the money." Aye, though Christ's honor is

betrayed by it, and infidels sneer, and souls perish. Brethren, the very Pharisees of old were wiser! "*We may not put it into the treasury,*" they whispered, "*because it is the price of blood.*"

F. W. G.

(*To be continued.*)

THE END OF A QUARREL.

TWO persons having a grievance, left their respective homes in search of each other; they met in the street, and there was a perfect reconciliation. Would to God that more that are found in like circumstances would "go and do likewise," obeying our Lord's word, "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*"! (Matt. v. 23, 24.)

"How rare that task a prosperous issue finds
Which seeks to reconcile discordant minds!
How many scruples rise at passion's touch!—
This yields too little, and that asks too much;
Each wishes each with *other's* eyes to see,
And *many* sinners can't make *two* agree.
What MEDIATION, then, the Saviour showed,
Who, *singly*, reconciled us unto God!"

(2 Cor. v. 18-21; 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.)

"If any man have a quarrel [grievance] against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye*." (Col. iii. 13.) "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. iv. 32.)

What a motive for our hearts, beloved brethren! May we in this attest our heart's love to Him who

has died for us, and says, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments"!

B. C. G.

THE REVOLVING CYLINDER.

VISITING a brother in the Lord some time since, who had utilized his saw-mill for the manufacture of broom-handles, I was at a loss to know how they were to be made smooth enough for use, seeing them come from the saw and lathe so rough in appearance. "Oh, I will show you," he replied, as I presented the difficulty to my friend; and, suiting the action to the word, he grasped an armful, and placed them in a revolving cylinder. In a very brief time, on releasing the belt, to my amazement, he took them out quite smooth in appearance and feeling. He had done this that they might *rub each other smooth*.

"Ah," said I, "here is a good lesson for us as to the ways of the Lord with us His people, and I understand better than ever what it is to 'endeavor to keep the *unity of the Spirit*.' When God's grace has saved a man, and made him personally fit to go to heaven, cleansed by the Saviour's blood, and with a nature capable of enjoying it, He next sees fit to put him into such circumstances on earth as thus serve him a good purpose, like this smoothing process." Thus, beloved brethren, it is that we are put, by His divine and unerring hand of love and wisdom, into association with many in the body of Christ who daily try and exercise our hearts, that so in the workings of His grace we may "*rub each other smooth*." Even so, Father, may our hearts respond!

B. C. G.

THE SERVANT'S NAME.

"THE servant's name was *Malchus*" are words of holy writ—divinely inspired,—“written for our learning,” or “admonition,”—part of the “all Scripture” which “is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Have we ever so considered it, and consciously profited by its brief though significant message from Him who “though He be *high*, yet hath He respect unto the *lowly*; but the proud He knoweth afar off”? Whether we have or not, may we now do so, and to our soul's profit, by His grace.

The part in Scripture where our verse is found is John (xviii. 10)—*that* gospel of the four which specially unfolds the glory of our Lord as the Eternal Word—“God manifest in the flesh”—the “Creator” and “Upholder of all things”—the “Light and Life of men;” and it surely adds to it something of “this glory that excelleth,” to be found in such a place.

First, it was the name of one who, at least to sight, was among those who “hated Him without cause”—one among others of the band Judas received from the chief priests and Pharisees, who “came with lanterns and torches and weapons to *take Jesus*.” In what associations, under what a leader, and upon what a mission to be found—embracing “the counsel of the *ungodly*, the way of *sinners*, and the seat of the *scornful*”! It is thus God records his name. Were this all that is told us, what reason for fear that it is *against* him the

record stands! and for what an awful reckoning in the day when God "maketh inquisition for blood," and calls men to account for the death of His beloved Son! But there is more. It was a *servant's* name; and were that too the only fact, how readily, among so many of greater importance, with men, would what befell him be dismissed by, "*Only a servant*, what need to mention him further, or record his name?" But not so with God, and here we are before God, and God is before us, albeit He is *Jesus*, our precious, lowly, gracious Saviour. Here, where we see our Lord yielding Himself up into the hands of His enemies, laying down His life, being led as a lamb to the slaughter, what grace in Him, while "*knowing* all things that should come upon Him," to turn from all concerning Himself, and not only exercise His divine *power* in behalf of such an one, but display His *grace* and *sympathy* as well, saying (as we elsewhere find), "Suffer ye *thus far*," as He touched his ear and healed him. Precious, unselfish, considerate Lord and Master,—able to create worlds, to command legions of angels, to make His enemies fall before His face, to drink the cup of divine judgment against sin,—yes, and *as able* (blessed be His name!) to soothe the pain of an enemy, to sympathize with and relieve the suffering of such, though but a *servant*. Surely it was of *that* grace that John had received, and under the inspiration of the same Spirit he was when he penned those gracious words, "And the *servant's name was Malchus*." And further, may we not hope from this record of his name that he was afterward known among our Lord's friends and followers, as here among His enemies? Having the assurance that one of such,

the dying thief, who by *necessity* was where he heard His gracious words, and was won to trust Him, and some ground also to believe that another, Simon the Cyrenian, who came, as it were, by *chance* upon the scene of His sufferings, was also numbered among His own (Comp. Mark xv. 21; Acts xiii. 1.); so may we not also hope that this too was the occasion of blessing to still another, who, it may be, was of *choice* among those "who took Jesus," and that it is in view of this his name was made part of holy Scripture.

Be this as it may, some lessons are plain and manifest, which may we not miss! Let us, like our gracious, adorable Lord, seek to *relieve*, rather than inflict, suffering, even though it be as to an enemy; and if even in men's account but a servant, may we show His gracious *consideration*. As to this latter, how strong this appeal to our hearts, in behalf of those in such relations to us, that there may be a fuller display of the grace of Christ in us; not only "giving unto them that which is just and equal," and suitably taking note of and "rewarding every good thing," as our Lord and Master does, and "forbearing threatening;" but realizing our stewardship of grace toward them, making us *debtors* to them as to all men.

And here, may we not fittingly find room for "a word of exhortation," which, through grace, may yield its profit? To how many, in this day of the overturning of the relationships which God has established among men, is the question of "*the servant*" a very serious one, and one fraught with more than a little care, which, alas! they seem unable to "cast upon Him," as believing "He careth for them"! Is there not a *cause*? and, (thank God!)

with this discovered, with Him a *remedy*? There is assuredly, and may we not ask our hearts, Is it not this?—Do we not too often think of such as those outside of us in whom we have, alas! but scanty interest beyond the amount of *labor* that they yield us for which we in turn compensate them? Can this, beloved brethren, be our God's thought for His people, when He has called us to be *imitators* of Him, as dear children? Were we to look upon ourselves more as "the stewards of His manifold grace," set here in the world to "bless, and curse not," as to all with whom we come into contact, would we not more seriously regard this matter of our servants? and if assured, as we should be, that those given us are *from the Lord*, and in answer to our heart's supplication to Him, would not then the *servant's name* with us have a record also? The frequent change of servants, with its attendant care and friction, with which not a few even of God's dear people are familiar, we may rightly own to be as really His *discipline* as the nations of Canaan left to try the hearts of Israel.

Let us, as to this though commonplace yet important matter, "*search and try* our ways, and *turn again* to the Lord," believing that He who "numbers the very hairs of our head" cares for all our concerns; and in this matter, as "in every thing," would have us seek His face, first as to *who* He would have come beneath our roof in that relation, and then also as to the needed grace (*sufficient, promised* grace,) for each day's trial as it comes, that we may thus, as in all things, "adorn the doctrine of our Saviour."

The goodness of Jehovah's heart,—*"pitiful, and*

full of tender mercy," how fully we find displayed in the statutes enjoined upon His people Israel as to those subordinate to them! and how pathetic His appeal as to the stranger,—“for ye *know the heart of a stranger.*”

May we, beloved brethren, in the remembrance of that grace to which we are daily such debtors, walk in its power toward all around us, that in “that day” of our Lord’s return our servant’s names too may have a record, as those whom we have “shown grace,” and been made channels of blessings to. Thus will we be made to share a little of His joy, whose grace said, “Suffer ye thus far,” and caused it to be written, “And the *servant’s name was Malchus.*”

May it be so for His name’s sake!

B. C. G.

ONE TOUCH.

“ONE touch—one little, scarce-felt touch—
 Amid so many! ’Twill only be as though
 A leaf had fluttered down upon His robe
 From one of these tall sycamores,—as though
 One snowflake more had fallen noiselessly
 Upon those far, calm heights of Lebanon,
 So light, so gentle! And for me—for me
 It will be *life!* The Master will not know;
 And I shall lay aside this weight of woe,—
 This vestiture of hopeless suffering,
 Which hath been mine so long, and shall be whole.
 I will not wait, methinks, to kneel to Him,
 Till the great multitudes have passed away;
 Though in the twilight, when the shadows fall,
 Unnoticed I might creep unto His feet;
 Nay, I will touch His sacred raiment now;
 How many have been straightway healed thus!

It may be with that touch I shall be whole.
The Master will not know that one so vile,
So sin-defiled, is near. I need not fear—
The quivering palm-leaves will not tell Him,
Nor the sycamores which grow beside the way :
I think God set them there lest the hot sun
Should smite upon His Servants's face to-day."

So she came nearer—mingled among those
Who followed closest round Him in the crowd.
A moment more, and her worn hand had touched
The *border* of His robe : its azure hem
Lay for one moment 'neath those fingers frail,
Which came in contact with its wondrous blue
So quick, so tremblingly ! And then she knew,
With one wild throb of joy, that she was *whole* !
But straightway wonderingly the Master turned,
And looking on the eager, restless crowd
Which pressed around His sacred form, He asked,
"*Who* touched My clothes?" Then, heeding not
their words,

Nor yet the questionings of those He loved,
He sought her where she stood, and looked on her
With one sweet look, which told her *He* knew all ;
And bade her, irresistibly, to rise
And come to Him. Yes, *He knew all*. As well
Might mother be unconscious that the babe,
O'er which in speechless agony she bent
To see it die, was given back to her
By God ; as well might she not heed its smile,
Nor yet the first light touch upon her cheek
Of the small baby-fingers. So she came—
Rejoicingly, yet tremblingly, she came—
And, kneeling low at His dear feet, she told
How great had been His grace. And then, in words
Which breathed naught but tenderness, He filled
Yet fuller to the brim her cup of joy—
Sealing her trembling gladness with His word,
"Thy faith hath made the whole : *go in peace.*"

J. S. P.

PRESENT THINGS,

AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)*Pergamos: the Church united with the World.*(Rev. II. 12-17.)—*Continued.*

IT will be a relief to turn to Scripture, and to examine what we have there upon this subject. It is very simple. There was no organized machinery for supporting churches; none for paying ministers; no promise, no contract upon the people's part, as to any sum they were to receive at all. There were necessities, of course, many, to be provided for, and it was understood that there was to be provision. The saints themselves had to meet all. They had not taken up with a cheap religion. Having often to lay down their lives for it, they did not think much of their goods. The principle was this: "Every man as he is disposed in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." It was to be to God, and before God. There was to be no blazoning it out to brethren, still less before the world. He that gave was not to let his left hand know what his right hand was doing.

It is true there were solemn motives to enforce it. On the one side, "he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully;" but on the other side, most powerful, most influential of all, was this: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

who, though He was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich."

Such was the principle, such was to be the motive. There was no compulsory method of extraction if this failed. If there was not heart to give, it was no use to extract.

So as to the laborer in the Word,—it was very clearly announced, and that as what God had ordained, that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel," and that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." But although here also God used the willing hands of His people, it was not understood that *they* "hired" him, or that he was *their* laborer. What they gave, it was to God they gave it, and *his* privilege was to be Christ's servant. His responsibility was to the Lord, and theirs also. They did not understand that they were to get so much work for so much money. They did not *pay*, but "*offered*." There is a wonderful difference; for you cannot "pay" God, and you do not "offer" (in this sense of offering,) to man. The moment you *pay*, God is out of the question.

Do you think this is perhaps a little unfair on both sides? that it is right that there should be something more of an equivalent for the labor he bestows,—for the money you give? That is good law, bad gospel. What better than simony is it to suppose after this fashion—"that the gift of God can be purchased with money"? Would you rather make your own bargain than trust Christ's *grace* to minister to your need? or is it hard for him that he who ministers the Word should show his practical trust in the Word by looking to the Lord for his support? Ah, to whom could he look

so well? and how much better off would he be for losing the sweet experience of His care?

No; it is all unbelief in divine power and love, and machinery brought in to make up for the want of it. And yet if there is not this, what profit is there of keeping up the empty profession of it? If God can fail, let the whole thing go together; if *He* cannot, then your skillful contrivances are only the exhibition of rank unbelief.

And what do you accomplish by it? You bring in the Canaanite (the merchantman) into the house of the Lord. You offer a premium to the trader in divine things,—the man who most values your money and least cares for your souls. You cannot but be aware how naturally those two extremes associate together, and you cannot but own that if you took the Lord's plan, and left His laborers to look to Him for their support, you would do more to weed out such traffickers than by all your care and labor otherwise. Stop the hire, and you will banish the hirelings, and the blessed ministry of Christ will be freed from an incubus and a reproach which your contracts and bargainings are largely responsible for.

And if Christ's servants cannot after all trust Him, let them seek out some honest occupation where they may gain their bread without scandal. In the fifteenth century before Christ, God brought out a whole nation out of Egypt, and maintained them forty years in the wilderness. Did He? or did He not? Is He as competent as ever? Alas! will you dare to say those were the days of His youth, and these of His decrepitude?

So serious are these questions. But the unbelief that exists now existed then. Do you remember

what the people did when they had lost Moses on the mount awhile and lacked a leader? *They made a god of the gold which they had brought out of Egypt with them, and fell down and worshiped the work of their own hands.* History repeats itself. Who can deny that we have been looking on the counterpart of that?

Is there any measure, it may be well to ask here, of the Christian's giving, for one who would be right with God about it?

The notion of the tithe or tenth has been revived, or with some two tithes, as that which was the measure of an Israelite's giving. Jacob has been propounded to us as an example, as he stood before God in the morning after that wonderful night at Bethel, when God had engaged to be with him and to be his God, and to multiply his seed, and bring him again into the land from which he was departing. "If God will be with me," he says, "and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then the Lord shall be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house, and of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

God's ways are so little like our ways, His thoughts so little like our thoughts, it is not very wonderful man does not understand them. But surely Jacob does not here enter into the blessedness of God's thoughts.

I need not dwell now upon his case, but only notice it to say that for a Christian at least the whole principle is a mistake. You are not to ransom nine-tenths from God by giving one. You are

bought with a price—you and yours. In a double way, by creation and redemption too, you belong, with all you have, to God. Many people are acting upon the perfectly wrong idea that whether as to time, money, or whatever else, God is to have His share, and the rest is their own. They misunderstand the legal types, and do not realize the immense difference that accomplished redemption has brought in with it.

Before "Ye are bought with a price" could yet be said, it was impossible to deduce the consequences that result from this. Grace goes beyond law, which made nothing, and could make nothing, perfect. The very essence of the surrender of the life to God is that it must be a voluntary one. Like the vow of the Nazarite, which was a vow of separation to the Lord, and which reads, "When any one *will* vow the vow of a Nazarite," that surrender must be of the heart, or it is none. Nor is it a contradiction to this that there were *born* Nazarites—Nazarites from the womb, as Samson and the Baptist. We are all *born* (new-born) to Nazariteship, which is implied and necessitated (in a true sense) by the life which we receive from God. But the necessity is not one externally impressed upon it; it is an internal one. "A new heart will I give you," says the Lord; but the new heart given is a heart which chooses freely the service of its Master.

A legal requirement of the whole then would have been unavailing, and a mere bondage. "Not grudgingly, or of necessity," is, as we have seen, the Scripture rule. But that does not at all mean what people characterize as "cheap religion." It does not mean that God will accept the "mites" of the niggard as the Lord did those of the woman in

the Gospels. Christ does not say now, Give as much or as little as you please: it is all one. No: He expects intelligent, free surrender of all to Him, as on the part of one who recognizes that all is really His.

If you will look at the sixteenth chapter of Luke, you will find the Lord announcing very distinctly this principle. The unjust steward is our picture there,—the picture of those who are (as we all are as to the old creation) under sentence of dismissal from the place they were originally put in, on account of unrighteous dealing in it. Grace has not recalled the sentence, "Thou mayest be no longer steward." It has given us far more, but it has not reinstalled us in the place we have thus lost. Death, in fact, is our removal from our stewardship, although it be the entrance, for us as Christians, into something which must be confessed "far better."

But grace has delayed the execution of the sentence, and meanwhile our Master's goods are in our hand. All that we have here are *His* things, and not ours. And now God looks for us to be faithful in what is, alas! to men as such (creature of God as indeed it is,) "the mammon of unrighteousness,"—the miserable deity of unrighteous man.

Moreover, grace counts this faithfulness to us. We are permitted to "make *friends* of this mammon of unrighteousness" by our godly use of it, whereas it is naturally, through our fault, our enemy and our accuser. It must not be imagined that the "unjust steward" is to be our character literally all through. The Lord shows us that this is not so when He speaks of "faithfulness" being looked for. No doubt the unjust steward in the parable acts unjustly with his master's goods, and

it must not be imagined that *God* commends him, it is "his lord" that does so,—man as man admiring the shrewdness which he displayed. Yet only so could be imaged that conduct which in us is *not* injustice but faithfulness to our Master,—grace entitling us to use what we have received, for our own true and eternal interests, which in this case are one with His own due and glory.

But then there are things also which we may speak of as "our own." What are these? Ah, they are what the Lord speaks of as, after all, "the true riches." "If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is Another's, [not 'another *man's*,' but of course God's,] who will give you that which is *your own*?"

Thus our own things are distinct altogether; and I must not tell Christians what they are. I need only remind you that if you have in your thoughts as men down here, a quantity of things, your own possessions, to be liberal with or to hoard up,—in both cases you misapprehend the matter. You have as to things here your *Master's* goods, which if you hoard up here, you surely lose hereafter, and turn into accusers. On the other hand, you are graciously permitted to transfer them really to your own account, by laying them up amid your treasure, where your treasure is—"in heaven."

The rich man in the solemn illustration at the end of the chapter was one who had made his Lord's "good things" his own after another fashion, and in eternity they were not friends, but enemies and accusers. "Son," says Abraham to him, "remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy

good things." That was all, but what a solemn memory it was! How once again the purple and fine linen and sumptuous fare met the eyes they had once gratified and now appalled! Lazarus had been at his gate, but it was not Lazarus that accused. And oh, beware of having things your own down here! There was a man who had "his good things" here, and in eternity what were they to him?

I know this is not the gospel. No, but it is what, as the principle of God's holy government, the gospel should prepare us to understand and to enter into. Have you observed that the most beautiful and affecting story of gospel grace, the story of the lost son received, is what *precedes* the story of the unjust steward? The Pharisees who in the fifteenth chapter stand for the picture of the elder son are here rebuked in the person of the rich man. Will not the prodigal received back to a Father's arms be the very one who will understand that he owes his all to a Father's love? Is not "Ye are bought with a price" the gospel? But then "*ye are bought: ye are not your own.*"

Put it in another way. You remember that when God would bring His people out of Egypt, Pharaoh wanted to compromise,—of course by that compromise to keep the people as his slaves. Three separate offers he makes to Moses, each of which would have prevented salvation being, according to God's thought of it, salvation at all. The first compromise was, "*Worship in the land.*"

"And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, 'Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.'"

And still the world asks, "Why need you go outside it? You are entitled to your opinions, but why be so extreme? Why three days' journey

into the wilderness? Why separate from what you were brought up in, and from people as good as you?" Ah, they do not know what that three days' journey implies, and that the death and resurrection of Christ place you where you are no more of the world than He is! Egypt,—luxurious, civilized, self-satisfied, idolatrous Egypt,—and the wilderness! what a contrast! Yet only in the wilderness can you sacrifice to God.

Then he tries another stratagem:—

"And he said unto them, 'Go, serve the Lord your God; *but who are they that shall go?*'"

"And Moses said, 'We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds we will go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord.'

"And he said unto them, 'Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go and your little ones: look to it, for evil is before you. Not so: go now ye that are *men*, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire.'"

By their little ones he had them safe, of course,—a perfectly good security that they would not go far away. And so it is still. How many are brought back into the world by the children they did not bring with them *out of* the world!

One last hope remains for Pharaoh:—

"And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, 'Go ye, serve the Lord; *only let your flocks and your herds be stayed*: let your little ones also go with you.'

"Leave your possessions," he says; and how many leave their possessions! Themselves are saved: but their business, their occupation, these are still not sacred things, they are secular; what

have these things to do with the salvation of the soul?

But God says, No: bring them all out of Egypt: yourselves, your families, your property,—all are to be Mine.

And in point of fact, His it must be if we would ourselves keep it, for we cannot keep it of ourselves. The man out of whom the devil went is our Lord's own illustration of the fact that an empty house will never lack a tenant. The sweeping and garnishing and all that, will not keep out the devil, but perhaps only make him more earnest after occupation. Nothing will save from it but the positive possession of it by another, who will not and need not give it up. So we must bring Christ into every thing, or by that in which He is not we shall find we have but made room for another,—Christ's opposite. The parable has application in many ways and in many degrees to those who are Christ's people, as well as to those who are not. Our really idle hours are not idle. Our useless occupations have a use, if not for Christ, then against Him. Our so-called recreations may be but the frittering away of energy, as well as time, and not only distraction, but the seed of worse distraction.

We are in a world where on every side we are exposed to influences of the most subtle character; where corruption and decay are natural; and where all thus is not permeated by divine life, it becomes the necessary and speedy subject of decay and death. To a beleaguered garrison, a holiday may be fatal. We cannot ever here ungird our loins or unbuckle our armor. It is not enough to withstand in the evil day; but having done all, still you must stand. So if you leave Christ at the door

of the counting-house, you will have to contend alone with (or give place to) the devil within the counting-house.

Does this startle you? does it seem to require too much? It requires that you should be with Christ in constant companionship, at all times and on all occasions. Is that narrow,—a rigid, an uncomfortable view of matters? Does it distress you to think of giving Him such a place as that? There are those who believe that *he* is the picture of a converted man, who complains he never got a kid to make merry with his friends. Do you realize that? Do you sympathize with such a view? Have you friends that you would like to run away to for a while out of Christ's scrutiny or company? Beloved, when you think of heaven, is it of a long *monotony* of being "ever with the Lord"? You startle at that suggestion; and no wonder. But if you will find eternal joy then, and now can think of it as that, to be ever with Him there, is it less happy to think of being always with Him here?

At any rate, you cannot alter the reality by all your thoughts about it. None of our thoughts can change the nature of things. You cannot find in all this world a clean corner in which you can be apart from Christ and yet apart from evil. And if you could, the very idea of being so would of itself pollute it with evil. No; Christ must be a constant Saviour as to every detail of our walk and ways. Communion with Him is the only alternative of communion with evil. The wisdom that has not Him in it, will be "earthly, sensual, devilish;" if it come not from above, come it will from below.

Thus you see how important it is to be right

here. It is not a mere question of points of detail; it is a question of truth of heart to Him, which affects every detail,—the whole character and complexion of our lives indeed. So you must not wonder at a question of *cattle* being concerned with a deeper question of "salvation" itself; looking at salvation as not merely being from wrath and condemnation, but of salvation from the sin also which brings in these. God gives it us thus in the typical picture here, and it is not a blot or deformity in the picture, but rather an essential part. Be persuaded of it, beloved friends, that only thus can we find, in the full power of it, what salvation is.

We have been looking at this from the side of responsibility. Surely it is good to look at it also from the side of salvation. Until you are clean delivered in these three respects, you cannot be happily with God, nor even safe. Of course I am not talking about reaching heaven; you may be safe in that respect. But whatever you have that is not Christ's, that is the world's still, and it will drag you back into the world. You are keeping it back from Him; you have a divided interest; how can this but affect all your intercourse, all your happiness (or what you ought to have) with Him? Can you go to your business and shut the door upon Him and He not feel it, and *you* not feel it? Can you say to Him, "Lord, Sunday is Yours and Monday is mine," or "Lord, there is Your tenth, and these nine are mine," and feel perfectly satisfied that all is right with Him?

And practically, it gets to be much less. He gets a part of our superfluity, and that is all. We must dress like our neighbors, live up to our rank of life, put a little by for a "rainy day," and something for

our children. "We must be *just* before we are generous," we think. And then, with some reserve for recreation, and some for miscellaneous trifles, *all the rest shall be the Lord's*. It may be but a "mite," but did not He accept a mite? *So the very narrowness of our dole to the Lord who has saved us links us with her who had His special commendation.*

Better keep it all back than give it in that fashion. For the amount given just hinders from realizing where we are. We give it ungrudgingly, perhaps: we think it has the Lord's approval therefore. We do not think *how much it is* that we can give ungrudgingly.

Ungrudgingly it must be. Love it must be. Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, except it be love that does it, it will be utterly contemned. But if our love is measured by what we give to Him, how serious is the question raised!

In this great world of sorrow and of evil, Christ has interests dear to His heart,—how dear, no one of us has perhaps a notion of. Souls lie in darkness to whom His Word would give light, and in bondage to whom it would bring deliverance. He says to us, "I count upon My people to do this." How can we answer to Him for this confidence He has placed in us? Shall we say, "Lord, I have had to keep up with my neighbors, to provide for the future, to do a great many things, which I thought of more importance"? or shall we say, "Lord, Thou art so great, so high, so powerful, Thou surely canst not want my help in a matter like this!" or, again, "Lord, Thou art so gracious, I am sure Thou wilt accept any thing I may bring: I would not suppose Thee a hard Master, to want me to bring Thee much"? Alas, what shall we

say? Shall we not rather own with broken hearts how little we have valued *Him*?

The "doctrine of Balaam" thrives upon the heartlessness of God's own people. Do not let us imagine, because we denounce the mercenary character of what is current all around, that we can have no share in upholding what we denounce. It is far otherwise. If we have given cause, are giving cause, to those who sneer at the advocates of "cheap religion," we are giving it the most effectual possible support. In words, you denounce; in deeds, you justify. You tell them that it is vain to trust to the power of Christ's love in Christians,—that your own barn is practically dearer to you than all God's house; and they can point to you triumphantly as proof of the necessity of all that they contend for.

Beloved, I have done. I have spoken out my heart, and I must pray you bear with me. Who that looks around with a heart for Christ upon all the abominations practiced in His name but must be led to ask, Did not all this evil spring out of the failure of His own people—of those who at heart loved Him? And further, how far are we perhaps now unsuspectingly helping on the very evils we deplore? Do we not pray for Him to search out our hearts? and shall we shrink from having them searched out? If the search detects nothing, we need not fear it: if it shows us unanticipated evil, it is well to realize that the truthful judgment of the evil is ever the truest blessing for our souls. It will cost us something, no doubt, to walk in what is ever a narrow way. A race, a warfare, call for energy and self-denial. But ah, beloved, it will

cost us more, much more, to have Christ walk as a stranger to us because our paths and His do not agree. How few, when they speak of cost, put this into their balance-sheet! Yet, "if I wash thee not," He says, "thou hast no part with Me." Are there not many trying to keep up appearances, when that is the inward trouble of their souls?

But the door is open, beloved, to come back. He has never shut it. The one thing so greatly lacking now is whole-hearted integrity;—so few without some secret corner in their hearts that they would not like to have searched out by Him. That corner *must* be searched out, for He must be a Saviour after His own fashion; and if we would not have it, we can have little apprehended the fullness and reality of His salvation. Not alone does He save from wrath: He saves from *sin*. It is in subjection to His yoke that we find rest. From our own will and ways and thoughts, in His blessed will, His thoughts, His love.

God grant it to us for His name's sake, even now.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

EXTRACT OF AN ADDRESS TO CHRISTIAN PARENTS.

"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; BUT NOW ARE THEY HOLY." (1 Cor. vii. 14.)

CHILDREN of God—fathers and mothers of families, here is the charta of your parental relationship: "They are holy,"—the children are holy.

The word "*sanctify*" in the Bible is not nearly so limited in its meaning as the word "*saint*" or "*holy*;" and the same is true in modern English. We speak of the conveniences of life, of trial, of temptation from Satan, being *sanctified* to us, but we could not apply the word "*holy*" to them. The word "*ἅγιος*" ("*saint*," or "*holy*,") just means "that which is set apart for God," and is very rarely used in a subordinate sense. It is usually applied thus: "The *Holy* Spirit"—"the *Holy* One of God"—"the *holy* angels"—"the *holy* place"—"the *holy* city,"—"the *saints*"—"a *holy* kiss"—"Be ye *holy*, for I am *holy*," etc. *Separated unto God* is just its force: your children are holy! This word is such as to embrace all our offspring; it is a word of encouragement, and an appeal to *faith*.

Awake, brethren! awake! let Faith do her work. Your God has told you your children are set apart to Him. **How** set apart?—aye, that is the word; take it to your Father. Israel was set apart, but Israel is not;—Jerusalem was set apart, but Jerusalem is trodden underfoot of the Gentiles;—the temple was set apart, but not one stone is left upon another;—the churches on earth were set apart, but what are they now but ripe for judgment?—christendom was set apart for the bright display to it of grace and truth, heaven's light itself shining down from the person of the Lamb; but what is it now? And how many a child of Christian parents, thus set apart for God, to be trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, has instead proved a solemn warning to the neglect of godly nurture with parental authority according to the Lord! Brethren, God has appealed to you. He has given, as it were, a blank check for *faith* to

fill up. Your children are holy. Will you say, "They are holy, so I may leave all care about them as to praying for them and instructing them"? This is the flesh, brethren, not faith. Nay, rather, go to your Father, and without guile tell Him the lesson Himself has taught you,—taught in your souls by the Holy Spirit. Tell Him that all things are dung and dross save Jesus Christ.

Let us look a little at the exhortation to you in Scripture. In Eph. vi. 4 IT IS WRITTEN, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Observe the word "NURTURE" (παίδεια). This word occurs in five other places in the New Testament in the original:—

2 Tim. iii. 16. All Scripture . . . is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for *instruction* in righteousness.

Heb. xii. 5. My son, despise not thou the *chastening* of the Lord.

7. If ye endure *chastening*, God dealeth with you as with sons;

8. But if ye are without *chastisement*, whereof all are partakers.

11. Now no *chastening* for the present seemeth to be joyous.

Observe well these five passages, as showing what we are to understand by the word "NURTURE." In modern English, the word "nurture" seems to suggest the idea of nourishment, and, therefore, to presuppose life. The communicating nutriment to that which has inward life to enable it to be nourished thereby is just what suggests itself to the mind by the phrase, "bring up in the nurture." Nurture, in short, is an inward application and appropriation. If we spoke of a child

which had been well cared for in youth—well fed, and well disciplined, when needs be, even with the rod,—we could not apply the word “nurture” to the punishments inflicted, without the strange incongruity of the expression grating upon the ear. For there is a gentle, tender care ministering in love to the profit of the child, involved in the word “*nurture*.” But the word “DISCIPLINE” is far otherwise, suggesting at once the thought of applications from without, the bending and conforming by the hand of another to a given standard. Let any one supply, in all six of the quoted passages, first the word “*nurture*,” and then the word “*discipline*,” and they will at once feel that the latter is the Holy Ghost’s meaning of the word, judging from His common use of the same. The meaning is, that parents are to take the truth of God as their guide and standard, and discipline according to it. This would lead them to endeavor to fashion their little ones to truth, candor, humility, subjection, self-denial, patience, perseverance, kindness, love, etc., etc. And in confirmation, as it were, of this discipline from without, we have in the word which immediately follows, “*admonition*” (*νουθεσια*, *putting in mind*), that which has to do with the inner man.

The force of the exhortation is this: “Provoke not your children to wrath,” yet bring them up in the discipline and knowledge of the Lord.

Very similar to this is that which is written in Col. iii. 2, “Fathers, provoke not your children, lest they be discouraged.”

Study, then, the character of your God, and to it strive to fashion your tender charge; study the grace of your Saviour, and Him, in all the fullness

of His grace and truth, try to impress upon their minds. Do not deceive your own selves that the children have grace when they have it not, so deceiving their souls, or doing what you can thereto. And do not hold your responsibility in the flesh, but remember that though God's authorized evangelists to your little circles, you are still parents—fathers and mothers; accredit yourselves to them as letters of Christ, known and read of all men, seeking not theirs, but themselves, in all you do or say. And, above all, *pray without ceasing*.

BIBLE LESSONS ON MATTHEW.

Chapter iii. 12-17.

“**W**HOSE *fan* is in His hand.” His judgment, though sure, and deserved by all, is met for those who have owned their place as being justly under it. “And He will *thoroughly purge* His floor”—no evil can escape Him. “Gather His *wheat* into the garner”—not only take His own out of all that calls for His judgment, but gather them into the place He has fitted for them. “Burn up the *chaff* with unquenchable fire”—the wicked also “go unto their own place,” in what they have fitted themselves for—“eternal judgment,” whether executed in time or in eternity. It is well to remember that in all this it is primarily the clearance of the earth for the throne of the Messiah, both here and in the Prophets, as see Ps. xxi. 9, 10, “The fire shall *devour them*, and their fruit shalt Thou destroy *from the earth*, and their seed *from among the children of men*.” Unless this be carefully noted, there will be confusion as to the government of God *on earth*.

and His final judgment of the wicked in eternity. While, as to the former, there is complete riddance of the wicked when He "purges out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity," because the "Lord reigneth," and "justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne;" yet is it true also that "*after* He hath killed, He hath power to *cast into hell*." However, "*unquenchable* fire" tells solemnly that it is not annihilation, for in it we read, "*Their worm dieth not*," as well as that "the fire is not quenched." (Mark ix. 44-48.)

The holy character of God being eternal, and sin being eternal also, and not only man's destruction, but the violation of that character, of necessity there can be no remedy, as God "cannot give His glory to another," and man in time *will not*, and in eternity *cannot*, "repent to give Him glory." Well may our hearts, in view of so solemn a subject, rise up in adoring thankfulness, to say, O God, how rich Thy grace to bring us beforehand into judgment in the cross of Christ, and of ourselves in repentance, ere the day of Thy judgment, that Thou mightest thus bless us with Thyself eternally! Marvel of divine mercy!—wondrous cross of Christ!

"Then cometh Jesus from *Galilee*." There found because of His people's rejection; now He comes to put Himself alongside them in their "low estate."

"Unto *John*, to be *baptized* of him"—to the preacher of repentance—taking His place, in infinite grace, with those who confessed their sins, and the righteous judgment of God under which they lay. If they "*justified* God, being baptized with the baptism of John," then He says, "I will be

with them in it." "But John *forbad* Him." Could truth be silent now? No; he who was the witness of Israel's sin must also be of the excellency of Christ, and know Him as God's *burnt-offering* of "sweet-smelling savor," as well as the *sin-offering*, to be burned "outside of camp," by reason of man's guilt. John needed the grace found in Him, and Israel needed the truth of which John was the steward, and Jesus enters into all that need—owns their sins to be "as scarlet and crimson," and that the "judgment of God is according to truth," and yet comes to take His place among them, as though a sinner with them.

"Comest THOU to *me*?" John asks; and well he might, for his was the *sinner's* baptism—of *repentance*, and unto the *remission of sins*; and what relations could the Holy One have to these? But *one*—to take *their* place, in bearing the judgment they deserved, and by thus identifying Himself with all who confessed its justice and their need as being under it. "The *law* (the measure of man's responsibility) and the *prophets* (the testimony of God as to his failure in answering to it) were until John;" and now, this "*grace and truth*" which "came by Jesus Christ," "the Sun of Righteousness, arising with healing in His wings,"—the dawning of a new day, that had not been hitherto,—"the day-spring from on high."

"Suffer it to be so now." Christ must needs suffer to enter into His glory, take the cross ere He does the crown, and this is the anticipation of it. Israel were under God's curse—the curse of a broken law and stoned prophets; and "He was *made a curse*, to redeem them that were under it."

"*Thus* it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness"

—not in life, save as presenting to God the sweet savor of the true meat-offering in obedience—"good pleasure in men;" but in *death*, confessing sinners' *sins*, and attesting the *righteousness* of God, that could not pass over sin, but, dealing with it in His judgment, can now consistently shelter all who put their trust in Him who has met *both*, putting away the first, and establishing the second. "And Jesus . . . went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him," etc. God could not silently let it be judged that this was Christ's place, except in *grace*.

B. C. G.

"AS AN EAGLE STIRRETH UP HER NEST."

JUST as the mother-eagle
Breaks up her birdlings' rest,
Pushing her wee ones over
The edge of their quiet nest,

Watching their trembling efforts,
With eager mother's love
She spreads her wings beneath them,
And bears them safe above.

Up toward the bright sun soaring,
O'er dizzy mountain-crest,
Showing her timid birdlings
Things better than their nest.

Thus does Thy love, O Father,
Break up our earthly nest;
In faithfulness Thou sayest,
"Rise; this is not thy rest."

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H. McD.

“AT MIDNIGHT,
PAUL AND SILAS SANG PRAISES UNTO GOD.”

—
Acts xvi. 25.
—

O H, the songs of night, the songs of night,
Breaking forth from the children of fadeless
light
As they journey along through this poor sad
world
Beneath God's banner of love unfurled !
Singing with joy as they pass along
Their Master's praise in cheerful song.

Surrounded by foes on every side,
Safe in His presence do they abide,
Knowing their weakness as on they go, .
And the mighty power of their wily foe ;
Yet the everlasting arm, so strong,
Safe, and secure, doth bear them on.

I hear them singing, with beaming face,
Of the Father's love and the Saviour's grace ;
I see them toiling with heart and hand
As they journey on to the glory-land ;
Their hearts are cheered, thro' the toil and strife,
By His love that brightens the darkest night.

Sing on, ye children of heavenly light,
Let your songs resound thro' the world's dark
night ;
Tell of redemption through the blood—
Of Him who hath our surety stood—
The priceless gift of eternal love,
The precious, peerless Christ of God.

Oh, the songs of night, these songs of night,
That we never can learn in our home of light,

Where all shall be changed from faith to sight,
When forever with Jesus in glory bright ;
Then past forever—each weary sigh
All hushed—in His presence eternally.

No toil to mar—no grief or care,
Naught to sever can enter there ;
There, all at home, one family
In the Father's glorious home on high,
With adoring hearts we shall love to trace
The wonders of God's perfect grace.

Songs of the night, bright witnesses ye
Of the Spirit that *leadeth your melody* ;
Not the trumpet-sound, or the noisy drum,
But the heart's deep joy as we're pressing on,
And deeper the joy the more we learn
His love, who maketh our heart to burn.

Songs of redeemed which the Spirit awakes,
Sung in the prison, sung at the stake,
Sung by the mother amidst her home-cares,
Sung by the people of God every where ;
The rich and the poor, the high and the low,
All sing these songs wherever they go.

And the night is made glad with these songs
 of the day,
For the love of our Father doth ever display ;
If we sleep or wake—it's unceasing care :
There's none can harm, and nothing to fear.

Oh, well may we sing as we journey on
To the home of everlasting song,—
The home of eternal bloom—where we
Shall see the One who for us did die,
Who hath redeemed us with His blood,
And brought us to His Father, God.

C. G. C.

PRESENT THINGS,

AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)*Pergamos: the Promise to the Overcomer.*

(Rev. ii. 17.)

THE promise to the overcomer in Pergamos claims our deepest attention. As always in these epistles, it emphasizes the condition of those to whom it is addressed; and we have seen that this is not merely a past condition, but a stage in the development of what is all around us to-day so that the exhortations and warnings suited to it have for us no less force than ever. In fact they should have more, as we stand face to face with that development,—as the fruit, ripe and multiplied is before our eyes.

But the promise to the overcomer, while reminding us of the departure and decay already so far gone, is not shrouded with the gloom of this. On the contrary, it is bright with hope, and full of the joy which for the Christian can spring out of whatever sorrow. It breathes the spirit of what the apostle speaks of as our portion ever, "not the spirit of fear, but of power and love and of a sound mind." It is Christ's word of encouragement for those who in the strife of the battle-field look to the Captain of their salvation; and it carries us beyond the scene of strife to the inheritance already sure to us, although through trial and suffering is the path by which it is ordained to reach it.

The promise has two parts, which are in beautiful relation to one another. The *manna*, as is evident, speaks of Christ Himself, and of *our apprehension of Him*; the *white stone* is a sign, on the other hand, of *His appreciation of us*. How blessed is the interchange of affection thus expressed! How touching the appeal to it where the heart of His beloved is so manifestly wandering away from Him! The manna is wilderness food: it fell only there, in Egypt it was not yet known; arrived within the borders of the land, it ceased. It was divine provision for those to whom God was an absolute necessity, whom He had brought into a place where was no natural provision, where they were wholly cast upon Him. It was this necessity which was their claim upon the tender compassion of their great Deliverer. He had, indeed, made Himself responsible to answer to it, and all their varied need was thus to draw out new witness of divine resources,—riches of glory—power and love alike.

The wilderness does not speak of any natural condition. Egypt is the natural condition, and Egypt is a very fruitful land. There were many drawbacks there, no doubt, which would in general be freely acknowledged. Plagues smote there as elsewhere, and an oppressive tyranny brooded over it: but the one, they might hope individually to escape; the other, they bore in company with a multitude. But the productiveness of the soil no one could question: "We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: and now our soul is dried away, there is nothing at all but this manna before our eyes."

The promise of the manna is, then, for the wilderness, but it is the *overcomer* in Pergamos who alone knows the need of the wilderness. Those who have settled down in the world proclaim by the fact how little they find the world such; and this character of the overcomer confirms our view of the state spiritually of Pergamos itself. Here it was no longer the state of individuals merely, but of the mass; and not even a secret state, but avowed openly in deed if not in word. Thus, then, the Lord speaks to him who, true to his calling, finds in Himself his one necessity and satisfaction. "Bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure." Yea, "meat which endureth unto everlasting life," and water which shall "be in him a *spring* of water, springing up to everlasting life."

And this may remind us that the manna, of which the Lord speaks in the promise here, although it be the manna of the wilderness, is not, nevertheless, what was partaken of in the wilderness. The "*hidden* manna" was that put by command of God into the ark, and carried into the land, that after-generations might see the bread wherewith He had fed them in the wilderness." In this case it was, of course, not eaten; but the Lord promises to the overcomer here that he shall eat it; clearly in the blessed place which for us has in the highest degree the character attributed to the land of Canaan, —a place "where the eyes of the Lord are continually:" the wilderness food is still to be enjoyed when the wilderness is passed forever. The hidden manna was the memorial sample of what had fallen long before: it is typically the abiding remembrance of what we once tasted,—the fresh taste in eternity of Christ as enjoyed by faith down here.

We may thus see (and it is good to see,) how closely connected the life to come is with the present. Do we not miss much by separating them as widely as we sometimes do? and by supposing that, apart from all experiences and attainments here, all elements of blessing will be found in equal degree in the cup of eternal joy, when our lips are once at its brim? by imagining that if "when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away," then all present effects of lack of communion, or of that knowledge which results in and implies communion, will be necessarily passed also; not allowed to abate in any wise the eternal portion? Is this what the words of the apostle indeed assure us of?

For each one of us, no doubt, the state will be perfect, the partial condition will be done away. That is surely so. When the bud is ripened into the flower, the perfect condition is reached; it is a bud no longer. Does it follow from this at all that the flower is in no wise *dependent* upon that bud which is passed away? We know it *is* dependent. So when it is no longer a condition of faith, but of sight,—no longer seeing through a glass, darkly, but face to face, the present *knowing**—not the knowledge itself, but the manner of it—will have passed. We "shall know," not as afar off any longer, but in the presence of the things known. That is, "as we are known," as He to whom all

*"Knowledge," in 1 Cor. xiii. 8, may be here better rendered "knowing" (γινώσκεις). When it is added, "Then shall I know even as also I am [or rather *have been*] known" (v. 12), a compound form is used (ἐπιγινώσκω). This last perfectly suits the apostle's comparison of seeing face to face instead of through a glass. It is intensive,—a knowing founded upon knowledge, and thus often used for "recognition" and "acknowledgment."

things are present knows us. It does not speak of the *measure* of knowledge, but of the *manner* of it; for who could suppose the measure of it to be God's omniscience? And it is of the manner of it—face-to-face knowledge—the apostle speaks.

Rather will the limits of our knowledge there be defined, and we shall be conscious of them,—spared thus the strain of searching into the unsearchable, and delivered from the temptation of aspiring to what is beyond our sphere. There will be, of course, complete satisfaction with the limits whatever they may be.

But this, then, removes the thought of any necessary equality of knowledge among the redeemed themselves. The "new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" is a proof of this in the words before us. And the hidden manna is another proof. For the partaking of that which fell in the wilderness is only possible as a recalling of experience once known. It is not a fresh experience, but a past experience enjoyed afresh. Christ is no more there the humbled One of which the manna speaks; and the hidden manna was carried into Canaan, not belonged there. It was strictly a memorial of the past, and as this, has its significance. The experience which we gain here is gained forever; the joy is not for a moment, the meat endures unto eternal life: the fruit of the sorrow we pass through is not reaped all amid the sorrow, but reaped above all, there where the harvest is an abiding one. Blessed be God, it is so.

Some imagine a common height of blessing to which grace lifts in result all partakers of it, which leaves no practical issue for eternity of whatever difference in the life and ways on earth. Others

would cut off, as contrary to the grace which remembers our sins and iniquities no more, the very memory of them within us, as if it would spoil the eternal blessedness. Others, again,—and this is a most common mistake,—would confound the fruits of grace, which we enjoy in common, with the rewards of grace, which have respect to responsibilities fulfilled. All these are alike errors, and lead to practical consequences which are of grave importance.

Sonship, heirship, membership in the body of Christ, are alike pure gifts of divine grace, and in no wise of work. They are ours once for all, and never withdrawn from us. How blessed to realize that these are, after all, our very chiefest blessings, which we have in common! How much less, comparatively, must the reward of *our* work be, and the reward of Christ's work, which they all are! How precious to know that every child of the Father's love shall be clasped to the Father's heart alike,—that there shall be no more distance for one than for another! Yet it is not every one who is clear as to salvation who is clear as to this. But were it otherwise, who could, without presumption, anticipate any nearness at all? But the many mansions of the Father's house have room for all, and the Father's heart has surely no less room. "What manner of love hath He" indeed "bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" But it is *His* love, and let us enjoy it to the full without a remnant of fear. Let not one shadow of legality darken the joy of it. And this love shall be justified in its fullest expression also, for "we shall be"—one as much as another,—“like Christ, for we shall see Him as He is.”

It is not, perhaps, wonderful that as we contemplate such blessings as these we should be tempted to think that there surely cannot be left room for any difference whatever. To be like Christ!—all altogether like Him! Think of it, ye His beloved, the fruit of His work, the purchase of His precious blood! Who could imagine, indeed, that the fruit of *our* work could make any difference here! For whom could it be but in the most absolute wonderful love, with power to accomplish its desires in us? Shall any thing hinder that accomplishment, then? No, nothing! What is stronger than what manifested itself in the cross? What can rob it of its glorious reward?

Yet unspeakably great as all this is, still he that has an ear to receive the Scripture testimony will surely find that, beside the common blessing which every one of Christ's own shall get, there are distinctive and individual blessings, which are not, therefore, the same for all. "To reward every one according as his work shall be."—"Rule thou over ten . . . rule thou over five cities."—"Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." These passages, and such as these, are unmistakably clear also. Nor can it be urged that it is only in temporary not in eternal awards that such distinctions can have place. The hidden manna and the white stone are not of this character, and they both speak of what is the result of the earthly walk.

And again, it is in no wise true that the very sins of which God says, "I will remember them no more" shall not come up before the judgment-seat of Christ. They surely shall. "God," says the Preacher, "shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or

whether it be evil." "We must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

Are these things contradictory? They are equally parts of God's perfect and eternal Word. Nor is there the slightest difficulty even as to their reconciliation, if we may speak of reconciliation as needful. God will indeed remember our sins no more; but does any one imagine that His memory will fail in the least as to one of them? *Against us* He will not remember them. No displeasure on their account shall ever darken His glorious face. Never will He upbraid us with them. It is *we* who shall "give *account of ourselves* to Him." Shall it be only of whatever *good*, little or much as it may be? Shall we present ourselves as sinless ones, who have had no need of redeeming blood? Standing in the glory and perfection of Christ's likeness as we then shall be, our memories shall be fully alive with all the past, so as to give a faithful record of it before the throne of truth. All mists, all uncertainties, all errors, will be gone forever. How blessed to be clear of them! Then how bright will God's grace appear! how perfect His wisdom! Not, surely, with reference to an angel's course, but to that of a fallen, erring, yet redeemed man. And the memories of our sins, would we be then without them, when without them the whole world would be an impenetrable darkness still, and the very song of redemption could not itself be sung!

And it is declared of some who build upon God's foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, the day shall declare it, for it shall be revealed with fire, and the fire shall try every man's

work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he has built thereon, he shall receive a reward; if any man's work be burned up, he shall suffer loss; yet he himself shall be saved, yet so as through the fire. No matter of what class of believers this speaks, the principle announced is plain: reward to some, to others loss, while yet both alike are saved ones.

Thus the promise of the hidden manna appeals solemnly, while most encouragingly, to us. Our present life is not cut off by so broad a division from the eternal one as some would have it; while yet there is a division as plain as it is serious. The days of human responsibility end with the life here. It is for the things done in the body that they are judged or rewarded, and for these only. Thus these days exercise an irreversible influence over the life to come: the hidden manna and the white stone are eternal recompenses of the present time. In another sense, as to the hidden manna, it is but that "the meat" that faith lives on now is but the "meat that endureth to everlasting life." So that the spiritual experiences of the present pass on as memories into the eternal joy beyond. But as memories with none of the dullness which attaches to such things now; for then is the day of manifestation and of recompense, and the memory then will far outdo the experience now.

We pass through trial and adversity, through a world in truth a wilderness, a place of utter dependence, in which faith feels, amid the darkness, for the strength of the everlasting arms. And here we learn, as no where else could we learn, the grace that is come down to us. We are like those that go down to the sea in ships, and that have their

business in the deep waters,—men that see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep. "A brother is born for adversity," and in adversity we learn the touch of a brother's hand; yea, "there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother," and how blessed to realize in Him who sticks so close the very Lord of glory Himself! Not a kindly and gracious Protector merely, from His own sphere of unchanging blessedness, but One hand in hand, traveling the same road, ministering of His own cup of consolation, displaying sympathies which have been developed in the self-same path, but of sorrows voluntarily endured that He might so minister to us.

Precious humiliation, upon which the heavens once looked down in wonder! but of which none can know in truth the deepest meaning, save those who have drunk of the cup of the pilgrim, and in actual poverty been enriched by a greater poverty of Him for our sakes come into it. It is this which makes the hidden manna so impossible to be tasted except by one who has tasted the manna in that wilderness where alone it fell. After-generations in Israel might indeed *see* the food wherewith the Lord fed them in the wilderness, but that was all. He who had been *in* the wilderness alone could say of it, "I know its taste." When the people were despising it as light food, in touching appeal to us the Lord through the historian describes its taste. We can little indeed describe a taste; only at all by comparing it to some other familiar one, and so here: "its taste was as the taste of *fresh oil*,"—the ministry of the Holy Ghost; but in another place, "it was like wafers made with honey:" *that* speaks of Him whom the Holy Ghost declares to us.

The land promised to Israel was described in its riches as a "land flowing with milk and honey." It is the figure of natural sweetness; very sweet, but not to be partaken of too freely, nor allowed to be put into that which was offered to God. But the manna was not honey, and though having the sweetness of it, could be fed upon continually. All the sweetness of human affection and intimacy is found in the "Son of Man," but with no element of corruptibility in it. Honey easily ferments and sours, but in this sweet intimacy there is absolute stability: it is a love which can be relied on at all times, where the human has become one with the divine,—the divine makes itself realized in what we can apprehend and enter into as most truly human.

This is the taste; but to know it, you must taste it. No description will convey it rightly to you; and to know the grace of Christ's humiliation, you must have been in the wilderness, and there learned to say, "All my fresh springs are in Thee." If "a brother is born for adversity," it is only adversity that can rightly make you know that "brother." In the land, amid all its glories, the *manna* was "the *hidden manna*." In the wilderness it was not hidden; and to those who had gone the journey through the wilderness, the manna, even in the land, was not really hidden. In the glory of heaven we shall know in the Man, Christ Jesus, some steps (and surely wonderful ones) of His surpassing condescension; nay, a "Lamb, as it had been slain," will call forth the unceasing homage of all there; but the manna gives the personal application of this grace to a need which in heaven will no longer exist: it must be enjoyed there as knowledge gained in quite other circumstances. And here the

wilderness will at last yield its harvests to us, the desert left behind will blossom as the rose.

For how will those spiritual experiences so full of joy to us here bloom in the sunlight of eternity into glorious recollections, when all that hinders shall be forever removed; when the divine ways shall be seen in all their holiness, all their wisdom, all their grace! Our senses are here at the best so dull, the power of the Spirit so little known, Christ is after all so little in His transcendent beauty enjoyed! Then, face to face with His glory, seeing Him as He is, and able to measure somewhat truly the depths of His descent from the heights before us, how will the King in His beauty, our blest Lord and Saviour, be revealed!

But it is time to turn round upon ourselves, is it not? and to ask of ourselves, How much material for this joy hereafter are we gathering here? And this suggests another question: How much need have we of Christ day by day? how much hunger and thirst have we after Him? These are very strong terms, as they are evidently also the terms of Scripture. All the labor of man is for the mouth. Hunger and thirst are controlling things. Yet says the Lord, "Labor *not* for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." Do we indeed by comparison not labor for the one as we labor for the other? and *which* one is it—in calm, sober, reality—that we labor for?

We have life, perhaps,—eternal life,—salvation. Blessed to have these. With the rest thus gained, have we started for the goal outside the world? or are we practically living much as others in it,—the days filled up with a routine of things imposed by

the various masters (customs, men's thoughts of us, the claims of society, and what not) which rule there? It is one thing or other; outside the world, and in opposition to it, or in it, and floating with its stream.

In this last case, there will either be no felt need, or none that Christ can be counted on to meet. Much may be pleaded as to duties, which are merely artificial, and untruly covered with so fair a name. But whatever may be the plea, the daily need and ministry of Christ is a thing unknown. *Great* needs may demand Him, but life is not made up of these.

Briefly to consider now, however, the second part of the promise—the “white stone”:—

The two parts of the promise are inseparably connected with one another. The appreciation of Christ by the soul is the necessary basis of His answering approbation. The white stone speaks, as has been said, of this approbation. It was the token of approval, dropped by voters into the urn of old, with the name of the candidate approved upon it. But the name here is a *new* name, known only by Him who gives and by him who receives it.

The name, in Scripture, is always significant and descriptive of the one who bears it. To know God's name is just to know what He is, to know His character; and the new name here speaks of the character for Christ of him upon whom it is conferred, some character which He approves. It is a peculiar link between the Lord and the one approved, a peculiar something that we are for Him.

It implies some trial, as the former part of the promise, and speaks of His estimate of how it has

been endured,—of something especially noted as pleasing to Himself. It is not publicly noted or rewarded, however. Such rewards, of course, there are; but this is another and a deeper thing. Still more than the hidden manna is it an individual joy, not shared by the general company of the redeemed,—the one secret link, as it would seem, between the Lord and the individual saint.

Is it worth seeking, this approbation of His? Is any thing else in comparison? Is it not marvelous that we can barter the priceless eternal joys for things which perish in the using, even if they did not also entail upon the soul a feebleness from which oftentimes there is here no recovery. We pity the inebriate, possessed by his passion for what rivets upon the ever-increasing load which will at last destroy him; but oh what sorrow should we have for the Nazarites of God, endowed with the limitless possession of the Spirit of God, to know the things that are freely given to us of God, yet drunk with the spirit of the world, His enemy, and squandering the precious gifts of God for the husks of the swineherd! We have no words that are worthy or of power to rebuke it; but let us hear the apostle:—

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Wherefore, whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. . . . For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”

"Wherefore awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and CHRIST shall give thee light."

"For ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night, and they that are drunken are drunken in the night; but let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should *live together with Him*."

Yes, and that life is now begun with us; the eternal life has for us begun. May the words ring in our ears at least until they lay hold completely of our hearts and lives: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he who receiveth it."

"Overcometh"—not in the world merely, but now in the church; not in circumstances in which he is *not*, but in the precise circumstances in which he is;—"overcometh:" do you, do I, know well, and from quite familiar experience, what it is to *overcome*?

(To be continued.)

F. W. G.

"ADOPTION is, putting *into a place*. BIRTH makes us *children*: *adoption* makes us *sons*. John always speaks of children: Paul uses both words—'sons' and 'children.' Eph. i. 5 is, son-putting, or adoption. Adoption is, taking you into His house. The spirit of sonship gives you the *place*, and the spirit to *fill* the place."—F. W. G.

"THE BOW IN THE CLOUD."

Gen. viii. 21, 22; ix. 8-17.

THE first mention of a covenant in the holy Scriptures is found in the portion above referred to, and a few things with reference to it are very striking, as showing forth somewhat of the blessedness of Christianity. Let us consider them:—

1. The *origin* of it: THE HEART OF GOD.

"The Lord *smelled a sweet savor*; and the Lord said in His heart, 'I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I smite any more every living thing as I have done. While the earth remaineth,—

seed-time and harvest,	}	shall not cease.' "
cold and heat,		
summer and winter,		
day and night,		

2. The *nature* of it: A DIVINE COVENANT.

"*My* covenant." (v. 9.)

"*My* covenant." (v. 11.)

"The covenant which *I make*." (v. 12.)

"A covenant between *Me* and the earth." (v. 13.)

"*My* covenant between *Me* and you." (v. 15.)

"The everlasting covenant between *God*," etc. (v. 16.)

"The covenant which *I* have established between *Me*," etc. (v. 17.)

3. The *extent* of it: THE WHOLE WORLD.

"With {	you,	of {	the <i>fowl</i> ,
	your <i>seed</i> after you,		the <i>cattle</i> ,
	every <i>living creature</i> with you,		every <i>beast</i> ;
	from <i>all</i> that go out of the ark,		
	to <i>every</i> beast of the earth," (v. 9, 10.)		

"Between Me and { *you*, (v. 12.)
every *living creature* with you."

"Between Me and the *earth*." (v. 13.)

"Between Me and { *you*, (v. 15.)
every *living creature* of *all* flesh."

"Between God and every *living creature* of *all* flesh."

"Between Me and *all flesh*." (v. 17.) (v. 16.)

4. The *immutability* of it: ESTABLISHED BY GOD.

"I, behold, I *establish* My covenant." (v. 9.)

"I will *establish* My covenant." (v. 11.)

"The covenant which I have *established*." (v. 17.)

5. The *assurance* of it: THE BOW IN THE CLOUD.

"This is the *token* of the covenant." (v. 12.)

"I do set *My bow* in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant." (v. 13.)

"And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that *the bow* shall be seen in the cloud." (v. 14.)

"*The bow* shall be in the cloud." (v. 16.)

6. The *remembrance* of it: GOD'S EYE AND MIND.

"The bow shall be *seen* in the cloud; and I will *remember* My covenant." (vv. 14, 15.)

"The bow shall be in the cloud; and I will *look* upon it, that I may *remember*," etc. (v. 16.)

7. The *duration* of it: EVERLASTING.

"Neither shall all flesh be cut off *any more*."

"Neither shall there *any more* be a flood." (v. 11.)

"For *perpetual* generations." (v. 12.)

"The waters shall *no more* become a flood." (v. 15.)

"The *everlasting* covenant." (v. 16.)

Passing from this "the *shadow* of good things to come," to the "good things" themselves, how readily we may trace the various points of simi-

larity, while yet remembering that it is but the *shadow*, and not *the very image*, of the things"!

1. As to its *source*.

"Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed *in Himself*," etc. (Eph. i. 9.)

"Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For *of* Him, and *through* Him, and *to* Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 34-36.)

"According to Thine own heart hast Thou done" it. (1 Chron. xvii. 19.)

2. As to the *nature* of it.

"God so *loved* the world that He gave His only begotten Son," etc. (Jno. iii. 16.)

"God *commendeth* His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.)

"In this was *manifested* the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." (1 Jno. iv. 9.)

3. As to its *extent*.

"God was in Christ, reconciling *the world* unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor. v. 19.)

"God our Saviour, who will have *all men* to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. ii. 3, 4.)

4. As to its *immutability*.

"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the *immutability* of His counsel, confirmed it by *an oath*; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (Heb. vi. 17, 18.)

5. As to the *assurance* of it.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 16.)

"Now He which *stablisheth* us with you in Christ, and hath *anointed* us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the *earnest* of the Spirit in our hearts." (2 Cor. i. 21, 22.)

"Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the *Spirit* of His Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father.'" (Gal. iv. 6.)

6. As to the *remembrance* of it.

"God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Numb. xxiii. 19.)

"The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom. xi. 29.)

7. As to the *duration* of it.

"According to the *eternal purpose* which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. iii. 11.)

"God hath given to us *eternal life*." (1 Jno. v. 11.)

"The author of *eternal* salvation." (Heb. v. 9.)

"Having obtained *eternal redemption*." (Heb. ix. 12.)

"Who through the *eternal Spirit* offered Himself." (Heb. ix. 14.)

"They which are called might receive the promise of *eternal inheritance*." (Heb. ix. 15.)

"Who hath called us unto His *eternal glory*." (1 Pet. v. 10.)

May we learn, beloved brethren, the depth of blessing in these "precious things of God" which have thus cast their shadows backward, and to Him shall be the praise.

B. C. G.

AN EXPERIENCE.

Given especially for young persons.

I WAS very religious when I was a young child. I was the only daughter, and my father brought us up most strictly in all the outward forms of church-attendance and strict regard to religious duties.

When I was eighteen or nineteen I was a Sunday-school teacher, and visited the poor as a matter of course. I was very anxious to do my duty, and exceedingly conscientious as to my responsibilities at home with my brothers and my father. On the whole, I was tolerably satisfied with myself, especially when I was toiling in religious duties. But there came an awakening to me that entirely changed all my thoughts and feelings, and broke up all my fancied security.

A stranger-lady came to lodge in the street in which we lived. She was quite alone, very handsomely dressed, and very sad-looking. In a quiet country town, you know, the appearance of such a stranger excites some curiosity and remark. Occasionally I saw this lady come into the place of worship we attended, and as I walked down the street to go to my Sunday-school, I frequently saw her sitting alone by her window. We found that her husband was a Frenchman, and that they were separated; but no one knew more, and a sort of romance gathered round her in my girlish mind. We had never met or exchanged a word, and imagine my amazement when one day a messenger came to my father's door asking to see me, and on

my appearance, telling me that the lady lodging at Mrs. ——'s was very dangerously ill, and particularly wished to see me.

"To see *me*!" I said. "I think it must be a mistake. I do not know her."

"Oh, no," replied the girl; "its no mistake, miss, for the lady has said many times, 'Fetch that young lady who passes by on Sundays to the school;' and I know she means you, miss, for she told me where you lived. The little baby was born last night, and the doctor says the poor lady cannot live."

When I got into her room, I found her in a state of distressing excitement.

"Have they told you that I am dying?" the lady asked. "Yes, I am dying, and I don't know how to get ready to die. I sent for *you*. I am sure you will excuse me, because I know you are so very religious. I am sure *you* can tell me what I want to know. Tell me, I beg you, as quickly as you can, what I must do to get ready."

Never can I forget the scene. The poor woman flushed and agitated, her beautiful hair all dangling and wet, her pillows and bed-clothes tossed about in disorder, no one belonging to her to speak a word of help or comfort. I could hardly control my voice to say, "You must pray to God. You have read the Bible? You know what He says?" but she caught up my words with a sharp cry of pain: "I cannot pray, I am too ill, and I do not know how. I cannot read the Bible, and I do not know it. Oh, tell me yourself what I must do. Pray for me, oh, pray for me."

Can you wonder that I burst into tears? I had never prayed with any one in my life. I could re-

member nothing that I thought could possibly be of any comfort or good to this poor dying woman. More than that, a sudden flash of light seemed to reveal to my inmost soul that I myself was building my house upon the sand, and that all my religiousness was nothing at all to stand in such a storm as this.

"Oh," I said to her eagerly, "let me fetch the minister to you."

"No!" she answered; "I do not know him. I do not want him. I want a *woman* to speak to me, like a sister, or a mother."

I thought of the minister's wife. Ah, no, she was not one I could imagine in such a scene as this. Then I remembered, with a sudden feeling of inexpressible relief, another lady, wise, loving, gentle, earnest—one of those who bore her Master's name written on her forehead, whose own name I had heard many a time uttered in accents of love and gratitude from the poor and the sorrowful.

"I know a dear lady," I said, "who could help you. I am sure she would. I will go to her directly."

"Oh!" said the dying lady, with a look of reproach that sank deep into my inmost heart, "I wanted *you* to tell me. I have seen you so often going to church and to the school. I often, often wished I was like you; I thought you were so very religious." She sighed bitterly, and leaned back exhausted.

I escaped, crept down stairs, hearing the feeble wail of a little infant as I passed, and hastened to the house of Mrs. —, rushing into her presence with my agitated and half-incoherent story, much to her surprise. "Do come directly, dear Mrs.

—," I said; "there is not a moment to lose! Oh, come back with me now!"

"My dear Margaret," she answered, "I will come as soon as I can; but it cannot be immediately. Go back and sit by the poor lady until I come. Try to be very calm and quiet with her, and to soothe her as well as you can. I daresay I shall be with her a quarter of an hour after you."

I was not quite pleased at this, and felt impatient and astonished. Ah, I knew in after days why she could not come on such an errand without seeking wisdom and help in one quarter of an hour with the Master.

I went back, and sat quietly by the bedside, where my poor invalid lay in feverish sleep. As I sat there, a realization, such as I never felt before, of the uncertainty of life and the nearness of eternity came to me. My own past life, with all its "religiousness," looked utterly worthless, and I knew that I had yet to begin with the humble cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"—yet to be "born again," and to enter as a little child into the kingdom.

My heart was heavy for the poor young mother, and my busy fancy tried to guess her story, while I shuddered to think how nearly it was closing, and longed for help and comfort for her.

A low knock at the door, quiet footsteps on the stairs, and my friend came in. Softly as she entered, the dying lady awoke, and her painful agitation returned.

Tenderly as a mother my friend went to her, smoothed her pillows, arranged her bed-clothes, and with willing gentleness asked and used permission to brush her hair and make her comfortable.

I looked on in surprise, for I had expected her to be in haste to read and to pray. I was learning lessons useful to me ever since. I was sent for warm water, and we sponged her face and hands. In a few minutes she was resting with a very different expression on her face, refreshed and peaceful, as if reflecting the quiet restfulness of the face of her new friend; but the bright, eager eyes were turned on her with a wistful, imploring gaze that went to her heart.

"And now," she said, "dear friend, you want to know how to rest in the Lord Jesus, so that you may be safe in His arms if He should see it best to call you home? Our time is very precious; we will ask Him to show it all to you Himself." And we knelt by the bedside.

I cannot tell you any thing about that simple, urgent prayer, except that it came home to *my* heart with a power that must have been that of the Holy Spirit who inspired it. When it was ended, I could not trust myself to stay in the room. I thought, too, that it would be better to leave them alone together; and I went down to the kitchen, where at least I felt myself at home in making some gruel, nursing the baby, and helping to restore some degree of order to the distracted little household.

Before the next morning dawned the lady passed away, looking in faith and hope to a crucified Saviour, as we humbly believed,—her hand clasped in hers who had brought her the message of peace. As for me, I did not find peace at once; for weeks, and even months, my burden only grew more and more heavy, and my heart more sad. When I could no longer keep my anxiety to myself, my father and brothers were amazed, and began to

fear that my mind was affected. Again and again they said to me,—

“But you have always been so religious, Margaret; why should *you* be troubled about such things?”

They made parties of pleasure for me; but wherever I went I carried my burden, and every thing failed, until God sent me a true friend, and through his blessing, and the guidance I then received, I was led to give up my own doings, and found true peace in believing in Jesus, coming to Him as a guilty, unprofitable servant, just as I was. If I had not been summoned to that dying bed, I might have remained all my life with only “a name to live;” I might have missed all the blessed reality of life in Christ Jesus.—(*Selected.*)

OURSELVES WITH GOD.

A ROW of books had been set up again and again upon the table, but each time failed to keep their position, because to some extent leaning one upon another. One who was sitting near set them up firmly by placing each distinct from the other, saying, as he did so, “*This* is the only way to accomplish it—let them stand upon *their own responsibility.*”

Methought, what a lesson for ourselves is here given us!—they only stand well *together* in divine things who first stand upon their own responsibility *individually*. And to this end, is it not oftentimes that our gracious God removes from us those whom He sees we are leaning upon, instead of

wholly upon Himself, that we may realize our own individuality with Him. So we find it in Ps. xviii, "I will love Thee, O Lord, *my* strength. The Lord is *my* rock, and *my* fortress, and *my* deliverer; *my* God, *my* strength, in whom I will trust; *my* buckler, and the horn of *my* salvation, and *my* high tower," and thus throughout the entire psalm.

How much of life's discipline may this explain! and how many of the precepts of Scripture, little realized to any profit, would it give force and value to were it more so with us! As we go forward in the Christian life, this surely will result, and our hearts be more able through grace to say, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto *me*, and *I* unto the world."

May we know it thus, through His grace!

B. C. G.

"HIS REST SHALL BE GLORIOUS."

(ISA. xl. 10.)

THERE'S rest for the birdling in its nest,
 For the infant on its mother's breast,
 For the sinner with his sins confessed.
 But there's a deeper, holier rest :
 'Tis for him who leans on Jesus' breast.
 And still, there is another rest :
 When earth's no more by sin oppressed,
 When death's destroyed, and heaven blest,
 Then we shall learn how God can rest ;
 With praise our wondering souls possessed,
 We'll join in God's eternal rest.

H. McD.

WAITING AND WATCHING.

Luke xii. 13-14.

THE whole of this portion is founded on the deep consciousness of Christ Himself in passing through the world, that all in connection with earth was closed and broken up. The fire was kindled: all would come out more distinctly at the cross; but all that was in opposition was now actually showing itself, bringing out the truth of the portion and the position of those who are Christ's being entirely *heavenly*, having nothing down here, waiting for the Lord with loins girded. He having been definitely rejected, all linking them to earth is broken.

In chap. xi. some said, "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils." What was that but calling the Holy Ghost a devil? It was a hopeless sin, the direct enmity of Satan. In this chapter also we find "singleness of eye"—our responsibility to let our light shine out; also two characters of satanic power—first, malicious, a liar; second, a murderer. In chapter xii., "Be not afraid of them that kill the body." If open persecution come in through Satan, they are not to be afraid. But in ver. 13, there is the danger of the worldly influence of Satan,—a *quiet* influence, the more to be feared because not open—a kind of influence that goes on when not watching, and weans the heart away from the only thing we have as Christians,—*i. e.*, a heavenly portion, making us solicitous about, and setting a value on, worldly things; but the Lord comes to the rich man to show the utter folly of any who are making the world their portion, and then He enters on the use to be made of riches. We have not got apostles at whose feet

to lay down every thing for the Lord, but we are to hold all *mammon* for the service of the Lord, our portion being in heaven, yet having the privilege of using it for the Lord, turning what is mere dross and dung into something for service to the Lord, and then not to have a care.

Sweet the way in which the Lord discharges them from all care: "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things"! How blessedly they are brought into direct connection with the Father! The world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but the word of God endureth forever. Directly we come to a Father taking care of us, the heart is discharged entirely from care about this world. How blessed the thought of that God being *our Father*, without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, and that we are in this blessed relationship because Christ has taken us into it with Himself. "Fear not, little flock," etc. As those belonging to the kingdom, how ought we to walk? All laying up treasure here carries the heart with it; if laying up treasure, we shall like to *keep it*. On the one hand, warned against the spirit of the world; on the other, not to have a care, because He who is your Father careth for you. Walking with loins girded and lights burning, be ye as men waiting for their lord, every moment having, in the whole spirit, tone, and temper, the sense of constantly waiting for the Lord girded (the long garments tucked up for service). There then is the distinct power of life seen. Servants, in the midst of all down here, waiting for their absent Lord with affections tucked up (loins girded). It is a great thing to walk through the world with the distinct thought that the Lord is *out of it* because it would

not have Him. Suppose yesterday, or six days ago, He had been rejected by the world, and He had told us He was going to prepare a place *for us*, what should we think of the nature and character of that world that had blasphemed and rejected Him? Could we be taken up with it if our hearts are really attached to Himself, and He up there having done the work to bring us into the place of holiness before He went, that we should be up there *accepted in Him*? Should not we be waiting for Him with girded loins, walking through the world that spit upon and hated Him, with hearts out of it?

It is to be *constant* watching. "Blessed are those servants" (*v.* 37). "Soon I shall take My turn in serving. You must now be watching with hearts and eyes fixed on Me, but when I come I shall have it My own way; I shall gird Myself, and put you at My table, and then I shall serve you. Here there must be watching and waiting, but there is a place where I shall have things My own way; I shall spread the table and serve you. All the fat of the house will be set before you; lay your account upon that. You are to be in the place where you are not going only to rule the world that turned Me out, but *there* where all the energy of My love will flow out to you."

The watching for the little while now, is for the outflowing of the eternal blessedness of His love at that day when He shall gird Himself and make them sit down that *He* may serve them. There it is not watching, but service to those now watching. The loins girded for service, and watching, is to be the character of our walk all through this present wilderness path, suffering linked with it. If we suffer, we shall reign. We get suffering as the con.

sequence of what He puts into our hands. What a wonderful thing for us that we are to be set in the place of rule in every thing below Him! Now one sees here the blessedness of His love to His own; how He takes their hearts out of the world, expressing Himself as if all was over. His own heart cannot get on in such a world. He is driven in on Himself by the condition of all round Him, forced to shut up the very love ever ready to flow out.

The whole thing is, morally speaking, over; the world judged, He out of it; and that is the place you get, the place *He is in now*; that is what detaches the heart from all things not of the Father, but of the world. The Holy Ghost sets Christ's walk before us to show us the character and spirit we ought to have in the world if our hearts would go rightly through it. It is only as the heart is fixed on Jesus as the One soon coming—that only will make us in our lives the diligent expression of His coming. Not only our treasure above, counting all but dross, but the practical place of separation to Him, the heart thinking only of Him, and separating from the world that won't have Him. Oh, may He fix our hearts on Himself, that He may see us in spirit and walk like men waiting and watching for Him! The Lord truly keep our hearts waiting and longing for Him from heaven!

"I WILL NOT GO OUT FREE."

THE above expression of a choice made in view of what men's hearts love most of all on earth,—LIBERTY, and that, the *refusal* of it for a life of continuous service, is worthy of our consid-

eration. The scripture in which we meet with it is Exodus xxi., where God's judgments for His people Israel are set before them, and it reads thus: "If thou buy a Hebrew servant, *six* years shall he *serve*; and in the *seventh*, he shall go out *free* for nothing." So far, two points are before us, presenting a *service*, or slavery, which is compulsory—the necessity of circumstances, and a *freedom* which was the provision of Jehovah's grace.

Thus, even in circumstances like these, where one who could say "We have Abraham to our father," and "to whom belong the oracles and promises of God" had become the property of another, so that service was a necessity, not the "willing offering" of a devoted heart, may we see to what sin reduces us, as our Lord says, "His servant *ye are* to whom ye obey." And further, as the dawn of God's Sabbath of years brought with it "*liberty* for those that were bound," how precious the intimation of that rest which our Lord has since proclaimed in His gracious words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you *rest*." "If the Son shall make you *free*, ye shall be *free indeed*."

But it is in other relations we must view this matter; for we further read, "If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons and daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, '*I love my master, my wife, and my children: I will not go out free*,' then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto

the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall *serve him forever.*"

What lessons, then, we may inquire, are for us here? Turning to psalm xl., we read, "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire: Mine ears hast thou opened" (marg., *digged.*—Ex. xxi. 6).

This, plainly, links it with our Lord Himself, and as we trace it out in some further portions of the Word, we shall once more be led to exclaim, "This is our *Beloved*, and this is our *Friend*!"

First, have we not each learned already that where *sin* brought us, in poverty and need,—yea, darkness and distance from God, His *grace* brought Him, the willing servant of His Father's will, and man, the sinner's need. Thus how beautifully it fits with the devoted and heroic love that has gained us for Himself at such an expense,— "though He was rich, yet for our sakes *becoming poor*, that we through His poverty might be rich"—"Laid down *His life* for us"!

But first we may notice that where the week of (years) labor is fulfilled, though there is *liberty*, as we read, "In the seventh year, he shall go out *free for nothing*," yet it is confined to the *one* who has so labored—"he shall go out *by himself*;" plainly witnessing that even in our Lord's most holy life, apart from His death, there was no redemption for fallen man. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth alone; but *if it die*, it bringeth forth *much fruit*" (Jno. xii, 24.) witnesses that none, in any dispensation of God's dealings with men, could ever realize blessing from Him save on the ground of *death*; and also that the sacrifice of the Son of God stretches, in its blessed

results, from the time "sin entered into the world, and death by sin," unto the "new heavens and new earth," where "God shall be all in all."

This brings to what more specially is before us in this portion—the mystery of the cross of Christ. Truly we may say, considering it "without controversy, Great is the mystery or godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

How truly could it be said of Him, who was "daily God's delight, as one brought up with Him," "by whom also He made the worlds," He might have *gone out free*—no yoke nor burden could be laid upon Him as a necessity; and yet we read, "When He cometh into the world, He saith, 'Lo, I *come to do Thy will*, O God.'" Thus did He, at least in prospect, say, "I love My *Master*, [God, for He was taking His place as a man, to do God's will,] My *wife*, [the Church, which He loved and gave Himself for,] and My *children*, [all His redeemed—the children whom God hath given Him]: I will *not go out free*," that He might have us with Him; choosing to take the form of a servant, and that forever; coming first to be with us in our place of need, that we might thus be with Him in His, of glory. Thus does the Spirit of Christ testify of "the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow," which now may we trace a little further.

In self-sacrifice, in devoted love, in view of others, does the Hebrew servant refuse a liberty which is his by right of Jehovah's appointment, and remain the *voluntary*, not compulsory, servant of another, bearing the marks of such a choice in-

delibly upon him, in the "ear bored through with an awl."

"Mine ears hast Thou opened [digged]," "A *body* hast Thou prepared Me," "Behold My *servant*, whom I uphold, Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth" (Ps. xl.; Heb. x. 5; Is. xlii. 1.), tells very simply to whom the type bears witness, even Jesus, who "took upon Him the form of a servant," "wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him." Viewing Him so, we find three various relations in which it may be seen, and a further meditation than this brief paper upon them would amply repay us.

1. "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to *minister*, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mk. x. 45.) "I am among you as He that *serveth*." (Luke xxii. 27.) This stamps His whole life as the true Meat-offering,—tested in all the various vays presented in the *oven* (secret sufferings), *pan* (more manifest ones), and *frying-pan* (intenser ones), as when "in an agony He prayed *more earnestly*," and "offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared [for His piety]." Therein He is seen as "*obedient unto death*," that *one obedience* ("learned by the things which He suffered," and "made perfect" in laying down His life,) by which many are made righteous.

2. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and *girded Himself*," etc. (Jno. xiii. 3, 4.) "One God, and one *Mediator* between God and men, the

Man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 5.) "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a *High-Priest* became us." (Heb. vii. 25.) "We have an *Advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 Jno. ii. 1.) "The *Shepherd* and *Bishop* of your souls." (1 Pet. ii. 25.)

Though these relations of service are different, and not all set forth in the illustration given, yet how fitting the words, as so far applying to all, "*girded* Himself"! Thus too, indeed, has He who "sat down at the right hand of God," as witnessing of the *work* He finished, girded Himself afresh for each sphere of service in which He is now occupied, though "gone into heaven, and on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him."

3. "Blessed are those servants whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you that he shall *gird* himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and *serve* them," telling us finally what it will be in the day of His glory, when, exalted King of kings and Lord of lords," and receiving the adoring homage of men and angels, He still holds, as to the beloved objects of His heart, "the form of a servant," saying, in the language of our type, "*I will not go out free.*"

Tracing His holy footsteps thus along the way, how adoringly would the heart of every believer own, as to each part of it, that He might truly have gone out "*free for nothing*;" but, eternal praise to His blessed name! He chose rather to remain the willing bondman of love, serving still, and to all eternity!

"Love, only love, Thy heart inclined,
 And brought Thee, Saviour of mankind,
 Down from the throne above;
 Love made Thee here a Man of grief,
 Distressed Thee sore for our relief—
 O mystery of love!"

B. C. G.

WARNINGS.

REUBEN, Gad, and half tribe of Manasseh were equally with the other tribes called to Canaan: they accepted the call, but came short in practical power. "They *saw* the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle." (Num. xxxii.) Ah! that was the secret; the rich pasture-lands of Jazer and Gilead were more to them than the call of God.

How stands it with you, my reader? Are you one of the many who admire and accept, and would on no account give up, the *doctrine* of the heavenly calling, while it is denied in practical power? Has it formed your life, character, and ways? If not, seek to discover at *once* the hindrance to your full and hearty response to the call of God.

You will find that, after all, the only path of safety and blessing is, to be out and out for God.

The two tribes and half were the first to fall into the hands of their enemies.

The worldly Lot soon found himself a captive with the "sinners of Sodom," and the loving but half-hearted Jonathan fell with the enemies of God and Israel on the mountains of Gilboa.

Abraham came short of the *first* step in the path of practical discipleship. He fell before the claims

of nature (Acts vii. 3, 4). Would the Bride have beauty for the eyes and heart of her Bridegroom and King? then "hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ears: forget also thine own people, and thy father's house. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for He is thy Lord, and worship Thou Him." (Ps. xlv. 10, 11.)

God graciously came into the scene of half-heartedness and laid His hand upon Terah, Abraham's father.

If we do not break the link ourselves, God will do it for us; while the heart will get a wrench it might have been spared.

Demas, a fellow-laborer with the apostle (Phil. 24), found the testimony of Paul too narrow. Either the world or the testimony must be given up (2 Tim. iv. 10). The witness-bearing of Paul will be found embraced in his epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians; and Demas, as well as "all in Asia," give up, in practice, the truths of these precious epistles. They did not give up the gospel of the grace of God, but the gospel of the *glory*.

Union to the risen *Man* in the heavens is a truth which refuses to have to *say* or *do* with the world. It were well for thousands to ponder, ere taking the path of discipleship, the words of Jesus, "*No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*" (Matt. vi. 24.) The Christian's path is one outside the world-system, as the lonely path of the "blessed One" sweetly tells us, "Ye are *not* of the world, even as I am not of the world."

E. F. B.

PRESENT THINGS,

AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)*Thyatira: the Reign of the World-Church.*

(Rev. II. 18-29.)

OUR course has been hitherto continually downward. The church to which we have now come forms no exception to this rule, and in a certain sense it is the end of the course that we reach in it. In Thyatira, our eyes are no more toward the past, but toward the future—the coming of the Lord: there is no more the call to repentance and doing the first works; the word is now, “I gave her space to repent, and she did not repent.” The opportunity of repentance is therefore over; henceforth there can only be judgment—judgment which has accumulated terribly during the long delay: “I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her works; and I will kill her children with death.”

But on this account we find a remnant in Thyatira distinguished from that upon which judgment is to fall; a remnant guilty indeed for their toleration of what the Lord has devoted to destruction, but which He cannot for a moment confound, nevertheless, with it. This remnant is exhorted to hold fast until He comes. “And to him that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he

shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces, even as I received of My Father; and I will give him the morning star."

We have reached, then, in this line, the final development, as I have said. Thyatira goes on, substantially, unchanged until the coming of the Lord.

What, then, is the character of Thyatira? It is characterized by the suffering of one who calls herself a prophetess,—that is, claims for herself divine inspiration,—and who by her name, Jezebel, carries us back to the idolatry of the worst days of Israel, and the bitter persecution of the saints and servants of God by her who, stranger as she was, exercised royal authority in the midst of the professed people of the Lord. "And she teacheth and seduceth My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols."

We have already compared the opening parables of the thirteenth of Matthew with the first three of these addresses to the Asiatic churches, and we cannot but be here most powerfully impressed with the appearance of the "woman" alike in the fourth parable of this series and the fourth address to which we have come. It is a new figure in each case. When we come to examine it, we are made to realize without any doubt that the two women are in fact but one. And that in spite of various and discordant interpretations which have been given to these passages. Let us look, then, first at the parable, and then compare it with our Revelation chapter. They are both the words of our Lord Himself.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto

leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

The common interpretation of this we are all familiar with. It is applied to the universal spread and final triumph of the gospel, which, diffusive as leaven in its nature, is thus to make its way among the nations of the earth, and subject them to its beneficent influence. And at first sight there is much plausibility in this view. It may be urged for it that if the *kingdom of heaven* be like unto leaven, this settles the question of the leaven itself as to be taken in a good sense, and then undoubtedly it is the *kingdom* which spreads throughout the world. But a brief examination will assuredly remove all the appearance of truth in this, and force upon us an entirely different conclusion from the common one.

In the first place, to meet the strongest point of the argument:—*is* the kingdom of heaven here intended to find its symbol in the leaven itself? At first sight, it may be granted that it seems so, but if we compare the style of similar parables, we shall more than hesitate to assert this. To take the second parable of the same chapter, is the kingdom of heaven meant to find its likeness in the Sower of the good seed? or rather, is it not in the whole story of the different seed, and of the issue? Again, in the fifth, if the treasure hid in the field be the kingdom, and not the man who finds it,—yet in the sixth it would be *not* the pearl itself, *but* the man who finds it.

The truth is, it is the whole parable that is the likeness, and not any one point in it; and then also this does not decide that the meaning shall be good rather than bad: for the kingdom is not as it

will be—set up in power and in the hands of Him whose right it is, but as now with the King absent, intrusted to the hands of others. Thus, *while men sleep*, the enemy can sow his tares among the wheat, and the proof is conclusive that in the first three parables there is a progressive growth of evil: the first showing the partial failure of the good seed; the second, the success of the bad seed, the enemy's work; the third, the tree-like worldly power which results from the sowing of the least of all seeds; and the fowls of the air, the evil powers of the first parable, securely lodged within it. If, then, the fourth parable shows the universal spread of the gospel, the whole course of things is changed, and the most perplexing contradiction arises, not only to the view presented in what goes before, but also to the view given by Scripture as a whole.

On the other hand, simply interpret Scripture by Scripture, and not only is there consistency throughout, but there is found a definiteness and precision of meaning which is itself a convincing proof of its truth. Every part of the parable becomes full of light. We have not, as before, to omit or interpret at hazard essential features of it, (as the three measures of meal, for instance,) and to claim in defense of it that "no parable goes on all fours," though this may be really true, instinct as it is with a life higher than bestial, as with a spirit more than human.

There should be no question that the key of the parable has been rightly found in the second chapter of Leviticus. The "three measures of meal" refer to the "fine flour" of the *meal-offering*, as the Revised Version very well styles it, into which the leaven was *never* to be put (Lev. ii. 11). The essen-

tial point is, that the woman is doing *what was expressly forbidden to be done*. This at once brings the similitude of the kingdom here into harmony with what has gone before. The process of deterioration which we see going on in the first three only assumes in the fourth a character of more decided evil. For the meal-offering is Christ the bread of life, the food of the *priestly people* of God, and the mixture of the leaven means the adulteration of Christ as this at the hands of the woman, the professing church.

We must, for its importance, look at this more closely, however. And here the feast of unleavened bread, so peremptorily insisted on in connection with the passover-feast, shows at once the perfect familiarity of the figure to the mind of the Jews whom our Lord was here addressing, and the way in which it could scarcely fail to be apprehended by them. Leaven in meal was to them undoubtedly a thing of evil significance and not of good. The positive word, "For whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel" (Ex. xii. 15), was well known and rigidly held by the mass of the people in our Lord's day. The ordinance as to the meal-offering was scarcely less familiar to them, and the prohibition of leaven in any offering to the Lord made with fire was very clear in attaching to leaven as a type the thought of evil abhorrent to the Holy One.

The general use of leaven in Scripture, it is allowed, perfectly corresponds with this. There is no exception, if it be not found in the passage before us; and here, the connection of the parable with what precedes necessitates an evil significance.

But there is a specific application of the figure by the Lord Himself, and in this gospel which defines it in a way completely in agreement with the parable before us: He applies it to "the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (chap. xvi. 12).

Now Christ as the food of our souls is ministered to us in the way of doctrine. The Word is constantly, in Scripture, spoken of as food to be eaten, or appropriated by faith to the personal need. Christ is the "Truth," and in the truth we apprehend Him. The doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees is error presented in its common types of an external and self-righteous formalism, or of an unbelieving rationalism. The leaven in either case is the rejection of Christ as God presents Him and as faith enjoys Him. If to these we add what in the gospel of Mark (viii. 15) is added—"the leaven of Herod," or the court-party, then we have fully the great triumvirate of evil—the flesh, the devil, and the world—as corrupting influences of the truth of Christ.

But why "*three measures*" of meal? Upon any other interpretation of the meal, I know not. We find the same thing in the provision made by Abram for his heavenly guests; and both there and here, if we see Christ before us, it is not hard to realize the meaning. It is the *Son of Man* who gives us the "meat which endureth unto everlasting life;" as *man*, He becomes our necessary food: but what is the measure of the "Man, Christ Jesus"? *Three* is the *divine* measure, the number of the Trinity—of the fullness of God; and "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Lesser or lower measure would not fit the truth presented to us here.

Into these "three measures of meal" the woman, then, is putting leaven. But who is the woman? Undoubtedly the Church is in Scripture symbolized by a woman, and this whether it be the true or the nominal professing body, which so readily passes into the shape of the woman "Babylon," the false church of this book of Revelation. Between these two, in view of the other features of the parable, there is not the least difficulty in deciding as to which is before us. In the preceding parable, we have already found the Babylonish character,—the kingdom of heaven, becoming in its earthly administration of the pattern of the kingdoms of the world, the figure of the tree corresponding specifically, moreover, to that under which the power of Nebuchadnezzar is depicted. Thus here it is the reigning world-church, which as possessing empire must make its laws and promulge its doctrines. Necessarily the leaven comes then into the meal. All features cohere in a picture startling in its vividness.

The woman has in her hands the doctrine of Christ—the Christian doctrine; she has authority over it; she can knead and mould it at her will; she can add her traditions, her unwritten law, equal in authority to the written Word; she can interpret and fix its meanings. Here is the leaven: it is the leaven of Church-teaching, the essential error which wherever found, in whatever modified forms, quenches the Spirit of God, deforms and mutilates the Word of God, gives the conscience another master than the Lord Jesus Christ, and does all this cunningly in His name and by His authority, so that the souls of His people even bow to the forged decrees and shudder at the thought of re-

sistance. For this is "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth;" and her merchants are the great men of the earth, and by her sorceries are all nations deceived.

Turn we now to this other picture that we have in the address to Thyatira,—a picture by the same master-hand,—and put side by side the woman of the fourth parable and the woman Jezebel of the fourth Asiatic church. Who will deny that they are one? This Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and teaches and seduces Christ's servants to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols, is she any other than the leaven-hiding woman of the parable "writ large"? or than the woman Babylon of the later character? But we will take up the address in its due order; we will listen to Christ's words as the Spirit of truth has given them to us; we would not miss the least detail, or the impression that the "due order" should make upon us.

"And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write, These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass." It is no longer, as in Pergamos, "He that hath the sharp sword with two edges." That sword is the Word of God as the word of penetrating judgment; for "the word that I have spoken," says the Lord, "the same shall judge [him that receiveth them not,] at the last day" (Jno. xii. 48). And so, in the nineteenth chapter of this book, men are slain with the sword proceeding out of His mouth.

But in the meanwhile the Word precedes and

anticipates this judgment, and in Pergamos it is still there to appeal to, to warn of coming wrath, to separate between joints and marrow, and soul and spirit, and bring men into the presence of Him with whom we have to do, before whom all things are naked and opened. Plenty of perverters of the Word there are too in Pergamos, as we have seen; but the Word is also there witnessing for itself against them. In Thyatira it *remains no longer*: we hear of Jezebel's doctrine, and the word of the living prophets, clearer and more decisive, as her followers claim, has superseded practically the Scriptures. With the Church's word men may be more safely trusted than with the word of God.

Thus it is no more "He that hath the sharp sword with two edges," but the "Son of God," who has to assert His authority as a divine Being over the Church, rising into a sphere where she dare not pretend to be. With Him alone are the "eyes as a flame of fire," the really infallible and holy insight, which the "feet like fine brass" accompany with irresistible judgment.

And He needs to assert His claim, for she who claims to be His bride, in her own self-assertion, is doing what she can to lower it. She has taken the grace of His incarnation to subject Him to His human mother; or if she remember His divine title, it is to raise Mary into the "Mother of God." Systematically Rome degrades Him amid a crowd of saintly mediators and intercessors with God, all more accessible than Himself, foremost of whom is this "queen of heaven" with her woman's heart, more tender than His!

Here, then, He speaks as Son of God to those

who would confound the Church's authority with His. Has she His eyes of fire? Has she His feet of brass? If that which she binds on earth is bound in heaven, will she bind with her decrees the throne of God itself? Will His all-conscious wisdom stutter in her infant's speech? or His holiness attach itself to error and frailty and sin?

It is well known, and shortly to come before us, how Rome escapes from such perplexity; and it is safe to assert there is no other way. But to all assertors of Church-authority, alike, the Lord here maintains His distinctive place. *He* alone is the "*Son of God*," in a place unapproachable by His people, and His glory will He not give to another. He alone is the governing Head; the Church His body, in a wondrous relationship to Him as that, but perfectly distinct and wholly subject.

As "*Son of God*," also, He now sits upon the throne—His Father's throne,—that of pure deity, which no creature could possibly share. His words to Laodicea afterward bring out the force of the assertion here,—“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne” (chap. iii. 21). As Son of man the apostle has seen Him in the vision with which the book commences; as Son of man He will presently take a throne which He can share with men, His redeemed. Till then, they are in the field of conflict, to overcome as He overcame, and this is the manifest answer to the dream of authority in the world which in Thyatira possesses the false church. Rome would reign before Christ reigns, or reign upon the throne of God with Him.

Thus His claim to be the Son of God is here of the greatest possible significance.

This is as to authority over the *world*, and in this way, of course, "whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" cannot possibly apply. The passage in Matthew connects it with the maintenance of discipline among the saints, with care for the holiness which His people are to exhibit. It is not founded on relationship to Him, save as disciples to a Master, and then of obedience to Him which they are under responsibility to enforce. In the fulfillment of this responsibility He is surely with them: what they bind He binds; but apart from His word they bind nothing, nor are they even the authorized exponents of it. Themselves subject to that Word, He is for them in all true subjection. It is the Word that has authority, not they; and let it be shown that the Word has not guided them, then Christ cannot bind upon His people *insubjection to the Word*: it would be to be a party to His own dishonor.

And all claim of ecclesiastical authority other than this is real rebellion against Christ Himself. Here as elsewhere, "no man can serve two masters." The conscience is to be before God alone, and this is a first principle of all holiness, all morality. Swerve from it by a hair's breadth, right is no longer right, nor wrong wrong; all lines are blurred; the unsteady tremulousness of the soul warns but too surely of the approach of spiritual paralysis.

Yes, the "eyes of fire" are still with the "Son of God" alone. Let us take heed how we hear and what! But clear and holy as they are, they are the eyes of the priestly Son of Man, full of an infinite

pity and tenderness none can fathom. How blessed to have to do with Him! How full of joy to stand before Him! And even in Thyatira—amid the awful corruption of that “mystery of iniquity,” Rome,—still His words to His own recognize all He can:—

“I know thy works and love and faith and service, and thy patience, and thy last works to be more than the first.” We must remember that a remnant is distinctly separated in Thyatira, and that neither Jezebel nor her children are included here. Then it will not be hard to realize this testimony on the Lord’s part to what He has seen in them. Little, too, do we know of the hidden lives of those who amid the assumption and pride of the days of Romish tyranny walked humbly and in secret with their God. Comforting it is to realize how fully Christ could appreciate and how openly He will yet acknowledge them. Like the devil-coats put upon their victims by the Inquisition of old, how many falsehoods have besmirched the memories often of those who in the day of manifestation will receive their crown of righteousness from the Lord the righteous Judge! Of how many Naboths has Jezebel suborned her witnesses that they have “blasphemed God and the king,” because they would not surrender their inheritance for a price. Here is the record, that they are not forgotten, those nameless ones, or of dishonored names: “works and love and faith,” how tested! “and service,” amid what discouragement! “and thy patience,” marked and emphasized in the language used,—that long endurance!

And then comes, last of all, that sweet witness of real divine energy, which does not flag as what is

merely human does,—“and *thy last works to be more than the first.*” Not simply the *same* as the first,—that would be much to say, as it should seem, amid all the opposition, continuous, unrelenting, of all that held power on earth. But here it is “*more than the first,*” for the works recorded are fruits of the life eternal, which, implanted within us, is a *growth*, a living energy, which, thank God! can burst all bands and defy all imprisonment. We have all remarked how the might of a living tree will break up and burst through the stones around its roots, as it forces its way up into the light of heaven. How much more will the energy of that eternal life whose nature is spirit, and which the Spirit of God sustains, develop itself in the face of whatever hindrances. “They go from strength to strength” is said of God’s pilgrims through the valley of Baca; for it is Christ’s strength perfected in human weakness.

If we study the record which we have of those dark days also, we shall be inclined too to believe that there was in the line of those patient witnesses, looked at as a whole, a growth in vigor as the days went on. They come more into the light; they take bolder place; the coming Reformation has its precursors; the torch of truth, as it drops from one hand, is taken up by another. Above all, separation becomes more decided,—a great point, one of the greatest; for we see that what the Lord has against these saints of His is declared to be their tolerance of the woman Jezebel. The evil, it is true, was rampant, and might seem supreme; none the less, but the more, became the duty of open testimony against it. It was by such a testimony, in the face of overwhelming odds naturally, the

Reformation established itself; and where it was the Word openly preached, God rallied round it defenders of it.

"Notwithstanding I have against thee, that thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess; and she teaches and seduces My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she will not repent."

Here is the distinctive evil of Thyatira,—an evil so frightful that the Lord calls it further on "the depths of Satan." Beyond it we do not get in this direction. It closes the development of the Church's departure from God in true succession from its germ in the beginning. Afterward, we find a fresh work of God has commenced, although it too is shortly, and indeed when first it comes before us, declined and passing. But as the woman closes the first series of the parables of Matt. xiii., so does the woman close the first series of the Asiatic churches. We shall speedily find, as has been already stated, that these two women are in fact one and the same,—the woman, "Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

Her name is at once significant, and is a striking exemplification of the pregnant speech of Scripture, which with a single word will illuminate a subject with a flood of light. The name, with its attached history, adds features to the picture which carry us far beyond the mere assembly in Asia to which first the Lord spoke, and identically the "woman" in question in the plainest way possible.

Thus she is described here simply as one that calls herself a prophetess, and the effect of her false

prophecy is given as seducing to fornication and idolatry; but the history referred to by no means gives us Jezebel as a prophetess. She is a *queen*, and an idolatrous queen, but this the Jezebel of Thyatira was surely not. Yet in the promise to the overcomer we have evident allusion to a reign over men on earth, which helps us easily to understand that the thought of queenly power is really meant to be implied in the name as used. For the promise, as we see in all these cases, has reference to the state of things in which the overcoming is to be. Here he who overcomes waits in fruitful patience, till he shall reign with Christ. How significant if in that scene which is the full realization of what is in the Lord's mind here, the false church is reigning! Babylon, too, in the after-churches reigns a queen, and thus these two passages are linked together.

Babylon also is red with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and here again is a character of the woman which we could not expect to find in the Thyatiran assembly. But the name "Jezebel," interjected in the address, recalls at once to our minds the persecutor. And we need all this to bring out the full meaning of the address. On the other hand, the fourth parable of Matthew says nothing of the queen or of the persecutor, while it speaks clearly of the self-assumed prophetess. Thus the address to Thyatira binds together these two other prophecies, and the three throw their concentrated light upon the solemn reality which is presented to us.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

CHRIST IS ALL.

ALPHA and Omega, Advocate above,
Jesus, precious Saviour ! how Thy grace we prove !
Thou art God's Beloved, Bridegroom to Thine own ;
All our hearts' affections to Thyself are won.

Christ, the Lord's Anointed, and our Captain Thou,
Unto Thee in glory ev'ry knee shall bow ;
Day-star of the morning, day-spring from on high,
How we long to see Thee, in whom we're made nigh !

Thou art Life Eternal, God revealed below ;
Thy blest name, " Emanuel," 'tis our joy to know.
Now, as Man Thou'rt risen, First-fruits from the grave,
All Thy work completed, mighty now to save.

God's great gift for sinners, Guide to heaven's home,
Rock of our salvation, precious Corner-Stone !
On this firm foundation safely now we rest
Till we stand before Thee, in Thy presence blest.

Thou our Head in heaven, we Thy members here,
To Thine own blest Person ever keep us near.
Jesus, we would follow whither Thou dost lead ;
Thou, our loving Shepherd, all thy sheep dost feed.

Image of the Father, light and life and love,
Lamb of God, once wounded, seated now above,
Unto Thee the praises of our hearts arise
As the grateful savor of the sacrifice.

" Nazarene," men called Thee, when on earth below
Thou didst stoop in mercy all our griefs to know ;
High Thou art exalted on the Father's throne,
Righteousness established, all Thy work well done.

Refuge and Redeemer, Prince of life, Thou art,
In Thy loving-kindness we've with Thee a part.
Though the world reject Thee, soon Thou'lt come again,
On the clouds of glory, o'er the earth to reign.

Once the Man of Sorrows, and with thorns then crowned,
Man shall own Thy sceptre wheresoever found ;

Then Thy fair creation, from the curse set free,
Shall enjoy Thy favor, giving praise to Thee.

But, our blessed Saviour, we who know Thy name
Even now can worship, and Thy praise proclaim :
Everlasting glory, Lord, to Thee we give ;
Thou alone art worthy,—Thou in whom we live.

When in Thy blest presence low we bow the knee,
We shall praise Thee fully through eternity,
While with growing rapture we Thy grace explore,
And with satisfaction ever Thee adore.

Amen! and Amen!

C. E. B.

PRAYER.

THE more spiritual the soul is, the more prayerful it will be, because it is then the most occupied in heart and desire about the things of God. Our prayers will be few and feeble if our walk with God be of a low character. If we have narrow views of God and His purposes, our prayers will be also narrow and confined. If we are unstable, unbelieving, and unspiritual, our prayers may return unanswered. Faith, a good conscience, a large heart, knowledge of the mind and will of God, and a sense of our utter weakness, are the proper prerequisites of prayer. Not many words are needed: the desires of the Spirit in our hearts, with groanings that cannot be uttered, God will attend to. He that searcheth the heart, and knoweth the mind of the Spirit, will give heed to the feeblest cry. It is far more important to consider the condition of our souls, and the truthfulness of our requests, than the mode of utterance or form of speech. In prayer, we have to do with the divine ear, and not with man's.—(*Selected.*)

PRESENT THINGS,

AS FORESHOWN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

THE ADDRESSES TO THE CHURCHES. (*Continued.*)*Thyatira: the Reign of the World-Church.*(Rev. ii. 18-20.—*Continued.*)

ROME it surely is, drawn with the few bold strokes of a master-pencil,—Rome as the Lord Himself sees and judges it. Good it is, and necessary, to take our estimate of her from the Word of God itself rather than from the judgments of men, shifting and unstable as they have ever proved. The judgment of God abides, and the day that is coming will only affirm its decisions, unutterably solemn as indeed they are. How dare we indulge the false liberality so common in this day in presence of the awful threatenings of the passage before us?

“And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give to every one of you according to your works.”

Thus the pitiless persecutor of God's people shall find sure doom from His hand at last; and with that judgment all heaven will be in sympathy: “I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, ‘Halleluiah! Salvation and glory

and power unto the Lord our God, for true and righteous are His judgments; for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand.' And again they said, 'Halleluiah!' And her smoke riseth up forever and ever."

No true charity can possibly soften down the terms of divine judgment here pronounced, but will rather echo the call of mercy in the meantime: "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Yet it is quite possible to judge Rome without hesitation, and to partake, nevertheless, in what are the works of Rome. We must remember, therefore, that Rome is the "*mother* of harlots and abominations of the earth." Principles can be received and followed which are essentially Romish, while we reject the full development of them in the canons of the Council of Trent or the creed of Pope Pius IV. The features of popery, if carefully noted here, will often be found under the guise of Protestantism. And there is a tendency in them to reproduce themselves together. Take Irvingism, in which, in the most startling manner, all the doctrines of popery (without the pope) have sprung up into a precocious maturity: and here, even the claim of infallibility is found, though the pope is not: there is the voice of the woman calling herself a prophetess, whether the woman's name be "Jezebel" or not.

But in modified forms, the features of Rome may be found where there is no pretension to infallibility, and none at all to worldly supremacy for the Church as such. Wherever the teaching of the Church is maintained as authoritative, though it be over a

body of Christians who make no claims to catholicity, or to succession after the Romish manner, and who do not propose to add to the Word of God, but to be guided by it,—still, even here the voice of the woman is heard, although the woman's name be certainly *not* "Jezebel." Yet here, not only the churches of the Reformation, but all churches almost, stand. Nay, it is considered even that there is no sure guarantee for orthodoxy where this is not so. And indeed it cannot be denied that the abolition of creeds has been very often loudly urged by those who desired latitude as to the most positive doctrines of the Word itself. The deniers of eternal punishment have contended for it; the men who put the inspiration of Scripture on the same footing with the inspiration of Shakespeare; the people who to retain Christianity must leave out Christ. All these, in their various pleas against the stiffness of a creed that they refused, have furnished the most convincing arguments for its necessity. Nor do I now propose to deal with these arguments; they will come before us properly elsewhere. It is nevertheless true that, according to Scripture, the Church never teaches. God teaches by His Spirit, and the one authoritative teaching is that of the inspired Word,—truly authoritative, because absolute truth itself. This much is true in Jezebel's false claim, that infallible teaching alone can demand obedience, as alone it can implicit faith. Allow that the guide may lead astray, and how can you require men to follow her? "If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

But the creeds are to be submitted to because they may be proved by Scripture, "by most certain arguments," it is said. Well, if Scripture be so

certain and so authoritative, what need of any thing else? I believe indeed that it is certain and all-sufficient, and thus the argument proves too much. Why seek to make certain what is already so, or give authority to what is already and only authoritative? In so doing, Scripture is dishonored in the very method by which you would honor it. Its own testimony is, that it is "given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, *thoroughly* furnished unto all good works." But the authoritatively imposed creed actually takes away the appeal to Scripture, becoming itself the only permissible appeal. If there be error in the creed, it will have to be maintained as carefully as the truth in it. If there be defect in the creed, the Scripture cannot be allowed even to supplement it. It is, in short, completely displaced from its rightful supremacy over men. The conscience is not allowed to be before God, and the most godly are just those who will be forced most into opposition against the human rule thus substituted for the divine.

This we shall have to look at further at another time, however. But it is evident that Jezebel is right thus far, in that she connects her right of rule over the people of God with the infallibility of the prophetess. She displays, however, the falsity of her pretension by her refusal to submit her claims in this respect to be judged by that which she owns herself to be the Word of God. Her infallibility must not be tested, but received: whereas Scripture itself, with a claim no less absolute, *on that very account* submits to every possible test, assured that the more complete the test, the more

will this claim be manifested and made good. The true coin fears not the test which would at once expose the counterfeit. Faith in Rome is credulity and superstition only: faith in Scripture is intelligent, reasonable, and open-eyed.

In Scripture, the Church does not teach at all. The prophets speak; and the rest "judge." The Word itself is the rule by which all is judged, and the conscience is kept directly in the presence of God Himself. All are exercised as to what is spoken: they are to take heed *what* they hear, as well as *how* they hear. This exercise is necessary to maintain the soul in vigor and in dependence. Vigilance, the constant habit of reference to God, and walking before Him are to be ever emphasized and insisted on. We tend continually to follow human authorities and traditional teachings, which God has continually to break through for us, sending us afresh to His Word, that our faith may not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Thus alone true spiritual health is realized and preserved.

Church teaching is one mark, then, of what in Rome has only come to full maturity. The seed is scattered widely, and found in the most diverse places. Another thing often to be met with independently is yet, quite similarly to this, the germ of what is fully developed only in Rome. This is, the claim for the Church of rightful supremacy over the world.

In Rome, it is outspoken and defiant. Jezebel reigns as a queen, and is no widow, and shall see no sorrow. With her foot upon the necks of kings, she can apply to herself the words which belong to Christ,—“Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the

adder; the young lion and the dragon Thou shalt trample underfoot." This needs, of course, no comment; but how many are there, on the other hand, who sincerely believe that Christians should have their place in the government of the world,—nay, should control it! Who, in fact, so fitted? and what could be so desirable for the world itself?

They do not see that the world is never to be subject to Christ until He take possession of it with the rod of iron; that Satan is its prince and god, never to be cast out until the Lord comes Himself from heaven; that the world remains, therefore, in steadfast opposition to what is of God, and Christianity, if it root itself in it, only becomes corrupted by it, and not its purifier. The yoke with unbelievers, which these principles of necessity bring about, is what at the start forfeits for the child of God the enjoyment of the child's proper place. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? or what communion hath light with darkness? or what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you; and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'"

In Jezebel, the full maturity of these principles is reached, and the Church attains its rule over the world; but in so doing, *it has entirely changed its character*. It is no longer the true Church, but the

false, although in historical succession with the true. The world's principles have leavened it; it shelters the unclean "birds of the air," the followers of the "prince of the power of the air;" the true followers of Christ are hunted down and destroyed; and their only hope is here the coming of the Lord Himself, which now for the first time in these addresses becomes the Star of promise. "But unto you I say, even unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden: but that which ye have already hold fast *till I come*. And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of My Father. And I will give him the morning star."

Here is, plainly, the attitude of faith declared in contrast with Jezebel's claim of rule. Rule! yes, we are to have it when the Lord comes,—not before. The reign of the saints is to be with Christ, and although it is true that He now reigns, it is upon the Father's throne—a throne which cannot be shared with men. It is impossible, therefore, that Christians can reign now. When as Son of Man He takes His own throne, then indeed they shall be associated with Him. This is in the promise to the overcomer in Laodicea: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

It is in that day the rod of iron will be in His hands, which, as we see here, He promises to share

with His people. This is a direct reference to the second psalm, where Christ is seen, as in the purpose of God, "set" upon the "holy hill of Zion." It is not a heavenly, but an earthly, throne. And thereupon Christ's own voice is heard declaring the decree which establishes Him in possession of the earth: "I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto Me, 'Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.'" This is often quoted to show the gradual spread of the gospel over the earth, but how, in fact, is Christ's claim upon the nations to be made good? "Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

This is plainly not the grace of the gospel. It is as plainly the exercise of the power in which He associates the saints with Himself. It is again referred to, when in the nineteenth chapter of this book the white-horsed Rider, whose name is called the Word of God, comes forth from heaven, attended by His armies, to the judgment of the nations banded still, as in the second psalm, "against the Lord and against His Christ." "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp, two-edged sword, that with it He should smite the nations, and He shall *rule them with a rod of iron*, and He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

Thus the time of this rule is fixed definitely, and its character it would seem impossible to mistake. Till then, "overcoming" is in patience and long-suffering, keeping Christ's works unto the end.

But the promise of the morning-star goes beyond

this, even; and we must look at it with corresponding attention. We have here the Lord's own interpretation, and in the same book. When the whole roll of prophecy has been unfolded and come to an end, He returns to explain to us this significant word. "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and *Morning-Star*." The Revelation, and thus the New-Testament as a whole, closes with this announcement. It is striking, therefore, to find the *Old Testament* closing, in Malachi, with a contrasted announcement, which yet applies to the same glorious Speaker, who thus takes His place in connection with the promises of both parts of the Word. The *Old Testament*, with its earthly promises, closes with this: "Unto you that fear My name shall the *Sun of Righteousness* arise with healing in His wings." The *New Testament*, with its heavenly promises, speaks, not of the *Sun of Righteousness*, but of the *Morning-Star*.

The *Old-Testament* promise may seem the fuller thing. It is more to have the sun rise, surely, one would say, than the morning-star,—to have the *day* than the *promise* of the day. And this is true from the *Old-Testament* point of view: the star shines out of heaven, does not brighten the earth at all; but *in its own sphere* it is bright nevertheless. And this is the key to its *New-Testament* use. The Star shines its welcome for us out of those heavenly places in which our blessings as Christians are. Christ is coming to bring the day to the whole earth. The glory of the Lord, like the solar radiance, is going to cover it, as the waters cover the sea. It shall rise upon Israel, and the Gentiles

come to the light, and kings to the brightness of its rising. But before this, our eyes shall have beheld Him; and when this comes, our higher, better place shall be already with Him. For His promise to us is, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I AM,"—in His own eternal home,—
"there ye may be also."

How beautiful this reminder, then, here, where the glitter of earthly rule and dignity seeks to attract and ensnare the saints of God! Like the Lord's words to the seventy when they returned to Him again with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name!" With His face toward the very scenes of which we have been speaking, He replies, "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven! Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding,"—and here is the parallel so complete,—
"in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice *because your names are written in heaven.*"

Though our reign be over the earth, and when He appears we shall appear with Him in glory, yet our "mansions"—our abiding-places, as the word means,—are not on earth, but in the Father's house, of which the temple, with its "patterns of things in the heavenlies," was the type and presentation upon earth. "My Father's house" was Christ's name for the temple. This had its temporary apartments for the priests, as they came up in their courses to fulfill their service at Jerusalem. And is it not in designed contrast that our Lord designates our places in the Father's house above, not as *temporary*, but *abiding-places*? To "abide," "con-

tinue," is one of the characteristic words in John's gospel, and it is in perfect harmony with the gospel of Christ's deity that it should be so; all that belongs to Deity *abides*; and here, in the place of the presence of God, are our not temporary but eternal *abodes*.

But "the Morning-Star" is more than our abode. The abode we shall have, to enjoy it, but Himself it is we are called to enjoy. "I am the bright and Morning-Star." "Father, I will also that those 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."

How blessed to be forever where this glory is displayed, and where the eye will be perfect to let in the light! "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." And in order to see Him as He is, we must be like Him. The passage is often read the reverse way; as if it were the sight of Him that would change us into His likeness: but I do not believe that to be the thought. The truth is, that as we must have the divine nature to know God, so we must be in Christ's moral image to apprehend Him. Man knows man by reason of the common nature; here, where all obstruction is at last removed, and we enter into life as our abiding and exclusive condition,—the "body of death" gone forever,—here we shall be at last face to face with Christ indeed. And this will seal and perfect the blessedness of a life always in us essentially dependent. We shall still and ever, now with no inner obstruction to prevent its realization, be "complete" (or "filled full") "in Him."

The Morning-Star anticipates the day, and we shall be gathered up to Christ before He appears for the judgment yet deliverance of the earth. *Then*, those who have suffered will reign with Him. When judgment shall return to righteousness,—the rod, no longer a serpent, returns to the hand of that great Shepherd of whom Moses was but the fore-shadow,—we shall be with Him, to take joyful part in that “restitution of all things” which He comes to effect. When the Sun of Righteousness arises, “then shall the righteous shine forth *as* the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.” The rod will then be the irresistible “rod of iron,” but how beneficent shall be its sway! “Then, judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field; and the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.” For now, as never yet, “a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a Man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”

The word, then, to the overcomer is, “Hold fast till I come!” The night-watch is not over; nor will the failed Church recover itself. The watch-word of comfort is, “Until I come.” The true are but a *remnant*, and Rome's *catholicity* is but a decisive proof of the general departure. Revivals there may be, but no return. Good it is for those who accept humbly the lesson, which stains forever the glory of man. “The corruption of the best

thing is the worst corruption." We have had God's "best thing" nearly two thousand years in hand: what have we done with it? Shall we do better now? It is easy to judge Rome; to judge, *in* Rome, our own utter and ruinous failure, is that to which God calls, and in which alone blessing is. Then, blessed be God, the Morning-Star rises in the darkened sky: "At midnight there was a cry made, 'Behold, the Bridegroom! go ye out to meet Him.'"

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!"

F. W. G.

MY THREEFOLD REST.

I.

*"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden,
and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.)*

FROM sin and sins, dear Lord, I rest,—
Altar and Priest and Sacrifice Thou art;
By law and sin no more oppress,
I share in Thy beatitude a part.
My *yesterdays* are covered by Thy blood;
To-day, my only shelter is Thy power;
To-morrow, Thou wilt be as strong and good
As in the past most gracious hour.

II.

*"Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek
and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest
unto your souls." (v. 29.)*

I rest by serving at Thy will,—
Thy yoke is easy, and Thy burden light;
And peace grows deep, and deeper still,
As my obedience proves Thy might.

I hold my powers alone for Thee,—
 Use them in loving errands of Thy grace ;
 And calm me, though I may not see
 Thy methods, as before Thy face.

III.

"There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God."
 (Heb. iv. 9.)

And yet the noblest rest remains
 In sweet reserve for hope and love ;
 It hath no place for sighs or pains,
 'Tis kept a glad surprise above.
 Oh, rest untroubled and serene,
 In Thy bright presence, spotless Lamb !
 Fit me each day, by every scene,
 For robe and harp, for crown and palm.

Stone.

THE MAN OF GOD'S DELIGHT.

(*An Extract.*)

AS to the connection between psalm i. 1-3 and John vii. 38, I think the first psalm is a delineation of the character, walk, and fruitfulness of the Lord Himself, the Man of God's delight. He neither walked in the counsels of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful; but His delight was in the law of the Lord, and in it He meditated day and night, according to psalm cxix. 97-100. In Him God saw, and sets before us for our imitation, a Man whose delight it was to do His will as revealed in His law—*i. e.*, the Word of God. Hence His fruitfulness; for the secret and power of fruitfulness is subjection to God (Jno. xv.). But psalm i. presents Him to us rather, I think, as the corn of wheat, yet abiding alone. He was indeed the tree planted by the river of water, *in constant, unbroken com-*

munion with God, whose leaf faded not, and which brought forth His fruit *in season*. Every thing in Him delighted God. He said the right thing at the right time and in the right place. God says to us, See the Man who always pleases Me; and see Him—*how* He does it. He knows how and when to speak, how and when to be silent, even though Himself is defamed; He knows what to do and what not to do, when to go and when not to go, what to say and what not to say. He is neither an enthusiast nor a mere reasoner, neither elated by acclamations of praise nor dejected by the scorn and contempt of those who felt His majesty and their own inferiority. He is superior to the world, to man, to Satan; and without sin, His branches are richly loaded with the fruit that God delights in. This is the *Man* whose springs are in God, whose strength and sufficiency God is, and in whom God delights. But in all this strength and majesty, this rich fruitfulness in living connection with its source for man (God), He stood alone,—Himself could drink to the full from the fountain of all joy and strength, and through Him indeed came blessing to others. Still He was pent up—straightened, because He had a baptism withal to be baptized. Yet so fixed was His purpose to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work, that He could anticipate that work in its blessed results to others. He stands up in that the last great day of the feast (strange feast where were those who were athirst!), in which there was indeed the outward form of approach to the source of blessing and refreshment, but no *real* approach, (and the form without reality is the saddest kind of poverty,) and cries, "If any man thirst, let him

come unto Me, and drink." If I mistake not, it is the only occasion (besides that on the cross) that He *cries*, as if the vehemence of His desire to impart blessing to those who are famishing for it while they are spending their labor for naught—as if that untellable burning love that yearned to give to the needy was only equaled in its vehemence and intensity by the intensity of the suffering that proved it to be stronger than death. "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." I think the allusion here is to Isaiah xxxii. 2, with possibly Isaiah xlv. 3. In the psalm, we have more the effect of the river in the fruitfulness of the Tree. It is planted by the water which nourishes it. In John vii., it is the waters that are to flow out unchecked. The tree is always, I think, what the individual is in himself and for God; and that too, I think, in nature and under the law. Christ was fruitful there, but who else? The rivers of living water flowing out of the belly is what God does in grace for man and through man. It never existed before the exaltation of Christ. "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for as yet the Holy Ghost was not, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." It had never been before. It was not a tree bearing fruit to God, but God opening up all the floodgates of blessing to man through man,—first, through the obedient, humbled, and now exalted Man, and in connection with Him, those who believe. Notice, the Lord does not say that every one who would like to be a fruitful tree, and would like to bring forth something for God; but seeing the real poverty and need, He says, "If any man thirst, let him

come unto Me, and drink," and he shall not only have what he needs for himself, but shall become a channel of richest blessing to others.

W. W.

"IT IS I: BE NOT AFRAID."

MY dear suffering one, I can see only the Lord in all this which you are now passing through. I can see no enemy, no injustice of the creature, no triumph of evil, so brightly does the love and wisdom of God shine over it all.

God is perfecting that which concerns you; and these are His instruments of blessing to you, if accepted in His will and submitted to for His sake. He does not cause all this wrong-doing, but He overrules all, permits all, even causing the wrong-doing of others to be a ministry of good to His dear children. Has He not declared, and will He not perform? "No evil shall befall thee."—"All things work together for good." Did not Job say, (though all his affliction was directly from the hand of Satan, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord!") Never did there seem such triumph of the powers of darkness as when Christ was crucified and laid in the tomb. Thank God, things are not what they seem. It was the hour of God's victory; it was the overthrow of Satan's kingdom; it gave to the world a risen Christ, who liveth for evermore.

Christ feared not to go by that way to accomplish the will of God. So, beloved, fear not to go by the way He is now leading you, even unto the death of self, reputation and all, that you may rise in all the life of God.

It is not for man to appoint his steps. God in His providence has brought you by this way; accept it as God's will to you; take it as the cup the Father offers you. "The cup which My Father giveth Me, shall I not drink it?"

The crucifixion of self, and the regulation of all right desires, can only be accomplished by true and perfect submission. The will is the essence of the body of self; and in order to have it brought into perfect harmony with God's will, we must submit to all the discipline of life as it comes to us in God's causive or permissive will. We, as consecrated children, must acknowledge all as from the Lord. Be patient: believe all things: wait for the end. God will let no enemy, no wrong, triumph over us. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." (Rom. viii. 28.)

"My happy soul, since it hath learned to die,
Hath found new life in Thine infinity."

M. E. C.

DAILY BREAD IN HARD TIMES.

"IT'S dreadful to live this way! I do wonder why God doesn't answer your prayer and send you some work," said Mrs. Wilson.

"Are you hungry, wife? I'm sure I thought we had a good breakfast," responded John Wilson.

"But we've nothing for dinner!"

"But it is n't dinner-time yet, my wife."

"Well, I must confess I'd like to know what we are to have just a little while before dinner-time."

"God has said our bread and water shall be sure, but

He has not promised that we shall know before-hand where it's coming from."

"Father," said little Maggie, "do you s'pose God knows what time we have dinner?"

"Yes, my dear child, I suppose He knows exactly that. I've done my best to get work, and I'll go out now and look about."

John Wilson went away to seek work, and spent that forenoon seeking vainly. God saw that here was a diamond worth polishing. He subjected His servant's faith to a strain, but it bore the test. I will not say that no questionings or painful thoughts disturbed the man as he walked homeward at noon. Four eager, hungry little children, just home from school, to find the table unspread, and no dinner ready for them; an aged and infirm parent, from whom he had concealed as far as possible all his difficulties and perplexities, lest he should feel himself a burden in his old age,—awakened to a realization that there was not enough for him and them,—these were not pleasant pictures to contemplate; and all through the weary forenoon Satan had been holding them up to his view, and it was only by clinging to the Lord, as drowning men cling to the rope that is thrown to them, that he was kept from utter despondency.

"Thou knowest, O Lord, that I've done my best to support my family. My abilities are small, but I've done my best. Now, Lord, I'm waiting to see Thy salvation. Appear for me! Let me not be put to shame.

"Increase my faith, increase my hope,
Or soon my strength will fail.'"

So he prayed in his own simple fashion as he walked along.

He drew near to his own door with something of shrinking and dread. But the children rushed out to meet him with joyous shouts.

"Come right in, father; quick! We've got a splendid

dinner all ready. We've been waiting for you, and we're fearfully hungry."

The tired steps quickened, and the strongly drawn lines in the weary face softened to a look of cheerful questioning, such as was oftenest seen there. He came in and stood beside his wife, who was leaning over the fire, dipping soup out of the big dinner-pot with a ladle.

"How is this, mother?" said he.

"Why, father! Mr. Giddings has been over from Bristol. He came just after you went out. And he says a mistake was made in your account last August, which he has just found out by accident; he owed you fifteen shillings more, and he paid it to me. So I——"

"I don't think it was by accident, though," said John Wilson," interrupting her.

"Do you think it was *accident* that sent us that money to-day, mother?" persisted the thankful man.

"No, I don't think so," said the wife, humbly; and I am thankful. You have'nt heard the whole, though. Mr. Giddings wants you next Monday for all the week, and he thinks for all summer."

The grace at the table was a long one, full of thanks and praise, but not even the youngest child was impatient at its length.—(*Selected.*)

ON CHRISTIAN INTERCOURSE.

(*An Extract.*)

I CANNOT doubt but that much of that lack of deep, settled, habitual peace of which so many complain is very justly traceable to the light and trifling habits of conversation in which they indulge,—to their reading of newspapers and other light works. Such things must grieve the Holy Spirit; and if the Holy Spirit is grieved, Christ cannot be enjoyed; for it is the Spirit alone who, by the written Word, ministers Christ to the soul.

I do not mean to deny that very many feel this lack of

peace who do not engage in such things. By no means; but I say that these things must necessarily be productive of much serious injury to our spiritual health, and must superinduce a sickly condition of soul, which is most dishonoring to Christ.

It may be that some who have long been accustomed to a so-called high teaching will turn away from such plain, practical principles as these. It will be pronounced legalism; and the writer may be accused of seeking to bring people into a sort of bondage, and of casting them upon themselves. I can only say, God forbid. The opening statements of this paper should furnish a decisive answer to such an accusation. If it be legalism to direct attention to the matter of conversation, then it is the legalism of the epistle to the Ephesians; for there we find that "foolish talking and jesting" are amongst the things which are not to be "once named among us, as becometh saints." * Again, we read, "Let your conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt." These are plain statements of Scripture—statements, moreover, found in immediate connection with some of the most elevated doctrines of inspiration; and it will be found, that where those plain statements are not allowed their full weight on the conscience, the higher truths are not enjoyed. I can neither enjoy nor walk worthy of my "high calling" if I am indulging in "foolish talking and jesting."

I quite admit the need of carefully avoiding all affected sanctimoniousness, or fleshly restraint. The sanctimoniousness of nature is fully as bad as its levity, if not worse. But why exhibit either the one or the other? The gospel gives us something far better. Instead of affected sanctimoniousness, the gospel gives us *real sanctity*; and instead of levity, it gives us *holy cheerfulness*.

* The word which is rendered "jesting," takes in what is commonly called "wit," "humor," "punning," "*repartee*," and such like. It is well to remember this. The word "jesting" would let a great deal pass which should come under the edge of the original word, which is a compound of two Greek words, signifying, "to turn well."

There is no need to *affect* any thing, for if I am feeding upon Christ, all is reality, without any effort. The moment there is effort, it is all perfect weakness. If I say I must talk about Christ, it becomes terrible bondage; but if my soul is in communion, all is natural and easy, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." It is said of a certain little insect, that it always exhibits the color of the leaf on which it feeds. So is it exactly with the Christian. It is very easy to tell what he is feeding upon.

But it may be said by some that "we cannot be always talking about Christ." I reply that just in proportion as we are led by an ungrieved Spirit will all our thoughts and words be occupied about Christ. We, if we are children of God, will be occupied with Him throughout eternity; and why not now? We are as really separated from the world *now* as we shall be *then*; but we do not realize it, because we do not walk in the Spirit.

It is quite true that in entering into the matter of a Christian's habit of conversation, one is taking low ground; but then it is needful ground. It would be much happier to keep on the high ground; but, alas! we fail in this; and it is a mercy that Scripture and the Spirit of God meet us in our failure. Scripture tells us we are "seated in heavenly places, in Christ;" and it tells us also not "to steal." It may be said that it is low ground to talk to heavenly men about stealing; yet it is Scripture-ground, and that is enough for us. The Spirit of God knew that it was not sufficient to tell us that we are seated *in heaven*; He also tells us how to conduct ourselves *on earth*; and our experience of the former will be evidenced by our exhibition of the latter. The walk *here* proves how I enter into my place *there*.

Hence, I may find in the Christian's walk a very legitimate ground on which to deal with him about the actual condition of his soul before God. If his walk is low, carnal, and worldly, it must be evident that he is not real-

zing his high and holy position as a member of Christ's body, and a temple of God.

Wherefore, to all who are prone to indulge in habits of light and trifling conversation or reading, I would affectionately but solemnly say, Look well to the general state of your spiritual health. Bad symptoms show themselves—certain evidences of a disease working within—a disease, it may be, more or less affecting the very springs of vitality. Beware how you allow this disease to make progress. Betake yourself at once to the Physician, and partake of His precious balm. Your whole spiritual constitution may be deranged, and nothing can restore its tone save the healing virtues of what He has to give you.

A fresh view of the excellency, preciousness, and beauty of Christ is the only thing to lift the soul up out of a low condition. All our barrenness and poverty arises from our having let slip Christ. It is not that He has let us slip. No; blessed be His name, this cannot be. But, practically, we have let Him slip, and as a consequence, our tone has become so low, that it is at times difficult to recognize any thing of the Christian in us but the mere name. We have stopped short in our practical career. We have not entered as we should into the meaning of Christ's "cup and baptism;" we have failed in seeking fellowship with Him in His sufferings, death, and resurrection. We have sought the *result* of all these, as wrought out in Him; but we have not entered experimentally into them, and hence our melancholy decline, from which nothing can recover us but getting more into the fullness of Christ.

C. H. M.

"THERE is nothing in which we so signally fail as in the cultivation of a confiding and thankful spirit."

"OUR path through the desert is strewed with countless

mercies ; and yet let but a cloud the size of a man's hand appear on the horizon, and we at once forget the rich mercies of the past in view of this single cloud, which after all may only 'break in blessing on our head.' "

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. 38.—"Can you give me some light on 1 Pet. iv. 6?"

Ans.—It must be taken in connection with what immediately precedes it. The apostle has been speaking of the changed lives of the Christian converts, which exposed them to the reproaches of the Gentiles round ; but they must give account to Him who was ready to judge both the living and the dead.

This leads him to speak, in the verse before us, of the uniform effect of the gospel wherever received, and in which they were one with all the saints departed. "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead:" not, as some have strangely imagined, who were dead when they were preached to, but who are *now* dead,—“that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”

The gospel had for its necessary result the bringing out of all the ways and thoughts of natural men (men in the flesh). And this exposed its converts to the false judgment of such men. But according to God in the spirit they then really and for the first time *lived*: they had true, divine life, recognized and approved by Him. In this, the living saints only followed in the steps of those passed away ; and, in the nature of things, the opposition on the part of men must be,—it was only the expression of the opposition between their former and their present lives.

F. W. G.