

HELP AND FOOD

FOR THE

Household of Faith.

Vol. XI.

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ERRATA.

Page 282, third line from top, for “ Baalam ” read “ Baalim.”

“ 301, first line of last paragraph, for “ lx.” read “ xl.”

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Help and Hood

FOR

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.



THE NEW YEAR.

COME let us anew
Our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear;
His adorable will
Let us gladly fulfill,
And our talents improve,
By the patience of hope and the labor of love.

Our life is a dream;
Our time, as a stream,
Glides swiftly away,
And the fugitive moment refuses to stay:
The arrow is flown,
The moment is gone,
The millennial year
Rushes on to our view, and eternity's here.

Oh that each in the day
Of His coming may say,
"I have fought my way through,
I have finished the work which Thou gav'st me
Oh that each from his Lord [to do"]!
May receive the glad word,
"Well and faithfully done!"
Enter into My joy, and sit down on My throne!"

Chas. Wesley.

A SHORT MEDITATION ON THE MORAL GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is the moral glory, or, as we speak, the character of the Lord Jesus on which I meditate in these pages. All went up to God as a sacrifice of sweet savor. Every expression of Himself in every measure, however small, and in whatever relationship it was rendered, was incense. In His person (but surely there only,) *man* was reconciled to God. In Him, God recovered His complacency in man, and that too with unspeakable gain; for in Jesus man is more to God than he would have been in an eternity of Adam innocence.

But in this Meditation on the Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus, it is surely but a small part of that wondrous subject I affect to have reached. I may give occasion to fruitful thoughts in the souls of others, and that will be good.

The Lord's *person* I assume—God and man in one Christ. His *work* I also assume; that suffering service, or blood-shedding, accomplished on the cross, whereby reconciliation is perfected, and wherein it is preached for the acceptance and joy of faith.

“And when any will offer a meat-offering, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon; and he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests; and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord.” (Lev. ii. 1, 2.)

THE glories of the Lord Jesus are threefold—personal, official, and moral. His personal glory He veiled, save where *faith* discovered it or an occasion demanded it. His official glory He veiled likewise; He did not walk through the land as either

the divine Son from the bosom of the Father, or as the authoritative Son of David. Such glories were commonly hid, as He passed on in the circumstances of life day by day. But His moral glory could not be hid: He could not be less than perfect in every thing—it belonged to Him, it was Himself. From its intense excellency, it was too bright for the eye of man; and man was under constant exposure and rebuke from it. But there it shone, whether man could bear it or not. It now illuminates every page of the four evangelists, as it once did every path which the Lord Himself trod on this earth of ours.

It has been said of the Lord, “His humanity was perfectly natural in its development.” This is very beautiful and true. Luke ii. 52 would verify this. There was nothing of unnatural progress in Him: all was orderly increase. His wisdom kept pace with His stature, or age. He was the child first, then the man. By and by, as a man (God’s man in the world), He will testify of the world that its works are evil, and be hated by it; but as a child (a child after God’s heart, as I may say), He will be subject to His parents, and under the law, and as one perfect; in such conditions, He grew in favor with God and man.

But though there was *progress* in Him, as we thus see, there was no cloud or perversion or mistake: in this He distinguished Himself from all. His mother pondered things in her heart; but cloud and indistinctness,—nay, darkness itself, beset her mind, and the Lord had to say to her, “How is it that ye sought Me?” But with Him, progress was but one form of moral beauty—His growth was orderly and was seasonable; and I may add that as “His humanity was perfectly natural in its development,” so was His

character entirely human in its expressions: all that displayed it was common to man, as I may say.

He was the tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season (Ps. i.); and all things are only beautiful in their season. The moral glory of "the Child Jesus" shines in its season and generation; and when He became a man, the same glory only gets other seasonable expressions. He knew when to own the claims of His mother, when she made them; when to resist them, though she made them; when to recognize them unsought (Luke ii. 51; viii. 21; Jno. xix. 27); and, as we afterward track Him, He knew Gethsemane in season, or according to its character; and the Holy Mount in its season, winter and summer, to His spirit. He knew the well of Sychar, and the road which led Him to Jerusalem for the last time. He trod each path or filled each spot in that mind that was according to the character it bore under God's eye. And so on occasions which called for still more energy. If it be the defilement of His Father's house, He will let zeal consume Him; if it be His own wrong at the hand of some Samaritan villagers, He will suffer it, and pass on.

And all was perfect in its *combinations* as well as in its *season*. He wept as He was reaching the grave of Lazarus, though He knew that He carried life for the dead. He who had just said, "I am the resurrection and the life" wept. Divine power would leave human sympathies free to take their full course.

And it is assemblage or combination of virtues which forms moral glory. He knew, as the apostle speaks, "how to abound and how to be abased,"—how to use moments of prosperity, so to call them, and also times of depression; for, in His passage

through life, He was introduced to each of these.

Thus He was introduced for a moment to His glory; and a very bright moment it was. I allude to the transfiguration. He was high in His honors there. As the sun, the source of all brightness, there He shone; and such eminent ones as Moses and Elias are there, taking of His glory from Him, and in it shining with Him. But as He descended the hill, He charged those who had been with Him, "the eye-witnesses of His majesty," not to speak of it. And when the people, on His reaching the foot of the hill, ran to salute Him (Mark ix. 15),—His person still reflecting, I believe, though faintly, the glory which it had lately borne,—He does not linger among them to receive their homage, but at once addresses Himself to His common service; for He knew "how to abound." He was not exalted by His prosperity. He sought not a place among men, but emptied Himself—made Himself of no reputation, quickly veiled the glory that He might be the servant,—the *girded*, not the *arrayed* One.

And it was thus with Him a second time, after He had become the risen Jesus, as we may see in Jno. xx. He is there in the midst of His disciples, in such a glorious character as man had never borne or witnessed, and never could. He is there as the conqueror of death, and the spoiler of the grave. But He is not there—though in such glories—to receive the congratulations of His people, as we speak, and as one naturally would who was finding himself returned to the bosom of friends and kinsfolk, after toil and danger and victory. Not that He was indifferent to sympathy: He sought it in season, and felt the want of it when He did not get it. But He is now, risen from the dead, in the midst of His disciples,

rather as a visitor for a day than as in a triumph. He is rather teaching them *their* interest, and not displaying *His own*, in the great things which had just been accomplished.

This was using a victory indeed, as Abraham knew how to use his victory over the confederate kings—a harder thing, as some have said, than to gain it. This, again, was knowing “how to abound,” how “to be full.”

But He knew “how to be abased” also. Look at Him with the Samaritan villagers in Luke ix. At the outset of that action, in the sense of His personal glory, He anticipated His being “raised up,” as He actually was afterward (see Mark xvi. 19; 1 Tim. iii. 16; the Greek word is the same); and in the common, well-known style of one who would have it known that a person of distinction was coming that way, He sends messengers before His face. But the unbelief of the Samaritans changes the scene. They would not receive Him. They refused to cast up a highway for the feet of this glorious One, but forced Him to find out for Himself the best path He could, as the *rejected* One. But He accepts this place at once, without a murmur in His heart. He becomes again (borrowing the word from Matt. ii.) the Nazarene, seeing He was refused as the Bethlehemite, and He fills this new character on this side of the Samaritan village as perfectly as He had filled the other character on the other side of it.

Thus He knew “how to be abased;” and just so do we again see Him in Matt. xxi. He enters the city as Son of David. All that could set Him off in that dignity surrounds and accompanies Him. He is in His earthly honor now, as He had been in His heav-

only glory on the holy hill. It was His without robbery; and when the moment demanded it, He can wear it. But the unbelief of Jerusalem now, as the unbelief of Samaria before, changes the scene; and He who had entered the city as her King has to leave it to seek a night's lodging, so to speak, where best He could find it. But there He is, outside Jerusalem, as before He had been outside the Samaritan village, knowing "how to be abased."

What perfection! If the darkness comprehend *not* the light of His personal or official glory, His moral glory shall only find occasion to shine the brighter. For there is nothing in morals or in human character finer than this combination of willing degradation in the midst of men, and the consciousness of intrinsic glory before God. We see it in some of the saints beautifully. *Abraham* was a willing stranger in the midst of the Canaanites all his days, not having a foot of land, nor seeking to have it; but when occasion served, he would take headship even of kings, conscious of his dignity in God's sight, according to God's own counsel. *Jacob* would speak of his pilgrimage, of his few and evil days, making himself nothing in the reckoning of the world; but he would at the same moment bless him who at that time was the greatest man on the earth, conscious that, under God and before him, he was "the better," the greater man of the two.

David would ask for a loaf of bread, and ask for it without shame. But, with all that, he would accept the homage due to a king, receiving the tribute of his subjects, as in the person of Abigail. *Paul* was bound with a chain, a prisoner in the palace, and would speak of his bonds; but at that same moment he

would let the whole court and high estate of the Roman world know that he knew himself to be the blest man, the only blest man, in the midst of them.

It is this combination of willing degradation before man, and conscious glory before God, that gets its highest, brightest way (when I consider who He was), its infinite illustration in our Lord.

And there is still further moral beauty in this knowing how to abound, and how to be abased, how to be full, and how to suffer need; for it tells us that the heart of him who has learnt that lesson is upon *the end* of the journey, rather than upon the *journey itself*. If the heart be on the journey, we shall not like these accidents and difficulties, the rough places and the hilly places; but if it be on the end, it will in proportion overlook such things. It is surely a secret rebuke to some of us to trace all this. J. G. B.

(*To be continued.*)

“AND THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT THERE.”

*“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.
And there shall be no more death; neither
sorrow, nor crying; neither shall
there be any more pain.”*

No *night* there.

NO need of feeble candle-flame, nor flare
Of fitful sunlight, oft by clouds obscure;
But light that shall eternally endure.
God giveth light our hearts could not conceive,
These eyes could not behold, yet we believe
’Tis all light there.

No *tears* there.

No weary watching, with no heart to share
Our anguish. Yet the burdened soul finds rest
In sweet communings on the Saviour’s breast.

Sweet foretaste of that never-ending day
 When God Himself shall wipe all tears away,—
 All joy there.

 No *pain* there.

No sufferer needing all our tend'rest care;
 No moan to break the awful stillness round;
 No fretful tone; no sharp, impatient sound;
 No bed of languishing, no weariness,
 No pain; but, oh, the joyous blessed rest!
 All rest there.

 No *death* there.

Death's rude, relentless hand shall never tear
 The loved one from the anguished breaking heart.
 For in that glorious world friends never part;
 But ever in the presence of the holy King,
 Their songs of thankful praises ever sing,
 All praise there.

 No *sin* there.

No drunken revelry sounds through the air;
 No darkened corner for sin's lurking-place.
 Not e'en a shadow there,—no, not a trace;
 But more than noonday brightness, glory light,
 Where shadow cannot fall, nor any blight,—
 No curse there.

 No *sea* there.

No strained eyes; no shadowed face shall wear
 The anxious peering 'cross the darkened shore,
 For some beloved one midst the tempest's roar.
 This restless surging tide shall cease to be,
 For He hath said, "There shall be no more sea."
 No sorrow there.

 We'll soon be there.

Free from all blight of sorrow and of care,
 Soon shall the deepening shadows flee away,
 And night shall end in bright, eternal day;
 For, hark! He saith, "Behold, I quickly come."
 With Christ, the blessed, in the Father's home,

Plainfield. We'll soon be there. *H. McD.*

"THINGS THAT SHALL BE:"

AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

PART VII. (Chap. xix. 5—xxii.)

THE CONSUMMATION.

The Earth's Final State. (Chap. xxi. 1—8.)

BEFORE the face of Him who sits upon the great white throne "the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them." (Chap. xx. 11.) We have now a complementary statement: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth." It is clear, therefore, that an earthly condition abides for eternity. It is a point of interest as to which Scripture seems to give full satisfaction, whether this new earth is itself a "new *creation*," or the old earth remodeled and made new. At first sight, one would no doubt decide for the former; and this was the view that at one time almost held possession of the field, the new earth scarcely being regarded by the mass as "earth" at all. Practically, the earth was simply believed to exist no more, and in contrast with it all was to be heavenly: the double sphere of blessing, earth *and* heaven, was lost sight of, if not denied.

Lately, for many, reaction has set in, and the pendulum has swung past the point of rest to the other extreme. The prophecies of the Old Testament rightly understood as to be literally taken, and delivered from the glosses of a falsely called "spiritual" interpretation, seemed to agree with the apostle Peter and the book of Revelation in making the earth to be the inheritance of the saints,—the earth in a heavenly *condition*, brought back out of its state of exile, and into true relation with the rest of the family of heaven, not alienated from their original place. Contrast between earth and heaven as an eternal existence was again, but from the other side of it, denied.

The whole web and woof of Scripture is against either of these confusions: the point of rest can only be in accepting the distinction of earthly from heavenly as fundamental to all right understanding of the prophetic word. The Old-Testament “promises,” which have in view the earth as a sphere of blessing, are, as the apostle declares (Rom. ix. 1-4), Jewish, not Christian. The New Testament emphasizes that the blessings of the Christian are in “heavenly places.” (Eph. i. 3.) Nor can this last possibly apply to earth made heavenly. The Lord has left us with the assurance (Jno. xiv.) that in His Father’s house are many mansions,—permanent places of abode,—that He was going to prepare a place there for us, and that He will come again to receive us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. As well assure us that the Lord’s permanent abode is to be on earth and not in heaven, as that our own is to be here, not there.

Each line of truth must have its place if we are to be “rightly dividing the word of truth.” The heavenly “bride of the Lamb” is not the earthly; “Jerusalem which is above” is not the Palestinean city; the “church of first-born ones, who are written in *heaven*” are not that “Israel,” declared God’s “first-born” as to the earth; the promise of the Morning-Star is not the same as that of the “Sun of Righteousness,” although Christ assuredly is both of these. Discernment of such differences is of necessity for all true filling of our place, and practical rendering of Christian life.

Let us look now, however, at the question of continuity between the earth that flees away and the earth that succeeds it. At first sight we should surely say, they cannot be identical. The well-known passage in the epistle of Peter would seem to confirm this (2 Pet. iii. 10, 12). There we learn that “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the

earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." And it is repeated, and thus emphasized by repetition, that "the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

Yet, as we look more closely, we shall find reason to doubt whether more is meant than the destruction of the earth as the place of human habitation. In the deluge, to which it is compared (*vv.* 5-7), "the world that then was *perished*;" yet its continuity with the present no one doubts. Fire, though the instrument of a more penetrating judgment, yet does not annihilate the material upon which it fastens. The melting even of elements implies rather the reverse, and dissolution is not (in this sense) destruction.

Yet the heavens and the earth pass away,—that is, in the form in which now we know them; or, as the apostle speaks to the Corinthians, "the *fashion* of this world passes away" (1 Cor. vii. 21): and that this is the sense in which we are to understand it, other scriptures come to assure us.

A "new" earth does not necessarily mean *another* earth, except as a "new" man means *another* man,—"new" in the sense of renewed. And even the words here, "there was no more sea," naturally suggest another *state* of the earth that now exists. This fact is a significant one: that which is the type of instability and barrenness, and condemns to it so large a portion of the globe, is gone utterly and forever. At the beginning of Genesis we find the whole earth buried under it; emerging on the third day, and the waters given their bounds, which but once afterward they pass. Now they are gone forever, as are the wicked, to whom Isaiah compares it: "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." This last is the effect of chafing against its bounds, as the "mind of the flesh" is "not

subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Rom. viii. 7.)

These analogies cannot fail to illustrate another which the Lord Himself gives us, when He speaks of the millennial kingdom as the “regeneration,”—“Ye who have followed Me, in the *regeneration*, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matt. xix. 28.) Here, let us note that it is the Lord’s *kingdom* that is the regeneration of the earth. That reign of righteousness which is the effectual curb upon human wickedness, not the removal of it, answers thus to what “regeneration” is for him who is in this sense in the Lord’s kingdom now. Sin is not removed; the flesh abides even in the regenerate; but it has its bound—it does not reign, has not dominion. In the perfect state, whether for the individual or the earth, righteousness *dwells*, as Peter says of the latter: sin exists no more. How striking does the analogy here become when we remember that the change, perhaps dissolution, of the body comes between the regenerate and the perfect state, just as the similar “dissolution” of the earth does between the millennium and the new earth! Surely this throws a bright light upon the point we are examining.

The new heavens are, of course, only the *earth*-heavens, the work of the second of the six days. They are of great importance to the earth which they surround, and to which they minister. More and more is science coming to recognize how (in natural law at least) the heavens rule. Yet who but an inspired writer, of the time of Peter or John, would have made so much of the new heavens? And these only, as Peter reminds us, develop a much earlier “promise.” This we find in Isa. lxxv. and lxxvi., a repeated announcement, the second time explicitly connected with the continuance of Israel’s “seed” and

"name:" "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall abide before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." Thus even in the new earth there will be no merging of Israel in the general mass of the nations. The first-born people written on earth will show still how "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," as will the "church of the first-born who are written in heaven." These different circles of blessing, like the principalities and powers in heavenly places, are quite accordant with what we see everywhere of God's manifold ways and ranks in creation. Why should eternity efface these differences, which of course do not touch the unity of the family of God as such, while they are abiding witnesses of divine mercy in relation to a past, of which the lessons are never to be lost?

Earth, then, itself remains, but a "new" earth; and as the seal upon its eternal blessedness, "I saw," says the prophet-evangelist, "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, their God.'" Here is the promise in Immanuel's name made finally good to the redeemed race: and he who is privileged to show us the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father tabernacling among men when the Word was made flesh, is the one who shows us the full consummation. Of the new Jerusalem we have presently a detailed account; here, what is emphasized is, that it is the link between God and men; God Himself is with men, in all the fullness of blessing implied in that.

We must not, however, pass over any thing: the less even that is said, the more should we ponder that which *is* said. Let us see, then, what is here, putting it in

connection with what seems most naturally to throw light upon it elsewhere. Standing where we are—at the end of time, we stand indeed whither the whole stream of time has been conducting us; and therefore with the countless voices of the past sounding prophetically to us. What will it be to be actually there, at the end of the ways which, though through the valley of Baca, lead up to the city of God!

First, here, we are shown that He has prepared for us a city—"the holy city." The new Jerusalem is surely, what its earthly type is, a "city of habitation:" it is not simply a figure for the saints themselves. The patriarchs of old, content to await in patient faith the end of their pilgrim-journey, "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God;" and He will not disappoint their expectations,—“He hath prepared for them a city.” (Heb. xi. 10, 16.) At the very beginning of the world's history we find, in one who manifested a totally opposite spirit, still the desire of the human heart which this promise meets. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, fugitive and vagabond as he was, to build a city. Without faith or patience, he only shows the natural craving of the heart, but not in itself evil because natural. Ever since, the history of man has connected itself mainly with its cities. From Babel on to Rome, these have been the centres of power and progress ever, and (the world being what it is) they have exhibited in the most developed way its opposition to God. But God too has His city, and makes much of it, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth," and with it associates (Ps. lxxxvii.) the One great name which eclipses that of all others.

The tendency of the day is toward cities, and in these, for good or for ill, we find the greatest development of man; only, man being fallen, the development is mon-

strous. When the day of the Lord has put down, however, all human thoughts, it is only to exalt Jerusalem upon the earth, and to make way for the display of that better Jerusalem that is here before us.

The city is the expression of human need, and the provision for it. In the midst of strife and insecurity, men gather together for protection; but that is only a small part of what is implied in it. There are other needs more universal than this, as that of coöperation, the division of labor, the result of that inequality of aptitudes by which God has made us mutually dependent. Our social nature is thus met, and there are formed and strengthened the ties by which the world is bound together; while the intercourse of mind with mind, of heart with heart, stimulates and develops every latent faculty. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." (Prov. xxvii. 17.)

The eternal city implies for us association, fellowship, intercourse, the fullness of what was intimated in the primal saying, "It is not good for man to be alone," but which in respect of the bride city, which this is, has still a deeper meaning. Here, the relationship of the saints to Christ, who as the Lamp of divine glory enlightens it, alone adequately explains all. "Alone" can we nevermore be. "With Him" our whole manhood shall find its complete answer, satisfaction, and rest.

This is necessarily, therefore, the "*holy* city." Cain's has but too much characterized every city hitherto. Where shall we find as in the city the reek of impurity and the hotbed of corruption? There poverty and riches pour out a common flood of iniquity, out of which comes ever increasing the defiant cry of despair. But here at last is a "HOLY CITY," the new Jerusalem, "foundation of peace;" not, like Babel of old, towering up to heaven, but coming down from heaven, the way of all good, of all

blessing for men. The tabernacle of God is with men. God Himself tabernacles with them. His own hand removes every trace of former sorrow, every effect of sin. His own voice proclaims what his hand accomplishes: "Behold, I make all things new."

Here, that we may be fully assured, a confirmatory word is added. And along with this, and in view of it, in the name of Him who is Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, the sweet invitation of the gospel is once more published, the free gift of the water of life to every thirsty soul is certified; and the inheritance to the overcomer, for it is reached by the way of conflict and of triumph,—grace securing, not evading, this: "He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son."

Just here too, with no less earnestness, and in eternity, past all the change of time, the doom of the wicked is pronounced: "But the fearful"—too cowardly to take part with Christ in a world opposed to Him,—“and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

MEPHIBOSHETH AND ZIBA.

WAS there ever so beautiful a picture of a heart true to an absent, rejected Lord, as that of Mephibosheth, in the nineteenth chapter 2 Samuel. We have, of course, all of us, enjoyed again and again, the story of the finding of this poor remnant of the house of Saul. It has spoken too closely to our inmost souls not to have been of intens-

est interest to us. "The kindness of God!" How infinitely lovely and precious to see so complete and touching a picture of it, a thousand years before the "Son of His love" came to show to a lost world the true "Kindness of God." But it is not of this that I would now write; but of that other scene, where David, the king, is returning after the defeat of Absalom, and all are hastening to do him honor; and amongst the multitude who flock to the passages of the Jordan, he who with undressed feet, untrimmed beard, and unwashed raiment, shows where his affections have been during those weary days of his Lord's absence and rejection. Now I want to ask attention to one point that has appeared to me a strange blemish to the beauty of the narrative. How is it that after Mephibosheth's explanation of his absence from David's side in the days of his sorrow and shame, that the king should reply, "Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, 'Thou and Ziba divide the land.'" Does not that look as if the king were taking very low and unkingly ground with poor Mephibosheth? Ziba—in whom we can but recognize the religious man of the earth, with his pretended fidelity, his obsequious and voluntary humility, his lying accusations against the true saint, his quick grasp on the estate of his master, his voluntary association with Shimei, the curser: Ziba—type of the self-righteous elder brother of Luke xv., that "servant" of his day;—Ziba is now put on a level and equal footing with Mephibosheth, the loyal, true Mephibosheth, the object of David's pure grace and favor. Is that just? is that right? For one or the other of these two men is a liar to the heart's core. If Ziba be true, then surely Mephibosheth deserves

rather to be slain for his base ingratitude, in forsaking his benefactor, for his efforts to have the kingdom restored to himself, for his present shameful duplicity in appearing to have mourned during his absence. Death, or banishment at least, would be nearer justice than "to halve the land" with the true and loyal Ziba. If, on the other hand, Mephibosheth be true, then surely half his master's land is a great premium on the wicked falsehood and cruel deceit of the servant Ziba. Does it not look like a blemish to the narrative? Well it is for us, beloved reader, if we have so learned God's Word as really to *welcome* these apparent blemishes for the hidden beauties that sooner or later they reveal to us. These are the kind of defects that infidelity delights to get hold of and flaunt before all (but to its own deep shame), whilst the heart of the child of God quietly rests in humble confidence in Him, and waits upon Him for enlightenment, till the apparent darkness disappears, and the words that looked so inconsistent and defective, sparkle with a new, a peculiar, a divine beauty.

Here is the scene : all Judah had come in a crowd to welcome back the king, and now the very stronghold of the rebellion, Jerusalem, has come (see Revised Version) also to the fords for the same purpose—a vast multitude. Who can tell the true attitude of heart of each individual that comprises it? It seems to have been a typical scene of that triumphant return of our rejected Lord when all shall yield Him obedience; but that obedience shall be, in many cases, "feigned," as Ps. xviii. leads us to expect. Do we not see how naturally King David might doubt as to Mephibosheth? He has heard, and evidently believed up to this time, Ziba's story accounting for his

master's absence in the day of trial, so now he asks Mephibosheth to give *his* explanation. "Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth?" The answer is not only a straight denial of all that Ziba had said, but a direct charge of slander against the servant. Who can possibly decide between the two? It is simply a question of veracity. Who can detect the false and justify the true before all? Both men lie under the suspicion of the gravest charges. Who shall clear the innocent that his righteousness may shine as the light? God's wisdom is needful surely here; for the matter stands now much in the same position as that later scene before David's son, when each woman claimed the living child as hers, and there appeared no way of discovering the true from the false. Yes, it *is* a similar difficulty, and a similar test shall solve it. The affections must be touched, and allowed to speak out—the true state of heart must be revealed. "Divide the child," says Solomon, "Divide the land," says David! It does its work. It has its effect in both cases. If Mephibosheth were false and disloyal, what an escape for him! He must, in that case, have come trembling down to Jordan; his conscience thundering its accusations of his ingratitude and disloyalty, and his heart cold with apprehension for his life, and lo! he hears that he is to have *half the land* instead of death. "Yes, yes," surely a false Mephibosheth would have cried, seeking to confirm David's mind ere it changed, "so let it be; it is a wise and just settlement"—just as the false mother,—“let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.” But listen to the true heart in both cases. Out it comes, with its simple natural cry of inherent affection, "O my Lord, give her the liv-

ing child, and in no wise slay it." "Yea, let him take all; for as much as my lord the king is come again in peace into his own house." How beautiful! What need of another word of comment! The Spirit of God leaves it there in its beauty for you and me to look at, admire, and worship. The scene is perfect. Mephibosheth is fully justified, and by consequence Ziba is condemned; but has not the king just said that "no man must be put to death this day in Israel?" Then no more need be said, or can be said, of Ziba, for *that* is his desert; so there is silence, a silence as beautiful as all else: it is perfect.

But now is there in this merely a beauty that we may admire? Is there no practical searching word for our consciences in this testing of Mephibosheth, to which he, dear gracious man, answered so happily? There seems to be here what in the divine wisdom tests every heart, yours and mine, dear reader. Is it without significance that the same character of testing is found twice in the Old Testament in David and Solomon? And is it too much for us to see in it one of God's own ways of trying and bringing out just where the affections of our hearts really are? I believe it fully; nay, moreover, I am convinced that this is a day when we need to apply very faithfully to ourselves, just such touchstones as these that God's Word gives us. You and I would not, of course, look upon this world as *all* our own; not at all; we would not, of course, forfeit the approval, the well-done, of our Lord Jesus by having our portion *altogether* here and now; but are we equally careful that our affections are not somewhat *divided*? Do we feel content to "divide the land" with Ziba? Ah, that, if I understand the epistles to the seven churches at all, is

exactly the characteristic of the present times—Laodicea is not cold; she lays claim to the precious things of Christ; she is not utterly indifferent to divine things, not at all; she has come to meet the King (as do *all* the ten virgins); but she is not “hot”—and what an immensely solemn word, “I would thou wert *cold* or hot.” She will not sacrifice all for Him; Christ Jesus is not *all* to her—she approves the sentence, “Thou and Ziba divide the land,” and she becomes a “dweller upon the earth.”

Search hearts, my brethren; nay, raise the cry of Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24. No bird needs *all* the forest for its nest—one twig suffices; and our hearts can find nesting place—often unconsciously—on a very small portion of the world—very little suffices to “divide” them, at least.

Do you want to see a true Mephibosheth of this day of Christ's rejection? Then look at that man running his race with these words on his lips, “One thing I do.” Hearken to the voice of *his* affections, listen to *his* heart speaking out, “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.” All things loss! Have suffered the loss of all things! Dear reader, is this your case? Is this thy case, O my soul? Does this touchstone make thee tremble? Dost thou admit any thing in this death-doomed scene to *share*, in however small a degree, thy affections with Him who has shown thee, a poor, vile, impure, guilty sinner, “the kindness of God.” Let *your* heart answer. Let *your* affections speak.

“Is there a thing beneath the sun

That seeks with Thee my heart to share?

Ah, tear it thence, and reign alone,

The Lord of every motion there.”

F. C. J.

THE LAST WORDS OF DAVID.

DAVID'S eventful life was drawing to a close. His career was a checkered one, beginning with the sheepfolds and ending on the throne. He had been persecuted by King Saul until at the death of that persecutor he had taken the place intended for him by God. His reign too had been marked by stirring events in which the hand of God, in dealing with His beloved servant in blessing and in chastening, had frequently been manifested. And now he was about to lay down the sceptre and the harp, to pass from scenes of earth, where he had walked by faith through the darkness, into the presence of Him whom he called his "exceeding joy." It was fitting that such a man after such a life should leave behind him some last words, gathering up in brief the experiences of a lifetime. Equally does it become us to listen to these closing words of the man after God's own heart and to get for ourselves some profit from them.

How brief they were! But it is the brevity of condensation, not of poverty. It is the conclusion, reached after years of experience, a conclusion so simple and plain that but few words were needed to make it known.

First, there is the retrospective glance. "David the son of Jesse." Here was his place by nature, traced back a little further, it would have shown his relationship to the Moabite, through Ruth, with no claim on God, save through grace. Immediately with this natural title comes his position by grace: "The man who was raised up on high, and the anointed of the God of Jacob." He was low; he was not ashamed to own it; now he could confess who it

was who had anointed him, the God of Jacob, Jacob the supplanter, who had nothing to commend him save his deep need of the grace which has been shown him. It was Jacob's God who had anointed him, he with that one had nothing to commend him but his need. It was this conception of what God had done for him which, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, fitted him to be "The sweet psalmist of Israel." He had known God's ways, experienced His love and care amid all conceivable circumstances whether of oppression by the enemy, or victory over them; of personal failure or merciful restoration; as man or as king, he had known fully what God was and what he was, and therefore was a suited mouthpiece to speak the praises of Israel's God for Israel.

Next, he speaks of the responsibilities and qualifications of one who would in truth be the ruler of God's people. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." His own experience with Saul, and the manifest needs of the people had brought home to him the absolute necessity of a proper ruler, one just and who feared God. He could not claim these qualifications for himself, but he well knew who was the true ruler of God's Israel, of whom alone it could be said, "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." "He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment." He was the "Sun of Righteousness," "the light of the morning." Without Him all was dark,

but David looks forward to that "morning without clouds," when the tender grass shall at last spring up under the benign influences of that reign. How striking all these for the last words of a man who had done much for God. He esteems it all as nothing compared with Christ; his eye is set forward upon Him and in the light of that cloudless morning one day to dawn on Israel, he knew that his reign had been but the dim twilight. Is our experience more and more coming to this? Our work, our worship, our joy, are all but the dimness of night; are we looking forward not to the "Sun of Righteousness," as was David, but to the "bright and Morning Star," the light-bearer, who, before day dawns here, will call us up where light has its home?

We have seen that David looked not at himself, but at the true King of whom he was but a type. We now see him taking a look at his own house. "Although my house be not so with God;" here is the plain acknowledgement of unfitness in himself. Doubtless he remembered the blots upon his reign—Uriah, Absalom and Joab's unchecked lawlessness. Nor did the bright prospects before Solomon beguile him into thinking that he was the true king. But how beautifully he appropriates the blessings, if he had to acknowledge his unfitness: "Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." For us, as for David, it is true that "our house is not so with God." For us also, as for him, thanks be to the God of all grace, there is the "everlasting covenant," sealed with the precious blood of Christ, ordered in all things and sure, and this is all our salvation. How blessedly firm and secure it all is. David adds, "And all my *desire*." Dear brethren, as

we see hopes blighted, it may be, every thing here dark and gloomy, our own record nothing to boast in, can we say of that everlasting covenant that it is all our salvation and all our *desire*? Does it satisfy us?

Lastly, David has a word for the incorrigible. Judgment, though it lingers in long-suffering, will soon come, and for these there is not "the morning without clouds," but "the blackness of darkness forever."

Such were the last words of David. Self-abasement, and joyful confidence in Christ, postponing all final blessings till He come—these thoughts and such like filled the mind of this man as he drew near the end of his course. And as we have reached the close of another year, the last it may be we shall spend here, let us learn to use these last words. For ourselves we can say but little, but let the "blessed hope" be more real, more vivid, and the sweet assurance of our interest in all future blessings not only give certainty as to salvation, but fill to overflowing our cup.

"This is all my salvation, and all my desire."

SELF-CONTROL.

MANY a hot-tempered Christian has wished, and wished in vain, that he might be able to control his tongue. "The tongue can no man tame." Many have longed to put the foot upon appetite, sloth, or other sources of failure, only to find themselves utterly helpless. Scripture tells us the secret of self-control. Temperance, or, as it might be translated, self-control, means literally "strength within." No outward strength—even poor Samson's

—can control the fierce will, the fiery passions, any more than the chains could bind the demoniac of Gaddara. “Strengthened with all power, according to the might of His glory, unto all *endurance* and long-suffering with joy.” (Col. i. 11.) There we have a power, divine and yet within us. It is “the power that worketh in us,” and it is the power for self-control. It is the might of His glory, the power of heaven—opened for us through the death and resurrection of our Lord—which is our strength. Naturally, we might expect greater results from such a power—tongues of men and angels, mountains removed, and such like. Instead of that, we have simply endurance. But that means all else; for when we are passive in God’s hands, He can use us as He sees fit.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. 1.—“Please explain Rev. xii. 9-11, and Eph. vi. 12. The literal wording of these passages implies that our old Enemy is in heaven at the present time, which is hardly in accord with anything I have ever seen in print, and, unpopular as the thought may be, I would like to be clear as to it.” *H. N. T.*

Ans.—Whether unpopular or not there can be no question that Satan is now in heaven. The scriptures referred to, with others equally plain, leave no room for doubt as to this. The popular, though somewhat confused, thought is that Satan has his home in hell. There he is supposed to reign, and there he inflicts torments upon the wicked dying in their sins. Nothing could be further from the truth than this. Hell is not the kingdom, but the prison-house of the devil; there he will not inflict, but receive the awful punishment reserved for him. This will take place after the millennium, when, having been loosed for a season from the abyss—a place of confinement during the thousand years of blessing—he gathers the nations for their last mad act of rebellion against a righteous God, only to be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented forever and ever. (Rev. xx. 1-10.) This is the first time the devil is placed in hell, and his doom there is final. Solemn and awful thought, that all the impenitent will share in that fire “prepared for the devil and his angels.”

But if Satan for the first time is placed in hell at the close of the millennium, where is he now? The scriptures referred to tell us. Our warfare is with "the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the *heavenly places*." (Eph. vi. 12, *R. V.*) Christ is there (Eph. i. 20, 21); our place is there "in Him." (Eph. ii. 6.) Hence the conflict—Satan and his hosts on the one hand seeking to prevent us from now entering upon the enjoyment of our heavenly inheritance, and we through grace standing firm in God's grace and overcoming the enemy. But we are upon earth and Satan seeks to overcome us by giving us earth instead of heaven. So we read, "The world rulers of this darkness." (Eph. vi. 12.) Satan is the prince (Jno. xiv. 30) and the god (2 Cor. iv. 4) of this world, and as such, has authority and power, yea, can be as a roaring lion. (1 Pet. v. 8, 9.) But he is a vanquished foe (Heb. ii. 14) to *faith*, which recognizes the victory which Christ won and anticipates the doom of the wicked one, as our blessed Lord did. (Luke x. 18.) This last passage is evidently the prophetic anticipation of what actually takes place in Rev. xii. 7-12. The context gives us the time when this takes place. It is after the man-child (Christ and the Church) is "caught up unto God" (Rev. xii. 5), and then, when the ransomed saints are presented in all their glory, Satan, who had constantly been accusing them, is finally thrust out. He has been engaged in this work of accusation a long time. In Job's day we see him with free access to the presence of God, only to speak evil of that faithful man, and we see him there too "going to and fro in the *earth* and walking up and down in it." (Job i. 6, 7.) But how blessed it is to remember that, if the saints of God have an *accuser* in heaven, they have an *Advocate* as well, and such an Advocate (1 Jno. ii. 1.)—

"Though the restless foe accuses,
Sins recounting like a flood,
Every charge our God refuses,
Christ has answered with His blood."

But we were seeing that the twelfth of Revelation gives us the *time* of Satan's downfall. It is when the Church is caught up. Satan is thrust down to earth to devote himself exclusively to the development of that specially satanic form of evil manifested in the last week of Daniel, the time of the beast, and the antichrist and the "great tribulation." This is but a "short time," and then he is confined, as we have seen, during the millennium.

We learn, then, from Scripture that Satan at present has the range of heaven and earth—that he has not yet but will be at the last, cast into the lake of fire. His work now is to accuse saints before God, to keep them out of the enjoyment of their heavenly position, and to deceive and mislead them here. But, thank God, he has no power over us, as he had none over our blessed Lord, if we, like Him, resist him by the Word of God.

ON THE MORAL GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(Continued from p. 8.)

BUT there are other combinations in the Lord's character that we must look at. Another has said of Him, "He was the most gracious and accessible of men." We observe in His ways a tenderness and a kindness never seen in man, yet we always feel that He was "a stranger." How true this is! He was "a stranger here"—a stranger as far as *revolted man* was filling the place, but intimately near as far as *misery or need demanded Him*. The distance He took, and the intimacy He expressed, were perfect. He did more than look on the misery that was around Him, He entered into it with a sympathy that was all His own; and He did more than refuse the pollution that was around Him,—He kept the very distance of holiness itself from every touch or stain of it. See Him as exhibiting this combination of distance and intimacy in Mark vi. It is an affecting scene. The disciples return to Him after a long day's service. He cares for them. He brings their weariness very near to him. He takes account of it, and provides for it at once, saying to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." But, the multitude following Him, He turns with the same readiness to them, acquainting Himself with their condition; and having taken knowledge of them, as sheep that had no shepherd, He began to teach them. In all this we see Him very near to the rising, varied need of the scene around Him, whether that need be the fatigue of the disciples, or the hunger and ignorance of the multitude. But the disciples soon resent His attention to

the multitude, and move Him to send them away. This, however, will in no wise do for Him. There is immediate estrangement between Him and them, which shortly afterward expresses itself by His telling them to get into the ship while He sent the multitude away. But this separation from Him only works fresh trouble for them. Winds and waves are against them on the lake; and then in their distress He is again near at hand to succor and secure them!

How consistent in the combination of holiness and grace is all this! He is near in our weariness, our hunger, or our danger. He is apart from our tempers and our selfishness. His holiness made Him an utter stranger in such a polluted world; His gr \acute{a} ce kept Him ever active in such a needy and afflicted world. And this sets off His life, I may say, in great moral glory; that though forced, by the quality of the scene around Him, to be a lonely One, yet was He drawn forth by the need and sorrow of it to be the active One. And these activities were spent on all kinds of persons, and had therefore to assume all kinds of forms. Adversaries,—the people, a company of disciples who followed Him (the twelve), and individuals; these kept Him not only in constant, but in very various activity; and He had to know, as surely He did to perfection, how to answer every man. And beside all this, we see Him at times at the *table* of others; but it is only that we may still notice further various perfections. At the table of the Pharisees, as we see Him occasionally, He is not adopting or sanctioning the family scene, but, being invited in the character which He had already acquired and sustained outside, He is there to act in that character. He is not a guest simply, under the courtesy and

hospitality of the master of the house, but He has entered in His own character, and therefore He can rebuke or teach. He is still the Light, and will act as the Light; and thus He exposes darkness within doors as He did abroad. (See Luke vii., xi.)

But if He thus entered the house of the Pharisee again and again, in the character of a *teacher*, and would then, acting as such, rebuke the moral condition of things which He found there, He entered the house of the publican as a Saviour. Levi made Him a feast in his own house, and set publicans and sinners in His company. This is, of course, objected to. The religious rulers find fault, and then the Lord reveals Himself as a Saviour, saying to them, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; but go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Very simple, but very striking, and full of meaning this is. Simon the Pharisee objected that a sinner should enter His house and approach the Lord Jesus; Levi the publican provided such as these to be the fellow-guests of the Lord Jesus. And according to this, the Lord in the one house acts as a reprover, in the other, discloses Himself in the rich grace of a Saviour.

But we are to see Him at other tables still. We may visit Him in Jericho and at Emmaus. (See Luke xix. and xxiv.) It was desire that received Him on each of these occasions; but desire differently awakened—awakened, I mean, under different influences. Zaccheus had been but a sinner, a child of nature, which is, as we know, corrupt in its springs and in its activities. But he had been just at that moment

under the drawings of the Father, and his soul was making Jesus its object. He wished to see Him, and that desire being commanding, he had pressed his way through the crowd and climbed up into a sycamore tree, if he might but just see Him as He passed by. The Lord looked up, and at once invited Himself into his house. This is very peculiar,—Jesus is an uninvited, self-invited guest in the house of that publican at Jericho !

The earliest strivings of life in a poor sinner, the desire which had been awakened by the drawings of the Father, were there in that house ready to welcome Him; but sweetly and significantly He anticipates the welcome, and goes in—goes in in full, consistent, responsive character, to kindle and strengthen the freshly quickened life, till it break forth in some of its precious virtue, and yield some of its own good fruit. “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.” At Emmaus *desire* had been again quickened, but under different conditions. It was not the desire of a freshly drawn soul, but of restored saints. These two disciples had been unbelieving. They were returning home under a sorrow that Jesus had disappointed them. The Lord rebukes them shortly after He joined them on the road, but so orders His words as to kindle their hearts. When their walk together ends at the gate of their dwelling, the Lord makes as though He would go further. He would not invite Himself as He had done at Jericho. They were not in the moral state which suggested this, as Zaccheus had been; but, when invited, He goes in—goes in just to kindle

further the desire which had here invited Him—to gratify it to the full. And so He does; and they are constrained by their joy to return to the city that night, late as it was, to communicate it to their fellows.

How full of various beauty all these cases are! The guest in the house of Pharisees, the guest in the house of publicans, the guest in the house of disciples,—the invited and the uninvited guest, in the person of Jesus, sits in His place, in all perfection and beauty. I might instance Him as a guest at other tables, but I will now look only at one more. At Bethany we see Him adopting a family scene. Had Jesus disallowed the idea of a Christian family, He could not have been at Bethany, as we see He was. And yet, when we get Him there, it is only some new phase of moral beauty that we trace in Him. He is a friend of the family, finding, as we find to this day among ourselves, a home in the midst of them. “Now Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus,” are words which bespeak this. His love to them was not that of a Saviour, or a shepherd, though we know well He was each of these to them. It was the love of a family friend. But though a friend, an intimate friend, who might whenever He pleased find a welcome there; yet He did not interfere with the arrangements of the house. Martha was the house-keeper, the busy one of the family, useful and important in her place; and Jesus will surely leave her where He finds her. It was not for Him to alter or settle such matters. Lazarus may sit by the side of the guests at the family table, Mary may be abstracted and withdrawn as in her own kingdom, or into the kingdom of God within her, and Martha be

busy and serving. Be it so. Jesus leaves all this just as He finds it. He who would not enter the house of another unbidden, when entered into the house of those sisters and brother, will not meddle with its order and arrangements, and in full moral comeliness this is. But if one of the family, instead of carrying herself in her family place, step out of it to be a teacher in His presence, He must and will resume His higher character, and set things right *divinely*, though He would not interfere with or touch them *domestically*. (Luke x.)

What various and exquisite beauty! Who can trace all His paths? The vulture will have to say it is beyond even the reach of his eye. And if no human eye can fully see the whole of this one object, where is the human character that does not aid in setting off its light by its own shadows and imperfections? We none of us think of John, or of Peter, or of the rest of them, as hard-hearted or unkind. Quite otherwise. We feel that we could have intrusted them with our griefs or our necessities. But this little narrative in Mark vi., to which I referred, shows us that they are all at fault, all in the distance, when the hunger of the multitude appealed to them, threatening to break up their ease; but, on the contrary, *that* was the very moment, the very occasion, when Jesus drew near. All this tells us of Him, beloved. "I know no one," says another, "so kind, so condescending, who is come down to poor sinners, as He. I trust His love more than I do Mary's, or any saint's; not merely His power as God, but the tenderness of His heart as man. No one ever showed such, or had such, or proved it so well—none has inspired me with such confidence. Let others go to

saints or angels, if they will; I trust Jesus' kindness more." Surely, again I say, this is so—and this occasion in Mark vi., betraying the narrow-heartedness of the best of us, such as Peter and John, but manifesting the full, unwearied, saving grace of Jesus, verifies it. But further: there are in Him combinations of characters, as well as of virtues or graces. His relationship to the world, when He was here, exhibits this. He was at once a conqueror, a sufferer, and a benefactor. What moral glories shine in such an assemblage! He overcame the world, refusing all its attractions and offers; He suffered from it, witnessing for God against its whole course and spirit; He blessed it, dispensing His love and power continually, returning good for evil. Its temptations only made Him a conqueror; its pollutions and enmities only a sufferer; its miseries only a benefactor. What a combination! What moral glories shine in each other's company there!

J. G. B.

(To be continued.)

“THE END OF THE COMMANDMENT.”

“Now the end of the commandment is charity (love) out of a pure heart, and a good conscience and faith unfeigned.” (1 Tim. i. 5.)

THE end of the commandment, charge, or exhortation, is “love out of a pure heart.” “God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him.” Naturally, we do not love each other any further than another ministers to our desires. We love ourselves, and we love our wives, children, brothers, sisters, friends, and neighbors

only in proportion as they gratify or please us in some manner. Our natural love is then wholly selfish. But love that is according to God—like any thing else in Christianity—is from Himself and by the Spirit. It is through His love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which He has given unto us, that we love others "out of a pure heart." A pure heart is one in subjection to God, and such an one God dwells in by His Spirit, and His love goes out through him to others. It is of God, and, like every thing else in Christianity, all of God.

A heart truly in subjection to God is one over which He reigns and in which He rules, and, consequently the rule is in love, for He is love, and the love which is of Him must be out of a pure heart. In 2 Tim. ii. 22, we are commanded to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Here it is the same thought, out of a heart so in subjection to God that He has, so to speak, His own way with it. When all hearts in an assembly are so in subjection we have the "unity of the Spirit," and we are all of one mind for "we have the mind of Christ." "Love out of a pure heart" also manifests itself in fellowship with others who are alike in subjection and so manifests itself that each realizes the subjective condition of his fellow. Therefore we are admonished to associate ourselves with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.

"A good conscience." This can only be maintained through walking in the light. We are the children of light. God has introduced us into His light by Jesus Christ, and to keep a good conscience we are to walk in the light as He is in the light, and

there we have fellowship one with another, and *the blood*, not the walk, cleanseth us from all sin. That is, we realize this by faith. We have the full consciousness of the fact. Thus we keep a good conscience. “If we say we abide in Him, we ought so to walk even as He walked.” We are exhorted by Paul “*not* to grieve the Holy Spirit of God by which we are sealed unto the day of redemption,” and to fail in this brings with it a bad conscience. But the end of the commandment is “a good conscience.” This, then, can only be maintained while walking in fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. In this fellowship and communion there is, there can be, no sin; but when we fall out of that place, and begin to walk as men in the world, that moment sin comes in and we grieve the Holy Spirit and get a bad conscience. “My little children, these things write I unto you that *ye do not sin*; and if any man (saint) do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One; and He is the propitiation for our sins.” “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” This is restoring grace for failing saints, and again brings us into His presence with no conscience of sins. So is ample provision made for both keeping a good conscience and restoring it when lost through failure; the work of the Righteous One still going on for us in grace. Let His name be praised by all His saints to the ages of the ages. Amen.

“These things write I unto you that *ye sin not*.” This, dear brethren, is the primary word for us. The Word of God does not contemplate us as practicing sin. “He that committeth sin is of the devil.”

"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." "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." This alone is the place of security. Abiding in Him is the place where there is no sin, and there alone can we keep continually a good conscience. It is a double abiding. He abides in us as life, the new life, and our place of strength is abiding in Him by faith where He is. May God our Father keep us so abiding by His Holy Spirit.

"And faith unfeigned." Faith unfeigned implies feigned faith. A man may *say* he has faith and yet not be born of God. Such a faith is a feigned faith, or man's own work, of his own volition; but unfeigned faith is the gift of God, and comes to man only when he has come to the end of himself. See the case of the man with the withered hand. The Lord Jesus commanded him to stand forth before the whole assembly in the synagogue (see Mark iii.). He obeyed, and stood there while the Master spoke to the assembly; at the end He said unto him, "Stretch forth thy hand," and he immediately stretched forth the hand that he could not stretch forth. There was faith unfeigned, and it came from God as a free gift by Jesus Christ when the man was ready to receive it. "As many as *received* Him, to them gave He the power (privilege) to become the sons of God," even to them that believe on His name, which were born of God. Unfeigned faith, then, is of God, and comes to every willing, submissive soul. "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

Mr. Darby somewhere says that "faith is this power of God working in a man," and this is the

truth, and only this is unfeigned faith. It is an old saying that "man's extremity is God's opportunity," and so when a man comes to the end of himself before God and is fully subject, then God takes him up. Faith unfeigned is, so to speak, the instrument by which God works salvation in man by Jesus Christ. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? Thou hast both seen Him and it is He that talketh with thee; and he said, Lord, I believe, and he worshiped Him." He was willing, he was submissive, and at once the Lord made him a worshiper.

May our God keep us full of love out of a pure heart, and with a good conscience, and a faith that is unfeigned for His ever blessed Son's sake. Amen.

J. S. P.

"AS UNKNOWN, YET WELL KNOWN."

Strangers here—

NOT a link with earth unbroken,
 Not a farewell to be spoken,
 Waiting for their Lord to take them
 To Himself and like Him make them.

Strangers here—

With their hearts upon a treasure
 That has dimmed for them earth's pleasure;
 Lamps well trimmed and brightly burning;
 Eyes forever upward turning.

Strangers here—

Pilgrims in a hostile nation,
 In a groaning old creation,
 Journeying on through shame and scorning,
 Gazing at the Star of Morning.

Strangers here—
Earthly rank and riches losing,
Worldly ties and claims refusing;
On to Christ in glory pressing,
All things there in Him possessing.

Strangers here—
But in Him their hearts are resting,
Faith looks up in days of testing,
Follows Him with true allegiance,
Loves to walk in His obedience.

Strangers here—
Christ has told them His affection,
Given them such a bright reception;
Not one word of condemnation—
Not one thought of separation.

Strangers here—
Soon to be at home together,
Going in with Christ forever;
He who bore their deep dishonor,
Giving them His wealth and honor.

Well known there—
Oh, what joy for Christ to take them
To the Father, who will make them
Welcome in His mansions yonder;
Strangers here—to be no longer!

(Selected.)

“To fill any post really for God you must not expect it to be all happiness, though you will have the light and cheer of His countenance, even though the sun by day and the frost by night may try you on the human side. To find things pleasant is not the right expectation. To please the Lord is our summum-bonum, and as we do, we are happier pleasing Him than in pleasing ourselves.”

“THINGS THAT SHALL BE:”

AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

PART VII. (Chap. xix. 5—xxii.)

THE CONSUMMATION.

The Holy City.

THE last vision of Revelation is now before us : it is that of the city of God itself. But here, where one would desire above all to see clearly, we become most conscious of how feeble and dull is our apprehension of eternal things. They are words of an apostle which remind us that “we see through a glass darkly”—*en ainigmati*, in a riddle. Such a riddle, then, it is no wonder if the vision presents to us: the dream that we have here a literal description, even to the measurements, of the saints’ eternal home, is one too foolish to need much comment. All other visions throughout the book have been symbolic: how much more here! how little need we expect that the glimpse which is here given us into the unseen would reveal to us the shape of buildings, or the material used! Scripture is reticent all through upon such subjects; and the impress to be left upon our souls is plainly spiritual, not of lines and hues, as for the natural senses. “Things which eye hath not seen” are not put before the eye.

On the other hand, that the “city” revealed to us here is not simply a figure of the saints themselves, as, from the term used for it, “the Bride, the Lamb’s Wife,” some have taken it to be, there are other scriptures which seem definitely to assure us. “Jerusalem, which is above, which is our mother” (Gal. iv.) could hardly be used in this way, though the Church is indeed so conceived of in

patristic and mediæval thought. But even thus it would not be spoken of naturally as "*above*."

In Heb. xii. we have a still more definite testimony. For there the "Church of the first-born ones which are written in heaven," as well as "the spirits of just men made perfect"—in other words, both Christians and the saints of the Old Testament—are mentioned as distinct from "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem;" and this will not allow them to be the same thing, although, in another way, the identification of a city with its inhabitants is easy.

We are led in the same direction by the mention of the "tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God,"—something to which the apostle thought he might have been caught even bodily (2 Cor. xii.)—and here is the tree of life in the midst of the city beside the "river of the water of life" which flows from the throne of God. Figurative language all this surely; yet these passages combine to give us the thought of a heavenly abode, already existing, and which will be in due time revealed as the metropolis of the heavenly kingdom—what Jerusalem restored will be in the lower sphere. Indeed the earthly here so parallels and illustrates the heavenly as to be a most useful help in fixing, if not enlarging, our thoughts about it,—always while we realize, of course, the essential difference that Scripture itself makes clear to be between them. But this we shall have to look at as we proceed.

"The holy city, Jerusalem," is certainly intended to be a plain comparison with the earthly city. But that is the type only; this is the antitype, the true "foundation of peace," as the word means. What more comforting title, after all the scenes of strife, the fruit of the lusts that war in our members, which we have had to look upon! Here is "peace" at last, and on a foundation that shall not be removed, but that stands fast forever. For this is em-

phatically “the city that *hath* foundations,” and “whose builder and maker is God.” (Heb. xi. 10.) How blessed it is, too, that it should be just one of the seven angels that had the seven last plagues that shows John the city! for no mere executioner of judgment we see is he: judgment (as with God, for it is God’s) is also *his* “strange work.” It had to come, and it has come: there was no help, no hope without it; thus the stroke of the “rod of iron” was that of the shepherd’s rod; it was the destruction of the destroyers only. But it is past, and here is the scene wherein his own heart rests, to which it returns with loyalty and devotion: here, where the water of life flows from the throne of God,—eternal, from the Eternal; refreshment, gladness, fruitfulness, and power are found in obedience.

But the city is the “Bride, the Lamb’s wife.” In the Old Testament, the figure of marriage is used in a similar way. Israel was thus Jehovah’s “married wife” (Is. liv. 1, Jer. xxxi. 33), now divorced indeed for her unfaithfulness, but yet to return (Hos. ii.), and be received and reinstated. Her Maker will be then once more her husband, and more than the old blessing be restored. In the forty-fifth psalm, Israel’s King, Messiah, is the Bridegroom; the Song of Solomon is the mystic song of His espousals. Jerusalem thus bears His name: “This is the name whereby she shall be called: ‘Jehovah our Righteousness.’” (Jer. xxxiii. 16, comp. xxiii. 6.) The land too shall be “married.” (Is. lxii. 4.)

In the New Testament, the same figure is still used in the same way. The Baptist speaks of his joy as the “friend of the Bridegroom,” in hearing the Bridegroom’s voice (Jno. iii. 29); and in the parable of the virgins (Matt. xxv.), where Christians are those who go forth to meet the Bridegroom, they are by that very fact not regarded as the Bride, which is still Israel, (according to

the general character of the prophecy,) though not actually brought into the scene. Some may be able to see also in the marriage at Cana of Galilee (Jno. ii. 1) the vailing of the same thought.

All this, therefore, is in that earthly sphere in which Israel's blessings lie; our own are "in *heavenly* places" (Eph. i. 3), and here it is we find, not the Bride of *Messiah* simply, but distinctively "the Bride of the *Lamb*." The "Lamb," as a title, always keeps before us His death, and that by violence, "a Lamb as it had been *slain*" (Rev. v. 6); and it is thus that He has title to that redemption empire in which we find Him throughout this book. But "the Bride of the Lamb" is thus one espoused to Him in His rejection, sharer (though it be but in slight measure) of His reproach and sorrow, trained and disciplined for glory in a place of humiliation. And so it is said that "*if we suffer*, we shall also reign with Him;" and again, "If so be we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." (2 Tim. ii. 12; Rom. viii. 17.)

The saints in the millennium have no heritage of suffering such as this; even those who pass through the trial which ushers it in, have not the same character of it, although we must not forget those associated with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, who illustrate the same truth, but upon a lower platform. Even these are not His Bride.

Ephesians, the epistle of the heavenly places, shows us the Church as Eve of the last Adam, whom Christ loves, and for whom He gave Himself. Formed out of Himself and for Himself, He now sanctifies and cleanses her with water-washing by the Word, that He may present her to Himself a holy Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. In another aspect, this Church is His body, formed by the baptism of the Spirit as at Pentecost, complete when those who are Christ's are caught up to meet

Him in the air. The doctrine of this is, of course, not in Revelation: the difficulty is in seeing the conformity of Revelation with it.

Outside of Revelation even, there is a difficulty in the connection (if there *be*, as one would anticipate, a connection) between the Church as the body of Christ *now*, before our presentation to Him, and the “one flesh” which is the fruit of marriage. Israel was the married wife, and will be, though now for a time “desolate,” as one divorced. The Church is “espoused” (2 Cor. xi. 2), not married. Thus the “one body” and the “great mystery” of “one flesh,” of which the apostle speaks (Eph. v. 29) must be distinct.

Looking back to Adam, to whom as a type he there refers us, we find that Eve is taken out of his side,—is thus really his “flesh” by her very making. Thus, as one with him in nature, she is united to him,—a union in which the prior unity finds its fit expression. The two things are therefore in this way very clearly and intimately connected. The being of Christ's body is that, then, which alone prepares and qualifies for the being of His bride hereafter; and body and bride must be strictly commensurate with each other.

The mystery here is great, as the apostle himself says; nor is it to be affirmed that the type in all its features answers to the reality. It is easily seen that this could not be; yet there is real correspondence and suitability thus far: according to it, the Church of Christ alone, from Pentecost to the rapture, is scripturally only (in a strict sense) the “Bride of the Lamb.”

Yet can we confine the new Jerusalem to these? There would of course in this case be no difficulty as to the character of a city which it is given in this vision. A city is commonly enough identified with its inhabitants, so that the same term covers both place and persons. But

are none to inhabit the new Jerusalem except the saints of Christian times? Are none of those so illustrious in the Old Testament to find their place there? Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are among those with whom the Lord assures us we are to sit down in the kingdom of God (Luke xiii. 28, 29);—are they to be outside the heavenly city?

This is positively answered otherwise, as it would seem, in Revelation itself. For while the general account of those who enter there is that they are those "written in the Lamb's book of life" (xxi. 27), "without" the city are said to be only "dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolators, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (xxii. 15).

In the eleventh of Hebrews, moreover, in a verse already quoted, "the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God," for which the patriarchs looked and waited, can surely be no other than that which we find here; and it is added that they desired "a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." It could not be the New-Testament church for which Abraham looked; for this was as yet entirely hidden in God. (Eph. iii. 9.) Another and larger meaning for the new Jerusalem must surely, therefore, be admitted.

And why should there not be in it the inclusion of both thoughts? Why should it not be the bride-city, named from the bride-church, whose home it is, and yet containing other occupants? This alone would seem to cover the whole of the facts which Scripture gives us as to it; and the Jewish bride is in like manner sometimes a wider, sometimes a narrower conception; sometimes the city Jerusalem, sometimes the people Israel. Only that in the Old Testament the city is the narrower, the people

the wider view; while in the New Testament this is reversed. And even this may be significant: the heavenly city, the dwelling-place of God, permitting none of the redeemed to be outside it, but opening its gates widely to all. A Bride-City indeed, ever holding bridal festival, and having perpetual welcome for all that come: its freshness never fading, its joy never satiating; blessed are they whose names are written there!

As before, the city is seen "descending out of heaven from God." We shall find, however, here, that the present vision goes back of the new heavens and earth to the millennial age,—that is, that while itself eternal, the city is seen in connection with the earth at this time. Not yet has it been said, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them." The descending city is not, therefore, in that settled and near intimacy with men outside of it in which it will be. A significant and perfect note of time it is that the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of nations (xxii. 2). Tender as this grace is, the condition it shows could not be eternal.

All the nearer does it bring this vision of glory and of love, no more to be banished or dimmed by human sin or sorrow. The city has the glory of God; and here is the goal of hope, complete fruition of that which but as hope outshines all that is known of brightness elsewhere. It cannot be painted with words. We cannot hope even to expand what the Holy Ghost has given us. But the blessedness itself we are soon to know.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

"WATCH ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity." (1 Cor. xvi. 13, 14.)

CALEB'S PATIENCE.

APPARENTLY, Caleb lost the best part of his life in the wilderness. Those forty years of aimless wandering were, to outward appearance, thrown away. Nor was he to blame. His faith was ready to take him into the land at Kadesh Barnea. He knew God was able to give the people their promised inheritance, and he was ready in the vigor of that assurance to act at once: "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." But he, with Joshua, stood alone, and in vain attempted to stem the torrent of fear, unbelief, and rebellion which swept the whole congregation past this point of opportunity—opportunity never to come again to any of that unbelieving host. "So then we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." And so he must be chained to a rebellious and unbelieving people, compelled to go up and down in a waste land, and all that time the home of his choice, fair Hebron, lay away off in that "pleasant land," which the people had despised. What did it cost him to walk those forty years in peace and patience? He was suffering under the government of God, not for his own sin, but because he was identified with Israel and had to go through all the circumstances of trial, sorrow, and temporary cutting off which, in righteous chastening, God was bringing upon the people. Personally he was guiltless, but this enabled him the more clearly and fully to enter into the reality of it. In all this, he presents a vivid illustration of our blessed Lord as Messiah, Israel's King. In the gospel of Matthew, He had attracted the people and awakened their desire for the "kingdom

of heaven;" He had shown them, as it were "spied out" for them, the holy principles of that kingdom, in the sermon on the mount; He had exhibited the "power of the coming age," Eshchol's fruit, in healing every kind of sickness and infirmity; only to find the same unbelief that existed in Caleb's day, culminating in the same rebellion and apostasy, even ascribing to Satan the works of the Holy Ghost! How like Kadesh Barnea! and how similar in result! The people as a nation refuse to enter with Him into the blessings of the kingdom, and so from the thirteenth chapter of Matthew we see Him, Caleb-like, turn from the prospect of an immediate earthly kingdom to tread in patience the thorny path of rejection, ending in His being "cut off" as Messiah. "For the transgression of My people was He smitten." We well know, thanks be to God, that this rejection, this cutting off, only opened up the "new and living way through His death;" but none the less real was the pressure upon His soul, the disappointment we may say, as He realized that the people Israel "could not enter in because of unbelief." But, blessed Master, if He could not enter in because of Israel's unbelief, He showed the meekness and patience of complete submission to God's chastening hand—chastening undeserved by Him, more lovely even than any earthly glory could have been. In all this He has "left us an example that we should follow His steps." In one sense, He, like Caleb, could say, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain;" but how surely could He, and can all upon whom apparently adverse circumstances press, add, "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." After the deliberate and

formal refusal of the people to recognize Him, He was just as patient, just as loving. He had sorrow and tears for their unbelief, but never a thought of deserting them.

And Caleb, too, in his measure, no doubt exhibited this same patience in accompanying the people in their wanderings—to be sure it was the only thing for him to do, but he evidently did not succumb to the surrounding circumstances, for we hear him say, when at last the people under Joshua had entered the land, a new race, “And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as He said, these forty and five years . . . while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; . . . for war, both to go out and to come in.” (Josh. xiv. 10, 11.) No man but one who had kept himself “unspotted from the world” could have said that. Only of the “righteous” can it be said, “They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.” (Ps. xcii. 14.) There is no need to mention the various instances where special patience, kindness, diligence was shown. His wilderness history is an unwritten one, to be filled out by each one who will walk in his steps.

And are not our circumstances very similar to Caleb's in many ways? To be sure there is the added factor of personal failure and the need of realizing the chastening for this, but there are certain general characteristics which can be applied to us all.

To begin with the most general: we have an inheritance which is ours, purchased and assured, but we cannot yet enter upon it. This is not because of

personal or general failure, but from the necessity of the case. The demoniac of Gadara longed to accompany the Lord, who had healed him, but was bidden wait awhile and testify what had been done for him. The new-born soul longs to be with Jesus, to see and worship Him, but must wait in the wilderness till the Lord's own time. Here is need for patience, and in a twofold way is the warning needed not to be "weary in well doing." One may be homesick for heaven and let that homesickness unfit him for service here. This is so rare that one almost is tempted to wish there were more such who were crying,

"Take me to love's own country."

But there is for those who so long and become faint the need to remember that service here is that to which the master calls, and it is only a "little while." More needed however is Caleb's example for those who, shut out for the time from their home, become absorbed with their surroundings and forget "the things that are before." Did not the memory of Hebron remain in Caleb's heart as fresh during all those years as at the first? How is it with us, dear brethren? Is it a longing to be *there*? a desire to depart, if need be, and be with Christ? Are our treasures realized to be there and not here? Let Caleb teach us, who, though his feet were in the desert, had his heart in the land. "Set your mind on things above, *not* on things on the earth." (Col. iii. 2.)

But we can get help and encouragement from Caleb's example for individual cases. He was yoked with a carnal set, and had to outwardly follow where they were led. We, too, are in Christendom and

must accept, in a broad sense, the position brought upon it by unbelief. We have often heard it said that it is impossible to restore a ruin, and this is true, and we go wrong if we ignore it or attempt to extricate ourselves from the consequences of this ruin. Caleb could not leave the rest of the people, neither can we separate ourselves from the professing church; we must sorrowfully bear witness to the fact that *we* are in confusion (and who can, with Caleb, claim personal blamelessness in contributing to this confusion?) But, though outwardly with the people, who dreams of Caleb's taking part in, or by his presence countenancing the shameful scenes of Bethpeor? So we have not the slightest excuse for mixing ourselves with practices which, if not so gross, are as much forbidden as the sin of Peor. Specification is not needed, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." We are to hold ourselves ready to help in every way and minister to God's people wherever they are, but we are most assuredly not to partake in their unscriptural practices.

But we have lessons still more individual. One of the constant complaints of God's people, if not upon their lips, in their hearts at least, is that their circumstances are so unfavorable to a full enjoyment of divine things. One is hampered by absorbing business; another is thrown with ungodly persons in the performance of his duty, a third has, it may be, a worldly family. *If* matters were different how much more would they enjoy the things of God,—congenial surroundings, pleasant associates, and so forth. Caleb teaches us to have the *heart* wholly set upon God's things, and then walk the path of duty. It is not said that we cannot alter some of our circum-

stances. We surely ought where they involve us in dishonor to God. But the vast mass will remain unchanged, and it will spoil us for service if we are going to be dragged down by it. Here is our lesson—to live with God and for Him where He puts us. Nay, we may have through unfaithfulness put ourselves in positions where we must quietly learn from God and glorify Him in the position.

What is the *root* of it all? To be *whole-hearted* for God. If the Lord has not our whole heart, the world will, wedgelike, enter and spoil all. Oh, for that confidence in His love, that conviction of His all-sufficiency which will abide with us in all our path, and give us such rest of soul that we may remain, like Caleb, fresh and full of vigor!

FAREL, THE REFORMER OF SWITZERLAND, TO ANDRONICUS.

(“*D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation.*”—
Times of Calvin. Vol. iii., p. 234.)

“WE are in the thick of the fight; the conflict is terrible; we are fighting man to man . . . but the Lord giveth the victory. Take up the sword, set the helmet on your head, buckle on the breastplate, hang the shield to your loins, and being thus armed with the panoply of God, rush into the midst of the battle; hurl the darts, throw down the enemy on every side, and put all the army to flight. But, alas! instead of joining the soldiers of Christ, instead of rushing into the Lord's battles, you fear the cross, and the dangers that lie in wait for you. Preferring your own ease, you refuse to come to the assistance of your brethren. Is that the be-

havior of a Christian The holy Scriptures declare that the Lord will exact a severe reckoning for such cowardice . . . Beware lest you bury the talent you have received. Call to mind that you must give an account of all those souls whom tyranny holds captive in its gloomy dungeons. You can set the light before their eyes; you can deliver them from their chains.* You must conjure them to throw themselves into the arms of Jesus Christ . . . Do not hesitate . . . Christ must be preferred to every thing. Do not trouble yourself about what your wife wishes or requires, but about what God asks and commands."

April, 1531.

MERCY AND JUDGMENT.

"If ye had known what this meaneth, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,' ye would not have condemned the guiltless." (Matt. xii. 7.)

THE Lord does not here say, *the guilty*, yet He speaks of mercy.

The Pharisees were great sticklers for *law*, and thus professed to be the only ones who honored Moses, and God who gave it. They were orthodox enough, but there was one thing lacking—they had no hearts—no heart-movement toward God, and so no hearts for God's people; and this was an awful lack, was it not?

Although we may not be Pharisees in the full sense, the same principles and the same condition of soul in a measure may possess us in our relations to one another. The cold letter of the Word kills now as then,

"Loose him, and let him go." (Jno. xi.)

and none more than those who themselves use it; so we too need to know what this means, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." The Lord beautifully meets this hardness of their hearts, and justifies the poor of His flock by pressing upon their consciences (and bringing themselves in as witnesses), that it is *lawful* to do good at any time. For this, is needed a heart right toward God, and bowels of mercies toward men—a tender and compassionate heart. This will not leave out judgment, but it will show mercy. "I will sing of mercy and of judgment," said one who had learned something of this.

Our compassions—how easily, alas!—circle around ourselves, and plead for ourselves instead of others. We speak often of principles, too, and set to work to carry them out with hard and fast lines of Scripture, all clear and straight enough, but in the application of them, showing judgment is not tempered by mercy. "This ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone." There is no value in our taking "high ground," and talking about God and His claims however rightly, if there be lacking in us real heart-care for the least of His people. We cannot separate *love to Christ* from *love to His people*, and yet how much it is done!

It is easy to talk of love for brethren far off, and all the time be unable to live with the brethren at our door; of what account, then, is our talk? "for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God [or his brother] whom he hath not seen?" (1 Jno. iv. 20.)

And so, whether it be a question of the guiltless or the guilty, while we are bound to maintain the truth, it must be kept in even balance—as it ever was per-

fectly by the blessed Lord Himself—with mercy in the heart. The truth has no power when used as a whip for the backs of others—merely to beat and smite them, and thus drive them away, but, in the true love of the true Shepherd of the sheep, to do good with, and this is always lawful.

What a reaping for us it will be, even in the life that is, when “he who showed no mercy will have judgment without mercy”! How happy, on the other hand, to be able to enter into the joy and blessedness of that word, “And mercy glories over judgment.” (Jas. ii. 13.) The Lord graciously teach us more of it; for if we do not learn it, we too may condemn the guiltless.

W. B.—d.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. 2.—“In what respect does Acts correspond with Exodus?”

J. H. H. .

Ans.—In general, Exodus is the book of *salvation* of Israel from Egypt (answering to the significance of its number—2.) Acts is the history of the actual salvation of the people from Judaism and the law to Christianity. While the death and resurrection of our Lord, prefigured by the opening of the waters of the Red Sea, are not *recorded* in this book, their effects and benefits form the theme of the whole; beginning with the descent of the Holy Ghost, answering to the pillar of cloud and fire, who is the Guide and Power of the true Israel of God. The power of Judaism has become a world-power, and, linked with the Gentiles, forms a bondage of which Pharaoh's sway was a fitting illustration. It is not meant that every portion of the book will have an exact correspondence in the other, but that in general the themes are similar. No doubt, too, careful study will bring out more exact resemblances as Paul's conversion and ministry answering to the tabernacle and its service, while the deliverance from law, for the Gentile Christians in the fifteenth chapter would be rather a contrast to Israel's deliberate acceptance of law at Sinai.

ON THE MORAL GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(Continued from p. 35.)

THE Lord illustrated that word that is among us, "*In the world, but not of the world,*"—a form of words which, I suppose, has been derived from what He Himself says in Jno. xvii. 15,—“I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil.” He illustrates this condition all through His life; for He was ever in the world, active in the midst of its ignorance and misery, but never of it, as one that shared its hopes or projects, or breathed its spirit. But in Jno. vii. I believe He is eminently seen in this character. It was the time of the feast of tabernacles, the crowning joyous time in Israel, the antepast of the coming kingdom, the season of ingathering, when the people had only to *remember* that they had been in other days wanderers in a wilderness, and dwellers in a camp. His brethren propose to Him to take advantage of such a moment, when “all the world,” as we speak, was at Jerusalem. They would have Him make Himself important,—make Himself, as we again speak, “a man of the world.” “If thou do these things,” they say, “show thyself to the world.” He refused. His time had not then come to keep the feast of tabernacles. He will have His kingdom in the world, and be great to the end of the earth, when His day comes; but as yet He was on His way to the altar, and not to the throne. He will not go to the feast to be *of the feast*, though He will be *in* it; therefore, when He reaches the city at this time, we see Him in *service* there, not in *honor*,—not working miracles, as His brethren would have had Him, that He might gain the notice

of men, but teaching others, and then hiding Himself under this: "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me."

Very peculiar and characteristic indeed all this is. And all this was some of the moral glory of the Man—the perfect Man—Jesus, in His relation to the world. He was a conqueror, a sufferer, and a benefactor,—in the world, but not of it. But with equal perfectness do we see Him at times *distinguishing things*, as well as exhibiting these beautiful combinations. Thus, in dealing with sorrow which *lay outside*, as I may express it, we see tenderness, the power that relieved; but in dealing with the trouble of *disciples*, we see faithfulness as well as tenderness. The leper in Matt. viii. is a stranger. He brings his sorrow to Christ, and gets healing at once. Disciples, in the same chapter, bring their sorrow also—their fears in the storm; but they get rebuke as well as relief. "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" He says to them. And yet the leper had but little faith, as well as the disciples. If they said, "Lord, save us: we perish!" he said, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." But they are rebuked, while he is not, just because there was a different thing before the mind of the Lord, and justly so. It was *simply sorrow* in the one case; it was *the soul as well as the sorrow* in the other. Tenderness—unmixed tenderness was therefore His answer to the one; faithfulness must form part of the other. The different relationship to Him of disciples and strangers at once accounts for this, and may show us how perfectly He distinguished things that came very near each other but still were not the same. But further, as to this perfection. Though He Himself rebuke, He will not

allow others lightly to do it. As in earlier days, Moses may be humbled by the Lord, but the Lord will not allow Miriam and Aaron to reproach him. (Num. xi., xii.) Israel in the wilderness will be chastened again and again by the hand of God, but in the face of Balaam, or any other adversary, He will be as one that has not seen iniquity in His people, and will not suffer any enchantment to prevail against them. So the Lord Jesus will beautifully and strikingly step in between the two disciples and the rebuking ten (Matt. xx.); and though He send a word of warning and admonition to John the Baptist, as in secret (such a word as John's conscience alone might understand), He turns to the multitude to speak of John only with commendation and delight. And still further, as to this grace in distinguishing things that differ. Even in dealing with His disciples, there did come a moment when faithfulness can be observed no longer, and tenderness *alone* is to be exercised. I mean in the hour of parting, as we see in Jno. xiv., xvi. It was then "too late to be faithful." The moment would not have admitted it. It was a time which the *heart* claimed as entirely belonging to itself. The education of the soul could not go on then. He opens fresh secrets to them, it is true,—secrets of the dearest and most intimate relationships, as between them and the Father; but there is nothing that is to be called rebuke. There is no such word as, "O ye of little faith!" or "How is it that ye do not understand?" A word that may sound somewhat like that is only the discharging of a wound which the heart had suffered, that they might know the love He had for them. This was the sacredness of the sorrow of a moment of parting, in the perfect mind

and affection of Jesus; and we practice it ourselves in some poor manner, so that we are at least able to enjoy and admire the full expression of it in Him. "There is a time to embrace," says the preacher, "and there is a time to refrain from embracing." This is a law in the statute-book of love, and Jesus observed it.

But again. He was not to be drawn into softness when the occasion demanded faithfulness, and yet He passed by many circumstances which human sensibilities would have resented, and which the human moral sense would have judged it well to resent. He would not gain His disciples after the poor way of amiable nature. Honey was excluded from the offerings made by fire, as well as leaven. The meat-offering had none of it (Lev. ii. 11); neither had Jesus, the true meat-offering. It was not the merely civil, amiable thing that the disciples got from their Master. It was not the courtesy that consults for the ease of another. He did not gratify, and yet He bound them to Him very closely; and this is power. There is always moral power when the confidence of another is gained without its being sought, for the heart has then become conscious of the reality of love. "We all know," writes one, "how to distinguish between love and attention, and that there may be a great deal of the latter without any of the former. Some might say, Attention must win our confidence; but we know ourselves that nothing but love does." This is so true. Attention, if it be mere attention, is honey, and how much of this poor material is found with us! and we are disposed to think that it is all well, and perhaps we aim no higher than to purge out leaven, and fill the lump with honey. Let us be amiable,

perform our part well in the civil, courteous, well-ordered social scene, pleasing others, and doing what we can to keep people on good terms with themselves, then we are satisfied with ourselves, and others with us also. But is this service to God? Is this a meat-offering? Is this found as part of the moral glory of the perfect man? Indeed, indeed it is not. We may naturally judge, I grant, that nothing could do it better or more effectually; but still it is one of the secrets of the sanctuary, that *honey was not used to give a sweet savor to the offering*.

Thus, in progress, in seasonableness, in combinations, and in distinctions, how perfect in moral glory and beauty were all the ways of the Son of Man!

The life of Jesus was the bright shining of a candle. It was such a lamp in the house of God as needed no golden tongs or snuff-dishes. It was ordered before the Lord continually, burning as from pure beaten oil. It was making manifest all that was around, exposing and reproofing; but it ever held its own place uncondemned.

Whether challenged by disciples or adversaries, as the Lord was again and again, there is never an excusing of Himself. On one occasion, disciples complain, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" but He does not think of vindicating the sleep out of which this challenge awakes Him. On another occasion they object to Him, "The multitude throng Thee, and press Thee, and sayest Thou, 'Who touched Me?'" But He does not need this inquiry, but acts upon the satisfaction of it. At another time, Martha says to Him, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;" but He does not excuse His not having been there, nor His delaying for two

days in the place where He was; but instructs Martha in the *wondrous character which His delay had given to that hour*.

What a glorious vindication of His delay that was! And thus it was on every like occasion,—whether challenged or rebuked, there is never the recalling of a word, nor the retracing of a step. Every tongue that rises in judgment against Him He condemns. The mother rebukes Him in Luke ii.; but instead of making good her charge, she has to listen to Him convicting the darkness and error of her thoughts. Peter takes upon him to admonish Him: “This be far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee;” but Peter has to learn that it was Satan himself that in Peter prompted the admonition. The officer in the palace of the high-priest goes still further—correcting Him, and smiting Him on the cheek; but he is convicted of breaking the rules of judgment in the very face and place of judgment.

All this tells us of the way of the perfect Master. Appearances might have been against Him at times. Why did He sleep in the boat when winds and waves were raging? Why did He loiter on the road when Jairus’ daughter was dying? or why did He tarry where He was when His friend Lazarus was sick in the distant village of Bethany? But all this is but *appearance*, and that for a moment. We have heard of these ways of Jesus,—this sleep, this loitering, and this tarrying,—but we also see the end of Jesus, that all is perfect. Appearances were against the God of Job in patriarchal days. Messenger after messenger seemed too much, unrelenting, and inexorable; but the God of Job had not to excuse Himself, nor has the Jesus of the evangelists.

Therefore, when we look at the Lord Jesus as the lamp of the sanctuary, the light in the house of God, we find at once that the tongs and snuff-dishes cannot be used. They are discovered to have no counterpart in Him; consequently, they who undertook to challenge or rebuke Him when He was here had to go back rebuked and put to shame themselves. They were using the tongs or snuffers with a lamp which did not need them, and they only betrayed their folly; and the light of this lamp shone the brighter, not because the tongs had been used, but because it was able to give forth some fresh witness (which it did on every occasion) that it did not need them.

And from all these instances we have the happy lesson that we had better stand by, and let Jesus go on with His business. We may look and worship, but not meddle or interrupt, as all these were doing in their day,—enemies, kinsfolk, and even disciples. They could not improve this light that was shining; they had only to be gladdened by it, and walk in it, and not attempt to trim or order it. Let our eye be single, and we may be sure the candle of the Lord, set on the candlestick, will make the whole body full of light.

But I pass on. And I may further observe that as He did not excuse Himself to the judgment of man in the course of His ministry, as we have now seen, so in the hour of His weakness, when the powers of darkness were all against Him, He did not cast Himself on the pity of man. When He became the prisoner of the Jews and of the Gentiles, He did not entreat them or sue to them. No appeal to compassion, no pleading for life is heard. He had prayed to the Father in Gethsemane, but there is no seeking to

move the Jewish high-priest or the Roman governor. All that He says to man in that hour, is to expose the sin with which man, whether Jew or Gentile, was going through that hour.

What a picture! Who could have conceived such an object! It must have been exhibited ere it was described, as has been long since observed by others. It was the perfect man, who once walked here in the fullness of moral glory, and whose reflections have been left by the Holy Ghost on the pages of the evangelists. And next to the simple, happy, earnest assurance of His personal love to ourselves, (the Lord increase it in our hearts!) nothing more helps us to desire to be with Him than this discovery of *Himself*. I have heard of one who, observing His bright and blessed ways in the four gospels, was filled with tears and affections, and was heard to cry out, "O that I were with Him!"

If one may speak for others, beloved, it is this we *want*, and it is this we *covet*. We know our need, but we can say, the Lord knows our desire.

The same preacher whom we quoted before says, "There is a time to keep and a time to cast away." (Eccles. iii. 6.) The Lord Jesus both kept and cast away in the due season.

There is no waste in the services of the heart or the hand that worships God, be they as prodigal as they may. "All things come of Thee," says David to the Lord, "and of Thine own have we given Thee."

The cattle on a thousand hills are His, and the fullness of the earth. But Pharaoh treated Israel's proposal to worship God as idleness, and the disciples challenge the spending of three hundred pence on the body of Jesus as waste. But to give the Lord

His own,—the honor or the sacrifice, the love of the heart, the labor of the hands, or the substance of the house,—is neither idleness nor waste. It is chief work to render to God.

But here I would linger for a moment or two.

J. G. B.

(To be continued.)

THE REPROACH OF CHRIST AND THE REPROACH OF EGYPT.

“Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” (Heb. xi. 26.) *“This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.”* (Josh. v. 9.)

AS a young man, Moses had remarkably bright prospects from a worldly point of view. Of a despised race oppressed, and apparently doomed to destruction, he had been adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, and instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians; thus having every advantage that worldly wealth, wisdom, and position could give him. Nor were these things trifles. He who begins by despising allurements, often ends by succumbing to them.

But there came a time in his life when other motives began to have power with him. The seeds of truth, doubtless planted by a faithful mother during the time of his childhood, had sprung up, and he was not ashamed to call his brethren those despised and oppressed Israelites, whom, spite of their bondage, he doubtless recognized as the objects of God's favor, the subjects of His counsels of grace—His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Here he deliberately identified himself with those

who were a reproach in the eyes of the Egyptians. To thus identify himself he had to give up his worldly prospects, to "refuse" them, as one at a later day could say, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." But he had a true idea of the relative value of the things despised by the world, and quietly preferred them to the treasures in Egypt. Little difference did it make to him whether or not he might one day be king, his heart was set on God's blessings, and these, we are told here, were in and through Christ. The reproach, then, was not the reproach of Israel, but of Christ.

So for us to-day, there is a reproach in the eyes of the world connected with a faithful confession of Christ. It may be called by other names—it mostly is—but it is simply the reproach of Christ. It is the way He is regarded by the world. Have we, as Moses, learned fully to look at God's side? He has highly exalted Christ, delights in Him, has put all power and all glory in His hands. Through Him all blessings come—through Him alone. The day is fast coming when the world will see all this; but faith sees it now, and, in the light of it, esteems the reproach of Christ, the very thing the world sneers at, as more valuable than the best the world can give,—its honors, its riches, learning. Christ has been learned, and a true value put upon Him. Well it is for the soul, in days of worldliness like these, thus to appreciate and hold fast to what is despised with men.

Let us face it. If we will follow Christ, we will get some of His reproach. Is it dearer to us to be laughed at for His sake than to be bowed to by those who do not know or love Him? Nay, even those who

are His, but "following afar off," may be the ones whose scorn we may have to meet, who will smile at our "extreme views" or "peculiar actions." If Christ is precious to us, above all and every body, these reproaches will be welcome, even if painful. They will be more valuable to us than the rich things of earth.

But there is reproach of another kind. The reproach of Christ was that view of His people and cause by the Egyptians. The reproach of Egypt is *God's* view of that which savors of the land of death and judgment among His people. It is a reproach to remember the world. The circumstances under which the remark was made makes its meaning plain. The people had just set foot in the land, and were about to begin their work of conquest. But before they could strike a blow, a work among themselves was needed. During those weary forty years of wilderness wanderings they had failed to circumcise their children. So that the new generation which had grown up were in that respect not Israelites at all. Figuratively, circumcision was the application of the death of Christ to the person. It was entering into the significance of that death which has not only taken away judgment, but passed sentence of death upon the world as well. Until this is realized, the believer is to a certain extent conformed to the world; not to its vices necessarily, but to its thoughts, its ways. He will try to reform it, he will have his home in it. But let him realize that the cross has crucified the world to him and he will no longer be of it. And until this is the case, he is in no condition to enjoy heavenly truths. It is this which is a reproach in God's sight. It is the reproach of Egypt, being like the world.

If we are looking with the eyes of faith, God's eyes, we will esteem the reproach of Christ, but we will have rolled off the reproach of Egypt.

THE ROOT OF DIVISION.

"The land was not able to bear them"—Abraham and Lot. "Go from us; thou art mightier than we," said the Philistines to Isaac. "The land wherein they were strangers could not hold them, because of their cattle"—Esau and Jacob.

WHY should that land which held without being burdened the teeming populations of David and Solomon's time be unable to support two men? Doubtless, they did not do much in the way of cultivating the soil, and its natural yield of grass might be exhausted by the numerous number of cattle they kept. This is said to be so in the case of Jacob and Esau, and intimated in that of Abraham and Lot. But spiritually the meaning for us is plain. Abraham was the man of faith; Lot, the man of sight. Jacob, with all his follies, prized the birth-right of God's blessing, while Esau despised the one and really did not care for the other. With Isaac the case is plain. There was, then, nothing *in heart* common between these men, and so their *ways* of necessity parted.

So it is to-day. The spiritual and carnal Christian can no more walk together than could Abraham and Lot. There will be abundant opportunity for this heart-divergence to crop out. One cause is as good as another. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" Here is the root of much schism

among Christians. Some are spiritual and some walk as men.

Nor can the flesh and spirit be welded together, whether it be the rough self-will of Esau, or the professed obedience of the Philistine. One must give place to the other : which shall be master ?

But the *land*, thank God, will bear all who have the heart to live on it. Its hills and valleys will yield the “finest of the wheat,” its very rocks give honey. If there are partings and separations, let us be sure the cause is in ourselves, not in the Christian position.

The Lord give us one heart to prove the fertility of the land He has given us to sustain all His people.

“WITH SIMPLICITY.”

“He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.”

(Rom. xii. 8.)

GIVING is one of the highest privileges the believer enjoys. But its very nature is such that it offers to our adversary the devil an excellent opportunity to excite in the giver pride and a feeling of superiority; hence we find the above and many similar exhortations.

Did we but bear in mind that we are only “stewards of the manifold grace of God,” pride could gain no foothold. It is *His* bounty which we are privileged to dispense,—*His* “manifold grace,” whether “carnal things” or spiritual things.

When one gives thus—as a steward, not only is he “blessed in his deed,” but the recipients are put in mind that what they have received has come from God, and to Him first their thanks are due. So the apostle writes concerning the help supplied the poor

saints at Jerusalem, "For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God."

A beautiful example of the way God would have us give is found in the law concerning the reaping of the harvest, laid down in Lev. xix. 9, 10 and Deut. xxiv. 19-22,—“And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the Lord your God.” “When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands,” etc.

The wisdom of this law is so apparent, that one is led to exclaim with the prophet, “This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, which is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.” Let us look for a moment at some of the numerous advantages of this simple method of giving. In the first place, the habit of leaving the gleanings of vineyard, olive-yard, and field for the poor, the fatherless, and the widow would be a potent guard against the tendency to become grasping and penurious—that covetousness which is so common to human nature. On the other hand, the temptation to be proud of being generous would be much less than if the gleanings were first gathered by the owner of the field and then given to the poor. Again, the distribution of labor would be more equal: the giver would not be overworked by having to go

over his fields a second time. Even as the apostle says in 2 Cor. viii. 13,—“For I mean not that other men be eased and ye be burdened.”

On the part of the recipients, industry and thrift would be encouraged rather than indolence and dependence, quite in accord with the scripture in 2 Thess. iii. 10—“That if any would not work, neither should he eat.”

Then, too, they would be spared needless humiliation on account of their poverty; for poverty in itself is not a reproach, though it is often keenly felt to be such on account of the condescending manner in which help is given. Our Lord Himself has been called “the poorest of men;” and His disciples, as they walked with Him through the corn-fields on the Sabbath, and plucked of the corn to satisfy their hunger, were taking advantage of a similar gracious provision of the law. (Deut. xxiii. 25.) Then, again, the thoughts of the gleaners would naturally be occupied first and most with Him who had given the increase, for the very fruits of the earth which they were engaged in gathering bear witness of Him, as it is written, “He left not Himself without witness in that He gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” And so their thanksgiving would be rendered first to Him, afterward to the owner of the field, who had not forgotten the law of his God.

So much for the law and its workings in temporal things: is it not equally instructive and applicable concerning our ministry in spiritual things?

Among God’s children there are those who have taken possession of a goodly portion of the land, and have broad acres of rich grain-fields, olive-yards,

and vineyards. In other words, those who are well instructed in the Word of God, who have abundance of food for themselves and others. There are also those who are poor, who have never perhaps gotten beyond the “first principles of the doctrine of Christ.”

“The poor shall never cease out of the land,” says Jehovah, so there will always be those who have need of just such ministry as these spiritually rich believers have to offer. And it is well that it is so, for the very poverty of these needy ones calls forth the spiritual activities of those who by the grace of God are richer, demands the exercise of their various gifts and keeps them from becoming selfish and careless of the interests of other saints. The Lord would never have His people forget their need one of another. It is written, “Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed *alone* in the midst of the earth.”

There are fields enough for all the saints in the good land our God has given us; the land is “wide and quiet and peaceable,” and those who are of God’s mind will rejoice to see “the poor” come into possession of fields they can call their own.

Ruth the gleaner did not remain a gleaner. After a short season of gleaning she became joint-owner of all the fields of Boaz !

“We have often been grieved to hear young believers remark, “I do enjoy listening to a good address, but when I read the Bible for myself I can’t get any thing out of it.”

And we have often replied, mentally, You have never learned how to *glean*, and perhaps it is because those who have ministered to you carefully gleaned their fields themselves, and then gave you out of

their abundance; instead of leading you straight to the fields where the reapers are at work, and instructing you, as Boaz did Ruth, “Let thine eyes be *on the fields that they do reap*, and go thou after them.”

Had you but been in the fields, you would know where the grain grows, and how it is gathered, and you would not be so helpless.

In plainer language, if he who desires to teach another some truth or line of truth from the Scriptures, is content to lead his pupil on slowly, from text to text, in the Word, giving him time to find each for himself, and see its bearing on the subject in hand, progress may seem slow, and the teacher may not be able to manifest how much he knows about the subject, but the benefit the pupil receives is great and lasting. It may take days, perhaps weeks, to teach him a single lesson; but once learned, it is well learned. He can take you to the Scriptures and give you from them a reason for the hope that is in him. He has been in the fields at work, and the next lesson will be easier to teach him.

Moreover, what he has thus gleaned will be precious in his sight, as the fruit of his own labor. He will measure it as Ruth did, and though it be only “about an ephah of barley,” he will, like Ruth, carry it home with him, and after being sufficed therewith himself, will no doubt give of his treasure to some one else, even as Ruth “brought forth and gave to her (Naomi) that she had reserved after she was sufficed.” She was first sufficed, for “the husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.”

When ~~believers are~~ thus taught they are not apt to get their eyes upon the teacher instead of the truth

taught. Their eyes have been upon the field, the Scriptures, and it is *their* worth and perfection they learn to appreciate.

Such simplicity of teaching is also an excellent guard to the instructor against teaching any thing that cannot be clearly established by the Word of God.

The one thus taught also learns to more readily detect false doctrine, to be suspicious of any teaching for which he is not given Scripture, and to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good.” Thus, little by little, he increases “in wisdom and stature,” and ere long has fields of his own where he may reap and others glean.

Many a young untaught believer upon first hearing some deeply instructed saint open the Scriptures to others, is quite discouraged, and thinks there is not the least hope of his ever gaining such a knowledge of the Word of God. But if this same teacher sits patiently down with him, and leads him to the same fields whence he has acquired all his wealth, and gives him a few lessons in gleaning, he takes fresh courage, his interest is aroused, he sees what possibilities of wealth are before him, and goes earnestly to work. In giving with simplicity, as in every thing else, our Lord Jesus has left us a perfect example. Of Him it is written, “For ye know the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”

One can but marvel at such a strange thing as that. We would suppose that if a rich man wanted to make others rich he must surely do it while he himself was rich, and not first become poor ! But not so. From

the beginning of the world God had been giving to men as One who was rich and able indeed to give ; but not thus were their hearts won, not thus were they made rich toward God. Not until He came “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men,” did God accomplish His desire. As a poor Man He walked among men and made many rich indeed. He came to minister, but He came as a poor Man. Nevertheless all the resources of heaven were at His command when man’s need called them forth. He could heal the sick, raise the dead, feed the multitudes, and all as a poor Man who had “not where to lay His head.”

Dearly beloved, would to God we better knew how to give with "the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus." Always "poor in spirit," that we may be in sympathy with those whom we seek to help, and yet "filled with all the fullness of God." "Full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."

So should we be according to the scripture, "Approving ourselves as the ministers of God . . . as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

G. M. R.

JESUS, THE LORD.

WHAT'S this poor world to me,
Jesus, my Lord?
I'm ever missing Thee,
Jesus, my Lord.

I long Thy face to see,
And evermore to be,
Joy of my heart, with Thee,
Jesus, my Lord.

Oh, t'would be sad indeed,
Jesus, my Lord,
And oft my heart would bleed,
Jesus, my Lord,
But that Thy footprints dear,
Mark all the desert drear,
Through which I journey here,
Jesus, my Lord !

Bright shines the star of hope,
Jesus, my Lord.
Lighting the pathway up,
Jesus, my Lord.
Soon shall the glorious day
Chase all the night away,
Then Thou shalt have full sway,
Jesus, my Lord.

Sov'reign Thou shalt be owned,
Jesus, the Lord.
Once in derision crowned,
Jesus, the Lord.
God's hand shall crown Thy brow,
Then every knee shall bow,
Every tongue own that Thou
Only art Lord.

Though time shall cease to be,
As saith Thy Word,
Still through eternity
Thou wilt be Lord ;
And while its ages roll,
Life of my ransomed soul,
My being all control,
Jesus, my Lord.

H. McD.

HIGHER CRITICISM AND THE HEXATEUCH.*

WE have now reached a place from which it will be most convenient to review the pretensions of what assumes to be the "higher" criticism; lofty enough indeed in these, and manifesting abundantly the spirit of the latter days,—days which Scripture characterizes with sufficient plainness. To its advocates, that it should manifest this will not even be a reproach; for nothing is more the boast of these latter times than the scientific spirit, and here is but in their eyes the scientific spirit in religion: where should it be more needful? The spirit of science being to-day evolutionist, the higher criticism will be found to be little else than Darwinism (morals and all) in another sphere,—a sphere which, so much the more important as it is, craves the more for it an earnest examination.

It is the well-known characteristic of Darwinism, that it substitutes a theory of the *how* for the *why*, with the effect of removing the appearance of design from nature. What appears like design may be but a consequence of the mode or conditions of production,—a *consequence*, not a *cause*; and the universe be the result of the operation of natural laws, apart from all supernatural superintendence or interference. As Huxley says, "For the notion that every organism has been created as it is, and launched straight at a purpose, Mr. Darwin substitutes the conception of something which may be fairly termed a method of trial and error. Organisms vary incessantly; of these variations, the few meet with surrounding conditions which suit them, and thrive; the many are unsuited and become extinguished." It is on account of this elimination of design out of the world that skeptics and materialists range themselves so unanimously under the leadership of Darwin; and this they proclaim a distinguished merit of his scheme. Others have, of course, taken it up who can by no means be classed with these, and

* From the Introduction to Joshua, in the second volume of *The Numerical Bible*.

thus it has received various modifications. But the original vice of the thing manifests itself through all, as far as possible from the spirit of Scripture, the attempt, which we have even been told is "the *duty* of the man of science, to *push back* the Great First Cause in time as far as possible." The beauty and blessedness of Scripture consists in its persistent effort to bring God *nigh*.

It is certainly a bold and subtle plan of the enemy to import in this sense the scientific spirit into Scripture itself, to fix our minds upon theories of its production which are proclaimed incapable of damage to our faith because merely that, until we find that unawares we have indeed "pushed back" God far into the distance. The "higher" criticism, as distinct from that of textual integrity, concerns itself, it is said, only with questions of "authorship, etc."*—where the "etc." will be found much the most important part—of the Bible books. "Its conclusions," says Prof. Driver, "affect not the *fact* of revelation, but only its *form*. They help to determine the stages through which it passed, the different phases which it assumed, and the process by which the record of it was built up. They do not touch either the authority or the inspiration of the scriptures of the Old Testament. They imply no change in respect to the divine attributes revealed in the Old Testament, no change in the lessons of human duty to be derived from it, no change as to the general position (apart from the interpretation of particular passages) that the Old Testament points forward prophetically to Christ.†"

Harmless as it thus looks, it is an admitted fact that the patchwork theory which the higher criticism accepts was born of infidelity, cradled in rationalism, and is to this day claimed rightly by professors of it such as Kuenen, for whom "the Israelitish religion is one of the principal religions,—nothing less, but also nothing more:" a "manifestation of the religious spirit of mankind." The babe has been stolen,

* Sanday: "The Oracles of God," p. 30.

† Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament." Preface, p. xi.

taught a somewhat different accent, smuggled in among Christians, and passed off as Christian; but though made to appear lamblike, its voice is still the dragon's. Even as interpreted by Dr. Driver, it can contradict Christ to the face, as where, in His application of the hundred and tenth psalm to Himself He avers that "David in spirit calls Him Lord," while the higher criticism says, "This psalm, though it may be ancient, *can hardly* have been composed by David."* But, indeed, everywhere it contradicts Christ, who says, and just of these Old-Testament books, "Scripture cannot be broken" (Jno. x. 35), while these men are continually, to their own satisfaction, proving that it can, and their system could not be maintained apart from this.

The very criteria by which they distinguish the different documents that make up, for instance, the book of Genesis, involve the idea of contradictory statements, too inconsistent to be from one hand. Thus the order of creation in the second narrative (chap. ii. 4-6, *seq.*) is said to be "evidently opposed to the order indicated in chap. i."† True, the editor who, in their conception of the matter, put them together, did not see it, and thus has left (happily for them) the seams of his patchwork visible, when once the critical eye rests upon it. So the narrative of the deluge, where in one document "of every clean beast *seven* are to be taken into the ark, while in vi. 19 (*cf.* vii. 15) *two* of every sort, without distinction, are prescribed."‡ Again: "The section xxvii. 46-xxviii. 9 differs appreciably in style from xxvii. 1-45, and at the same time exhibits Rebekah as influenced by a different motive in suggesting Jacob's departure from Canaan,—not to escape his brother's anger, but to procure a wife agreeable to his parents' wishes. Further, we find two explanations of the origin of the name '*Bethel*;' two of '*Israel*:' xxxii. 3, xxxiii. 16, Esau is described as already resident in Edom, while xxxvi. 6, *seq.*, his migration thither is attributed to causes which could only have come into operation after Jacob's return to Canaan."§

* Introduction, p. 362, *n.* † p. 7. ‡ p. 7. § p. 8.

“Scripture cannot be broken”?—why, here it *is* broken! All these are plainly given as statements contradictory of one another; for that is the only reason why one writer should not be supposed to have written them all. It is easier to suppose an editor who put them together not perceiving the contradiction between them, although strangely too, as none of these statements lie very far apart. But Scripture *can*, then, be broken: and “if we are forced to answer” how the Lord could make such mistakes as these, Dr. Sanday tells us piously “that the explanation must lie in the fact that He of whom we are speaking is not only God, but Man. The error of statement would belong in some way to the humanity and not to the divinity”!*

Can, then, He who for Christians is the Great Teacher, and who claims to be in some sense the only one (Matt. xxiii. 8) lead us astray? To prove the possibility, Dr. Sanday stamps the expression He uses, “He maketh the sun to rise” as “*imperfect science*” (!) and to those who, timidly enough, “maintain that questions relating to the authorship of the Old Testament touch more nearly the subject-matter of Revelation,” he puts the question, “Are these distinctions valid? Are they valid enough to be insisted upon so strongly as they must be if the arguments based upon them are to hold good?”

He answers for himself: “I greatly doubt it;” and by and by undertakes to read us a lecture on humility: “In regard to these questions, I think we shall do better to ponder the words of the psalm,—‘Lord, I am not high-minded; I have no proud looks. I do not exercise myself on great matters which are too high for me’” (! !)

So Scripture is broken, and we must not be so haughty as to defend it. Dr. Sanday, with all the scientists of the day, have expunged the word “sunrise” from their dictionary, and of course never use it. Scripture, even in its most positive assertions may mislead us; only let us talk piously: “I should be loth to believe”—notice, my reader, it is Dr. San-

day who would be "*loth to believe* that our Lord *accommodated* His language to current notions, knowing them to be false. I prefer to think, as it has been happily worded, that He '*condescended* not to know.'"

Piously, however, or impiously, it is the same thing in result: Scripture has passed out of our hands. Even the author we have quoted confesses, as to these changes in men's thoughts about it, that "it must be admitted frankly that they *involve a loss*. . . . In old days, it was very much as with the Jews in the time of our Lord. When any question arose of doctrine or practice, all that was needed was to turn the pages of Scripture until one came to a place which bore upon the point at issue. This was at once applied just as it stood, without hesitation and without misgiving."* Dr. Sanday owns that this, according to their view, is gone, although he is not so candid as he seems, when he tells us *how far* it is gone. It is *not* merely that "the inquirer feels bound, not only to take the passage along with its context," which was always true, nor even "also to ask, Who was the author? when did he write? and with what stage in the history of revelation is the particular utterance connected?"—questions, some of them, which have no likelihood of being ever answered,—the much deeper question is now, Is the utterance true? and instead of our becoming as "babes" to have divine things revealed to us, we must be learned men, and that to no ordinary extent, in order to pass judgment upon the mingled truth and error presented in Scripture! By and by, Dr. Sanday hopes, with the help of specialists who are devoting themselves to this, we shall have an annotated—really, a purged—Bible, which will make things easier for simple souls. Practically, thus, another great principle that our Lord announces is taken from us. Scripture becomes like a morass—with firm footing, indeed, somewhere, if I could only find it; but, alas! without help, I cannot even know what is firm from what is treacherous! We are not to be delivered from the necessity

* Oracles, p. 76.

of faith: "I, like them,"—the intelligent among his audience—"must take a great deal upon trust,"* says Dr. Sanday; but it is trust in the *competency of the critics!* The "open Bible" of which we have boasted is to be taken from us, and that more completely than by Romanism itself.

As to the historical books of the Old Testament, with which we are now concerned, they are, according to this view, "in many parts," (*how many, we have no means of knowing, it would seem,*) "*traditions, in which the original representation has been insensibly modified, and sometimes (especially in the later books,) colored by the associations of the age in which the author recording it lived.*" No wonder, then, "(2) that some freedom was used by ancient historians in placing speeches or discourses in the mouths of historical characters. In some cases, no doubt, such speeches agreed substantially with what was actually said; but often they merely develop at length, in the style and manner of the narrator, what was handed down only as a compendious report, or what was deemed to be consonant with the temper and aim of a given character on a particular occasion. No satisfactory conclusions with respect to the Old Testament will be arrived at without due account being taken of these two principles"!*

"Scripture cannot be broken"!—how far have we got away from this! Perhaps, however, the Lord never said that. Perhaps it is some chronicler of a tradition, piecing and patching some musty manuscripts, who put that sentence into His mouth? They were very little careful about such things, those old historians. Man had not developed, at that age of the world, into the moral being that he is to-day. The criticism of the New Testament is steadily progressing. Völter, Visser, Weizäcker, Pfeiderer, hailing from authoritative German universities, have shown us, but a short time since, the composite character of the Apocalypse. Steck has done the same for the epistle to the Galatians, and has proved, to his own satisfaction, that neither this nor

* "Oracles," p. 7.

Corinthians nor Romans is of Pauline origin. Völler has found later still that Romans is made up of no less than seven different epistles; Spitta, only the year before last, that the Acts is of two accounts, put together by a "redactor."† All these are Germans, are professors, or at least students, of colleges, and of course, competent men! Is it not safer to withdraw, while there is yet time to do so with honor, from the extreme position of verbal inspiration which all these and a host of others so determinedly attack? Is it not more reverent to believe that the Lord did not vouch for this, which, after all, these learned men cannot accept as fact?

Well, what is left us? It is impossible just yet to know. We shall, of course, have the *criticisms* left; but even the value of these is doubtful. Certainly, "to the poor," *their* gospel *cannot* be preached. With all their wisdom, they cannot distinguish a stone from bread, and know nothing of the need of the human heart,—of the sickening sense of having only uncertainty when the future is to be faced,—of the awful silence in the soul when what was held for the voice of God has died out of it. Is there no possibility of distinguishing what is really that from every merely human voice whatever? Drs. Sanday, Driver, and many of their fellows agree that He has spoken; but it is something in the air, which has not shaped itself in definite words: the *words* are *human*! Yes, and is there no possibility that He who *became* man, in His desire to be with us,—if that is among the things left still,—can speak *definitely* in a human voice? Oh, if I must yet "take a great deal upon trust," may I not trust this wondrous book, which, like the Unchangeable in whose name it speaks, is the Past in a living Present, rather than all the opinions of all the critics in the world? Can they reconstruct this life pervading it, which their dissections in vain search after? Can they give me, with all their wisdom, another Bible, or add a book to it,

* Driver, "Introduction," pref. xiii. n.

† Prof. Jacobus, in *The Hartford Seminary Record*.

even? No, they cannot; and by that fact, Scripture is shown more authoritative than its would-be judges. I may have here to "take a great deal upon trust," but it is a trust which heart and conscience approve, and which gives rest and satisfaction to them. It has the witness of centuries to it, and of adoring multitudes in every century, who in every circumstance have found faith in the Bible the one thing sufficing them. Are these modern critics more to be believed than the living Christ this book has given me? No, says my highest reason;—no, ten thousand times: it is here I trust alone,—with the faith of a little child, if you will,—trust and rest here.

But we need not be afraid of their arguments. As with evolution in its other branches, the facts which the higher criticism produces—so long as they *are* facts,—are always interesting, and can be read with profit in the light of the "why." The "why"—the design—reveals the heart of the designer; and where the "how," if it can be ascertained, and while it is connected with this, may illustrate the wisdom of the designer, the purpose in it exhibits him in his whole moral character. If there be no design, the mere "how" of accomplishment is utterly trivial. If the apparent foot-print in the sand be not human, and my solitude is to find no relief, how much to me is it to learn how winds and waves have mocked me? But think of men being frenzied with delight in being able to show that what seems *mind* in all around is not that, and that chance really rules in all the law and order that exist! This most certain truth that chance is nowhere makes every fact at once of interest: they are real foot-prints that are round about me,—and not of a human comforter, but a *divine*!

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

ON THE MORAL GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(Continued from p. 65.)

RENOUNCING Egypt is not idleness, nor is the breaking of a box of ointment on the head of Christ waste; though we thus see that a certain kind of reckoning among the children of men, and even at times (and that too frequent) among the saints of God, would charge these things as such. Advantages in life are surrendered, opportunities of worldly promise are not used, because the heart has understood the path of companionship with a rejected Lord.

But this is "idleness" and "waste," many will say: the advantages might have been retained by the possessor, or the opportunities might have been sought and reached, and then used for the Lord. But such persons know not. Station, and the human, earthly influence that attaches to it, is commended by them, and treated almost as "a gift to be used for profit and edification and blessing." But a rejected Christ—a Christ cast out by men, if known spiritually by the soul, would teach another lesson.

This station in life, these worldly advantages, these opportunities so commended, are the very Egypt which Moses renounced. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

The treasures of Egypt were not riches in his esteem, because he could not use them for the Lord. And he went outside of them, and the Lord met him there, and used him afterward, not to accredit Egypt and its treasures, but to deliver His people out of it.

I follow this a little here, for it is, I feel, important to us.

All this renunciation, however, must be made in

the understanding and faith of a rejected Lord; it will otherwise want all its fine and genuine and proper character. If it be made on a mere *religious* principle, as that of working out a righteousness or a title for ourselves, it may well be said to be something worse than idleness or waste. It then betrays an advantage which Satan has got over us, rather than any advantage we have got over the world. But if it be indeed made in the faith and love of a rejected Master, and in the sense and intelligence of His relation to this present evil world, it is worship.

To serve man at the expense of God's truth and principles is not Christianity, though persons who do so will be called "benefactors." Christianity considers the glory of God as well as the blessing of man; but as far as we lose sight of this, so far shall we be tempted to call many things waste and idleness which are really holy, intelligent, consistent, and devoted service to Jesus. Indeed, it is so. The Lord's vindication of the woman who poured her treasure on the head of Jesus tells me so. (Matt. xxvi.) We are to own God's glory in what we do, though man may refuse to sanction what does not advance the good order of the world, or provide for the good of our neighbor. But Jesus would know God's claims in this self-seeking world, while He recognized (very surely, as we may know) His neighbor's claim upon Himself.

He knew when to cast away and when to keep. "Let her alone," He said of the woman who had been upbraided for breaking the box of spikenard on Him; "she hath wrought a good work on Me." But after feeding the multitudes, He would say, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

This was observing the divine rule, "There is a

time to keep and a time to cast away." If the prodigal service of the heart or hand in worship be no waste, the very crumbs of human food are sacred, and must not be cast away. He who vindicated the spending of three hundred pence on one of these occasions, on the other would not let the fragments of five loaves be left on the ground. In His eyes, such fragments were sacred. They were the food of life, the herb of the field, which God had given to man for his life. And life is a sacred thing. God is the God of the living. "To you it shall be for meat," God has said of it, and therefore Jesus would hallow it. "The tree of the field is man's life," the law had said, and accordingly had thus prescribed to them that were under the law—"When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an ax against them; for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down to employ them in the siege; only the trees that thou knowest are not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down." (Deut. xx.) It would have been waste, it would have been profaneness, to have thus abused the food of life, which was God's gift; and Jesus in like purity, in the perfectness of God's living ordinance, would not let the fragments lie on the ground. "Gather up the fragments that remain," He said, "that nothing be lost."

These are but small incidents; but all the circumstances of human life, as He passes through them, change as they may, or be they as minute as they may, are thus adorned by something of the moral glory that was ever brightening the path of His sacred, wearied feet. The eye of man was incapable

of tracking it; but to God it was all incense, a sacrifice of sweet savor, a sacrifice of rest, the meat-offering of the sanctuary.

But again. The Lord did not judge of persons in relation to Himself,—a common fault with us all. We naturally judge of others according as they treat ourselves, and we make our interest in them the measure of their character and worth. But this was not the Lord. God is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed. He understands every action *fully*. In all its moral meaning He understands it, and according to that He weighs it. And, as the image of the God of knowledge, we see our Lord Jesus Christ, in the days of His ministry here, again and again. I may refer to Luke xi. There was the air of courtesy and good feeling toward Him in the Pharisee that invited Him to dine. But the Lord was “the God of knowledge,” and as such He weighed this action in its full moral character.

The honey of courtesy, which is the best ingredient in social life in this world, should not pervert His taste or judgment. He approved things that are excellent. The civility which invited Him to dinner was not to determine the judgment of Him who carried the weights and measures of the sanctuary of God. It is the God of knowledge that this civility has on this occasion to confront, and it does not stand, it will not do. Oh how the tracing of this may rebuke us! The invitation covered a purpose. As soon as the Lord entered the house, the host acts the Pharisee, and not the host. He marvels that his guest had not washed before dinner. And the character he thus assumes at the beginning shows itself in full force at the end. And the Lord deals with

the whole scene accordingly, for He weighed it as the God of knowledge. Some may say that the courtesy He had received might have kept Him silent. But He could not look on this man simply as in relation to Himself. He was not to be *flattered* out of a just judgment. He exposes and rebukes, and the end of the scene justifies Him. "And as He said these things unto them, the scribes and Pharisees began to urge Him vehemently, and to provoke Him to speak of many things, laying wait for Him, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him."

Very different, however, was His way in the house of another Pharisee, who in like manner had asked Him to dine. (See Luke vii.) For Simon had no covered purpose in the invitation. Quite otherwise. He seemed to act the Pharisee too, silently accusing the poor sinner of the city, and his Guest for admitting her approach. But appearances are not the ground of righteous judgments. Often the very same words, on different lips, have a very different mind in them. And therefore the Lord, the perfect weigh-master according to God, though He may rebuke Simon, and expose him to himself, knows him by name, and leaves his house as a guest should leave it. He distinguishes the Pharisee of Luke vii. from the Pharisee of Luke xi., though he dined with both of them. So we may look at the Lord with Peter in Matt. xvi. Peter expresses fond and considerate attachment to his Master: "This be far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee." But Jesus judged Peter's words only in their *moral* place. Hard indeed we find it to do this when we are personally gratified. "Get thee behind Me, Satan," was not the answer

which a merely amiable nature would have suggested to such words. But again, I say, our Lord did not listen to Peter's words simply as they expressed personal kindness and good-will to Himself. He *judged* them, He weighed them, as in the presence of God, and at once found that the enemy had moved them; for he that can transform himself into an angel of light is very often lurking in words of courtesy and kindness. And in the same way the Lord dealt with Thomas in Jno. xx. Thomas had just worshiped Him. "My Lord and my God," he had said. But Jesus was not to be drawn from the high moral elevation that He filled, and from whence he heard and saw every thing, even by words like these. They were genuine words,—words of a mind which, enlightened of God, had repented toward the risen Saviour, and, instead of doubting any longer, worshiped. But Thomas had stood out as long as he could; he had exceeded. They had all been unbelieving as to the resurrection, but he had insisted that he would be still in unbelief till sense and sight came to deliver him. All this had been his moral condition; and Jesus has this before Him, and puts Thomas in his right moral place, as He had put Peter. "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Our hearts in such cases as these would have been taken by surprise. They could not have kept their ground in the face of these assaults which the good-will of Peter and the worship of Thomas would have made upon them. But our perfect Master stood for God and His truth, and not for Himself. The ark of old was not to be flattered. Israel may honor it, and bring it down to the battle,

telling it, as it were, that now in its presence all *must* be well with them. But this will not do for the God of Israel. Israel falls before the Philistines, though the ark be thus in the battle; and Peter and Thomas shall be rebuked, though Jesus, still the God of Israel, be honored by them.

J. G. B.

(To be continued.)

RENOUNCING ALL FOR CHRIST.

[“The following hymn was composed by Madame A. Bourignon, and translated by John Wesley. It was likely written more than a hundred and fifty years ago. It breathes a spirit of real and entire consecration to Christ. It is transcribed with the hope that it may, with the Lord’s blessing, aid in promoting the same spirit in those who have greater light, so that they too may be able to say, “Lo, we have left *all*, and have followed *Thee*.”—*R. H.*]

COME, Saviour Jesus, from above,
 Assist me with Thy heavenly grace;
 Empty my heart of earthly love,
 And for Thyself prepare the place.

Oh, let Thy sacred presence fill,
 And set my longing spirit free,
 Which pants to have no other will,
 But day and night to feast on Thee.

While in this region here below,
 No other good will I pursue;
 I’ll bid this world of noise and show,
 With all its glittering snares, adieu.

That path with humble speed I’ll seek,
 In which my Saviour’s footsteps shine;
 Nor will I hear, nor will I speak,
 Of any other love but Thine.

Henceforth may no profane delight
 Divide this consecrated soul;

Possess it, Thou, who hast the right,
As Lord and Master of the whole.

Wealth, honor, pleasure, and what else
This short enduring world can give,—
Tempt as ye will, my soul repels,
To Christ *alone* resolved to live.

Thee I can love, and Thee alone,
With pure delight and inward bliss;
To know Thou tak'st me for Thine own—
Oh, what a happiness is this !

Nothing on earth do I desire,
But Thy pure love within my breast;
This, *only* this, will I require,
And *freely* give up all the rest.

“WHO ARE THE SANCTIFIED?”

THIS was the question asked of the writer by a lady as he pointed her to the precious and familiar passage in Heb. x.—“For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Through the teaching of her “church,” she was in the habit of praying daily for pardon, though a professed believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. It was to show her the finished work of Christ that the above passage was referred to, and it evidently arrested her attention. “But who are the sanctified?” Here it seemed as though a loop-hole for unbelief was about to open. Did not “sanctify” mean “to make holy”? and who could lay claim to that? But how perfect God’s Word is! She was simply referred to the thirteenth chapter of the same epistle,—“Wherefore Jesus also, that He might *sanctify the people with His own blood*, suffered without the gate.”

(Heb. xiii. 12.) There could be no gainsaying this. The answer was so plain that she was obliged to receive it. Sanctified by *His blood*; set apart to God according to the value of *that* offering. Those, then, who are sanctified are those who have an interest in that blood, and those are sinners who believe. This is the sanctification spoken of in Hebrews, where the object is to occupy the soul entirely with Christ, to the exclusion of form, priest, and all else that unbelief would put between the soul and its Saviour.

"THY GENTLENESS HATH MADE ME GREAT."

MANY of the most beautiful things in nature are so delicate in their structure that to touch them almost means to destroy them. Man could not pretend to imitate these works of beauty, they are so frail that they for the most part escape even his notice. Yet God builds this beauty, and delights to put it everywhere, to show us His beauty, and His tenderness as well. The delicate little flower, the wing of the butterfly, crushed by the rude hand of a boy, were made by the almighty God, who takes thought of them.

And so in spiritual things, there are characters so frail that the touch of man seems to mar them. The new-born soul, with its desires after God, its love for Christ, its almost inarticulate prayers and praises, is surely more beautiful in His sight than the fairest flower of earth. And yet by our cold criticism, our rigid exactness, may we not crush the beauty out of this flower? Let us learn to be more tender with one another. Let not our rude touch mar God's beauti-

ful work. May we rather be imitators of Him, and learn to develop rather than to dwarf that which is of Him.

For how does He deal with us? How has He built us up? By gentleness. Our love to Him, our joy, the early fruits of the Spirit, have been watched and nourished; our coldness has been borne with, and so He has gently led us on. Oh, to learn to do likewise in all our dealings with God's lambs!

THE OVERCOMING POWER OF GOOD.

"Overcome evil with good." (Rom. xii. 21.)

IN the sevenfold picture of the church's history in Rev. ii. and iii., we have a sevenfold promise to the "overcomer," and at the close of the book, after describing the eternal state, again the promise is given, "He that overcometh shall inherit these things." We are in a race which only ends when we take our seats on high; in a warfare, a "good fight," which ceases when we leave this scene. Blessed is it to *know* that we "run, not as uncertainly," that the end is sure, though there be conflict on the way. We follow a Victor, One who has conquered for us, and this nerves us for the conflict, gives patience in all toil. Still, it is well to remember that there *is* a conflict, a race, and that grace, while making the end sure, has not obliterated the wilderness.

We can look at this overcoming, however, not as the final outcome of our life, but also as that which should characterize each day of that life. Taken as a whole, the life of each believer is a victory; in some in a very small degree; but taken in detail the lives

of many show more defeat than victory, and in all there are some points where defeat comes in. It is rather at the details than at the final outcome we would look now, remembering, however, that details make up the total, and that "saved as by fire," and "an abundant entrance" are in contrast.

The conflict is with evil, and not mere impersonal evil, but the evil one and his emissaries. His devices are manifold, suited to those whom he assaults; and hidden that he may the better insnare,—"*the wiles of the devil.*" We meet evil in ourselves, our circumstances, our brethren, and in the world. The question is, How are we to overcome it?

And the first answer must be, to know it *as* evil. Light shone into Paul's heart when (Rom. vii.) he distinguished between himself and sin that dwelt in him. This did not enable him to overcome it, it seemed to make the conflict more desperate, but he saw sin, knew it was that and what to expect of it. We must learn to call things by their right names, to recognize them, to judge them.

We do not fight evil for the sake of fighting. "Abstain, hold off from, fleshly lusts which war against the soul." It is when evil has usurped some of our inheritance, our portion, as believers that we are to thrust it out. With Edom Israel would have no conflict, God would judge it in His time; but with the inhabitants of the land the case was different. They were occupying what belonged to Israel, and therefore must be expelled. So with us. With the flesh, the sinful nature as such, we are to have no conflict, knowing that sentence has been passed upon it on the cross, and that in a little while it will be obliterated, when "this mortal shall put on immortality."

But when this flesh, used of Satan, would intrude into our spiritual life, occupy our time, demand our attention, interfere with communion and service, and dim our conception of the portion that is ours in Christ,—then we must overcome the intruder and cast him out, or, like Israel, the good land will soon be out of our hands, and we will be driven to dwell in caves.

It is well to remark here that no compromises were to be made with the enemy in the land. “Ye shall make no league with the inhabitants.” Led by Joshua, victorious Israel marched through the length and breadth of the land: this was victory in general. But when we come to individual history, we find the enemy unsubdued in many places, or if subdued, not exterminated, but made tributary. But who ever made evil tributary to good? Apparently we may, but for a season only. Pride may thus be made to “ape humility.” Emulation may seem to incite to as diligent service as zeal, but in a little while it will be manifest that the pride and the emulation have gained control of ourselves; our tributaries have become our masters. There can be no compromise. Extermination is needful. Just here was the kernel of all Israel’s failure, as a glance at the book of Judges will show, and a glance nearer home will doubtless show the same thing. Rome may make tributaries of the very sins it professes to forgive, but Rome is only a shining example of that of which we speak.

Conflict, then, there must be, and that until the foe is completely conquered. But *how* are we to fight? If we use Satan’s weapons, we are not fighting *God’s* battle. “The weapons of our warfare are

not carnal, but mighty through God." The short verse at the head of this paper tells us how. "Overcome evil with *good*." The one thing Israel had to do with the land they conquered was to *occupy* it. Mere victory over the foe was but a negative advantage, preliminary to that practical appropriation of the land to their own use, which God had designed. So important was this that God made the extirpation of the enemy to be as gradual as their power to occupy the land. "And the Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee little by little : thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee." (Deut. vii. 22.) The empty house of Matt. xii. is a solemn explanation of this. Our life is a positive thing; it must not only be not evil, but actually good.

And this is what our verse teaches us. Good will overcome evil. To him that *hath* shall be given. Our possessions well cultivated, fully occupied, and we will encroach on and drive out the next evil, in order that we may gain more of our inheritance. It is the *good* that we want, and we are to be only so far occupied with the evil as to see how far it hinders us, to judge it, and in the energy of faith overcome it by good. How does the farmer rid his field of weeds and briars? Not by plowing and harrowing, for this would but sow a fresh crop of weeds, and by tearing the briar roots apart, cause two to grow where there had been but one before. He puts the field in *wheat*, fertilizing well, and sows thickly in grass. As a result, the wheat and grass give the weeds *no room* for growth, and they soon disappear. Let us learn from this, in our individual life and in relation to one another. We know evil is there. We

do not shut our eyes to it, but we know it can be overcome in one way only—by the substitution of something better.

Is not this God's way? What is the gospel of His grace but the overcoming of evil with good? The law made the offense to abound. Grace came in and drove sin off the field. "The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared," and *that* by the power of the Holy Spirit, subdued those who were "hateful and hating one another." The message of love to rebellious sinners was His "soft answer which turneth away wrath." May we be imitators of God as dear children.

Sorrow over sin and folly there will be, firm judgment of evil and straightforward obedience; but this only confirms our truth; for these are in themselves powerless to overcome evil, they but prepare the way for the good.

It is most important to remember this in our relationships,—the family, the assembly, and even in the world. "Husbands, *love* your wives" is but one of the exhortations which press this principle and which if all followed, would make home what it should be, a foretaste of heaven. How many an assembly of God's people is kept feeble by a constant spirit of criticism. The good is forgotten, neglected, and instead of "taking forth the precious from the vile," the process is reversed, and the vile is taken. We need to "strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die." Love is the only power by which evil can be overcome. Most of the failings in our brethren could be overcome in this way, while they are only multiplied when we attempt to pluck them out by the roots. The same could be said of worldliness

in dress, habits, or conversation. Often it is mere emptiness, which can be filled with the precious things of Christ, to the joy of the person who would resent as impertinence any attempt at setting him right.

But what is good? We answer simply, Christ in grace, known and loved. This embraces everything—His word, His work, His person, His Church,—everything that concerns Him. Fix the centre, and we can have as many circles about it as we may; they will all harmoniously be gathered about that centre. It is this occupation with good, with Him who is perfect goodness, that is the secret of power and of joy. Oh, dear brethren, let us begin afresh with Him? It is grace alone which gives power, and we would have firmness too; for love can be most firm when it is necessary. But it is love, and is manifest as that. May He whose perfect goodness in patience is dealing with all our waywardness teach us the full meaning of this, “Overcome evil with good.”

JOY IN SERVICE.

“Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things: therefore thou shalt serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger and in thirst, and in nakedness and in want of all things.” (Deut. xxviii. 47, 48.)

“**I**N Thy presence is fullness of joy,” and all true service is done in God’s presence; therefore in all service there is joy. Such, at least, is God’s thought. It is not meant by this that there are no sorrows connected with it, no pain for nature. Paul

wrote to the church at Corinth in the carrying out of the service committed to him "out of much affliction and anguish of heart . . . with many tears." (2 Cor. ii. 4.) But there was the rejoicing of a good conscience, and the comfortable assurance of God's good pleasure. Such service as that to which he alludes, too, is rather the exception. The main work in the Church of God, as in the family, is not discipline, but edification; and in our personal life the same is true. The morbid person may look within, and seek to bring a clean thing out of an unclean; the child of God, on the contrary, looks up at Christ, and at the things which are above, and in the joy of the possession of those things he can freely turn from other attractions.

God's mind for Israel was to enter upon their inheritance, and possess it, to eat of the fruit of it, and to rejoice before Him for all the good He had given them. The enemy was to be driven out, but they were not to be always fighting. And so with ourselves. Fight we must, but only that we may thrust out the enemy who would hinder our enjoyment of those things which are ours. Then we lay aside the sword for the plowshare, and in the development of our inheritance, in the gathering of its varied products, we will find ample employment and abundant joy.

Is joy low? Something must be the matter, for this is not "the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning" us. "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." (Ps. iv. 7.) But there must be a reason for the joy, and it is in the abundance of all that has been given us. Israel failed to enter upon this

abundance, and so her joy failed. She did not take in her whole territory, so soon lost what she had. How many of us, in like manner, are content with but a small part of what is ours, find but little joy in that, and so soon lose even that joy. Our service becomes duty. "Ye said also, 'Behold, what a weariness is it!'" (Mal. i. 13.) And in the dull routine of private prayer, Scripture reading, and attendance upon meetings, there has been but little to refresh the heart. We are only speaking of what is possible, each must ask himself in what measure it is true of him.

We sometimes hear a desire expressed for a revival among God's people, and surely that is well. But what is a revival? Is it not simply the re-possession of what is ours? The book of Judges is a history of declension and revival, and when the revival came it was shown by the regaining of territory, the enjoyment of fruit which the enemy had taken. So with us, a revival would be shown not necessarily in the first place by increased numbers, or any such supposed accompaniments, but by an enlarged apprehension of the Word of God as for us, and greater joy in that apprehension. This indeed would attract others to us.

Our blessed God does not wish forced service. What joy can be compared with finding that in His Word we have Him speaking to us, that in prayer we are speaking directly to Himself, that in our meeting together we are sharing the precious things which are our common possession, or unitedly praising the "Giver of all good"? If Israel in the feast of harvest, and of ingathering, was to rejoice before the Lord, "*because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all*

thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice" (Deut. xvi. 15), how much more should we, whose blessings are eternal, rejoice before Him !

It is from such joy that true service springs. The gospel flows forth like cool waters to a thirsty soul, from a full fountain; ministry to saints, in all places, becomes the natural communication of what has refreshed us, taking the place of that idle gossip, that fault-finding, which but too often mars the happiness of God's dear people.

On the other hand, what a sad picture we have of the opposite of this joyful service. God has not been delighted in, and the abundance which He has provided is changed for the hunger and nakedness of captivity. It reminds us of Laodicea, where this state of poverty exists while the unfortunate one is unconscious of it. And what is Laodicea? Self-sufficiency. God is not rejoiced in, the abundance of *His* things is not known, and the poor blind one, proud in and of his poverty, is of all men most miserable.

Beloved, let us not rest satisfied unless we are rejoicing in the abundance of God's inheritance. If we have lost that joy through worldliness or carelessness let us awake; let not the enemy any longer cheat us into thinking it is all well, but let us begin afresh to apprehend those "unsearchable riches of Christ," which lie all about us in God's Word.

It was as much a miracle to call Matthew from the receipt of custom as to cure the paralytic. If the latter needed power to deliver him from the grasp of disease, no less did the former need it to set him free

from the clutch of covetousness which held him fast at the money-table. But divine power is sufficient for all things, and He who set free the paralytic awakens a new life in Matthew.

And are not these two occurrences put together (Matt. ix.) to teach us the fullness of divine blessing? Our need is completely met; this we see in the paralytic. We are given power to walk in the path of obedience; and this is made plain in Matthew's case. Our Lord does not stop at half-way measures, nor should we. If *our* need is met, it should be our care to see that His will for us is accomplished. But, as we said, this last is as much a miracle as the first. The drawing of His love is as much divine as the putting forth of manifest power. Let it be ours to prove the reality of this, and thus provide a *feast* for Him who has called us to Himself.

“Lord, Thou hast drawn me after Thee;
Now let me run, and never tire.”

THE FIRST CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN GENEVA.

THE SPRING OF 1533.

(*History of the Reformation.—Time of Calvin.*
Vol. iii., p. 360.)

“**W**HEN the day arrived, many persons went out of the city and quietly directed their steps toward D'Adda's garden, situated in a place called Pré L' Evêque, because the bishop had a house there. A table had been prepared in a room or in the open air. The believers, as they arrived, took their seats in silence on the rude benches, not without fear that the priests would get information of the furtive meeting. Guerin sat down in front of the table. Just at the moment (we are told) when the ceremony was to begin, the sun rose and illuminated with his first rays a scene more imposing in its sim-

plicity than the mountains capped with everlasting snow, above which the star of day was beginning his course. The pious Guerin stood up, and after a prayer distributed the bread and wine, and all together praised the Lord. The communicants quitted D'Adda's garden full of gratitude toward God."

Geneva was soon to be a centre of light; but first a storm of persecution, to close the long night of the tyranny of Rome, was to baptize the little flock.

THE LAND I LOVE.

MY heart is bounding onward,
Home to the land I love;
Its distant vales and mountains
My wishful passions move:
Fain would my thirsting spirit
Its living freshness breathe,
And wearied steps find resting
Its hallowed shades beneath.

No soil of nature's evil,
No touch of man's rude hand,
Shall e'er disturb around us
That bright and peaceful land.
The charms that woo our senses
Shall be as pure as fair;
For all, while stealing o'er us,
Shall tell of Jesus there.

What light, when all its beaming
Shall own Him as its Sun!
What music, when its breathing
Shall bear His name along!
No pause, no change, those pleasures
Shall ever seek to know:
The draught that lulls our thirsting
But wakes that thirst anew.

J. G. Bellett.

HIGHER CRITICISM AND THE HEXATEUCH.

(Continued from page 84.)

HOW many hands have contributed to make up Scripture is a thing with which Scripture itself does not concern itself or occupy us. Of the writers of most of the historical books we have no real knowledge; and if Moses compiled Genesis from existing records, such as are referred to in some of the later books, there would be nothing at all in this to stumble us. We are only concerned to know that where Moses is credited, in either Old or New Testament, with writing or speaking,—this, with all the rest, is absolutely true and trustworthy. But this is entirely contrary to Prof. Driver's canon, without which he thinks no satisfactory conclusions can be reached as to the Old Testament. Traditions, modified and colored by the historian, and interspersed with speeches fictitious to whatever extent one may desire,—this is what he conceives it to be.

The facts upon which the document-theory is founded are, as I have said, interesting where they *are* facts. Often they are not. The linguistic argument (or that from characteristic words,) has been well refuted by Vos,* and his book is accessible to all who desire it. The argument from discrepancies may be found, in part, there also. The few specimens already given from Driver are as forcible as most, and the readers of the present book can be at little loss to answer them. It is not difficult to see that the order of creation in the second chapter of Genesis is, so far as the plants and beasts are concerned, not an order at all; that the specification of pairs of living creatures in God's first communication to Noah is in no wise inconsistent with an after-specification of sevens for beasts that were clean; that Rebekah, just like one of ourselves, might easily have had a double motive for sending Jacob to Laban; while Esau's having been in Edom before Jacob's return to Canaan would

* "Mosaic Origin of the Pentateuchal Codes." By Geerhardus Vos, N. Y.

not in the least affect the question of a later and final return thither. The double naming of Bethel and of Israel, glanced at in our notes (vol. i., p. 99) has a special significance, of which the higher criticism in general, being of the earth earthy, takes no account.

For any detailed reply to criticisms of this sort it would be impossible to find room here. The facility with which they can be made is as insnaring to those who would gain a cheap reputation as it is condemnatory of the whole. There is probably no book that could not be cut up after the same fashion, and the smaller the fragments the more readily can it be done. A single verse, thus, in a section pronounced "Elohistic," if it has the name of Jehovah, proves itself to be from a "Jehovistic" source; and we have such dissections as this of Gen. xxx. from Prof. Driver, where verses 1-3^a, 6, 8, 17-20^a, 20^c-23, are given as Elohistic, so called from the use in it of "Elohim" (God), while the rest, including a fragment from the middle of the 20th verse, is Jehovistic!

Such attempts practiced upon any other book would find speedy and scornful relegation to the limbo of conceits that perish in their birth. Only the wondrous life of the book itself seems as if it kept alive the very enemies that seek its destruction. The interests that are involved beget an interest in the attack upon them; and in a world which has held the cross, the carnal mind still shows itself as enmity against God. As has been said, no detail can be ventured upon here,—and in truth the detail would be terribly wearisome; but we may look a little at the broad features of what is proposed to us as the Bible of the future, so far as it affects what we have already had before us.

We are to have no longer a Pentateuch, nor any books of Moses. Moses' part in the laws of Israel is an undefined and ever-vanishing quantity. The extreme party of critics cannot, of course, allow Israel to be any exception to the law of development which ordains man to have struggled on and up from the level of his ape-like ancestors unaided by

any revelation of God. Prof. Toy, of Harvard, outlines the "History of the Religion of Israel" after this manner:—

"A comparatively large law-book was written (Deuteronomy, about B.C. 622); and this, in accordance with the ideas of the times, which demanded the authority of ancient sages and lawgivers, was ascribed to Moses . . . After various law-books had been written, they were all gathered up, sifted, and edited about the time of Ezra (B.C. 450), as one book. This is substantially our present Law (*Tora*), or Pentateuch. (*pp.* 6, 7.)

"Nations do not easily change their gods; it is not likely that Moses could or would introduce a new deity. But as the Israelites believed that he had made some great change, it may be that through his means the worship of Yahwe [Jehovah] became more general—became, in fact, in a real sense, the national worship. This would not necessarily mean that no other deities were worshiped . . . Still less would it mean that there was only one God,—that is, that all other pretended gods were nothing. This is what we believe, and what the later Israelites (about the time of the exile and on) believed; but David, and generations after him, thought that Kemosh and Dagon and the rest were real gods, only not the gods of Israel. Exactly what Moses' belief was we do not know. (*p.* 24.)

"If we cannot suppose that the Pentateuch is correct history, then we do not know precisely what Moses did for his people . . . From all that we do know, we are led to believe that what Moses did was rather to organize the people, and give them an impulse in religion, than to frame any code of laws, or make any great change in their institutions." *

The Harvard professor goes on to tell us that "we" know now that God did *not* give Israel the law at Sinai; but so long as we refuse that, he will allow us to believe that "the people, or a part of them, may have stayed there awhile." Moses' part in it all, he tells us, matters very little.

This is, of course, more than "down-grade:" it is near the bottom of the descent. Dr. Driver does not mean to land there. We do not always see where the road ends, and the mercy of God may prevent such a catastrophe; but there is, in fact, no practicable halting-place short of this. Between Dr. Toy and orthodoxy there is every degree of errancy, and the voices of the critics are not a little confused.

* Quoted from Dr. Armstrong's "Nature and Revelation."

It is contended that they are becoming more harmonious; and this, no doubt, is true and to be expected. The stream would naturally wear for itself channels, within which it would be henceforth confined. Some errors would be too manifest to be upheld, and others be found inconsistent with the purpose they were used for. This unification of the critics, while it will enable their arguments to be more concisely dealt with, does not imply any bettering of their position from the Scripture stand-point: the fact is the reverse; the tendency of error is to gravitate, and consistency necessitates ever a more complete departure from the truth. Thus Kuenen and Wellhausen, who are not badly represented by Prof. Toy, give us the latest phase of the documentary hypothesis. And it is striking enough to find how largely Driver builds to-day upon their foundations.

Yet it is plain that even for him the distinction between Jehovistic and Elohist documents, with which these criticisms began, is fading away, so that he has often had to consider the question, "Is it probable that there should have been two narratives of the patriarchal and Mosaic ages, independent, yet largely resembling each other, and that these narratives should have been combined together into a single whole at a relatively early period of the history of Israel?" He answers, indeed, though with some hesitancy, that he believes it to be a fact that there were, "and that in some part, even if not so frequently as some critics have supposed, the independent sources used by the compiler are still *more or less* clearly discernible."

The period of this compilation he gives as "approximately, in the eighth century B.C.," or about Hezekiah's time! But that only carries us a few steps in the construction of the Pentateuch.

Deuteronomy comes next, which critics believe to be the "book of the law" found by Hilkiyah in Josiah's day; but "how much earlier than B.C. 621 it may be is more difficult to determine. The supposition that Hilkiyah himself was concerned in the composition of it is not probable; for a

book compiled by the high-priest could hardly fail"—God, of course, being left out,—“to emphasize the interests of the priestly body at Jerusalem, which Deuteronomy does not do. . . . It is probable its composition is not later than the reign of Manassch.”

The real “*priestly*” narrative—which does, of course, look sharply after their interests,—came later still. It is supposed to have added largely to Genesis, considerably to Exodus, including all about the special priesthood, the entire book of Leviticus, and much of Numbers. It belongs “approximately, to the time of the Babylonish captivity”! And now, with Ezra’s revision, the Pentateuch is complete.

But we must take notice, if we are to do justice to Dr. Driver’s position, that he allows that there was a certain indefinable amount of tradition long before, and even, as we see, some written documents. The aggregate amount of these it is very hard to determine.

“Although, therefore, the Priests’ Code assumed finally the shape in which we have it in the age subsequent to Ezekiel, it rests ultimately upon an ancient traditional basis, and many of the institutions prominent in it are recognized in various stages of their growth, by the earlier pre-exile literature, by Deuteronomy and by Ezekiel. The laws of P [the priestly code], even when they included later elements, were still referred to Moses,—no doubt because, in its basis and origin, Hebrew legislation was actually derived from him, and was only modified gradually.”

This is how, it seems, the positive statements that “Moses spake” and “the Lord said to Moses” are to be interpreted. The issue is naturally such a romance as the following:—

“The institution which was among the last to reach a settled state, appears to have been the *priesthood*. Till the age of Deuteronomy”—which, we must remember, was that of *Manassch*—“the right of exercising priestly offices must have been enjoyed by every member of the tribe of Levi; but this right on the part of the tribe generally is evidently not incompatible with the *pre-eminence* of a particular family (that of Aaron: cf. Deut. x. 6), which in the line of Zadok held the chief rank at the Central Sanctuary. After the abolition of the high places by Josiah, however, the central priesthood refused to acknowledge the right which (according to the law

of Deuteronomy) the Levitical priests of the high places must have possessed. The action of the central priesthood was indorsed by Ezekiel (xliv. 6 ff.): the priesthood, he declared, was, for the future, to be confined to the descendants of Zadok; the priests of the high places (or their descendants) were condemned by him to discharge subordinate offices, as menials in attendance upon the worshipers. As it proved, however, the event did not altogether accord with Ezekiel's declaration; the descendants of Ithamar succeeded in maintaining their right to officiate as priests by the side of the sons of Zadok (1 Chron. xxiv. 4, etc.), but the action of the central priesthood under Josiah, and the sanction given to it by Ezekiel, combined, if not to create, yet to accentuate the distinction of 'priests' and 'Levites.' It is possible that those parts of P which emphasize this distinction (Num. i.-iv., etc.) are of later origin than the rest, and date from a time when—probably after a struggle with some of the disestablished Levitical priests—it was generally accepted." *

Think of a poor soul trying to read between the lines of his Bible after this fashion! or rather, of the revised one; for the present one, thank God, he cannot. Moses is thus "modified;" and God, who cannot be "modified," is left out,—except He is to be supposed to sanction this fraudulent speaking in His name! What is needed, to judge it all, is indeed rather conscience than learning, and here, it is comforting to think, the "babes" will not fare the worst.

Even the Pentateuch is not to be suffered to remain, and Moses being no longer credited with its authorship, the book of Joshua can be added to it, and the Pentateuch becomes a *Hexateuch*. Here too they can find a Jehovist and an Elohist, a priestly writer and a Deuteronomist. But it is no great wonder if, according to the old belief, Joshua himself were the writer,—that one so long in companionship with Moses, and familiar with the books of the law, should use similar expressions, and write to some extent in the same style. That the writer was, in fact, a contemporary of the conquest is shown by his use of "we," and by his statement that Rahab was still dwelling in Israel (chap. v. 1, 6; vi. 25). Of course this can be as easily declared a fraud

as the constant language of the Pentateuch itself. This can be denied also with equal ease,—and with this advantage, that we have the whole character of God against it.

But that the first five books are a real Pentateuch, we are able now to produce the structure of the Bible itself in proof. The five books of the Psalms are moulded on the Mosaic five, so that the Jews have named them ‘The Pentateuch of David.’ And that this is not a mere fancy of the Jews, but the real key to the spiritual meaning that pervades them, will be manifest the more the more deeply we look into them: we cannot, of course, enter here upon the proof.

Again: taking away from the Kethubim the historical and prophetical books, we have a didactic series of five, at the head of which the Psalms are found; Job, Solomon’s Song, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, completing another Pentateuch.

The Prophets, taking the minor twelve as one book (as was done of old), and Lamentations as an appendix to Jeremiah, fall, then, into another series of five—another Pentateuch. Nay, the historical books, as we have seen, fall into still another pentateuchal series; while the books of the New Testament easily divide into a similar one of Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, Catholic Epistles, and Revelation. Thus the Pentateuch is the basis and model of the whole of Scripture.

Nor is this merely a form: on the contrary, the form but clothes and manifests the spirit that dwells in it. The spiritual meaning which the higher criticism ignores and would destroy, and which the apostle teaches us to find in the fullest way in the Old-Testament history,—which gives us the New Testament in the Old, prophecy in history, the divine seal everywhere upon its perfection,—confirms all this, and glorifies it. According to it, Joshua is not a continuation of the first series, but the beginning of a second. It is a true Genesis of the after-history, and spiritually a new beginning, Deuteronomy having carried us beyond the wilderness, and, in principle, to the judgment-seat of Christ.

The numerical structure, of which this pentateuchal one

is only a part, is indeed the key to the true higher criticism; only that one would not employ a term which implies the subjecting of the Word of God to the mere mind of fallen man. Faith's part it is to learn humbly from God, when once it realizes that it has to do with Him. While at the same time it purges the eye, not blinds it,—opens, not sets aside the understanding. Scripture itself, as the destructive criticism understands it, is not any more that which displays the Mind of all other mind, than is Nature under the withering blight of Darwinian evolution. "God in every thing" means wisdom in every thing. God thrust into the distance means the glorious Sun dwindled to a petty star. However much you may argue about its being in itself as bright as ever, it has no longer power to prevent the earth becoming a lifeless mass, whirled senselessly in a frozen orbit. The very law to which you may still vaunt its subjection is that which now surely condemns it to eternal darkness.

Against all this, the pentateuchal structure of the Bible utters emphatic protest. It is no mere arbitrary thing, but, like all that is divine, has a voice for us,—a voice which is of infinite sweetness and comfort also. For this number 5, which, as I have shown elsewhere,* is the *rest*-note of music, as well as the measure of its expansion, is that in which, as we have seen, man in his frailty is found in relation to the Almighty God. And while this implies responsibility on his part, and ways of divine government which may be to His creature

"Dark with excessive bright,"

and may give him exercise most needful, and fill him with apprehension too, yet it is that in which alone all blessing is, and to which Christ, in the wondrous mystery of His person, gives only adequate expression. Not only the divine seal is thus put upon all Scripture, but Christ is Himself that seal, from first to last the one Name that Scripture utters,—the assurance to us of an infinite joy with which we may face the history of the past, the mystery of the future. The book is in the hands of the Lamb slain; it is His; He is its interpreter and fulfillment both. With the chorus of the ages we say and sing, Worthy art Thou to take it! F. W. G.

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World." p. 76.

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS ;

OR,

Notes on Ecclesiastes.

PERHAPS there is no book within the whole canon of Scriptures so perplexing and anomalous at first sight as that entitle! "Ecclesiastes." Its terrible hopelessness, its bold expression of those difficulties with which man is surrounded on every side, the apparent fruitlessness of its quest after good, the unsatisfactory character, from a Christian stand-point, of its conclusion : all these points have made it, at one and the same time, an enigma to the superficial student of the Word, and the arsenal whence a far more superficial infidelity has sought to draw weapons for its warfare against clear revelation. And yet here it is, embedded in the very heart of those Scriptures which we are told were "given by inspiration of God, and which are 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." Then with this precious assurance of its "profitableness" deeply fixed in our hearts by a living faith, and in absolute dependence on that blessed One who is the one perfect Teacher, let us consider the book.

First then, let us seek to get all the light we can from all the exterior marks it bears before seeking to interpret its contents. For our primary care with regard to this, as indeed with regard to every book in the Bible, must be to discover if possible what is the object of the book ? From what standpoint does the writer approach his subject ?

And first we find it in that group of books through

which the voice of man is prominent; Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Canticles. In these is heard the music of Man's soul; often,—nay, mostly, giving sorrowful and striking evidence of discord, in wail and groan, in tear and sigh; and yet again, in response evidently to the touch of some Master hand, that knows it well,—a tender, gracious, compassionate touch,—rising into a song of sweetest harmony, that speaks eloquently of its possibilities, and bears along on its chords, the promise and hope of a complete restoration. But we shall search our book in vain for any such expression of joy. No song brightens its pages; no praise is heard amid its exercises. And yet perfectly assured we may be, that, listened to aright, it shall speak forth the praise of God's beloved Son; looked at in a right light, it shall set off His beauty. If "He turns the wrath of man to praise Him," surely we may expect no less from man's sorrows and ignorance. This then, we may take it, is the object of the book, to show forth by its dark background, the glory of the Lord, to bring into glorious relief against the black cloud of man's need and ignorance, the bright light of a perfect holy revelation,—to let man tell out, in the person of his greatest and wisest; when he too, is at the summit of his greatness, with the full advantage of his matured wisdom, the solemn questions of his inmost being; and to see that greatness to be of no avail in solving them, that wisdom foiled in the search for their answers.

This then, we will conclude, is the purpose of the book and the standpoint from which the writer speaks, and we shall find its contents confirm this in every particular.

It has been well said that as regards each book in holy writ, the "key hangs by the door;" that is, that the first few sentences will give the gist of the whole. And indeed pre-eminently is such the case here. The first verse gives us who the writer is; the second, the beginning and ending of his search: and therein lies the key of the whole. For the writer is the Son of David, the man exalted by Jehovah to highest earthly glory. Through rejection and flight, through battle and conflict, had the Lord brought David to this excellence of glory and power. All this his "son" entered into in its perfection and at once. For it is that one of his sons who speaks, who is *king*, and in *Jerusalem*, the city of God's choice, the beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth. Such is the story of ver. 1. Nothing could possibly go beyond the glory that is compassed by these few words. For consider them, and you will see that they ascribe "*wisdom, and honor, and riches, and power*" to him of whom they are spoken; but it is human wisdom and earthly power, all "under the sun." And now listen to the "song" that should surely accompany this ascription; note the joy of a heart fully and completely satisfied, now that the pinnacle of human greatness is attained. Here it is: "Vanity of vanities," saith the Preacher, "vanity of vanities; all is vanity!" The word *hahvehl* is always translated, as here, "vanity." It is sometimes applied to "idols," as Deut. xxxii. 21, and would give the idea of emptiness—nothingness. What a striking contrast! Man has here all that nature can possibly give, and his poor heart, far from singing, is *empty* still, and utters its sad bitter groan of disappointment. Now turn and contem-

plate that other scene, where the true Son of David, only now a "*Lamb as it had been slain*," is the centre of every circle, the object of every heart. Tears are dried at the mention of His name, and song after song bursts forth, till the whole universe of bliss pours forth its joy, relieves its sur-charged heart in praise. "Vanity of vanities," saith the Preacher,—that is the *old* groan. "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for Thou was slain, and hast redeemed to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made them kings and priests, and they shall reign over the earth."—that is the *new* song—oh, blessed contrast! Does it not make Him who Himself has replaced the groan by the song precious? Has it then no value?

F. C. J.

(To be continued.)

"PEACE BE UNTO YOU."

A thrice-repeated Benediction. (Jno. xx. 19-29.)

THE words of our blessed Lord were always "pure words," always suited to the occasion—words of kindly love to the repenting sinner, of solemn warning to the wavering, of awful denunciation to the proud, careless, and self-righteous. We may be sure, then, that whenever He opened His mouth it was to utter that which was not only true, but the appropriate and needed truth for the occasion.

It was after the resurrection that He pronounced the blessing upon His disciples, "Peace be unto you." And how appropriate was it that these should be His

first words to them gathered together. They had but lately seen their beloved Lord and Master snatched from their midst, and delivered up to death by the enmity of the heads of the nation, a death willingly executed by the cruelty of the Gentiles,—nay, they had heard from his own blessed lips the cry that He was forsaken of *God*, as well as persecuted by man. The darkness, the earth-quake, the awful accompaniments of that death—the death of all their hopes too—spoke of sorrow, of anguish, of despair, of divine displeasure. How fitting, then, that the Lord should greet them in blessed contrast to all their fears,—“Peace be unto you,” It was the characteristic of the place which He occupied, and which by grace He had brought and was about to introduce them into—the ground of resurrection, beyond death, beyond its fear, beyond wrath and judgment, beyond—as far as real power was concerned—the rage of man, the power of Satan, and the world. As the dove brought to Noah from the reclaimed earth the olive-branch of peace, token of the wonderful change that awaited him; so here, our Lord, in person however, not yet by the Spirit, brings from the new creation the olive branch; “He came and preached peace.”

And if the word is so full of meaning in this connection in a negative way, that is but the prelude to the positive blessings that belong to such a position. “Peace,” in Hebrew, is from a root signifying, “fullness,” and this most fittingly gives its positive meaning: “My cup runneth over,” said one, in type, in the green pastures of resurrection life, led there by the “great shepherd.” “Blessed with *all* spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ” is the word for us who through grace have been raised with Christ.

"The Lord is risen: with Him we also rose,
And in His grave see vanquished all our foes.
The Lord is risen: beyond the judgment-land,
In Him, in resurrection-life, we stand."

In this greeting, three times repeated, we have the fullness of blessing suggested, and most fittingly applied to our need upon earth. Each greeting suggests a truth, and the three are grouped in the order in which we would need them:—

First, The ground of peace.

Second, The power for service.

Third, The means of recovery.

"Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side." This is the starting-point of the enjoyment of true peace. Christ's person, His earthly ministry,—words and works full of blessing—all these can only be truly appreciated after we see the work by which peace has been made, by which God's righteousness has been declared, and His love manifested, to guilty rebels. His hands and side remind me of that "wondrous cross," of the substitution of the spotless lamb for the defiled sinner. The wounds tell me that the "chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." God has been glorified by that death, and every righteous barrier to perfect love manifesting itself to the lost has been removed. There is no wrath now, there can never be wrath again for those who have availed themselves of those wounds. Can conscience trouble? No; for God is greater than conscience, and He is satisfied with that atoning death. Can Satan accuse? To what purpose, when the finished work of Christ confronts him? He can but read his doom there, nothing else.

Should these lines be read by a timid believer,

fearing to call himself a child of God, and to look up into His face with thanksgiving, let him hear this benediction and see those wounds, and he cannot doubt that peace is his. We cannot dwell on our experience, it is but a poor and a humbling thing to think of—utterly valueless as in any way contributing to our peace. Nothing but the work of Christ for us is the ground of peace; not feelings, not attainments, nothing but the work of Christ. And that work nothing can change. How blessed it is to know this. The future may be dark, we may have many trials and many temptations, we may stumble, but none of these can affect the value of the cross. It is most important that the young Christian should fully grasp the blessedness of this. Wherever we go, bright and joyful or depressed, this benediction and its ground are ours. “Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side.” Little wonder that the disciples were “glad when they saw the Lord.”

The second benediction suggests other thoughts. In the first, peace, the ground of our relationship, is fully and forever established. In the second, the power of our walk, worthy of God and in His service, is given. “Peace be unto you; as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them and saith unto them, ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.’” Here we see that we are Christ’s representatives on earth. The conscience is at rest and we are now to live for Him. But what a dignity is this ! to represent God’s Son; to show in our life and by our words how He

would speak and walk. This is the standard of Christian holiness; none dare make it lower. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself so to walk, even as He walked." (1 Jno. ii. 6.) If we realize the privilege and responsibility this conveys, we will be filled with a sense of the dignity of our mission; nothing, not even the smallest step, the most lowly service, will seem trivial. On the other hand, we will feel the need of a power not our own. And this is just what we get, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Who could be weaker to meet the religion of the Jew and the culture of the Greek than those "unlearned and ignorant" Galileans? Without the Holy Spirit they were indeed utterly helpless; in His power they could "preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Their speech was "in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power." And this is *our* power, a present, acting Person, using us, helping our infirmities, in prayer, praise, or preaching—giving us strength to follow Christ. This is our only power. In ourselves we are utterly weak, the easy spoil of Satan's wiles, but "strengthened with might by His Spirit" we can "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." How careful we should be then to see that the Spirit is not grieved by a loose and careless frame of mind in us.

But representing Christ here means more than personal walk or public preaching; there is the exercise of discipline, in receiving into the number of God's people, or cutting off those who are not fit to associate with them. Now what man dare take to

himself this right? And yet there is the responsibility which must be faced. Rome, on the one hand, affects the authority and uses it in a despotic way, that crushes out all liberty of the Spirit. This is most unscriptural, and not less so is that utter indifference which permits open sinners to partake of the Lord's supper, and which misapplies the parable of the wheat and tares to the church, rather than the *world*. But who can calmly and in the fear of God, humbly take up this yoke and seek to act for Him? Only those guided by the Holy Spirit. All questions relating to fellowship, to discipline, are questions utterly unsolvable save by the Holy Spirit. If we come to them with carnal wisdom, or party-spirit, we will but make worse confusion. A broken spirit, a sense of utter weakness and dependence are absolutely indispensable in this the most delicate of Christian service. Those who are most competent to engage in it will be most deeply sensible of their need. Of course there are phases of discipline which belonged only to apostolic authority and power—the cutting off of Annanias and Sapphira; the delivering of offenders to Satan; but there remains the broad ground of responsibility for all, and the power to act, by the Spirit.

Lastly, we have in the interview with Thomas a most touching illustration of the care of the great Shepherd for His wandering sheep. It is introduced by the same unchanging words, “Peace be unto you.” Thomas had been away from the place of blessing, and so had been overcome by unbelief. The Lord meets him in his unbelief, and shames him by giving him the very proof he had demanded. Most suggestively we find the Lord doing for Thomas

what He had done for all before; He shows His hands and side and invites him further to "thrust his hand" into His side. He goes back to the beginning with him. He needed to be established in the truths taught by the pierced hands and side, and he gets what he needed to restore his wandering soul. And when we have gone astray, what is it that recalls us? Not high truth, so-called, but the simple great foundation-truths of the atonement. Thomas got a sight of Jesus' wounds and cries, "My Lord and my God." Have we grown worldly, cold, and gotten far from the Lord, as to communion? He recalls us by the same precious truth that first won us to Himself. This is what breaks us down:

"And yet to find Thee still the same—
'Tis this that humbles us with shame."

The frequent memorial of the Lord's death has this effect, among many others; it brings us back to our first love, in all the simplicity and joy of that newly found peace when we first saw His hands and side.

It is interesting to note that in the restoration of Peter (Jno. xxi.) in the threefold injunction, "Feed My lambs, shepherd My sheep, feed My sheep" (*Gk.*), we have these truths we have been looking at brought before us again, and in the same order: "Feed My Lambs" corresponds to the first benediction, "Peace be unto you." It is the milk, the precious gospel truth needed by the young believer, to be established in the great foundation truths of redemption. "Shepherd My sheep" implies the exercise of discipline, care to guard the flock of God, and to purge out that which defiles, as well as all that intermediate care implied in the word "shepherd." Lastly, "*Feed My sheep*" reminds us of the treat-

ment of lambs: feed the weak, as the Lord did Thomas, and with the same result, to restore to Himself those who are dear to Him. Would that we, like Peter, knew more of this blessed shepherd work!

EXTRACT OF A LETTER.

* * * * *

WITH regard to the tract of which you inquire, while there is truth in it which is attractive, there is also that which, we believe, destroys it in the end; and with that conviction, we could not advise the distribution of it.

We have learned, in what experience we have acquired, that truth itself, even if not mixed with objectionable statements, can be put in very different ways and with equally different results. If put in a holy, divine way, its effects in them who receive it are accordingly. If put in a light, human way, its effects in those in whom it takes root are light and human. Though the work of the Spirit be purely divine, there is with that also the part of man alongside, and that stamps itself in the convert as in a babe the mother's nature is stamped as well as the father's.

You will notice, therefore, how superficial every thing of God is becoming in them who are the children of God. The truth has come to them by light things, amid sing-song, semi-laughing talks, books of pictures and interesting illustrations.

After all this, the soul which has been born of God is unable to feed upon the sincere milk of the Word. It must be *entertained* to be interested.

All this is great loss, and we often mourn over it, not only because God is robbed of much in His be-

loved people, but also how can God be robbed and His people not be losers?

Forgive, dear brother, for saying so much. Think over it; and if you see this too, then help to check the tide as much as lies in you.

Yours in Christ,

* * *

HIDDEN FAITH.

FAITH itself is invisible, save to the eye of God; "Jesus seeing their faith," as shown by their persistent following and prayer, though there was the divine perception as well. We can know it only by its fruits. A man may *say* he has faith, and we take him at his word, but we can only know it by seeing the works of faith manifested in his life.

Abraham, David, and hosts of others, were men of faith so evidently that there could be no question. Their lives spoke. But there were some whose life was not so clear, of whom we could not have known that they were persons of faith unless we had been distinctly told so in Scripture.

Who would have thought of Lot as being even a child of God if Scripture had not told us? True his faith was weak; he had enough to make him miserable in the place of evil association, not enough to take him out of it. Still he had faith, and though there is nothing in his life to comfort us, plenty to warn us, it is good to see that grace reigns, and that feebly, still really, faith took hold of that grace.

Jacob, too, in his life, gives us more of warning than example. The obtaining his brother's birth-right at a time of great weakness in Esau; the delib-

erate deception by which he secured the blessing of the first-born; his questionable bargains with Laban; to say nothing of his falsehoods in later years;—these bring out the weakness of the man, and show his unbelief. And yet connected with these very acts, wicked in themselves, there was, hidden from view, faith. Why should Jacob prize the birthright or the blessing? Was it not faith which led him to value that which his brother despised?—a faith which had it been allowed to act unhindered would have led him not only to prize these blessings, but to *wait on God* for them. How much bitterness of soul, how much sorrow he would have been spared, if he had waited on God instead of taking things into his own hands. He is not alone in this. Is not much of the restlessness and impatience of God's people to be traced to the weakness of their faith? They value the blessings, and that is faith; they try to secure them by human effort, and that is unbelief. But God is able to distinguish between the faith and the unbelief, and to value the one far more than the utter indifference of "profane persons like Esau."

Rahab affords us another example of this. Faith led her to fear for her safety, while as yet the walls of Jericho stood firm and Israel was beyond Jordan. Faith led her to claim shelter for herself and family, when the judgment impending should be executed; to shelter the spies and to send them forth in peace. But unbelief led her to lie to the men of Jericho. And Scripture is careful, while it approves the faith, not to include the unbelief. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."

Sarah's history is interesting in this connection.

From the Old-Testament history we would look upon her as rather a weak person, submitting to deception and indignities she would be supposed to resent. Nor is untruthfulness wanting, when the heavenly visitors announce the birth of Isaac. She laughed behind the tent door, and then denied it. She gave Hagar to Abraham, and this surely was not faith. But behind all this there was a real faith, which set a value, as did Jacob, on divine blessings and promises. If unbelief led her to give Hagar, it was faith that prompted her to desire seed for Abraham that God's promise to him might be fulfilled. A strong faith would have left *all* to God; and indeed it is good to read in the epistle to the Hebrews, "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised." Abraham's faith we can see in the Old Testament; the Spirit of God preserves this notice of Sarah's in the New, to remind us that she too was one of those "holy women who trusted in God" (1 Pet. iii. 5, 6), and thus was an example to those who should follow. In the light of that faith, hidden from view in the Old Testament, how beautiful are her words at Isaac's birth!—"God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear shall laugh with me"—a real song of joy, if it be a little one compared with Hannah's, after her deep and bitter experience and her earnest prayer; or Mary's, after her simple and beautiful bowing to God's wondrous grace.

This faith of Sarah's, too, seems to grow, until it exceeds Abraham's. At first, invisible to human eye; then rising to light in her little song; and finally reaching the dignity of "scripture"—"Cast out the

bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." (Gen. xxi. 10 with Gal. iv. 30.)

Nor is Abraham too an example of a faith altogether visible. We realize that he was a man of wonderful faith, counting on the living God to give him the land, to make his seed as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea innumerable, to make him, through his *Seed*, a blessing to all the nations of the earth. But who would have thought of him, from the Old Testament, as a man who had his hopes in heaven? Even the "land of promise" was to him but a "strange country;" "for he looked for *the* city which hath *the* foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. xi. 10.) The Greek has the definite article, making both the city and its foundations, not vague, but well known and looked for.

And so we have traced the faith, hidden from view, in these various persons all the way from poor Lot, gradually rising in dignity and worth until we see it in Abraham, detaching him from earth, even earthly blessings, and linking him with heaven. The question arises, What is the profit of all this? Are we to imitate Lot in choosing Sodom, or Jacob in cheating his brother, or Rahab in falsehood? Scripture gives the answer: "Whose *faith* follow." We can imitate Lot in abhorring evil, Jacob and Rahab in prizing the blessing. Otherwise they are warnings to us. But we do learn that God can see more than we do,—that where we can see but the sin, He may see the faith struggling for expression, but held down by unbelief. It is good to know that the time is coming when "every man shall have *praise* of God." We should remember this in judging one another. The brother

whom we so readily criticise has, hidden in his heart, a spark of real faith; his clumsy efforts to give it expression, mixed with fleshly strength, assure us of a reality that should command our respect, while we by no means excuse the carnality. The one who has little to say, but goes quietly on in his daily duties, a very ordinary sort of person, may have his eyes on "another country" when we would hardly think so. All this should teach us to esteem one another very highly. We cannot truly serve one unless we truly respect him, and we cannot truly do that unless we realize that he has some of that "like precious faith" which is God's gift. We will thus be more intent on developing the faith than rooting up the unbelief.

And this brings us to see the remedy for unbelief. "To him that hath shall be given." Lot did not need to remain in Sodom. The faith which made him miserable there, if not checked by self-interest, would have taken him out of the city. So with Jacob. The faith which made him prize the birthright and the blessing, if unchecked by low carnal thoughts, would have led him to "count Him faithful that promised." He could have, like Abraham, "patiently endured." So with all. If the simple faith as a grain of mustard-seed is not checked, but nourished and developed and exercised, it grows stronger. Indeed, strong faith is simply faith applied, not to some, but to all the conditions of life; and this is the privilege of 'all God's people, not of a chosen few. So while on the one hand we do not boast of our faith, and flaunt it before men, let us on the other "so let our light shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven."

ON THE MORAL GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(Continued from p. 91.)

ANGELS have their joy over the repentance of sinners. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." It is happy to have this secret of heaven disclosed to us, and to read one illustration of it after another, as we do in Luke xv.

But there is something beyond this. The joy there, though in heaven, is *public*. It utters itself, and has companionship. Very proper that it should be so; very proper that the whole house should share it, and find it a common joy. But there is something beyond this. There is the joy of the *divine bosom*, as well as this joy of heaven. Jno. iv. 27-32 gives it to us, as Luke xv. gives us the public joy in heaven. And this joy of the divine bosom, I need not say, is the deeper thing. It is full, silent, and personal. It asks not to be raised or sustained by others. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of" is the language of the heart of Christ as He tasted this joy. The glory was filling the house, so that the ministers of the house must stand by for a time. The Shepherd had but just brought home the stray one of the flock, having laid it on His shoulders rejoicing, and as yet the joy was all His own. The household had not been called to rejoice with Him, when the woman left Him a saved and happy sinner. Disciples felt the character of the moment. They would not trespass. The fat reserved for the altar, the richest portion of the feast, "the food of God," was spread, and the disciples were silent, and stood apart. This was a wondrous moment—not many like it. The deep, unuttered joy of the divine bosom is known here, as the

public ecstatic joy of heaven is known in Luke xv.

But He that could be thus feasted was weary betimes, and hungry, and thirsting. This is seen in the same chapter—Jno. iv., as again in Mark iv. But there is this difference in the two cases: He finds sleep for His relief and restoration in Mark iv., He is independent of it in Jno. iv. And why was this? In Mark iv. He had gone through a day of toil, and in the evening He was weary, as nature will be after labor: “Man goeth forth to his work and to his labor until the evening.” (Ps. civ.) Sleep is then provided for him, to restore him to his service when morning returns. Jesus proved all this. He was asleep on the pillow in the boat. In Jno. iv. He is weary again, hungry and thirsty too. He sits at the well, like a tired traveler, waiting till the disciples came from the neighboring village with food. But when they come, they find Him feasted and rested, and that too without food or drink or sleep. His weariness had had another refreshment than what sleep would have brought Him. He had been made happy by fruit to His labor in the soul of a poor sinner. The woman had been sent away in the liberty of the salvation of God. But there had been no woman of Samaria in Mark iv., and He has therefore to use the pillow in His weariness.

But how true all this is to the sensibilities of our common humanity! We all understand it. The Lord's heart was merry, as I may say, in Jno. iv.; but there was nothing to make it merry in Mark iv. And we are taught to know (and our experience sets to its seal that the word is true) that “a merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones.” (Prov. xvii. 22.) So that the Master can

say in the one case, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," while in the other, He will use the pillow which care for His weariness had provided.

How perfect in all its sympathies was the humanity the Son had assumed! Surely, indeed, it was the common humanity, apart from sin.

"Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame.

But again. There is a temptation in the time of confusion to cast up all as hopeless and gone, and to say, It is endless and needless to be still distinguishing. All is in disorder and apostasy; why, then, attempt to distinguish?

But this was not the Lord. He was *in* the confusion, but not *of* it, as He was in the world but not of it, as we said before of Him. He met all sorts of people, in all sorts of conditions,—heaps upon heaps where all should have been compact together; but He held His even, narrow, unsoiled, and undistracted way through it all. The pretensions of the Pharisee, the worldliness of the Herodian, the philosophy of the Sadducee, the fickleness of the multitude, the attempts of adversaries, and the ignorance and infirmities of disciples were moral materials which He had to meet and answer every day.

And then the condition of things, as well as the characters of persons exercised Him; the coin of Cæsar circulating in Immanuel's land; partition-walls all but in ruins; Jew and Gentile, clean and unclean, confounded, save as religious arrogancy might still retain them after its own manner. But His one golden rule expressed the perfectness of His passage through all,—“Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.” The remnant in the day of captivity, a like day of confusion, carried themselves beautifully, distin-

guishing things that differed, and not hopelessly casting all up. Daniel would advise the king, but not eat his meat: Nehemiah would serve in the palace, but not suffer the Moabite or the Ammonite in the house of the Lord: Mordecai would guard the king's life, but would not bow to the Amalekite: Ezra and Zerubbabel would accept favors from the Persian, but not Samaritan help, nor Gentile marriages: and the captives would pray for the peace of Babylon, but would not sing Zion's songs there. All this was beautiful; and the Lord, in His day, was *perfect in this remnant-character*. And all this has a voice for us; for ours is a day, in its character of confusion, not inferior to these days of the captives, or of Jesus. And we, like them, are not to act on the hopelessness of the scene, but know still how to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.

All His moral beauty becomes a pattern to us. But then we see Him stand in God's relationship to evil also, and that is a place which, of course, we never could fill. He touched the leper, and He touched the bier, and yet He was undefiled. He had God's relationship to sin. He knew good and evil, but was in divine supremacy over it; knowing such things as God knows them. Had He been other than He was, these touches of the bier and of the leper would have defiled Him. He must have been put outside the camp, and gone through the cleansing which the law prescribed. But nothing of this kind do we see in Him. He was not an unclean Jew; He was not merely undefiled, He was undefilable; and yet such was the mystery of His person, such the perfection of the manhood in company with the Godhead in Him, that the temptation was as real in Him as was the undefilableness.

But we pause. Our place toward much of this needed though mysterious and deeply precious truth is, to receive it and worship, rather than to discuss and analyze it.* It is happy, however, to one's own spirit to mark the yearnings of some simple souls, who give you the impression that it is *Himself* that is before them. We oftentimes traffic with truths in such wise as in the end leaves with us a rebuking conviction that we did not reach Himself, though so occupied. We find out that we had been loitering in the avenue.

J. G. B.

(To be continued)

"THINGS THAT SHALL BE:"

AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

PART VII. (Chap. xix. 5—xxii.)

THE CONSUMMATION.

The Holy City.—(Continued.)

THE holy city descends from heaven, "having the glory of God." She is the chosen vessel of it, to display it to the universe, being the fruit of Christ's work, the fullest witness of abounding grace. Her shining is "like a most precious stone, as a crystal-like jasper-stone," or diamond, as we have already taken it to be.† The carbon crystallized into this lustrous brilliant, which still shines with a light not its own, is a fit representation of the "glory" that is to be "in the Church in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages." (Eph. iii. 21.) This glory which God manifests through His creatures, He manifests *to* His creatures, satisfying

* His death, I may here take occasion to say, was the perfecting of His moral glory of which I speak. (Phil. ii.) Of course, I know, it was a great deal more than that also; but, among other things, it was that.

† See on chap. iv. 3.

His own love in bringing them thus nigh unto Himself. How blessed to be a means of such display !

The wall of the city clearly speaks of its security : it has "a great and high wall;" for "salvation hath God appointed as walls and bulwarks." (Is. xxvi. 1.) And in the wall, which has four sides, there are twelve gates,—three gates on every side, for egress and ingress, home as this is of a life which is unceasing activity. The number 12 is upon all the city, 12 being an expanded 7, with the same factors (4×3 instead of $4 + 3$), and the symbol of manifest divine government, God being here manifestly supreme. This is perfection in its deepest analysis; and the numbers are thus one in fact.* The 12 here is plainly the usual 4×3 ; the 3 still speaking of divine manifestation, while the 4 shows it to be universal, the sides facing also every way.

At the gates are twelve angels; upon them the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. As the tabernacle of God, a reference to the tabernacle of old is surely in place here, though to that there was but one entrance, for a simple and beautiful reason, Christ being seen in it as the only way of approach to God. Now there are twelve gates, answering to the twelve tribes which in the wilderness also were grouped in similar threes around the tabernacle. Ezekiel, in his last vision of the future (chap. xlvi.), shows us what more exactly answers to what is here, though speaking of the earthly city restored, and not the heavenly; and there the gates are appropriated, one to each particular tribe. Israel are here, as it would seem, their own representatives, as in the vision of the seventh chapter; and we are reminded of their being in nearest connection upon earth with the heavenly city. In the *heavenly* sphere, at the gates are angels. The heavenly and earthly relations of the city are thus declared.

There are twelve foundations of the wall of the city also; but on these are the names of the twelve apostles

* See "Spiritual Law in the Natural World," pp. 73-5.

of the Lamb. They have *laid* the foundations, and their names are stamped upon their work. We are surely not to imagine any individualizing here, as if any one foundation could be appropriated to any one apostle, or indeed that the number 12 itself is any thing but characteristic. This connects itself also with the question of the presence or absence of Paul's name from the number. It is remarkable that almost the same difficulty connects with the *twelve* tribes of Israel, which often exclude and often include the tribe of Levi. Taking Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, as tribal heads, equal in this respect to Jacob's other sons, (and this is the place that they are given in the history,) yet they are none the less always counted twelve. Why may not the apostles, in spite of the addition of Paul to their number, be counted here as twelve?

The measurements of the city and the wall are next given. The city is a cube, twelve thousand furlongs every way; the wall, a hundred and forty-four cubits high. The number 12 still governs everywhere. The cube speaks of substance, reality. The sanctuary in the tabernacle and in the temple were both cubes. This is the eternal sanctuary, and the full fruition of every hope of the saint. The measurements further, though surely symbolic, await yet their interpretation.

The building of the wall is of jasper (or diamond). The divine glory is itself a safeguard of the eternal city. What can touch that which God has ordained for His own praise? The city itself is pure transparent gold,—pure, permanent, radiant,—not hindering, but welcoming the enraptured sight. The foundations of the wall are adorned with every precious stone,—all the attributes of God displayed in that upon which rests the salvation of the people of God. The stones, in their separate meanings, are again a mystery. The twelve gates are twelve pearls—the picture of such grace as has been shown in the Church (Matt. xiii. 45, 46). These gates stand open

all the unending day. The street of the city is, again, "pure gold, like transparent glass." The street—especially in the east—is the place of traffic, the meeting-place constantly of need and greed. But here, all circumstances, all intercourse, the whole environment, is absolute holiness and truth, fit for and permeated by the felt presence of God.

And this leads us directly to the next statement, that because the city is *all* sanctuary, there is no more any special one. The presence of God is the temple of the city: there is no other; and the Lamb is He who characterizes for us, and will always characterize, this otherwise ineffable Presence. There is no distance; there is nothing that can produce distance; there never can be more. It is that which the presence of Jesus among us—now nearly nineteen centuries since—implied and pledged to us: it is Immanu-El—"God with us"—in full reality, and in the highest and most intimate way.

It is true we have not the Father spoken of as such: it is "the Lord (or Jehovah) God Almighty"—the God of Old-Testament revelation,—with "the Lamb," in whom we have the revelation of the New. Nothing less, surely, is meant than God in full display, so far as the creature can ever be made to apprehend Him. There is a glory of the Light always inaccessible,—not hid in darkness, but in light, which no human eye can ever penetrate. None can fully know God but God. This is only to say that the creature remains the creature; but the limitation of faculties does not mean distance, as if kept back. "The Lamb" shows, on the one hand, the desire of God to be known, while implying, in the very fact of manhood taken for this revelation, that God purely as God could not be known.

Thus it is immediately added that the glory of God lightens the city, and "the Lamb is the lamp thereof." The lamp sustains the light. It adds nothing to it, for to divine glory nothing can be added: if any thing could

be, it would no longer be divine. But the light is “put upon a candlestick (or lamp) that they who enter in may see the light.” (Luke viii. 16.) So will Christ always be the One in whom the Father is made known: nay, the sacrificial word (“Lamb”) assures us that we shall always have need of the past also for this. But this does not at all mean that there will not be what the Lord has assured us the angels of the little children enjoy continually: “Their angels do always behold the face of My Father who is in heaven.”

This, then, is the glory of the heavenly city, in the light of which the nations of the earth themselves walk; while the kings of the earth bring their glory unto it. As another has said, “They own the heavens and the heavenly kingdom to be the source of all, and bring there the homage of their power.” And “they bring the glory and honor of the nations unto it.” That is, “Heaven is seen as the source of all the glory and honor of this world.” The nations are, as we shall see directly, undoubtedly the millennial nations; and it is no question of these entering themselves into the heavenly city: their glory and honor it is they bring, and though the words in the original admit the force of “into,” they by no means compel it. The mention of the continually open gates speaks indeed of peaceful and constant intercourse, and we must remember that here is the abode of those who reign with Christ over the earth. Whether these are the “kings of the earth” meant is, however, a question: if it were so, the “into” might be still the true sense.

The next statement as to the city regards those who do enter therein,—that is, have part in the blessedness which is here depicted. In opposition to all defilement, one class alone has title here: it is “they who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” This surely shows that the whole of the Old-Testament saints enter into the city. No one is excluded whose name is there. While, on the other hand, the millennial saints have as clearly their

portion on earth—the new earth—in connection, indeed, with the “tabernacle of God,” but not in it. The heavenly city remains always heavenly, and when it descends from heaven, has then received its inhabitants. These distinctions, which indeed are gathered from elsewhere, are nevertheless to be kept in remembrance here, or all will be confusion.

We have next before us the “paradise of God,” in which the city lies. Man’s paradise of old could not yet have the city; and when the city came, it was outside of paradise altogether. Here at last the two things are united.

We are of necessity reminded also of one of the closing visions of Ezekiel, while a comparison easily shows also the difference between the earthly and the heavenly in these pictures,—the one being indeed the shadow, but no more than the shadow, of the other. John here sees “a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” And in Ezekiel, the life-giving waters issue forth from the house of the Lord, and thus is specially noted in connection with the fruit of the trees that are nourished by it: “And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to its months, because their waters, they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.” How like the account in Revelation is to this, no one can fail to understand: even the language might seem to be taken from it: “In the midst of the street of it, and on this side of the river and on that, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve [manner of] fruits, and yielded its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

But in Ezekiel all is distinctly earthly, and the blessing is not yet full. The waters go down into the salt sea and heal it, so that a great multitude of fish are in its waters;

but there are miry places and marshes that are not healed, but given over to salt. With both the Old-Testament prophet and the New, we see that the earth is yet in the millennial, not the eternal condition; for the leaves of the tree are for medicine in both alike; there is, in both, need of healing yet.

The waters are in both cases from the sanctuary, for that is the character of the whole city of God. In Revelation, they are specifically from the throne of God; for here the one blessedness is, as we have seen, that God reigns,—God revealed in that perfect grace that is expressed in Christ,—the throne of God being also that of the Lamb. Thus the water is the type, as always in its highest meaning, of the fullness of the Spirit, the power of life and sanctification, indeed the power of God in all creation. The *tree* of life bears witness, as in the earthly paradise at first, of dependence upon Another, of life in dependence; but all the plenteous and varied fruits of this could not even be symbolized in the time of old; fresh fruits and abundant: who can tell the blessed meaning? or what Christ is to those that have their life in Him?

"And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him. And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." Thus He is openly theirs; they too are openly His. Service is taken up afresh in glory according to the fullness of that open-eyed and open-faced communion which is here so assured. It is indeed, when it has its proper character, communion itself. The love that serves us all is the love of God Himself, and of this Christ is the perfect expression. How is it possible to be in communion with Christ without the diligent endeavor to serve Him in the gospel of His grace, and in ministry to His people? In heaven, service will not for a moment cease; although some precious possibilities of the present will have passed away indeed. Would that this were more realized, with the

Lord's estimate of greatness in the kingdom of which He is greatest of all!

But the light! and our inheritance is in the light. To this the vision returns, and ends with it: "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, nor light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for the ages of the ages." Thus the reign of the saints is not for the millennium only, nor simply as partakers of the power of the rod of iron. "If by one man's offense death reigned through one, much more shall they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life by One, Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 17.) Reigning is, for the heavenly saints, inseparable from the life they enter into in the coming day. The new Jerusalem is a city of kings and priests,—the bridal city of the King of kings. Here the eternal reign seems associated necessarily with the glory in which all here live and move. For those who were once sinners,—slaves of Satan, and of the lusts by which he inthralled them, to be delivered and brought, by the priceless blood of Jesus, into such communion as is here shown with the Father and the Son,—how can their condition be expressed in language less glowing than this—needing no candle, nor light of the sun, because the Lord God giveth them light,—than that they reign forever and ever?

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

GOD may have to compel us to "come in," for in the stubbornness of our evil hearts we would rather perish than come to His Son; but there are two things He will never compel any man to do: He will compel none to take, as Mary, the place at the feet of Jesus. This must come from *a heart devoted to His person*. Nor will He compel any to meet Satan in conflict; this can only be by *devotedness to Christ's interests*.

ON THE MORAL GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(Continued from p. 133.)

THE Lord was "poor, yet making many rich,"—"having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

These high and wondrous conditions were exhibited in Him in ways that were and must have been peculiar—altogether His own. He would receive ministry from some godly women out of their substance, and yet minister to the need of all around Him out of the treasures of the fullness of the earth. He would feed thousands in desert places, and yet be Himself a hungered, waiting for the return of His disciples with victuals from a neighboring village. This is "having nothing, and yet possessing all things." But while thus poor, both needy and exposed, *nothing that in the least savored of meanness* is ever seen attaching to His condition. He never begs, though He have not a penny; for when He wanted to see one (not to use it for Himself), He had to ask to be shown it. He never runs away, though exposed, and His life jeopardized, as we speak, in the place where He was. He withdraws Himself, or passes by as hidden. And thus, again I may say, nothing mean, nothing unbecoming full personal dignity attaches to Him, though poverty and exposure were His lot every day.

Blessed and beautiful! Who could preserve under our eye such an object,—so perfect, so unblemished, so exquisitely, delicately pure, in all the minute and most ordinary details of human life? Paul does not give us this. None could give it to us but Jesus, the God-Man. The peculiarities of His virtues in the midst of the ordinariness of His circumstances tell us of His person. It must be a peculiar person, it must

be the divine Man, if I may so express Him, that could give us such peculiarities in such commonplace conditions. Paul does not give us any thing like it, again I say. There was great dignity and moral elevation about him, I know. If any one may be received as exhibiting that, let us agree that it was he. But his path is not that of Jesus;—he is in danger of his life, and he uses his nephew to protect him. Again, his friends let him down the wall of the town in a basket. I do not say he begs or asks for it, but he acknowledges money sent to him. I say not how Paul avowed himself a Pharisee in the mixed assembly in order to shelter himself, or how he spake evil of the high-priest that was judging him. Such conduct was morally wrong; and I am speaking here only of such cases as were (though not morally wrong,) below the full personal and moral dignity that marks the way of Christ. Nor is the flight into Egypt, as it is called, an exception in this characteristic of the Lord; for that journey was taken to fulfill prophecy, and under the authority of a divine oracle.

But all this is really, not only moral glory, but it is a moral wonder: marvelous how the pen that was held by a human hand could ever have delineated such beauties. We are to account for it, as has been observed before and by others, only by its being a truth—a living reality. We are shut up to that blessed necessity. Still further, as we go on with this blessed truth, it is written, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” Our words should prove themselves as thus, always with grace, by ministering good to others—“grace to the hearers.” This, however, will often be in the pun-

gency of admonition or rebuke; and at times with decision or severity, even with indignation and zeal; and thus they will be "seasoned with salt," as the Scripture speaks. And having these fine qualities—being gracious and yet salted, they will bear witness that we know how to answer every man.

Among all other forms of it, the Lord Jesus illustrated this form of moral perfectness. He knew how to answer every man, as with words which were always to his soul's profit, whether men would hear or whether they would forbear; but at times seasoned,—nay, seasoned highly, with salt.

Thus, in answering inquiries, he did not so much purpose to satisfy *them*, as to reach the *conscience or the condition of the inquirer*.

In His silence, or refusal to answer at all, when He stood before the Jew or the Gentile at the end, before either the priests or Pilate or Herod, we can trace the same perfect fitness as we do in His words or answers; witnessing to God that at least One among the sons of men knew "a time to keep silence and a time to speak."

Great variety in His very tone and manner also presents itself in all this; and all this variety, minute as it was as well as great, was part of this fragrance before God. Sometimes His word was gentle, sometimes peremptory; sometimes he reasons, sometimes he rebukes at once, and sometimes conducts calm reasoning up to the heated point of solemn condemnation; for it is the *moral* of the occasion He always weighs.

Matt. xv. has struck me as a chapter in which this perfection, in much of its various beauty and excellency, may be seen. In the course of it, the Lord is

called to answer the Pharisees, the multitude, the poor afflicted stranger from the coasts of Tyre, and His own disciples, again and again, in their different exposure of either their stupidity or their selfishness; and we may notice His different style of rebuke and of reasoning,—of calm, patient teaching, and of faithful, wise, and gracious training of the soul: and we cannot but feel how fitting all this variety was to the place or occasion that called it forth. And such was the beauty and the fitness of His neither *teaching* nor *learning*, in Luke ii., but only hearing and asking questions. To have *taught* then would not have been in season, a child as He was in the midst of His elders. To have learnt would not have been in full fidelity to the light, the eminent and bright light, which He knew He carried in Himself; for we may surely say of Him, “He was wiser than the ancients, and had more understanding than His teachers.” I do not mean as God, but as One “filled with wisdom,” as was then said of Him. But He knew, in the perfection of grace, how to use this fullness of wisdom, and He is therefore not presented to us by the evangelist in the midst of the doctors in the temple at the age of twelve either *teaching* or *learning*; but it is simply said of Him that He was hearing and asking questions. Strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God upon Him, is the description of Him then, as He grew up in tender years; and when a man, conversing in the world, His speech was always with grace, seasoned with salt, as of one who knew how to answer every man. What perfection and beauty suited to the different seasons of childhood and manhood!

And further. We find Him, besides this, also in

various other conditions. At times He is *slighted and scorned*, watched and hated by adversaries, retiring, as it were to save His life from their attempts and purposes. At times He is *weak*, followed only by the poorest of the people; wearied, too, and hungry and athirst, debtor to the service of some loving women, who felt as though they owed Him every thing. At times He is *compassionating the multitude* in all gentleness, or companying with His disciples in their repasts or in their journeying, conversing with them as a man would with His friends. At times He is *in strength and honor* before us, doing wonders, letting out some rays of glory; and though in His person and circumstances nothing and nobody in the world—a carpenter's son, without learning or fortune, yet making a greater stir among men, and that, too, at times in the thoughts of the ruling ones on earth, than man ever made.

Childhood and manhood, and human life in all its variousness, thus give Him to us. Would that the heart could hold Him! There is a perfection in some of the minute features that tell of the divine hand that was delineating them. Awkward work would any penman, unkept, unguided by the Spirit, have made of certain occasions where these strokes and touches are seen. As when the Lord wanted to comment on the current money of the land, He asked to be shown it, and does not find it about Himself. Indeed, we may be sure He carried none of it. Thus the moral beauties of the action flowed from the moral perfection of His condition within.

He asked His disciples, in the hour of Gethsemane, to *watch with Him*; but He did not ask them to *pray for Him*. He would claim sympathy. He prized it

in the hour of weakness and pressure, and would have the hearts of His companions bound to Him then. Such a desire was of the moral glory that formed the human perfection that was in Him; but while He felt this and did this, He could not ask them to stand as in the divine presence on His behalf. He would have them give themselves to Him, but He could not seek them to give themselves to God for Him. Thus He asked them, again I say, to watch with Him, but He did not ask them to pray for Him. When, shortly or immediately afterward, He linked praying and watching together, it was of themselves and for themselves He spoke, saying, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Paul could say to his fellow-saints, "Ye also helping together by prayer to God for us: pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience." But such was not the language of Jesus. I need not say, it could not have been; but the pen that writes for us such a life and delineates for us such a character is held by the Spirit of God. None other than the Spirit could write thus.

He did good, and lent, hoping for nothing again. He gave, and His left hand did not know what His right hand was doing. Never, in one single instance, as I believe, did He claim either the person or the service of those whom He restored and delivered. He never made the deliverance He wrought a title to service. Jesus loved and healed and saved, looking for nothing again. He would not let Legion, the Gadarene, be with Him; the child at the foot of the mount He delivered back to His father; the daughter of Jairus He left in the bosom of her family; the widow's son at Nain He restores to His mother. He

claims none of them. Does Christ give in order that He may receive again? Does He not (perfect Master!) illustrate His own principle—"Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again"? The nature of grace is, to impart to others, not to enrich itself; and He came that in Him and His ways it might shine in all the exceeding riches and glory that belong to it. He found servants in this world, but He did not first heal them and then claim them. He called them and endowed them. They were the fruit of the energy of His Spirit, and of affections kindled in hearts constrained by His love. And sending them forth, He said to them, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Surely there is something beyond human conception in the delineation of such a character. One repeats that thought again and again. And very happy is it to add that it is in the very simplest forms this moral glory of the Lord shines forth at times,—such forms as are at once intelligible to all the perceptions and sympathies of the heart. Thus He never refused the feeblest faith, though He accepted and answered, and that too with delight, the approaches and demands of the boldest.

The strong faith which drew upon Him, without ceremony or apology, in full, immediate assurance was ever welcome to Him; while the timid soul that approached Him as one that was ashamed, and would excuse itself, was encouraged and blessed. His lips at once bore away from the heart of the poor leper the one only thing that hung over that heart as a cloud. "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," said he. "I will: be thou clean," said Jesus. But immediately afterward the same lips uttered the fullness of the heart, when the clear, unquestioning

faith of the Gentile centurion was witnessed, and when the bold, earnest faith of a family in Israel broke up the roof of the house where He was, that they might let down their sick one before Him.

When a weak faith appealed to the Lord, He granted the blessing it sought, but He rebuked the seeker. But even this rebuke is full of comfort to us; for it seems to say, "Why did you not make freer fuller, happier use of Me?" Did we value the Giver as we do the gift,—the heart of Christ as well as His hand, this *rebuke* of weak faith would be just as welcome as the *answer* to it.

And if little faith be thus reprov'd, strong faith must be grateful. And therefore we have reason to know what a fine sight was under the eye of the Lord when, in that case already looked at, they broke up the roof of the house in order to reach Him. It was indeed, right sure I am, a grand spectacle for the eye of the divine and bounteous Jesus. *His heart* was entered by that action as surely as *the house in Capernaum* was entered by it.

J. G. B.

(To be continued.)

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS;

OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

(Continued from page 116.)

AND this is just the purpose of the whole book, to furnish such striking contrasts whereby the "new" is set off in its glories against the dark background of the "old,"—rest against labor, hope against despair, song against groan; and so the third verse puts this very explicitly,—“What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?”

The wisest and the greatest of men is seeking for an answer to this question. And this verse is too important in its bearing on the whole book to permit our passing it without looking at that significant word "profit" a little closer. And here one feels the advantage of those helps that a gracious God has put into our hands in these days of special attack upon His revelation, whereby even the unlearned may, by a little diligence, arrive at the exact shade of meaning of a word. The word "profit," then, is, in the Hebrew, *yihrohn*, and is found in this exact form only in this book, where it is translated "profit," as here, or "excellency," as in chap. ii. 13. The Septuagint translates it into a Greek one, meaning "advantage," or perhaps more literally, "that which remains over and above." In Eph. iii. 20 it is rendered "exceeding abundantly above." Hence, we gather that our word intends to convey to us the question, "After life is over, after man has given his labor, his time, his powers, and his talents, what has he received in exchange that shall satisfy him for all that he has lost? Do the pleasures obtained during life fully compensate for what is spent in obtaining them? do they satisfy? and do they remain to him as "profit" over and above that expenditure? In a word, what "under the sun" can satisfy the longing, thirsting, hungering heart of man, so that he can say, "My heart is filled to overflowing, its restless longings are stilled, I have found a food that satisfies its hunger, a water that quenches its thirst"? A question all-important, surely, and it will be well worth listening to the experience of this seeker, who is filled far above his fellows for finding this satisfactory good, if it can be found "under the sun."

First, then, the preacher, like a good workman, takes account of what material he has to work with. "Have I," he says, "any thing that others have not had, or can I hope to find any thing that has not been before?" At once he is struck with that "law of circuit" that is stamped on every thing: generation follows generation; but no new earth, *that* remains ever the same; the sun wheels ceaselessly in its one course; the winds circle from point to point, but whirl about to their starting-place; the waters, too, follow the same law, and keep up one unbroken circuit. Where can rest be found in such a scene? Whilst there is unceasing change, nothing is *new*; it is but a repetition of what has been before, and which again soon passes, leaving the heart empty and hungry still. Again, then, let us use this dark background to throw forward another scene. See, even now, "above the sun" Him who is the Head and perfect Exponent of the creation called the *new*. Is there any law of constant unsatisfying circuit in Him? Nay, indeed, every sight we get of Him is *new*; each revelation of Himself perfectly satisfies, and yet awakens appetite for further views of Himself.

"No pause, no change those pleasures
Shall ever seek to know;
The draught that lulls our thirsting
But wakes that thirst anew."

Or, again, look at that blessed "law of circuit" spoken of in another way by one who has indeed been enlightened by a light "above the sun" in every sense of the word, in 2 Cor. ix. It is not the circling of winds or waters, but of "grace" direct from the blessed God Himself. Mark the perfection stamped upon it both by its being a complete circle—never

ending, but returning to its Source,—and by the numerical stamp of perfection upon it in its seven distinct parts (or movements) as shown by the seven-fold recurrence of the word “all,” or “every,” both coming from the same Greek word.

1. “God is able to make *all* grace abound unto you :” there is an inexhaustible *source*. We may come and come and come again, and never find *that* fountain lowered by all our drafts upon it. Sooner, far sooner, should the ocean be emptied by a tea-cup than infinite “power” and “love” impoverished by all that all His saints could draw from Him. *All* grace.

2. “That ye *always*.” There is no moment when this circle of blessing need stop flowing. It is ever available. No moment—by day or night; in the quiet of the closet or in the activities of the day’s duties; when in communion with friends or in the company of foes; when that grace is not available. At *all* times.

3. “Having *all* sufficiency”—perfect competence to meet just the present emergency. A sufficiency, let us mark, absolutely independent of nature’s resources,—a sufficiency beautifully illustrated by “unlearned and ignorant” Peter and John in the presence of the learned Sanhedrim. Let us rejoice and praise God as we trace these three glorious links in this endless chain of blessing. *All* sufficiency.

4. “In *all* things” (or “in every way”). It is no matter from what side the demand may come, this precious grace is there to meet it. Is it to deal with another troubled anxious soul, where human wisdom avails nothing? Divine wisdom and tact shall be supplied. Courage if danger presents itself, or “all

long-suffering with joyfulness" if affliction tear the heart. In *all* things.

5. "May abound to *every* good work." Now filled to the brim, and still connected with an inexhaustible supply, the vessel *must* overflow, and that on every side: no effort, no toil, no weariness, no drawing by mechanical means from a deep well; but the grace-filled heart, abiding (and that is the only condition) in complete dependence upon its God, naturally overflows on every side—to *all* good work.

6. "Being enriched in *every thing*" (we omit the parenthesis, although full of its own divine beauty,) (or, "in every way.") This is in some sort a repetition of No. 5, but goes as far beyond it as the word "enriched" is fuller than the word "sufficient." The latter fills the vessel, as we have said, up to the brim; the former adds another drop, and over it flows. In view of these "exceeding great and precious promises," we may say,—

"Oh wherefore should we do ourselves this wrong
Or others, that we are not always strong?"

since we may be enriched in *all* things.

7. "To *all* bountifulness." This stream of grace is never to stagnate, or it will lose all its character of blessing, as the manna hoarded for a second day "bred worms, and stank." Thus every single Christian becomes a living channel of blessing to all around, and the circle is now completed, by once more returning to the point whence it started,— "Which causeth through us thanksgiving to God," and closes with no weary wail of "All things are full of labor," but joyful songs resound on every side, and at every motion of this circle of blessing ascend "thanksgiving to God." For just exactly the same

full measure is seen in the thanksgiving ascending at the end as in the grace descending in the beginning. There it “abounded,” filling the vessel full till it overflowed in the same measure, “abounding” in blessing to others who needed, and these forthwith pass on the stream in “abounding” thanksgiving to God. The apostle himself, as if he could not suffer himself to be excluded from the circle of blessing, adds his own note at the close with “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” And shall we not too, dear brother or sister now reading these lines, let our feeble voice be heard in this sweet harmony of praise? Has not this contrast between the new song and the old groan, again we may ask, great value?

F. C. J.

(To be continued.)

“CONCERNING THEM THAT SLEEP.”

DEATH is not the normal condition of the child of God. Life—in all its manifestations, both in this world and elsewhere—is what God gives. “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” “In Him we live and move and have our being.” He is the “living God,” and death in itself means only separation from Him. So we read, “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” It is the dark accompanying shadow of sin. “The wages of sin is death.”

We need not remind the reader that the death spoken of in the scriptures quoted is something more than bodily dissolution; nor of the blessed fact, as we shall see later, that, for the child of God, the sting has been taken from death and the victory from the grave. We are simply premising this fact—that

death is an abnormal thing, an interloper, if we may so speak, into God's fair creation where He pronounced all "very good;" and that now for the child of God it is not the final goal toward which he is tending, nor is the state of the blessed dead that in which they will spend eternity.

The "blessed hope" of the believer is *not* to spend a long and useful life in this world, then to lie peacefully down in the grave, and as to his soul, to be in heaven happy forever;—

"An honored life, a peaceful end,
And heaven to crown it all."

Nowhere in the New Testament is death mentioned as the hope of the child of God, or as the inevitable close of his earthly course. He may have a *desire* to depart and be with Christ, as being far better than his present surroundings; he may be both confident and willing to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. But death is not what he looks forward to; rather life, life untrammelled, in its fullness. True he meditates much upon death, but it is the death of his Substitute, who "abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel." He looks back at Calvary, and sees death, *his* death, as he deserved to undergo it, borne by Christ; and now he looks, not at the tomb, but "steadfastly up into heaven" through the vail, which has been rent in twain. He waits, not for death, but for the Lord, who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, who will come in person and take all His redeemed ones up away from even bodily death. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." Even the semblance of death shall not be

tasted. This is the “blessed hope” (not an uncertain thing, but, as being future, something to be looked forward to) which the child of God is privileged now to enjoy.

“But,” it is said, “Christians do die.” Certainly, and as long as the time of Christ’s patience and the long-suffering of God wait, they will continue to do so. But how soon all this may change! Who can say when the Lord will come for His own? His own words are, “Surely I come quickly.” If the adverb at the beginning of that brief sentence establishes the *certainty* of His coming, so the one at the close impresses us with the *nearness* of that coming. Not another saint may fall asleep, not another day may pass, before the “shout” shall be heard, and we shall be “clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.”

And what a blessed hope this is! Can we conceive of any thing which could be added to it which would really increase its brightness? If we know this to be true, let it be our aim to let our lives feel the power and manifest it.

But it is of this intermediate state that we would now speak, in the hope that a repetition of truths familiar perhaps to all, may soothe some grief-burdened heart, for the Lord has sorrowing people here, and few have lived on into maturity some years who have not felt the pang of parting from dear ones, and yearned for true comfort. How good it is that in the precious Word of God we have the amplest comfort. He who is “the Father of mercies and the God of *all* comfort” meeting the mourner, and ready here to “wipe away all tears” for faith, as He will actually do it in the day of His power.

"Absent from the body" gives us the negative side, upon which we will first dwell a little. The body is the mortal, and the only mortal, part of man: "your mortal body" reminds us of the word to Adam, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." He was dust as to his body, not as to the spirit which God breathed into him, and which made man a "living soul." Until sin came in, there was no hint that the body was mortal, and it would never have come under the power of death had man continued unfallen. Sin, and death by sin, is the order, reminding us of the terrible folly of man in departing from the living God,—a folly which God has overruled in grace, and brought in by redemption greater blessings than we lost in Eden. So when we speak of a *mortal* body, we are reminded of the sin that made the body mortal. This is the connection in the words quoted—"Let not sin reign in your mortal body." (Rom. vi. 12.) To be absent, then, from the mortal body means to be absent from the presence of sin. Here we have one of the greatest blessings brought by death. To be sure, even now faith should so enter into the reality of Christ's death that we should "reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." But when a child of God is absent from the body, he no longer *reckons* himself to be dead to sin; he literally is, and so is away from its presence. Apart from Christ's death, by which He "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," it is needless to say that the death of the child of God would give no deliverance. Through grace, the believer may and should enjoy deliverance from the power of sin in this life. But who is there who must not say with James, "In many things, we all offend"? and with Paul "buffet the body and bring it

into subjection,"—by the Spirit mortify its deeds? But at death this is all changed. The body is left, and no longer needs to be watched and kept in subjection. The old nature which lurked in that body, "the flesh," named from its dwelling-place, is laid aside too, and the spirit is at length perfectly free from the power and the presence of sin. To the one who longs for likeness to God, to be absolutely conformed to the image of His Son, what joy does death bring! The world may look upon it with horror, but the believer can say, as one did, "How have I dreaded as an enemy this smiling friend!"

No more sin, no *desire*, or the least motion toward it; that is what the believer gets at death. As the shorter catechism says, "The souls of believers are at death made perfect in holiness;" and while we desire no creed to mould our faith, it is well to recognize the faith of those who wrote that sentence.

But absence from the body suggests other thoughts. The body is our link with this world—a world full of groans and sorrows. If the saint is to "rejoice in the Lord always," he is also sorrowing. God's fair world has become a place of sighs. "The whole creation groaneth;" we, who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan too. Unless we blind our eyes and harden our hearts, there is enough misery here to make the heart ache from sheer pity. Then our individual sorrows—and the heart knoweth its own bitterness,—all these things are voiced in that word, "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." To be absent from the body means to be free from these sorrows. It means to be free from the surroundings of earth and earth's circumstances.

But those who are absent from the body have left

its infirmities and pains behind. It is sad to see the limitations which hamper so many—a frail body, oft-recurring pain and sickness, and the infirmities of old age. To leave the body is to leave all these infirmities and pains; and while we should and do get good out of such trials, what a relief it is to be beyond the need and so beyond the fact of having them!

But we have been only looking at the negative side of death—at what we leave. We come now to dwell upon the positive side—at what we reach. It is summed up in one word—"Present with the Lord." That means every thing. "In Thy presence is *fullness of joy*." Death is a gloomy thing to those here, but to the one who departs it is fullness of joy. Stephen met death by stoning,—that was the earth-side view. He looked up into heaven and "saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." That was the heaven-side view. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"—he is "absent from the body and at home with the Lord." What an exchange! the blessedness of the Lord's presence for the cursings and stones of the Jews. No wonder that he could say, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

Do we know Christ? Then we know something of the blessedness of being with Him. Redemption, as made known by the Spirit, fills the heart with peace and joy. With Christ, its fullness will be more deeply known. The person of the Lord, as known now, is most precious. With Him, He becomes better known, and therefore more deeply loved. The limits here are removed there, and the whole time is taken up with Him. If one hour of communion

here is so sweet that the savor of it lingers, what shall we say of that uninterrupted fellowship with the Son—learning the depths of His love, the wonders of His grace? If it seems a sort of blank to us, does not that tell how little we enjoy Him here? Little wonder was it that Paul, whose whole heart went out in love to Christ, and his whole life in service, could say, “Having a *desire* to depart and be with Christ, which is *far better*.” How such words as those silence at once the suggestion that death is unconsciousness, a sleep of the soul. Would it be far better for Paul, who enjoyed Christ as he did, in the midst of trial, to become unconscious, to be practically extinct? Never. It was far better to die, because he would then be with the One he loved, and away from all else, at leisure to enjoy Him as he sought to enjoy Him here.

And now, as we realize the blessed portion of those that are asleep, can we not give God thanks that they are with the Lord, in heaven, for He is there and they are with Him? As bereaved we mourn, but we are not to sorrow “as others who have no hope.” We can look at death and say, “O death, where is thy sting?” Christ has taken away the sting, which is sin. We can look at the grave and say, “O grave, where is thy victory?” Christ has won the victory, and by His resurrection has left us an *open* grave with the way out. May not all God’s sorrowing people learn to rejoice at the blessing which the sleeping saints enjoy? And would not this spirit of joy and praise be as a tonic to enable them to pick up afresh the duties of this life, and to go on, with firmness and progress, in the path appointed. And it is only a very little while. The

Lord Himself will soon come. There will be no more mourning then; but now is the time of trial and of opportunity, to suffer and to do for Him, who suffered and did so much for us.

"When the weary ones we love
Enter on their rest above;
When their words of love and cheer
Fall no longer on our ear;
Hush! be every murmur dumb,
It is only 'till He come.' "

"THINGS THAT SHALL BE:"

AN EXPOSITION OF REVELATION IV.—XXII.

PART VII. (Chap. xix. 5—xxii.)

THE CONSUMMATION.

Closing Testimonies. (Chap. xxii. 6—21.)

THE series of visions is thus completed. What remains is the emphasizing of its authority for the soul, with all that belongs to Him whose revelation it is, and who is Himself coming speedily. Thus the angel now affirms that "these words are faithful and true:" necessarily so, because of Him whose words they are. "The Lord God of the spirits of the prophets hath sent His angel to show unto His servants things which must soon come to pass." Here we return to the announcement of the first chapter. The book is, above all, a practical book. It is not for theorists or dreamers, but for servants,—words which are to be *kept*, and to have application to their service in the Church and in the world.

The things themselves were soon to come to pass. In fact, the history of the Church, as the opening epistles depict it, could be found imaged, as we see, in the condition of existing assemblies. The seeds of the future

already existed, and were silently growing up, even with the growth (externally) of Christianity itself. As to the visions following the epistles also, from the sixth chapter on, we have acknowledged the partial truth of what is known as the historical fulfillment of these. It is admitted that there has been an anticipative fulfillment in Christian times of that which has definite application to the time of the end, although it is the last only that has been, in general, dwelt upon in these pages.

Historicalists will not be satisfied with such an admission, and refusing on their side (as they mostly do) the general bearing of the introductory epistles upon the history of the Church at large, insist upon such affirmations as the present as entirely conclusive that the historical interpretation is the only true one. In fact, the view which has been here followed brings nearest to those in the apostles' days the things announced, as well as makes the whole book far more fruitful and important for the guidance of servants. For how many generations must they have waited before the seals and trumpets would speak to these? And when they did, how much of guidance would they furnish for practical walk? The application of Babylon the great to Romanism is fully accepted, and that of Jezebel in the same way insisted on, so that as to the errors of popery, we are as *protestant* as any, if in the “beasts” of the thirteenth chapter we find something beyond this. But nothing of this could have been intelligible to the saints of the early centuries, while the fulfillment of Ephesus, Smyrna, and even Pergamos, would soon be of the first importance.

“The Lord God of the *spirits* of the prophets”—the reading now generally admitted to be right—emphasizes for us the presence of the living God as what was for these the constant realization, in all the shifting scenes of human history. And so it is for those whose spirit is in harmony with them. God in past history, God in the events happening under our eyes, His judgment there-

fore of every thing, while controlling every thing, for His own glory and for the blessing of His people,—in this respect how blessed to be guided by those wondrous revelations! While the future, to be learnt from the same infallible teaching, is not only that which animates our hopes, but is necessary for the judgment of the present, no less. All lines lead on to the full end, there where the full light gives the manifestation of all.

"And behold, I come quickly." This is for the heart: future as long as we are down here; and yet to govern the present. "Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book."

Here we are warned of the mistakes that may be made by the holiest of men in the most fervent occupation with heavenly things. John falls at the angel's feet to worship him; but the angel refuses it, claiming no higher title than to be a fellow-servant with John himself, with his brethren the prophets, and with those also who keep the words of this book. And he adds, "*Worship God:*"—worship, that is, no creature.

Unlike Daniel's prophecies, the words of the prophecy of this book are not to be sealed up, for the time is near. To the Christian, brought face to face with the coming of the Lord, the end is always near. What time might actually elapse was another question. In fact, some eighteen centuries have elapsed since this was written: but while Daniel was taught to look on through a vista of many generations to the end before him, Christians, taught to be always in an attitude of expectation, have before them no such necessary interval, and are brought into the full light now, though unbelief and wrong teaching may obscure it. But nothing in this way is under a vail, save the moment whose concealment is meant to encourage expectation. How good for us, and fruitful such concealment, may be measured by the goodness and fruitfulness of the expectation itself.

The solemn words are just ready to be uttered which proclaim the close of the day of grace to those who have refused grace. It is just ready to be said, “Let him that doeth unrighteously do unrighteously still; and let the filthy make himself filthy still; and let him that is righteous do righteousness still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still.” And when this applies is shown clearly in the next words, “Behold, I come quickly, and My reward with Me, to render to every one as his work shall be: I, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” The last affirmation here shows the irrevocable character of this judgment. He sums up in Himself all wisdom, all power: “none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?”

The way of life and the way of death are now put in contrast: “Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Here is the condition of blessing stated according to the character of Revelation, in terms that have been used before. Our robes must be washed in the blood of the Lamb, as those of the redeemed multitude in the vision under the seals, in order to be arrayed in the *white* garments that are granted to the Lamb’s wife. A very old corruption in this text is that exhibited in the common version, “Blessed are they that do His commandments;” but which is the true reading ought to be apparent at once. It is not by keeping commandments than any one can acquire a *right* to the tree of life. On the other hand, condemnation is for committed evil: “without are dogs, and sorcerers, and fornicators, and murderers, and idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie.”

Again it is repeated, “I, Jesus, have sent Mine angel to testify these things unto you in the assemblies;” and

then He declares Himself in the two relations among men in which the book has spoken of Him: "I am the Root and the Offspring of David"—the Jewish relation, the divine incarnate King of Israel,—“the bright and Morning Star,”—the object of expectation for the Christian. But immediately He is named—or rather names Himself in this way, the heart of the Bride, moved by the Spirit, awakes: "And the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'" But because it is yet the day of grace, and the Bride is still open to receive accessions it is added, "And let him that heareth say, 'Come!'" And if one answer, "Ah, but my heart is yet unsatisfied," it is further said, "And let him that is athirst come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely."

Blessed is this testimony. The precious gifts of God are not restricted in proportion to their preciousness, but the reverse. In nature, sunlight, fresh air, the water-brooks, things the most necessary, are on that account bestowed freely upon all. And in the spiritual realm there is no barrier to reception of the best gifts, save that which the soul makes for itself. Not only so, but men are urged to come,—to take,—to look,—with no uncertainty of result for those who do so. The stream that makes glad the city of God is poured out for the satisfaction of all who thirst, and will but stoop to drink of it. This is the closing testimony of the gospel in this book, and that with which it is associated adds amazingly to its solemnity.

There is now another warning, neither to add to, nor to take from the words of the prophecy of this book. Scripture has many similar admonitions, but here the penalty is an unutterably solemn one. To him that adds, God shall add the plagues that are written in this book. From him who takes away, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city. Yet men

are now not scrupulous at least to take away many of the words of Scripture, and of Revelation among the rest. Every *word* is claimed here by the Lord Himself for God; and if this is not a claim for verbal inspiration, what is it? As manifestly the closing book of New-Testament scripture, what may we not infer as to the verbal inspiration of other parts? And what shall be the woe of those who dare presumptuously to meddle with that which is the authoritative communication of the mind of God to man? Is it not being done? and by those who own that somewhere at least—and they cannot pretend to know exactly the limit,—Scripture *contains* the Word of God?

This announcement of penalty is Christ's own word: “He who testifieth these things saith, ‘Surely, I come quickly.’” Is it not when His Word is being thus dealt with that we may more than ever expect Himself? When the testimony of Scripture is being invalidated and denied, is it not then that we may most expect the Faithful and True Witness to testify in person? And especially when this arises in the most unlooked for places, and Church-teachers laboriously work out a theology of unbelief?

And the promise abides as the hope of the Church, although it be true that the Bridegroom has tarried, and the virgins have slept! That—true or false—a cry has been raised, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!” is notorious. That many have stirred and taken up the old attitude of expectancy is also true. All these things should surely be significant also. But whatever one's *head* may say,—whatever the doctrine we have received and hold as to the coming of our Lord and Master,—the *heart* of the truly faithful must surely say with the apostle here, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

It is the only response that answers to the assurance

of His love on His departure to the Father: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, ye may be also."

The Lord's coming—the *parousia*—is just the "presence" of the Lord Himself. Nothing short of this could satisfy the hearts of those who looked up after Him, as He ascended with His hands spread in blessing over them; and were reassured by the angels' voices, that this same Jesus would come again. Just in proportion as we too have learnt by the Spirit the power of the love of Jesus, we too shall be satisfied with this, and with this alone. May we learn more deeply what is this cry of the Spirit and the Bride: "Amen, come, Lord Jesus."

F. W. G.

CONTAMINATION.

IT has been long held by farmers that the neighborhood of barberry bushes produces rust in wheat, and science has recently established this opinion—has shown that the well-known orange-red spots so common on the leaves of the barberry, caused by a fungus, develop minute secondary seeds, which appear on the wheat in the shape of rust. A barberry hedge was recently planted on one of the railway embankments in the Cote-d'-Or, in France, when immediately the crops of wheat, rye, and barley in the neighborhood became infested with rust—which was unknown before in the district. The railway company's own commissioners, after investigating the case, admitted that the account of the origin of the disease given by the farmers was correct, and

considered them entitled to compensation. So, also, a species of blight on the pear-tree is closely connected with a glutinous parasite which grows on the juniper.

Analogous to this natural fact is the spiritual one, that "evil communications corrupt good manners." We have a tendency to become like those with whom we associate; and if our friends are tainted with special evil practices, we lie very much at their mercy, if not to ruin us, yet to make us unhappy and sin-stained—to rob us of self-respect, and cloud us with perplexity. Christians are not altogether exempt from the common failing of falling into worldly and not scriptural estimates of men and things—of being misled by the customs of society, and adopting the peculiar conventional code of morality followed by the multitude among whom they live. Instead of giving examples of a higher standard of morality, they descend to the level of the average rate. The evils of the world cleave to them; their very Christianity is infected with worldliness, and thus becomes stunted, diseased, and uninfluential.—(*"The True Vine,"* by Hugh McMillan.)

"LABORERS TOGETHER WITH GOD."

"Take heed"! "Every man's work shall be tried."

WE are laborers together
 In the harvest-field for God;
 Some may plow and some may harrow,
 All may sow the blessed Word;
 'Tis the precious seed that springeth,
 And a plenteous harvest bringeth,—
 'Tis our only weapon: this the Spirit's Word.

He that planteth, he that wat'reth,
Work together, e'en as one;
The reward shall be according
To the work that each hath done.
Let us labor till the reaping,
For the judgment's surely creeping
On poor souls that thro' our efforts might be won.

Through the Spirit's noiseless labor
God is building living stones;
Let us be His willing helpers,
For our work He gladly owns:
We may give out many a warning,—
We can tell of that glad morning
When forever this poor world shall cease its groans.

Let us faint not, nor be weary,
The foundation well is laid,
And we've only to be careful
To build "precious things," He said.
Let us work, then, not for hire,
But with love-constrained desire,
That the Master's last command may be obeyed.

(*Don't forget the closet, brethren,—*
Here is where so many fail!
Need we wonder if we're heavy,
Or our hearts begin to quail?)
Let us pray, then, without ceasing,—
Look to God for the increasing;
Thus, on Him depending, we can never fail.

Then, if courage seem to fail us
With the smallness of our gain,
Just remember, *God works with us,—*
This will soothe all needless pain,
And the glorious harvest-morning
Will reveal (His crown adorning,)
Souls of those we never thought to meet again.

H. McD.

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS;

OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

(Continued from page 153.)

HAVING, then, seen in these first few verses the purpose of the book and the stand-point of the writer, we may accompany him in the details of his search. First he repeats, what is of the greatest importance for us to remember (*v.* 12), "I, the preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem." He would not have us forget that, should he fail in his search for perfect satisfaction, it will not be because he is not fully qualified both by his abilities and his position to succeed. But Infidelity, and its kinsman Rationalism, raise a joyful shout over this verse; for to disconnect the books of the Bible from the writers, whose name they bear, is a long step toward overthrowing the authority of those books altogether. If the believer's long-settled confidence can be proved vain in one point, and that so important a point, there is good "hope" of eventually overthrowing it altogether. So, with extravagant protestations of loyalty to the Scriptures, they, Joablike, "kiss" and "stab" simultaneously, wonderfully manifesting in word and work that dual form of the evil one, who, our Lord tells us, was both "liar and murderer from the beginning." And many thousand professing Christians are like Amasa of old, their ear is well pleased with the fair sound of "Art thou in health, my brother?" and they too take "no heed to the sword" in the inquirer's hand. Judas too, in his day, illustrates strongly that same diabolical compound of "deceit and violence," only the enemy finds no unwary Amasa in Jesus the Lord.

"Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss" tears the vail from him at once ; and in the same way the feeblest believer who abides in Him, is led of that same spirit ; and "good words and fair speeches" do not deceive, nor can betrayal be hidden behind the warmest protestations of affection.

But to return : "How could," cries this sapient infidelity, which to-day has given itself the modest name of "Higher Criticism,"—"how could Solomon say, 'I *was* king,' when he never ceased to be that?" Ah ! one fears if that same Lord were to speak once more as of old, He would again say, "O fools and blind !" For is it not meet that the writer who is about to give recital of his experiences should first tell us what his position *was* at the very time of those experiences? That at the very time of all these exercises, disappointments, and groanings, he *was* still the highest monarch on earth, king over an undivided Israel, in Jerusalem, with all the resources and glories that accompany this high station, pre-eminently fitting *him* to speak with authority, and compelling *us* to listen with the profoundest respect and attention.

Yes, this glorious monarch "gives his heart"—*i.e.*, applies himself with singleness of purpose "to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven." No path that gives the slightest promise of leading to happiness shall be untrodden ;—no pleasure shall be denied, no toil be shirked, that shall give any hope of satisfaction or rest. "This sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith." That is, the heart of man hungers and thirsts, and he *must* search till he does find something to satisfy, and, if, alas !

he fail to find it in "time," if he only drinks here of waters whereof he "that drinks shall thirst again," eternity shall find him thirsting still, and crying for one drop of water to cool his tongue. But then with what bitter despair Ecclesiastes records all these searchings! "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit," or rather, "pursuit of the wind." Exactly seven times he uses this term, "pursuit of the wind," expressing perfect, complete, despairing failure in his quest. He finds things all wrong, but he has no power of righting them; "that which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered." But perhaps we may get the secret of his failure in his next words. He takes a companion or counselor in his search. Again exactly seven times he takes counsel with this companion, "*his own heart*." "I communed with my own heart." That is the level of the book; the writer's resources are all within himself; no light from without save that which nature gives; no taking hold on another, no hand clasped by another. He and his heart are alone. Ah! that is dangerous, as well as dreary work to take counsel with one's own heart. "Fool" and "lawless one" come to their foolish and wicked conclusions there (Ps. xiv. x.); and what else than "folly" could be expected in hearkening to that which is "deceitful above all things"—what else than lawlessness in taking counsel with that which is "desperately wicked"?

Take not, then, for thy counselor "thine own heart," when divine love has placed infinite wisdom and knowledge at the disposal of lowly faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, "who of God is made unto us

wisdom," and "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

But does our Preacher find the rest he desires in the path of his own wisdom? Not at all. "For in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." "Grief and sorrow" ever growing, ever increasing, the further he treads that attractive and comparatively elevated path of human wisdom. Nor has Solomon been a lonely traveler along that road. Thousands of the more refined of Adam's sons have chosen it; but none have gone beyond "the king," and none have discovered any thing in it, but added "grief and sorrow"—sorrowful groan! But the youngest of God's family has his feet too on a path of "knowledge," and he may press along that path without the slightest fear of "grief or sorrow" resulting from added knowledge. Nay, a new song shall be in his mouth, "*Grace and peace shall be multiplied through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.*" (2 Pet. i. 2.) Blessed contrast! "Sorrow and grief" multiplied through growth in human wisdom: "Grace and peace" multiplied through growth in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord!

My beloved reader, I pray you, meditate a little on this striking and precious contrast. Here is Solomon in all his glory, with a brighter halo of human wisdom round his head than ever had any of the children of men. Turn to 1 Kings iv. 29—"And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he

was wiser than all men,—than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman and Chalcol and Darda the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees—from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.” Is it not a magnificent ascription of abounding wisdom? What field has it not capacity to explore? Philosophy in its depths—poetry in its beauties—botany and zoology in their wonders. Do we envy him? Then listen to what his poor heart was groaning all that time. “In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow”! Now turn to *our* portion above the sun—“the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord:” infinitely higher, deeper, lovelier, and more wondrous than the fields explored by Solomon, in constant unfoldings of riches of wisdom; and each new unfolding bringing its own sweet measure of “grace and peace.” Have not the lines fallen to us in pleasant places? Have we not a goodly heritage? Take the feeblest of the saints of God of to-day, and had Solomon in all his glory a lot like one of these?

F. C. J.

(To be continued.)

No one would think of bringing a lighted candle to add brightness to the sun at mid-day; and yet the man who would do so might well be accounted wise, in comparison with him who attempts to assist God by his bustling officiousness.

DAVID AT ZIKLAG ;

OR, THE MINISTRY OF DISAPPOINTMENT.

(1 Sam. xxx.)

THE most faithful servants of God have not been perfect. Moses, the meekest man in all the earth, "spake unadvisedly with his lips." Peter, a truly devoted man, learned from bitter experience that he could put "no confidence in the flesh." David is, in some respects, the most beautiful and striking type we have of Christ in the Old Testament, both in his rejection and his elevation to the throne. In all the time of his persecution by king Saul, he exhibited both a forbearance toward his enemy and a faith in God which are very beautiful. Again and again he refused to take his case in his own hands, but committed all to the One who had called and anointed him.

It is therefore specially painful to see the faith of such an one fail, and to hear him say, *in his heart*, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul : there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines." How prone are God's people to leave His land, the place of His appointment ! A famine drove Abraham into Egypt, where he learned that the path of sight, apparently easier than that of faith, ends in sorrow and shame. Isaac doubtless would have gone the same way, had he not been restrained by a distinct word. Since that day the road from the land into Egypt has been much traveled by the Lord's people, who, under stress of circumstances, have thought to get relief, away from God's path—a sad mistake. No matter what the trial may be, it is light

if we remain in God's place with a good conscience, compared with the sorrow and chastening which accompany departure from Him. Naomi is a striking example of this. "I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty." Ah! how slow we are to realize that perfect love has chosen our path, and that perfect wisdom knows exactly what is best for us.

It was in the face of distinct preservation from the king, and indeed of strange, if but temporary melting on his part, that David made the unbelieving remark we have quoted above. "Then said Saul, 'I have sinned; return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm; because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.'" (1 Sam. xxvi. 21.) If he wanted to walk by sight, here seemed to be a relenting on the part of the king which would for a time, at least, insure him quietness; but unbelief is without reason and once indulged will lead us on in a path farther and farther from that which counts on God alone. And so he finds himself in the land of his and God's enemies whom he had oftentimes met and overcome in battle, but to whom he now goes for protection. Let us not be too severe with him; let us rather remember our own inconsistencies in this very respect, and how they have led us to adopt courses for ourselves which we have condemned in others.

Humanly speaking, it was a wise move on his part, but he had left the place which God had chosen for him, and substituted as a protector, king Achish, of Gath—his name signifying, "truly a man,"—for the living God. And this was the very man who at

the beginning of his rejection had refused shelter to David; before whom he had feigned himself a mad-man, until he rose to the dignity of dependence upon God, and went to the cave of Adullam—his true place.

Now he is back again in the same place, and in what strange inconsistencies is he involved. An enemy to God's enemies he must fight them, but with the courage to do that he at the same time uses deception and fears to acknowledge it to Achish. Strangest of all, he is found in the Philistine army ready to go up to Apheh to take part in battle against king Saul, the Lord's anointed. He who had refused to lift up his hand against the king of Israel is actually now found in the ranks of the enemy, and but for the mercy of God would have been found in that day of Israel's sorrow and humiliation fighting against the very people over whom he had been anointed king, or what would have been also a blot upon his good faith, he would have turned against the Philistines in the day of battle. God does not want His servants to be traitors. He would never have them in such compromising positions that such a thing would be possible.

But the disgrace of fighting in the enemy's ranks is prevented by the Philistines, and, with a vigorous protest of faithfulness to their cause, David is compelled to retire. God in mercy would not let His servant go further in this path of unbelief.

And now begins the chastening which is to bring him back to the simplicity of his confidence in God. He came to Ziklag, the place where his family and possessions were, only to find the city a mass of smoking ruins, and those whom he loved carried

away captive. If he can be willing to go with the enemy, another enemy can come upon him and spoil him. It was no doubt a bitter moment for David. His little all had vanished. "Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept until they had no more power to weep." Ah! now he is beginning to taste the bitterness of being without the protection of God. As a homeless wanderer, pursued like a partridge upon the mountains, despised by the Nabals, who dwelt at ease in the land, he had never known the like of this. But now, under the protection of the king of Gath, and with a city of his own, he learns that without God's shelter he is exposed indeed. In the first shock of disappointment he can only weep: all seems lost. Perhaps we may know from experience something of his gloom. We have been hoarding for many a day to get a little about us, to make a comfortable home it may be, and it is all taken from us. Perhaps it is bereavement that comes, and in the bitterness of the grief all seems to be against us. He is aroused from the lethargy of his grief by the anger of his faithful followers. Those who had been with him in the cave of Adullam, and shared without a murmur, so far as we know, his perils and trials, now speak of stoning him. His troubles accumulate. But this is God's way to bring him back to Himself. And at last we read that he no longer will place himself under human protection—it has sadly failed him. When all things are against him, David's faith comes back,—he turns to the One who had never failed, and from whom he had sadly departed. "But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." Ah! blessed is the trial, no matter how heavy,—precious the disappoint-

ment, no matter how bitter, that can result thus! He is back now to God; and that, for him and for us all, means back in the place of blessing. Better, far better, to be in the midst of the black ruins of Ziklag, surrounded by a threatening mob, than in the ranks of the Philistines fighting against God's beloved people.

Have we, beloved brethren, in any way known what bitter disappointment means? and have we in the midst of it turned to the One who has smitten us, and encouraged ourselves in Him? Then, like David, we can say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; for before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept Thy word."

And how encouraging this is to all who are borne down with great sorrow. Never can it be so great, the disappointment can be never so keen, but we can find relief in God—in the very one who has sent the sorrow upon us. This faith in God, springing up among the ruins of all he had, was a precious and a beautiful thing. It marked a great turning-point in his life.

Nor does it stop here. His next step is, to inquire what can be done. Notice, he does not rush after the enemy who had done the mischief. He first inquires of God in the appointed way, and finds out what must be done. His restless self-confidence has disappeared, his soul is again like a weaned child. God shall now be his guide. Is not this a beautiful lesson? "Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them?" Ah! he is in the right path now; and if he does not move rapidly, he goes surely. Would that we could learn to imitate him! for our efforts to undo the results of our own folly and unbe-

lief are often but a fresh going on in the path which brought the chastening upon us. And this will end only in fresh disappointment. "Be still, and know that I am God" is the word we need to hear, and to let the hand that has smitten us lead us in the plain path that He alone knows. This is most needful, and one of the surest signs that disappointment and sorrow have been blessed to us is, to see this spirit of dependence on God.

And this brings us to the place of victory. This nerves them, weak as they may be, and, with some left behind, to press on after the enemy, to overtake them, and to recover that which had been lost. They are now, too, in a state to enjoy their recovered possessions. They will not be a snare to them. When God takes a thing out of our hands to teach us a lesson we need to learn, He can, after we have learned that lesson, put the thing back in our hands. This He often, not always, does. But faith is now in its right place, and can appreciate recovered blessings, receiving them now from God.

But there is more to see. Only a portion of the men had the strength and energy to follow David over the brook Besor, to overtake and vanquish the spoilers. What about those who "tarried at home"? Pride and selfishness might say that they should not share in the fruits of the victory; but one who had been truly restored in his soul, like David,—who knew what his own failure had been, and how all was due to God alone, would permit no such selfishness. Those who remained at home were to share in the victory. This is true largeness of heart, and always marks one who has learned in God's school. Others may want to stint those with less faith and energy;

he will rejoice to give them what he has gained. It is always comparatively few who do the active work of recovering truth, for instance; but it would be niggardly indeed to deprive any of God's people of the fullest enjoyment of what has been won. We need to remember this. If God has in mercy restored to us any truths of His Word, we owe it to the whole Church to impart it to as many as will receive it. "Feed the flock of God,"—not part of it, but all,—any who will share with us what we have won back from the spoiler, not hampered in our ministry by the fact that "he followeth not with us."

Thus, out of the ruins of Ziklag, and out of the ruins of his testimony, David rises to a brighter faith step by step,—dependence, looking for guidance, energy to pursue the enemy, and largeness of heart to share the spoil with all. So did Gideon in his victory.

The next notice we have of David's movements is, the childlike inquiry, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" He had left them, inquiring of his own heart only; he will only go back as God may guide. And how fitting it is that he should be sent back to Hebron—"communion"! It is ever back to this that God would call us. He would never have us leave the place of communion; and if we do, He would call us back, and we can thank Him well if He gets us back at the cost of disappointment and sorrow.

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

ON THE MORAL GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(Continued from p. 148.)

WE see glories and humilities in our Redeemer: we do indeed; for we need each.

The One who sat on the well in Sychar is He who now sits on high in heaven. He that ascended is He that descended. Dignities and condescensions are with Him;—a seat at the right hand of God, and yet a stooping to wash the feet of His saints here. What a combination! No abatement of His honors, though suiting Himself to our poverty: nothing wanting that can serve us, though glorious and stainless and complete in Himself.

Selfishness is wearied by trespass and importunity. “He will not rise because he is his friend; but because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as much as he needeth.” Thus it is with man, or selfishness; it is otherwise with God, or love; for God in Isaiah vii. is the contradiction of man in Luke xi.

It is the unbelief that would not draw on Him, that refused to ask a blessing, and get it with a seal and a witness that wearied God,—not importunity, but, as I may say, the absence of it. And all this divine blessedness and excellency, which is thus seen in the Jehovah of the house of David in Isaiah vii. reappears in the Lord Jesus Christ of the evangelists, and in His different dealing with weak faith and full faith.

All these things that we are able to discover bespeak His perfections; but how small a part of them do we reach!

We are aware in how many different ways our fellow-disciples try and tempt us, as, no doubt, we do them. We see, or fancy we see, some bad quality in them, and we find it hard to go on in further com-

pany with them. And yet in all this, or in much of it, the fault may be with ourselves, mistaking a want of conformity, of taste or judgment, with ourselves for something to be condemned in them.

But the Lord could not be thus mistaken; and yet He was never "overcome of evil," but was ever "overcoming evil with good,"—the evil that was in them with the good that was in Himself. Vanity, ill-temper, indifference about others and carefulness about themselves, ignorance after painstaking to instruct, were of the things in them which He had to suffer continually. His walk with them, in its way and measure, was a day of provocation, as the forty years in the wilderness had been. Israel again tempted the Lord, I may say, but again proved Him. Blessed to tell it!—they *provoked* Him, but by this they *proved* Him. He suffered, but He took it patiently. He never gave them up. He warned and taught, rebuked and condemned them, but never gave them up. Nay, at the end of their walk together He is nearer to them than ever.

Perfect and excellent this is, and comforting to us. The Lord's dealing with the conscience never touches His heart. We lose nothing by His rebukes. And He who does not withdraw His heart from us when He is dealing with our conscience is quick to restore our souls, that the conscience, so to express it, may be enabled soon to leave his school, and the heart find its happy freedom in His presence again. As expressed in that hymn, which some of us know,—

"Still sweet 'tis to discover,
If clouds have dimmed my sight,
When passed, Eternal Lover,
Toward me, as e'er, Thou'rt bright."

And I would further notice, that in the characters

which in the course of His ministry He is called to take up (it may be for only an occasion, or a passing moment), we see the same perfection, the same moral glory, as in the path He treads daily. As, for instance, that of a Judge, as in Matt. xxiii., and that of an Advocate or Pleader in Matt. xxii. But I only suggest this: the theme is too abundant. Every step, word, and action carries with it a ray of this glory; and the eye of God had more to fill it in the life of Jesus than it would have had in an eternity of Adam's innocence. It was in the midst of our moral ruin Jesus walked; and from such a region as that He has sent up to the throne on high a richer sacrifice of sweet-smelling savor than Eden, and the Adam of Eden, had it continued unsoiled forever, would or could have rendered. *Time made no change in the Lord.* Kindred instances of grace and character in Him, before and after His resurrection, give us possession of this truth, which is of such importance to us. We know what He is this moment and what He will be forever from what he has already been—in character as in nature—in relationship to us as well as in Himself—"the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." The very mention of this is blessed. Sometimes we may be grieved at changes, sometimes we may desire them. In different ways we all prove the fickle, uncertain nature of that which constitutes human life. Not only circumstances, which are changeful to a proverb, but associations, friendships, affections, characters, continually undergo variations which surprise and sadden us. We are hurried from stage to stage of life; but unchilled affections and unsullied principles are rarely borne along with us, either in ourselves or our companions. But Jesus

was the same after His resurrection as He had been before, though late events had put Him and His disciples at a greater distance than companions had ever known or could ever know. *They* had betrayed their unfaithful hearts, forsaking Him and fleeing in the hour of His weakness and need; while *He* for their sakes had gone through death—such a death as never could have been borne by another, as would have crushed the creature itself. They were still but poor feeble Galileans,—He was glorified with all power in heaven and on earth.

But these things worked no change; “nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,” as the apostle speaks, could do that. Love defies them all, and He returns to them the Jesus whom they had known before. He is their companion in labor after His resurrection,—nay, after His ascension, as He had been in the days of His ministry and sojourn with them. This we learn in the last verse of St. Mark. On the sea, in the day of Matt. xiv., they thought that they saw a spirit, and cried out for fear; but the Lord gave them to know that it was He Himself that was there, near to them, and in grace, though in divine strength and sovereignty over nature. And so in Luke xxiv., or after He was risen, He takes the honeycomb and the fish, and eats before them, that with like certainty and ease of heart they might know that it was He Himself. And He would have them handle Him, and see; telling them that a spirit had not flesh and bones as they might then prove that He had.

In John iii. He led a slow-hearted Rabbi into the light and way of truth, bearing with him in all patient grace. And thus did He again in Luke xxiv.,

after that He was risen, with the two slow-hearted ones who were finding their way home to Emmaus.

In Mark iv. He allayed the fears of His people ere He rebuked their unbelief. He said to the winds and the waves, "Peace: be still," before He said to the disciples, "How is it that ye have no faith?" and thus did He as the risen One in John xxi. He sits and dines with Peter in full and free fellowship, as without a breach in the spirit, ere He challenges him and awakens his conscience by the words, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?"

The risen Jesus who appeared to Mary Magdalene, the evangelist takes care to tell us, was He who in other days had cast seven devils out of her—and she herself knew the voice that then called her by her name, as a voice that her ear had long been familiar with. What identity between the humbled and the glorified One,—the Healer of sinners and the Lord of the world to come! How all tell us that, in character as in divine personal glory, He that descended is the same also that ascended! John, too, in company with his risen Lord, is recognized as the one who had leaned on His bosom at the supper. "I am Jesus," was the answer from the ascended place—the very highest place in heaven—the right hand of the throne of the majesty there, when Saul of Tarsus demanded, "Who art Thou, Lord?" (Acts ix.) And all this is so individual and personal in its application to us. It is our own very selves that are interested in this. Peter, for himself, knows his Master, the same to him before and after the resurrection. In Matt. xvi. the Lord rebukes him, but shortly after takes him up to the hill with Him with as full freedom of heart as if nothing had happened. And so with

the same Peter,—in John xxi. he is again rebuked. He had been busy, as was his way, meddling with what was beyond him. “Lord, what shall this man do?” says he, looking at John,—and his Master has again to rebuke him—“What is that to thee?” But again, as in the face of this rebuke, sharp and peremptory as it was, the Lord immediately afterward has him, together with John, in His train, or in His company up to heaven. It was a *rebuked* Peter who had once gone with the Lord to the holy mount; and it is a *rebuked* Peter, the same rebuked Peter, who now goes with the Lord to heaven,—or, if we please, to the hill of glory, the mount of transfiguration, a second time.*

Full indeed of strong consolation is all this. This is Jesus our Lord,—the same yesterday, to-day, and forever,—the same in the day of His ministry, after His resurrection, now in the ascended heavens, and so forever; and as He sustains the same character, and approves Himself by the same grace after as before the resurrection, so does He redeem all His pledges left with His disciples.

Whether it be on His own lips or on the lips of His angels, it is still now as then—since He rose as before He suffered, “Fear not:” He had spoken to His disciples before of giving them *His* peace, and we find He does this afterward in the most emphatic manner. He pronounces peace upon them in the day of John xx.; and having done so, shows them His hands and His side; where, as in symbolic language, they might read their title to a peace wrought out and purchased for them by Himself,—His peace, entirely His own,

* Some seem to judge that it was deep love in Peter to John that led him to ask the Lord about him. I deny that.

as procured only by Himself, and now theirs by indefeasible, unchangeable title.

In earlier days the Lord said to them, “Because I live, ye shall live also;” and now in risen days, in the days of the risen Man, in possession of victorious life, He imparts that life to them in the most full and perfect measure of it, breathing on them, and saying, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”

The world was not to see Him again, as He had also said to them; but *they* were to see Him. And so it comes to pass. He was seen of them for forty days, and He spake to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. But this was all in secret: the world has not seen Him since the hour of Calvary, nor will they till they see Him in judgment.

J. G. B.

(*To be continued.*)

“WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM.”

ONE more precious fact,—“We know that when He shall appear, we shall be *like Him*; for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 Jno. iii. 2.) What a destiny! to be like Him,—in the full image of the heavenly Man in glory—holy, pure, incorruptible!

We are now accepted in the Beloved,—the whole value of His person and work reckoned to us; reckoned dead with Him, and risen in Him, one with Him. But actually and everlastingly to be like Him! Do not our souls long for this? and can we not say, “As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness”? But, oh, most wondrous fact, is not this the language of Christ Himself? So really we are one with Him

that His own resurrection was but the first-fruits. And it will be when His body, the Church, raised from the dust, or changed in a moment, and the millions of the redeemed meet Him in His own likeness, then shall He see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; sweetly shall we share His joy.

"He and I, in that bright glory *one deep joy* shall share:
Mine, to be forever with Him; His, that I am there."

From eternity has He looked forward to that moment, now so near, when the bride shall be presented to Himself; and when it comes, do we not hear Him up there in the heavens saying, "Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, . . . Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away"? And again: "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee." (Song ii. 10-13.) The Holy Ghost must use the sweetest poetry to express the heart of Christ.

(*Selected, E. F. B.*)

"THE WELLS OF SALVATION."

"With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." (Is. xii. 3.)

THE verse preceding reads, "Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is become my strength and song; He also is become my salvation;" then it is added, "therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

This is a good word for faith to start out upon. The "wells of salvation" are the Scriptures, clearly, since in the Scripture water is often used as a symbol of the Word of God.

This is a millennial song, this twelfth chapter of Isaiah. "All things of God" in heaven and on earth. The glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. As in the days of Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan the cloud covered them, and on the mount of transfiguration the cloud covered them, so in millennial days will the cloud of glory cover the earth. See Is. iv. 5—"And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defense"—[*"for from above, the glory shall be for a defense."* marg.]

"And this shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." The marginal reading makes it clearer, and is the correct reading, no doubt.

And this is still more clearly seen when traced as looked at in connection with the deliverance out of Egypt. See Ex. viii. 22, 23—"And Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven; and there was a darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days; but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings."

Now to the Egyptians, this was a darkness which they could not light up. Ordinarily they could light up their darkness. For seventy-two hours, day or night, they were bound by this spell of darkness—no man moved out of his place; but the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. What, then, do you suppose was the character of this light in the houses of the Hebrews? Was it any thing which

they had produced by their own means? I think not; but a miraculous light,—a light which God gave, in contrast with the darkness given to the Egyptians. (Comp. Ex. xiv. 19, 20.) The Egyptians had a darkness which they could not light up, and the Hebrews had a light which they could not put out. Thank God! and at the appointed hour, and at the given word, this light led each family out of their dwellings into their proper places in the ranks of that wonderful procession of many miles in length.

Nor was it a mob, without order and arrangement, that came up "five in a rank," in battle-array, out of the land of Egypt. Six hundred thousand soldiers and their accompanying families, with flocks and herds—a mighty host—humanly speaking, an unmanageable multitude—were led without disorder through the Red Sea, and safely brought to the other shore to sing their song of deliverance.

And this is not a parable, but a matter of history;—typical as to practical lessons for us, no doubt, but real, actual facts of history, the "higher critics" to the contrary notwithstanding. Israel in their Egyptian bondage was a reality. Moses, under God, was their deliverer—a real and a true man, and *a man of God* in all that this word comprehends.

If any part of this can be gainsaid, then all of it can be gainsaid, and the whole book may be cast away as a deception and a fraud; for Christ and His apostles give their most absolute sanction to Moses and the prophets; and if Christ and His apostles are rejected, we have no revelation of God, and are thrown back into absolute atheism—no God. And can we consent to this? By no means, thank God! For all that the higher critics can say is, that *they*

don't know! while we can say that WE DO KNOW. Like the man in the ninth of John, when his eyes were opened, he could say, “*One thing I know!*” And the testimony of one man who does know is to be received, while the know-nothings are not received.

It reminds one of the man who was brought before a justice for stealing, and one witness was brought who testified that he saw the theft. “But,” said the defendant, “I can bring a dozen men who will say they did not see me.” So it is with these wise men, these learned professors of agnosticism—know-nothingism; their wisdom proves their folly, and this, again, substantiates the Word of God. For God has said, “I will confound the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

Taking them on their own ground, they have no revelation of God,—hence, no knowledge of God, and no God. While the simplest and weakest believer in all the world can understand how it is and why it is that *these wise men* (?) don't know. They have thrown away the key of knowledge—Christ, inasmuch as they reject God's testimony about His Son through Moses and the prophets, since Moses and the prophets testify of Him. They stand or fall together. But, thank God! they stand, while the wise men go down, like the fire and brimstone upon Sodom, to be engulfed in the flame which their own wisdom has kindled. They do not like to think of hell now. Will they like it any better when they get there? They prefer great happiness in judging God's Word now? Will they be as happy when God's Word judges them for this contempt of Moses and the prophets?

But what a contrast to all this human emptiness is the fullness of God's precious Word, those wells that never run dry. "With joy,"—when the poor wise man and his day have passed,—with joy shall we drink of those wells. Let it be so even now. Those wells are open, and while Philistines may try to choke them, let it be our joy to open them, and to drink deeply ourselves and give also to the thirsting multitudes about us.

C. E. H.



CURRENT EVENTS.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND PROFESSOR BRIGGS.

THE action of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, held at Washington during the latter part of May, is of such importance that it well merits a notice in these pages. For the question raised was not one which affected the denomination as such, but the whole professing church. It was a question touching the very foundations of Christianity, and therefore the importance of the answer to that question reached out beyond the bounds of the denomination.

It should be a matter of unfeigned and hearty thanksgiving that so clear, unequivocal and decisive a result should have been reached. It was a contest where were ranged on the one side learning, influence, wealth and the prestige of a victory in the Presbytery of New York; on the other side was the conviction that the Word of God was more precious than the best man had to offer, and its integrity, all-

sufficiency, and infallibility must be maintained at all costs.

The question came before the General Assembly in the form of an appeal from the minority of the Presbytery where Dr. Briggs had been tried and acquitted, largely with the help of those who, though differing from him, would for the sake of peace, retain him in the church. A very significant feature was the effort of Dr. Briggs to get the assembly to refuse to entertain this appeal. And this point was argued with all the subtlety of a lawyer. The reasons urged were purely technical, and even the adherents of the professor would be forced to admit that he did it merely to gain time. If the appeal were thrown out and the case sent back to the Synod, another year would be gained in which to sow diligently the seeds of infidelity broadcast in the church. But what can be said for the uprightness of one who would thus seek as a man of the world, while admitting the facts of the case—that he held and taught the doctrines as charged—to deliberately prevent, on technical ground, a decision being reached on them? But there was a determination on the part of many that this state of things should continue no longer; and while desiring to be perfectly fair to Professor Briggs they would yield no longer to delay. So the case was brought up for trial

Professor Briggs was charged with holding and teaching doctrines contrary to the standards of the Presbyterian Church and (what is far more important) to the word of God. These doctrines may be grouped under three general heads.

I. As to the Scriptures: he denied the Mosaic au-

thorship of the Pentateuch; that David wrote many of the psalms ascribed to him, or Isaiah the latter part of the prophecy called by his name. In short, he tore apart, mutilated and remodeled according to his own theory the greater part of the Old Testament. History, ordinances and commandments were in this way altered to suit his theory and the dates of the Mosaic writings, which according to him Moses never saw, changed to the time of Ezra.

Growing out of this mutilation of the form of Scripture was a denial of its verbal inspiration. Indeed this was a necessary conclusion from such premises. For his theory of authorship was formed on supposed conflicting statements in the books—one or both of which must have been incorrect. The Bible according to him was not infallible in all things—only, as the Romanists claim for the Pope, in matters of faith and practice. The jots and tittles were full of blemishes and errors, according to him; and Christ's words, that the Scriptures cannot be broken, were virtually contradicted.

It is needless to dwell on the effect of all this. It is infidelity pure and simple, no matter how concealed for the time by a seeming piety and desire for the truth. It begins with taking away the foundations of the faith, by denying that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The evil done by the holders of such views cannot be estimated. Christ said of Moses, "He wrote of Me," these men say he did not—some one else wrote. Christ said, "but if ye believe not *his* writings how shall ye believe my words?"—a question which might well be pressed home upon those who in the pride of higher criticism are fast becoming deniers of Christ; for it will come to that.

II. The second doctrine was that which co-ordinated the Bible, reason and the Church as fountains of divine authority. Some men found God through the Bible and the doctrines of grace; others, differently constituted found him through the church, its authority and ordinances; (Cardinal Newman was given as an illustration of this class;) and others found God neither through the Bible nor through the church but through reason. Christ is left out. His words "No man can come unto the Father but by Me," are not true. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" is answered in the affirmative, and indeed every landmark of Christianity is removed.

If Cardinal Newman found true peace in his soul it was through the Word of God, even if dimly seen, and not through the authority of the church of Rome. And so with every other man. We can readily understand how one who begins by invalidating Scripture can go on to associate with it, as of equal authority, the professing church and man's finite reason.

III. The third doctrine was that of progressive sanctification after death. Professor Briggs held that at death the work of sanctification, begun by regeneration, went on until it was completed at the resurrection. The close resemblance to the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory strikes one. Coupled with it he has, by misinterpreting the passage which speaks of Christ preaching to the spirits in prison, given some general idea that such men as Paul are now employed in the work of enlightening those who die not fully sanctified, and this work goes on to the resurrection! We must ask, Does this man call such

teaching Christianity? Where is the all-sufficient completely finished work of Christ? Where the blessed truth of regeneration, with its impartation of a pure—a divine life? Where the death of the old man by the cross? Ah where are any of the soul-emancipating truths if such teaching—a mere refined and cultured heathenism with some Christian names—is to be substituted for the Word of God? We readily admit that knowledge will increase and that there will be growth and progress to all eternity, but that is not what is meant by this teaching.

It was then for the assembly to decide whether one who held and taught such doctrines could be considered a Christian minister, a safe guide from those who contemplated entering the ministry. By an overwhelming vote they decided that he could not; and he was declared suspended. Let all who love God's truth rejoice that in days of looseness and worldliness there remains firmness enough to stand thus; that neither fears of disruption, nor the impressiveness of learning and wealth could make men forget their loyalty to Christ and His Word.

But, the question forces itself upon us,—if we have the inspired Word of God what are we going to do with it? Shall not the answer be, We will not merely stand for it, but we will search it as never before. We will test it and draw from its inexhaustible resources things new and old? We will let its light shine and let it speak for itself before the world. Above all we will *let it rule us*. The Lord grant that those who have been faithful to stand for it, and *all* His dear people, may be able to give some such answer.

WEAKNESS AND IGNORANCE NO BARRIER TO BLESSING.

An Incident in the Life of Jehoshaphat.

(2 Chron. xx. 1-30.)

A STRANGE element of weakness mars the otherwise fine character of Jehoshaphat—a weakness yielded to, and thus proving a most effectual barrier to blessing. Beginning his reign with evident purpose of heart to walk in God's ways, he solidified the kingdom of Judah, and strengthened it both materially and spiritually. He sent out Levites and priests who instructed the people out of the law. He "waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles, and cities of store. And he had much business in the cities of Judah: and the men of war, mighty men of valor were in Jerusalem." The fear of God was upon the surrounding nations preventing them from attacking the king. Thus, though shorn of the glory of Solomon's day, when all Israel was one, it was again true there was "neither adversary, nor evil occurrent."

With all quiet within and without, with no need to tempt him, Jehoshaphat joined affinity with Ahab, and opened the door for all the entangling alliances which were so disastrous during and after his reign; for to this union may be traced largely the subsequent idolatry of the royal house of Judah, while the murderess Athaliah and the vengeance of Jehu were alike inflictions for and results of this mixture of darkness with light.

He must go with king Ahab to war in face of the solemn warning of the only prophet who could or dared tell the truth—a prophet whom he himself had called for—and was only kept from the doom of the

wicked king of Israel through God's mercy, reminding us of Lot's escape from Sodom. Later enterprises of a similar character were engaged in, showing that the root of weakness was never fully judged; and so this otherwise good and devoted king left a very crooked path for his successors to walk in.

For this reason too the matter before us is only an *incident* in his life. It did not give character to the whole, but stands out in contrast with a great part of it.

There can be no doubt that the combined attack of Moab and Ammon was a distinct chastening for his connection with Ahab. Until that time, the fear of God hindered the enmity of these nations. On his return from the campaign to Ramoth-gilead, he met with a solemn reproof from Jehu the son of Hanani, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." (Chap. xix. 2.) There is at the same time a word of approval for the measure of uprightness found in him, which, with continued faithfulness in the internal affairs of the kingdom, foreshadowed tender dealing even in the affliction. But nothing can avert that chastisement. How in all this we see the character of God manifest! He must reprove unfaithfulness, but He is "not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward His name." (Heb. vi. 10.) He does not love to write bitter things against us; He does love to record the good He can find. His holiness compels Him to send chastening, that we might be partakers of that holiness; but His love is ever ready to come to the succor of His people when chastened.

So the enemy comes in like a flood, and if Jehosha-

phat wants war, he shall have it to the full. It was his own choosing. If we are in grievous trial, brought upon us through our unfaithfulness, let us not be surprised, still less let us complain. Let us rather learn from the man before us, for now he reads us a precious lesson.

“It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them others besides the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle.” Moab and Ammon were the children of Lot's shame, marking the depth to which a child of God may fall who forsakes the separate place marked out by grace for faith. Their names describe and interpret them. Moab—“seed of a father;” Ben-Ammi “son of my people.” They represent the fruits of *self*, acting upon and occupied with itself. An intenser self—or flesh, which is the same—is the result. So if Lot was a neutral, a trifler and loiterer in the enemy's country, these his offspring are the pronounced enemies, with nothing but evil in them. “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever.” (Deut. xxiii. 3.) If Jehoshaphat had acted as a neutral, he must feel the power of the fruits of neutralism. If we step aside and hold intercourse with God's enemies, we must feel the power of those “fleshly lusts which war against the soul;” of that “carnal mind which is enmity against God.” Moab and Ammon then seem to represent more than mere outward enmity; they were *related* to Israel. So in our own history, there are spiritual foes outside of ourselves, and others as it were related to us—fruits of our own folly and un-

belief. It is these who come up to overwhelm us when we have departed from that path of separation which is the only path of peace or power.

There were others joined with these, as Satan knows how and when to marshal his forces and to league even opposing interests against his one object of hatred. So that Jehoshaphat might have said, "They have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against Thee: the tabernacles of Edom and the Ishmaelites; of Moab and the Hagarenes: Gebal and Ammon and Amalek: . . . they have holpen the children of Lot." (Ps. lxxxiii. 5-8.) Our enemies rarely come single handed. The Corinthian saints were beset not merely by the pride of party strife, but by a carnality of walk and a looseness of doctrine that were simply appalling.

No wonder that in the face of such a host Jehoshaphat was filled with fear. But that fear drove him where prosperity it seems could not hold him, into the presence of God. "He set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah." "Pride goeth before destruction," and faith is seen in fear. "Noah *moved with fear* prepared an ark." It is no sign of faith to see one unexercised by the presence of spiritual foes, especially if brought upon him as a result of his own course. "Blessed is the man that feareth always." One of the saddest signs of the day is this lack of fear. The powers of darkness have well-nigh overwhelmed the professing church, but where is that fasting and seeking the Lord which we see in Jehoshaphat? In place of that how often is the reverse seen—human expedients and self-complacency.

Gathered together and humbled before Him the men of Judah lay the whole case before God. They tell Him of His absolute power as Creator (*v.* 6.) They remind Him of His covenant relationship with Israel and how He gave them the land (*v.* 7.) They remind Him of the sanctuary where His name had been placed, and of the promise of "help from the sanctuary" in the "day of trouble," (*v.* 8, 9.) The fact of the present attack is then laid before Him, and the prayer closes with these words—owning their helplessness, but holding fast to His power:—"We have no might against this great company that cometh against us: neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee." (*v.* 12.)

How beautiful is this attitude of confessed weakness and ignorance! "All Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones and their wives, and their children." Utterly weak they are, but who dare touch them? They know not what to do, where to go; but their cause is in other hands. "Be not afraid or dismayed by reason of this great multitude,"—they get an answer from God Himself through His servant—"for the battle is not yours but God's." They have but to go to meet the foe, and stand still and see God work for them, as at the Red Sea. And is not the same path of victory open for us? If in utter weakness, and ignorance of what to do, we but cast ourselves in complete self-abandonment upon God, how soon would we learn that He would undertake for us. He would meet our enemies and we would need but to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord with us."

Do we believe these things? Will we act upon them? Will you, child of God, well-nigh over-

whelmed by the enemy, with no strength and at a loss which way to turn—will you, in confessed weakness, let God's power work for you? Will you, feeble company of God's saints, that seem a target for Satan, with weakness within and scoffs without—will you stand before God and let your weakness speak for you? Oh! what a place of power is this! Creature-resources are swept aside and the living God goes before His people. No wonder that a band of singers is put in the forefront of the battle. "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary and Israel his dominion. The sea saw it and fled: Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams, the little hills like lambs. What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan that thou wast driven back? . . . Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob." (Ps. cxiv.)

God Himself—"The Lord is a man of war"—was the One who was to fight their battle and win their victory. In the majestic sixty-eighth psalm, we have very much the same ring of victory that we can well believe sounded in the hearts of Jehoshaphat's host. "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let them also that hate Him flee before Him . . . Sing unto God, sing praises to His name: extol Him that rideth upon the heavens by His name Jah, and rejoice before Him. . . Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil. . . The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after."

Two subjects formed the theme of the praises of the people—"the beauty of holiness," and "His

mercy endureth forever." The first celebrates what God is; the second His acts toward His people. The beauty of holiness—in God it all centered: glimpses of it might be seen in His servants but its fulness and symmetry could only be found in Himself. For us who know Him in His Son; who do not see His "back parts" as even Moses was only privileged to do; but who behold "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"—for us how much this beauty of holiness should mean. So too "His mercy endureth forever" means so much more for us than it could possibly for that company. For them it was a refrain that could be placed after the mention of each act of His power, from creation to the victories that put them in possession of their land. (Ps. cxxxvi.) For us it more particularly means the celebration of that redemption which found us lost, away from God and will not cease to act until we are placed in glory with Christ. Oh! how much does that mean for us—"His mercy endureth forever!" This then is the song with which we face the enemy, and in anticipation celebrate a victory yet to be won; in reality however already won—the person and the work of Christ. "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Is this the spirit in which we go forth for the conflicts which are pressed upon us? Then victory is ours. How simple this is; to the world so simple as to be foolish; but to faith a blessed secret of power.

Let us remember that a sense of helplessness and ignorance preceded the song of praise. There was the renunciation of self—no thought of turning to Ahab's house or elsewhere. "Give us help from

trouble, for vain is the help of man." "Our eyes are upon *Thee*."

How complete the victory was! The patched up truce between hostile tribes was forgotten; and the hidden evil that lurked in all their hearts, ("hateful and hating one another") turned their swords against one another, and God's people had only to see their enemies slaughtered without lifting an arm themselves. They only followed after to take the spoils. For such victories mean great spoil. If we are brought to the end of our strength and cast upon God and thus go to meet our enemy, we have won a victory that will yield great results; we will have indeed rich spoil. The experience gained, the reality of God's presence, the blessedness of depending upon Him—these and many other results will make our place of victory a valley of Berachah indeed—a valley of blessing. Fresh praises will burst from our hearts. We will settle down to a quiet which none can disturb; it will be "He" that "giveth quietness."

Let us remember then, if we are utterly weak, if we know not which way to turn—these things, so far from depressing us, should, if used aright, give us confidence of victory. If they but lead us unto God it will be said of us that we were "out of weakness made strong."

NOT MY WILL, BUT THINE.

HAVE it Thy way, dear Lord;
For long I sought but mine,
Yet craved Thy help and blessing in a walk
That neither came from nor yet led to Thee.
But years have rolled around,

Dear Lord,"

Dear Lord."

(*Selected.*)

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS:

OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

(Continued from page 173.)

CHAP. II.

THE wise man, having found that wisdom brought with it but increased sorrow, turns to the other side—to all those pleasures that the flesh, as we speak, enjoys. Still, he gives us, as in chap. i., the result of his search before he describes it, “I said in my heart, ‘Go to now ; I will prove thee [*i. e.*, I will see if I cannot satisfy thee,] with mirth ; therefore enjoy pleasure : ’ and behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, ‘it is mad ; ’ and of mirth, ‘what doeth it ? ’ ” For he now has tried wine, the occupation of laying out of vineyards, gardens, parks, the forming of lakes, and the building of houses, all filled without stint, with every thing that sense could crave, or the soul of man could enjoy. The resources at His command are practically limit-

less and so he works on and rejoices in the labor, apparently with the idea that now the craving within can be satisfied, now he is on the road to rest. Soon he will look round on the result of all his work, and be able to say, "All is very good ; I can now rest in the full enjoyment of my labor and be satisfied." But when he does reach the end, when every pleasure tried, every beauty of surrounding created, and he expects to eat the fruit of his work, instantly his mouth is filled with rottenness and decay. "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do ; and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit ; and there was no profit under the sun." Thus he groans again : a groan that has been echoed and re-echoed all down the ages from every heart that has tried to fill the same void by the same means.

Ah ! wise and glorious preacher, it is a large place thou art seeking to fill. "Free and boundless its desires." Deeper, wider, broader than the whole world, which is at thy disposal to fill it. And thou mayest well say, "What can the man do that cometh after the king ?" for thou hadst the whole world and the glory of it at thy command in thy day, and did it enable thee to fill those "free and boundless desires" ? No, indeed. After all is cast into that hungry pit, yawning and empty it is still. Look well on this picture, my soul ; ponder it in the secret place of God's presence, and ask Him to write it indelibly on thy heart that thou forget it not. Then turn and listen to this sweet voice : "If any man thirst" (and what man does not ?) "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." Thirst not only quenched, but water to spare for other thirsting ones—the void not only filled, but running over with a constant flow of blessing. Who can express the glories of that contrast!

Pause, beloved reader; turn your eyes from the page and dwell on it in thy spirit a little. What a difference between "*no profit under the sun*" and "*never thirst*"!—a difference entirely due simply to coming to Him—Jesus. Not a coming once and then departing from Him once more to try again the muddy, stagnant pools of this world: no, but to pitch our tents by the palm-trees and the springing wells of Christ's presence, and so to drink and drink and drink again of Him, the Rock that follows His people. But is this possible? Is this not mere imaginative ecstasy, whilst practically such a state is not possible? No, indeed; for see that man, with all the same hungry longings of Solomon or any other child of Adam; having no wealth, outcast, and a wanderer without a home, but who has found something that has enabled him to say, "*I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.*"

What, then, is the necessary logical deduction from two such pictures but this: The Lord Jesus infinitely surpasses all the world in filling the hungry heart of man.

Look, oh my reader, whether thou be sinner or saint, to Him—to Him alone.

F. C. J.

(To be continued.)



CURRENT EVENTS.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

IN ITS APPLICATION TO THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

(Daniel v.)

[No apology can be needed for putting forth at this time a reprint of this tract, from the pen of a servant of the Lord now gone to be with the One who loved him, and whom he loved.

The tract was originally written to call attention to what was being made manifest of the world's tendencies at the Great Exhibition in London (1851). That the "World's Fair," now opened to the public, is a great advance on the original needs no proof, and the principles and truths set forth in this tract are of increasing importance as the end draws near. No one doubts that the world has advanced with rapid strides since 1851; but in *what* as to real moral value? Certainly not in peace and order, but assuredly in the reverse of all this, and of all that is estimable.

The growling of the storm soon to burst upon a deceived world, when the Lamb in the midst of the throne takes the seven-sealed book of judgment out of the hand of the thrice-holy God, may almost be heard: whilst faith looks with increased longing for the One whose promise is, "Behold, I come quickly."

May the reader of these pages be able to say unfeignedly, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

If this tract is used of the Lord to help some of His beloved people, who may have been carried away by the infectious spirit of the age, to discern the path of separation that befits them, the object of its re-issue will be attained.—*R. T. G.*]

WHILE Jeremiah was left at Jerusalem to witness the course of moral corruption there, and to warn of coming judgments, and while Ezekiel was among the remnant in the place of discipline or of righteousness on the river Chebar, Daniel is set among the Gentiles, even at Babylon, to learn the history and the ways of the Gentile, or the world.

We may see in this his first six chapters, which consti-

tute the first part of the book. In chap. i. we see the Gentile, or the world, set up. Then, in chap. ii., we get the same system—the world, in its political career onward to the kingdom, figured in the great image, seen in all its parts, from its head of gold to its toes of clay-iron; and judged, in the appointed hour, by the stone which becomes a mountain, to occupy the scene of power all the world over with an untransferable kingdom. Then, in the four following chapters, the stories of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius give us the moral course of the world. In Nebuchadnezzar, we get a persecuting power, connected with human religion or idolatry. The king sets up an image and demands the worship of it on pain of the fiery furnace. The righteous refuse and suffer. In Belshazzar, we get the easy, worldly, self-indulgent thing, with contempt of religion. The king makes a feast, worshiping all that which ministered to his pleasures. The righteous are utter strangers to it all. In Darius we get a persecuting power again, but it is in connection with self-exaltation. The king makes an interdict, that none are to be treated as God but himself, for so many days, on pain of the lion's den. The righteous again refuse and suffer.

These are plain and sure distinctions in the progress of Gentile iniquity. And it may strike us, I judge, very clearly that we are at present rather in the day of Belshazzar. Persecution and idol-service gave character to the preceding day, and persecution and the deification of man to the day which followed; but all was easy indifference, with thorough satisfaction in the present things of the world, in the day of Belshazzar. Refusal and consequent suffering form the path or history of the righteous in the times of the idolatrous, persecuting Nebuchadnezzar, and of the self-exalting, persecuting Darius; but in the times of Belshazzar, perfect and

thorough separation is the place of the saints of God.

There is a voice for us in all this. Daniel is not seen at the feast. And there is one, though not in his strength yet much in his spirit, who is absent also—the queen, the king's mother. The king is ignorant of the man of God who was then in his dominions. He is also unmindful of the doings of God which had been in the same dominions in the days of his father. But the queen has recollections and knowledge of these things, and she is a stranger to his feast.

Is not the question, then, with us to be this : Who is the separated one now ? Who is going to the king's feast ? or who, in the light of the Lord, is separated from it ? The present is an easy, self-indulgent, worldly moment. The gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of wood, and of iron are praised. All the capabilities in the world to make a feast are produced, and displayed and gloried in. Social accomodation and social delights are the great object. Man's works, the fruit of his skill and the resources of his country, adorn and furnish the scene, and are the host of the feast, that which gathers and entertains. Man is providing the joy of this awful hour in the world's history—awful indeed, not in the judgments or sorrows which are upon it, but in the moral principles which are quickening it. The captivity of Zion was heedlessly forgotten by Belshazzar, and the vessels of God's temple were profaned. The operations of His hands were not considered, but the wine and the tabret were in his feast. So now ; the rejection of Christ is by common consent forgotten, that man may meet his fellow, greet him with a common joy and with a common welcome, because they are all of one earth, of the same world, of kindred flesh and blood ; and all God's claims on His elect and testimony against the world are thrown

together, as what for a season must be passed by till the feast-day is kept.

Where, then, again I ask, is the separated one? Where is Daniel? Where is the king's mother? The feast does not attract either of them, though they may be in different measures of strength. Daniel knew the character of it before the judgment of it was pronounced. He does not wait for the fingers of the man's hand to put him into his place in relation to it. He is not moved by the mysterious writing on the wall. Sudden destruction, as a thief in the night, does not come upon him. He and his companion, though "a weaker vessel," are, in the spirit of their minds, in the place from whence these fingers were sent—they were "children of light and children of the day." The judgment upon the feast had no terror for them, for they were not at the feast. They had judged it already. Their separation was not sleep. "They that sleep sleep in the night, and they that are drunken are drunken in the night." But they were no more indifferent to it than taking their pleasure at it. Their separation, therefore, as I said, was not sleep. In a divine sense they watched and were sober. (1 Thess. v. 3.) In the separated place Daniel knew the judgment of God about it all, long before the writing on the wall announced it to the world. All this is full of meaning for us.

I am not going to say that the form of evil which Belshazzar's day presents is the worst. Nebuchadnezzar set up an idol before that day, and Darius set up himself after it. The fiery furnace was heated for the saints in the former reign, and the lion's den was open for them in the latter. The day of Belshazzar witnessed nothing of this. The abomination in the plain of Dura did not demand worship then, neither did the royal statute forbid worship toward Jerusalem then. But still there is some-

thing in Belshazzar himself, if not in his day, which especially provoked the Spirit of the Lord. Daniel can feel for Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar is brought to a right repentant mind, and the judgment of God is reversed. Daniel too can feel for Darius, and Darius is seen in humbled gracious meltings of soul, and we can all pity him—pity him when we see him unwittingly involved in results which a moment's vanity and easiness of nature had led to. But from us Belshazzar gets no kindly movement of heart, from the Spirit of God in Daniel nothing but stern rebuke, and from the hand of God nothing but swift destruction, the fingers on the wall announcing it, and the sword of the Median executing it. "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."

He was the easy man of the of the world. He despised all religious fear. What he worshiped was his pleasures, the gods of silver, of brass, and of gold, the vessels which could fill out his entertainments and make provision for his lusts. He did not summon the world to either his idol or himself, but to his board and to his holiday. Nebuchadnezzar makes an image, Darius a royal decree, Belshazzar a feast. But Jerusalem and her sorrows are forgotten, the temple and its furniture despised. The wonders which the God of Jerusalem and of the temple had freshly wrought in the land were all a dream or a fiction with him, and the very spoils of His house he can use in making merry with his friends.

This was easy worldliness—the heartless way of man who can forget God's wonders, and the rejection and humiliation of Christ. And all this is terrible. The harp, and the pipe, and the tabret are in such feasts; but the operations of God's hands are forgotten. Till now the vessels of God's house had been held in some fear and honor. But now they are profaned and made to

serve the lusts of the king. God had ordained them to witness the separation of His priestly nation, and His own worship in the midst of His people; but the king makes them the instruments of his sport.

And what, I ask, is the effort to deck out the world, to enjoy it, and to boast of it, while Jesus is rejected by its citizens? Is it not a thing in kindred spirit with this? The rejection of Christ is forgotten, yea, despised—for that is gloried in and displayed which continues the word, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." Is not this somewhat of taking of the choice vessels of God's house, in the very day of their captivity, to make merry with them?

The present moment may surely thus remind us of Belshazzar's feast. Gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron, and of wood are praised; the resources and capabilities of the world are displayed, thoughtless of its rejection of Christ. And are any of the captivity at the king's feast? Israel was captive together with the vessels of the temple. Would any of them be so thoughtless as to make merry with the king who was despising the spoils of that house? Would any of the servants of the rejected nobleman take part with the citizens in setting forth the wonders of their blood-stained land? (See Luke xix.)

The mind turns with these thoughts to the present moment. It cannot refuse to give itself, in some sort and in some measure, to the subject of The Great Exhibition. It would not be fit that it should be indifferent to it—for it is no common sign of the time and ought to be morally judged.

It will be pleaded for. No doubt of it. It will be said that it is designed to encourage brotherhood among the nations, and to promote the great business of social comfort and happiness as wide as the human family. But, I

ask, are these God's objects? God has scattered the nations, and never proposes to gather them till He gathers them to Shiloh. God would have us strangers here, "content with such things as we have," without making it our business to increase or improve them. God would have us testify against the world in its present condition, and therefore neither flatter it nor reconcile it to itself, nor glory in its capabilities. The Exhibition is therefore in full collision with the mind of God. Christ exposes the world; the Exhibition displays it. Christ would alarm it, and call it to a sense of judgment; the Exhibition makes it on better terms with itself than ever.

It is indeed a mighty advance in all the apostate reprobate principles of man. Efforts of a like kind we may be familiar with, but they are commonplace in comparison with this. As prophets speak, touching advance in the ways of evil, this is indeed "adding drunkenness to thirst."

I regard all admiration of it as a step in the way to "wonder after the beast." That will be but a further expression of the same mind; and how serious, if evangelical religion be sending its contributions to it, or becoming one of the exhibitors at it! Deep must be the infatuation. To tell the world one day what it is in God's esteem, and the next day to become one of the wonderers after its resources and capacities! Admiration like this savors of worship.

Like the old prophet at Bethel, when a saint is in a place or a position unwarranted by the call of God, the enemy will find easy occasion to use him. Still I own, when I think of it, it is to me wonderful that a Christian should find satisfaction in this thing. That it is an awful advance in the development of those evil principles which are to mark the day of Christendom's ripened iniquity, I have not the least doubt.

The Lord of old scattered the nations. (See Gen. xi.) This was judgment on a bold attempt of theirs, when they were of one speech and one language, to make themselves independent of God. And has He reversed that judgment? There is an appointed time when it shall be reversed. Jerusalem shall be a centre, and Shiloh a gathering-object. The nations will flock to Zion, there to see the King in His beauty. And none of them there, we may say, shall appear before the Lord empty. The tributes of all the lands shall beautify the place of God's sanctuary. The fruits of Midian and of Ephah shall be there—gold and incense from Sheba, the flocks of Kedar, and the rams of Nebaioth, the glory of Lebanon, the forces of all the Gentiles. All shall flock there, like doves to their windows, and kings shall minister there. Gold, too, shall be for brass, silver for iron, brass for wood, and iron for stones. All shall be for glory and beauty in the earth then. But this is still future. This is for "the world to come," after the Redeemer has come out of Zion, and turned away ungodliness from Jacob. See Is. lix. and Rom. xi.

The reversing of the judgment of scattering at Babel is left for the kingdom of God at Jerusalem. He that scattered must gather. He is Lord of the nations. "The powers that be are ordained of God." It is His pleasure that they should be scattered nations still; for one universal monarchy is appointed of God for Jesus only—as it is written, "Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." "His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

The name of Jesus was, indeed, proposed as a gathering-object in the day of Pentecost. Tongues were then cloven, as they had been at Babel; but it was to reunite what had been already severed. But this proposal, like

every other on God's part to man, was disappointed. The hard unbelieving heart did this. And what is man now proposing? He who refused God's proposal to gather to Jesus, in the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, is proposing to gather to himself. He will exalt himself as at Babel. He will be independent of God. He will be like the Most High. The beast will issue his decree on pain of death, his mark will be received on the forehead, and all the world will wonder after him. (Rev. xiii.) This is in the prospect of the world's history. He who will not let Christ be exalted will seek to exalt himself. And such an one is man.

Isaiah, anticipating in the Spirit the last days, warns the people of God against saying, "A confederacy," in common with the world around them. (Chap. viii.) And I ask myself and others, Do we, in deed and in faith, receive these notices from the prophets? Do we judge that man will thus exalt himself and confederate—thus gather round himself? And if we treat these warnings of the character of the last days as divine, can we doubt, from all we see and hear, that man has already begun to practice his hand in kindred attempts, in efforts which shall issue in all this?

The facilities and the speed in linking the nations one with another is now well known. It is used and gloried in. And what is this "Great Exhibition" but another trying of his skill in forwarding the main leading purpose of man's heart? No doubt it suits the spirit which is moving all this to have it under the sanction of *religion*. When he can use it for his own ends, nothing suits the devil better. He would fain have had Christ exalt Himself under the sanction of Ps. xci. And again and again he would have acknowledged Christ had He allowed it, as the spirit of divination would have witnessed to Christ's servant had he received it. (Acts xvi.) But this could

not be. The beast, however, will have his false prophet. He will use religion for his own ends. But divine religion takes us only into *God's* ends; and it teaches us this (with the authority of the real intrinsic holiness of such a principle): we can have no fellowship with that against which we are called to testify. (Eph. v. 11.)

Nor can we say that the judgment we form on this matter is a small or an indifferent thing. It is not so. The subject is well fitted to exercise the judgment of a saint of God. It is eminently so, I believe. His mind *generally* will be much affected by his sense of this thing and his decision respecting it. The mind can become dull; the eye gets dim betimes; and if such a process as that be going on, the next attempt of the enemy finds us less prepared. And, I ask, is not all that dangerous, when delusions are multiplying as they are and as they will?

We are counseled to buy eye-salve of Christ, that we may see. That is something beyond or beside faith and confession of the gospel. Laodicea had the common faith, and in a sense boasted of it, but Laodicea wanted eye-salve. And sure I am that let this great shop of the world's ware expose what it may, that eye-salve is the very thing which will not—cannot be had there. It is the article which would detect the whole character of the place, and it could not, therefore, be had there. It is a palace. Man is not enthroned there as God, it is true. Things among the children of men are not quite ripe for that yet. It is not a temple where man sits, showing himself as God (2 Thess. ii.); but man's works are displayed there. Man's art is enthroned there, and man expects to be admired and wondered at there, and thousands enter it (as another has observed) in the spirit of doing homage to man. It is a mirror in which the world is reflected in a thousand attractive forms, and the un-

worldly, humbled, earth-rejected Jesus is forgotten. Jesus may be named there, it is true, but an unworldly Jesus is practically forgotten there.

It is, indeed, as I surely judge, solemnly, awfully significant. It is full of the spirit of the last days. This palace for man's productions to be gazed at is but a stage before the temple for man himself to sit in, and admiration of it is getting a generation ready, morally ready, to "wonder after the beast." One is amazed that any Christian can find the least satisfaction in it.

This Exhibition (for it calls itself by that significant name) in its way shows all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. It does not hide this. It professes to do this. Like John Bunyan's *Vanity Fair*, there is the Italian row, and the German row, and the English row. It has human skill and resources in all variety, and from all lands. It presents the kingdoms of the world, and "the glory of them." And who, I ask, was it that did this before? The Spirit led the Son of God into "the wilderness"—a place of strangership and pilgrimage, but the devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.

The world, according to the Scriptures of God, is a lost and a judged thing. It is incapable of recovery. The Word of God does not, in a single passage of it, warrant the thought that it can be advanced or cultivated for God. He has judged it—though in grace the judgment tarries, and the long-suffering of God is salvation. But the world is a system past all hope of recovery, till the judgment be executed. But confederacy is an attempt to fix the world in its present condition, to settle it, though it be in departure from God and in enmity against Christ. This was the thought at Babel of old.

Separation of His own out of the world is God's way now. And this separation is the deepest and most thor-

ough judgment that could be passed upon the world. This is a more complete judgment of it than by the waters of the flood, or by the plagues of Egypt, or by the sword of Joshua. The withdrawal or separation of all that God owns bespeaks final thoughts about the world, and not merely a purifying of it from present corruptions, as by the waters of Noah, in order to put it on a fresh trial. The trial of it is over, the judgment of it is pronounced, and the delay is but for the salvation of the elect. The attitude of the Church,—that is, separation from the earth, and heavenly calling, tells us of the full moral condemnation of the course of things here. And thus the Church judges the world. Her position and calling does so.

The “servants” of the departed “nobleman” very well know that the country of the “citizens” has very great resources and very great capabilities; and they know that in due season such will be both used and displayed. But they cannot allow this thought while that country is as it is now—stained with the blood of their rejected Master. The cry, “We will not have this man to reign over us,” is ever in their ears. And with that cry from the land, can they, in company with the “citizens” who raised it and still keep it up (for the character of the world, as we have said from Scripture, is unalterably fixed), be occupied in investigating and producing the treasures of their country and the skill of its people, and glory in the thought of the common advancement?

They cannot, when alive to the character of the place where they are, and awake, as they should ever be, to the cry which followed the rejected Jesus as He left it—they cannot. The cup of the Lord’s indignation is to go round the nations, and they must drink it. An awful reverse this will be from Belshazzar passing the wine among his courtiers and concubines in the cups of the

Lord's house. And solemn it is in those nations feasting and praising the gods of gold, and of silver, of iron, of brass, and of wood, while such a handwriting as that is on the wall against them. If not on the walls of the palace, it is in the books of the prophets. (Ps. lxxv.; Jer. xxv.)

Incorruption, I may say, cannot inherit corruption. The spotless Jesus cannot hold an unpurged dominion. The woman of Rev. xvii. glorifies herself, and lives deliciously in the earth during that very time in which the judgment of God is awaiting it; but the bride of Rev. xxi. does not become manifested in the earth till it has been cleansed and is ready, not for the judgment of the Lord, but for the presence of the glory.

There is infinite moral distance there. The world must be judged ere it can be adopted of God. The earth must be purified before it can be furnished and adorned for Him. This has been again and again transacted in the progress of the divine government. Noah, God's saint and representative, took the earth to rule and to enjoy it, but it had previously passed through the purifying of the flood. Israel, God's people and witnesses, took the land of Canaan to possess and enjoy it, but it had been judged by the sword of Joshua. And according to these types, the earth is to be cleansed; out of the kingdom is to be taken all that offends and does iniquity ere Jesus will take the power.

Ornament and furniture well becomes it, for it is the Lord's footstool. Eden had not only its plants, and trees, and fruits, and flowers; but its gold, its bdellium, and its onyx stones. Solomon, in typical days of glory, trafficked in all desirable riches. And the millennial Jerusalem will receive all the treasures of the provinces. (Is. lx.) But the present age is not millennial; the earth is not yet an extended Eden. Corruption is not judged;

the things that offend and do iniquity are not taken away, nor is there any divine commission to that end. The field of tares is not to be cleansed now—it waits for the angels and the time of harvest. The saint submits to “the powers that be,” knowing that “God” will stand in the congregation of them for judgment in due season. (Comp. Rom. xiii. 1 with Ps. lxxxii. 1.)

It is despite of the holiness of God, we may therefore say, to be presenting this evil world in its ornaments and furniture, in its resources and capabilities, as this exhibition is doing. And it is also despite of the wrongs and sorrows of Christ. The citizens who have cast outside their city and country the blessed Son of God, are exhibiting what their country can produce, and what their hands can skillfully weave and fashion. I ask, could a servant of such a rejected Master aid and encourage such things? Could he be a servant a moment beyond the time that he thus practically forgot his Lord's rejection here? He could not. He might, indeed, be a useful member of society, and serve his generation in their generation well; but a servant of Christ (properly speaking) he could not be if once he forgot the world's rejection of Christ; and acceptance of the invitation of the citizens (see Luke xix.) to come and rejoice with them in the resources of their country and the skill of their people, would at once be such forgetfulness.

The sorrow and humbling of a saint is that he remembers the rejection of his Master so coldly, and acts on that great fact so poorly. But to have it estranged from the soul so as to consent to take part with the citizens from one end of the world to the other, in a great confederated effort to display the world as a wealthy and desirable place—to do this in full and hearty fellowship with all, on the ground of the common humanity, is confounding light and darkness, Christ and Belial. The

language of the whole thing is this,—We will forget, at least for a season, the claims and sorrows of Jesus, and have a holiday with the world that has rejected Him.

Has so little “eye-salve” been bought of Christ as to leave the saints in such a blinded condition of soul as this? “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” When Daniel and his companions entered the place of the Gentiles, they carried one purpose of heart with them, that they would not defile themselves with the king’s meat. (Dan. i. 8.) He knew not what this might cost him, but this was his purpose. He had bought this eye-salve of Christ, ere he stood among the uncircumcised. And in the strength of the Lord, he and his dear companions stood. The fiery furnace and the lion’s den witness the victory of men strengthened by Christ; “nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.” And so at Belshazzar’s feast. Daniel entered it as a conqueror, as he afterward entered the lion’s den. He had no affinity with the feast—not a bit. He was, in the day of it, as we have seen, a separated man. But he was called to it, and he entered the banqueting hall as a conqueror. The king who was there promised to make him “the third ruler in the kingdom.” “Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another,” said the servant of Christ. He was as much a conqueror in the day of the feast, as he was in the day of the lion’s den.

Noble attitude of a saint of God! Could such a man have accepted an invitation to the feast? Morally impossible. And “the eye-salve” which Christ had supplied him with, disclosed its further virtues, as he stood in that palace of the world’s enjoyments. There was nothing in the language of the writing on the wall beyond the astrologers of Babylon more than beyond Daniel. Not so much, I might say. At least the words were as familiar to a Chaldean as to a Hebrew. But the

wise men of Babylon, the scribes of Belshazzar's court and kingdom were not equal to interpret them. They were morally incapacitated. A single eye to Christ alone can do so to this day—the "eye-salve." If we test a thing by any test but Christ, we shall misinterpret it. It will appear fair and good and desirable, if we try it by its relationship to the welfare of society, or to the advancement of man and the world; but if we look at it in the light of a rejected Jesus, its bloom will be found to be corruption. Standing in the festive hall, Daniel traces the whole scene in Babylon at that hour in relation to God. He rehearses before Belshazzar God's way with Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar's way with God, and then Belshazzar's own hardness and infidel pride in defiance of Him who had wrought the wonders. This was Daniel's key to the writing—of course, I know, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But still this was the prophet's moral apprehension of the king's feast. He judged it in reference to God—and what could the end be, but awful and sudden destruction? The writing must speak of judgment, though the lords and the captains, the wives and the concubines, sport themselves in the king's hall.

"Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see." It is blessed so to do, but it is hard. We judge of things in reference to ourselves, and not in reference to Christ. We think rather of the world's improvement than of his rejection. We talk of human capabilities rather than of human and incurable apostasy. We want the eye-salve, without which we cannot see—we cannot discover the feast, or read the writing on the wall.

The disciples wanted it on the Mount of Olives, as they looked on the temple. They saw the building, but not with the eye of Christ, not as anointed with the eye-salve. He had seen it, and all that surrounded it, with the eye of God; and costly as it was, and beautiful beyond comparison, He had written the judgment of it;

yea, on the very wall He had written the judgment of "that beautiful house." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, behold, your house is left unto you desolate." This was writing with the same divine authority which had sentenced Belshazzar and his feast. But the disciples still eyed the beauty of the stones, and Jesus, in patient grace, but because of their demand, and unanointed eye, had to re-write the doom of that place: "Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down."

Sad to tell of it then, sad to see it now, sad to know, in our own worldly hearts, the secret of all this darkness. We may be sorry to find it thus among disciples, though prepared to get it plentifully among the children of men. The kings of the earth, the merchants, and the mariners bewail the fall of Babylon, and we wonder not. They judged Babylon in reference to themselves—they had lived deliciously with her. How could they have eyesalve to know her, and to see her with the mind of heaven? God "remembered her iniquities," but they remembered her as one "wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness." They therefore bewail, when heaven rejoices. The lords at the feast tremble, when heaven traces its doom. But sad it is that saints should be admiring the "costliness" which the mind of heaven has already judged.

What words in our ears, beloved, are these!—what writings under our eyes! Oh, for the anointing which Christ has for His saints! Oh, for power in our souls to judge the king's feast, the Gentile's greatness, the world's advancement, the jubilee of Babylon, in the light of the rejection of the Son of God, in the hearing of that cry, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." Then let us ask ourselves, if we have a pulse of affection or allegiance to Jesus, can we glory in this present moment with all its costliness and pleasures?

J. G. Bellett.

CHRIST ALONE OUR PEACE.

HAVING been made of late afresh to realize the prevalence in certain quarters, of an insistance upon experience in such a way as to obscure and adulterate the grace of the gospel, I am induced to take it up briefly now. It will be allowed that whatever does this is important enough to claim examination at our hands. And alas, our minds are naturally so legal, that that which under one form we have renounced and done with, under another we are but too prone to receive and welcome. Thus it can never be in vain to go back to first principles and to review what Scripture teaches upon a matter of so deep interest and value for our souls.

The doctrine to which I refer is this, that, in order to vindicate our claim to be Christians, we must be able to put our finger upon a certain date in our past history, and to say, "that was the moment of my conversion to God." It ought to be at once clear that Scripture makes no such demand upon any, and that therefore we have no right to add to Scripture. It ought to be clear moreover, that such an addition really obscures and perverts the gospel, changing the foundation upon which the soul rests from Christ to an experience: making many a heart sad that the Lord would not make sad, and rendering that *insecure* for all, which it is sought to *establish*.

John the Baptist, "filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb," would under such a test be declared an unconverted man: and this is alone sufficient to stamp the whole theory as false and unscriptural. How many may there not be, in these Christian days, in whom God has wrought from the

very begining of life in such a way as to make it impossible for them to say when they were *not* converted? while for how many others has conversion been so slow a process as to make them unable with any certainty to point to the time and steps of it! Souls are not always born to God amid the throes and agonies of intense conviction; and it is as great a folly to refuse the evidence for the present time of a Christianity which is otherwise distinct and trustworthy, as it would be to decide that the young man who stands in life and vigor before you was not alive, because he could not from his own experience, satisfy you as to the day of his birth.

But I go further than this, and ask in the conversion of a soul, as instantaneous and indubitable as that of Saul of Tarsus, upon what is it made to rest for peace? upon Christ Himself and the value of His work, is it not? and that entirely apart from anything in oneself whatever. Or does the convicted and repentant sinner rest upon the satisfactory nature of his conviction or repentance? Are these the objects of faith, or is Christ the object? And have not these their real value in forcing him outside of himself, to rest on Christ alone? This surely every one knows who knows the gospel aright. All is darkness until God reveals His Son in us; and the death of Christ, the precious blood shed, was shed for our sins and nothing else in us. *As sinners*, we rest in Him. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

How important is it that we should be dislodged from *all* confidence in ourselves! how many are kept from peace just by a morbid self-occupation which, if it can find no rest in good deeds that we have done,

will try and make something out of groans, and tears, and experiences ! But these lose all their value just by the effort to make value out of them. And how anxious is the Lord to assure us of how freely He receives *all* who come to Him,—how him that cometh unto Him He will in no wise cast out ! “Blessed are *all* they that put their trust in Him.” Is there room here for doubt? Is not the remedy for self-deception, *never to trust self?*

Now, if in a true experience one has found Christ thus for one's need, is it necessary ever to turn back to the past to assure myself of title to this Christ that I have found? I need no title but His own perfect grace. I trusted Him as a sinner, when I could have no other; have I now as a saint need to re-inforce this confidence by a trust in what then I renounced as trust? Have I need of the past at all to build upon, when Christ is here and now in the present for me?

Scripture never turns me back to past experiences to build upon, never tests things in that way. If it says, “We know that we have passed from death unto life,” the proof is in the present, not the past: it is “*because we love the brethren.*” And this is such a proof as comes from a previous and joyous confidence that we belong to the family of God,—it is the love of kinship: not anything that brought me there, or was my title to be received. Such fruits may be, and should be, pressed upon those who profess faith in Christ. More real and severe as tests than any appeal to a past history—possibly misread—they bring one face to face with his actual condition. “Faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone.” “Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye

are not under the law, but under grace." Every sweet and holy assurance, such as this last is, becomes a real test for the soul. Yet we would not escape from them. They are holy, but they are not legal. They do not show the *ground* of confidence, but they confirm it for the man who does confide, pointing him to results of which he will be conscious,—the holiness of grace, the fruitfulness of faith. Of such things, however feeble he may be, the true believer will be conscious. Faith and grace are what is pressed, and conscience it is that responds to the appeal: how different from the raking up of past experiences in order to question the right of present confidence! The tests used in Scripture are but the fruits and results of faith in Christ, and, rightly understood, can never shake but only confirm in it. Conscious of what faith has wrought, my rest in Christ becomes more profound. I do not need to ask if I have come honestly by what all are welcome to and besought to have.

The root of all the evil is that, in all this which I am speaking of, Christ is not really seen as offered to sinners but to saints, or at least to those who have gone through a certain quantum of preparation and fitting for Him. New birth is looked at as the ground of assurance, instead of the reception of Christ by the sinner being that; whereas it is "*to as many as receive Him*, to them He gives *right to become* the children of God," while the divine explanation of how this can be is in what follows, "which were born again . . . of God" (Jno. i.)

New birth is the accomplishment of divine power in the soul,—absolutely needed for the Kingdom of God; but Christ is the Life, without the reception of

which there is no birth possible. God's order then is not birth for life, but *life for birth*; and the consequences of any other order are disastrous. Christ is then not for sinners in the full unreserved royalty of His grace, but for a class of them already begun to be changed, and finding in that change their title to Him. Assurance is the result of "introspection" therefore,—satisfaction as to this needful process, of new birth. But in this way the result is scarcely absolutely ever without doubt, and Christ is hindered from being the full occupation of the soul.

But in Scripture, new birth is never put as the gospel, or confused with it. The Lord speaks of it to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, to lay the ax at the root of his self-righteousness, and bring him to the foot of the cross; to the woman of Samaria He says nothing of it, but encourages her to the reception of God's gift of living water. Nor is it recorded that He spoke of it to any other, except as it might be involved in that eternal life which he who believed in the Son already has. And how often is that door set open!

In the epistle of John, to those who were already Christians, the moral characters of new birth are insisted on. As a means of peace or assurance to the soul it is never presented, but Christ Himself is made this, known by a faith which, as such, unites with repentance to exalt Him alone. If conversion be a "turning round" of the soul, repentance is the back turned upon self, that faith may have the Lord of glory in unobstructed vision.

F. W. G.

ON THE MORAL GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(Continued from p. 187.)

AS a humbler, lowlier witness of His full fidelity to all His pledges, we may observe, He meets His people in Galilee, as He had promised them. As a larger expression of the same, I may also observe, He takes them to the Father in heaven, as He had also promised them, sending a message to them, that He was ascending to *His* Father, and to *their* Father, to *His* God and to *their* God. And thus, whether it was in our Galilee on earth, or in His own home in heaven, that His presence had been pledged to them, both are alike made good to them. And well we may meditate on the condescendings, the faithfulness, the fullness, the simplicity, the greatness, the elevation, of all that forms and marks His path before us. The Lord had very much to do with Peter, beyond any of the disciples while He was ministering in the midst of them, and we find it the same after He rose from the dead. Peter is the one to occupy, as I may say, the whole of the last chapter in St. John. There the Lord carries on with him the gracious work He had begun ere He left him, and carries it on exactly from the point where He had left it. Peter had betrayed special self-confidence. Though all should be offended, yet would not he, he said; and though he should die with his Master, he would not deny Him. But his Master had told him of the vanity of such boasts! and had told him also of His prayer for him, so that his faith should not fail. And when the boast was found to have been indeed a vanity, and poor Peter denied his Lord even with an oath, his Lord looked on him, and this look had its blessed operation. The prayer and the

look had availed. The prayer had kept his faith from failing, but the look had broken his heart. Peter did not "go away," but Peter wept, and "wept bitterly." At the opening of this chapter, we find Peter in this condition—in the condition in which the prayer and the look had put him. That his faith had not failed, he is enabled to give very sweet proof; for as soon as he learns that it was his Lord who was on the shore, he threw himself into the water to reach Him; not, however, as a penitent, as though he had not already wept, but as one that could trust himself in His presence in full assurance of heart; and in that character his most blessed and gracious Lord accepts him, and they dine together on the shore. The prayer and the look had thus already done their work with Peter, and they are not to be repeated. The Lord simply goes on with His work thus begun, to conduct it to its perfection. Accordingly, the *prayer* and the *look* are now followed by *the word*. Restoration follows conviction and tears. Peter is put into the place of strengthening his brethren, as his Lord had once said to him; and also into the place of glorifying God by His death, a privilege he had forfeited by his unbelief and denial.

This was the word of restoration, following the prayer which had already sustained Peter's faith, and the look which had already broken his heart. He had in the day of John xiii. taught this same loved Peter, that a washed man need not be washed again, save only his feet; and exactly in this way He now deals with him. He does not put him again through the process of Luke v., when the draught of fishes overwhelmed him, and he found out that he

was a sinner; but He does wash his soiled feet. He restores him, and puts Himself in His due place again. (See Jno. xxi. 15-17.)

Perfect Master! the same to us yesterday, to-day and forever; the same in gracious, perfect skill of love, going on with the work He had already begun, resuming, as the risen Lord, the service which He had left unfinished when He was taken from them, resuming it at the very point, knitting the past to the present service in the fullest grace and skill!

And a little further still, as to His redeeming His pledges and promises. There was a very distinguished one which He gave them after He had risen. I mean, what He calls "the promise of the Father," and "power from on high." This promise was made to them in the day of Luke xxiv., after He had risen, and it was fulfilled to them in the day of Acts ii., after He had ascended, and was glorified.

Surely this only continues the story and the testimony of His faithfulness. All witness for Him,—His life ere He suffered, His resurrection intercourse with His disciples, and now what He has done since He ascended,—that no variableness neither shadow of turning is found in Him.

And I would not pass another instance of this, which we get again in Luke xxiv. The risen Lord there recognizes the very place in which He had left His disciples in His earlier instructions. "These are the words," says He, "which I spake unto you when I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me." He thus reminds them that He had already told them, that Scripture was the great witness of the

divine mind, that all found *written there* must surely be *accomplished here*. And now what does He do? That which is the simple, consistent following out of this His previous teaching. "Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." His *power* now knits itself with His *instructions* before. He is making good in them what He had already communicated to them.*

But even further, in some sense, the very style and spirit of this intercourse with His disciples during that interval of forty days is still the same. He knows them then *by name*, as He had before. He manifests Himself to them *by the same methods*. He was the host at the table, though bidden there only as a guest, a second time, or after, as before, His resurrection (Jno. ii; Luke xxiv.); and in the deep sense and apprehension of their souls they treat His presence as the same. On returning to Him at the well of Sychar in Jno. iv., they would not intrude, but tread softly. And so on their reaching Him after the draught of fishes, in Jno. xxi., they tread softly again, judging a second time from the character of the moment, that their words must be few, though their hearts were filled with wonder and joy.

What links, tender and yet strong, are thus formed between Him who has been already known to us in the daily walks of human life, and Him who is to be known to us forever! He came down first into our circumstances and then He takes us into His. But in ours we have learnt Him, and *learnt Him forever*. This is a very happy truth. Peter witnesses it to us.

* To our comfort I may add, that after He had risen, He never once reminded His disciples of their late desertion of Him in the hour of His sorrow.

I have looked at this scene already with another intent. I must now give it a second look.

At the draught of fishes in Luke v., or before the resurrection, Peter was convicted. The *fisherman* Peter, in his own eyes became the *sinner* Peter. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The draught of fishes (giving proof that the stranger who had asked for the loan of his boat was the Lord of the fulness of the sea) had brought Peter, in spirit, into the presence of God, and there he learnt himself. We never, indeed, learn that lesson anywhere else. But the Lord at that moment, as from the glory, spoke comfortably to him. He had said, "Fear not," and Peter was at ease. The glory or the presence of God had now a home for him as well as conviction, and Peter is in full quietness of heart before the Lord. And accordingly, at the second draught of fishes, in Jno. xxi., after the resurrection, Peter was still at ease, and had only to practice the lesson which he had already learnt. And he does so. He experiences the presence of the Lord of glory to be a home for him. He proves in himself, and witnesses to us, that *what he had learnt of Jesus he had learnt forever*. He did not know the Stranger on the shore to be Jesus; but when John revealed that fact to him, the Stranger was a stranger to him no more, but the sooner and the nearer he could get to Him the better.

What further consolation is this! If it be joy to know that He is the same, whether here or there,—whether in our world or in His own world,—in our ruined circumstances, or in His own glorious circumstances,—what further joy is it to see one of our-

selves, as Peter was, experiencing the blessedness of such a fact in his own spirit!

Jesus—the same, indeed—faithful and true! All the pledges He had given them ere He suffered, He makes good after He rose: all the character He had sustained in the midst of them then, He sustains now.

The Lord was continually *giving*, but He was rarely assenting. He made great *communications* where He found but little communion. This magnifies or illustrates His goodness. There was, as it were, nothing to draw Him forth, and yet He was ever imparting. He was as the Father in heaven, of whom He Himself spoke, making His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sending His rain on the just and the unjust. This tells us what He is, to His praise—what we are, to our shame.

But He was not only thus, as the Father in heaven, the reflection of such a One in His doings, but He was also in this world as “the unknown God,” as St. Paul speaks. The darkness did not comprehend Him; the world, neither by its religion nor its wisdom, knew Him. The rich aboundings of His grace, the purity of His kingdom, the foundation and title upon which the glory He sought in such a world as this alone could rest, were all strangers to the thoughts of the children of men. All this is seen in the deep moral mistakes they were continually making. When, for instance, the multitude were exceedingly hailing the King and the kingdom in His person, in Luke xix., “Master, rebuke Thy disciples,” the Pharisees say. They would not brook the thought of the throne belonging to such a One. It was presumption in Him, Jesus of Nazareth as He

was, to allow the royal joy to surround Him. They knew not—they had not learnt—the secret of true honor in this false fallen world of ours. They had not learnt the mystery of “a root out of a dry ground,” nor had they in spirit perceived “the arm of the Lord.” (Is. liii.) It was where His own spirit led, that discoveries were made of Him, and such are very sweet, and various too, in their measure.

In Mark i. His ministry, in its grace and power, is used by many. People under all kinds of diseases come to Him, congregations listen to Him, and own the authority with which He spake. A leper brings his leprosy to Him, thereby apprehending Him as the God of Israel. In different measures, there was then some knowledge of Him, either who He was, or what He had; but when we enter chapter ii., we get knowledge of Him expressing itself in a brighter, richer way: we get samples of the faith that *understood* Him; and this is the deeper thing.

The company at Capernaum, who bring their palsied friend to Him, understand Him as well as use Him; understand Him, I mean, in Himself, in His character, in the habits and tastes of His mind. The very style in which they reach Him to get at Him tells us this. It was not *approaching* as though they were reserved, and doubtful, and overawed. It was more: “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me”—a thing more welcome to Him, more according to the way that *love* would have us take. They ask no leave, they use no ceremony, but they break up the roof of the house, that they may reach Him; all this telling us that they *knew* Him as well as *used* Him; knew that He delighted in having His grace trusted and His power used by our necessities with-

out reserve. So Levi, shortly afterward, in the same chapter. He makes a feast, and seats publicans and others at it, in company with Jesus. And this, in like manner, tells us that Levi *knew* Him. He knew whom he *entertained*, as Paul tells us he knew whom he *believed*.

J. G. B.

(To be continued.)

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS;

OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

(Continued from page 207.)

CHAP. II.

THIS then brings us to the 12th verse of chapter ii., which already, thus early in the book, seems to be a summing up of his experiences. "I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly:" that is I looked "full face," or carefully considered, these three things that I had now tested; and whilst each gave me only disappointment and bitterness as to meeting my deepest needs, yet "I saw that there was a profit in wisdom over folly, as light is profitable over darkness." This then is within the power of human reason to determine. The philosophy of the best of the heathen brought them to exactly the same conclusion. Socrates and Solomon, with many another worthy name, are here in perfect accord, and testify together that "the wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walketh in darkness." Not that men *prefer* wisdom to folly; on the contrary; still even human reason gives this judgment: for the wise man walks at least as a *man*, intelligently; the spirit, the intelligence, having its place. But how much further can reason discern as to the comparative worth of wisdom or folly? The former certainly morally elevates a man *now*; but

here comes an awful shadow across reason's path: "but I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all. Then said I in my heart, as it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me: and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity." Ah! in this book in which poor man at his highest is allowed to give voice to his deepest questions, in which all the chaos, and darkness, the "without form and void" state of his poor, distracted, disjointed being is seen; Death is indeed the King of Terrors, upsetting all his reasonings, and bringing the wisdom and folly, between which he had so carefully discriminated to one level in a moment. But here, death is looked upon in relation to the "works" of which he has been speaking. Wisdom cannot guarantee its possessor's enjoyment of the fruits of his labors. Death comes to him as swiftly and as surely as to the fool, and a common oblivion shall, after a little, swallow the memory of each, with their works. This thought the Preacher dwells upon, and, as he regards it on every side again and again he groans, "this also, is vanity" vs. 19, 21, 23. "Therefore I hated life, yea, all my labor which I took under the sun," and "therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all my labor which I took under the sun." For what is there in the labor itself? Nothing that satisfies by itself. It is only the anticipation of final satisfaction and enjoyment that can make up for the loss of quiet and ease now; prove *that* to be a vain hope, and the mere labor and planning night and day are indeed "empty vanity."

Thus much for labor "under the sun," with self for its object, and death for its limit. Now for the contrast again in its refreshing beauty of the

“new” as against the “old” “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” “All my labor vanity” is the “groan” of the old, “for death with its terrors cuts me off from my labor and I leave it to a fool.” “No labor in vain” is the song of victory of the new, for resurrection with its glories but introduces me to the precious fruit of those labors, to be enjoyed for ever.

Oh my brethren, let us cherish this precious word, “not in vain;” let us be indeed “persuaded” of it, and “embrace” it, not giving up our glorious heritage, and going back, as the Christian world largely is in this day, to the mere human wisdom that Solomon the king possessed above all, and which only led then, as it must now, and ever, to the groan of “vanity!” But “*not* in vain” is ours. No little one refreshed with even a cup of cold water but that soon the fruit of even that little labor of love shall meet its sweetest recompense in the smile, the approval, the praise of our Lord Jesus; and that shall make our hearts full to overflowing with bliss; as we there echo and re-echo our own word: it was indeed, “not in vain.”

The chapter closes with the recognition that, apart from God, it is not in the power of man to get any enjoyment from his labor. Our translation of verse 24 seems quite out of harmony with the Preacher’s previous experiences, and the verse would better read (as in Dr. Taylor Lewis’ metrical version.)

“The good is not in man that he should eat and drink
And find his soul’s enjoyment in his toil;
This, too, I saw, is only from the hands of God.”

Chapter iii. may be paraphrased, I think, somewhat in this way: Yes, life itself emphasizes the truth that nothing is at one stay here;—all *moves*. There is naught abiding, like the winds and waters that he has noted in chap. i.; man's life is but a wheel that turns: death follows birth, and all the experiences between are but ever varying shades of good and evil, evil and good. (Let us bear in mind this is not faith's view, but simply that of human wisdom. Faith sings a song amidst the whirl of life:

“With mercy and with judgment,
My web of time He wove;
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lusted with His love.”

But then if nothing thus rests as it is, it becomes a necessary deduction that, if wisdom has collected, and labored, and built, folly will follow to possess and scatter, what profit then in toiling? For he sees that this constant travail is of God who, in wisdom inscrutable, and not to be penetrated by human reasoning, would have men exercised by these constant changes, whilst their hearts can be really satisfied with no one of these things, beautiful as each may be in its time. So boundless are its desires that he says, “Eternity” has been placed in that heart of man, and naught in all these “time-changes” can fill it. Still he can see nothing better for man, than that he should make the best of the present, for he cannot alter or change what God does or purposes, and everything he sees, speaks of His purpose to a constant “round,” a recurrence of that which is past (as verse 15 should probably read.)

But still man's reason can make one more step now, one further deduction from the *law of circuit*,

as soon as God, even though He be known only by nature's light, is introduced; and that is, the present wrong and injustice so evident here, must in some "time" in God's purposes, be righted; God Himself being the Judge. This seems to be a gleam of real light, similar to the conclusion of the whole book. Yes, further, this constant change—is there no reason for it? Has God no purpose in it? Surely to teach men the very lesson of their own mortality: that there is naught abiding—men and beasts are, as far as unaided human wisdom can see, on one level exactly as to that awful exit from this scene. It is true there may be—and there are strong grounds for inferring that there *is*—a wide difference between the spirit of man, and the spirit of beasts, although the bodies of each are formed of, and return to the dust; but who can tell this absolutely? Who has seen and told what is on the other side of that dread portal? None. So then, again says the wise Preacher, my wisdom sees only good in enjoying the present, for the future is shrouded in an impenetrable cloud, and none can pierce it.

Precious beyond expression becomes the glorious bright beam of divine revelation, as against this dense and awful darkness of man's ignorance on such a question. How deep and terrible the groan here, "For all is vanity." Yet the pitch-dark background shall serve to throw into glorious relief, the glory of that light that is not from reason, or nature; but from Him who is the Father of Lights. Yes, He bids us look on this picture of the wisest of men, tracing man and beast to one end and standing before that awful door through which each has disappeared, confessing his absolute inability to determine

if there be any difference between them. Death surely triumphs here. It is true that there may be a possible distinction between the "breath," or vital principle of each; but this uncertainty only adds to the mystery, and increases a thousand fold the agonizing need for light. God be thanked that He has given it. The darkest problem that has faced mankind all through the weary ages, has been triumphantly solved; and the sweetest songs of faith ever resound about the empty tomb of the Lord Jesus—nay rather, about the glorious person of that risen Christ Himself, for He is Himself the leader of the joy. "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee."

So then, in sharp and blessed contrast to the wise man and his groaning, let us lift our eyes up and ever up, past the tombs and graves of earth; yea, past thrones and principalities, and powers in the heavens; up and still up, even to the "*throne of the Majesty on High*" itself; and look on One sitting ever there, a *Man*—oh mark it well, for He has been of woman born—a *Man*,—for of that very One it was once said, "Is not this the carpenter?"—now crowned with glory and honor; and listen, for He speaks: "I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." Consider Him! And whilst we look and listen, how does that word of the Preacher sound, "a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast!" And this is our portion, beloved reader. He might indeed have had all the glory of that place, without the agony of the garden, without the suffering and shame of the cross, had He been content to enjoy it alone. But no—He must have His own with Him; and now death has been

abolished as to its terror and power, so that the groan of old is replaced by the triumphant challenge:

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

The resurrection of Jesus not only makes possible—not only makes probable—but absolutely assures, the glorious triumphant resurrection of His own who have fallen asleep: “Christ the firstfruits, afterward they are Christ’s at His coming.” But further, is this “falling asleep” of the saint to separate him, for a time, from the conscious enjoyment of his Saviour’s love? Is the trysting of the saved one with his Saviour to be interrupted for awhile by death? Is his song

“Not all things else are half so dear
As is His blissful presence here”

to be silenced by death? Then were he a strangely conquered foe, and not stingless, if for one hour he could separate us from the enjoyed love of Christ. But no, “blessed be the Victor’s name,” not for a second. “Death is ours” and “absent from the body” is only “present with the Lord.” So that we may too, in our turn, answer the Preacher’s word “A man hath no pre-eminence above a beast,” with the challenge, To which of the *beasts* said He at any time, “This day shalt thou be with me in paradise?”

Let the Preacher groan “For this is vanity;” the groan is in perfect—if sorrowful—harmony with the darkness and ignorance of human reason; but “*singing*” alone accords with *light*; “Joy cometh *in the morning*,” and if we but receive it, we have in “Jesus Risen” light enough for perpetual, unending, song.

F. C. J.

(To be continued.)

TILL HE COME.

ALTHOUGH we're oft discouraged, we confess—
 We are not left as orphans in the gloom
 Of this dark world, for Thou hast spread a feast,
 Pledge of Thy love, till Thou shalt come again.

O blessed place, in deepest rev'rence bowed,—
 To think on Thee, and on Thy death, dear Lord.
 To worship at Thy table till Thou come,
 In sweet obedience to Thy holy Word.

Lost in Thyself, enveloped in Thy love—
 Forgetful for the moment of life's pain,
 We look from Calv'ry's cross, with brightest hope,
 To that glad day, when Thou shalt come again.

We stand between that cross of shame, and scorn,
 (Our sins all buried in the Saviour's tomb,)
 And glory, inexpressible, untold,
 While memory feasts on Him, "till He shall come."

O bliss transporting ! who hath words to tell,
 Of love, and grace, and mercy intertwined :
 In one sweet mingled cord of endless joy,
 Forever to His heart, our hearts to bind.

Then let us labor on, that other souls
 May share our joys, while thus we journey home.
 Yea, never weary telling of His love,
 His wondrous grace and mercy, "till He come."

H. McD.

"DRINK, O BELOVED."

THOU deep unfathomable source of every joy we
 know,

How can we ever drink at broken cisterns, of
 our own device,

When living water from the living Rock
 Flows at our feet, exhaustless, pure, and free.

We would, our God, have all our springs in Thee.
 Thence let us draw, we shall be satisfied.—*H. McD.*

S T R I V E .

“Then said one unto Him, Lord are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.” (Luke xiii. 23-28.)

SOME persons seem constantly occupied with religious questions. Their inquiry is not, “Am I saved?” but, “Are others saved?” Sometimes we find a fond parent solicitous about the future state of a dying child, a kind master anxious about his afflicted servant’s spiritual condition, and others manifesting concern for the ignorant and poor around them, without laying to heart what their own state before God really is. It was so in the days of our Lord. “One said unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved?” to which Jesus replied, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.” Thus He sought to lead him away from the consideration of others, to ponder the all-important question of his own soul’s salvation; and exposed the folly of appearing concerned for others, while he himself was in the broad road to destruction. So weighty, so essential, is the point, and so fatal would a mistake be, that He commands them to “strive (or agonize) to enter in at the strait gate.”

1. WHAT IS THE STRAIT GATE? There could have been no way of escape for sinners from the wrath to come, had not Jesus died upon the cross. “Except a

corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." It is the cross of Christ that speaks to us of sin put away, redemption accomplished, and of the sinner's only way to God. Christ crucified, then, is the "strait gate." Jesus lifted up on the cross is the door of access. "I am the door," said He : "by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." The cross of Christ, therefore, becomes the point of separation between the saved and lost. Not to enter into God's presence through this gate is still to tarry in the place of death and judgment ; but to enter into the Father's presence through the atoning work of His dear Son is present peace and eternal salvation. The gospel thus presents to us a door of escape, and it is still wide open ; it welcomes all guilty sinners that "enter in" by faith, thus sheltering them for ever from the wrath of God, and shutting them into the peace-speaking presence of the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort.

2. IT IS A STRAIT GATE. True Christianity is an individual thing. The gate is so strait, so narrow, that all who enter go in one by one. Many long to take others with them, but each person is accountable to God for himself ; every one must be exercised before God on account of his own sin. The gospel appeals to the individual conscience. "*He* that believeth on the Son"—"*He* that hath the Son"—"*He* that believeth and is baptized," &c. Paul said, "*I* know whom I have believed"—"*I* obtained mercy"—Christ "*loved me.*" This is very weighty, and shows us the deep necessity of each one asking the all-important question, "Am *I* saved?" We may be members of religious bodies, and outwardly appear consistent ; but those only who have entered in at the strait gate are saved.

3. STRIVE TO ENTER IN. This solemn subject calls for earnestness. The eternal importance of the work of

Christ demands it. God cannot bear indifference. Embracing views merely is a poor thing. Learning a few religious ways and phrases will not do for God. All the world are guilty before Him. Judgment is quickly coming. The wrath of God is soon coming, and fall it must upon all Christless souls. His almighty arm and perfect love have made a door of escape, and His gracious voice exclaims to sinners, "Strive, or agonize, to enter in at the strait gate!" Do not be content at having serious impressions, or good desires. Rest not till you have entered in at the strait gate. Be in real earnest. Let not formal duties suffice; let not a little concern satisfy you; let not the credit of being religious among men be enough for you. Oh, no! Have real concern, for eternity is at hand. Your life is short; many will miss the strait gate; many will be deceived; many will find out their mistake when it is too late. Strive, then, agonize to enter in at the strait gate; escape for thy life, flee from the pit, turn to the Saviour; on no account miss His great salvation.

4. *The door will be shut.* "When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door." The gospel is not always going to be preached. God will not always send forth the message of peace. He is the God of judgment as well as the God of peace, and Christ is a Judge as well as a Saviour. He is now seated on the right hand of God, but He will ere long rise up and shut to the door. The preaching of the cross will then cease; the seeker will not find, the knocker will be disappointed, the asker will be refused; the gospel testimony will close, the church be removed to glory, and the hypocrite and unbeliever left for judgment. Men will discover their mistake then. The folly of putting off salvation will be made manifest. The door will be shut, and man's doom eternally settled. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still." How

imperative, then, is the necessity to "strive to enter in at the strait gate."

5. *The eternal torment of the lost.* "He that believeth not shall be damned," and "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him," are words of the God of truth which must have their fulfilment. Not to "enter in at the strait gate" for salvation, is not to believe in that Saviour whom God hath sent, but to be a "worker of iniquity," living in rebellion against the God of love and peace. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." They will have the consciousness that others are saved, but themselves for ever lost; they will know that others are for ever happy through the redemption-work of Christ, and they themselves cast into the lake of fire, into everlasting punishment; "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." How powerful were the Saviour's appeals! How simple, yet how thrilling, were the reasons He assigned why persons should "strive to enter in at the strait gate!"

(Selected.)

EXTRACTS.

"OH! there is a preciousness in Jesus that, if we saw it fully, would dazzle our eyes for discerning glory in external things; we should be unable to distinguish the great from the small, the bright from the dark. . . . Do you feel what I mean? that if Christ were apprehended, we should cease to know what the world calls little or great. The pursuit of an empire or of a butterfly would be to us alike *little*."

"I do not regret any of the trials I have had. Pilgrims must expect trials on a long journey: we cannot expect either good roads or good weather all

the way; but the Lord Jesus has sanctified it all—foul and fair and made all to work together for our good. Whatever purposes are in your heart let them be high and heavenly ones for Christ and His kingdom: the world will soon pass away and all its glories, but that kingdom shall endure. Keep *close* to the simplicity of Christ; nothing will keep us from extravagances but *walking with Him*. He always moved so seriously to the object He had in hand—the fulfilment of His Father's will."

"The more the sense of my Lord's love presses upon me, the more does it make my heart mourn to think He should have been served so much from cold principles, instead of that holy service of the heart He so desires and values."

"I have learned much of the *powerlessness of man* to direct his *own ways* when in difficulty and perplexity. I know no resource, nor do I *desire* any, except to throw off my trials upon God, leaving it with Him to bring light out of darkness, and awaiting *His* time to do it. It is not that our Father has *pleasure* in our being in straits and difficulties that He thus permits them to try us, but He knows that our real life is hid with Christ in Himself, and whatever makes us feel this connection with Jesus *necessary* to our comfort, and *constrains* us to more close intercourse with Him, and makes the hope of final deliverance and rest more precious, is clearly to the happiness of our *spiritual life*, however mortifying it may be to the natural man."

"In connection with these views, the state in which the Church is, is particularly affecting; for while the heart has individual experience of the need it has of these very trials of the cross to pull it out of

the snare of the world, it has to mourn over the Church, not only as *fallen* in the *dust*, but as being more than ever reluctant to be raised up; and instead of following the revelation of God in all doctrine and practice, she gets rid of her difficulties in carrying them out, by weaving to herself various little texts of doctrine suited to the various sects of of the day; and puts zeal for them in the place of zeal for God's holy and blessed truths, *as His*, without exception or innovation. Oh! who does not long that the warfare was accomplished, and the Church glorified together?"—(*Correspondence from the East*, 1834.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF **HELP AND FOOD**:

My dear Brother,—Since our parting at B. two months ago, A. E. B. and I have been journeying together in fields altogether new to me, and, at different points, not lacking in interest. One feature has been especially cheering: Save in some places where circumstances, unconcern, or opposition, closed the doors against us, we had access to many, and invariably got the best possible attention. Under such circumstances it is a delightful task to sow the seed in "the morning" and in "the evening," for one is assured that He who has bidden us so to do will not leave it fruitless.

In the majority of places a lengthening of the stay daily increased the attendance and the interest, and it was in some occasions a trial to leave them. In a section of the country extending for many miles, we found a few godly men who had scarcely left a corner within reach of them without having preached the gospel to the

people there. Nor were they men of leisure ; they were men of toil, caring lovingly for their families by their labor, but lovers of men as well and constrained by the love of Christ. How easy is one's service among such men ! Yearning after the souls of the lost and conscious of their weakness in meeting the need they hail with gladness the help of fellow-workers and are but too happy to see others reap where they have sown. May God raise up such everywhere.

In certain places there were marks of another kind of work, one which mars that of the Spirit of God wherever it obtains. It consists largely of a combative kind of gospel which seems more inclined to expose evil than to weep over it and to make Christ precious to the souls of men. It savors of a craving after adherents rather than of a holy purpose to edify the people of God, and its inevitable and sad result is, to leave souls in a barren, dwarfed condition, without power for prayer or spiritual development.

To speak of individual cases might lead one to more length than one cares to go into here ; but it is where the refreshment is as you well know. One instance was an elderly gentleman. Upon nearing his residence we met him walking out.

Sir, he said, I once opposed much the things you preach, but it is another thing now. God has been showing me what I am in His sight, and it has been a dreadful pass I have gone through. In all my life, though a professing Christian, I never had an idea of being such a sinner as I now see myself to be. I therefore understand and value the grace you proclaim ; but O tell me, is it truly possible that a man like me should be allowed to appropriate the wonderful riches declared in that grace ?

What a mercy to have *the Word of God* ! And what joy to minister it to such.

A most interesting feature of the journey has been the Roman Catholics. It is evident there is a movement going on among them. Their clergy is losing some of its power over them, and they are more easily persuaded to read the Scriptures. In one case it was a poor laborer who could not read, nor any of his family, but he had received a French Testament and found in his employer one who could read in that tongue and who loved the Scriptures. He got him to read some portions to him, and such became his interest in the book that he ever carried it with him. Now read to me, he would say, while opening his red handkerchief in which the Testament was carefully wrapped up; and when some passage especially struck him he would beg to have it read again to him even to the third time so that he might be able to communicate it to his family. Often did it so operate in him as it was being read to him that he would sit in an adoring attitude: he was hearing the voice of God.

In another case a Testament had been given to an intelligent, sturdy farmer who was in some difficulty with his priest. After reading it a little he saw there was abundant material there with which to fight the priest and he began to read in earnest. Soon, however, the battle changed front, and his own soul became the object instead of the priest. He cried to God and found mercy.

Spending an afternoon among the French families who have been blessed as the result of this has increased the desire to labor among that teeming French population who seem to be opening to the Word of God.

May it please the Lord, if He tarry yet a little, to so give grace and peace to His beloved people as to leave more freedom to carry the light in the parts which need it.

Ever yours in Him,

P. J. L.

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.*

2. *The Annoucement of the King (Chap. ii.).*

IT is now happily familiar to many that, as we have seen, the four Gospels have four different stories to tell us of the Lord Jesus Christ—give us four different views of Him. In the Gospel of Matthew He is the King (in relation to Israel especially, still of the kingdom of heaven, therefore wider and higher far than merely Israel's King): in Mark He is the Servant, the minister to human need: in Luke, the Man; and in John, the divine Person, the Word made flesh. In saying this, of course, it is not meant but that we have all these four in every Gospel, more or less; but we merely speak of what is emphasized in each one. Thus, for instance, while we have in the first chapter the Lord looked at as Son of God (John's theme), yet, at the same time, as there, this is in direct connection with the theme of Matthew, because God's kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, would not be fully that unless He who ruled was a divine Person. So again, when you take the Gospel of Mark, what you find is the Lord's humiliation in a most distinct way, beyond any other Gospel. He is not even called Lord by His disciples till the resurrection; yet it opens with, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, *the Son of God*." And why? Because, surely, the very thing that makes His ministry so precious is the apprehension of *who* it is that came down to serve in such a way, and therefore, that expression, though not characteristic

* For Chapter I., see "Help and Food," Vol., 1890.

of the book, coming in in the place it does, is not only consistent with, but deepens our apprehension of its character.

Now, looking back to the end of the first chapter before we pass on, let us notice afresh that the King here is no less than divine, the living link between God and men, Immanuel, "God with us." To be that, He must be "Jesus," and save His people from their sins; yet in His very Person, Godhead and manhood are bound together in an embrace that is eternal, and implies all that is revealed in the gospel.

The connection of this, of course, is with the first chapter, where we rightly find it. Yet there is a connection, alas, of a very different kind with the second, to which we are now come, and which gives us the announcement of this divine King in His own world, and to His own people, and the results of that announcement. He has not only as a stranger to *be* announced; but more, if exceptionally there are found a few to welcome, the mass are only troubled at the announcement.

Not only so: we shall find as we go on that it is, above all, for this pre-eminent glory of His that He is rejected. What man most of all needs, he most emphatically refuses. God's most wonderful grace he most stubbornly disbelieves.

The people were already crying out, so to speak, for a Christ, for Messiah, but not such a Christ as Christ was, the Son of God. This is what they would have stoned Him for, and for which they condemned Him in the high priest's palace; and only as the consequence of this was he delivered up to Pilate, the Roman governor, with the charge that He made Himself King in Israel. The rejection of the King

was in truth the rejection of a divine Person come into their midst: as the Lord says of them, "Now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father."

It is not, of course, inconsistent with this, when the apostle says, "Whom none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

They would not have *dared*; nevertheless, they had, consciously or unconsciously, looked into the face of the Son of God, and had therefore "seen the Father;" and had seen Him only to hate Him. What an awful thing it is to realize that this is the world we are living in, and the same world to-day, except where grace has made a difference!

Aye, and have we—we who have in measure owned His grace, and the necessity of His work for our salvation—have *we* cleared ourselves altogether of this deepest sin, so as, looking upon the face of God's Beloved, to have opened our hearts and lives to Him according to what is implied in this title, Immanuel, "God with us"? Would we have Him "with us" as His desire is to be with us? Do we keep back nothing from this glorious Visitant? do we *deliberately* keep back nothing? Have we flung the gates wide open, in joyous response to the wondrous condescension of the King?

In the details of our life, which of us can answer for himself as to this? The things that so much, and not in the way of duty but of choice, engage us, and crowd out the things in which *He* is interested;—the comparative occupation of our time with His word and perhaps a newspaper;—such things, and many like them, how do they speak in regard to the way

in which we have accepted indeed this blessed title of His—"God with us"?

How He would fulfill it to us, if we would but permit it! "We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." These are His own words; and what do they imply? Rather, may we say, what do they *not* imply?

How solemn it is, too, to realize, beloved, that when the Lord of glory comes into the world, He comes into it in the most humble form; not as a King at all, but disguised as the son of a carpenter, in the utmost poverty! But was it not, after all, that which became Him? Think of the Son of God coming among us born in the "princes of this world's" purple! Would not *that* be but the real disguise? What another picture we would have had of Him, had He been brought up in kings' palaces, rather than where He was! How blessed for Him to come down to the very lowest, so that there should not be one who cannot find Him, so to speak, in a place lower than himself! The world is upside down with sin; and this voluntary lowliness it is that proves and sets Him highest. It is the only thing suitable in Him, who, because the foundations of the world are out of course, is to bear up the pillars of it.

In this second chapter, then, we have the Lord announced, and having to be announced among His own people by men from afar—by Gentiles. Yet we know that not only by Daniel had God predicted almost the exact time of Messiah's coming, and by Micah, as the Scribes could unhesitatingly tell the place of His birth, but that heaven had given its witness to Him as actually come. Zecharias and Elizabeth had announced His forerunner. The angelic

vision had brought the shepherds to the manger where He lay. Simeon had blessed God for His salvation come; and with Anna had spoken of Him in Jerusalem itself. And yet the city is only startled into recognition when "magi from the east" come with their inquiry, "Where is He that has been born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and have come to worship Him."

Upon the star itself it is perhaps useless to speculate. It naturally connects itself with Balaam's prophecy of the "Star to arise out of Jacob," and which was, as we know, the prophecy of a Gentile among Gentiles. Prophecy had evidently spoken to them, or they would hardly have so definitely understood the object of their search to be a King of the *Jews*. The magi were, as we know, the great natural observers of those days, and here we have the witness of nature to the Lord. Nature is not rebellious to her Maker, and still gives plentiful witness—few as they may be who realize or care to read it. The star may not have been in the strict sense miraculous, although a miracle would, after all, seem most consonant with the wonder of the time, and miracle is that in which God has reserved for Himself a sphere in which to show Himself outside and above those fixed natural laws which form the necessarily stable world through which our daily path is. The disappearance and reappearance of the star, and its guiding them to just where the young child was, look, spite of all attempted explanation, like something very different from an object in the far-off heavens. At any rate, the love in it was not far off, and it spoke in no uncertain way to these glad pilgrims journeying at its word.

They come to Jerusalem expecting, doubtless, to find all the city ready for the inquirer with a gospel message. They come to find the Edomite on the throne, and with all the old Edomite hatred in his heart, craftily though he may hide it, and gather the chief priests and elders together to hasten them on the way. Of course, these can tell all about Christ's birth textually; and how the words must have stricken the old blood-stained tyrant to the heart! "And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall be Shepherd to My people Israel."

Such, literally, are the words they use; and one might suppose that in using them they meant to inflict a wound that Herod should not be able to impute to them, but should come home to him as the voice of God Himself. And so it was, though the words are not found in Micah just as they quote them here. For Hebrew was not any more the language, even of Israel as a whole; and it was quite customary to paraphrase—rather than give literally a Scripture appealed to. The Hebrew, besides other differences, does not give "shepherd" in this passage, but simply "ruler." The Septuagint Greek follows the Hebrew: so that the variation is their own. And yet who can deny that the one word is God's thought as to the other? He who had sent Moses to the sheepfolds to learn how to guide His people in the wilderness—He who in the land had chosen David, and taken him "from following the ewes great with young" to feed and guide with no less tenderness the flock of His pasture,—He had indeed consecrated the "shepherd" to be the picture of the Ruler whom

He had appointed and would raise up. And we all know how the Lord has filled out this picture.

The scribes, then, show in their variation from the letter their acquaintance with the character of Messiah as prophecy reveals Him. But we hear no more of them. They cite the text for Herod; and they do it well; but they have no heart for the One they testify to. They are like sign-posts upon a road on which they do not move an inch. They pass on the word to those who value it; Herod himself, also, becoming the instrument in guiding worshipers to the feet of Jesus. They only, obedient to the Word, turn their faces toward Bethlehem; and as they do so, the star appears again, and goes before them. Nor does it leave them now till they are face to face with Him they seek.

Then they worship. It is but a humble house, we may be sure, and there are in it but a young mother and her babe. But they worship,—and worship, not the mother, but the babe. Divinely taught, they pour out their gifts at His feet, “gold and frankincense and myrrh:” gifts which, no doubt, have meaning. The Church of old seems almost unitedly to have interpreted them as, in the gold, the recognition of His royalty; in the frankincense, the acknowledgment of His Deity; while the myrrh, used afterward at His burial, is taken thus to be the anticipation of His death. To some of these things, as we know, His disciples were long after strangers; nor could we argue, if there were no doubt about the correctness of the symbolism, that the magi knew the whole significance of what they did. God governed all here in a peculiar way; a way which, indeed, in Scripture is the rule, however. Here there is nothing unmean-

ing. Here, if prophets searched their own writings to find how much the Spirit of Christ which was in them had guided them beyond their knowledge, so words and deeds speak commonly with a divine intelligence, quite apart from those who are the speakers and the doers.

It is the shadow of the future that is passing before us: the Gentiles worshiping while Israel rejects,—a dispensational picture quite in keeping with the character of Matthew. If we turn to the Gospel of Luke, and put it side by side with what we have here, worshipers though there may be in both cases, how many points of contrast we shall find! Luke is the gospel of the manhood of Christ; and with this, no wonder if we find a nearness, a meeting of God and man, which Matthew has very little of indeed. Be it that we have seen in Israel's King Immanuel, "God with us," this is at present more a prophecy than a real fulfillment, even as the salvation which He is come to effect is, all through, prevaillingly a thing to be worked out before it can be plainly spoken into man's ear and heart. We shall see a fuller statement and proof of this as we go on. But in Luke, even from the beginning of it, salvation is come. Zacharias, before the birth of the Lord, testifies of it as at hand. Simeon, with the babe in his arms, sees it as already here. And instead of great men coming a long distance to find the King of the Jews, no star, but rejoicing hosts in an open heaven preach of a Saviour which is Christ the Lord, of peace on earth, and God's delight in men.

Nor is it afar off, but nigh at hand—a gospel for the poor, free and available for all that come. Men need not to labor after it, but only to receive it—as

in the offerings for atonement, where no wild nor hunted animal was used, but the sin-offerings couched at the door. Thus spoke God's grace before, as yet, it could be plainly uttered. Now the hidden things are gone, and God is in the light forevermore.—*F. W. G.*

THE CHRISTIAN'S POSITION.

Heb. xii. 22-24.

FROM very familiarity with them, we may grow so accustomed to truths which "many prophets and kings desired to see and did not see," that they lose their power over us, and we forget we are dealing with things that will fill heaven with praise and all intelligent creation with wonder. Oh, how it shames us that we can go over a long list of blessings, brought to us through the sufferings of Christ, with our cold hearts but little moved by them! Could we have a better proof of our nature than this, and at the same time a more touching illustration of that "patient and forbearing love that never turns aside"?

Such thoughts are suggested by the subject before us. We can enumerate the blessings attached to the Christian's position, but how do they affect us? Not, let us trust, like Laodicea, saying, "I am rich;" rather like David, "Who am I?" The Father seeketh worshipers, and all the matchless grace shown to us is to end in that.

In the passage before us, we have an eightfold view of the Christian's position. The number is significant. It reminds us of new creation. "If any man be in Christ, it is new creation." We are on new ground, with new objects before us. These objects mentioned here are, (1) Mount Zion; (2) The

city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; (3) An innumerable company of angels, the general assembly; (4) The Church of the first-born, who are written in heaven; (5) God the Judge of all; (6) The spirits of just men made perfect; (7) Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant; (8) The blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

(1) Mount Zion is in contrast to Mount Sinai, the mount that might be touched; and if touched by beast or man, death was the penalty. Covered by blackness, darkness, and tempest, burning with fire, it was a fitting place for the giving out of that law which could only condemn the guilty. The awful trumpet announcing the presence of a holy God, the voice of words declaring what He required of man for obedience—no wonder even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." The effect of Sinai was, to drive the people away. The voice of God struck terror to their guilty souls, they did not want to hear it again. And that fear was but a sample of that more awful terror that shall fill the hearts of all who stand before the great white throne. On the other hand, Mount Zion was the place where David dwelt. The man whom God raised up to be king of His people when they had failed under the judges and under Saul. He was the man after God's own heart, a beautiful and striking type of Him who alone could give unmingled delight to God. Zion suggests grace and blessing in contrast with the law and cursing of Sinai. God might come to Sinai, He did not dwell there. Of Zion it is said, "In Judah is God known, in Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling-place in Zion." (Ps. lxxvi.) "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her, and the Highest Himself shall establish her." (Ps. lxxxvii.) "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion. . . . Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks." (Ps. xlviii.) "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest forever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it." (Ps. cxxxii.) These, from among many scriptures, show that Mount Zion is the centre of God's gracious dealings on earth. The prophet Isaiah dwells much upon the future glories of that now apparently forsaken and rejected place. We are said to have come to Mount Zion in contrast to the law. We are in the place of grace, where blessing is centered in Christ and dependent upon Him. It is earthly blessing that is first contemplated. Zion is the earthly centre. But how can Christians be said to have come to the place of earthly blessing? First, as we have seen, grace in contrast to law. Then, too, there is a real sense in which we of this dispensation shall share in the joys and glory of the earthly scene, though our portion is above.

(2) So we come next, most naturally to what is distinctive of us as Christians. The city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

(To be continued.)

"HE MAKETH ME TO LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES."

MAY God Himself expound this precious word to our hearts! Does He lead the flock to green pastures? Yes, but that is not the thought here. You do not lie down to feed, but to rest. He

first serves the needy soul, then *maketh* him to lie down, because he is satisfied.

He knows my restlessness, and the strength and the activity of nature.

The blood of Christ has set you down in God's most holy presence,—not as a *beggar*, but as a *worshiper*. Here, then, it is not *standing*, for that would speak of service; nor *walking*, for that would tell of journeying; nor *sitting*, that would be to learn; but you *lie down*, happy and contented; it is the figure of calm, quiet, full repose.

Then He leads the sheep beside still waters, or waters of quietness, for it is the joy of the Shepherd to conduct the troubled hearts of His own into peaceful scenes of communion. *There*, the flock, under the watchful eye, and guided by the skillful hand of the Shepherd, are led along the banks of that river where neither wave nor ripple disturb the ransomed of the Lord. Yet a little while, and the banks of the river of life, with its ever-summer fruit, will be trod by the unwearied feet of the flock. “They shall walk with *Me* in white, for they are worthy.”

(*Selected.*)

ON THE MORAL GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(*Continued from p. 237.*)

THIS knowledge of the Lord is truly blessed! It is divine! Flesh and blood does not give it, His kinsfolk had it not. They said of Him, when He was spending Himself in service, “He is beside Himself.” But faith makes great discoveries of Him, and acts upon such discoveries. It may seem to carry us beyond due bounds at times, beyond the things that are orderly and well measured; but in

God's esteem it never does. The multitude tell Bartimeus to hold his peace, but he will not; for he knows Jesus as Levi knows Him.

It is His full work that we are not prepared for, and yet therein is its glory. He meets us in all our need, but, at the same time, He brings God in. He healed the sick, but He preached the kingdom also. This, however, did not suit man. Strange this may appear, for man knows full well how to value his own advantages. He knows the joy of restored nature. But such is the enmity of the carnal mind against God, that if blessing come in company with the presence of God, it will not receive a welcome. And from Christ it could not come in any other way. He will glorify as well as relieve the sinner. God has been dishonored in this world, as man has been ruined in it—self-ruined; and the Lord, the repairer of the breach, is doing a perfect work—vindicating the name and truth of God, declaring His kingdom and its rights, and manifesting His glory, just as much as He is redeeming and quickening the lost, dead sinner.

This will not do for man. He would be well taken care of himself, and let the glory of God fare as it may. Such is man. But when, through faith, any poor sinner is otherwise minded, and can indeed rejoice in the glory of God, very beautiful is the sight. And we see such a one in the Syrophenician. The glory of the ministry of Christ addressed itself to her soul brightly and powerfully. Apparently, in spite of her grief, the Lord Jesus asserts God's principles, and, as a stranger, he passes her by. "I am not sent," he says, "but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. . . . It is not meet to take the children's

bread, and to cast it unto the dogs." But she bows, she owns the Lord as the steward of the truth of God, and would not for a moment suppose that He would surrender that trust (the truth and principles of God) to her and her necessities. She would have God be glorified according to His own counsels, and Jesus continue the faithful witness of those counsels, and the servant of the divine good pleasure, be it to herself as it may. "Truth, Lord," she answers, vindicating all that he had said; but, in full consistency with it, she adds, "yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."

All this is lovely—the fruit of divine light in her soul. The mother in Luke ii. is quite below this Gentile woman in Mark vii. She did not know that Jesus was to be about His Father's business, but this stranger knew that that was the very business He was always to be about. She would let God's way, in the faithful hand of Christ, be exalted, though she herself were thereby set aside, even in her sorrows.

This was knowledge of Him indeed; this was accepting Him in His *full* work, as one who stood for God in a world that had rebelled against Him, as well as for the poor worthless sinner that had destroyed himself.

It is not well to be always understood. Our ways and habits should be those of strangers, citizens of a foreign country, whose language, and laws, and customs are but poorly known here. Flesh and blood cannot appreciate them, and therefore it is not well with the saints of God when the world understands them.

His kinsfolk were ignorant of Jesus. Did the mother know Him when she wanted Him to display

His power, and provide wine for the feast? Did His brethren know Him when they said to Him, "If Thou do these things, show Thyself to the world." What a thought! an endeavor to lead the Lord Jesus to make Himself, as we say, "a man of the world!" Could there have been *knowledge of Him* in the hearts which indited such a thought as that? Most distant, indeed, from such knowledge they were, and therefore it is immediately added by the evangelist, "for neither did His brethren believe in Him." (John vii.) They understood His *power*, but not His *principles*; for, after the manner of men, they connect the possession of power or talents with the serving of a man's interest in the world.

But Jesus was the contradiction of this, as I need not say; and the worldly-minded kindred in the flesh could not understand Him. His principles were foreign to such a world. They were despised, as was David's dancing before the ark in the thoughts of a daughter of king Saul.

But what attractiveness there would have been in Him for any eye or heart that had been opened by the Spirit! This is witnessed to us by the apostles. They knew but little about Him *doctrinally*, and they got nothing by remaining with Him—I mean, nothing in this world. Their condition in the world was anything but improved by their walking with Him; and it cannot be said that they availed themselves of His miraculous power. Indeed, they questioned it, rather than used it. And yet they clung to Him. They did not company with Him because they eyed Him as the full and ready storehouse of all provisions for them. On no one occasion, I believe we may say, did they use the power that was in Him for

themselves. And yet, there they were with Him—troubled when He talked of leaving, and found weeping when they thought they had indeed lost Him.

Surely, we may again say, what attractiveness there must have been in Him for any eye or heart that had been opened by the Spirit, or drawn by the Father! And with what authority one look or one word from Him would enter at times! We see this in Matthew. That one word on the Lord's lips, "Follow me!" was enough. And this authority and this attractiveness was felt by men of the most opposite temperaments. The slow-hearted, reasoning Thomas, and the ardent, uncalculating Peter, were alike kept near this wondrous centre. Even Thomas would breathe in that presence the spirit of the earnest Peter, and say under force of this attraction, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

Shall we not say, What will it be to see and feel all this by and by in its perfection! when all, gathered from every clime, and color, and character, of the wide-spread human family—all nations, kindreds, peoples, and tongues, are with him and around him in a world worthy of Him! We may dwell, in memory, on these samples of His preciousness to hearts like our own, and welcome them as pledges of that which, in hope, is ours as well as theirs.

The light of God shines at times before us, leaving us, as we may have power, to discern it, to enjoy it, to use it, to follow it. It does not so much challenge us or exact of us; but, as I said, it shines before us, that we may reflect it, if we have grace. We see it doing its work after this manner in the early church at Jerusalem. The light of God there *exacted* nothing. It shone brightly and powerfully; but that was

all. Peter spoke the language of that light, when he said to Ananias, "While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power?" It had made no demands upon Ananias; it simply shone in its beauty beside him or before him, that he might walk in it according to his measure. And such, in a great sense, is the moral glory of the Lord Jesus. Our first duty to that light is to learn from it *what He is*. We are not to begin by anxiously and painfully measuring ourselves by it, but by calmly, and happily, and thankfully learning Him in all His perfect moral humanity. And surely this glory is departed! There is no living image of it here. We have its *record* in the evangelists, but not its *reflection* anywhere.

But having its record, we may say, as one of our own poets has said,

"There has one object been disclosed on earth
That might commend the place : but now 'tis gone :
Jesus is with the Father."

But though not here, beloved, He is just what He was. We are to know Him, as it were, by *memory*; and memory has no capacity to weave fictions; memory can only turn over living, truthful pages. And thus we know Him for His own eternity. In an eminent sense, the disciples knew Him *personally*. It was His person, His presence, Himself, that was their attraction. And if one may speak for others, it is more of this we need. We may be busy in acquainting ourselves with truths about Him, and we may make proficiency in that way; but with all our knowledge, and with all the disciples' ignorance, they may leave us far behind in the power of a commanding affection toward Himself. And surely, beloved, we

will not refuse to say that it is well when the heart is drawn by Him beyond what the knowledge we have of Him may account for. It tells us that He Himself has been rightly apprehended. And there are simple souls still that exhibit this; but generally it is not so. Nowadays our light, our acquaintance with truth, is beyond the measure of the answer of our heart to Himself. And it is painful to us, if we have any just sensibilities at all, to discover this.

"The prerogative of our Christian faith," says one, "the secret of its strength, is this: that all which it has, and all which it offers, is laid up in a *person*. This is what has made it strong, while so much else has proved weak: that it has a Christ as its middle point; that it has not a circumference without a centre; that it has not merely deliverance but a deliverer; not redemption only, but a redeemer as well. This is what makes it fit for wayfaring men. This is what makes it sunlight, and all else, when compared with it, but as moonlight; fair it may be, but cold and ineffectual, while here the light and the life are one." And again he says, "And, oh, how great the difference between submitting ourselves to a complex of rules, and casting ourselves upon a beating heart, between accepting a system, and cleaving to a person. Our blessedness—and let us not miss it—is, that our treasures are treasured in a person, who is not for one generation a present teacher and a living Lord, and then for all succeeding generations a past and a dead one, but who is present and living for all." Good words, and seasonable words, I judge indeed, I may say these are.

A great combination of like moral glories in the Lord's *ministry* may be traced, as well as in His char-

acter. And in ministry we may look at Him in relation to *God*, to *Satan*, and to *man*. As to *God*, the Lord Jesus, in His own person and ways, was always representing man to God, as God would have him. He was rendering back human nature as a sacrifice of rest, or of sweet savor, as incense pure and fragrant, as a sheaf of untainted first-fruits out of the human soil. He restored to God His complacency in man, which sin, or Adam, had taken from him. God's repentance that He had made man (Gen. vi. 6) was exchanged for delight and glory in man again. And this offering was made to God in the midst of all contradictions, all opposing circumstances, sorrows, fatigues, necessities, and heart-breaking disappointments. Wondrous altar! wondrous offering! A richer sacrifice it infinitely was than an eternity of Adam's innocency would have been. And as He was thus representing man to God, so was He representing God to man.

Through Adam's apostasy, God had been left without an image here; but now He gets a fuller, brighter image of Himself than Adam could ever have presented. Jesus was letting, not a fair creation, but a ruined, worthless world, know what God was, representing Him in grace, and saying, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the *Father*." He declared God. All that is of God, all that can be known of "the light" which no man can approach unto, has now passed before us in Jesus.

And again, in the ministry of Christ, looked at in relation to God, we find Him ever mindful of God's rights, ever faithful to God's truth and principles, while in the daily, unwearied actions of relieving man's necessities. Let human sorrow address Him

with what appeal it may, He never sacrificed or surrendered anything that was God's to it. "Glory to God in the highest" was heard over Him at His birth, as well as "on earth good-will to man;" and according to this, God's glory, all through His ministry, was as jealously consulted as the sinner's need and blessing were diligently served. The echo of those voices, "Glory to God," and "Peace on earth," was, as I may express it, heard on every occasion. The Syrophenician's case, already noticed, is a vivid sample of this. Till she took her place in relation to God's purposes and dispensations, He could do nothing for her; but then, everything.

Surely these are glories in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, in the relations of that ministry to God.

Then as to *Satan*. In the first place, and seasonably and properly so, the Lord meets him as a *tempter*. Satan sought in the wilderness to impregnate Him with those moral corruptions which he had succeeded in implanting in Adam and the human nature. This victory over the tempter was the needed righteous introduction to all His works and doings touching him. It was therefore the Spirit that led Him up to this action. As we read, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." Ere the Son of God could go forth and spoil the house of the strong man, He must bind him. (Matt. xii. 29.) Ere He could "reprove" the works of darkness, He must show that He had no fellowship with them. (Eph. v. 11.) He must withstand the enemy, and keep him outside Himself, ere He could enter his kingdom to destroy his works.

Jesus thus *silenced* Satan. He bound him. Satan

had to withdraw as a thoroughly defeated tempter. He could not get anything of his into Him; he rather found that all that was there was of God. Christ kept outside all that which Adam, under a like temptation, had let inside; and having thus stood the clean thing, He can go, under a perfect *moral* title, to reprove the unclean.

“Skin for skin,” the accuser may have to say of another, and like words that charge and challenge the common corrupted nature; but he had nothing to do, as an accuser of Jesus, before the throne of God. He was silenced.

Thus His relationship to Satan begins. Upon this, He enters his house and spoils his goods. This world is that house, and there the Lord, in His ministry, is seen effacing various and deep expressions of the enemy's strength. Every deaf or blind one healed, every leper cleansed, every work under His repairing hand, of whatsoever sort it was, was this. It was a spoiling of the goods of the strong man in his own house. Having already bound him, He now spoiled his goods. At last he yields to Him as the One that had “the power of death.” Calvary was the hour of the power of darkness. All Satan's resources were brought up there, and all his subtlety put forth; but he was overthrown. His captive was his conqueror. By death He destroyed him that had the power of it. He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The head of the serpent was bruised; as another has said, that “death and not man was without strength.”

Thus Jesus the Son of God was the *bruiser* of Satan, as before He had been his *binder* and his *spoiler*. But there is another moral glory that is seen to shine

in the ministry of Christ, in the relation it bears to Satan. I mean this: *He never allows him to bear witness to Him.* The testimony may be true, and, as we say, flattering, good words and fair words, such as, "I know Thee who Thou art, the holy One of God," but Jesus suffered him not to speak. For His ministry was as *pure* as it was gracious. He would not be helped in His ministry by that which He came to destroy. He could have no fellowship with darkness, in His service, any more than in His nature. He could not act on expediency, therefore rebuke and silencing of him was the answer he got to his testimony.* Then as to *man*, the moral glories which show themselves in the ministry of the Lord Jesus are bright and excellent indeed.

He was constantly *relieving and serving* man in all the variety of his misery; but He was as surely *exposing* him, showing him to have a nature fully departed from God in revolt and apostasy. But further: He was exercising him. This is much to be considered, though perhaps not so commonly noticed. In His teaching He exercised people in whatever relation to Himself they stood—disciples or the multitude, or those who brought their sorrows to Him, or those who were friendly, as I may call them, or those who, as enemies, were withstanding Him. The disciples He was continually putting through exercises of heart or conscience as He walked with them and taught them. This is so common that it need not be

* As far as the Lord's ministry in the gospel goes in relation to Satan, He is simply, as we have now seen, his binder, his spoiler, his bruiser. In the Apocalypse, we follow Him in further relations to the same adversary. There we see Him "casting him down from heaven;" then, in due season, "putting him in the bottomless pit;" and afterward "leaving him in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." (Rev. xii., xx.) We thus track His conquest over him from the wilderness of the temptation to the lake of fire.

instanced. The multitude who followed Him He would treat likewise. "Hear and understand," He would say to them; thus exercising their own minds as He was teaching them.

To some who brought their sorrows to Him He would say, "Believe ye that I can do this?" or such like words. The Syrophenician is an eminent witness to us how He exercised this class of persons.

Addressing the friendly Simon in Luke vii., after telling him the story of the man who had two debtors, "Tell me," says He, "therefore, which of them will love him most?"

The Pharisees, His unwearied opposers, He was in like manner constantly calling into exercise. And there is such a voice in this, such a witness of what He is. It tells us that He was not performing summary judgment for them, but would fain lead them to repentance: and so, in calling disciples into exercise, he tells us that we learn His lessons only in a due manner, as far as we are drawn out, in some activity of understanding, heart, or conscience, over them. This exercising of those He was either leading or teaching is surely another of the moral glories which marked His ministry. But further: in His ministry toward man we see Him frequently as a *reprover*, needfully so, in the midst of such a thing as the human family; but His way in reproving shines with excellency that we may well admire. When He was rebuking the Pharisees, whom *worldliness* had set in opposition to Him, He uses a very solemn form of words: "He that is not with Me is against Me." But when He is alluding to those who owned Him and loved Him, but who needed further strength of faith or measure of light, so as to be in

full company with Him, He spake in other terms: "He that is not against us is for us."

We notice Him again in this character in Matt. xx., in the case of the ten and the two brethren. How does he temper His rebuke because of the good and the right that were in those whom He had to rebuke? And in this He takes a place apart from His heated disciples, who would not have had their two brethren spared in any measure. He patiently sits over the whole material, and separates the precious from the vile that was in it.

So He is heard again as a reprover in the case of John, forbidding any to cast out devils in His name, if they would not walk with them. But at that moment John's spirit had been under chastening. In the light of the Lord's preceding words, he had been making discovery of the mistake he had committed, and he refers to that mistake, though the Lord Himself had in no way alluded to it. But this being so, John having already a sense of his mistake, and artlessly letting it tell itself out, the Lord deals with it in the greatest gentleness. (See Luke ix. 46-50.)

So as to the Baptist: the Lord rebukes him with marked consideration. He was in prison then. What a fact that must have been in the esteem of the Lord at that moment! But he was to be rebuked for having sent a message to his Lord that reproached Him. But the delicacy of the rebuke is beautiful. He returns a message to John which none but John himself could estimate: "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me." Even John's disciples, who carried the message between him and the Lord, could not have understood this. Jesus would expose John to himself, but neither to his disciples nor to the world.

So, further, His rebuke of the two of Emmaus, and of Thomas after the resurrection, each has its own excellency. Peter, both in Matt. xvi. and xvii., has to meet rebuke; but the rebuke is very differently ministered on each occasion.

But all this variety is full of moral beauty; and we may surely say, whether His style be peremptory or gentle, sharp or considerate; whether rebuke on His lips be so reduced as to be scarcely rebuke at all, or so heightened as almost to be the language of repulse and disclaimer; still, when the occasion is weighed, all this variety will be found to be but various perfections. All these His reproofs were "earrings of gold, and ornaments of fine gold," whether hung or not upon "obedient ears." (Prov. xxv. 12.) "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." (Psalm cxli. 5.) Surely the Lord gave His disciples to prove this.

J. G. B.

(Concluded in our next.)

THE BELIEVING MIND.

O H, the Believing mind,
 That sets the Lord above
 The failure of my heart and hand
 In constancy of love:
 Impart it, Lord, to me;
 Each moment may it reign,
 In all its calm and brightness there,
 My spirit's realm within!

Should busy mem'ry wake
 The slumbers of the past,
 And o'er a present cloudless sky
 Some gloomy shadow cast,

Then let believing thought
 Arrest for Thee the place;
 Fill the whole region of my soul
 With glories of thy grace!

Should fear, with fruitful skill,
 Image my days to come,
 And bear my trembling footsteps on
 Through dangers, snares, and gloom,
 My faith, then eye the bow
 Which spans the distant cloud,
 And pledges safety to the end,
 Though tempests surge around!

Let faith, with clear, calm light,
 Thus measure all my days;
 Keep my whole soul in constant peace,
 And give it thoughts of praise:
 In converse, Lord, with Thee,
 My Saviour, Guardian, Friend,
 While onward still to glory's home
 My guided footsteps tend!—*J. G. Bellett.*

CURRENT EVENTS.

THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS.

[We gladly insert the following from the *New York Sun* on the Parliament of Religions now in session at the World's Fair, Chicago;—a well deserved rebuke, even from the editor of a newspaper.]

IF the so-called Parliament of Religions at Chicago is for any other purpose than to be a sensational side show to the big Fair, it is a purely agnostic purpose. It is to destroy the old conviction that there is a single absolute true and perfect religion revealed from God, and to substitute for it the agnostic theory that no religious belief is more than an expression of the universal and ceaseless effort of men to discover the undiscoverable. It is that men's Gods are of their own making, and that they are improved and finally discarded according as the manufacturers grow in enlightenment.

How, then, can Christians consistently join in any such polytheistic symposium as that now proceeding at Chicago? If Christianity is not the sole true and perfect religion, and if all others are not consequently false and pernicious, it is based on delusion. If it is not merely the best, but also the only religion whereby men can be saved, it is an imposture. If it contains only a part of the truth, sharing that priceless possession with many other religions, its source is not as it proclaims itself to be. Christianity is either the sole and complete revelation of divine truth from God Himself, and hence the only and absolute truth, or it is a fabrication of men, the more worthless because it seeks to bolster itself up by false pretences. If God did not come down from heaven and take on the form of a man in order to show man the only way to salvation, thereby making all other religions false and profane, Christian theology is a sham: it is built on fiction.

That being so, Christianity cannot argue with other religions and compromise with them, accepting something and giving something. It can only say, 'This is the truth of God, uttered by God Himself, and there is no other religious truth possible. Accept it or reject it at the peril of your soul. God does not argue with men. He commands and they must obey: and Christianity is that divine command, or it is no more than a delusion and a superstition. If it is not divine and absolute, but uncertain human groping for truth like other religions, the story of the incarnation and the resurrection is a fable and the doctrine of the atonement is a myth.

How, then, can Christians come together with Buddhists, Brahmans, Mohammedans, Jews, and Zoroastrians to discuss their religion with them on equal terms? How can they treat them otherwise than as infidels who are the surer of damnation because they have seen the light of heaven and turned away from it?

In Chicago hospitality to all religions indicates agnostic indifference to them all.—(*New York Sun.*)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir*: The writer is pleased to see that there is at least one great newspaper that has formed correct views of the "Parliament of

Religions," and was not afraid to express them, as shown by an article in last Sunday's issue of *THE SUN*. Permit me to add that this hydra of religions, brought together at the earnest request of so called Christians, is not an evidence of growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; but the contrary. It is manifestly a retrograde movement, and a falling away from "the faith once delivered to the saints." The blind leaders are turning away the hearts of the people from the truth, and they are being turned unto fables. They are even by word and conduct denying the foundation of all that is Christian, that is, the cross of Christ. For I speak advisedly when I say that the conditions of admission to this so-called Parliament of Religions are that the death of Jesus on the cross as a satisfaction to justice for the sins of the world should not be mentioned.

The offence of the cross has not ceased then, for we have the pitiable spectacle of men while professing to be Christians denying their Redeemer. The heathen and Mohammedan religions represented will not be slow to think that Christians themselves regard the vicarious atonement of Jesus as too foolish to be mentioned, and they will reason that Jesus is no more to the Christian than Buddha to the Buddhist or Mohammed to the Mohammedan. But if Jesus be no more than these or more than all other such, He was an imposter; for He said He "came into the world that the world through Him might be saved." He said further, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by Me." "He that climbeth up any other way is a thief and a robber," and further, He was "the good Shepherd that layeth down His life for the sheep."

Then to Christians worthy of the name there is but one way. There is but "one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Therefore they cannot fellowship with or compromise with any other system of religion; but must reprove and enlighten them.—*S. O. Blunden.*

(Continued from page 261.)

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

2. *The Announcement of the King (Chap. ii.).*

THE magi are warned of God, in a dream, not to return to Herod; and they depart into their own country another way. Then Joseph is similarly warned of impending danger, and flees by divine direction, with the young child and his mother, into Egypt. There is no manifest display of power made. The angels that appeared to announce a Saviour do not now reappear to guard the infant King. Everything marks that He has come to take no exceptional place in this way, as distinct from the common lot of men. Nay, it is a necessity of the work which He has come to do that He should stoop to this; and in subjection to these human conditions manifest His exaltation above fallen man. Prophecy, however, has marked Him out all through; and it is that it might be fulfilled that He goes down to Egypt.

But just here we have what calls for special examination. The prophecy to be fulfilled is that of Hosea (ch. xi. 1): "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." But this, at first sight, does not seem to be a prophecy at all; and certainly not a prophecy of Christ. Any one looking at it would say it was simply a rebuke of Israel as a nation, for repaying with apostasy and Baal-worship the love which God had shown in their redemption of old. He had taken them out of their bondage and misery, and called them to adoption as His own family among the fam-

ilies of the earth. But how had they repaid it? "As [the prophets] called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed to Baalam, and burned incense to graven images." This, of course, could only speak of Israel as a nation.

And yet the application to the Lord of the first verse is no *mere* application. It is not that such a thing took place now in relation to Him who was Son of God by a fuller title, to that which had taken place in regard to His "first-born" Israel. The manner of quotation is much too precise for that. Evidently there is here a far deeper view of prophecy than we are accustomed to. It is common to say that there is here an example of typical prophecy; but we must understand what we mean if we say this. For certainly it could be only in fragments of the national history that there could be any typical reference to the Lord; and what follows in the prophet indicates only entire and emphatic contrast, as we have seen. We must have, therefore, some guiding truth to enable us to distinguish, with any certainty, what is typical and what is not.

Now in Isaiah xlix. we have such a principle: for of whom is it written, "Jehovah has called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother has He made mention of my name, . . . and said unto me, Thou art my servant, *O Israel*, in whom I will be glorified"? This, one would say, must be the nation; but immediately we hear a Voice that is *not* the nation's: "Then I said, I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with Jehovah, and my work with my God."

Now notice the claim: "And now, saith Jehovah,

that formed ME *from the womb to be His Servant*, to bring Jacob again to Him, Though Israel be *not* gathered, yet shall I be glorious in Jehovah's eyes, and my God shall be my strength. And He said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be My Servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the ends of the earth."

Here, to a Christian, there can be no doubt of the application. It is Christ *alone* who fulfills this. But thus He is also the true *Servant*, formed from the womb, and the *Israel* in whom God will be glorified. Here Christ and Israel are both identified and distinguished at the same time. Israel, that had failed utterly,—failed even in hearing this glorious Person when He came,—Israel comes to fulfill its destiny only in and through Christ, who comes of Israel; who is (according to the prophetic language) the lowly "Shoot" from the cut down "stem of Jesse," the "Branch" that should "grow out of his roots"; and upon whom, in full complacency, and in seven-fold power, "the Spirit of Jehovah" was to "rest." (Isa. xi.) In Him, the "Son born" to them, Israel nationally is yet to revive. His glory involves their blessing. He begins anew for God their history, purged of its failure and its shame, and thus the necessary application of such passages as that in Hosea, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son."

Yet how differently is it fulfilled in these two cases? For Him there could be no captivity, no "house of bondage." For them this had been the discipline needed, the furnace because of the dross that the Refiner must purge out. Typically, for us all, it

speaks of the bondage to sin in our natural state, out of which a divine voice alone can call us. For Him, of all this there was nothing,—could be nothing. Egypt shelters, not ensnares, nor takes captive. He had no natural state to be delivered from. The world of Nature, had He desired it, would have yielded Him all it had. The Voice that called Him out of it, called Him but to the work for which He had come; and so the “favor” even “with man” (Luke ii. 52) was exchanged for rejection, as also for one dread hour the “favor with God” was eclipsed in the darkness of abandonment, only to shine out, however, immediately, in the glory of the resurrection and return to heaven.

All, then, should be clear as to the application of Hosea. The next quotation in this chapter, that from Jeremiah, which speaks of Rachel’s weeping over her dead, is introduced after a very different manner, “*then* was fulfilled,” not “that it might be.” This is really but an application. When Bethlehem mourned her babes slaughtered by Herod, then it was as if Rachel, from her grave close by, were repeating her lamentation. But Rachel must be comforted here also, in a deeper way than in the prophet. He had escaped, who by and by would freely offer Himself to redeem from the power of the grave, and bring back to a better life.

But the days of the Edomite were drawing to an end; and soon the angel of the Lord appeared once more in a dream to Joseph, with words that brought back those that set the face of Moses, the deliverer, toward the people to whom he was commissioned: “they are dead that sought the young child’s life.” But only one tyrant had succeeded another, so that

they do not return to Judea, where Archelaus had begun his short but cruel reign, but into Galilee; and they came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth. In this, too, prophecy was fulfilled,—not a specific one, but the tenor of the prophets generally: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Galilee means “circle,” or “circuit”; and here was the place in which, though but for a short time, through the unbelief that rejected Him, Israel's lost blessings were to return more gloriously. It was called, as elsewhere stated, “Galilee of the Gentiles,” because so full of Gentiles. There the ruin of the people, therefore, was most plainly to be seen; and thus it was the fitting place for grace to be shown. It would be most manifestly grace. So when the child returns, the land is as it were claimed once more—the only place in the New Testament where the expression is used—as “the land of *Israel*.” Such it shall be yet, when it shall be owned as “Immanuel's land.”

And this connects with what we had before; and that to which our attention is once again, and more distinctly called, in this summing up of various prophecies: “He shall be called a Nazarene.” This was, of course, a name actually given the Lord; and generally in scorn, from the place in which so large a proportion of His life on earth was spent. Nazareth was in no good repute, especially among the Pharisees and traditionalists. It had no memories, no history, was consecrated by no great names; and its own name—which seems to have been but a feminine form of *netzer*, a “sprout,” or “shoot,”—may even refer to this. It was thus expressive of lowliness, if yet of life, and identical with the word in Isaiah xi. 1,

where Messiah is spoken of as the "rod" or "shoot out of the stem of Jesse"; and here His greatness and His lowliness are seen together.

The stem is cut down: it is better characterized as that of Jesse than of David; and thus the Son of David comes into no outward state or glory, but the opposite. Yet He comes to revive, and more than revive. He is the "righteous Branch" of Jeremiah (xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 15), and Zechariah's Branch, Jehovah's Servant, who builds the temple of Jehovah, and bears the glory (ch. vi. 12). His stooping is in love and service,—even to death, because His work is resurrection. How great and wonderful is this lowliness, when once we penetrate his real character!—how necessary when once we have understood the need to relieve which He came!

Here, then, is the key to His whole position: for this Branch is to reign, and be a Priest upon His throne. Not Israel's burden only is He lifting, but our own. For Israel, in their long probation, in which they failed so utterly, were only the representatives of men,—of all men,—our's; and therefore ours also is the royal Saviour. And this expression—"the Nazarene"—implies all this. Thus He is "called" this, from opposite sides, for opposite reasons. Those who would dishonor Him, those who would honor Him, here unite together. The cross is a death of shame; but it is His glory. Up in the glory of heaven, amid the universal homage there, stands "a Lamb as it had been slain."

F. W. G.

“BY, THROUGH, FOR.”

THESE three prepositions give us in the fullest way the place of the Son of God in relation to creation, so that every whisper of unbelief as to His divine dignity and glory must be hushed. “All things were created *by* Him.” (Col. i. 16.) Here the source of all creation is given. It is divine, and Christ is the creator—therefore divine. It was in His own power that this was done; His self-existence and sufficiency are here asserted. This creation includes all beings and all worlds, things visible and invisible; thrones, dominions, and powers. This is God.

“All things were created *through* Him.” He was the divine instrument used in creation. God the Father and the Spirit were undoubtedly associated with the Son in that work. The Son, however, was the executor of it all. “Without Him was not anything made that was made.” Knowing His absolute divinity, we are in no danger now in learning His share in the work. He was not the highest of created beings, who was the mouthpiece of God; but God Himself.

“All things were created *for* Him.” He who was once crucified, who is still rejected by the world, will one day be manifested as Lord over all. All creation will own Him then. The whole universe exists for Him.

And it is of this blessed, adorable One that we can say, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins,” and “This is my beloved, and this is my friend.” For He has become man, died, and risen again, that He might be that to us.

(Continued from p. 277.)

ON THE MORAL GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now traced some of the features of the moral glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. He represented man to God—man as he ought to be, and God rested in him.

This moral perfectness of the man Christ Jesus, and God's acceptance of Him, was signified by the meat-offering, that cake of fine flour, which was baked either in oven, pan, or frying-pan, with its oil and its frankincense. (Lev. ii.)

When the Lord Jesus was here, and thus manifested as man to God, God's delight in Him was ever expressing itself. He grew up before Him in human nature, and in the exhibition of all human virtues; and He needed nothing at any one moment to commend Him but Himself, just as He was. In His person and ways man was morally glorified, so that when the end, or perfection, of His course came, He could go "straightway" to God, as the sheaf of first-fruits of old was taken directly and immediately, just as it was, out of the field, needing no process to fit it for the presence and acceptance of God. (Lev. xxiii. 10.) The title of Jesus to glory was a *moral* one. He had a moral right to be glorified; his title was in Himself. John xiii. 31, 32 is the blessed setting forth of this in its due connection. "Now is the Son of Man glorified," the Lord there says, just as Judas had left the table; for that action of Judas was the sure precursor of the Lord's being taken by the Jews, and that was the sure precursor of His being put to death by the Gentiles. And the cross being the

completeness and perfection of the full form of moral *glory in Him*, it was at this moment He utters these words, "Now is the Son of Man glorified." Then He adds, "and God is glorified in Him."

God was as perfectly glorified then as the Son of Man was, though the glory was another glory. The Son of Man was glorified then by His *completing* that full form of moral beauty which had been shining in Him all through His life. Nothing of it was then to be wanting, as nothing from the beginning up to that late hour had ever mingled with it that was unworthy of it. The hour was then at hand when it was to shine out in the very last ray that was to give it its full brightness. But God was also glorified then, because all that was of Him was either maintained or displayed. His rights were maintained, His goodness displayed. Mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, were alike and equally either satisfied or gratified. God's truth, holiness, love, majesty, and all beside were magnified in a way, and illustrated in a light, beyond all that could ever have been known of them elsewhere. The cross, as one has said, is the moral wonder of the universe.

But then, again, the Lord adds, "If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself; and shall straightway glorify Him." This is His recognition of His own title to personal glory. He had already perfected the full form of *moral* glory through life and in death. He had also vindicated God's glory, as we have seen. Therefore it was but a righteous thing that He should now enter on *His own personal* glory. And this He did when He took His place in heaven, at the right hand of the majesty

there, as in company with God Himself, and all that at once, or "straightway."

God's work as Creator had been quickly soiled in man's hand. Man had ruined himself; so that it is written, "God repented that he had made man." (Gen. vi.) A terrible change in the Divine mind since the day when God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good! (Gen. i.) But in the Lord Jesus the Divine complacency in man was restored.

This was blessed! and the more acceptable, as we may say, from the previous repentance. It was more than first enjoyment, it was recovery after loss and disappointment; and that, too, in a way exceeding the first. And as the first man, upon his sin, had been put *outside* creation, as I may say, this second man (being, as He also was, "the Lord from heaven"), upon His glorifying of God, was seated *at the head* of creation, at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Jesus is in heaven as a glorified man because here on earth God had been glorified in Him as the obedient One in life and death. He is there, indeed, in other characters. Surely we know that. He is there as a Conqueror, as an Expectant, as the High Priest in the tabernacle which God has pitched, as our Forerunner, and as the Purger of our sins. But He is there also, in the highest heavens glorified, because in Him God had been here on earth glorified.

Life and glory were His by personal right and by moral title. One delights to dwell on such a truth, to repeat it again and again. He never forfeited the garden of Eden. Truly indeed did He walk outside it all His days, or amid the thorns and briers, the

sorrows and privations, of a ruined world. But this He did in grace. He took such a condition upon Him; but He was not exposed to it. He was not, like Adam, like us all, on one side of the cherubim and the flaming sword, and the tree of life and the garden of Eden on the other. In His history, instead of angels keeping Him outside or beyond the gate, when He had gone through His temptation they come and minister to Him. For He stood where Adam failed and fell. Therefore, man as He was, verily and simply man, He was this distinguished man. God was glorified in Him, as in all beside He had been dishonored and disappointed.

In one sense, this perfectness of the Son of man, this moral perfectness, is all for us. It lends its savor to the blood which atones for our sins. It was as the cloud of incense which went in to the presence of God, together with the blood, on the day of atonement. (Lev. xvi.)

But in another sense this perfection is too much for us. It is high; we cannot attain to it. It overwhelms the moral sense as far as we look at it in the recollection of what we *ourselves* are, while it fills us with admiration as far as we look at it as telling us what *He* is. The personal judicial glory, when displayed of old, was overwhelming. The most favored of the children of men could not stand before it, as Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; and Peter and John experienced the same. And this moral glory, in like manner exposing us, is overwhelming.

Faith, however, is at home in the presence of it. The god of this world blinds the mind to the apprehension and joy of it; but faith welcomes it. Such are the histories of it here among men. In the pres-

ence of it Pharisees and Sadducees together asked for a sign from heaven. The mother, through vanity, mistakes it, and the brethren of the Lord through worldliness. (John ii. 7.) Disciples themselves are under constant rebuke from it. The oil-olive beaten for this light was too pure for any; but it was ever burning in the sanctuary, or "before the Lord." The synagogue at Nazareth strikingly lets us learn the unpreparedness of man for it. They owned the gracious words which proceeded out of the Lord's lips; they felt the power of them. But quickly a strong current of nature's corruption set in and withstood this movement in their hearts, and overcame it. God's humbled, self-emptied witness, in the midst of a proud, revolted world, was discovered; and this would not do for them. Let "Joseph's son" speak as He may, good words and comfortable words, He will not be accepted—He is a carpenter's son. (Luke iv.) It is wonderful—wonderful witness of the deep, inlaid corruption. Man has his amiabilities, his taste, his virtues, his sensibilities, as this scene at Nazareth, in Luke iv., may tell us. The gracious words of Jesus raised a current of good feeling for a moment; but what was it all, and where was it all, when God tested it? Ah, beloved, we may still say, in spite of this, our amiability and respectability, our taste and emotions, that in us (that is, in our flesh) "dwelleth no good thing!"

But again, I say, faith is at home with Jesus. Can we, I ask, treat such a One with fear or suspicion? Can we doubt Him? Could we have taken a distant place from Him who sat at the well with the woman of Sychar? Did she herself take such a place? Surely, beloved, we should seek intimacy

with Him. The disciples who companied with Him have to learn their lessons again and again. We know something of this. They had to make discovery of Him afresh, instead of enjoying Him as already discovered. In the fourteenth of Matthew they had to cry out, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God!" This was discovering Him afresh. Had their faith been simple, they would have slept in the boat with Him. What a scene it was, to their shame and His glory! They spoke insultingly or reproachfully to the Lord, as though He were indifferent to their danger: "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" He awoke at the sound of their voice, and at once set them in safety. But then, He rebukes them, not, however, for the injustice their hard words had done Him, but for their want of faith.

How perfect was this! How perfect, surely, was everything; and each in its generation!—the human virtues, the fruits of the anointing that was on Him, and His divine glories. The natures in the one Person are unconfused; but the effulgence of the divine is chastened, the homeliness of the human is elevated. There is nothing like this, there could be nothing like this, in the whole creation. And yet the human was human, and the divine was divine. Jesus slept in the boat: He was man. Jesus quelled the winds and the waves: He was God.

This moral glory must shine. Other glories must give place till this is done. The Greeks, who had come to worship in Jerusalem at the feast, inquire after Jesus, desiring to see Him. This savored of the kingdom, or of the royal glory of the Messiah. It was a sample of that day when the nations shall come up to the city of the Jews to keep holy day,

and when, as King in Zion, He shall be Lord of all and God of the whole earth.

But there was a secret deeper than this. It needs a juster sense of God's way than simply to be expecting a kingdom. The Pharisees needed that, when in Luke xvii. they asked the Lord when the kingdom should appear. He had to tell them of another kingdom, which they did not apprehend—a kingdom *within*, a present kingdom, which had to be entered and known ere the glorious manifested kingdom could appear. The disciples needed it in Acts i., when they asked their Lord if He would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel. He had to tell them, also, of another thing ere the restoration could take place—that they were to be gifted by the Spirit for testimony to Him all the world over.

So here in John xii. The Lord lets us know that *moral glory* must precede the kingdom. He will surely shine in the glory of the throne by and by, and the Gentiles shall then come to Zion, and see the King in His beauty; but ere that could be, the moral glory must be displayed in all its fullness and unsulliedness. And this was His thought now, when the Gentiles had inquired after Him. “The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified.” This was His moral glory, as we have said before, in John xiii. 31, 32. It had been shining all through His ways, from His birth hitherto; His death was to be the completeness of it; and therefore the hour was then at hand when it was to shine out in the last ray that was to form it and give it perfection. The Lord thus supplies or introduces on this occasion, as He did, as we have seen, in Luke xvii. and in Acts i., the truth, the additional truth, which needs the rich-

er, juster sense of God's ways to apprehend. The moral glory must be fully displayed ere Messiah can show Himself in royal glory to the ends of the earth.

It is, however, His, and His only. How infinitely distant from one's heart is any other thought! When the heavens opened, in Acts x., the sheet was seen descending ere Peter was commanded to have fellowship with it, or ere it ascended and was lost or hid again on high. The contents of it had to be cleansed, or sanctified. But when the heaven was opened, in Matt. iii., Jesus on earth needed not to be taken up to be approved there, but voices and visions from on high sealed and attested Him just as He was. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

And when the heavens were opened again, as in Matt. xxvii., that is, when the vail of the temple was rent in twain, all was finished, nothing more was needed, the work of Jesus was sealed and attested just as it then was. An opened heaven at the beginning shone out in the full acceptance of His *person*; an opened heaven at the end shone out in full acceptance of His *work*.

And let me close in saying that it is blessed and happy, as well as part of our worship, to mark the characteristics of the Lord's way and ministry here on the earth, as I have been seeking in measure to do in this paper; for all that He did and said, all His service, whether in the substance or the style of it, is the witness of what He was, and He is the witness to us of what God is. And thus we reach God, the blessed One, through the paths of the Lord Jesus, in the pages of the evangelists. Every step of that way becomes important to us. All that He did and said was a real, truthful expression of Himself, as He

Himself was a real, truthful expression of God. And if we can understand the character of His ministry, or read the moral glory that attaches to each moment and each particular of His walk and service here on earth, and so learn what He is, and thus learn what God is, we reach God, in certain and unclouded knowledge of Him, through the ordinary paths and activities of the life of this divine Son of man.

THE THRICE-BLESSED MAN.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.—Ps. xxxii. 1.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. . . . but his delight is in the law of the Lord.—Ps. i. 1, 2.

Blessed is he that considereth the poor.—Ps. xli. 1.

ALL the world is in pursuit of happiness. Some are seeking it in wealth; others in power and a great name; while the vast proportion think they will find it in pleasure. This pursuit of happiness is an unconscious confession on man's part that he does not possess it; "for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" So, what a man possesses why does he yet seek for? Ah, beneath all the hurry of business, the rivalry of contending parties, and the shout of merry-making, there is the hungry heart that longs to be satisfied, and is not. In bright contrast to the hunger—a hunger too proud to turn to One who alone can satisfy it,—we have the happiness of the child of God set before us here, its fullness suggested and its fruits manifested in this threefold view. Though taken from the Psalms,

Israel's book, this blessedness is the common portion of all the people of God, brought out indeed into clearer relief through the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

We have first the blessedness of forgiveness. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." This comes first, whether we look at God's desire to bless, or man's need of blessing; for as to the former, His love is always in holiness, and how can a holy God bless a guilty sinner without a sacrifice of His righteousness, unless all the claims of that righteousness have been perfectly met? As to the need of the sinner, what would be a blessing if forgiveness were withheld? Would possession of all earthly and heavenly things satisfy a guilty soul? Nay, would not all other blessings apart from this but aggravate his misery? So when God begins with a soul, this is the first blessing He bestows. It is the kiss with which He meets the repentant prodigal "when he was yet a great way off." Of the fullness of this forgiveness, there is perhaps little need to speak here, save for the joy it ever brings to the heart. "Having forgiven you *all* trespasses." Who can go behind that *all*? Satan with his ingenuity to suggest, and our poor hearts with their willingness to receive doubts, are both silent before that word. Nor does its fullness apply to sins in number merely, but to time as well. As to the past, all trespasses have been forgiven; as to the present "being justified by faith, we *have* peace with God"; as to the future, "he *shall* not come into judgment,"—he is in a forgiven state, in a position to which forgiveness attaches.

All this is the more clearly understood and enjoyed

when we look at the *grounds* of this forgiveness. The word for "covered" is also that for making atonement—the true and only covering. When man covers sin, it only brings misery: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long, . . . my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." How different when God covers it! It is done on the ground of righteousness, of expiation by Another. The blood upon the mercy seat—"the covering"—told of a sacrifice which had been offered and accepted. Upon that ground the priest, as representing the people, could enter into God's presence for them, and not die; and come out of that presence as God's representative to bless. The reality of all this is blessedly familiar to us, who know that Christ now appears in the presence of God for us, as our representative, having first as that been made sin for us; nay, that we ourselves have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus"; who also know that the Holy Ghost has come out to us the witness of our acceptance and the bearer of heavenly gifts to us. Truly we may say "*blessed* is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

But God does not leave a man merely forgiven, as we well know, nor does salvation make us fit for heaven while leaving us unfit for earth. In days of looseness we need to guard all points. The freeness of the gospel is attacked, but there are also not wanting those who would "turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness." But how careful is God's word to guard against any such misuse of grace. "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, . . . of the which I tell you before, as I have also told

you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. v. 19-21.) "For this ye know that no whoremonger, nor unclean person . . . hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words." (Eph. v. 5, 6.) "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) Here we have a solemn and concurrent testimony from three epistles most unlike in their contents and points of view. Galatians was written to those in danger of going back to law; Ephesians to those "faithful in Christ Jesus," who could appreciate the fullness of blessing, both for the individual and the church, which is unfolded in that epistle; while Corinthians treats of disorders in a church where grace was known and gifts enjoyed, but all was abused. Yet from whatever viewpoint, the judgment is the same, the testimony identical. And so it is with all Scripture: the *walk* in this world is of the utmost importance.

Now in our second Scripture this is pressed. "Blessed is the man that *walketh* not in the counsel of the ungodly. . . . but his delight is in the law of the Lord."

The child of God is here described in two ways—negatively and positively. He is separated from evil—"cease to do evil"; then occupied with good—"learn to do well." It is a familiar truth that we are formed by our associations: it needs no proof, only exhortation that we take it to heart. In all its forms, intercourse with the ungodly is forbidden,—whether walking, standing, or sitting, indicating the various grades of intimacy. Christ is our example. If he was "the friend of sinners," He was

also "separate from sinners." We need not add that heart separation is meant. There is no conceivable way in which God's children can break down the wall of separation between them and the world, without peril to their souls. No link of business or religion, social or political, between God's children and the world is contemplated in Scripture. We can be and should be kind, helpful, and gracious; but "the plowing of the wicked is sin," and the unequal yoke will sooner or later gall the neck of him who wears it. We cannot too strongly impress this upon the young Christian. How many bright lights have grown dim through neglect of it! How many happy hearts have grown heavy!

But God does not deal in mere negations. If we are to free ourselves from that which defiles, it is that we may be engaged with that which is good. And what a place is here given to the Scriptures: "his delight is in the law of the Lord." In a day when God's word is being attacked and doubted, we need to be recalled to it. "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name," above all else that declares God—His works, His providence, His judgments. God's word is God speaking to us, showing us His mind and the thoughts of His heart. Do we *delight* in it? Is it a constant and growing pleasure to dwell upon it? Is it our one book, studied, held up in every light, fed upon, meditated upon? The danger is not so much that we will know the Bible intellectually only, as that we will not know it well. Let us read it as never before. Let our thoughts be upon it "day and night," our opinions formed by it, our path marked by it. What do we know of it

as yet? The best instructed will reply, "but little." And yet it lies open to us, inviting our search into it and assuring us that we will be most richly rewarded.

Of the results of this delight in God's word and the fruits of meditating upon it, we need only look at the tree planted by the rivers of water—fresh in leaf and yielding seasonable fruit. Is it thus with us?

Man was made for God, and can never be truly at rest until he is with God. We know what a sense of loneliness comes over us if we have man only before us. Not even the word of God, did it not bring us into intimate fellowship with Himself, could do away with this sense of loneliness. The heart craves an object, and that object must be a living person. We are reminded of this by the last quotation at the head of this paper, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor."

In the psalm just preceding this (Ps. lx.), and which unquestionably refers to the Lord Jesus, who came to do God's will by the sacrifice of Himself, and who was brought low, even into the "horrible pit and miry clay," we hear Him saying, "I am poor and needy." "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich" (in glory and in honor) "yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich." Christ is the poor Man whom it is blessed to consider. Are we tempted to murmur? Consider the poor Man, stripped of all,—poor in life, infinitely poor in death, as deprived of the smile of God,—consider all that He was deprived of, and can we murmur? Are we tempted to be envious, vainglorious? Again the

divine remedy is in the consideration of that poor Man who did not clutch at that which was His right—to be equal with God—but resigned it all and took a servant's form; and where is the vain-glory? If the Son of God has taken the lowest place, who dare take a higher? Oh, as we “survey the wondrous cross,” envy, vainglory vanish; we learn, in the light of that self-abasement, to “pour contempt on all our pride.”

Would not we realize more what true blessedness is did we have our adorable Lord more constantly before our souls? Beds of languishing would be turned into places of worship did we thus consider the poor.

How full a blessing we thus have—forgiveness to give peace and liberty; the word of God and a narrow path to enjoy it in; and above all a precious Saviour and Lord, who has come very near to us, and would constantly be drawing our hearts nearer to Himself. May He give all His dear people to know increasingly what a *blessed* portion we have.

A FATAL KISS.

ALL Scripture combines in teaching us our need of constant watchfulness and dependence upon God, if we are to be here for Him in a true way, and of any real service to others.

The Lord's people so often think (or appear to) that they know better ways of serving His interests, they easily turn aside to their own way, only, alas! to prove in the end the bitter misery of it. This only betrays where we really are, and how far and

how fast we depart at times from the way of faith and patience and true waiting upon God.

Absalom had sinned (2 Sam. xiii). He had sinned with deliberate and wicked purpose; and, as a consequence, was outside the privileges of Israel, and away from all the happy associations of his father's presence. He dwelt in Geshur, among a judged people. (1 Sam. xxvii. 8.) His sin was against the throne of David, as well as against his brethren; yet David's heart was toward him,—open, we may surely say, day and night, for the repentance and return of the self-willed wanderer. This was right, and like God Himself, so far as it was a desire for a return upon a basis that should be for the glory of his throne, and the real blessing of Absalom as well as for the whole people.

Joab now comes before us as one who would fain help to right things, but being evidently a man without faith,—though with remarkable natural energy, which at times *appeared* to carry him on in such a path,—and having no wisdom from God, he works for a restoration that would be a dishonor to David's throne, and which would, in its turn, surely work—except the mercy of God intervene—its destruction, as well as that of David and Absalom too. In the carrying out of his scheme, through the wise woman of Tekoah, the basis of righteousness which sustains the throne of God is wanting; and David, failing to maintain this, opens the door to Absalom's return to Jerusalem. It is only a very distant and very partial restoration. There is much still wanting, for he is not permitted to see the king's face. Does this not evidence there is more than a doubt in the king's mind?

Absalom, in whom there is no realization of his sin, cannot long remain satisfied with this. He has now a record of five years and more since the day of his judgment, and there has been no continuation of the sin for which he had been excluded. The blot in the past is there all unjudged, as well as the state of soul that produced it. But his present record,—what about that? And so he must appear as one fully justified, and must stand in all the favor of the king. The unjust knoweth no shame, and he unblushingly asks, Where is my sin? “Let me see the king’s face, and if there be any iniquity in me let him kill me.” There is profusion of apparent humility, “and the king kissed Absalom.” It was, indeed, a fatal kiss. How much for the sinning one, and all concerned, as well as the Lord’s name, is involved in having the true mind of God in such circumstances. David had not been watching, and he slips easily into the fault of having *too* open a heart, and *too* much tenderness for one under a righteous sentence.

Perhaps it was pressed upon David that a change had come over Absalom; that the five years that had elapsed had not been marked by any distinct outbreak of the flesh, in what any mere natural judgment would distinguish as wicked. Any way he is at length restored to the fullest enjoyment of all the privileges of the court, as well as the favor of David; and this without one word of acknowledgment of his guilt, or judgment of his past.

The sequel shows the result of this lack of loins girt about with truth. “It came to pass *after this*.” These words are full of meaning. “After this” Absalom exalts himself, and becomes a great man in

his own thoughts. He will become popular also, evidencing, in the way he goes about it, the awful lack of principle that displays as surely his corrupt state as his original unveiled sin, although to the uncircumcised eye he is the opposite—everything that is good. But the moral condition is there, betraying not only that there is no wisdom and no fear of God, but also that there is a moral obliquity that infects others, corrupting and blinding them to what should seem to call for little eyesight to see. He flatters and kisses, and would be the friend to them that David is not; and at last he stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

One step leads on quickly to another. Many become defiled and an easy prey to the conceit and deceit of Absalom. Ahithophel comes forward to assist in a way kindred to Absalom's own; and now David suffers the consequences of his unwatchfulness and lack of salt in his dealings with Absalom. Who can estimate the far-reaching results of such a lack in ourselves as David shows? Those judging by the sight of their eyes might point to the years of agreeableness which Absalom had shown, and the diligence which marked him in every good work and kindness to others; and if they at all acknowledged at length that blot in the remote past, by the later years they would judge and pass it all over. So David, but not so God. He cannot overlook that unjudged past; and in a fuller way this lesson is taught us in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Men may forget, or attempt by many ways to blot it out of the world or the mind of the world. Centuries may roll away, but for God and for the faith of His people that cross still stands, and speaks as surely of coming judgment

as of present grace for every repentant soul. And if David be overtaken in a moment of unwatchfulness, God will take care of him and restore him again, but the results of his unfaithfulness fall more heavily on Absalom, whose cup is at length full, and who now brings down upon his own head the judgment of an accumulated lifetime of scheming and of sin.

David's grief has poignancy added to it (has it not?) by the remembrance of his own failure in relation to one who was very near and very dear to his heart; by the remembrance, too, of what might have been, if he had been firm in the moment of testing, even though it should be thought by the Joabs and others that he was narrow and severe and lacking in love.

God's principles remain always the same, from beginning to end; and these scenes, drawn by the finger of God, are there for *our* warning; but also, in His goodness, "that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope"; and He is "the God of Hope." So we may take fresh courage,—looking for a bright end, but remembering the journey is not yet over. Shall we not, then, earnestly seek to be not *too* fast and not *too* slow, but only and always to be imitators of God as dear children, walking thus in line toward one another and toward all. This love will be according to truth, and magnify God, and result in our truly serving the interests of Christ in His people here.

We need hearts as well as heads, perhaps even much more; and to let patience have her perfect work. The Lord helps us in these graces that we may abound in them, and that we judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

W. B.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

THE dark picture in the Epistle of Jude is enough to overwhelm one with an awakened conscience, did not the closing verses give us the bright side for faith. Everything else has gone to ruin; corrupters have come in, defiling the church; and we cannot be blind to it. What can we do? Reform the evil? go on with it? Neither. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Here we have a fourfold word, the wilderness number, and that of our walk through it. The darkness could not oppress us with its gloom, did we follow this divine exhortation.

Then, too, we would have discernment and compassion for others caught in the snares which, through mercy, we may have escaped—teaching with pity the ignorant, and snatching others with fear from what, as a fire, would consume.

In the midst of all the peril, Jude ("praise") can lift his heart in worship; and surely we should be able to join in it—"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

JOURNEY AND REST.

GOD'S saints have journeyed long
The promised rest to gain;
And still, through grace, their hope is strong
That they with Christ will reign.

They started on the way
Six thousand years ago;
And oft, without one earthly stay,
Have passed through scenes of woe.

But God has been their stay,
And not a fleshly arm;
And they have trod the desert way,
Where foes have sought their harm.

Now they are almost home!
They know the rest is near,—
To Canaan's border they have come,
The Lord will soon appear!

He'll greet them with a smile,
And bid their wand'ring cease,—
He'll place them in a heavenly clime,
And give them endless peace.

They give all praise to God,
And glory to the Lamb;
They trust alone His precious blood,
And don't deny His name.

They joy before the Lamb;
They worship and adore
Him who was so humbled here,—
In grace their sorrows bore.

R. H.

CHRIST THE KING :

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

(Continued from p. 287.)

CHAPTER III.

THE Gospel of Matthew has seven primary divisions. The two chapters we have been considering form the first of these, in which our attention is fixed upon the person of the King. That which commences with the third chapter presents the kingdom. It occupies five chapters, to the end of the seventh, and has five subdivisions, although these are not at all marked out for us by the chapters. The first subdivision has in fact, as I believe, only six verses, in which we have set before us the herald of the kingdom, John the Baptist, a remarkable person, both in himself and in the place he fills. "Among those that are born of women," is our Lord's testimony of him, "there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." And yet He adds, (and this connects itself with the place he fills between two dispensations,) "Nevertheless, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

It is not yet the place to consider this. We have first to see what the kingdom itself is, and what is the meaning of the expression for it, the "kingdom of *heaven*," which is peculiar to and characteristic of this gospel. In all the others we have only the "kingdom of *God*." Matthew has both terms, but predominantly the former.

The difference is implied in the terms themselves. "Heaven" is a place; "God" is a Person; "heaven" naturally suggests "earth" as the sphere of the kingdom; "God" suggests "man." God might reign upon an earthly throne, as He did in Israel, when He dwelt between the cherubim. All that had long

ceased; the glory had left its earthly tabernacle, and the kingdom upon earth had been put into the hand of the Gentile. The throne, so to speak, removed to heaven, the way is prepared for the coming of a "kingdom of heaven."

Heaven had always ruled upon earth in fact; it was a fact which probably would have been any time admitted even by Nebuchadnezzar, though his pride might forget it, that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." But this was not the truth of the "kingdom of heaven"; for it meant a government of secret forces, and according to principles which might be themselves unknown. This kingdom, on the other hand, meant something open, God in this way drawing near, not even faith requisite to realize the fact. For we are not now speaking of the kingdom of heaven as it exists at present, with the King absent and the prevalence of evil upon the earth: that is for the first time made known, and then in parables, in the thirteenth chapter: where they are declared to be "*mysteries* of the kingdom of heaven." The very manner of speech was in accordance with this, as the evangelist applies the words of the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

Of such hidden things the Baptist could therefore know nothing. He was not a prophet of the Christianity so soon to come, but the last voice of the dispensation passing away, which could not pass until it had pointed to Him in whose hand were the ages beyond it. He was the voice of the past in the present, the law in its moral significance, its testimony to its own insufficiency, its reference to Him that was to come. "Repent," says the Voice, crying in the wilderness, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Prophets had long before announced the kingdom and the king; always in connection with Israel, with the law going forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. It is the same kingdom that the Baptist declares to be "at hand," though now for the first time spoken of under this peculiar title. Yet Daniel had seen "One like the Son of man come in the clouds of heaven" to receive it, and Zechariah had announced that His feet should "stand" in that day "upon the mount of Olives, . . . and the Lord my God shall come, and all the holy ones with Thee."

Since then but one prophet had spoken, and he to show that the remnant brought back out of the captivity in Babylon were but filling up the measure of their fathers' sins. Priests and people were alike gone astray from God. There remained but a remnant of a remnant. The day that was to come would therefore have to discriminate, and be in judgment as well as mercy. But "Behold," says Jehovah, "I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare My way before Me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple."

The voice dropped, and the centuries had run on. Now, after a long interval, the messenger had come, with the express warning of his Master's feet behind him. The years had brought no recovery, and the promise had to come as warning still. The new "voice" cried in the wilderness, not in the cities of Israel: there where Jehovah remembered still the kindness of her youth, the love of her espousals, when Israel was holiness to the Lord, and the first-fruits of her increase (Jer. ii. 2, 3), and where again He will have to allure her, in order to speak comfortably to her (Hos. ii. 14). There the cry of "Repent" was in its place.

The people were in fact being brought into the wilderness, whether or not they would accept the warning and return to God. They were under the heel of the Gentile fully. Even the bastard rule of the Herods was now over for Judea, (although it was destined to a brief revival,) and there was a Roman governor over the land. The sanctuary throne had long been empty; Lo-ammi, "not my people," had long been the verdict against them; there was no Urim and Thummim by which God might be consulted; for centuries no prophet had spoken for Him. God was outside, and the messenger of God had to deliver his message from a place outside. The son of a priest, John, exercised no priestly function. We never find him at Jerusalem. His clothing is of camel's hair—such as spoke of the desert, with a leathern girdle about his loins. His food is locusts and wild honey. Everything with him speaks of separation; as if he had heard (as he had) the word to Jeremiah: "Let them return to thee, but return not thou to them."

His baptism confirms his preaching. He baptizes to repentance, and in Jordan, the river of death; baptizes thus to death, the people confessing their sins, of which death was the just due. This is repentance: not a vain promise of reform, not the reform itself, but what is primary and antecedent to all this, the taking of true ground before God as hopeless and undone, with such an one as Job, who, though the best man of his day, and so pronounced by God, found his place here in self-abhorrence. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear," he cries to God, "but now mine eye seeth Thee: therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Were repentance the same as reformation, or "doing better," as is more vaguely said, we might well despair

if the best man on earth, so declared by God Himself, had yet to repent in this sense. On the other hand, it is not hard at all to realize how the very perfection, comparatively, of his life and ways might hinder the apprehension of the evil in him, till he had measured himself fairly in the presence of God. This is his own account of it, as is evident. He had found in such light, deeper than his outward life, a self from which he turned in shame and loathing. Repentance was with him, at least, not doing, in any shape, but turning from all that he had done and been, to cast himself upon mere mercy. And that mercy in God met him there and then with full deliverance and lifting up from all his sorrows.

Thus, then, was the way of the Lord to be prepared into His kingdom. As Isaiah renders it,—though the quotation is only found in Luke, not here,—the mountain was to be leveled, the valley filled, pride abased, the lowliest exalted, grace in God realized as needed alike by all, sufficient for any. So would He have His way.

John preached, and there was power in his word: "there went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were all baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins."

We come now to the second subdivision, which contains only six more verses: and here we find the opposition of the heart to God revealing itself, and John emphasizing, therefore, the division that would have to be made between men when the King should come. For now, among the multitude, whether merely to be in the fashion, or moved by the power which yet they would not yield themselves to, many Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism. They were the religious leaders of the people, though far

enough apart from one another, types of the two directions in which men turn away from God. The Pharisee was the legalist and formalist; the Sadducee, the rationalist and infidel of his day. Apart as they were, they could show their essential oneness by the way in which they could combine against the followers of the Lord, and John treats them as one, essentially: "O generation of vipers," he exclaims on seeing them, "who hath warned *you* to flee from the wrath to come?" He could not credit them with having felt the sting of such an incentive. They must prove the reality of it: "Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance"; and here self-judgment would show itself first of all: "and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

Natural birth, outward participation with the people of God,—it is possible for men even yet, and under a very different dispensation, to attribute to such things an extraordinary importance. With the Jew, the promises to Abraham's seed, taken in the crudest way and with the grossest misconception, made him value himself exceedingly upon the connection with the "friend of God." John's language, therefore, attacked his most cherished expectations. Not only might all the promises fail him upon which he had built, but God could by His power bring into the enjoyment of them those who had no natural claim or birth-relation at all! To us who enjoy, in fact, a place so given, this is simple. For the Jew it would be an overwhelming thought. It did, indeed, show that the axe was being laid at the root of the trees. All turned upon the fruit that manifested the tree. If the fruit was bad, what matter though it might come of the finest stock?

The sinner, as such, whoever he was, was under the wrath of God. Once the limit of forbearance reached, the tree cut down was destined for the fire. Very simple truth indeed, but no man loves it. Because he does not love it he will invent every possible way of escape; or, rather, hide from his own eyes that from which there is none. How terrible is the power of self-deceit in all of us; and what need for the plainest possible speaking where this is the case! For, thank God, there is a way of escape; not indeed from the need of repentance, but by its means. Repentance is only the back side of faith: he who turns his back on himself finds grace from Him to whom he turns.

All John's aim, therefore, was to bring man to repentance. For this he baptized with water: he mentions the "water," expressly to free them from the idea that there was anything in this, apart from the significance which it had as a baptism to repentance. Water is only water, can only produce a material effect, and not a spiritual. Nor does God ordain it to a magic use, perverting the nature of what He created. On the contrary, He takes up what is in itself nothing, in order that men should not lose sight of the spiritual by what might seem capable of inherent virtue. Baptism with John, as with Paul, was simple "burial"; *not* life, *not* resurrection, but the very opposite of these. The confession of death,—of the sinner's need and helplessness,—that Another may be seen and known and trusted in; accordingly he turns to that Other now:—

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I; whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: *He* shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

(*To be continued.*)

THE CHRISTIAN'S POSITION.

Heb. xii. 22-24.

(Continued from page 261.)

MOUNT SION is the center of earthly blessing, and in connection with an earthly people. We share in its glories, inasmuch as being associated with Christ we, the Church, shall reign with Him (2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. iii. 21). But earth and earthly blessing is not our goal, so our passage rises from earth to heaven, to show us our true place and portion. "The city of the living God" (as contrasted with the city of the great king, Jerusalem) "the heavenly Jerusalem." God has prepared for us a city of habitation, and it is where He dwells—His home, the Father's house. God is omnipresent, He fills immensity, but He dwells in heaven; the spirits of little children redeemed, do there behold His face. (Matt. xviii. 10.) The throne of God and of the Lamb is there; and His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face (Rev. xxii. 3, 4). This is our eternal home, and how soon may we enter it! But even now we have come to it. We have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." In Christ we are already seated in the heavenly places. Heaven has been opened to us through the entrance of Christ into it. And while it is not meant that the passages from Ephesians and Romans just quoted are parallel with what we have before us, they are views of the same subject from another point.

What has one to do with an earthly priesthood, with carnal ordinances, with the law as being under it, who has come to the heavenly Jerusalem?

(3.) We naturally come next to the inhabitants of

this heavenly home; and the lowest grade is mentioned first: the innumerable company of angels, a universal gathering—a pan-angelic assembly. Such clearly seems to be the meaning of this clause, the general assembly describing the angelic host and not the Church. Angels foretold and announced the birth of Christ. They ministered to Him after His temptation; one strengthened him in the garden; two announced His resurrection; and again His second coming (Acts i.) They are “all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation.” (Heb. i.) They excel in strength; they desire to look into the precious mysteries of the gospel (1 Pet. i. 12). Of their nature and character we know now but little, comparatively. Their home, however, is ours; and we shall doubtless know them fully when there, and they will share with us in our divine worship, though they can never know the sweetness of redemption. For He took not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham (Heb. ii.).

(4.) Round about the throne, nearer than the angels (Rev. iv. 11) are the company of the redeemed—kings and priests unto God. Of one part of this company our next clause speaks: the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. The first-born has the place of dignity—of priority over all the other children. So, in His amazing grace, God has put the Church. He has given it to be the Bride, the Lamb's wife, to share His glory, to be forever united to Him in the closest intimacy. To be the exhibition of God's kindness, the vessel of His glory throughout all ages! (Eph. iii. 21.) Soon will the Lord present it to Himself, a glorious church, not having a spot or wrinkle or any such thing. And

even now we have by faith come into association with that heavenly church,—nay, through grace we are a part of it. What a position! How small do the things of earth seem in comparison with these holy, happy associations.

(5.) But we are brought to God Himself, who, if He be the Judge of all, God over all blessed forever, is also our Father. Sin resulted in departure from God, hiding from Him; and all the sacrifices and ceremonies could not bring us back to Him. But Christ has brought us to God, we are made nigh. "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." (Rom. v. 11.) We have peace, access and standing in grace; we rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and can even glory in tribulations. As a crown upon it all the living God is now our joy; we can look into His face, by faith, and say Abba, Father. Praises be to His wondrous grace!

(6.) Those who have fought the good fight and have kept the faith, saints of all dispensations who have gone home to the Lord, are now set before us. Not in an unconscious sleep, but in happy rest they are shown to us for our encouragement. They are waiting for their glorified bodies, but are even now perfect. They have reached their home, they sin no more. Here are Abraham, the man of faith; Jacob, the tried and failing one; David, the man after God's own heart. They have done with earth—its sins and its joys. We belong to that goodly company. Their joys are ours, their rest is ours. How cheering it is, amidst the sorrows, trials, and temptations of the way, to remember that we have come to the

spirits of just men made perfect. We see some of them in the eleventh of Hebrews; but the time would fail to speak of all, and we hasten on to look at Him who is set before us in the twelfth chapter.

(7.) Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant. In the midst of the angels, of the church, of the spirits of just men made perfect,—upon the very throne of God is One who has drawn our hearts to Himself. He who died for us now lives for us, interceding in the presence of God for us. The old covenant was the law. Under it man engaged to obey the commandments of God as a condition of blessing. How man failed under that covenant, presented under its most attractive forms and appealing to all motives of self-interest and gratitude, it is needless to say. The cross is at once the witness of the doing away of the old covenant, and the introduction of a new one with Jesus as its mediator. He has fulfilled its conditions, and secured its blessings to us. As nothing depends upon us in it, all upon Him, it can never be done away; it is “ordered in all things and sure.” It is to this blessed person we have come,—not to Noah with his renewed earth, not to Moses with his legal covenant. Could we ask more?

(8.) And upon what does all this blessing rest? What is the ground upon which we, as Christians, stand? It is “the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” Abel’s blood cried for vengeance upon his guilty brother; the blood of Christ sprinkled upon the mercy seat, and seven times before it, tells of an accomplished redemption—God’s righteousness fully vindicated, every demand of justice met by the sacrifice of our Substitute and God *for us*. We now, through grace, boldly

stand before that blood-sprinkled mercy-seat. Who shall lay anything to our charge? How solid, how firm a standing,—how eternal. On the ground of the blood we are introduced into the holy society and position we have been looking at.

And what is the object of this unfolding of the completeness of the Christian's position? "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh" (v. 25). Christianity had succeeded upon Judaism. The shadow had given way to the substance. And should they return again to the "shadow of good things to come," when the good things themselves were before them? But it is said we are in no danger of going back to Judaism. Let us not be too sure of that. A reformed earth, instead of a returning Lord; a legal gospel of works, instead of an accomplished redemption; ordinances, seasons, a human priesthood between God and His people,—these are the characteristics of the religion of the day—going, gone back to—yea, beyond Judaism, into self-culture, universal brotherhood of man, with God and His word largely left out. His own, to His praise be it said, are and will be preserved through all this, but how needed is the admonition we have just quoted! And as the Christian's position is laid before us with all its holy associations, its wondrous nearness to God, its blessings, do not our hearts, with Peter, say "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life"?

As the year closes upon us, and another, darker as far as the world is concerned, opens, let us see what a goodly heritage we have, and stand fast in our lot "till He come."

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS; OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

(Continued from page 243.)

CHAPTER IV.

BUT we must follow our Preacher, who can only turn away with bitterness from this closed door of Death, once more to take note of what is “under the sun.” And sad and sorrowful it is to him to mark that the world is filled with oppression. He has already, in the previous chapter, noted that “wickedness was there in the place of judgment and iniquity in the place of righteousness,” and the natural consequence of this is oppression. Wherever men have *power* they use it to bring forth *tears*; therefore far better, cries Solomon, to be out of such a scene altogether; yea, better still, never to have come into it at all. Have we no sympathy with the Preacher here? Does he not give expression to one sad “touch of nature that makes the whole world kin”? Do we not recognize that he, too, was traveling through exactly the same scene as we find ourselves to be in? That tears were raining on this crust of earth in that far-off time, exactly as they are to-day? Yes indeed, it is a tear-soaked earth he trod, as well as we. But then that other man was also in the same scene exactly, who said, too, that it was certainly “far better” to be out of it; but—precious contrast! *that* was because of the loveliness and sweet attraction of One known outside of it; whilst the very needs of others in the scene—those “tears,” in a way, of which the wise man speaks, and which he knew no way of stopping—alone kept him in it, and made him consent to stay. For Paul had “heard a sweeter

story" than Solomon had ever in his wisdom conceived; had "found a truer gain" than all Solomon's wealth could give him; and his most blessed business it was to proclaim a glad tidings that should dry the tears of the oppressed, give them a peace that no oppressor could take away, a liberty outside all the chains of earth—a spring of joy that tyranny was powerless to affect.

Now let us, by the grace and loving kindness of our God, consider this a little closer, my readers. We have concluded that we find this book included in the inspired volume for this very purpose, to exalt all "the new" by its blessed contrast with "the old." We may too, if we will, look around on all the sorrows and tears of this sad earth, and groan "better would it be to be dead and out of it; yea, better never to have been born at all." And a wise groan, according to human wisdom, this would be.

But when such wisdom has attained to its full, it finds itself far short of the very "foolishness of God"; for, on the other hand we may, if we will, praise God with joyful heart that we are at least *in the only place in the whole universe, where tears can be dried, and gladness be made to take their place.* For is there oppression, and consequent weeping, in heaven? Surely not. Tears there are, in plenty, in hell; for did not He who is Love say, "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"? But, alas! those tears can be dried—*never*. But here Love can have its own way, and mourning ones may learn a secret that shall surely gild their tears with a rainbow glory of light, and the oppressed and distressed, the persecuted and afflicted, may triumphantly sing, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall

tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are *more than conquerors*, through Him that loved us." Ah, is there not, too, a peculiar beauty in those words "more than conquerors"? What can be more than a conqueror? A ship driven out of its course by the tempest, with anchor dragging or cable parted, is no "conqueror" at all, but the reverse. That ship riding out the gale, holding fast to its anchorage, is truly a conqueror; but that is all. But the vessel being driven by the very tempest to the haven where it would be, is better off still, and thus "more than conqueror." So it is with the saint now; the tempest drives him the closer to Him who is indeed his desired haven, and thus he is more than conqueror. Is not, then, this earth a unique place?—this life a wonderful time? A few years (possibly a few hours) more, and we shall be out of the scene of sorrow and evil forever; nor can we then prove the power of the love of Christ to lift above the sorrow either ourselves or others. Oh, my soul, art thou redeeming the time—"ransoming from loss" (as it might literally be worded) the precious opportunities that are around thee on every side, "because the days are evil"? The very fact that the days are evil—that thou art in the place of tears—gives thee the "opportunities." When the days cease to be evil, those special opportunities, whatever may be the service of the redeemed, will be gone forever.

But the Preacher still continues his search "under the sun," and turns from oppression and tears to regard what is, on the surface at least, a comparatively happy lot—"right work," by which a man has attained to prosperity and pre-eminence. But as he

looks closer at a case which, at first sight, seems to promise real satisfaction, he sees that there is a bitter sting connected with it,—a sting that at once robs it of all its attraction, and makes void all its promise of true rest,—for “for this a man is envied of his neighbor.” His success is only cause of bitter jealousy, and makes him the object not of love, but of envy, to all about him. Success, then, and a position of pre-eminence above one’s competitors, gained by skillful toil, is rather to be avoided as vanity and pursuit of the wind,—a grasping at an empty nothingness.

Is the opposite extreme of perfect idleness any better? No; for plainly the idler is a fool who “eateth his own flesh”; that is, necessarily brings ruin upon himself. So human wisdom here closes the meditation with—what human wisdom always does take refuge in—the “golden mean,” as it is called, “better a single handful with quiet rest, than both hands filled only by wearying toil and vexation of spirit.” And true enough this is, as every man who has tested things at all in this world will confirm. Accumulation brings with it only disappointment and added care,—everything is permeated with a common poison; and here the wisdom of the old is, in one sense, in full harmony with the higher wisdom of the new, which says “godliness, with contentment, is great gain,” and “having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.”

If we look “above the sun,” however, there is a scene where no sting lurks in all that attracts, as here. Where God Himself approves the desires of His people for more of their own, and says to them with gracious encouragement, “covet earnestly the best gifts.” Yes; but mark the root-difference be-

tween the two: the skillful, or right labor, that appears at first so desirable to the Preacher, is only for the worker's own advantage,—it exalts him above his fellows, where he becomes a mark for their bitter envy; but these “gifts” that are to be coveted are as far removed from this as the poles. In that higher scene, the more a gift exalts “self,” the less is that gift. The “best”—those which God calls “best”—are those that awake no envy in others; but bring their happy owner lower and ever lower to the feet of his brethren to serve them, to build *them* up. The Corinthians themselves had the lesser gifts in the more showy “tongues,” and “knowledge”; but one family amongst them had the *greater*,—“the household of Stephanas,” for it had addicted itself to the *service* of the saints.

But let us not leave this theme till we have sought to set our hearts a-singing by a sight of Him who is, and ever shall be, the source as well as the theme of all our songs. We but recently traced Him in His glorious upward path till we found Him resting on the throne of the Majesty on high. But “he that ascended, what is it but that he also descended?” So, beloved readers, though it may be a happily familiar theme to many, it will be none the less refreshing to look at that “right work” of our blessed Lord Jesus, “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” That is the glorious platform—as we might, in our human way of speaking, say—upon which He had abode all through the ages of the past. He looks above—there is none, there is nothing higher. He looks on the same plane as Himself—He is equal with God. There is His blessed, glorious place, at the highest

pinnacle of infinite glory, nothing to be desired, nothing to be grasped at.

He moves; and every heart that belongs to that new creation awakens into praise (oh, how different to the "envy" of the old!) as He takes His first step and makes Himself of no reputation. And as in our previous paper we followed Him in His glorious upward path, so here we may trace His no less glorious and most blessed path down and ever lower down, past Godhead to "*no reputation*"; past authority to *service*; past angels, who are servants, to *men*; past all the thrones and dignities of men to the manger at *Bethlehem* and the lowest walk of *poverty*, till He who, but now, was indeed rich is become poor; nay, says of Himself that He has not where to lay His head. No "golden mean" of the "handful with quietness" here! Yes, and far lower still, past that portion of the righteous man, endless life,—down, down to the humiliation of *death*; and then one more step to a death—not of honor, and respect, and the peace, that we are told marks the perfect man and the upright, but the death of lowest shame, the criminal slave's death, the *cross*! Seven distinct steps of perfect humiliation! Oh, consider Him there, beloved! Mocked of all His foes, forsaken of all His friends! The very refuse of the earth, the thieves that earth says are too vile for her, heaping their indignities upon Him. "Behold the man," spat upon, stricken, and numbered with transgressors; and, as we gaze, let us together listen to that divine voice, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," for that is *our* "right work," and there is no fear of a man being "envied of his neighbor" for right work of that kind.

But time and space would fail us to take up in detail all these precious contrasts. All Solomon's searches "under the sun" tell but one story: There is nought in all the world that can satisfy the heart of man. The next verse furnishes another striking illustration of this. He sees a solitary one, absolutely alone, without kith or kin dependent on him, and yet he toils on, "bereaving his soul of good" as unceasingly as when he first started in life. Every energy is still strained in the race for those riches that satisfy not at all. "Vanity" is the Preacher's commentary on the scene. This naturally leads to the conclusion that solitude, at least, is no blessing; for man was made for companionship and mutual dependence, and in this is safety. (Verses 9 to 12.)

Verses 13 to the end are difficult, as they stand in our authorized version; but they speak, I think, of the striking and extraordinary vicissitudes that are so constant "under the sun." There is no lot abiding. The king on his throne, "old and foolish," changes places with the youth who may even step from the humiliation of prison and chains to the highest dignity: then "better is the poor and wise youth than the old and foolish king." But wider still the Preacher looks, and marks the stately march of the present generation with the next that shall follow it; yea, there is no end of the succession of surging generations, each boastful of itself, and taking no joy in—that is, making little account of—that which has gone before. Each, in its turn, like a broken wave, making way for its successor. Boastful pride, broken in death, but still followed by another equally boastful, or more so, which, in its turn, is humbled also in the silence of the grave. It is the same story of human

changes as "the youth" and "the king," only a wider range is taken; but "vanity" is the appropriate groan that accompanies the whole meditation. In this I follow Dr. Lewis's version:—

Better the child, though he be poor, if wise,
 Than an old and foolish king, who heeds no longer warning;
 For out of bondage came the one to reign—
 The other, in a kingdom born, yet suffers poverty.
 I saw the living all, that walked in pride beneath the sun,
 I saw the second birth that in their place shall stand.
 No end to all the people that have gone before;
 And they who still succeed, in them shall find no joy.
 This, too, is vanity,—a chasing of the wind.

(To be continued.)

A FEW WORDS ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

WE might say at the outset that for one who knows and loves Christ as a personal Saviour, Christian Science can have no charms, and few dangers. If this should sound harsh, let it be remembered that this system completely subverts the whole of Christianity; so that he who accepts the one, must give up the other. It is an application of our Lord's words, "No man can serve two masters." That we are justified in making such a statement will be seen in a moment as we compare a few of the teachings of Scripture on fundamental truths with the doctrines of Christian Science (a most misleading name).

I. As to the Person of Christ: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "All things were made by Him." (John i. 1, 3.) "Who is the image of the invisible God." (Col. i. 15.) "Being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power." (Heb. i. 3.)

Here we have the divinity of the Son of God taught in the most absolute way.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” (John i. 14.) “He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” (Phil. ii. 7.) “Who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” (Rom. i. 3.) Here we have “the man Christ Jesus”—His humanity. “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.” (1 Pet. ii. 22.) “Holy, harmless, undefiled.” (Heb. vii. 26.)

These and such scriptures teach His absolute sinlessness.

Compare with these precious truths the following statements:* “Jesus Christ entered upon our false and terrible dream, experienced our evil conditions. . . . He put off everything derived from the mother. . . . He denied, rejected, overcame, and cast out, all our race-errors, . . . race-evils, including sin, sorrow, suffering, sickness, and death, derived through Mary. He thus *became* the divine truth, one with the Father, or the divine love. To follow Him in the regeneration is, like Him, to be delivered from the illusions of sense, the bondage of error, the false claims of matter, the promptings of self-hood—to be reunited to God” (page 15).

Such language teaches the mere humanity of Christ, that He was defiled (so far as such a thing as defilement can be said to exist), that He derived all that is evil in nature through His mother, and then rejected it, thrust it off, thus *becoming*, what He was

* Quotations are from a pamphlet entitled “Condensed Thoughts about Christian Science.”, Putz Publishing Co., Chicago.

not before, divine truth. No comment upon such blasphemy is needed.

II. As to the work of Christ. "By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) "Made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. ii. 13.) "Being justified by faith." . . . "justified through His blood." (Rom. v. 1, 9.) The truth of atonement by substitution, of wrath-bearing for our justification, is here taught.

Contrast with these texts the following: "The whole question of salvation depends upon ourselves, upon when, and how soon, we see our follies and errors, renounce our delusions, disrobe ourselves of our false opinions, accept the divine truth (that there is no such thing as evil), which is the light of heaven, awake from our dream of evil, and enter into the life of Christ" (page 22).

We extricate ourselves from an evil which has no existence, imitating Christ, who did the same; and this is redemption!

III. The existence of sin and death. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." (Rom. v. 12.) "Death reigned." (Rom. v. 14.) "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (John viii. 34.) "The wages of sin is death." (Rom. vi. 23.)

"I deny that evil has any real existence or actual power in the presence of divine truth. I deny that sin, sorrow, suffering, sickness, or death, are realities or entities, or have any ground or reason to be" (page 32).

And this includes a denial of the personality of Satan and evil spirits, of hell, of responsibility before God.

IV. The word of God. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." (2 Tim. iii. 16.) "The scripture cannot be broken." (John x. 35.) "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." (Ps. cxix. 89.)

Christian Science says, "The Spirit clothes itself with the letter, sometimes a tissue of appearances only (such as that God is angry, hell is eternal, etc.)." "The Bible or word of God was written from this standpoint of mortal mind (the unreal state of human thought, with its misconceptions of the existence of sin, evil, suffering), and its letter *often needs correction* from the higher reason" (pages 14, 25).

V. The Lord's coming, heaven, etc. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven: . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thes. iv. 16, 17.) "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." (John v. 28, 29.) "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 2, 3.)

"The second coming of the Lord is a descent, from the heavens *within us*, into the body of humanity, of the same divine truth which was manifested in Jesus Christ." "People will continue to die . . . until the absolute truth is universally admitted and declared." "I affirm that heaven is within us, that God is within us, and that neither is ever in any manner outside of us" (pages 49, 52, 53).

And so we might continue, placing side by side

these statements of light and darkness, illustrating afresh each time what we said at the beginning, that the one is the exact opposite of the other. There is an appearance of piety in some phrases, an apparent approach to truth in some, and frequent quotations of scripture misapplied. But any simple-hearted person can see that the whole thing is antichristian. It leaves us *nothing*—no personal God, no atonement, no Saviour, no heaven, no word of God. It would take from the wicked the fear of hell and of the wrath of God.

The hold it has taken upon some is its claim to cure disease. This it does by denying the existence of sickness, suffering, pain, or death. They are only imaginations. The poor, restless heart of the suffering one, who is ignorant of the grace of Christ or blinded by Satan, grasps at every straw. And so error spreads. Man will believe anything, everything, but God's truth. The times show how quickly is hastening on that hour when those who will not receive "the love of the truth that they might be saved," "shall believe a lie."

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle." (2 Thess. ii. 9-15.)

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." (1 Peter iv. 7.)