

HELP AND FOOD

FOR THE

Household of Faith.

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Answers to Correspondents.....	26, 56, 84, 168, 195, 224, 250, 280
As Little Children	36
A Word of Exhortation.....	1
A Word on Revelation iii. 11	138
Brief Notes of an Address on Joshua xiv, 6 to end and xv. 13-19.....	281
Christ the King: Being Lessons from the Gospel of Matthew — <i>Continued</i>	3, 37, 57, 89, 115, 158, 174
“Covet to Prophecy”.....	311
Dead.....	309
Enduring	83
Fighting with Foxes.....	53
Fragments.....	47, 111, 112, 148, 183, 190, 193, 293, 336
“Gold, Silver, Precious Stones.”	18
Grass.....	166
“If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again?”	213
Love, and Brotherly Love.....	307
Marriage.....	180
Narrative of the Lord’s Burial and Resurrection.....	219
Nature and the Atonement.....	189
Notes on Scripture.....	10
Old Groans and New Songs ; or, Notes on Ecclesiastes— <i>Continued</i>) .11, 42, 69, 97, 130, 149, 169, 205, 231, 273, 286, 316	23
One Tenth	113
Othniel and Achsah.....	113
Outlines of Scripture Doctrine..	77, 103, 122, 141, 184, 197, 240, 266, 294, 324
Perfect, Not Sinless	192

POETRY,—	Page
“Come, Lord Jesus!”	181
Eternal Love.....	137
From Morn to Night.....	95
I'll Praise Thee for it <i>All Some Day</i>	308
Jesus the One!.....	165
Longings of Those who Know the Lord.....	218
More Like Thee.....	68
My Refuge in the Day of Trouble	194
Satisfied	249
Sun Clouds.....	110
“That which I See Not Teach Thou Me”.....	279
“Yes, Let them go”.....	67
Rehoboam: A Division Precipitated	29
Socialism, not Christianity.....	147
Steadfastness	26
Stewardship	188
The Ground, the Definiteness, and the Moral Power of Christianity	63
The Heavenly Calling.....	253
The Meaning of the Cross.....	191
The Patience of Nature.....	248
The Soul in the Presence of God	85
The Tongue.....	313
Unrevised Notes of a Lecture on Numbers ii.....	225
“ “ “ “ Joshua xv. 1-12.....	260
Wood, Hay, Stubble	48

A WORD OF EXHORTATION.

BELOVED BRETHREN:

GOD has put into our hands His precious word. Its riches are unfolded to us by His Holy Spirit.

Of the fullness, the variety, the divine perfection of that word it is needless to speak to you. Men are, however, attacking it,—no longer as avowed infidels, but as professed friends. The attacks are the more dangerous, because covert. This infidelity, like the leprosy in the house, is creeping over the whole professing Church, doing its deadly work everywhere. What will be the end of it?

Let us pause, and ask ourselves why God has permitted this inroad of the enemy. When Israel failed to drive out their foes and to occupy the land for themselves; when they turned from God, He gave them over to the surrounding nations. Have we occupied our spiritual territory? Have we learned its fullness from the word of God? Is it not too true that many of God's people have been, are, neglecting His word? It is to this widespread neglect of the reading and study of the word of God that the inroads of infidelity may be truly attributed. Its attacks would be weak indeed did they not find God's people were weaker as far as a knowledge of His word is concerned. Do we know the gospels? Are the contents of the epistles familiar to us? "Yes," you say; "we are fairly acquainted with the New Testament." Then how is it with the Old? Is it not a fact that to most, the Old Testament is a closed book? Need we, then, be surprised if Satan should attack us at our weak point? The Old Testa-

ment history should be as familiar to us as the gospels,—the prophets as the epistles. The remedy is simple. Let us *read* the Old Testament more, and the New as well. Let not a day pass without our searching in its stores of divine truth. Let us not make the excuse that we have no time. If we have time to eat, we have time to read the word of God, as one has said, “I esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.” A few minutes daily given to the attentive reading of the Bible would enable us to complete the whole in a year.

Then, as we grow familiar with it, we would find it in our thoughts during the day; passages helpful in the prayer-meeting, illustrations at the reading meeting, and words of comfort or exhortation at the breaking of bread, would thus take the place of a barren silence. In other words, we would be revived. Let it not be thought, for a moment, that a neglect of prayer and dependence upon God are implied in this. Rather such reading and study will stimulate us in these. Shall we not afresh arouse ourselves in this matter? It concerns us all. Let us begin at once, and never leave off until we are with the Lord. If anything has come in to interfere with our enjoyment of the word of God,—the newspaper or the novel,—let us cast them from us, and turn afresh to that book of God. What blessing would result!

“BEING filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.” We have here the character of the fruits of the Christian life—righteousness; the power—the Lord Jesus Christ, “Without me ye can do nothing;” and the end—“the glory and praise of God.”

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

(Continued.)

CHAPTER III.

TO bear one's shoes was the office of the meanest slave,—a strong testimony from one to whom all the nation seemed looking up at this time; but what John announces Him as to do speaks more strongly yet: Who must He be who baptizes with the Holy Ghost? No doubt the Jews were far from having any proper intelligence with regard to the Holy Ghost; yet they knew that it was a divine influence that was here spoken of. *We* ought to have clear knowledge; and yet of few things perhaps in Christianity has there been more misunderstanding than of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, the very thing with which John contrasts it here, the baptism of water, has been and is by many, nay, by the mass of professing Christians, confounded with it; and, as a necessary consequence, it has been degraded to mere unreality, subjected to man's will, made to inflate the pride of a pretentious ecclesiasticism, and to deceive the credulous victims of superstition to their ruin. While, on the other hand, many who have truer knowledge of spiritual things yet reduce the baptism of the Spirit to a temporary, often repeated influence, whose significance is in reverse proportion to its ready repetition.

It is evident that our Lord is but applying the words here when He says, after His resurrection, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts i. 5.) Here is the same contrast of water with Spirit, yet the same term "baptism" applied to each; while the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, when these

words were fulfilled, did not connect itself with water, nor were those to whom they were spoken baptized with water at that time at all. It is certain, also, that these disciples were born again before Pentecost, and so that baptism was not their new birth. Scripture, if we pay the slightest heed to it, easily delivers us thus from these strange mistakes.

On the other hand, as clearly, at Pentecost the Christian Church began, and this is "the church, which is His [Christ's] body" (Eph. i. 22, 23); while in exact agreement with this we are told (1 Cor. xii. 13) that "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Thus the baptism of the Spirit is not that by which men are new-born, but that by which those new-born already become members of the body of Christ. It is not the beginning of the Spirit's work in souls, but a further, and yet an initial, work.

It does not follow, however, from the way in which Christianity has fulfilled this prophecy of John, that he knew anything of the Church as the body of Christ. It is certain that this was a revelation of later date, and necessarily hid from him (Eph. iii. 3-6). It is certain, because Scripture declares it (1 Pet. i. 10-12), that prophets might be led of the Spirit to utter what was quite beyond their own intelligence. But more than this, it does not follow, because Christianity has fulfilled this in a certain way, that there could not be another fulfillment of it, Israelitish and not Christian, in those days to which the Baptist seems to point on, when Israel will be finally purged, according to the Lord's own prophecy, so well known to us. I can at least see no reason why the outpouring of the Spirit upon Israel and the nations in millennial days, of which Joel and

others plainly speak, should not be called a baptism, as initiating for them that state of blessing which will then be theirs. Such double accomplishments of prophecy are by no means rare, little as it may be possible for some to find them. But we must not dwell upon this now.

It agrees, however, with this thought, that John puts alongside of this baptism of the Spirit the baptism of fire; which finds its explanation in what follows directly: "He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Many would point us rather to the "cloven tongues like as of fire" on the day of Pentecost,—a natural thought enough, if Christianity were the complete fulfillment of what is here, and such an idea has become completely attached to the expression, "a baptism of fire." But the tongues of fire convey a different idea, that of a word that shall act upon others, while that of baptism is of something that affects the subjects of it themselves. These things may have easy enough connection, but they are not the same. Moreover, the going forth of the gospel among men of divers tongues is not at all in the line of the Baptist's message here, which is an exhortation to Israel, in view of the coming Kingdom, and their unpreparedness for it. There would be alternate consequences, according as they repented and received, or else rejected, the coming King: they would either be separated to God by the action of the Spirit of God, or separated from God, to His wrath, if they rejected Him.

He had just before been speaking of the burning of the fruitless tree. He goes on now to speak of the coming of the King under the figure of one who winnows wheat in his threshing-floor. He fans away the chaff to get the wheat, which is what alone he values: and this is exactly what is necessary for

the blessing of Israel, who are to be blessed upon earth. For this the wicked must be severed from among the just, as we find in a parable of the Kingdom afterward (xiii. 49); the earth must be freed from the destroyers of it. The saints of the present time are, on the other hand, taken to heaven; and for their blessing no such judgment of the earth is needed.

Thus His "fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather the wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

We see that the Baptist goes on to a judgment which is future yet, and says nothing about the present delay of it in the Lord's long suffering. This is quite in the manner of Old Testament prophecy, as in that of Isaiah which the Saviour quoted and appealed to in the synagogue at Nazareth. Here He quotes, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," and as far as "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," and there He stops, though the sentence goes on without a break to "the day of *judgment* of our God" (Luke iv. 19; Isa. lxi. 1, 2), just as in John's words also, in connection with the restoration and blessing of Israel, which is then described in glowing terms.

We shall find this as a principle all the way through the Old Testament. Christianity, with all belonging to it, is a mystery hid in God; abundantly spoken of in types and figures throughout, but of course needing the light of the New Testament for its discovery. Even John is not given to see behind the veil, although being brought face to face with Christ, he is "much more than a prophet" of the Old Testament.

But John is not at his highest in any of these

so-called "synoptic" gospels. It is John the Evangelist who records for us his fullest utterances. In Matthew the herald of the Kingdom has already nearly completed his testimony, and is about to pass away. But before he does so, he is privileged to baptize the One whose coming he anticipates and welcomes with such fullness of delight; and we are now to stand with him in the presence of the KING.

The third subdivision begins with the 13th verse, and is but five verses long; but how much would it take to give aright its meaning! We have in it the manifestation and anointing of the King: the Saviour coming forth from His private into His public life to take up the wondrous work for which He came. Although not historically so, yet in its significance here, the mission of the Baptist ends where Christ's begins.

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him." There is definite purpose and meaning in this baptism, then; and yet from what we have seen of its character as John proclaims it, it is the last thing that we should have imagined possible, for the Lord to be baptized of John. He himself is startled, and refuses it: "but John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest thou to *me*?" In fact, there has been the widest misunderstanding of this act among Christians ever since; and we need to look at it earnestly and reverently in order (if it may be) to find the track where so many have gone astray. We shall not need, however, to discuss the conflicting views that have been taken. It will be more profitable, and indeed the only thing that will avail us, to see what Scripture itself may give us with regard to it. There is, it is true, no direct explanation: the

Lord's words, in reply to John, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness," require themselves to be set in the light of related facts, before, as it seems, we shall be able to apprehend them. Let us start with some of the plainest facts, and see what light they may throw upon the matter.

It is clear that, as already said, this baptism of Christ by John lies at the entrance of His active ministry. In the three gospels in which it is narrated, it stands in this place; and in the fourth, when this ministry begins, we see that it has already taken place. Before this, with the exception of the notices of His birth, and the one incident of His youth which Luke recalls, the silence of the gospels with regard to His life up to this time when He is now thirty years of age, is absolute and profound. So strange, too, it seems, that, as is well known, the gap has been sought to be filled up by apocryphal statements, in which miraculous deeds, as unlike the soberness of Scripture as possible, and as far removed from the character of the "signs" which bore testimony to His divine nature, fill the pages with transparent falsehood. We have the denial of the whole where the turning the water into wine at Cana of Galilee is stated to be "the beginning of miracles" which showed forth His glory (John ii. 11). And the silence of Scripture otherwise as to all these years of His life, by its very strangeness, shows the more evident design.

When He comes forth, it is to be proclaimed by John "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29); and in that view of Him we shall find the interpretation of this mysterious silence. The passover lamb was to be taken on the *tenth* day of the first month, and "kept up" to the

fourteenth day before being sacrificed. Yet it is evident that the passover it is that governs the change of the whole year in this respect. Why, then, these unnoticed ten days?

Notice that they have their mark according to the symbolic language which these types speak throughout, in the number "ten," which is the number of responsibility, as derived from those ten commandments which are its perfect measure, according to the law. The lamb was, as we know, to be without blemish,—in the true lamb, of course, a spiritual state. Now putting these two things together, how plain that they have connected meaning, and that the ten days of silence yet of responsibility answer in fact to the thirty years of silence before the Lord could come forward and be approved as the unblemished Lamb! That He did find then the witness of the Father's approbation and delight, we know. The typical "four days" of public testimony—the meaning again given by the numeral—were still to come before the actual sacrifice should take place; He is immediately led up of the Spirit in the wilderness for the express purpose of being "tempted by the devil"; His life afterwards, how different was it from the quiet Nazareth-life in which He had already grown up and lived before the eye of God! This was the fulfillment of His individual responsibility, having its divine necessity in order that He should be able to give Himself for others, yet on that very account private, not public. Only God could be competent witness to its perfection, and accordingly it is His witness that is given: at the end of these thirty years it is that the Father's voice utters openly its joyful approbation, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

(To be continued.)

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

John iv. 22.—“Salvation is of the Jews.”

THE Samaritans claimed to be worshipers of God, descendants of Jacob, and to have the proper site for the temple on Mount Gerizim. In reality they were heathen, brought into the land by the king of Assyria (2 Kings xvii. 24-41) to occupy the territory made vacant by the deportation of the ten tribes. “They feared the Lord, and served their own gods.” They took His name, but continued to be in heart and practice heathen. Our Lord could not recognize anything of God in them, especially as they set themselves up against His revelation and His city. He therefore presses upon this woman the fact that the Jews were the channels of God’s revelation, and that they did have the knowledge of the true God, though He was about to reveal a higher truth than that of legal observances and earthly places of worship. At the same time, he would recognize all that was of God in Judaism. In like manner, after Pentecost, when Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ to them (Acts viii. 5, &c.), and many were saved, they did not receive the Holy Ghost until the apostles came from Jerusalem. God would thus link His truth together, and show that His ways were to be recognized by those who had previously disregarded them.

THE inheritance is reserved in heaven for us, and we are kept for the inheritance by the power of God (1 Pet. i. 3, 4). God, as it were, holds the inheritance in one hand and us in the other. Both are kept by His almighty power, and will soon be brought together.

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS;

OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

(Continued.)

CHAPTER V.

WITH the opening of this chapter we come to quite a different theme. Like a fever-tossed patient, Ecclesiastes has turned from side to side for relief and rest; but each new change of posture has only brought him face to face with some other evil "under the sun" that has again and again pressed from him the bitter groan of "Vanity." But now, for a moment, he takes his eyes from the disappointments, the evil workings, and the sorrows, that everywhere prevail in that scene, and lifts them up to see how near his wisdom, or human reason, can bring him to *God*. Ah, poor bruised and wounded spirit! Everywhere it has met with rebuff; but now, like a caged bird which has long beaten its wings against its bars, at length turns to the open door, so now Ecclesiastes seems at least to have his face in the right direction,—God and approach to Him is his theme,—how far will his natural reason permit his walking in it? Will it carry him on to the highest rest and freedom at last?

This, it strikes me, is just the point of view of these first seven verses. Their meaning is, as a whole, quite clear and simple. "Keep thy foot,"—that is, permit no hasty step telling of slight realization of the majesty of Him who is approached. Nor let spirit be less reverently checked than body. "Be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools." Few be thy words, and none uttered thoughtlessly, for "God is in heaven and thou upon earth," and

many words, under such an infinite discrepancy in position, bespeak a fool as surely as a dream bespeaks overcrowded waking hours. Oh fear, then, to utter one syllable thoughtlessly or without meaning, for One listens to whom a vow once uttered must be paid, for not lightly canst thou retract the spoken vow with the excuse "It was unintentional,—it was not seriously meant." His Messenger or Angel is not so deceived; and quickly wilt thou find, in thy wrecked work and purposes astray, that it is *God* thou hast angered by thy light speech. Then avoid the many words which, as idle dreams, are but vanity; but rather "fear thou God."

After weighing the many conflicting views as to verses 6 and 7, the context has led me to the above as the sense of the words. Nor can there be the slightest question as to the general bearing of the speaker's argument. Its central thought, both in position and importance, is found in "God is in heaven and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few,"—its weighty conclusion, "Fear thou God."

Now, my beloved readers, there is a picture here well worth looking at attentively. Regard him: noble in every sense of the word,—with clearest intellect, with the loftiest elevation of thought, with an absolutely true conception of the existence of God. Who amongst men, let thought sweep as wide as it will amongst the children of Adam, can go or has gone, beyond him? What can man's mind conceive, he may ask, as well as man's hand do, that cometh after the King? Yea, let our minds go over all the combined wisdom of all the ages amongst the wise of the world, and where will you find a loftier, purer, truer conception of God, and the becoming

attitude of the creature in approaching Him than here? For he is not a heathen, as we speak, this Solomon. He has all that man, as man, could possibly have; and that surely includes the knowledge of the existence of God,—His power eternal, and His Godhead, as Romans i. clearly shows. The heathen themselves have lapsed from that knowledge. "*When they knew God*" is the intensely significant word of Scripture. This is, indeed, diametrically contrary to the teaching of modern science—that the barbarous and debased tribes of earth are only in a less developed condition—are on the way *upward* from the lowest forms of life, from the protoplasm whence all sprang, and have already passed in their upward course the ape, whose likeness they still, however, more closely bear! Oh, the folly of earth's wisdom! The pitiful meanness and littleness of the greatest of modern scientific minds that have "come after the King" contrasted even with the grand simple sublimity of the knowledge of Ecclesiastes. For this Preacher would not be a proper representative *man* were he in debased heathen ignorance. He could not show us faithfully and truly how far even unaided human reason could go in its recognition of, and approach to, God, if he had lost the knowledge of God. Low, indeed, is the level of man's highest, when in this state, as the Greeks show us; for whilst they, as distinct from the Jews, made wisdom the very object of their search, downward ever do they sink in their struggles, like a drowning man, till they reach a foul, impure, diabolical mythology. Their gods are as the stars for multitude. Nor are they able to conceive of these except as influenced by the same passions as themselves. Is there

any reverence in approach to such? Not at all. Low, sensual, earthly depravity marked ever that approach. That is the level of the lapsed fallen wisdom of earth's wise. How does it compare with Solomon's? We may almost say as earth to heaven,—hardly that,—rather as hell to earth. Solomon, then, clearly shows us the *highest possible conception of the creature's approach to his Creator*. This is as far as man could have attained, let him be at the summit of real wisdom. His reason would have given him nothing beyond this. It tells him that man is a creature, and it is but the most simple and necessary consequence of this that his approach to his Creator should be with all the reverence and humility that is alone consistent with such a relationship.

But high indeed as, in one point of view, this is, yet how low in another, for is one heart-throb stilled? One tormenting doubt removed? One fear quieted? One deep question answered? One sin-shackle loosened? *Not one*. The distance between them is still the distance between earth and heaven. “God is in heaven, and thou upon earth.” Nor can the highest, purest, best of human reason, as in this wise and glorious king, bridge over that distance one span! “Fear thou God” is the sweetest comfort he can give,—the clearest counsel he can offer. Consider him again, I say, my brethren, in all his nobility, in all his elevation, in all his bitter disappointment and incompetency.

And now, my heart, prepare for joy, as thou turnest to thy own blessed portion. For how rich, how precious, how closely to be cherished is that which has gone so far beyond all possible human concep-

tion,—that wondrous revelation by which this long, long distance 'twixt earth and heaven has been spanned completely. And in whom? JESUS, The Greater than Solomon. We have well considered the less,—let us turn to the Greater. And where is that second Man to be found? Afar off on earth, with God in heaven? No, indeed. “For when He had by Himself purged our sins He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”; and “seeing, then, that we have a great high priest, that is passed *through the heavens*, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.” Oh, let us consider Him together, my brethren. In holiest Light our Representative sits. He who but now was weighted with our guilt, and made sin for us, is in that Light ineffable, unapproachable. Where, then, are the sins? Where, then, the sin? Gone for all eternity! Nor does His position vary at all with all the varying states, failings, coldness, worldliness, of His people here. With holy calm, His work that has perfected them forever perfectly finished, He *sits*, and their position is thus maintained unchanging. Clearly, and without the shadow of the faintest mist to dim, the infinite searching Light of God falls on Him, but sees nought there that is not in completest harmony with Itself. Oh, wondrous conception! Oh, grandeur of thought beyond all the possibility of man’s highest mind! No longer can it be said at least to one Man, woman-born though He be, “God is in heaven, and thou upon earth”; for He, of the Seed of Abraham, of the house of David, is Himself in highest heaven.

But one step further with me, my brethren. We are in Him, there; and that is our place, too. The earthward trend of thought—the letting slip our

own precious truth—has introduced a “tongue” into Christendom that ought to be foreign to the Saint of heaven. No “place of worship” should the Christian know—nay, *can* he really know—short of heaven itself. For, listen: “Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter *into the holiest* by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the vail,—that is to say, His flesh,—and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near,” etc. We too, then, beloved, are *not* upon earth as to our worship, (let it be mixed with faith in us that hear). Israel’s “place of worship” was where her high priest stood, and our place of worship is where our great High Priest sits. Jesus our Lord sowed the seed of this precious truth when he answered the poor sinful woman of Samaria, “The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.”

But, then, are not “words to be few”? Good and wise it was for Solomon so to speak; “few words” become the far-off place of the creature on earth before the glorious Majesty of the Creator in heaven. But if infinite wisdom and love have rent the vail and made a new and living way into the Holiest, does He now say “few words”? Better, far better, than that; for with the changed position all is changed, and not too often can His gracious ear “hear the voice of His beloved”; and, lest shrinking unbelief should still hesitate and doubt, He says plainly “In *everything*, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” For He

has shown Himself fully, now that vail is down,—all that He is, is revealed to faith; and a Heart we find—with reverence and adoring love be it spoken—filled with tenderest solicitude for His people. Letting them have cares only that they may have His sympathy in a way that would not otherwise be possible; and thus again He invites “casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.” Nor is there a hint in the holiest, of weariness on God’s part in listening to His people, nor once does He say “enough; now cease thy prayers and supplications.” How could He so speak who says “*Pray without ceasing*”? Then if, as assuredly we have seen, Solomon shows us the highest limit of human thought, reason, or conception, if we go even one step beyond, we have *exceeded* human thought, reason, or conception; (and in these New Testament truths how far beyond have we gone?) And what does that mean but that we are on holy ground indeed, listening to a voice that is distinctly the voice of God,—the God who speaks to us, as He says, in order “*that our joy may be full.*”

(*To be continued.*)

It was after the Egyptians had left the room, that Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. It was through closed doors that the risen Lord came to His disciples. If we are to enjoy communion with Him, the world must be shut out. “A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.” The name of Luz (separation) was changed to Bethel (House of God). Mere negative separation may be pharisaism; it must be unto God to really keep us from defilement.

“GOLD, SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES.”

“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man’s work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.”

IT is evident, from these verses, that the grace of God has not only secured for all believers in Christ eternal salvation, but is reaching out to draw them into communion with Himself in the building upon the one blessed foundation in order that they may be laborers together with Him, and receive at His hands a reward according to their work. This is grace upon grace, for the grace which saves the sinner is God’s gift through Jesus, and is the foundation that is laid,—other no man can lay,—and is separated from the portion provided for the believer as a reward for all true work built thereupon. The wood, hay, and stubble shall be burned, and the builder suffer loss; but his salvation through faith in Jesus cannot be touched. “He himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.” It is, then, grace upon grace that God thus invites us to be laborers with Him that He may, in that day that shall declare every man’s work, fill our hands with His own reward for every bit of gold and silver and every precious stone built, through that grace, upon the foundation He has laid for us.

It will no doubt be accepted that, as in Rom. iii., the sinner is not regarded as being righteous or doing good, notwithstanding the righteous and good acts he may do, because he is not actuated by a de-

sire for *God's* glory, that just so will the believer's work be judged according to his motive rather than by his intelligence. It must also be true, however, that where the motive is right, God will give light to lead in the work most pleasing to Him.

The gold, silver, precious stones, evidently speak of the character of the work, and the reward will be according thereto; and if we believe that every word of Scripture is divinely chosen, we will see divine value in the gold and the silver, and divine beauty in the precious stones. If we go back to the account of the building of the tabernacle, where God in His grace took into His fellowship and made fellow-laborers with Him all the willing-hearted in the building of a dwelling-place for Himself on earth, and examine the typical meaning of the materials there selected, we should get some light upon the thoughts before us here. The work which *we* build, after being purged by the fire, will surely be that in which God will find a rest, and in which His glory will be displayed, for all must be in Christ and for Christ.

How beautiful, then, to see that when God would express glory, divine glory, the *gold* is chosen. The acacia wood, setting forth the humanity of the Lord, was covered with the gold to show us the glory of His divinity, thus crowning it with the highest honor, and shadowing forth the divine glories manifest in God's beloved Son, in whom God has found His delight. How blessed, then, that we should have before us as the one motive actuating every work for God, the glory of that divine One. If it is only a cup of cold water given in His name it is surely the “gold” built upon the foundation which shall receive

its reward. How sweet, too, will be the reward, to receive at His own hands that which shall eternally associate us with the glories of His own person, all our work seen in Him, of Him, and for Him, that He may be glorified. Oh beloved, what an object!—the glory of Christ, God's glorified Son! How every other glory must fade before this; how everything that is of man must be set aside, that Christ and Christ alone may be seen. This surely is the test that will try every man's work of what sort it is. How really, too, we may thus be found in fellowship with the Father, who in answer to His prayer, "Father, glorify Thy Son," and in answer to His finished work, has glorified Him. "Now is the Son Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." May it, indeed, be the only motive of our lives that He may be thus glorified in every work built upon the eternal foundation that is laid for us.

Silver, as Ex. xxx. 12, 16, shows us, was selected to serve as the atonement-money of the children of Israel; and in chapter xxxviii. 25–28, is seen as the material used in the tabernacle wherever God, in that wonderful type of Christ, would associate with Christ those for whom He died, and thus it tells us the wondrous story of redemptive love. How fitting again, then, that the divine glories of His person as seen in the gold, should be accompanied with the glories of redemption as seen in the silver, and how fitting that in the motive which actuates all work for God, there should not only be the glory of Christ's divine person before us, but also the glory of His work. With what joy, then, the laborers together with God should take the silver trumpet of the gospel of God's grace and go forth with the glad tidings

of salvation accomplished through Christ, and as the poor perishing sinner turns to find in Him his acceptance with God, the forgiveness of his sins, the eternal joys that heaven alone can afford, it will surely be declared to be the “silver” built upon the foundation which is laid. How sweet, then, again, will be the reward, to be associated with the glories that cluster around the Son of Man as He is displayed as the blessed Redeemer, our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Then, again, how really we may be found in fellowship not only with the Father in seeking the glory of the person of His beloved Son, but also with the Son who took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, that being found in fashion as a man he might humble Himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Again, beloved, let it be said, what an object! the glory of Christ, in whom we have redemption, a glory reflected in every redeemed sinner, from whose face all traces of the burden of sin have been forever wiped away! Shall not all this be a fresh incentive to preach the word, to be instant in season and out of season, that more and more glory may be added to His peerless name?

Precious stones are seen in the breastplate of the high priest, pressing upon his heart as he goes into the presence of God for the people, twelve stones and the names of the twelve tribes of Israel engraven as the engraving of a signet upon them, and as lighted up in God’s presence, together forming the Urim and Thummim, the lights and perfections of God. How fitting, then, that there should be associated with all the work built upon the foundation

the glories of Christ, not only in the divine glory of His person, nor in the glories of redemption, but also in Him as the glorified One at God's right hand,—those deeper glories that the saints are led into as their hearts are opened and are able to receive the things that the Holy Spirit would minister unto them. For He is the gift to the children of God, consequent upon the glorification of Christ on high, the One of whom the Lord says "He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of the things of mine and show them unto you," the One whom the Lord calls the "Comforter," to abide with them forever—the Spirit of truth to guide them into *all* truth, the One who searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God. What, then, can there be built upon the foundation that will answer more clearly to the precious stones than the heart that in all its service has for its object Christ in all those deeper, richer glories that only God's Spirit can reveal. How deep will be the joys, how wondrous the revelation of those glories to our own hearts, as we seek by the light and power of the same Spirit to exalt our glorified Lord in the ministry of His things to His beloved saints. The things of Christ,—those deep things,—the things of God that no man knoweth but the Spirit of God. Once again, how sweet will be the reward to be forever associated with the glories that the Holy Spirit will bring to the name of Christ, when His ministry through His servants, and by the precious word of God, is made manifest in that day. And once again how really, too, we may be found in fellowship not only with the Father and with the Son, but also with the Holy Spirit. And thus, too, every believer who seeks only the glory of Christ may find a blessed place in

real service and ministry for the glory of His name. The simplest child that can only lisp the name of Jesus, and thus speak of the person of Christ, the beloved Son of God, builds upon the foundation just as surely as the evangelist does, as in all the power and eloquence of his gift he sets forth the glories of His work, or as the teacher does, who through the Spirit of God brings forth from the depths of God's treasury the richer glories which are displayed in Christ at God's right hand.

Thus, beloved, will be found in that day that shall declare every man's work, that which shall abide,—the gold, silver, and precious stones built upon the foundation in fellowship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

May there be true purpose of heart to seek thus to exalt Him, that in His own glorious presence there may be eternal joy in His own eternal reward.

J. F. P.

ONE TENTH.

THIS was the portion of his goods which Jacob promised to give the Lord in response to His wondrous revelation of Himself to the homeless wanderer at Bethel. There, in the vision of the Ladder, Jacob saw himself the object of divine grace and care; and that there might be no doubt as to the meaning, it is confirmed by the words: "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I *will not leave* thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." (Gen. xxviii. 15.)

On awaking, Jacob, terrified, but apparently not

won, by this amazing manifestation, makes a vow, treating as conditional what God had made absolute: "*If* God will be with me . . . I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." This tenth we might well call the measure of Jacob's apprehension of God's grace on the one hand, and of his consecration on the other. It is therefore most appropriate that the tenth should be the prescribed proportion, the measure of consecration, under the law, which is indeed conditional in all its blessings (Lev. xxvii. 30). "I give tithes of all that I possess," said the self-righteous pharisee.

But if a tenth will do for one under law—for one who fails to apprehend the true grace of God, what is the measure of consecration for us who are under perfect grace? Will two tenths do? one half? nine tenths? Ah! if God has given us *His* all—"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all"—will any *fraction* do for our response to that grace? "The love of Christ constraineth us," says the apostle, and goes on to show that our *life* is to be now for Him who died for us and rose again. "To me to live is Christ." The law might demand one seventh of my time; grace *demand*s nothing, but should receive all—of time, means, opportunities, abilities. Anything short of complete devotion of all to God means unhappiness—that is, if anything is purposely withheld. Nothing showed the heart of the elder brother more than the words, "Thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends." He wanted to have something for himself, and this showed his real unwillingness to give his father anything. If we wish but one hour of our time with God left out, it would show a practical desire to have it all, checked as that desire might be by grace.

This complete consecration, the apostle tells us (Rom. xii.), is our "reasonable service." There is nothing harsh in it. "His commandments are not grievous," says the apostle of love. There is no constraint in it but the constraint of love; if otherwise, the devotion would be worthless even did it reach to the bestowing all one's goods to feed the poor and giving the body to be burned. It simply flows from a knowledge of what absolute grace is. It is the response of the heart to One who has shown us all His heart; who loves us with an everlasting love; who can do for us exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think; who would share His pleasures with us; who would make His joy our strength. Why should we wish to have anything for ourselves, when He provides all for us? The prodigal made sad use of "the portion of goods" that fell to him; restored, he gets no further share—he *lives with his father*. Was not that enough? Is not that enough for us?

But let us look at ourselves and ask, Is this complete devotedness true of us? and if it is not, what is the reason? The answer, one answer at least, would be, Because of our failure to apprehend the absolute, perfect grace of God. The slightest tinge of legalism means self-interest. Ah! we may know in a cold, intellectual way all the doctrines of grace, but when they are held in living power—rather, when their living power holds us—there is but one answer of the heart—"I am my Beloved's."

Beloved brethren, we are at best but learners in this school of grace. Let us see to it that we are indeed learners increasing in the knowledge of what God's perfect grace is, that the fruits of it may increasingly be manifest in our lives.

STEADFASTNESS.

IT is a great thing, in days of declension and fickleness, to be steadfast. One may not be brilliant, may seem to have no special gift, but if he is reliable he is a power for good. In the heavenly warfare (Eph. vi.) the word "stand" is prominent. It shows the courage which is ready to meet the enemy, and is the presage of victory. After his wondrous exposition of the great doctrine of the resurrection (1 Cor. ~~1~~. 5), the apostle presses as a practical outcome of that doctrine: "Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." What an inducement to steadfastness! Christ is victorious: we, through Him, are sure to be more than conquerors. Let us, then, stand firm,—in our daily walk, our testimony, and in all that relates to our fellowship with another. How much good one does who is always present at the prayer or reading meeting. His steadfastness in that is a constant example to others. And so in everything else. The Church needs gifts, and Christ has provided them; but it needs simple daily steadfastness on the part of all.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Question 1.—Was the Lord Jesus capable of yielding to temptation?
A. M. C.

Temptation is of two kinds,—from without and from within. The former would include all circumstances, whether of trial or allurements, met with in life. That our blessed Lord was exposed to every form of such temptation, both at the hands of man and of Satan, it is needless to say. After His baptism we see every kind of allurements presented to Him by Satan, only to be rejected in the power of simple obedience to the word of

God. Later, when Peter would turn Him from the cross (Matt. 16-23), He, with equal simplicity, put the temptation away. That such resistance to evil meant suffering is most clear. "He suffered, being tempted," but suffering is the opposite of yielding. All through His holy life, He was brought in contact with that which caused Him acute pain. We, alas! are so dull as to appreciate but little what it cost Him to live in a world like this. Doubtless, in the garden of Gethsemane the tempter pressed Him most powerfully to leave the path of pain His love had chosen, but not for a moment did He waver. Oh, what obedience!—what perfection! It calls for worship more than analysis; and yet, in a reverent spirit, it is our privilege to see the Burnt Offering flayed (the inmost thoughts revealed),—separated into its parts, and the whole to be washed in water,—not to cleanse, but to show its purity. In all this we have the perfect Man.

The second kind of temptation is that from within. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." (James i. 14.) We need but to ask the question, Did the Lord Jesus have lust—desire to sin in any form?—to see the blasphemy of the hint of such a thing. But it may be objected that Adam was innocent until he yielded to temptation; and was it not possible that the Lord Jesus might have yielded in the same way?—being a man. This may be more subtle, but is none the less a denial of His perfection. The Holy Ghost is most careful to guard the incarnation from any such misrepresentation. Adam was a man,—a mere man. The Lord Jesus was something more than a mere man. As to His humanity, He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. "Therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i. 35.) So that even as to His humanity He was the Son of God. Further, He was one *person*, not two. His divine nature gave character to the whole. "The word was made flesh." (John i. 14.) In the language of the type, the gold covered the shittim wood. Even when showing His perfect sympathy and humanity, the Holy Spirit guards most jealously the uniqueness of that humanity. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." (Heb. ii. 14.) The word translated "are partakers" is different from that rendered "took part." The former is used for man, and implies the most intimate association. The children are partakers,—that is their nature. "Took part" suggests the thought of one from the outside, and in a sense remaining ever distant, who in grace takes up a nature similar to that of His people. Thus, that

there might be no mistake, a different word is used for each. Our Lord was, and is, perfect man. If He was capable of sinning, He is still so,—I speak with reverence,—for He is “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.” He was perfect man in His thoughts, feelings, desires, as well as in His ways and words. Perfect to sympathize and to succor when we are tempted. He knows human love, He knew human dependence; but He was ever the *only One*. Let us guard most jealously the spotless integrity of the One who has laid open the holy mystery of His incarnation to our view. Let us ever be worshipers here, and be most quick and sensitive to reject the faintest whisper that He could have been by any possibility anything else than He was and is. The jeweler tests gold to see that it *is* gold. If it failed to stand the test, if it were *possible* that it could not, it would not have been gold. Temptation simply manifested what the Lord Jesus was.

Question 2.—Please explain Eph. iv. 25. In the similar passage, Col. iii. 9, it is “lie not one to another.” Why is it “neighbor” here? Is it to all men? Then how “members one of another”?

J. J. D.

Of course truthfulness is to characterize a Christian in his dealings with all men. The term “neighbor” simply means the person with whom we are associated. The following clause applies exclusively to members of the body of Christ. An unbeliever could not be a member of that, for it is formed by the Holy Ghost, who unites us with our glorified Head, and so with one another. See 1 Cor. xii. 13, Eph. i. 13, 23. Evidently, then, the persons contemplated in the word “neighbor” are believers. To make the passage teach the universal brotherhood of man would be to do violence to the whole context and to the entire teaching of Scripture.

It is interesting to note the reason assigned for the need of truthfulness, in each epistle. Ephesians is devoted to the unfolding of the great truth of the Church—the body of Christ, the building of God, in its perfectness and unity. It is fitting, therefore, that an exhortation to truthfulness should be based upon that fact. We are members of one body, have a common life, a common hope, and common interests. A man might as well lie to himself as lie to his brother. We are members one of another. In Colossians the theme is the glory of Christ, and our identification with Him in death and resurrection. So the exhortation to truthfulness is based on the fact that we have in the death of Christ put off the old man, and in His resurrection put on the new. The subject is treated at large in the third chapter.

REHOBAM : A DIVISION PRECIPITATED.

(2 Chron. x.)

DARK days were fast settling down upon God's beloved people when Rehoboam came to the throne,—all the darker because in such marked contrast with the brilliant reign of Solomon. David had left everything stable,—neither adversary nor evil occurrent; and the first years of Solomon's rule almost seemed to give promise of blessing “so long as the moon endureth.” But alas for man! Left to himself, his privileges do but raise him to an elevation which makes his fall all the more terrible. After building and dedicating the temple, having been endowed with amazing wisdom, king Solomon “loved many strange wives,” who stole away his heart,—gradually, no doubt, but surely, until he turned away from his God to worship the abominations of the heathen. His position and endowments only mark the more clearly for us the lesson of man being but vanity, even at his best estate; and remind us of that Only One who has never failed, and who will yet restore to Israel her long-looked-for glory and blessing.

Even in Solomon's lifetime some of the results of his wrong-doing were manifest, and the Lord's chastening hand had been felt. The word had gone forth, through the prophet, that the kingdom was to be disrupted, and the instrument for its accomplishment was being prepared. As long as the king lived things were allowed to take their course,—partly, no doubt, because of a measure of administrative skill and energy still preserved in him, and partly because of the prestige of his great name.

With his death, however, and the accession of Rehoboam, the spell is broken, and there must be a fresh putting forth of power, or the hidden seeds of disintegration will soon bear their legitimate fruit. Such crises are not uncommon among God's people at all times, the circumstances varying with the special conditions existing. How often has a great name held God's people together until some time of testing came. They were brought face to face with some question of faith or duty,—a question requiring immediate guidance, where tradition, no matter how exact, was impotent to help. Then it was that the latent weakness was brought to light: we may be sure, however, that it had existed long before.

Would Rehoboam rise to the emergency? Would he prove to be the man for the time?

The place of his coronation is significant. David had been made king at Hebron, a city of Judah, and meaning "communion." Solomon had gone to Gihon, apparently in great haste to anticipate Adonijah. It was a name given to a suburb of Jerusalem, from the fountain of water there. The name signifies "a breaking forth," as of a fountain from the earth. One of the four rivers of Paradise was so called. It might, therefore, fittingly represent that outflow of the Spirit of God which is to characterize the millennial reign of Christ, of which Solomon's was a type. Shechem means shoulder, suggesting service and perhaps rule ("the government shall be upon His shoulder.") Its position in the tribe of Ephraim, fruitfulness, emphasizes the thought of service.

No doubt expediency suggested the choice of the place of coronation in a tribe where the evidences of

disaffection were already but too manifest. Again and again had the tribe of Ephraim shown its jealousy of the others. When Gideon pursued the defeated Midianites and overthrew them, he had to meet with the envious chidings of the men of Ephraim. His wisdom and soft answer averted a collision,—which, later on, in Jephthah's day, and under similar circumstances, was precipitated by the want of grace in that stern man. During all the time of David's rejection, and again after the rebellion of Absalom, this same spirit of tribal jealousy, with Ephraim doubtless in the lead, prevailed. The flames might only smoulder, but they were never quenched, and will not be until the restored nation will forget all else under the blessing of our Lord's gracious and wise rule. Then "the envy, also, of Ephraim shall depart, . . . Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." (Isa. xi. 13.)

The spiritual meaning of this is plain, whether in the history of the individual or of the Church. Works are arrayed against faith, service against worship, and the very blessings of grace too often made to appear antagonistic by Satan and his ready ally, the flesh. Judah, "praise," however, must lead; and Ephraim will find abundant fruit in the true spirit of subjection.

It would seem, as has been said, that some sense of impending danger had taken hold of Rehoboam; and he seeks to avert disaster by this clumsy and apparent pandering to the jealousy of Ephraim. We may remark that in so doing he left the place of communion, Hebron, and of refreshment, Gihon, and so was in reality unfitted for service, Shechem, as the sequel shows.

Ephraim was not to be mollified by this. Real grievances were to be righted; and at Shechem the new king meets with a firm demand, in form as yet loyal: "Thy father made our yoke grievous; now, therefore, ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father, and his heavy yoke that he put upon us, and we will serve thee." There need be no surprise that one who had forsaken his God as Solomon had, should oppress his fellow-men.

This is a critical moment with King Rehoboam, and he rightly asks time for a decision, applying to his counsellors (did he also seek wisdom from God?) for advice. Their answers are characteristic. The older men, who had doubtless marked a gradual weakening of the bonds of loyalty, counseled gentleness: "If thou be kind to this people and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants forever." On the other hand, the young men, with a rashness that usually accompanies inexperience, put into form the thoughts, doubtless, of his own heart: "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. . . . My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

Little need be added. The schism is consummated; a few hot words, and the union of the twelve tribes, which had survived the chaotic independency of the times of the Judges, falls before the imperious will of this young man. In vain does he attempt to stem the torrent: the outraged pride of Ephraim refuses to listen to any overtures, and to restore peace by war was expressly forbidden.

Well may we pause here and contemplate the ruin thus wrought. That the ten tribes were guilty of revolt, that they soon deserted the temple of God for

the calves of Dan and Bethel—starting upon a downward course of unbroken evil—stands out upon the face of the history of those times. Equally is it plain that the crown belonged to David's line: God's name had been put at Jerusalem, and the promises were centered there. But was not Ichabod written upon it all? True, obedience to God would be shown by the recognition of His house, but the eye could never be closed to the fact that Israel was divided.

And as we look around at the divisions among the people of God, shame and sorrow become us rather than the pride of position, too common in all our hearts. The Lord give His people to see their common shame and weep over it,—realizing, each of us, our responsibility in having contributed to the general state. Nor is this in the least inconsistent with the maintenance in all firmness of those principles laid down in the word of God for the guidance of His people as to their corporate relationships.

But there are lessons of grave importance in connection with Rehoboam's action. There can be no question that his harshness precipitated the division. It is equally true that both Ephraim and Judah were ready to seize upon any pretext to separate: they were already divided in heart. Above all, the state of the whole nation, of the individuals composing it, rendered such a thing possible. What was needed was a man for the time,—a man who first of all would humble himself personally, and thus fit himself to be the instrument God could use to restore His people,—a man with a large and tender heart, as well as an enlightened conscience, who on the one hand could realize the claims of God, and on the

other the weakness and needs of the people. Rehoboam, alas! was not such a man. His mother's name and lineage suggest the principles which governed him,—Naamah, an Ammonitess,—pleasure, at the expense of righteousness, a practical lapse into the heathenism of the children of Lot.

Then, too, a man for such emergencies must be one who inspires confidence. In his darkest days, the people believed in David, his sincerity and devotedness. Blundering, failure, there might be; but behind all that there was the conscience toward God, and a love and care for His people. Such characteristics seem to have been entirely wanting in Rehoboam.

And this brings us to look at the true principle of rule. It is service. Jotham's parable (Judges ix.) illustrates this. The trees want a king over them, and invite the olive, the vine, and the fig, successively, to take that place. But each is already engaged in fruit-bearing, supplying man's need, and will not leave the place of service "to wave over the trees." The healing, nourishing ministry of the Holy Spirit; the cheering, life-giving ministry of the precious blood of Christ; the varied fruits produced in the believer's life, are suggested by these trees; and what position or authority can compare with such service? Only the thorny, worthless bramble, will consent to be king, and it only to devour the best. Naturalists tell us that the fruit of a tree is simply an arrested branch,—checked from bearing leaves and spreading further, and its strength given to the production of fruit and seed. Strange to say, the thorn is similarly a branch, but instead of the check upon its growth being turned to fruit and blessing, it shrinks into a useless spine which can

only wound. God would arrest our growth in such a way, that, instead of making a show we might bear fruit; but we may be sure He would never have that arrested growth changed into a useless bramble that can but wound.

The true spirit of leadership is service. "I am among you as he that serveth" were the words of the true king. All who would imitate him must walk in the same lowly path: "By love serve one another." "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

One of the greatest needs of the church of God to-day is pastors. Men who love and yearn over God's beloved people, because they are His; who will take the sorrows, cares, follies, and failures of the saints, and lay them before God alone; who can minister comfort where it is needed; who can heal the breach between brethren; who go in and out amongst the Lord's dear people, helping, guarding, cherishing them, as a nurse cherisheth her children. "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers." The reverse of the true pastor is seen in that solemn passage in Ezekiel: "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and cruelty have ye ruled them." (Ezek. xxxiv. 4.)

Rehoboam followed the advice of the young men, whose lack of experience sadly unfitted them for such delicate work. Naturally God would use those whose maturity would give a breadth of view, a gentleness coupled with firmness, which come with

years. Sad it is that these things should ever be lacking with gray hairs; and that God must pass by unprepared old age to use consecrated youth, for a work most suited to mature years.

Rehoboam means "Room for the people." How sorrowfully he contradicted his name we have seen. Instead of breadth we have found narrowness; instead of enlargement, cutting off. The Lord give us grace to shun the errors into which he fell, for we are living in times which much resemble those days.

AS LITTLE CHILDREN.

FATHER, Thy children are so tired to-night,
 And fain would rest.
 We long to lay our weary heads in peace
 On Jesus' breast.

As little ones, whose eyes are heavy grown,
 We come to Thee.
 Nor questioning thy love, we feel a sweet
 Security.

Thy love constrains to leave all earthly things,
 Our transient joys.
 The things our restless, childish hands have spoiled,
 Our broken toys.

Thou knowest each one on which our foolish hearts
 So loved to dwell.
 Thou 'st marked the tears when, scattered at our feet,
 The fragments fell.

How oft, when disappointment's bitter cup was
 drained,
 We turned to Thee,
 Assured in Thy great loving heart to find
 Sweet sympathy.

O, grant us, blessed God, that childlike trust
 Which knows not doubt nor fear,
 But simply takes the hand which leads the way,
 Whether it be dark or clear. H. McD.

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

CHAPTER III.

(Continued from page 9.)

IT is plain that if it is as the unblemished lamb He is presenting Himself here, the Lord's baptism at once becomes unmistakable in its significance. In the gospel of Mark, He speaks of His baptism,* with evident reference to His sufferings. (Mark x. 38.) Christian baptism is spoken of as "baptism unto death," and in it we are "baptized unto *His* death" (Rom. vi. 3, 4). With this John's baptism in *Jordan*—the river of death—is in full agreement. The words, "so it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness," receive also in this way their simplest interpretation. For those who were "confessing their sins" in such a manner, the first step in "righteousness" of which they were capable was to take openly the place of death, as what was their due. While for Him also, who, having no sins of His own, was yet there for the sins of others, the place of death which it prefigured was no less the requirement of righteousness: the blessed Substitute for sinners had of necessity to take the sinners' place.

Thus all is clear throughout; with the exception, perhaps, of how this connects with what is manifestly the great subject of the gospel—the kingdom of the heavens, and Christ the King of this kingdom. Here also, we have seen that when His birth is announced to Joseph, he is bidden to call His name Jesus, "for He shall save His people from their sins." No kingdom could there be apart from this,—no possibility

* In our common version it is found also in the present one (Matt. xx. 22), but all the editors agree that it is an interpolation.

of there being, in any satisfying sense, "His people." Men are sinners, and a holy God cannot ignore this. Thus when Israel came of old into relationship with Himself, though it were but external, they could only come into this place and be separated from the Egyptians by the blood of the passover: redemption could not be by power only, but—and first of all—by blood. He, therefore, who is to be King of God's kingdom, cannot without preliminary take the throne. He must suffer, that He may be glorified: He must take the crown by way of the cross.

And so when the throne *is* taken, the effect of this, and the character it manifests, abide. "He shall be a priest upon His throne." (Zech. v. 13.) He stands before God for the people over whom he reigns; and thus while he is the true Melchizedek, "king of righteousness," He is also the "King of Salem," that is "King of peace." In Him "righteousness and peace have kissed each other." (Ps. lxxxv. 10.) For His throne, like the mercy-seat of old, is blood-sprinkled; and the cherubim of judgment gaze upon it from between their covering wings, and are at rest.

Here, at present, therefore, the Lord enters not as yet upon His kingship. It is priesthood that first must act and prepare the way. Thus, rising up out of the water, the Spirit of God descends upon Him: He becomes, not simply in title, but in fact, the Christ, the "Anointed." As Aaron of old had by himself received the typical anointing without blood, in order to his exercising the priesthood, so He is now declared fit for and consecrated to His sacrificial work, Priest and Sacrifice as He is in one. His perfection is as needful to the one as to the other. The white linen garments of the day of atonement, and not the robes of glory and beauty, are those in which the sacrifice is alone offered, and

the priest can alone sprinkle the blood that enters the sanctuary. It is what He is Himself that prevails in the day of unequalled agony, when the Anti-type offered up to God the only acceptable offering, Himself, and was accepted in that glorious "obedience unto death," by which the many for whom He stood are constituted righteous. (Rom. v. 19.)

What the Father's voice proclaims, the Spirit seals. (John vi. 27.) He comes to rest where there is a heart, a human heart, in perfect sympathy with His own, to give Him lodgment. Thus appearing as a dove, He manifests the character of Him upon whom He comes. The "dove" was one of the sacrificial birds,—the symbol, therefore, of Christ, in the very attitude in which we find Him here; and all is still in perfection and divine harmony. Father, Son, and Spirit are, indeed, for the first time, openly manifested together in the work of redemption, while it is Christ in the perfection of manhood reconstituted, and in Him brought nigh to God, to which Father and Spirit witness.

The dove, or pigeon,—the two were almost one,—was, in fact, the only bird explicitly *named* for sacrifice. As the bird of *heaven* it has, undoubtedly, its first significance. Heaven itself provides the offering by which heaven is to be appeased and opened over man. "The Second Man is the Lord from heaven." (1 Cor. xv. 47.) He who has sinned, as all mere men have, cannot by that fact provide the unblemished offering that will alone avail. It is God Himself, therefore, who provides it; and in this way manifests Himself in unspeakable goodness to win man's heart to Himself. This is the divine power of the gospel in reconciliation. He who required has fulfilled the requirement. He who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity has yet devised the wondrous

means whereby His banished shall be restored to Him. Not only so, but for this restoration the bird of heaven shows us God become man,—a Man who is God manifest in flesh,—no temporary condescension, but eternal love made known for eternity, eternally to be enjoyed.

Christ is divine love come down, and the dove is the bird of love and of sorrow united. The love explains the sorrow, the sorrow the depth of the love. What a world to welcome the Son of God, and what welcome it gave Him! “A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief! and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.”

But Scripture is more definite than this as to the dove, for it points us to its “wings covered with silver, and its feathers with yellow gold.” (Ps. lxxviii. 13.) And here the reference should be plain to those who are acquainted with its symbolism. “Silver” gets its significance from the money of atonement, and its meaning is well illustrated in passages familiar to us. The *wings* are wings of redemption, for this it is that has put divine love in activity toward us; while in the feathers is the gleam of gold, the display of divine glory! This is how Nature itself bears witness to Christ.

The Hebrew word for the dove is *jonah*; and however little the prophet of the name may have exemplified in his own character the spirit which this implies, we cannot but remember the Lord's comparison of Himself: “As Jonah was three days and three nights in the fish's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Ch. xii. 40.) Whatever road we take here leads us to the great mystery of redeeming love. All witnesses combine to assure us of the meaning of what is here before us in the gospel.

The Father proclaims His Son. The apostle tells us that "no man taketh this honor [of the high priesthood] unto Himself, but He that was called of God, even as Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made a high priest, but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son." (Heb. v. 4, 5.) This, then, was the Lord's induction into His office, as having (of course, in an exclusive sense) the relationship which is acknowledged here. Yet it is not as the "only-begotten Son," or in His deity, that He is addressed, as is plain, for it could not be added then, as in Hebrews, "*to-day* I have begotten Thee." Nor could His full *divine* glory be the foundation of a priesthood which, of necessity, is human. It must be, therefore, as born into the world by the power of the Holy Ghost, as in Luke the angel says unto Mary, "*therefore* that Holy Thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Here He is Son of God in His human nature,—Man, but a *unique* Man. And the connection of this with His priesthood is not hard to trace. True man, without taint of the fall,—the Son of God, as once more coming (like Adam, but another Adam) fresh from the inspiration of God. Thus He begins another creation, though out of the ruins of the old. Thus He is the Representative-Head of a new race of men, standing for them before God, with God, the true Mediator-Priest of the new humanity.

No wonder that heaven opens to own and induct into His place this glorious Person! "Therefore doth my Father love Me," He says elsewhere, "because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." And here, where He is (as it were) pledging Himself to that death for men, the Father's voice breaks out in all its fullness of joy in Him: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I well pleased."

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS.

“ABOVE THE SUN.”

(Continued from page 17.)

CEASE, ye Saints, your occupation with the sorrow-scenes of earth;
 Let the ear of faith be opened, use the sight of second birth.

Long your hearts have been acquainted with the tear-drop and the groan;
 These are *weeds* of foreign growing, seek the *flowers* that are your own.

He who in the sandy desert looks for springs to quench his thirst

Finds his fountains are but slime-pits such as Siddim's vale accursed;

He who hopes to still the longing of the heart within his breast

Must not search within a scene where naught is at one moment's rest.

Lift your eyes *above* the heavens to a sphere as pure as fair;

There, no spot of earth's defilement, never fleck of sin-stain there.

Linger not to gaze on Angels, Principalities, nor Powers;

Brighter visions yet shall greet you, higher dignities are ours.

All night's golden constellations shine but dim as day draws on,

And the moon must veil her beauties at the rising of the sun.

Let the grove be wrapt in silence as the nightingale outflings

Her unrivaled minstrelsy, th' eclipse of every bird that sings.

Michael, Israel's Prince, is glorious, clad in panoply
of war;

* "Who is as the God of Israel" is his challenge near
and far;

But a higher still than Michael soon shall meet your
raptured gaze,

And ye shall forget his glories in *your* Captain's
brighter rays.

List a moment to the music of the mighty Gabriel's
voice,

With its message strange and tender, making Mary's
heart rejoice.

Then on-speed, for sweeter music soon expectant
faith shall greet:

His who chained another Mary willing captive at His
feet.

But, let memory first glance backward to the scenes

"beneath the sun,"

How the fairest earthly landscape echoed soon some
dying groan.

There the old-creation's story, shared between the
dismal Three:

Sin and Suffering and Sorrow summed that Babel's
history.

Now the contrast—vain ye listen for one jarring note
to fall;

For each dweller in that scene's in perfect harmony
with all.

Joy has here expelled all sadness, perfect peace dis-
placed all fears—

All around that central Throne makes the true "mu-
sic of the spheres."

Now upsoar ye on faith's pinion, leave all creature
things behind,

And approach yon throne of glory. Love in Light
ye there shall find;

* "Michael" means "Who is as God."

For with thrill of joy behold One—woman-born—
upon that Throne,
And, with deepest self-abasement, in *His* beauties
read your own.

Joyful scan the glories sparkling from His gracious
Head to Feet;
Never one that does not touch some tender chord of
memory sweet;
And e'en heaven's music lacks till blood-bought ones
their voices raise
High o'er feebl' angel-choirs; for richer grace wakes
nobler praise.

Vain the quest amongst the thronging of the heav-
enly angel band
For one trace of human kinship, for one touch of hu-
man hand;
'Mongst those spirits bright, ethereal, "man" would
stand a man alone;
Higher must he seek for kinship—thought amazing—
on God's Throne!

Does it not attract your nature, is it not a rest to
see
One e'en there at glory's summit, yet with human
form like thee?
Form assumed when love compelled Him to take up
your hopeless case,
Form He never will relinquish; ever shall it voice his
grace.

Wondrous grace! thus making heaven but our Fa-
ther's house prepared;
Since, by One who tells God's love, in wounded hu-
man form 'tis shared.
See, His Head is crowned with glory! yet a glory not
distinct
From an hour of deepest suffering, and a crown of
thorns succinct.

Draw still closer, with the rev'rence born of love and
holy fear;
Look into those tender eyes which have been dimmed
with human tear—
Tears in which *ye* see a glory hidden from th' Angelic
powers;
Ours alone the state that caused them, their beauty
then alone is ours.

Look once more upon that Head: finds memory no
attraction there
In the time when, homeless-wandering, night-dews
filled that very hair?
Brightest glories sparkle round it—crowned with
honor now; and yet,
Once it found its only pillow on storm-tossed Gen-
nesaret!

See that Hand! it once grasped Peter's as he sank
beneath the wave,—
Snatched the widow's son at Nain from the portal of
the grave,—
Touched with healing grace the leper, gave the light
to him born dark.
*Deeper love to you is spoken in that nail-print—
precious mark!*

Let your tender gaze now rest on those dear Feet
that erstwhile trod
All the weary, painful journey leading Him *from*
God *to* God;
Took Him in His gentle grace wherever need and
suffering thronged,
Or one lonely soul was found who for the living water
longed.

Those the very Feet once bathed with a pardoned
sinner's tears,
And anointed, too, with spikenard speaking Mary's
love and fears;

Took Him weary on His journey till refreshed on
Sychar's well
By that other thirsty parched one letting Him His
love out-tell.

Blessed Feet! 'tis only *sinner*s see the depth of beauty
there;

Angels never have bowed o'er them with a peniten-
tial tear.

Angels may regard the nail-print, with a holy, rever-
ent calm;

Ye who read the *love* it tells of, *must* break forth with
thankful psalm.

Draw yet nearer, look more fondly; yea, e'en nestle
and abide

In that covert from the storm-blast, in the haven of
His Side.

That deep wound speaks man's great hatred, but His
love surpassing great:

*There were focused, at one spear-point, all God's love
and all man's hate!*

Rest, ye saints! your search is ended; ye have
reached the source of peace.

By the side of Jesus risen, earth's dull cares and sor-
rows cease.

Here are Elim's wells and palm-trees, grateful shade
and waters cool,

Whilst in Christ's deep love there's healing far be-
yond Bethesda's pool.

Closer, closer, cluster round Him, till the kindling of
that Love

Melt your hearts to like compassions whilst amid like
scenes ye move.

Only thus abiding in Him can ye fruitfulness ex-
pect,

Or, 'mid old-creation sorrows, new-creation love
reflect.

Ever closer gather round Him, till "the glory of that
 Light"
 Dims the old-creation glitter, proves earth's glare to
 be but—night!
 Gaze thereon till His attractions wing your feet as on
 ye run,
 And faith merges into sight, in your own home
 "Above the Sun."

F. C. J.

(To be continued.)

FRAGMENTS.

SATAN is constantly endeavoring to awaken or strengthen within us a high opinion of ourselves, knowing that this will weaken our sense of dependence on Jesus, make us uncharitable toward each other, and put us off our guard.

GOD'S school is the school of the Cross. Jesus Himself, the spotless Son of God, "learned obedience by the things which He suffered." Not a child of God can there be without passing through the same school. True happiness comes out of our readiness to go through it, knowing well that Love is master in that school, and alone holds the rod. Nor shall we be excused till we have no more lesson to learn.

ARE you in trouble, afflicted, bereaved? Remember the great High Priest, who wept at the grave of Lazarus, and who raised him from the dead. Here we have divine sympathy and divine power. "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me." Support and affection! And this He has for all His people.

WOOD, HAY, STUBBLE.

IN the contemplation of the wood, hay, and stubble, we are again confronted with the further display of God's wondrous grace; for the same grace that would encourage our hearts to build upon the foundation the gold, silver, and precious stones would also emphasize the warning "let every man *take heed* how he buildeth thereon," by showing us the true character and absolute loss of all work that fails to have for its object and motive the glory of Christ.

Again, our hearts bow in deep thankfulness for the grace that will forever remove from His sight that which we ourselves would not wish to abide; and deep as will be the loss we suffer, we will rejoice in the faithfulness of the test that will thoroughly try all our work, consuming everything found to be wood, hay, and stubble, leaving only the gold, silver, and precious stones.

Again, too, we would praise Him for the eternal value of the work in which we stand accepted before God,—that blessed work that nothing can touch. Oh, how precious the words—"he himself shall be saved." May God grant for each one of us that, whilst much of our poor work may not abide, that of none of us it may be said "so as by fire."

We would, then, seek to contrast now the wood with the gold, the hay with the silver, and the stubble with the precious stones; for if the interpretation of the one is according to the unfailing word of God, its corroboration will be found in the harmony of the contrast, and the light of other scripture will throw its rays equally on the one as on the other. So, then, if the gold, silver, and precious

stones speak of the work and its reward, we should find a corresponding contrasting voice in the wood, hay, and stubble, for which there is no reward, but the suffering of loss.

Wood, of course, is only the tree cut down, and the word is the same word used for tree in other parts of the Scripture; and as the tree in its beauty and grandeur is figurative of man in his worldly glory and exaltation, we have the thought of the Spirit suggested in the very word itself. "Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon, and with a shadowing shroud and of a high stature, and his top was among the thick boughs: therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field." (Ezek. xxxi. 3-5.) Again, "the tree that thou sawest, which grew and was strong; whose height reached unto the heavens, and the sight thereof to all the earth; whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much. . . . It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong; for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth." (Dan. iv. 20-22.)

Sufficient, surely, are these divine illustrations to show that the tree is symbolical of man, in his glory and self-exaltation. How solemn, then, the warning "Take heed"; for if the divine glory of the person of Christ as the object before us is made to give place, in any form or to any extent, to the thought of the glory or exaltation of man, every bit of such work will in that day that shall declare it be seen to be only wood, the tree cut down, the life gone, and, under the test of the fire which shall try every man's work of what sort it is, must be consumed: it cannot abide; and the builder—oh, solemn words!—"shall

suffer loss." Then, instead of "how sweet will be the reward," how great will be the loss, and instead of its being manifest that in fellowship with the Father we had sought to set forth the glories of His beloved Son, it will be seen that out of communion with Him the glory of man had been before our hearts and actuated our work. May our souls turn with distrust from all that would tend to rob our Lord of His glory and ourselves of our reward.

HAY.—In the light of the same blessed word, which is so really the "lamp to our feet, and the light to our path," hay will be seen in contrast with the silver, which speaks to us so plainly of the glories of our blessed Saviour in His redemptive work for our souls,—that work which the poor sinner sees to be for sinners, for him,—and upon which his dying soul feeds and finds life; that flesh of which, except a man eat he has no life in him, that when appropriated by faith is found to be the eternal life which Christ gives to as many as His Father has given Him. Oh, the glories of Jesus as He is thus set forth as the bread come down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die! Oh, the glories of setting forth such a work,—the food and life of poor perishing souls: this is, indeed, the silver which shall have its reward. Now contrast with it the hay, which is grass or fodder, and again we have food, but food without life, used only by and fit only for the beast. How truly, then, every bit of work that would set before hungry dying souls the empty husks that the swine eat is only fit for the fire, and must be burned. Blessed be our God! Nothing in our hearts short of the glories of Christ as the living bread will be reckoned as the silver, or stand the test in that day.

Then, again, instead of "how sweet the reward," how great the loss, to find that we have thus substituted for His flesh, which He said He would give for the life of the world, that which could not give life nor satisfy the poor heart, and thus have built upon the foundation that which is again life and glory gone, grass cut down, only fit for the fire, and condemned to be burned. Thus, too, the absence of fellowship with the Son in setting forth other than His precious work will characterize the building of the hay in sad contrast with the silver.

STUBBLE, or straw, is emphasized in Scripture as the expression of what is worthless; the glory of the grain gone in the fruit which has been reaped from it; that which remains after harvest, left either to be driven before the wind or burned to the ground. In Isaiah we have it referred to as that which the fire easily consumed. "Therefore, as the fire devoureth the stubble and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be in rottenness and their blossom shall go up as dust:"—clearly that worthless chaff left standing after the fruit has been harvested. This is also corroborated by the account given in the Bible dictionaries describing the ancient method of reaping by cutting off only the heads of the grain, leaving the straw to be cleared off the field by fire. We have further light in the thirtieth chapter, where the woe is pronounced upon the spoiler: "Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble. Your breath, as fire, shall devour you." Enough in these references to give us the thought of the Spirit in choosing the word, when He would show us the worthless character of the stubble as contrasted with the divine value and beauty of the precious stones.

How necessary, then, if we build upon the foundation the precious stones (those lights and perfections) which set forth the richer deeper glories of all that Christ is, that we should be filled with the Spirit, who alone can know them,—who, ungrieved and unhindered, would prove Himself to be that “same anointing who teacheth us of all things.” (1 John ii. 27) And as the Lord Himself said, “He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John vii. 38, 39.) But now He *is* glorified, exalted at God’s right hand, the glory of God shining in His face; the Spirit *is* given, and He searches the deep things of God and reveals to us those things which aforetime ear could not hear nor heart conceive. How awful, then, if, in the ministry to God’s dear saints, the deep things should prove not to be the things of Christ, but only the researches and learning of man,—that which displaces *His* glory and sets forth another—the worthless, fruitless stubble. In such a ministry there are depths, but depths in which the person of our blessed Lord is lost. Food there is, but fit only for the beast,—the scientific husks on which this poor world feeds. Glories there are, but, alas! only the glories of poor human intellect, which, instead of setting forth the things of Christ, make only a display of learning.

Oh, servant of the Lord, be not drawn aside by the subtle influences of these perilous times! Seek not your own glory; study to show thyself approved; turn, with a devoted heart, to Christ, from all that

would exalt self. Be an imitator of the apostle who counted the things that were gain to him loss for Christ,—who could say “My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” How dare we attempt to build upon the blessed foundation God hath laid for us, anything but the glories of Christ? Must not all else be the wood, hay, stubble? Must it not be burned? Let us, then, take heed that the absence of fellowship with the Spirit, on whom all depends, does not characterize our service; that we do not turn the sweetness of reward into the suffering of loss; and let us seek, with all our hearts, to have only Christ Himself before us, setting forth His divine person—His precious work—His eternal glories, as seen in all that He was, all that He has done, and all that He is as now glorified at God’s right hand, that thus, through grace, we may build upon the foundation only the gold, silver, and precious stones.

J. F. P.

FIGHTING WITH FOXES.

(Judges xv. 2-5.)

SAMSON’S life in general is a warning rather than an example. Endowed with amazing strength and marked out as an instrument of the Spirit of God, he falls far short, and instead of setting his people free, leaves them, and himself dies, in bondage to the Philistines. The cause is not far to seek: he himself, though set apart as a Nazarite, exhibited the very failure which marked the whole nation of Israel—mixture with the heathen. Truly may we say at all times, “Vain is the help of man.”

The account before us, on its face, seems but the trifling of one who could have used his strength to some purpose in throwing off the yoke of the enemy. But beyond that, there was a direct violation of a command: and further, when we look at the spiritual significance, a fighting against the people of God, not for them.

“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 axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man’s life) to employ them in the siege.” (Deut. xx. 19.) Even when it seemed so necessary to use every means, as in a siege, the trees of the field which bore fruit were to be spared: how much more when there was no such stress! This was the work of the Midianites and Amalekites who came up into the land of Israel and “destroyed all the increase of the earth until thou come to Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel.” (Judges vi. 2-6.) A lawless Absalom might do similar work to compel the attention of Joab (2 Sam. xiv. 28-31), but it seems most clearly to be unfriendly to the best interests of God’s people. The spoil of their enemies belonged to them, while to destroy the spoil and leave the enemy seems the very reverse of any act of deliverance.

And this is seen more clearly when we remember the typical meaning of the fruits of the land. When Israel had left the wilderness and come across Jordan into their inheritance, the manna ceased, and they fed on the old corn of the land. (Josh. v. 12.) The manna, we are told plainly (John vi.), represented Him who came down from heaven and humbled him-

self unto death that He might give Himself to be the food—in death—of His people, so giving them life and sustaining them in this world. Similarly the old corn evidently refers to a risen and glorified Christ, the fruit, as it were, of heaven's field, who is the food of His people as risen with Him and in Him in the heavenly places. (Eph. ii.)

Similarly the typical meaning of foxes or jackals is plain. The cowardly feeder on carrion—night-roamer, cruel and worthless, fittingly stands for that flesh which, as enmity against God, only finds its food in the “unfruitful works of darkness,” the corrupt lusts of the old man.

But what work then to turn loose the flesh with firebrands—the tongue setteth on fire the whole course of nature (James iii. 6)—and allow it to burn up the good corn, the vineyards and olive-trees! It may be said these things were in the hands of the Philistines. Then let the Philistines be conquered and the spoil taken from them.

Have we not often in this day, too, something that answers to this fox-warfare? “The weapons of our warfare,” says the apostle, “are not carnal, but mighty through God.” (2 Cor. x. 3, 4.) How easy it is, alas, to take up that ever-ready nature and to turn it against what may really be a spiritual foe! But Satan never yet cast out Satan, nor the flesh its own lusts: and the effect of turning it loose is only to destroy, as it were, the Christ who is our food and leave untouched the enemy we were aiming at.

The application of this is plain, and can be made by our own conscience. Let us not destroy our food. How often, in attempting to set our brethren right, we may be but letting loose an evil in ourselves that

will devour what there is of good amongst us. How desolating a fire is! leaving in its track nothing but the charred embers of what was once a fair field of ripening grain or a fruitful vineyard. The strife of tongues can do this. Let us guard against it as we would against a literal fire.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Question 3.—If the natural man is utterly corrupt, what is the moral value of the so-called amiable qualities, such as natural affection, benevolence, etc.? Are these evil?

A. M. C.

Answer.—We must remember, first of all, that God has a different standard of measurement from man's. He measures motives, which we cannot; and secondly, He tests everything with relation to Himself. If these two factors are present in our tests of the naturally amiable qualities in man we will find their true worth in God's sight. As to motive, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.) Does the benevolent worldly man act from that motive? Does the parent love his child because the love of Christ constrains him? We know that such is not the case. How often is selfishness only too apparent in much that passes for love,—desire for approbation in what passes for disinterested benevolence. But unquestionably there is much that is amiable between man and man, in which God is left out entirely. Sinners lend to sinners, and salute their friends. But God's glory is far from their thoughts. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." It may not be low or immoral conduct, but it does not rise to God. Spiritual death consists in separation from God; and, alas, the stamp of death is upon all that is fairest and sweetest in the natural man. Even his religiousness but sharpens his hatred of God, as witness Saul of Tarsus.

It will be remembered that honey, as well as leaven, was excluded from the offerings to God. Natural amiability could have no place before Him. It is by Christ, and Christ alone, we draw near to God. In Him alone are we complete. Honey may do to taste, as Jonathan did, and was refreshed; but he only dipped the end of his rod in it,—a mere taste. The sweets of this life, even when apparently most innocent, do but allure us from God, if we are not careful.

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

(Continued from page 41.)

CHAPTER IV.

THE fourth subdivision follows the third, as Numbers follows Leviticus, with the story of the temptation in the wilderness. The Israelites took forty years, and then how little had they learned the lessons which they were put there to school to learn! The Lord is there forty days, and approves Himself as all the way through perfect,—Master, and not disciple.

He had fulfilled, as we have seen, in the thirty years of His private life at Nazareth, His own human responsibility before God. He had then come forth from that retirement to take His public place as Mediator for others. He is now accepted as perfectly pleasing to the Father, the unblemished Lamb of sacrifice, the Priest able to offer for the sins of men. To this office He is consecrated by the descent of the Spirit upon Him, and is now the Christ, the “Anointed,” proclaimed openly to be this.

In obedience to the law of responsibility He must be now tested as to His ability for the path upon which He has entered. The book of Job shows us Satan allowed of God for this purpose to be “the accuser of the brethren.” He who is to be the “first-born among” these pleads for Himself no exemption from this trial. He is expressly “led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the *devil*,” who is designated thus, according to the meaning of the term, as the “false accuser.”

But God had pronounced, Is not that enough? Alas, sin had come in, distrust of God Himself: He

also is upon trial; and Satan's reasoning in Job's case clearly takes that ground. God pronounces as to Job, and he takes exception as to it. "Hast Thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house?" is as much as to say "This sentence is not after fair trial." And God, in His mercy to man, who had, to his undoing, accepted Satan's malignity for truth, does not retreat behind His privilege. If He is and must be sovereign in His doing, so that "none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest Thou?" yet He will suffer question, and let all be brought into the fullest light. Job's "hedge" is taken away, and Satan is allowed large limits within which to deal with him,—the end being, of course, blessing to the sufferer, and vindication of God's perfect ways.

Here is His own Beloved, and there is no remnant of a hedge about the person of the Christ of God. Nor will He use the power that is His against the adversary. As conflict between good and evil, power cannot decide it. The good must manifest itself as that, and stand by its own virtue against all odds. The glorious Wrestler is stripped, therefore, for the wrestling. Son of God, though He be, He ordains for Himself the poverty of the creature, the conditions of humanity, and these in their utmost straitness. Man in Adam in his first perfection had been tempted in a garden, specially prepared and furnished for him. But one thing was denied him; and in the denial there was contained a blessing, among the chief of all the blessings there. Real want there was none, and need was in such sort ministered to as to be itself in every character the occasion of a new delight. The weakness of the creature is owned, but tenderly provided for, so as to witness of the tender arms of love that were about him: he had but to

shrink into them to be in perfect safety, outside of all possible reach of harm.

But not so sheltered, not so provided for, was the new Adam, the Son of man. The garden had gone: in its stead was the wilderness; nor was there nurture for Him even, from Nature's barren breast. For forty days-He fasts, and then the hunger of those forty days is on Him: then the tempter comes. It marks the contrast between Him and other men, that whereas a Moses or an Elias fasted to meet God, He must fast to meet the devil.

There are three forms of the temptation; though with the first broken we see, indeed, that victory is gained over them all. Yet for our instruction, however, it is that we are permitted to have all before us, that we may realize the points in which the subtlety perfected by ages of experience finds man to be above all accessible, and how Satan is to be resisted still. We shall do well to consider them closely, therefore, and with the closest application also to ourselves. The battlefield here may seem to be a narrow one; the points of attack few; the weapons employed against the enemy a scanty armory; but here lies one of the excellencies of Scripture, that its principles, while they may seem simple, have in them the depths of divine wisdom, and far-reaching application to the most diverse needs.

“And when the tempter came unto Him, he said, If thou be Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”

Satan thus would act upon Him by the conviction of what He was, and make Him assert Himself, in circumstances which seemed quite unsuited to Him as such. The Son of God, the beloved of the Father, at the extreme point of starvation in a desert! But then this was surely in His own power to set right:

was it not true that He needed not circumstances to be adjusted to Him, who was able so easily to adjust them to Himself? The power surely was His, the need was real, the hunger was sinless: why, then, should He not put forth His power, and make the stones of the ground into bread to supply His necessities? So simple and plausible is the suggestion, so well it seems to recognize the truth of what He was, so natural is it with us to minister with what power we have to our own requirements, that to any of us, naturally, it would seem to be of no evil suggestion at all,—no *temptation*. But it was such; and the Lord's answer will show us, better than any reasoning of our own, *why* it was such.

It has been noticed always—it could scarcely escape notice—that the Lord answers from the word of God. This is the sword of the Spirit, the only weapon we have wherewith to encounter the adversary. But it is striking to find the Lord, who could have certainly answered from His own mind, using always, and with distinct reference to it as such, the written word. We see that He takes the same ground as ourselves, answers as man, and subject, as we are, to the authority of God. And this the passage that He quotes fully proves,—going, indeed, beyond it: “It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

This is from Deuteronomy (viii. 3), the book that sums up the lessons of the wilderness for the people who had passed through the wilderness. And the passage shows that the dealings of God with His people had been directly designed to teach them this: “And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that *He might*

make thee know that man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." How important—how supremely important, therefore, is this principle!

Man lives by the word of God,—in obedience to it. The true life of man is nourished and sustained alone by this. Bread will not sustain it: the life of obedience is that which alone is "life." In this way we see, that though, because of inherent sin everywhere, the legal covenant had no life in it, yet there is another sense in which "which, if a man do, he shall even live in them," is to be understood. There is really a path of life thus, though grace alone can put us in it, or retain us there. Eternal life and disobedience cannot go together. This is, in the nature of things, impossible. The gospel does not alter it; grace but affirms it: yea, "sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace."

All this is in the passage quoted by the Lord; but in His application of it we are made to go further than naturally we should carry it. What principle of disobedience, we might question, could be contained in the simple suggestion to use power that He really had, to minister to need that was as really His also, and in which, therefore, there could be no evil?

Notice, then, that it is as "man" He speaks,—it is of *man* these things are written. Son of God He was,—adoringly we own it: it is that makes the path we are thinking of so wonderful an one; but it is not in the open glory of the Godhead that He is come to traverse the earth, but to learn obedience in a path of humiliation,—nay, by the things that He *suffered*. He is come as man to work out redemption for men; and for this to learn all that is proper to man, apart

from sin. Thus He cannot save Himself out of this condition by the power of the Godhead. What He can use freely for others, for Himself He cannot use. It is He of whom it is written in the volume of the book, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God! . . . I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart." (Ps. xl. 7, 8.) Thus He is here subject, and subject in satisfaction and delight, to the will of Another. He has, in His whole course on earth, no other motive. Need may press, appetite may crave: He feels all this as other men; did He not feel it, the glory of His humiliation would be dimmed. But while He feels it, it is no *motive* to Him: there is but one motive—the will of God. To make Himself the motive would destroy this perfection,—come to do *that* will, nothing else.

This is the spirit in which He goes forth to service: the close of it on earth—closing with the deepest humiliation and dreadest shadow of all—affords so beautiful an example of this principle, even while at first sight it might seem in conflict with it, that one cannot forbear to speak of it here. One of the physical distresses of the great agony of the cross is the intense thirst that is produced by it. Almost the last words of the Lord there had reference to this, and gave it expression. His words, "I thirst," are answered by the sponge filled with vinegar, of which He tasted; and they were such as naturally to call forth such an answer. Was this, then, really any seeking of relief, in His extremity, even from the hands that had nailed Him there? No, this could not be; and we are carefully guarded from such a perversion. There was one scripture, we are told, that remained to be fulfilled; and of this it was, in all the agony of the hour, that He was thinking: "Jesus, *that the Scripture might be fulfilled*, saith,

I thirst." This leads to what had been predicted, "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Thus the glorious obedience shines here without a cloud upon it; nay, with surpassing luster. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," is throughout the principle of His life.

F. W. G.

(*To be continued.*)

THE GROUND, THE DEFINITENESS, AND THE MORAL POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.

(Lev. xvi. 12-14; Phil. iii. 13, 14; 2 Pet. i. 3-9.)

THE *ground* of Christianity is "Christ, and Him crucified," as Paul puts it, or "the Lamb, as it had been slain," as John writes it; or the incense and the blood, as Moses unfolds it in that great Atonement chapter of the Pentateuch, Lev. xvi. If our salvation, from first to last, reposes on that firm and imperishable ground, the precious blood of Christ; if there can be no Christianity without the cross, *whose* blood was shed? *Who* sustained that cross? *Who* upheld that mighty work which, for grandeur and moral sublimity towers over all? It was the glory of the One who died. The person upheld the work on which our souls rest for time and eternity. Oh, blessed foundation! Oh, rock of everlasting strength!

First, we have the person, then the work. Aaron was to "take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil." The incense sets forth the merits of Christ,—the moral beauties and excellencies of His person. Now, from Exod. iii. 34-36 we learn that

the "sweet incense" was composed of four precious ingredients, of like weight and beaten small. Surely the Christ of the four Gospels—crushed, bruised, and suffering—is here foreshadowed. But you cannot separate Christ from His work; hence the High Priest was directed to take a censer, or pan, of burning coals from off the altar and take it within the veil. He also filled his hands with the fragrant incense; and thus, in Jehovah's presence, we have in type the person, incense, and the work, the blood. Then the, to us, blessed and inseparable connection between the two is further shown. The incense put on the fire rose up in a delightful cloud and covered the mercy-seat. The memorials of Calvary are in the presence of God. The victor and victory are in the Divine presence. The moral beauties and glories of the One who died have been expressed *in* and *by* the work of the cross as nowhere else. It was a golden censer (Heb. ix. 4) which was used on these never-to-be-forgotten occasions—the annual day of atonement for Israel. Divine righteousness in exercise, could alone meet the requirements of the divine nature. Then the blood of the appointed sacrificial victim was sprinkled *once* on the mercy-seat and *seven* times before it. The mercy-seat was made of pure gold; and on either end of it a cherub was fashioned out of the same piece of gold of which the mercy-seat, or cover, of the ark was made. The ark contained the tables of the law,—the measure of what a fallen creature ought to be for God. The golden cherubim were the moral supports of Jehovah's throne in the midst of a sinful and guilty people. On what ground could a defiled people holily appear before a holy God? Is it possible for a guilty one to

stand before a righteous God? It is. Death had taken place. The brazen altar had told its tale of judgment; and now the witness of death, *blood*, is taken into the presence of God and sprinkled *on* the throne. The cherubim are satisfied. Blood—the blood of God's appointed victim—has been *shed* at the altar, and *sprinkled* on the throne. It is enough. God is infinitely glorified. But then the blood was sprinkled seven times before the throne. Be it remembered that the sand of the desert constituted the floor of the tabernacle. Thus our standing before the throne is the Lamb, and that alone. You cannot add to its value; you have it in all its priceless worth, in its infinite value to God as ground of our standing in the divine presence; and *here* we know it and rejoice in it, as we tread the desert which His feet trod. Whose feet? The feet of the One who shed His blood.

Thus we have the ground—alone and magnificent—of Christianity. If the person and work of Christ glorifies the throne, supports the sinners before it, there is no other—can be no other—basis of the whole system of Christianity, as God's only given system for men on earth. Christianity is worthless—yea, it is positively immoral—if you rob it of its distinguishing glory—the cross of Christ. Its moral power is gone if there be no Christ. Christianity without Christ would be like the heavens without the sun. Christ it is which gives motive and power. Without Him all—all—would be a huge, moral waste.

The *definiteness* of Christianity consists in its intense presentation of Christ. Several objects before the heart are distracting. The Christian has but *one*.

The duties and responsibilities of life are many, but amidst them all the believer has to pursue but one object. The great, all-absorbing business of life, is to please Christ; to walk and live and serve Him wholly and only. Thousands of God's dear people live aimless, objectless lives. The lack of purpose, of point, of definiteness, is simply owing to the soul not grasping God's end in conversion—exclusive devotion to Christ. What a rare opportunity for all, but especially for Christian *young* men and women to shine for Christ. Organizations, societies, and the like, cripple individual energy. We want our young people to be fired with a holy enthusiasm,—a burning, passionate desire to be *all* for Christ in life and work; and while willing to be counseled by age and experience, yet indifferent to the frown or smile of others. Every true work of God has been wrought by individual effort.

The moral *power* of Christianity does not consist in strong assertion, nor is it doctrine and dogma authoritatively revealed. Christianity is a living power. It enters into all the relationships of life. It transforms a thief into a generous man (Eph. iv. 28). It is an active force in this world. Christianity is not mere sentiment. It is an active, living, practical power, dealing with the needs, miseries, and woes of men. Its representatives are saved men and women,—persons morally brave. We have known many, in course of a lengthened ministry, naturally timid, and even weak in character, grow strong under the moral influence of Christianity. Christ produces splendid characters,—firm, yet gracious; strong, yet gentle.

The character described in 2 Pet. i., is not one a

saved person all at once jumps into. It is a gradual addition and strengthening of Christian character. It is a process of development. The study of Scripture, the knowledge of God and of Christ, and the earnest pressing on in a path of godliness are essential to the cultivation of such a character as Peter here describes.

W. S.,
(Scotland.)

“YES, LET THEM GO!”

“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”—Psalm xc., v. 10.

My “days” are gone!
My “fourscore years” have passed away,
And I can not much longer stay,
For so my failing “strength” doth say,—
My “days” are gone!

Well, let them go!
For bright indeed they have not been,—
No mortal eye has fully seen,—
Life's ills were hid behind a screen:
But God doth know!

Yes, let them go!
For brightest days are coming fast,—
Days that will ne'er, ne'er be past,—
Days that will ever, ever last:
And free from woe!

All, all of grace!
For Jesus loved and died for me,
Bore all my sins upon the tree,
That I might be forever free
To see God's face!

Yea, see and *live*!
 For, *Jesus now* beholds His face:
 Because *He lives I live*, through grace;
 And I, through Him, shall reach that "place,"
 Full praise to give!

Thou blessed One!
 What joy it is to call Thee mine!
 How sweet to know that I am thine!
 That I shall in Thy beauty shine!
 E'en share Thy throne!

Jesus, my all!
 O precious One, I've all in Thee!
 For time and for eternity!
 Oh, may I truly waiting be,
 When Thou shalt call.

R. H.

MORE LIKE THEE.

More like Thee, my precious Saviour,
 As the days go fleeting by:
 More like Thee I would be growing:
 By thy love, Lord, keep me nigh.

In this world of sin and sorrow,
 Saviour, I would shine for Thee;
 But I know my light is feeble,—
 Help I seek, O Lord, from Thee.

From Thy distant home in glory,
 Saviour, Thou didst come for me:
 Left it that Thou might'st save me,
 And that I might ransomed be.

Rescued thus, my precious Saviour,—
 Purchased by Thy precious blood,—
 May I walk on earth a stranger,
 As a son and heir of God.

F. A. G.

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS; OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

CHAPTER V.

(Continued from page 17.)

BUT the Preacher continues to give, in verses 8 and 9, such counsel as he can to meet the discordant state of things everywhere apparent. "When thou seest violent oppression exercised by those in authority," he says, "marvel not; think it not strange, as though some strange thing were happening; thou art only looking on a weed-plant that everywhere flourishes 'under the sun,' and still thou mayest remember that these oppressors themselves, high though they be, have superiors above them: yea, in the ever-ascending scale of ranks and orders thou mayest have to go to the Highest—God Himself; but the same truth hold good, and He shall yet call powers and governors to answer for the exercise of their authorities. This for thy comfort, if thou lookest *up*; but, on the other hand, look *down*, and thou shalt see that which goes far to humble the highest; for even the king himself is as dependent as any on the field whence man's food comes."

True, indeed, all this; but cold is the comfort, small cause for singing it gives. Our own dear apostle seems to have dropped for a moment from his higher vantage-ground to the level of Solomon's wisdom when smarting under "oppression and the violent perverting of judgment," he cried to the high priest, "God [the higher than the highest] shall smite thee, thou whited wall." But we hear no joyful singing from him in connection with that indignant protest. On the contrary, the beloved and faithful

servant regrets it the next moment, with "I wist not, brethren." Not so in the silent suffering of "violent oppression" at Philippi. There he and his companion have surely comfort beyond any that Solomon can offer, and the overflowing joy of their hearts comes from no spring that rises in this sad desert scene. Never before had prisoners in that dismal jail heard aught but groans of suffering coming from that inner prison, from the bruised and wounded prisoners whose feet were made fast in the stocks; but the Spirit of God notes, with sweet and simple pathos, "the prisoners heard them"; and oh, how mighty the testimony to that which is "above the sun" was that singing! It came from the Christian's proper portion,—your portion and mine, dear fellow-redeemed one,—for Jesus, our Lord Jesus, our Saviour Jesus, is the alone fountain of a joy that can fill a human heart until it gives forth "songs in the night," even in one of earth's foul abodes of suffering and oppression. He is the portion of the youngest, feeblest believer. Rich treasure! Let us beware lest any spoil us of that treasure, for we can only "sing" as we enjoy it.

But once more let us listen to what the highest, purest attainment of the wisdom of man can give. And now he speaks of wealth and the abundance of earthly prosperity which he, of all men, had so fully tested. "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance, with increase"; and again there is the sorrowful groan, "This is also vanity." "If goods increase," he continues, "the household necessary to care for them increases proportionately, and the owner gets no further satisfaction from them than their sight affords.

Nay, he who toils has a distinct advantage over the wealthy, who is denied the quiet repose the former enjoys." Carefully the Preacher has watched the miser heaping up ever, and robbing himself of all natural enjoyment, until some disaster—"evil travail"—sweeps away in a moment his accumulations, and his son is left a pauper. And such, at least, is every man he marks, be he never so wealthy, when the end comes. Inexorable Death is, sooner or later, the "evil travail" that strips him as naked as he came; and then, though he has spent his life in "selfish self-denial," filling his dark days with vexation, sickness, and irritation, he is snatched from all, and, poor indeed, departs. Such the sad story of Solomon's experience; but not more sad than true, nor confined by any means to Scripture. World-wide it is. Nor is divine revelation necessary to tell poor man that silver, nor gold, nor abundance of any kind, can satisfy the heart. Hear the very heathen cry "*semper avarus eget*"—"the miser ever *needs*"; or "*Avarum irritat non satiat pecunia*"—"the wealth of the miser satisfies not, but irritates." But more weighty and far-reaching is the word of revelation going far beyond the negation of the king. "They that desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition, for the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

But let us pass to the last three verses of the chapter. The Preacher here says, in effect, "Now attend carefully to what I tell thee of the result of all my

experience in this way. I have discerned a good that I can really call comely or fair. It is for a man to have the means at his command for enjoyment, and the power to enjoy those means. This combination is distinctly the 'gift of God.' From such an one all the evils that make up life pass off without eating deep into his being. A cheerful spirit takes him off from the present evil as soon as it is past. He does not think on it much; for the joy of heart within, *to which God responds*, enables him to meet and over-ride those waves of life and forget them."

This is in perfect conformity with the whole scope of our book: and it is surely a mistake that the evangelical doctors and commentators make when they seek to extract truth from Solomon's writings that is never to be attained apart from God's revelation. On the other hand, a large school of German rationalists see here nothing beyond the teaching of the Epicure: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Rather does it show the high-water mark of human reason, wisdom, and experience,—having much in common with the philosophy of the world, but going far beyond it; and then, at its highest, uttering some wail of dissatisfaction and disappointment, whilst the majestic height of divine revelation towers above it into the very heavens, taking him who receives it far above the clouds and mists of earth's speculations and questionings into the clear sunlight of eternal divine truth.

So here Solomon—and let us not forget none have ever gone, or can ever go, beyond him—gives us the result of his searchings along the special line of the power of riches to give enjoyment. His whole experience again and again has contradicted this. Look

at the 12th verse of this very chapter. "The sleep of the laboring man is sweet, *but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.*" No, no. In some way to get *joy*, he confesses he must have *God*. He combines in these verses these two ideas—"Joy" and "God." Look at them. See how they recur: four times the name of God, thrice a word for joy. Now this raises Solomon far far above the malarial swamps of mere epicureanism, which excluded God entirely. It shows how perfect the harmony throughout the whole book. It is again, let us recall it, the high-water mark of human reason, intelligence, and experience. He reasons thus: (1) I have proved the vanity and unsatisfactory character of all created things in themselves, and yet can see no good beyond getting enjoyment from them. (2) The power, therefore, for enjoyment cannot be from the things themselves. It must be from God. He must give it. (3) This assumes that there must be some kind of accord between God and the heart, for God is the spring, and not the circumstances without. So far the power of human reason. High it is, indeed; but how unsatisfactory, at its highest. Consider all that it leaves unsaid. Suppose this were where you and I were, my reader, what should we learn of the way of attaining to this "good that is fair"? Shall we ask Ecclesiastes one single question that surely needs clear answer in order to attain it?

I am a sinner: conscience, with more or less power, constantly accuses. How can this awful matter of my guilt in the sight of that God, the confessed and only source of thy "good," be settled? Surely this is absolutely necessary to know ere I can enjoy thy "good that is fair." Nay, more: were a voice to

speak from heaven, telling me that all the past were blotted out up to this moment, I am well assured that I could not maintain this condition for the next moment. Sin would well up from the nature within, and leave me as hopeless as ever. I carry *it*—that awful defiling thing—with me, in me. How is this to be answered, Ecclesiastes?—or what help to its answer dost thou give? . . .

And there is silence alone for a reply.

Once and only once was such a state possible. Adam, as he walked in his undefiled Eden, eating its fruit, rejoicing in the result of his labor, with no accusing conscience, God visiting him in the cool of the day and responding to all his joy,—there is the picture of Ecclesiastes' "good that is fair." Where else in the old creation, and how long did that last? No; whilst it is refreshing and inspiring to mark the beautiful intelligence and exalted reasoning of Ecclesiastes, recognizing the true place of man in creation, dependent, and consciously dependent, on God for "life and breath and all things," as Paul spoke long afterwards, appealing to that in the heathen Athenians which even they were *capable* of responding to affirmatively; yet how he leaves us looking at a "good that is fair," but without a word as to how it is to be attained, in view of, and in spite of, sin. That one short word raises an impassable barrier between us and that fair good, and the more fair the good, the more cruel the pain at being so utterly separated from it; but then, too, the more sweet and precious the love that removes the barrier entirely, and introduces us to a good that is as far fairer than Solomon's as Solomon's is above the beasts.

For we, too, my dear readers, have our "good that

is fair." Nor need we fear comparison with that of this wisest of men.

Survey with me a fairer scene than any lighted by this old creation sun can show, and harken to God's own voice, in striking contrast to poor Solomon's portraying its lovely and entrancing beauties for our enjoyment.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will to the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved: in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace."

Dwell a little on this our own fair good; mark its sevenfold perfection; go up and down the land with me. Let us press these grapes of Eshcol, and taste their excellence together.

First: Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.—A threefold cord that is, indeed, not soon broken. "Chosen," God's own love and wisdom is the fount and spring whence all flows. And that in blessed connection with the dearest object of His love—"in Him." "Before the foundation of the world." In the stability and changelessness of Eternity,—before that scene that is, and ever was, characterized by change, began,—with its mirth and sorrow, sunshine and shadow, life and death. Blessed solid rock-foundation for all in God and Eternity.

Second: To be Holy.—Separated from all the defilement that should afterwards come in. Thus His electing love is always marked first by separation from all evil. It can never allow its object to be connected with the slightest defilement. The evil was allowed only that He might reveal Himself as Love and Light in dealing with it.

Third: without blame.—So thoroughly is all connected with past defilement met that not a memory of it remains to mar the present joy. The defilement of the old creation with which we were connected has left never a spot nor a stain on the person that could offend infinite holiness. Clean, every whit. Bless the Lord, oh my soul!

Fourth: In love.—Thus separated and cleansed from all defilement not mere complacency regards us. Not merely for his own pleasure, as men make a beautiful garden, and remove everything that would offend their taste, but active love in all its divine warmth encircles us. My reader, do you enjoy this fair good? If you be but the feeblest believer it is your own.

Fifth: Adoption of Children.—Closest kind of love, and that so implanted in the heart as to put that responsive home-cry of "Abba, Father," there, and on our lips. Yet nothing short of this was the "good pleasure of His will.

Sixth.—Taken into favor in the Beloved: the wondrous measure of acceptance "in the Beloved One." Look at Him again. All the glory He had in eternity He has now, and more added to it. Infinite complacency regards him. That, too, is the measure of our acceptance.

Seventh.—But no shirking that awful word,—no

overlooking the awful fact of sin's existence. No; the foundation of our enjoyment of our own fair good is well laid "in whom we have redemption through His blood, *even the forgiveness of sins.*"

Sin, looked at in infinite holy Light,—thoroughly looked at,—and Blood, precious Blood, poured out in atonement for it, and thus put away forever in perfect righteousness.

F. C. J.

(*To be continued.*)

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

THE CHURCH.—ITS NATURE.

IN many ways the name "church" is misleading, partly because of a certain historical but unscriptural meaning attached to it, and partly because the word is used in so many different ways. For instance, a building where religious meetings are held is called a church; the persons meeting there form a church; the denomination with which they are connected is a church. Similarly, we have the Church of England, or Scotland,—meaning the established form of religion in those countries. To the Romanist "the church" means the Papal system, and to the ritualist something very similar. The Evangelical will tell us that the word has a twofold significance, designated respectively as the visible and the invisible church. Thus all professing Christendom forms the visible church; while only the true believers form the invisible.

It is therefore necessary, as well as refreshing, to turn from these discordant definitions to the simple word of God, and gather from it the truths as to the church.

We might remark, in passing, as has been seen from what we have already said, that upon no other subject are there more various and unscriptural views held. Indeed, we might go further, and add that perhaps fewer understand the teaching of Scripture as to the church than upon any other prominent doctrine in the word of God. The effect of this is but too apparent. Satan is always at work where there is ignorance; and the various deadly systems of error founded upon wrong teaching on this subject, to say nothing of the hurtful uselessness of the doctrines of the evangelical denominations, only show the immense importance of being clear here.

With sorrow be it added that the revival of other precious truths, such as assurance, the Lord's coming, etc., has not been accompanied by an awakening upon this theme. Sad it is to hear men devoted in the gospel, clear expounders of the word of God, telling us that they do not trouble themselves about church doctrine; that salvation is the all-important theme; and the establishment of Christians in the fundamentals all that is necessary. We see men giving chapter and verse for every statement, and dwelling upon the infallible authority of the word of God, quietly closing their eyes to its teachings upon the church, probably connected with that for which they can give no scripture authority, and apparently contented to bring others into the same relationships.

We can praise God for the revival of gospel preaching, for the spread of Scripture teaching; but in this, we may say, studied neglect of church truth, we see only cause for apprehension. May we not venture to call upon those who love the word of God

to take up this neglected truth, and seek by the Lord's grace to learn His mind regarding that which is as dear to Him as His own body? Nothing but blessing would result.

The word rendered "church" in our ordinary versions is not a translation of the Greek *ἐκκλησία*. Assembly, or gathering, would give us the meaning; and this is at once seen to be a very general term. In fact, it is used not only for the church, but in Acts vii. 38 for the congregation of Israel; and later, in the same book, for a heathen mob at Ephesus. (Acts xix. 32, 39, 41.) There can be no question as to this last passage; to those, however, who include in the church believers of all dispensations, we will have to give a word of explanation later, when the contrast between Israel and the church is brought out.

We must therefore look for some passage in Scripture which will qualify the word "assembly," and we find one which has all the clearness of a definition: "and hath made Him head over all things to *the church, which is His body*, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 22, 23.) We are, in this part of Ephesians, occupied with a risen and glorified Christ. He has been raised from the dead, proof of an accomplished redemption, and exalted to the right hand of God, all things being put beneath His feet. He occupies that position not merely as the witness of eternal redemption, not merely as the representative of His people before God, the measure of their acceptance and their righteousness; but He is there as Head of the church, which is His body. This is figurative language, no doubt; but is none the less clear for this reason. It suggests the closest connection, the

same interests, and the same prospects. "The fullness of Him that filleth all in all" shows that through grace the church is the complement of Christ. As at the beginning, when God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make an helpmeet for him," so now God likens the church in its relation to Christ to a wife in relation to the husband,—the complement, the rounding out—amazing thought!—of the second Adam. (Eph. v. 22–33.)

The Church, then, is the body of Christ. But how and of what is this body formed? Again Scripture answers with the distinctness of a definition: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) "We all" means those who have the Spirit, and His baptism marks the beginning of the Church. When, then, did this take place? "This spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (John vii. 39.) "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you." (John xvi. 7.) "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts i. 5.) "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 4.)

These passages show us that as long as the Lord Jesus was upon earth,—until He was glorified after His death, the Holy Ghost did not come. After His resurrection He reminded His disciples of the promise—and uses this very word "baptize"—of the descent of the Spirit; and in Acts ii., at Pentecost, we have the promised baptism. Is it not clear, then, that the Church was begun at Pentecost, not before?

And does not this accord beautifully with the definition we have been looking at? It is the body of Christ glorified; and when glorified He sent down the Holy Ghost to form this body.

Let it not be thought, for a moment, that we mean that the Holy Spirit did not act upon earth before this. Scripture is plain here. At creation, the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters. (Gen. i. 2.) Before the flood God's Spirit strove with men. (Gen. vi. 3.) He came upon men for prophecy or for power. (Num. xi. 25, 26; Judges vi. 24.) From the beginning new birth was His work, to which our Lord refers in His conversation with Nicodemus as a thing which ought to have been familiar to a teacher in Israel. (John iii. 10.) But none of these is the baptism of the Spirit, uniting believers to a glorified Christ and to one another. This, as we have seen, took place at Pentecost.

Confirmatory of this is the familiar passage in Matt. xvi. 18: "Upon this rock I *will* build my church." Christ's person is the rock, the foundation, and upon that He says He *will*, as a future thing, build His church. This being the case, it follows that believers before Pentecost did not form part of the Body of Christ; but, lest there should be any doubt here, Scripture expressly states that the Church was a mystery, hid in God, not known in other ages. (Eph. iii. 1-11.)

Until God called out Israel, He dealt with His people individually and in families. After the nation came into existence, He recognized that as the responsible body, in connection with which all earthly blessings were promised, upon condition of obedience. The Gentiles were blessed in connection with Israel

(Ps. xxii. 23-28), not independently of them (Deut. xxxii. 8, 9, with Ps. lxxii. 8-11). A simple examination of the Prophets in contrast with the Epistles will make this perfectly clear.

It only remains necessary to add that *all* believers since Pentecost form part of the Church. For all believers receive the Holy Spirit (Eph. i. 13); and we have already seen that by the Spirit "we all" are baptized into one body. There is no select class of specially privileged or intelligent believers. All who believe are baptized.

If the Church began to be formed at Pentecost, when will it be complete? We have seen (Eph. v.) that the Church is spoken of as the bride of Christ. The marriage has not yet taken place: that will be when Christ presents her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. At present she is espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ. (2 Cor. xi. 2.) In Rev. xix. 7 we read that "The marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready"; and in Rev. xxi. 9, etc., we have the description of the "glorious Church,"—complete at last. This is after the second coming of Christ, and before His millennial reign. And this, then, marks the close of the Church period,—the Lord's second coming. The Church, then, is composed of all believers, from Pentecost till the coming of the Lord.

If, then, the Church is united to a glorified Christ as head; if it is waiting for the Lord's coming to take it from earth to heaven, need we say that it is meant to be not an earthly but a heavenly body? Not to "blossom and bud and fill the face of the earth with fruit," but to share with Christ in those heavenly glories won by Him for us. Israel will yet have blessing upon the earth, for that is her inheritance. The bride of Christ has other hopes, another destiny. Would that she realized it more fully.

ENDURING.

TROUBLE, affliction, and sorrow come to all,—to the world and to the children of God. Persecution for righteousness' sake is wholly unknown by the world: it is the peculiar portion of those who believe in Christ, and who live godly in Him. There is another form of suffering which the Word calls chastening, and which is also the portion of those who believe in the Lord Jesus. From whatever source the believer's trials and sufferings may come, he has this blessed assurance that "All things work together for good to them that love God." God often calls His chosen ones to endure losses and want in ways which are exceedingly humiliating. We are proud; we want to get on in the world; to prosper and have success like the world; and yet how often in mercy and love and grace does the Lord cause our labors to come to naught, and permit the failure of our cherished hopes and plans. Sometimes we find ourselves hedged in, shut up, kept from success by barriers which only God can remove.

"Behold, we count them happy which endure." "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons." "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." How happy are they who endure humbly, patiently, submissively, what the Lord is pleased to send. We cannot, in our own strength; we can only put our hearts into the hands of Him to whom we belong. Our hearts may grow faint and weary, but He will be with us. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

It should not so much concern us to get rid of trial as to profit by it. Are we pleasing our God in it? Do we know that we are casting ourselves wholly on Him?—or are we in a maze of doubt and fear and anxiety to get into a more comfortable place, and seeking to satisfy our hearts with creature comforts apart from Him? Trial we may be sure is from God.

We may be sure, too, that affliction and loss can be made for us, by His power and grace, far better than any amount of earthly prosperity and worldly peace. "He knoweth them that trust in Him." Are you doing that?

J. W. NEWTON.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Question 4.—Will you please explain the difference between Gen. x. 31, "after their tongues," and Gen. xi. 1, "The whole earth was of one language, and of one speech." J. R. F.

Answer.—Chapter x., giving the genealogies of the sons of Noah, goes beyond the time of the confusion of tongues at Babel, and so speaks not only of various tribes but of different languages. Chapter xi. gives the account of the origin of these various languages,—man exalting himself to make him a great name, is only brought to confusion. "Tongue," the word used in chapter x., is the ordinary one for language,—used now, as "foreign tongue." "Language," in chapter xi., is literally "lip." The general thought is the same in both cases. If we are able to catch the shade of difference, it might be that "lip" suggests the outward form of the words, as we hear them; "tongue," the source of the language.

Question 5.—In Luke i. and Acts i. was not Theophilus a Gentile, and was it not one and the same person to whom Luke addressed his two books? J. R. F.

Answer.—"The former treatise" shows clearly that the same person is addressed in Acts as in Luke. The Greek form of his name suggests that he was a Gentile, and the adjective "most excellent" that he was a person of position. Compare Acts xxiii. 26; xxiv. 3; xxvi. 25. While there can be no question that he was a real person, not an imaginary one, the significance of his name, "the friend of God," is suggestive. "I have called you friends."

Question 6.—Please explain 1 Cor. vii. 35, especially last clause. J. R. F.

Answer.—The proper rendering, "virginity," makes the meaning clear,—it being nearly synonymous with chastity. The latter part, "let him do what he will, he sinneth not," can only be explained by the last words, "let them marry." No other meaning is possible. Only a satanic perversion of words could suggest any other thought.

THE SOUL IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

(PSALM CXXXIX.)

IN the concluding book of the Psalms (107-150) we find the general characteristics of the book of Deuteronomy, to which it corresponds. There is retrospect, reiteration, and then a looking forward. The result of this is praise. It is good to know that such is the effect of a contemplation of all God's ways, whether past or to come, and that even our own follies have been but the occasion of fresh manifestation of Himself. So will it be at the end. All the path behind us, strewn as it is with wrecks of our unbelief, will speak of a love which never for one moment failed, of a purpose of grace which never faltered.

In the midst of these Psalms of experience we find this one, which seems in a special way adapted to God's people individually, in all dispensations. While it doubtless gives us the thoughts of the believer in the remnant times of Israel's trouble, there is but little that does not equally apply to us in this day of grace. It is heart-history, and the hearts of God's people have always been the same.

There seem to be four general divisions in the Psalm. We have, first, God's omniscience; secondly, His omnipresence; thirdly, His power manifested even when hidden from the eyes of men; and lastly, the testing and separating effect of this knowledge of God.

He begins with a general statement of God's knowledge: "Thou hast searched me and known me"; and then applies this knowledge to all his ways—my down-sitting and uprising, my thought, my path, my

repose, my ways, my words. All, all is known to God. How solemn is the thought! He knows me better than I know myself; and no secret desire, no hasty word, nothing connected with me escapes His holy eye. Ah, it is with such a God we have to do. If we are to deal with Him, it is on the basis of truth. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

But while this should hush us and solemnize our hearts, does it not give us a view of His grace? He knows us altogether, and yet has not turned from us; He knows us, and yet would bring us to know Himself. We stand detected in His presence, and yet attracted. Like the woman of Samaria, He has shown us all that ever we did, but shown us Himself as well. The light is perfect, but it reveals a God of perfect grace, as well as ourselves, so we need not shrink from it.

Did we so desire, where could we flee from His presence? He has beset us behind and before, and laid His hand upon us. He is in heaven; we meet Him also in the grave. Beyond the sea, in the midst of the thick darkness, we are still with God. Nor is this said in the restlessness of one who desires to get away from Him. It is rather the confidence of one who knows that wherever he may be he has God with him to lead and guide. Blessed fact! We cannot get away from God. Where would we be if we could? And yet, alas, is it not true that the heart sometimes shrinks from this Holy Presence? Do we wish to leave that Presence a moment, to enjoy a pleasure, to indulge a thought we would not wish Him to see? Surely it would be vain to desire such a thing, but the flesh cannot glory in His presence: **if we wish that to act, we must forget we are there.**

And this omniscience, this intimate knowledge and presence, has been with us from the beginning. When our imperfect members were being secretly formed, curiously wrought, embroidered, as another has said, all was under His care and superintendence. Surely we can praise Him: we were formed for His praise.

And so the Psalmist goes on to dwell upon these wondrous thoughts of God,—their preciousness. But how great is their number! Where can we begin, and where leave off? We who have the fuller revelation of God in Christ may well say, "If I should count them they are more in number than the sand." Ah, in presence of this fullness why should our hearts crave more? Well may we repeat for ourselves the desire of the apostle for us: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with [unto, Gk.] all the fullness of God." (Eph. iii.)

But there is the earth-side to this truth, and a most practical one. The wicked are to be judged: "Depart from me, therefore, ye bloody men." Nay, so powerful is the effect upon him of God's presence that he counts as his enemies—he abhors—God's enemies. The soul that is at home in the presence of God will not look with indifference upon sin or sinners. True, grace has taught us to pity the lost, and declare to them the grace and love of God. We are not to hate them, but their sins. There is, indeed, a "perfect" hatred, an abhorrence of men who are the deliberate

enemies of God. Would that we knew more of it!—a holy abhorrence of avowed evil. In days like these, when the boundaries between the Church and the world have been well-nigh obliterated, we need to awake afresh to the seriousness and importance of separation unto God from the present evil world.

The Psalmist had begun with God's knowledge of him. This was beyond his control; he could not escape it if he would. It would seem as though dwelling upon these precious things on the one hand, and upon the evil by which he was surrounded on the other, had led him further. He asks now that God search him. He not merely submits to that from which he cannot flee,—he desires it. He cannot search his own heart: it is too dark and deceitful. He puts it in God's hands: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any way of grief [Heb.] in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Ah, beloved brethren, *our* ways—our wills—are but, in the end, ways of grief; and yet how we cling to them. Shall we shrink from making this prayer our own?—from putting our hearts into the hands of One who already knows them and us completely, but who would love to see this proof of our confidence in Himself. Need we fear? Need we be ashamed? When did we ever meet with rebuff or reproaches from Him? How has He revealed Himself to us? In CHRIST. We are called into the light,—a light that detects all, but the blood is there before us, and we cannot fear.

Do our hearts long to know more of conscious abiding in the presence of God? May it be the desire of the writer and reader of these lines. Amen!

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

CHAPTER IV.

(Continued from page 63.)

BUT here we are made to realize the wondrous privilege that is ours,—the solemn responsibility that rests upon us. For we are sanctified unto the obedience of Christ, and He has left us an example, that we should follow in His steps (1 Pet. i. 2; ii. 21). The principle of His life, then, must be, above all, the principle of our lives. If with Him the governing motive was this, to do the will of God,—if He rejected every motive that could be urged from His own necessities,—how simple is it that, for us also, the will of God must be in the same way that which prompts to action; apart from this there is no right motive possible.

What a world, then, is this, in which the mass of men around us have no thought of God, no knowledge of His will, no desire to know it,—with whom life is little less than the instinctive animal life, *disturbed* more or less by conscience, that is, by the apprehension of God! And as to Christians themselves, how easily are they persuaded that, with certain exceptions at important crises in their lives, the simple rule of right and wrong—often determined by custom of some kind, rather than the word of God—is sufficient to indicate for them the will of God, their *own* wills being thus left free within a variously limited area?

The law, in fact, drew such a circle around men, and in mercy, as a sheepfold is the limit for the sheep. A class of actions is defined as evil, and forbidden; within these limits one may please oneself. Nor

could law go further than this: for it the rigidity of a fixed code is a necessity. But Christ came into the fold to make His sheep hear His voice, and to lead them out: free, but where freedom would be safe as well as blessed, in following the living guidance of the Shepherd Himself. (John x.) The rule is much stricter, even while freer. And the reality transcends the figure, just as the "Good Shepherd" Himself transcends every other shepherd. To a love like His, united with a wisdom absolutely perfect, no detail of our lives can be unimportant, as in the connection of these throughout, and of one life with another, none can be insignificant. Could it be imagined that any were so, yet which of us is competent to discern this in any instance? "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth" is but the utterance of common experience. Who, then, that has learnt to distrust himself at all, but must welcome deliverance from such an uncertainty, and find it joy to be guided at all times by higher wisdom!

Nothing makes this appear severe, nothing difficult except the love of our own way, and the unbelief which, having given up confidence in God, first sent man out from the bountiful garden, to toil and strive for himself in the world outside. But the divine love which has pursued us here, and given us Bethlehem as our "house of bread," should suffice to heal that insane suspicion, and close up the fountain of self-will within us: "He who spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him also, freely give us all things?" The path ordained for us has, no doubt, its roughness, and the cloud hangs over it, but the cloud itself is but His tabernacle, and just in the very night it brightens into manifest glory. All differences are in the interests of the journey itself, as was said of Israel, that

they might "go by day and by night." The record of experience adds to this the assurance, "They go from strength to strength."

No wonder! if "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live." What a sustenance of the true life within to be thus, day by day, receiving the messages of His will, listening to that wondrous Voice, learning continually more His tender care for us: "He wakeneth morning by morning; He wakeneth mine ear to hear as a learner" (Isa. ~~5~~ 4). This is the utterance prophetically of the Lord Himself: how blessed to be able to make it our own, and thus to have the fulfillment of those words, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee, in the way in which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye."

So, then, the first temptation is met and conquered; and with this, in fact, is conquered every after one: for he who walks with God, and waits on God, what shall ensnare him? what enemy shall prevail against him? It is plain that Satan has been hinting again here the lie with which of old he seduced the woman. And that, as in her case, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," came in through the door so opened, they were here effectually shut out. Satan might repeat and vary his efforts, but to one cleaving fast to God, God was the shield against which every shaft must be broken to pieces. How great the importance for us, then, of such a lesson!

But if we are to listen for the word of God, and our lives are to be shaped by it, we are called next to guard against the misuse of the word itself. This is Satan's next attempt. "Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If Thou be the

Son of God, cast Thyself down: *for it is written*, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone."

How careful should we be as to quotations from Scripture? how little, in fact, we often are! Scripture twisted but a little awry, the authority of God is made to sanction a lie, and our very faith in it betrays us to the enemy.

How important, too, becomes on this view the complete verbal inspiration of Scripture. If but the thought meant to be conveyed is guaranteed to us, but the wording is left to the choice of imperfect wisdom, then unless words mean nothing, we can never settle what the thought precisely is. If the words are possibly faulty, who can assure me of the exact truth hid under a faulty expression?

Satan did but leave out two or three words of the original, "to keep Thee in all Thy ways;" but those words guard them against the abuse which he would make of them. The "ways" of Him who in the ninety-first psalm says of Jehovah, "in Him will I trust," could never be such as the unbelief would prompt which would make trial of Jehovah's words to see if they would be fulfilled. That is what the Lord's answer is, by another quotation, once more from that book of wilderness-lessons, Deuteronomy, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." This last text is one often enough misused to mean, Do not rely upon Him for too much: and the Lord's refusal to cast Himself down plausibly made an illustration of this meaning. But the whole question is of what has been settled in the first answer. If our ways are with God, directed according to His word, and following that living guidance of which even that of Israel of old was but a type and foreshadow, then

we need never think that we shall tax the divine resources too much to sustain us in them. Had we His word, it would be only faith to cast ourselves down, when without it it would be to "tempt" Him. Let us be assured, He will *never* say to us, "You trusted Me too much." There are abundance of possible sins without inventing an imaginary and impossible one.

Satan's argument is still grounded upon this: "If Thou be the Son of God;" but although He had just been declared that, He had come to submit to the conditions of humanity, to display under these the moral perfection of that eternal life, which could best display itself in such humiliation. The revelation of God Himself could only be made aright upon the level of humanity; and the title which He constantly gives Himself is that of the Son of Man. This is the place He has come to take, and He cannot be moved from it: for thus alone can He be Mediator between God and men, and thus alone can He be also an example for us.

But in the third temptation Satan shifts his ground completely. He could not say, "If Thou be the Son of God, fall down and worship me." He suddenly seems to realize so the truth of His humanity that he will adventure fully upon it. If this be indeed One who is Son of man, shut off, as it were, from the claims and conditions of Deity;—if He has come in the very weakness of manhood itself to work the work committed to Him, then he will test Him by the appeal to that very weakness. All the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them shall be flashed upon Him as in a moment; the power of which He came to possess Himself, He should have it by an easier path than He had chosen: "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me."

For us who know His glory, this seems indeed only like the raving of despair. But however it may seem to be no longer temptation, but an awful insult to the divine glory veiled in humanity before him, it does not seem to be given us as this. The Lord answers it, as He does the rest, from Scripture, though with an indignation which He has not shown before. Satan has disclosed himself, and can be called by his name and bidden to be off. Yet the whole reads as if he had as much confidence in this attack as in the others. The change of address, no longer, "If thou be the Son of God," with the matter of what he says, seems to say that he has at last discovered and accepted the fact, that as his conflict had been all through with man, so now it was to be still with One, who, be he more than this or not, had indeed come to meet him as man only; and man he thought he knew. Granted the conflict were to be moral only,—granted, that the One he met had only the weapons of goodness, was here truly and only as Man,—this was the ground He had taken, simply obedient, dependent, believing: this, then, was not divine sovereignty, omnipotence, omniscience; and human strength, what had *He* proved it to be!

In result, he has disclosed himself, and is defeated. There is still no display of Deity, no outburst of divine judgment or of power: "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God: and Him only shalt thou serve." The sufficiency of the word of God as the divine weapon against him is thus seen all through: a great encouragement for us also in the irrepressible conflict which we have all to maintain: "the sword of the Spirit is the saying of God." (Eph. vi. 17, *Gk.*)

F. W. G.

(*To be continued.*)

FROM MORN TO NIGHT.

ERE the rude perplexities
 Of the day,
 Lord, I'd lay my quiet heart
 'Neath Thy sway.
 In my loneliness I'd come
 Unto Thee;
 For I know there's always One
 Welcomes me.

Weakness, want, and waywardness,
 I confess,
 While in Thy dear name I plead
 Need of grace.
 Strength from Thee I crave each day,
 While I live;
 And I know, what's best, always
 Thou wilt give.

If with retrospective glance
 I would trace
 Mem'ries of the painful past,
 In Thy grace
 Gently draw my heart above,
 Where Thou art;
 With sweet mem'ries of Thy love
 Fill my heart.

Ah, Lord Jesus, upon earth
 There is naught
 Like the silent interchange
 Of deep thought;—
 Thought too sweet, too deep to tell
 But to Thee.
 E'en to those our hearts love well,
 How could we ?

Then, beneath the shadowy night,
 Oh how sweet
 Just to lay my sorrows down
 At Thy feet;—
 All my heart's complaint to tell
 Unto Thee!
 For I know Thy love full well,
 Lord, to me.

Thus from morn to night I'd walk
 Close to Thee;—
 I would lean upon Thy might
 Constantly.
 Night to day shall soon give place,—
 Glorious day.
 I shall then behold Thy face,
 And for aye. H. McD.

A STRANGE sight is the Church of God now,—divided, scattered abroad, (for the common hope which would unite them is merged in other interests, though individuals may earnestly look for it); instead of rejoicing in the truth, we see it confined by *systems* of theology hiding from it the true knowledge of God, and contending for doctrines, which may be done when vital godliness is gone; minding earthly things; looking for blessing to the earth before the resurrection comes, and practically evincing the belief “that it might be a tolerable world if all would agree to make the best of it.” And what is this but, as St. Augustine saith, “live such a happy life in the region of death”! Believers have need to cry for the spirit of God to raise up the hearts of His people into their true position—the apprehension of “the heavenly calling.” But the eye that is not dimmed by fellowship with unrighteousness may see that the Lord is working even now. The division for the final *gatherings* is going on. He is separating to Himself on the one side, and Satan is concentrating his strength on the other. The conflict is between holiness and sin; and the hour is fast coming which will irrevocably fix the side taken by each individual.—*Extract.*

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS;

OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

CHAPTER V.

(Continued from page 77.)

NOW may the Lord grant us to realize more fully, as we progress in our book, the awful hopelessness that weighs on man's sad being, apart from the blessed and infinitely gracious revelation of God. May he grant us—you and I, dear reader—to remember that when we look at the great writer of this book, we are looking at one, not only far far higher than ourselves—far beyond us—but indeed any that have come after him, in his ability, wisdom, or riches! For so shall his groans of disappointment have their true weight with us, and act as light-house beacons, warning us from danger, or from spending the one short fleeting life we have in treading the same profitless pathway of groaning.

So chapter six opens, still on the same subject of wealth and its power to bless. A sore evil, and one that weighs heavily on man, has Solomon seen: riches, wealth, and honor, clustering thick on the head of one person, and yet God has withheld from him the power of enjoying it all. As our own poet, Browning, writes that apt illustration of King Saul:

“A people is thine,

And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on one head combine!
High ambition, and deeds which surpass it, fame craving them all,
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—King Saul.”

So sorrowful is this in our preacher's eyes, and so thoroughly does it bespeak a state of affairs under the sun in confusion, that Solomon ventures the strongest possible assertion. Better, he says, an un-

timely birth, that never saw light, than a thousand years twice told, thus spent in vanity, without real good having been found. How bitter life must show itself to lead to such an estimate! Better never to have been born than pass through life without finding something that can satisfy. But this is not looking at life simply in itself, for life in itself is good, as the same poet sings:

“Oh, our manhood’s prime vigor! No spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool’s living water!
How good is man’s life—the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy!”

It is because man has, of all the creation of God, an awful shadow hanging over him—death and darkness and the tomb, with the solemn, silent, unknown “beyond” lying before him, robbing him of rest. Angels have present pure delight, with no such shadow possible—they die not. The beast may enjoy his pasture, for no thought of a coming death disturbs him. Life may be full of a kind of enjoyment to such; but man, poor man, when awake to the possibilities of his own being, as it surely becomes man to be (and that is just the point of this book—we are not looking upon man as a mere animal, but as a reasoning creature, and as such he), is robbed of present rest and enjoyment by an inevitable fate to which he is hastening, and from which there is no possible escape. Do not all go to one place?—that vague “Sheol,” speaking both of the grave and yet the grave, not as the *end*, but an indefinite shadowy existence beyond? All, all go there; and with no light on *that*, better, indeed, “the untimely birth

which came in vanity and departs in darkness;" for this, at least, has the more rest. Bitter groan this, indeed!

For the Preacher continues: "Does man's labor satisfy him? Can he get what is really 'good' from it?" No. For never is his appetite filled so that it desires nothing more. The constant return of its thirst demands constant toil; and fool and wise must alike obey its call. This is not confined to bodily food, but covers that bitter hunger and thirst of the heart, as the use of the word soul (margin) shows. The longings of the wise may be for a higher food. He may aim above the mere sensual, and seek to fill his soul with the refined, but he *fails*, as indeed do all, even "the poor man who knows to walk before the living;" that is, even the poor man who, with all the disadvantages of poverty, has wisdom enough to know how to live so as to command the respect of his fellows. Wise indeed must such be; but he, no more than the fool, has found the "good" that forever satisfies hunger and thirst, and calms to rest the wandering of the soul, which, like the restless swallow, is ever on the wing. Man is made up of desire, and one glimpse with the eyes, something seen, is at least something secured, and it is better than all mere longing, which is vanity and the pursuit of want. For everything has long ago been named *from its own nature*; and in this way its name shows what it is. Thus man, too, (Adam,) is, and ever has been, known from his name, from "adamah," earth; his name so showing his mortality. If thus he has been made by his Creator, how vain for him to hope to escape his fate, for with Him no contention is possible. What use, then, in many words (not things)

since they afford no relief as against that end? they only increase vanity. Then the last sad wail of this subject: "Who knoweth what is really *good*—satisfying for man—during the few fleeting years of his vain life here, which he passes as a shadow; and when he is gone, who can tell him what shall be after him under the sun"?

Let that wail sink down deep into our ears. It is the cry that has been passed, in ever increasing volume, from heart to heart—every empty, hollow heart of man echoing and re-echoing, "Who will show us any good?" Now turn and listen to One who came to answer that fully, and in His word to Mary, the sister of Lazarus, He does distinctly, in words, answer it. She had chosen the portion that He could call "good." And was that travail and toil, even in service for Himself? No, that was rather her sister's portion; but a seat—expressive of rest—(consider it), a listening ear, whilst the Lord ministered to her;—and that is all that is needful! What a contrast between this poor rich king, communing with his own heart to find out what is that good portion for man; and the rich poor saint in blessed communion with infinite Love, infinite Wisdom, infinite Power, and resting satisfied! Surely, Solomon in all his glory had no throne to be compared to hers, as she sat lowly "at His feet." And mark carefully, for thy soul's good, that word of tender grace that the Lord said, This is needful. He who had listened to the groan of man's heart through those long four thousand years, and knew its need fully and exactly, says that this good portion must not be regarded as any high attainment for the few, but as the very breath of life—for all. If He knows that it is needful for

thee, then, my soul, fear not but that He will approve thy taking the same place and claiming Mary's portion on the ground of thy *need alone*.

Yes, but does this really answer the root cause of the groan in our chapter? Is the shadow of death dispelled by sitting at His feet! Is death no longer the dark unknown? Shall we learn lessons there that shall rob it of all its terrors, and replace the groan with song? Yes, truly, for look at the few significant foot-prints of that dear Mary's walk after this. See her at that supper made for the Lord at Bethany. Here Martha is serving with perfect acceptance—no word of rebuke to her now; she has learned the lesson of that day spoken of in the tenth of Luke. But Mary still excels her, for, whilst sitting at His feet in that same day of tenth of Luke, she has heard some story that makes her come with precious spikenard to anoint His body for the burial! Strange act! And how could that affectionate heart force itself calmly to anoint the object of its love for burial? Ah! still a far sweeter story must she have heard “at His feet,” and a bright light must have pierced the shadow of the tomb. For, look at that little company of devoted women around His cross, and you will find no trace of the no less devoted Mary, the sister of Lazarus, there. The other Marys may come, in tender affection, but in the dark ignorance of unbelief, to search for Him, in His empty tomb on the third day. She, with no less tender affection surely, is not there. Is this silence of Scripture without significance, or are we to see the reason for it in that “good portion” she had chosen “at His feet”?—and there did she hear, not only the solemn story of His cross leading her to anoint His

body for the burial, but the joyful story of His resurrection, so that there was no need for *her* to seek “the living amongst the dead;”—she *knew* that He was risen, and she, as long before, “*sat still in the house*”! Oh, blessed calm! Oh, holy peace! What is the secret of it? Wouldst thou learn it! Sit, then, too, “at His feet,” in simple conscious emptiness and need. Give Him the still more blessed part of ministering to thee. So all shall be in order. Thou shalt have the good portion that shall dispel all clouds of death, and pour over thy being heaven’s pure sunlight of resurrection; and, with that Light, song shall displace groan, whilst thy Lord shall have the still better part—His own surely—of giving; for “more blessed it is to give than to receive.” All is then in divine, perfect harmony and order. Rejoice and sing, for singing too is also now in harmony. F. C. J.

(*To be continued.*)

ANXIETY reflects upon God, weakens and discourages our souls, and gives Satan an occasion against us. If God is our Father, and if His promises are true, He will provide for and supply us: why then should we be anxious?

SMOOTH paths are not always safe paths; in them we grow careless, selfish, and proud; then a fall or an affliction has to follow. It is the rough road that makes us cautious, prayerful, and dependent on God; then we are safe.

NATURE shudders at the thought of being thrown only and wholly upon God, for body and soul, for time and eternity: only grace can make us satisfied with this, and only grace upon grace can make us happy in it.

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

THE CHURCH.—ITS UNITY.

WE have seen in the preceding paper that the Church is the Body of Christ, united to a glorified Lord by the Holy Ghost, who came from heaven at Pentecost; that all believers are now in the Church, which will be complete when our Lord will descend from heaven, call His redeemed from their graves, and the living ones from the earth, to meet Him in the air, after which the union of the Church to Christ in glory will be consummated: the marriage of the Lamb will then take place. Such connections, and such a destiny made, we saw, the Church a heavenly, not an earthly body, a stranger here, with hopes and affections elsewhere, expressed by the longing: "The Spirit and the bride say come," "even so come, Lord Jesus."

We now pass to the examination of a truth which grows out of the nature of the church, and which is self-evident—its unity. Scripture has for us again a brief but most definite statement of this fact: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." (Eph. iv. 4.)

Unity is here connected with three words, each of which gives us a distinct view of the same truth, yet all harmoniously blended together: We have unity of the body, of the Spirit and of the hope of the church. "There is one body;" "The Church, which is His body." Who could ever, with such scriptures before him, for a moment question that the Church is one and only one? What need for efforts after unity, for alliances and confraternities? What need to endeavor to do what God has already done?

“He is our peace, who hath made both” (Jew and Gentile) “one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” (Eph. ii. 14-16.) Between Jew and Gentile there was a dividing wall which separated them not merely into distinct but hostile bodies. The Jew occupied the place of nearness as to privilege; but this only emphasized the distance of the Gentile and brought out the enmity between them.

The cross obliterated all this: the law of commandments was taken away—the Jew was condemned by it and the Gentile would perish without it (Rom. ii. 12. etc.), Christ in grace bore the penalty of a broken law, and so established the righteousness of its claims. (Rom. iii. 29-31.) Thus the law which kept the Gentile at a distance, while it condemned the Jew, was removed by the cross. “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.” (Col. ii. 14.) The effect of this was twofold: Jew and Gentile were both reconciled to God, but in *one body*, that is they were reconciled to one another also, and all previous distinctions were taken away. So in Christ there is a new man, and “neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all.” (Col. iii. 11.) The cross makes possible the manifestation of that “mystery,” “That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and

partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." (Eph. iii. 6.)

To all this, it may be replied, Who denies it? Theoretically, perhaps none; but all these scriptures are applied to "the invisible Church," as it is called, and so lose their practical power over the hearts and consciences of God's people. We have nowhere in Scripture the expression, or thought of the invisible Church. Our Lord's prayer for His people was that they might be *one*, not theoretically or invisibly, but "that the *world* may believe that thou hast sent me." (John xvii. 20, 21.) The Church was to manifest that divine unity which would be a witness to the world, divided into innumerable bodies, as self interest would dictate, that here was a power of which it was ignorant, a power which spoke of the reality of Christ's divine mission. We cannot close our eyes to the importance of this testimony, and it sweeps away at once all thought of the invisible Church.

Passing from the cross, which has set aside man, whether Jew or Gentile, and so made unity possible, we come naturally to the resurrection, which gives us the positive side of this truth. "In Himself" is the one new man to be made. Christ only became head of a new race in resurrection. This is plainly shown as to individual fruitfulness. (Rom. vii. 4) It is equally true as to His headship over the church. (Eph. i. 19-23.) As risen and ascended He has been made "head over all things to the church which is His body." But Christ is one; He is undivided; hence His Church is also one and undivided. Who that thinks of that glorious One at God's right hand could for a moment conceive of His Church as being anything but one? He has given His name and charac-

ter to it. It is one in His eyes. It all belongs to Him.

We come now to the next phrase—"There is one Spirit," the Holy Ghost sent from heaven at Pentecost, and He has formed but one body. This is entered upon at large in 1 Cor. xii. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: So also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (Vers. 12, 13.) We have the oneness of the body linked in the clearest way with that of the Spirit. The very diversity of the members,—the various individuals who compose the body—is but a confirmation of the truth that the body is one. Most striking too is the expression, "So also is Christ." Reference is here made not to the person of the Lord Himself, but to Christ and the Church; He as Head and it composed of many members, yet the whole forming one body. What amazing grace in Him to give His name to His Church! And what room, we may add, is there for any other name or body alongside of His?

"Whether Jews or Gentiles" reminds us of how completely those distinctions have been removed, in order that the Holy Spirit might link us with Christ alone. Christ is all and He is enough. As risen we have done with all other ties which would in any way be the rivals of His claims. We have not only life in Him, but a living divine Person who dwells in us and unites us with Him. The Holy Spirit not merely unites us to Christ, but by that very act puts us into His body, unites us to one another.

From this we can see the unscripturalness of the thought of a christian voluntarily joining the church. The moment he believes, this is done; and not by himself but by the Holy Spirit. Every believer is a member of the body of Christ, because he has received the Holy Spirit. He has been made to drink into one Spirit, to partake of the precious ministry of the Holy Spirit who is in him as a well of water.

Equally clear is the teaching as to the Holy Spirit dwelling in the house of God. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 20-22.) "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16.) The thought of unity is essential to the meaning of these passages. The foundation is one—Jesus Christ; and there is but One who dwells in the temple—the Holy Spirit. Every believer forms a part of this holy temple—a "living stone," as the apostle Peter says. (1 Pet. ii. 5.) We are not only builded upon the foundation, by faith in Christ, but are builded together, formed into a habitation of God. Each believer's body is a temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19), but the passages we are considering go further, and show that all believers form a unity, indwelt by One Spirit.

Before leaving this part of the subject, we need but to ask, Is the Spirit of God doing contradictory work? Is He serving diverse interests? or is His one work to glorify Christ and to secure that oneness of the church which He died to effect?

We are called in "one hope" of our calling. The oneness of the church is here again taught. When Christ left His own upon earth, He gave them the promise that He would come for them. Into the blessed fulness of this we will not now enter, save to touch upon some of the most striking features of "that blessed hope." Christ has gone on high, having rent the veil which separated us from God. The work of redemption is completed and we even now have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." This is for faith. But our Lord does not mean to leave His Church upon the earth and He to remain in Heaven. True, He "ever liveth to make intercession for us"; He restores us if we wander, and His almighty power and everlasting love are ever engaged in our behalf. But this is only for the interval. His heart longs to have us with Himself. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 24.) He will not rest till the Church which He loved and for which He gave Himself that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, is presented to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. (Eph. v. 25-27.) This includes the changing of our vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." (1 Jno. iii. 2.) This is the hope of our calling—a calling on high of God. (Phil. iii. 14.) "And so shall we ever be with the Lord."

That this hope has so largely died out of the hearts

of God's people is at once their loss and shame. But God's calling remains the same, and it is the common hope for *all* His people. There is only one hope, one destiny. And this gives additional emphasis to the truth we are considering. With but one destiny, there can be but one body—there will be but one heavenly bride. Ah! did we but have that blessed hope more simply before us, how clearly would be manifest that oneness. Was it not thus to link us together that our Lord set this hope before us? "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." (John. xvii. 22.)

We have thus looked at the scripture teaching upon Church unity from various points of view. Let it be remembered that we are speaking of no mere unity of sentiment or affection—but distinctly of organic unity. The church is one by its very constitution, its nature, its Head, its Life, its destiny. And this unity, as we have seen, was meant to be visible. Of our personal responsibility with regard to this, it is our purpose to speak in another paper. For the present we would submit to every thoughtful conscience that there must be wondrous privileges as well as immense responsibilities in connection with this truth. We could not, if we would, shirk these responsibilities. Let it be ours to calmly face them, asking with subject heart, "Lord what with *thou* have *me* to do?"

SELF is our greatest foe, our most dangerous enemy: we generally admit this, and yet we do not act under the influence of it: happy is the man who is habitually afraid of himself.

SUN-CLOUDS.

A FRIEND once turned to me and said,
 "Why is the sun so dim to-day?"
 He held a glass of deepest red
 Before its ray.

I answered not. He surely knows
 Its glorious light is never dim;
 When, to my wonder and amaze,
 He asked again.

And then he strangely looked at me,
 While, vivid, flashed across my mind
 The meaning of the mystery,
 So hard to find!

A fairer Sun, a brighter Light,
 Had paled before my careless eyes,
 And I had asked, "Why does the night
 So dark arise?"

O Saviour! revelation bright
 Of God's own glory and His grace,
Thou art not changed, but pleasure's blight
 Has hid Thy face.

Remove the veil that dims my sight,
 These earth-born wishes, floating round;
 And let me learn, 'tis never night
 Where *Thou* art found!

F. C. G.

SPEAKING evil of one another, and complaining of one another is sadly common, and being a habit it is done in the presence of children in the family circle. The injury must be great. In politics men are covered with reproach by opponents, and so in the Church, one who is "on the other side" appears at the worst; note how one who has forsaken Rome gets a name of infamy. It tries us that some

should differ from us and forsake us, and it is the same in smaller circles, and more private matters. But whatever be the circumstances or the case, vigilance is needed to escape this snare of Satan—"evil speaking."

The soul that is finding rest in the love of Christ, will not be harsh or impatient towards others. The heart will not be filled up by degrees, so as to overflow at Satan's opportunity, producing evil results; but will be occupied with what is lovely and of good report.

Such an one will minister what is edifying to the hearer.

In the one case we destroy one another. In the other we love one another, and build up one another.

May the love of Christ constrain us, and brotherly love. But these are fruits of God's planting, and of a deep root, that can be traced back through godliness, patience, temperance, knowledge, virtue, faith. "If these things be in you and *abound*," etc.

Divine power produces lovely results. In view of this, let us give "all diligence!"

THE ten tribes rebelled against authority—oppressively used—instead of turning to God for help. But, on the other hand, usurped authority is to be refused, in obedience to God. Absalom enthroned himself king, but David refused his authority, and Jonathan ignored the decree of Saul—his own father, and king by divine right. To obey God rather than men is always right. But in the church, often, both sides are ready for division, and permanent confusion results. May we humble ourselves before God, that He may lift us up!

“My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.” “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.” Thus did Jesus speak of His own labor of love; and who that professes to be a follower of Him can set a lower measure for his own life than his Master’s, “who left us an example that we should follow His steps”? Not, indeed, that he has no natural fellowship with all that charms the senses or the mind of man, but the melody of the songs of heaven is heard above the voice of earthly music; and the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, seen by the eye of faith, outshines the transient sparkle of earthly splendor. “THE TIME IS SHORT.” Most blessed word, whether for the stirring up of our diligence in our Lord’s work, that when He cometh we may be found doing His will; or for the gladdening of our souls in the prospect of the near approach whose coming shall be “as the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth, even a morning without clouds.” (2 Sam. xxiii.) Let us try everything that the world holds dear by the glory of that day, by the power and coming of Jesus, by the joy of His saints in whom He will come to be glorified, and then let our hearts decide whether we are ready to count all as dung that we may win Christ.—*Extract.*

“But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”

(1 PETER iv. 7.)

OTHNIEL AND ACHSAH.*

(JOSH. xv. 16-19.)

THE land of Canaan was given to Abraham by promise, and this promise was renewed many times before Israel actually entered upon the possession of the land. Even after they had crossed the Jordan, it remained for them in the energy of faith to take possession of that which had been given to them. In the earlier parts of the book of Joshua we have the account of the conquests of the nation as a whole; the first part of Judges narrates, with the mention of numerous shortcomings, victories of separate tribes; while in the passage before us we have the prowess of individual faith, in Caleb and Othniel. There are victories of the whole Church of God, where the mass share alike in the conflict and the spoil; on the other hand, oftentimes when the many were at ease and indifferent, individual faith has come to the front, and claimed the ever ready power of God, to seize what He had already given.

In Othniel we have a refreshing example of this, and the results of his victory can be duplicated, in spiritual blessings, by those who follow his faith. Kirjath-sepher is the prize to be taken. This was its original name, meaning "The city of the book": in the hands of God's people it becomes "The oracle." How significant these names are! In the enemy's hands the word of God is simply a book, *the* book even, but without power or life. When faith takes possession, it becomes a message from God Himself. It is now God speaking, and we see behind the book the One whose word it is. "The letter killeth,"—whether it be the letter of the Old or New Testament. But when faith takes hold we have no longer the let-

* Suggested from Numerical Bible, Vol. II., pages 93, 94.

ter alone, but the word of God and from God. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. . . . Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." From the word of God the apostle passes to God himself, who speaks in that word.

Othniel, "the lion of God," or, with Dr. Young, "God is force," suggests that energy of faith which fears nothing, meeting and overcoming all obstacles. Courage is the first accompaniment of faith (2 Pet. i. 5). It is really faith in activity, and is fittingly suggested in the name of the beast that is "comely in going,"—"a lion, which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any." (Prov. xxx. 30.) It is the righteous who is "as bold as a lion" (Prov. xxviii. 1); and for faith to be bold—to be truly faith—it must be coupled with practical righteousness.

In his victory Othniel gains Achsah, "anklet," suggestive of the foot adorned, "How beautiful are the feet," etc. (Rom. x. 15.) And she it is who moved him to ask for a field which was granted. Faith, when linked with lowly service and true subjection, wins for itself a special portion. It is Achsah, too, who sees the need of and obtains springs of water, without which the fields would have been but barren wastes. There is such a thing as intellectual apprehension of truth, even in a sense appropriation of it, without the freshness and power which can alone make it profitable. Well is it for us to recognize this, and to claim from One who is ever ready to give not only the portion, but the power to enjoy it as well.

"We praise Thee, and would praise Thee more:
To Thee our all we owe,—
The precious Saviour, and the power
That makes Him precious too."

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

CHAPTER IV.

(Continued from page 94.)

THE manifestation of the Lord's fitness for His work is now complete. From opposite sides He is declared what even the devils henceforth own Him, the Holy One of God. He can now go forth to His appointed work; and we have here a brief summary of His preaching, after the close of John's public testimony. The herald of the kingdom was now only to seal his witness with his blood; and the Lord, too, was on the way to the cross, which for Him was contemplated from the beginning. He was to be both Priest and Sacrifice; and for Him death would be not merely the seal of His testimony, but that upon which all blessing for man must depend. Still His life-work had also its absolute necessity, though of a very different kind: and it is of the deepest consequence to distinguish things that differ so essentially as these do. This, however, will be better left to be considered at another time.

What we have in this place is not any detailed history, but simply the fact of the announcement of the kingdom by the King Himself, with the gathering of disciples by it, and the signs accompanying it. The word is proclaimed in Galilee, from Capernaum as its centre, the word of the prophet being thus fulfilled. And though Galilee was now Galilee of the *Gentiles*, testifying thus to the ruin of God's people, it was *Israel* that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. Zebulon ("dwelling") dwelt no more in Galilee; and Naphtali, the "struggler," "sat," without struggling, in the darkness. In the land of Zeb-

ulon and of Naphtali, according to Isaiah's words, light was sprung up. There had come to Capernaum a dweller, in whom God on His side could dwell with man, and One who would be more than a struggler, the typical *Conqueror*, the woman's Seed.

Man had, indeed, failed, and lay prostrate, under that which was no mere absence of light, but a Satanic power of darkness; but another power had manifested itself,—the kingdom of heaven was at hand, though for the realization of its blessings man must repent. But the "goodness of God" was "leading to repentance." How new the word would sound on the lips that were now uttering it! How simple and plain a requirement when urged with the persuasive tones of a love so manifest, so truly seeking men!

The call of disciples follows this proclamation. Andrew and Simon, James and John, simple fishermen, chosen to be "fishers of men," illustrate the Lord's chosen methods for the salvation of souls. These first followers are certainly not men of position, or of wealth, or learning; and in this there is emphasized for us the truth, that none of these things can be essential, therefore, for even a foremost place among the messengers of the King of glory. The qualifications are spiritual, not natural; and He who sends them out is all-sufficient to them. On the other hand, the call of Christ to-day is as much needed as ever it was, and none can be a minister of His without it.

His call requires prompt, unhesitating obedience. This he emphasizes Himself elsewhere. Here we see it yielded: "immediately they left the ship and their father, and followed Him." How great a thing is *promptness*, when once we are assured of the Lord's will. There is, then, nothing else to be considered; while moral hesitancy may soon so cloud this assur-

ance as to make obedience then impracticable. "Add to your faith virtue" is the exhortation of the apostle, ("virtue" being here the soldier-quality, "valor,") "and to virtue knowledge." With how many would the present darkness of their way be clearly intelligible, if they could face honestly their past history. And that history must, after all, be faced one day.

The gospel preached by our Lord has "signs" accompanying it. This is one of the common Scripture words (though not used in this place) for what we call "miracles." Such a word is used in Scripture also, but it emphasizes the "wonder" element only, and is of infrequent occurrence in the gospels. Important even the power to produce wonder was, as a bell to gather an audience, but the words rather chosen for the Lord's works speak of that in them which was to make its impress on the conscience and the heart. As "signs" they spoke not obscurely, evidencing themselves as "powers"—acts of power—revealing God. The kingdom of heaven which the Old Testament prepared men to expect was, in fact, an interference of divine power on behalf of men which would free the earth from the burdens which sin had imposed on them, and from the curse which follows sin. Miracles, therefore, formed an essential part in "the kingdom and glory," and are thus called by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews "the powers of the world to come." Most suitably, therefore, did they accompany the message that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

Yet John, its first proclaimer, had done no miracle. His simple call to repentance required none. He saw and announced the kingdom, but was not to introduce it. He emphasized the testimony and embodied the spirit of the old dispensation, which itself pointed beyond itself for the completion which would of

necessity set it aside. He was the judicial summing up of the past, though in near view of the predicted future; and men needed only conscience to be called into activity to confirm to them the truth of what he said. They needed not and were not called to have faith in John, but to judge their own condition, and thus be ready for the coming King.

But now here *was* the King,—the One to whom the world was to be subject, the whole realm of Nature submissive to His hand. Here miracles were the *natural* sign then of His presence; to Him what man called *supernatural* was natural: not to have manifested it would but have discredited His claim. True and needful testimony it was to Him, when “all manner of disease and all manner of infirmity” yielded to His power, showing Him thus master of the whole condition of things into the midst of which He had come. All the consequences of sin had found their remedy: to earth the long-lost paradise might be restored. Sin, therefore, itself, as presently it was to be publicly proclaimed and certified, had found in Him its conqueror also. And, not passively content with receiving all who came, this grace in Him went forth with ceaseless activity to find its objects. God’s heart was pouring itself out in such a way as if to preclude all possibility of resistance. Who could refuse such ministry to need so manifest, in which the very flesh of man cried out for the living God: and how could, then, his soul be silent?

In fact, great multitudes flocked after Him from all the country round: from Galilee itself; from Decapolis, Rome’s ten colonial cities, now an utter desolation; from Jerusalem, valuing itself for privileges which, misused, were bringing ruin upon all connected with it. Could, then, these various grades of a common humanity, one in the sad inheritance of

the fall, which had yet so strangely divided them, find now in one Saviour-King their restoration to one another and to themselves? So it must surely seem as if it would be. But history has been slow in justifying such a verdict. Prophecy, on the other hand, declares it shall be, and that this is the one hope for the world which shall have fulfillment.

CHAPTER V.

WE shall be called back to these thronging multitudes again, to learn in detail their various needs, and the way in which God has thus provided for them. But first the inspired history bids us to listen to the Lord's own statement of what His kingdom is; not in the form it should take, but in its inner spirit. Old Testament prophets had already announced the form it would, and will yet, assume when the "promises" still belonging to Paul's "kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. ix. 3, 4) shall be fulfilled. Introduced by a coming in glory which every eye shall see, the kingdom of that day shall be established in power that shall smite down all opposition as with a rod of iron. The law will then go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, once more—and then to be acknowledged by all—the place of His special manifestation upon the earth, to which men shall come from every side to worship Him. The whole picture is one so unlike, in some of its features, that state to which Christianity has introduced us; is, in fact, so much a retrogression when seen as coming after this, that many find it impossible to understand it except as figure; but as such no one will find it possible to understand it really. It is not Christianity, nor the heaven in which our portion is, but a future—and still not final—state of the earth. It is

a last dispensation before eternity, of sight rather than of faith, and in many ways lower in character than what faith now enjoys. "Blessed" in a higher sense truly "are they that have *not* seen, and yet have believed." Yet in perfect accordance with this the glory is then manifest and visible, as now it is not; and once more, and beyond all in the past, Jerusalem will put the light upon a candlestick, where all may see it. Granting the apostle's interpretation to be the true one, that to Israel in the flesh the promises belong,—and the prophets themselves unmistakably show this,—no other reading of the Scripture is possible than the plain and literal one.

When John the Baptist proclaimed the kingdom as at hand, he had before him no vision of Christianity, but what the prophets of old had announced. And when the Lord takes up, with more emphasis and fuller demonstration of it here, the Baptist's message, He is still speaking of the same thing. But Israel rejected Him through whom alone those promises could be fulfilled to them: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." The consequence was, that, as far as Israel's blessing was concerned, the fair vision vanished. The world also, and not merely Israel, understood not the day of its visitation: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Thus the predicted blessing of the earth also is delayed, and only after nearly twenty centuries are the streaks of dawn beginning to be seen on the horizon.

Yet the kingdom has come, but come in how different a way! Grace repelled must still triumph over all hindrances; and out of that world which has taken Satan for its prince, and crucified the Son of God, God has been all this time taking for Himself a heavenly people—a people to share with Him rejection

upon the earth, yet to share with Him also His reign over it, and to have with Himself a place of dearer, tenderer intimacy than even this might imply—"that where I am," He says, "there ye may be also."

These things we shall find the Lord beginning to unfold to His disciples as soon as it is clearly seen that Israel will have none of Him; and here, when He speaks of "things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (chap. xiii. 35), we shall have no difficulty in finding our own special portion—a fullness of blessing that Israel's portion does, indeed, figure, and only figure. This—the nation's as such—is earthly; ours is heavenly. There is to be a "new *earth*" also, "wherein dwelleth righteousness," as well as a "heavenly city" for God's pilgrims of to-day.

In the "sermon on the mount" we have, then, the principles of the kingdom of heaven, with very plain reference to the millennial earth. It is the earth that the meek inherit (ver. 5), though there is also a reward in heaven," at which we shall have to look in its place (ver. 12). The first statement here is from the thirty-seventh psalm, the application of which is evident; Jerusalem, also, is "the city of the great King" (ver. 35)—not in its disowned, desolate condition; and we shall see further indications of this nature as we go through what is here.

Yet this does not take away from us the constant application everywhere to ourselves. The fuller revelation only completes the more partial one; the higher blessing but transcends the lower. Through all dispensations God is the same God; even amid cloud and darkness He is still the Light. Blessed be His name that we have the manifestation in Him in whom the glory tabernacled among men, glory without a veil, save only, to dim eyes, the excess of light.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

THE CHURCH.—ITS LOCAL ASPECTS.

HAVING in the previous paper seen the unity of the Church, as taught in various passages of Scripture, we come now to a most important branch of the subject.

In speaking of the nature of the Church, and its unity, we were dealing with general features common to the body as a whole. We now leave the general and come to special features. And yet we are still dealing with the Church as a whole, with features which belong to the entire body.

We saw in our last paper that the unity of the Church was not to be invisible, but that it was organic and manifest, "that the world may believe." To be manifest in any particular place, it is evident that the Church must take some form, and this is what we must now consider.

The word Church, as applied to the body of Christ, is used in three different ways. We have first "the Church" unlimited, meaning the whole body. "Upon this rock I will build my church." (Matt. xvi. 18.) Christ, the Son of God, as the only foundation for His whole Church, is the thought here. "And the Lord added to the church daily." (Acts ii. 47.) Not merely the Church at Jerusalem, but to the body. "Gaius mine host and of the whole church." (Rom. xvi. 23.) The hospitality of Gaius extended in heart and doubtless largely in practice to the whole Church. His care for one member tended to build up the whole body. Paul persecuted the Church (1 Cor. xv. 9; Gal. i. 13; Phil. iii. 6). Not merely the saints at Jerusalem, but through them the whole; nay, he

heard a voice asking "why persecutest thou *me*?" (Acts ix. 4, 5.) We find the word used in the same way in other passages; as Eph. i. 22; iii. 10, 21; v. 23, 24, 25, 29, 31; Col. i. 18, 24; 1 Tim. iii. 5, 15; Heb. xii. 23.

Secondly, we have "the Church" limited to some special locality, as "the church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts viii. 1; xi. 22), or at Antioch (Acts xiii. 1), Ephesus (Acts xx. 17), Cenchrea (Rom. xvi. 11), Corinth (1 Cor. i. 2), Thessalonica (1 Thess. i. 1).

Thirdly, we have the plural, "Churches," giving us the gatherings collectively in any given country; as Judea (1 Thess. ii. 14; Acts ix. 31), Galatia (1 Cor. xvi. 1; Gal. i. 2), Asia (1 Cor. xvi. 19), and Macedonia (2 Cor. viii. 1); or more generally including sometimes all the assemblies of God, as "other churches" (2 Cor. xi. 8); "the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. xi. 28); "the churches of God" (2 Thess. i. 4).

In these last two usages of the word we have the thought of local assemblies as distinct from the one body of Christ viewed in its entirety. We are now to see the relation between these local gatherings and the entire Church.

We may begin by saying that there must be nothing in the local Church to contradict the truths we have been already considering. Its nature and unity must be manifested. It must be seen that it is the body of Christ, formed by and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, that all believers are members of it, united to Christ glorified, and to one another; that the Lord's coming is the hope before it, and that the name of Christ is the only one by which it is called. Furthermore, it must exhibit the unity of the body of Christ. We have an illustration of this in the first Epistle to

the Corinthians: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." (1 Cor. i. 2.) The apostle here uses the name "church of God," which is the title of the whole body of Christ, and applies it locally, "which is at Corinth." He describes those who are included in it, "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints." We need not say that the term "sanctified" includes all who have a share in the work of Christ, all who are sheltered by His blood. It does not refer to personal state, but to the standing of every believer, who is also a called saint,—a saint by virtue of his calling. All then there who were believers in the Lord Jesus Christ formed the church of God which was at Corinth.

But to show that this church was not to be regarded as independent of the whole body of Christ, the apostle adds "with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Whatever the special needs of the particular assembly at Corinth might be, the principles which were to govern them were those for the whole church, to be applied wherever there might be the same state of things.

But more than this, the linking of the whole Church of Christ with the assembly at Corinth, as we see in the verse we are considering, shows that the whole Church was concerned in the matters to be presented to that special assembly,—that there was a responsibility which could not be evaded, and that distance from the locality did not create a severance in the Church. In other words, the truth of the one

body must not be lost sight of. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Cor. xii. 26.) Immediately preceding this verse, we read, v. 25, "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care for one another." A member of the Church of Christ in Africa is just as really linked with us as one with whom we are in daily association.

This is a most important principle; for without it the various assemblies of Christ would be so many independent congregations. Corporate unity would be but the unity of "the invisible Church," and all public testimony to that held so dear by our Lord would be at an end.

The truth we are considering becomes clearer as we see the place occupied by the Holy Spirit in the whole Church and in local assemblies. As we have already seen, it is He who has formed the Church, linking believers with a glorified Head and with one another, so forming the "One Body." We are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit (Eph. ii. 21, 22), where the whole Church is unquestionably the subject; and in a very interesting way, linking it would almost seem the Church at large with a local assembly, we have (1 Cor. iii. 16) "Know ye not ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." These two scriptures show that the Spirit dwells in the whole Church; that He also, because of this fact, dwells in the local assembly.

A partial illustration of this truth would be the

relation of the Atlantic Ocean as a whole to any spot upon its broad surface. The ocean would mean the whole mass, and yet we would speak of a ship as being upon the ocean, not upon part of it. The characteristics of the whole are seen in each one of its parts: nay, the word "parts" can scarcely be used, so homogeneous is the whole great mass. So it is with the whole Church and a local assembly: we have simply, as it were, located a spot on the great ocean, organically linked with the whole, and in no way to be severed from it.

Nor is all this in the least inconsistent with the exercise of discipline and all other necessary functions in a local assembly: on the contrary, the right apprehension of the truth gives power and adds impressiveness to the smallest act. Witness the apostle's words to the assembly at Corinth in the matter of dealing with the wicked person (1 Cor. v.): "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here we have the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, which has been put upon the whole Church (1 Cor. i. 2, 10), and His power, which is the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the whole body. We have here, then, no act of a small body, to be taken up and reviewed by some larger and more authoritative one, but the act of the Holy Ghost, through this assembly,—an act for and binding upon the whole body of Christ throughout the world. We will dwell upon the subject of discipline in a later paper, but would call earnest attention to the principle here seen,—a principle, we are persuaded, as wide-reaching and helpful in its application as it is, alas, ignored.

If what we have just stated be the truth, it will be seen at once that Scripture does not sanction the thought of an ecumenical body of representatives, no matter in what way chosen, as being necessary to give expression and authority to any decision. It is not the Church which has authority, but God the Holy Ghost; and when He speaks, no matter through how feeble an instrument, we have the authority for the whole Church. An aggregation of all the learning and piety of the whole world could not add one iota to the weight of authority the simplest expression of the mind of the Spirit would have.

Having said this, we can add some statements by way of safeguards to prevent misunderstanding. It is the Holy Ghost alone who can give weight to any judgment of an assembly. Without Him nothing has authority, whether it be the decision of an assembly or that of the whole Church; and faith would be shown, not in obeying such a decision, but the reverse. If God has spoken all must bow: if He has not, though the whole Church had, there could be no authority in what was said. In seeking His mind it would not show faith, but the reverse, in a local assembly to refuse the counsel and prayers of their brethren at a distance. True faith is always accompanied by humility and self-distrust; and as the Lord has made His people members one of another, as well as of His body, faith gladly accepts the help that may come through these varied channels. This same faith, also, will be ever ready to submit for examination the grounds of its decision. But these things only emphasize the truth we have been considering, that the Holy Spirit is present in the local gathering, which is but a manifestation of

the one body, and that His judgment is authoritative and final. We will recur to this subject again when we come to treat of discipline. Here it has simply been our object to show the relation between the individual assembly and the whole body of Christ, and to draw from this relationship the principles which underlie it, and which must govern us if we are to be in accord with the mind of God concerning His Church.

We have been speaking of discipline, but the same principles are found where other subjects are in consideration. For instance, in the apostle's farewell to the elders of the assembly at Ephesus, not only does he give prophetic intimations as to the history of the whole Church, but he applies to them, local officers, titles which take in the whole: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the *Church of God* which He hath purchased with His own blood." (Acts xx. 28.) Their responsibility was chiefly concerned with Ephesus, but they were to look upon their service to Christ's sheep there as ministering to the whole Church of God redeemed by the precious blood of His own Son. Ephesus was but the manifestation of the Church in that place. We have the same thought in the Epistle to the Ephesians (iv. 14). All gifts, whether of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers, were for the *edifying of the body of Christ*. Some of these gifts might never be exercised outside the limits of an assembly, yet the benefit was for the whole Church. "There are many members, yet but one body." (1 Cor. xii. 20.)

One other matter demands our consideration: what

constitutes a local assembly? Naturally our answer would first be all the believers in a given place, as Corinth, Ephesus, and the like; and this, in the main, would be a sufficient answer. A further question would be, when there are more Christians in one locality than can come conveniently together, and they meet separately, simply for that reason, would each such meeting constitute a local assembly, an expression of the one body, or would the several meetings collectively be required to make up the local Church? It seems plain that the question is not one for geography to settle. The whole spirit of the passages we have been examining would show that it is simply a question of manifestation of divine principles by a gathering of the Lord's people. If those principles which we have been looking at control a gathering of Christians—principles of Church unity and obedience to the truth—each such gathering would be a local assembly, an expression of the whole Church, and there might be a number of such gatherings in a single city. Naturally believers in the same locality would be much thrown together, and such intercourse would suggest mutual prayer and consultation when any question for decision should arise. But if the Lord is in the midst (and “where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. xviii. 20.) His authority is sufficient to bind, and the Holy Spirit is sufficient to direct.

These truths also afford us comfort in a day of almost universal departure from divine principles as to the Church of God. Principles remain, no matter how much the Church may have failed; and these principles are presented for our guidance now, as

much as when they were first given to the individual assemblies addressed in the several Epistles we have been considering. Sorrow of heart we may and should have, as we compare the present ruins with the once beautiful structure which God built; but departure of the many, failure of the Church as a whole to manifest her character and her destiny can never excuse present indifference to the truths of God. Those truths stand out in clear relief against the dark background of the wreck which has been made by man's unbelief and self-rule.

May the Lord, who loved the Church and gave Himself for it, speak to the hearts and consciences of His beloved people, and constrain them, out of love and devotedness to Him, to listen to His voice and to obey it.

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS;

OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

CHAPTER V.

(Continued from page 102.)

BUT whilst the King has not that most blessed light, and can get no further along this line of thought than his groan, "Who knoweth what is good for man?" yet there are some things in which he can discriminate; and here are seven comparisons in which his unaided wisdom can discern which is the better:—

1. A good name	is better than	precious ointment.
2. The day of death	" " "	the day of birth.
3. The house of mourning	" " "	the house of feasting.
4. Sorrow	" " "	laughter.
5. The rebuke of the wise	" " "	the song of fools.
6. The end of a thing	" " "	the beginning.
7. The patient in spirit	" " "	the proud in spirit.

Lofty, indeed, is the level to which Solomon has attained by such unpopular conclusions, and it proves fully that we are listening in this book to man at his highest, best. Not a bitter, morbid, diseased mind, simply wailing over a lost life, and taking, therefore, highly colored and incorrect views of that life, as so many pious commentators say; but the calm, quiet result of the use of the highest powers of reasoning man, as man, possesses; and we have but to turn for a moment, and listen to Him who is greater than Solomon, to find His holy and infallible seal set upon the above conclusions. "Blessed are the pure in heart,—they that mourn,—and the meek," is surely in the same strain exactly; although reasons are there given for this blessedness of which Solomon, with all his wisdom, had never a glimpse.

Let us take just one striking agreement, and note the contrasts: "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth." That is, the loftiest purest wisdom of man recognizes a quality in sorrow itself that is purifying. "In the sadness of the face the heart becometh fair." In a scene where all is in confusion,—where Death, as King of Terrors, reigns supreme over all, forcing his presence on us hourly, where wickedness and falsehood apparently prosper, and goodness and truth are forced to the wall,—in such a scene of awful disorder, laughter and mirth are but discord, and grate upon the awakened spirit's ear with ghastly harsh-

ness. Whilst an honest acceptance of the truth of things as they are, looking Death itself full in the face, the house of mourning not shunned, but sought out; the sorrow within is at least in harmony with the sad state of matters without; the "ministration of death" has its effect, the spirit learns its lesson of humiliation; and this, says all wisdom, is "*better*."

And yet this very level to which Reason can surely climb by her own unaided strength may become a foothold for Faith to go further. Unless Wrong, Discord, and Death, are the normal *permanent* condition of things, then sorrow, too, is not the normal permanent state of the heart; but this merely remains a question, and to its answer no reason helps us. Age after age has passed with no variation in the fell discord of its wails, tears and groans. Generation has followed in the footsteps of generation, but with no rift in the gloomy shadow of death that has overhung and finally settled over each. Six thousand years of mourning leave unaided Reason with poor hope of any change in the future,—of any expectation of true comfort. But then listen to that authoritative Voice proclaiming, as no "scribe" ever could, "Blessed are they that mourn, *for they shall be comforted*." Ah, there is a bright light breaking in on the dark clouds, with no lightning-flash of added storm, but a mild and holy ray,—the promise of a day yet to break o'er our sorrow-stricken earth, when there shall be no need for mourning, for death no more shall reign, but be swallowed up in victory.

But turn over a few pages more, and the contrast is still further heightened. The sun of divine revelation is now in mid-heaven; and not merely future, but present, comfort is revealed by its holy and

blessed beam. Come, let us enter now into the "house of mourning," not merely to clasp hands with the mourners, and to sit there in the silence of Ecclesiastes' helplessness for the benefit of our own hearts, nor even to whisper the promise of a future comfort, but, full of the comfort of a present hope, to pour out words of comfort into the mourners' ears. Tears still are flowing,—nor will we rebuke them. God would never blunt those tender sensibilities of the heart that thus speaks the Hand that made it; but He would take from them the bitterness of hopelessness, and would throw on the tears His own blessed Light,—a new direct word of revelation from Himself,—Love and Light as He is,—till, like the clouds in the physical world, they shine with a glory that even the cloudless sky knows not.

First, then, all must be grounded and based on faith in the Lord Jesus. We are talking to those who share with us in a common divine faith. *We believe that Jesus died:* but more, *we believe that He rose again:* and here alone is the foundation of true hope or comfort. They who believe not or know not this are as absolutely hopeless—as comfortless—as Ecclesiastes: they are "the rest which have no hope." True divine Hope is a rare sweet plant, whose root is found *only* in His empty tomb, whose flower and fruit are in heaven itself. Based on this, comforts abound; and in every step the living Lord Jesus is seen: His resurrection throws its blessed light everywhere. If One has actually risen from the dead, what glorious possibilities follow.

For as to those who are falling asleep, is *He* insensible to that which moves *us* so deeply? Nay; He Himself has put them to sleep. They are fallen

asleep [not "in," as our version says, but] *through* (*δια*) Jesus. He who so loved them has Himself put them to sleep. No matter what the outward, or apparent, causes of their departure to *sight*, faith sees the perfect love of the Lord Jesus giving "His beloved sleep." Sight may take note only of the flying stones as they crush the martyr's body; mark, with horror, the breaking bone, the bruised and bleeding flesh; hear the air filled with the confusion of shouts of imprecation, and mocking blasphemy; but to faith all is different: to her the spirit of the saint, in perfect calm, is enfolded to the bosom of Him who has loved and redeemed it, whilst the same Lord Jesus hushes the bruised and mangled form to *sleep*, as in the holy quiet of the sanctuary.

Let our faith take firm hold of this blessed word, "fallen asleep through Jesus," for our comfort. So shall we be able to instil this comfort into the wounded hearts of others,—comforting them with the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. What would Solomon have given to have known this?

Next, the mind must be gently loosened from occupation with itself and its own loss; and that by no rebuke or harsh word, so out of place with sorrow, but by the *assumption*, at least, that it is for the loss that the departed themselves suffer that we grieve. It is because we love them that our tears flow: but suppose we know beyond a question that *they* have suffered no loss by being taken away from this scene, would not that modify our sorrow? Yea; would it not change its character completely, extracting bitterness from it? So that blessed Lord Himself comforted His own on the eve of His departure: "If ye

loved me, ye would rejoice because I go unto my Father, for my Father is greater than I." The more you love me, the less—not the more—will you sorrow. Nay; you would change the sorrow into actual joy.

The measure of the comfort is exactly the measure of the love. That is surely divine. So here, "You are looking forward to the day when your rejected Lord Jesus shall be manifested in brightest glories: your beloved have not missed their share in that triumph. God will show them the same "path of life" He showed their Shepherd (Ps. xvi.), and will "bring them with Him" in the train of their victorious Lord.

3. But is that triumph, that joy, so far off that it can only be seen through the dim aisles and long vistas of many future ages and generations? Must our comfort be greatly lessened by the thought that while that end is "sure," it is still "very far off,"—a thousand years may—nay, some say, *must*—have to intervene; and must we sorrowfully say, like the bereaved saint of old, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me"? Not at all. Better, far better than that. For Faith's cheerful and cheering voice is "we who are alive and remain." That day is so close ever to faith that there is nothing between us and it. No long weary waiting expected; and that very *attitude*—that very hope—takes away the "weariness" from the swift passing days. Those dear saints of old grasped and cherished this blessed hope that their saviour Lord would return even during their life. Did they lose anything by so cherishing it? Have we gained by our giving it up? Has the more "reasonable" expectation that, after all, the

tomb shall be our lot as theirs, made our days brighter, happier, and so to speed more quickly? Has it made us more separate from the world, more heavenly in character, given us less in common with the worldling? Has this safe "reasoning" made us to abound in works of love, labors of faith, and in patience of hope, as did the "unreasonable" and "mistaken" hope of His immediate coming the dear Thessalonians of old? For look at the first chapter, and see how the "waiting for the Son from heaven" worked. Again I ask, have we improved on this? *Can* we improve upon it? Was it not far better, then, for them—if these its happy accompaniments—to hold fast, even to their last breath, that hope, and even to pass off this scene clasping it still fondly to their hearts, than our dimmed and dull faith with—it may be boldly said—all the sad loss that accompanies this?

Hold it fast, my brethren, "*We who are alive and remain.*" Let that be the only word in our mouths, the only hope in our hearts. It is a cup filled to the brim with comfort. How they ring with life and hope in contrast with the dull, heavy, deathful word of poor Ecclesiastes—"For that is the end of all men"!

Oh, spring up brighter in all our hearts, thou divinely given, divinely sustained Hope! F. C. J.

(*To be continued.*)

I BEG you to think much of the younger brethren, those less confirmed in the faith, and to surround them with your care and your affection; it is just they who have need of it. God adds His blessing when one acts in charity. He Himself is in the power of His blessing, and the feeblest hearts are established.—J. N. D.

“ETERNAL LOVE.”

HE never sinned, He never knew
 Until from me He gently drew
 The bitter dregs of that dark cup
 The awful draught, and drank it up.

Yea, 'twas for me, a loathsome one,
 A scoffer, scoffing at His love—
 And He, God's well-beloved Son!
 Adored by million worlds above.

Has Earth, with all her boasted store,
 A candle to eclipse the sun?
 I stand upon the Ocean's shore,
 I gaze upon th' Eternal One!

O Treasure infinite of grace!
 O vast, deep, wide Eternity!
 That sun may blush and hide its face,
 To think that *Thou* should'st die for *me*.

And yet 'tis so;—still bow and weep.
 For with those pierced hands of His
 He stoops to wash my soil-stained feet,
 And greet me with a Lover's kiss!

Thou sweet, divine, eternal Love!
 To thine own ready arms I flee,
 And there would nestle as a dove—
 Abide for all eternity.

Here tempests break and fall away:
 They cannot touch His sheltered lamb.
 I'm only resting till the day
 Awake me in Immanuel's land.

A WORD ON REVELATION III. 11.

THE crown here is not the priestly mitre that Aaron the high-priest wore into the sanctuary; nor the "fair mitre" put on the head of Joshua (Zech. iii.); nor is it the crown which rests by faith upon the head of every saint—God's free and individual gift to every sinner saved by grace. Every saved soul is a priest before God. Ye are "a holy priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 5). How sweet to think that every child of God is a priest by birth as well as a child by birth! Ah, beloved brethren, there will be no brow in heaven upon which no crown will set! "And upon the four and twenty thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold."

This crown is scarcely the one alluded to in our verse.

Nor is it the crown of life promised to the faithful martyr (Rev. ii. 10); nor to "them that love him" (James i. 12); nor the "crown of glory" which the prudent elder shall receive at the chief Shepherd's appearing (1 Pet. v. 4); nor is it the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give unto His faithful apostle in that day, and not unto him only, but unto all who love His appearing (ii. Tim. iv. 8). No, it is none of these.

Indeed, there is no name given it. It is a nameless crown. "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." The exhortation tests, not so much character, as one's confidence in God. Do I know my Father? Knowing my Father, I can then see the end from the beginning. Those sons cultivating that farm through all manner of toil, endur-

ing all manner of weariness, bringing in all manner of fruit in its season, know their father. They know, at the end of the toil of obedience, that father's voice will be heard in fullest approval; and so, moved by this sweet incentive, they go on in simplest contentment to the end.

Cannot I trust my Father? Ah yes, for I know His love. This was proven by the cross. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son." And now I have His confidence, and He has committed to my keeping His Name and His words; and at the end I know He has something suitable for me. A crown it is, surely; but it is nameless. Perhaps to name it would but tarnish its lustre; and though nameless, it may for that very reason shine out far above and beyond all crowns that are named, in its resplendency.

To whom, then, is this crown given, and what order of hand is it that holds it fast?

Notice, it is not the glamour of success according to man's measure that secures it. Some of those who have the greatest success in bringing men openly to confess the name of Jesus refuse to take the humble position His name and word would give them, not having the simple confidence blind Bartimeus had to follow "Jesus in the way" (Mark x. 52). No, beloved brethren, let us not deceive ourselves, and be carried away with the false and illusive thought that this nameless crown of our text is obtained by such success. Witness an apostle's success: He walked in perpetual triumph among men, "making manifest the savour of His knowledge in every place," being thus "a sweet savour of Christ unto God" (2 Cor. i. 14-16). And what unparalleled success he achieved!

The sad record is, that "All they in Asia be turned away from me;" and "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Tim. i. 15; and iv. 10). It is a crown obtained, not by success, but by holding fast His name and His word. The apostle won it: Demas lost it. This present world cheated him out of it. The world became his master. He loved his master's voice; and losing confidence in his Lord, he forgot the exhortation, gave up that precious name and word, and here in this life surrendered that crown and the joy of that blessed hope. "Shall it be mine?" may we not each say. Why should we be here to-day, few and feeble as we are, were it not that He hath committed to our keeping His name and His word? What honor is this! Think you He is indifferent to it? Shall our Lord ever put to shame the confidence that holds fast these things that touch His honor? Why should the name and glory of this present world for an instant charm our souls, since His voice declares, "I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee" (Rev. iii. 9)? These are not "idle words." I know my Father; and here is one of His promises that "hath great recompense of reward" (Heb. x. 35): "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Shall we cast it away, and lose that nameless crown, through love of this present evil world?

How blest are they who overcome, and, as in Laodicea, sit down with Him in His throne, wearing that crown on their brow, and thus enter in fully with Him into His joy!

W. H. J.

April 1st, 1894.

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

THE CHURCH.—ITS ORGANIZATION.

(Continued from page 130.)

FROM what we have already seen, in considering the unity of the Church, it will be clear that what we have to say now regarding the organization of the local assembly, applies to the whole Body. There can be no such thing as different organizations for different localities. We are still dealing with the Church as a whole, though with local features.

We might say at the outset that Scripture gives no hint of looseness in the matter of church organization. It is becoming the habit of the times to speak with indifference of these things, and under the guise of broad-minded liberality to allow room for the greatest divergence of views on these questions. Nay, the effort is made to show that Scripture itself is, in the main, silent as to the matter, and has only given us the outline to be filled out in detail pretty much as men please, or as exigencies may arise in various places; that certain problems of organization were left to be solved by the sanctified reason of the church, which would gradually find out what plan was best suited to meet the varied and growing needs of a body, ever increasing in size and importance and whose interests would become with each year more complex. And so in this very premise men open the way for all manner of variety and of contradiction. What wonder then is it that we find sects without number, all contending for their own forms of existence and as a result dividing the one Church of Christ until it is almost beyond recognition? And then instead of being abashed by the havoc thus made, men

tell us that these very divisions are a part of the beauty of church organization, intended by Providence to foster a spirit of generous rivalry and to increase by emulation the zeal of all! So far will even christian men be led as apologists for their own disobedience and neglect of Scripture.

The reason, perhaps, why scripture is thought to be silent as to the details of church organization, is that it is taken for granted that a varied and complicated mass of machinery is necessary. As in the gospel sinners stumble at the way of salvation, not because of any obscurity or complication in it but from its very simplicity, so saints fail to see the beauty and order of the Church as found in Scripture because of the absence of what is not only unnecessary to its well being but absolutely cumbersome. And yet does not nature itself teach us that simplicity as well as order is "nature's first law;" order, because of simplicity. All the great forces of nature—gravitation, the action of light, heat and electricity—are simple. It is man who makes machinery, but he is wise enough not to attempt to intrude it upon the domain of the great forces of nature. He does not attempt to assist them. If the Christian likewise would look for the Church and its organization apart from the machinery which he attempts to add to it, he would find it too in all its beauty and simplicity in the word of God.

It may naturally be asked what are the special hindrances to seeing the simplicity of church organization, and to this we may answer, Several principal ones.

I. The almost universal habit of giving a name to some portion of the professing Church is one great barrier to a clear understanding of what church organization is. Of course the division lies deeper

than the name, but that diverts the mind from the Scriptures and gives authority to the denomination and its rules. If we expect to find Scripture for the various forms of government prescribed by the different denominations we will be disappointed. Scripture knows neither the one nor the other, save to condemn both. (1 Cor. i. 10-13; 7. 17; 11. 19.)

2. Growing out of denominationalism, the next hindrance to a clear understanding of scripture teaching that we will mention is the use of creeds or confessions of faith. We need only point to the slight put upon the word of God by these human systems of doctrine, and ask can we expect them to aid in the understanding of that which they virtually displace? Take as an illustration the following definition of the Church, from the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England: "A congregation of faithful men in the which the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in *all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.*" Here we are held to a human priesthood and all else taught by that denomination as essential to a true church. Little wonder that an important requisite for church unity in their eyes is the maintenance of "the historic episcopate."

3. But this brings us to consider a third great obstacle to receiving the simple teaching of Scripture as to the organization of the Church;—the place occupied by the clergy both in the minds of the people and in economy of the various denominations. By clergy we mean that class of men who are supposed, by reason of their office, to have a special nearness to God and special rights in the way of ministry of the Word and administration of the "sacraments." Let

us say at the outset that we have the highest regard for every devoted servant of Christ, wherever found or called by whatever name. That there are multitudes of such among the clergy we would not for a moment deny. What we have to say is not against men, but against a system which we are sure is not only a hindrance to blessing for the Church of God at large, but a great burden to many conscientious men who are galled by its yoke.

The word clergy is derived from the Greek *κληρος*, the primary meaning of which is "lot," and it is so used in describing the division of our Lord's clothing among the soldiers who crucified Him. (Matt. xxvii. 35. etc.) We find it used in the same way in describing the appointment of Matthias (Acts i. 26.); but in that same connection we have that use of it, which has probably been the origin of the word as we know it. "For he was numbered with us, and had obtained *part* (Gk. lot) of this ministry." (Acts i. 17; also, v. 25.) This use of the word approaches the derived meaning, which is inheritance or portion, and which we find applied to the portion of all the people of God. (Acts xxvi. 18. Col. i. 12.) In 1 Pet. v. 3. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage," the word "God's" is not in the original. The Revised Version renders it "Neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you." But a more evident, because more accurate, rendering would be, "Not as lording it over your possessions"*; the thought evidently being that they were not to rule God's people as if they were their own possessions. But the translation of the Revisers is significant as indicating

* J. N. D.'s version of the N. T., with note.

the bias of a clerical position. They look upon a company of God's people as their "charge," their "flock" and in a sense their personal property, that which has been allotted to them, and so translate a passage which is meant to guard against this very thing. And this is the error that underlies all thoughts of a clergy whether it be of the priests of the church of Rome and England, or the more modified forms as found in the various Protestant denominations. They form a special class with distinct privileges and special duties, who thus assume a position, gradually and unintentionally no doubt at the first, utterly inconsistent with the rights of the Church as a whole. So true is this, that it may be almost said, as the French despot declared, "The state is myself," the clergy is the Church. The clergy must preach the Word, the clergy must administer the sacraments, the clergy must make the laws. A church without a clergyman is like a body without a head. Now with such thoughts of a special class in the Church of God, it is impossible to come to a right understanding of what that Church is. In a succeeding paper on the ministry of the Church we will have occasion to take up this subject of the clergy, in connection with ordination; what has been said is sufficient to show why the very idea of a clergyman which is nowhere mentioned in Scripture, is a veil over the truth as to church organization.

4. Similarly the sacraments, so-called, have become in the hands of those who misuse them a means of darkening truth. Baptism instead of a simple initiatory act, administered by any christian man, becomes the door into the Church, is administered by the clergyman, and too often is regarded as an essential

to salvation; or on the other side is pushed into undue prominence and made the sign of a party and the test of fellowship. The Lord's Supper, from a sweet and happy memorial feast, where all the Lord's people, gathered about Himself, recall His love stronger than death, becomes a formal, too often a superstitious act, presided over necessarily by a clergyman who is compelled to usurp all the functions of the whole people.

5. This brings us lastly to note the prevailing misconceptions about worship which also prove a barrier in the way of the simple seeker after God's order. Worship is a priestly act, and all God's people are priests. To confine it to one person, would tend to put him alone in the place of priest, and this Rome does and is followed at greater or less distance by all other denominations. To confound preaching of the Word with worship is another common mistake which tends in the same direction, as well as degrading worship to a subordinate position.

To recapitulate: a true knowledge of the scripture teaching as to church organization is hindered by general misconceptions as to the necessity of denominational names and creeds; as to the clergy, sacraments, and worship. One with such misconceptions would probably define a proper church organization to be one "formed by a company of Christians gathered under some denominational name, held together by the adoption of a doctrinal creed, presided over by a regularly ordained minister who administers the sacraments and presides over the worship." Does this sound like a libel? Our sad answer must be, Look around and you will find expression of scarcely anything else. But we are bold to say that, to get a

scriptural idea of church organization, we must eliminate, or change almost beyond recognition, every feature given in the above definition.

Let us then come to the Word of God and seek from Him, His thoughts as to this most important subject.

(*To be continued.*)

SOCIALISM, NOT CHRISTIANITY.

THERE is a spirit abroad, which, under the plea of the grace which is the very heart and soul of Christianity, would destroy all the foundations of government in the world, in the family, and in the Church itself. Actuated by covetousness, it quotes the fruit of the Spirit, in Acts ii. 44, 45, to establish a claim over what belongs to others. There it is the rich bringing their goods to the poor,—a voluntary act prompted by the Spirit of God, who dwells in them. But here it is the poor burning with the desire to get the goods which belong to the rich. This is not Christianity, but socialism,—the very root of anarchy itself. That same spirit would forbid the king to bear the sword and use it against evil-doers, pleading the grace which God would exercise toward sinners. They utterly forget or ignore that grace itself is shown only to them who *condemn themselves* for their sins.

So in the family: instead of a faithful, paternal government, which does not fail to discipline the child for his wrong-doing, and thus press upon him a wholesome fear of evil and of its retribution, grace is again misused, corrupted, and degraded to a mere excuse of sin. The effects are plain enough on every

hand, and the end cannot fail: The rising generation will not be Christian, but socialistic.

But in the Church itself is this corruption of grace seen in its worst forms: The circle where sin should not be found, or if found not to be excused nor covered up, but mourned over and *repented of*; and if not repented of *cast out*, though it be in sorrow, has become a hiding-place for all manner of spiritual and moral evil. Men devoid of spiritual intelligence plead grace for all this, as if the holiness which becomes the house of God were incompatible with His love.

All this only shows that the cross has lost its power over such, if ever it had any; that sin, which caused that awful cross, is lightly judged, if at all; that *repentance*, therefore, has ceased to be coupled with faith,—the salt lacking in the sacrifices, and corruption fast doing its work.

It is clear why “judgment must begin at the house of God,” for if we judge not ourselves we compel God to do it; and though judgment be His “strange work,” and delayed as far as possible, it becomes His necessary work. “I will spew thee out of my mouth” is His holy sentence upon an indifferent Laodicea.

P. J. L.

THE Levite who presided over the idolatrous worship of the house of Micah, and later of the tribe of Dan, was of the family of Gershom, the son of Moses. (Judges xviii., 30, R.V.) Nabal, the churlish worldling, was of the house of Caleb. (1 Sam. xxv. 3.) What contrasts to their progenitors! And do we not learn in this to “cease from man,” to “let no man glory in men”? It is not ancestry, but Christ, who saves; not lineage, but individual devotedness, that insures faithfulness to God.

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS;

OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

CHAPTER V.

(Continued from page 136.)

FOURTH.—“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

Another sweet and holy word of comfort. We have seen Jesus putting His saints to sleep, as to their bodies; and here we see the same Lord Jesus Himself bidding them rise. No indiscriminate general resurrection this: “the dead in Christ” alone are concerned: they rise first. He who died for them knows them; and they, too, have known His voice in life: that same voice now awakens them, and bids them rise as easily as the little damsel at the “Talitha Cumi”! How precious is this glorious word of the Lord! How perfect the order! No awe-inspiring trumpet, ‘sounding long and waxing loud,’ as at Sinai of old, awakening the panic-stricken dead, and bidding them come to an awful judgment. Such the picture that man’s dark unbelief and guilty conscience have drawn. Small comfort would we have for mourners were that true. God be thanked it is not. Their Saviour’s well-known voice that our dead have loved shall awaken them, ringing full and true in every tone and note of it with the love He has borne them. Then the voice of the Archangel Michael, the great marshal of God’s victorious hosts, shall range our ranks. This accomplished, and all in the perfect divine order of victory, the trumpet shall sound and

the redeemed shall begin their triumphant, blissful, upward flight.

Fifth.—But the Spirit of God desires us to get and to give the comfort of another precious word. In no strange unknown company shall we who are alive and remain start on that homeward journey, but “together with them.” Who that has known the agony of broken heart-strings does not see the infinitely gracious tender comfort in those three words, “together with them”? There is reunion. Once more we shall be in very deed with those we love, with never a thought or fear of parting more to shadow the mutual joy. In view of those three words it were simple impertinence to question whether we shall recognize our dear saints who have preceded us. Not only would such a question rob them of their beauty, but of their very meaning. They would be empty and absolutely meaningless in such case. Sure, beyond a peradventure, is it that our most cherished anticipations shall be far exceeded in that rapturous moment; for we can but reason from experience, whilst here the sweetest communion has ever been marred by that which there shall not be.

How sweet the prospect, my sorrowing bereaved readers! We shall, as God is true, look once more into the very faces of those we have known and loved in the Lord on earth. They awake to recognition as Magdalene at the word “Mary;” not to a renewed earthly companionship, nor to a relationship as known in the flesh, as poor Mary thought, but to a sweeter, as well as higher; a warmer, as well as purer communion; for the tie that there shall bind us together is that which is stronger, sweeter than all others, even here,—Jesus Christ the Lord.

But stay! Does this really meet fully the present sorrow? Does it give a satisfying comfort? Is there not a lurking feeling of disappointment that certain relationships with their affections are never to be restored; therefore, in certain ways, "recognition" is not probable? For instance, a husband loses the companion of his life. He shall, it is true, meet and recognize with joy a saint whom he knew on earth, but never again his *wife*. That sweet, pure, human affection, is never to be renewed. Death's rude hand has chilled that warmth forever. The shock of death has extinguished it forevermore. Is that exactly true! Is that just as Scripture puts it? Let us see.

We may justly reason that if, in the resurrection, relationships were exactly as here, sorrow would necessarily outweigh joy. To find broken families there would be a perpetuation of earth's keenest distresses. To know that that break was irreparable would cause a grief unutterable and altogether inconsistent with the joy of the new creation. Marriage there is not, and hence all relationships of earth we may safely gather are not there. But the natural affections of the soul of man have they absolutely come to nothing?

That soul, connected as it is with that which is higher than itself—the spirit—is immortal, and its powers and attributes must be in activity beyond death. It is the seat of the affections here, and, surely, there too. Why, then, shall not these affections there have full unhindered play? Let us seek to gather something from analogy. Knowledge has its seat in the spirit of man, and here he exercises that faculty; nor does the spirit any more than the

soul cease to exist; nor are its attributes therefore to be arrested. Yet we read of knowledge in that scene, "it shall vanish away." And why? Is it not because of the perfect light that there shines? Human knowledge is but a candle, and what worth is candle-light when the noonday sun shines? It is overwhelmed, swallowed up, by perfect light. It "vanishes away,"—is not extinguished, any more than is human knowledge, by the shock of death or change; but perfection of Light has done away with the very appearance of imperfection. Now is this not equally and exactly true of that other part of the divine nature—Love? *Here* we both know in part and love in part. *There* the perfection of Love causes that which is imperfect—the human affection of the soul—to "vanish away." The greater swallows up the less. The infinite attraction of the Lord Jesus—that "glory" which He prayed that we might see (John xvii.)—overwhelms all lower affections with no rough rude shock as of death, but by the very superabundance of the bliss. His glory! What is it but the radiant outshining of His infinitely blessed, infinitely attractive, divine nature,—Love and Light, Light and Love,—each swallowing up in their respective spheres every inferior imperfect reflection of them that we have enjoyed here in this scene of imperfection, leaving nothing to be desired, nothing missed; allowing perfect play to every human faculty and affection,—crushing, extinguishing none. Death has not been permitted to annul these faculties. The perfect love of the Lord Jesus has outstripped them, swallowed them up in warmer affections, sweeter communion.

The coming of that precious Saviour is close: just

as close is the fulfillment of those words, "together with them." "He maketh the clouds His chariots," and in those chariots we are taken home "together."

Sixth.—"To meet the Lord in the air." Another word of divine comfort, again. How bold the assertion! Its very boldness is assurance of its truth. It becomes God, and God only, so to speak that His people may both recognize His voice in its majesty and rest on His word. No speculation; no argument; no deduction; no reasoning; but a bare, authoritative statement, startling in its boldness. Not a syllable of past Scripture on which to build and to give color to it; and yet *when* revealed, *when* spoken, in perfect harmony with the whole of Scripture. How absolutely impossible for any man to have conceived that the Lord's saints should be caught up to meet Him "*in the air.*" Were it not true, its very boldness and apparent foolishness would be its refutation. And what must be the character of mind that would even seek to invent such a thought? What depths of awful wickedness it would bespeak! What cruelty thus to attempt to deceive the whole race! What corruption, thus to speak false in the holiest matters, attaching the Lord's name to a falsehood! The spring from which such a statement, if false, could rise must be corrupt indeed. But, oh, how different in fact! What severe righteousness! what depths of holiness! what elevated morality! what warmth of tender affection! what burning zeal, combined with the profoundest reasoning, characterize every word of the writer of this same statement! Every word that he has written testifies that he has *not* attempted to deceive.

There is, perhaps, one other alternative: the writer may have *believed himself* thus inspired, and was thus

self-deceived. But in this case far gone in disease must his mind have been; nor could it fail constantly to give striking evidence of being thus unhinged in other parts of his writings. This is a subject with which unbalanced minds have shown their inability to be much occupied without the most sorrowful evidences of the disease under which they suffer. Let there be independence of the Scriptures (as there confessedly is in this case), and let man's mind work in connection with this subject of the Lord's second coming, and all history has but one testimony: such minds become unbalanced, and feverish disquietude evidences itself by constant recurrence to the one theme. Find, on the other hand, one single instance, if you can, in which such a mind makes mention *once, and only once*, of that subject that has so overmastered every other as to have deceived him into the belief that falsehood is truth, his own imagination is the inspiration of the Spirit of God!

Have you not wondered why this wondrous word of revelation occurs thus in detail once and only once? Is it not one of the weapons of those who contend against this our hope that we base too much on this isolated Scripture text? Not that that is true, for all Scripture, as we have said, is in perfect harmony and accord with it; but what a perfect, complete, thorough answer, this fact gives to the other alternative—that the writer was self-deceived. This is impossible; or, like every other self-deceived man that ever lived, he would have pressed his one theme in every letter, forced it on unwilling minds every time he opened his mouth or took up his pen.

“No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest
Till half mankind were like himself possessed.”

'Tis an attractive theme. Long could we linger here, but we must pass on; but before leaving, let us see if we were justified in saying that whilst this word is based on no previous Scripture, yet, when spoken, it is in harmony with all. First, then, is it not in perfect accord with the peculiar character and calling of the Church? Israel, as a nation, finds her final deliverance on the earth. Her calling and her hopes have ever been limited to this scene. Fitting then, indeed, it is that she be saved by her Deliverer's *feet standing once more on the Mount of Olives* (Zach. xiv. 4), and the judgment of the living nations should then take place. But with the Church, how different: her blessings heavenly; her character heavenly; her calling heavenly. Is it not, then, in accord with this that her meeting with her Lord should be literally heavenly, too? Israel, exponent of the righteous government of God, may rightly long to "dip her foot in the blood of the wicked." Nor can she expect or know of any deliverance except, as of old, in victories in the day of battle. The Church, exponent of the exceeding riches of His grace, is of another spirit; and our deliverance "in the air" permits—nay, necessitates—our echoing that gracious word of our Lord, "Father, forgive them."

Then too, how beautifully this rapture follows the pattern of His whom the Lord's people now are following even to a dwelling that has no name nor place on earth (John i. 38, 39). The clouds received Him: they, too, shall receive us. Unseen by the world He left the world, too busy with its occupations to note or care for the departure of Him who is its Light. So the poor feeble glimmer of the

Lord's dear people now shall be lost, secretly, as it were, to the world in which they shine as lights, leaving it in awful gloomy darkness till the Day dawn and the Sun arise.

Nor is illustration or type lacking. In Enoch, caught up before the judgment of the flood, surely we may see a figure of the rapture of the heavenly saints before the antitype of the flood, the tribulation that is to try "the dwellers upon the earth," as in Noah brought through that judgment, a picture of the earthly ones.

In this connection, too, what could be more exquisitely harmonious than the way in which the Lord thus presents Himself to the expectant faith of His earthly and heavenly people? To the former the full plain Day is ushered in by the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in His wings: for that Day they look. To the latter, who are watching through the long hours of the night, the Bright and Morning Star shining ere the first beams of the Sun are thrown upon the dark world is the object of faith and hope.

Is not the word that believers shall "meet the Lord in the air" in absolute accord with these different aspects of the Lord as Star and Sun? Most certainly it is.

More than at any other time, a solid foundation for comfort is needed in times of deep grief. Then the hosts of darkness press round the dismayed spirit; clouds of darkness roll across the mental sky; the sun and all light is hidden; in the storm-wrack the fiery darts of the wicked one fall thick as rain. Every long-accepted truth is questioned; the very foundations seem to dissolve. A firm foothold, in-

deed, must we have on which to stand at such a time. Faith must be seen not at war with her poor blind—or at least short-sighted—sister Reason, but in perfect accord, leading her, with her feebleness, by the hand. But here is where the world's efforts to comfort—and, indeed, alas, the worldly Christians too—lack. Sentimentalism abounds here; and the poor troubled heart is told to stand fast on airy speculations, and to distil comfort from wax-flowers, as it were,—the creations of the imagination. How solid the comfort here given in contrast with all this. *God* speaks, and in the *Light*, that with clear yet gentle ray, exactly meets the needs of our present distress,—in the *Love* that in its infinite tenderness and beautiful delicacy knows how to heal the wounded spirit,—in the grand *authority* that rests on no other word or testimony for proof,—and yet in the perfect, absolute *harmony* with the whole scope of His own holy word, we, His children, recognize again His voice; for never man could speak thus, and we are comforted, and may comfort one another.

It is true. It is divine. We shall meet the Lord in the air. Happy journey that, in such a company to such a goal,—to meet the Lord! Who can picture the joy of that upward flight? What words extract the comfort of that meeting,—the Lord,—our Lord,—alone with Him,—“together with them,”—in the quiet chambers of the air!

Seventh.—“And so shall we ever be with the Lord.” There is an eternity of unmingled bliss. How short the time of separation, oh ye mourning ones, compared with this! The pain is but for a moment, whilst there is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of comfort.

What a contrast! Death is the sad, gloomy, mysterious, unknown boundary for all, groans Ecclesiastes, "for that is the end of all men." There is no end to the joy of the redeemed, says Revelation; and Faith sings "forever with the Lord." What deep need of Himself has this man's heart, that He has made. If in this sad scene we get one ray of true comfort it is when "with Him"; one thrill of true joy it is when "with Him"; one hour of true peace it is when "with Him." We were intended, meant, created, *to need Him*. Let us remember that, and then see the sweet comfort in that word, "so shall we *ever* be with the Lord." Man is at last, may it be said, in his *clement*. His spirit gets the communion that it needs—with Him forever; his soul, the love it needs, in Him forever; his body the perfection it needs—like Him forever! Is not this revelation self-evidently of God—worthy of Him—possible only to Him?"

Again, let us ask what would Solomon have given for a song like this, instead of his mournful groan "for death is the end of all men"! F. C. J.

(*To be continued.*)

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

CHAPTER V.

(*Continued from page 121.*)

THE "sermon on the mount" is the manifestation of the kingdom in its inner spirit and holiness,—still, of course, as a kingdom to come, and not actually come. There are seven parts: the first (vers. 1-16), fittingly, consisting of the "beatitudes," blessings pronounced by the Lord Himself upon the heirs

of it: first, in view of their personal character (1-9); then as sufferers in the midst of a world hostile to them (10-12); and lastly, as ministers, in the face of that hostility, of a blessing which shall be realized in the world, when the long-expected kingdom comes (13-16).

The old covenant also had its blessings, which were conditioned upon legal obedience, in result proving only the utter hopelessness of blessing under it, so that the very "song" of the law-giver is a witness against the people, and his blessing of the tribes has to look for its fulfillment in times beyond the law: in fact, in the very times of the kingdom which the Lord here announces. How suited that the Messenger of the *new* covenant should begin with blessing, — blessing still upon obedience, (for in the nature of things there can be no other,) but now with a positiveness and assurance which imply the grace that the covenant, with its glorious "I will"s, so royally expresses (Heb. viii. 8-12). For those under it there is no Mount Ebal, no curse or woe at all. The sweet authority of divine love constrains and restrains together. Christ is king of a kingdom like which there is no other, where the ingrafted Word is "law," yet a "law of liberty," and every individual conscience is His throne.

There are seven blessings pronounced on character, and as in most sevens elsewhere throughout the Word, the first four are distinguished from the last three here, by being connected with what is more negative and related to outward position; while the last three give us the more specific divine lineaments which are found in all the children of God as partakers of the divine nature. The first four show us the heart set upon a blessing which is not yet come, upon the kingdom of heaven itself, and thus

distressed at all that which is the moral opposite of this in the world around them. The last three give us the positive energy and activity of good amid the unceasing conflict of evil with it. But let us look at them more particularly in their order and connection with one another, all which has its meaning and importance for interpretation and spiritual application.

First, and therefore of first importance here, we have "Blessed are the poor *in spirit*." This is in contrast with mere external poverty, but like it in its own sphere. When the heart is set upon things to come, present things of necessity lose their power to satisfy. There is "absence of mind," as we say; the gaze is on the unseen. And this is characteristic of faith, which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." With this, therefore, we must begin, for "without faith it is impossible to please God." Yet this poverty of spirit is only the negative side of faith, the emptying and not the filling. There is power in it, however,—deliverance from a world which is known as vanity,—from the vain show in which men walk and their equally vain disquiet,—from the temptations, therefore, and distractions of it. The soul's bonds are cut; it can move, it can make progress. To such an one God's word becomes a necessity, as the one link with the invisible. And such a seeking has its invitation and blessing from the Lord Himself: "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

How much *more*, not *less*, forceful for us should this be, than for those to whom the Lord was directly speaking, or even for the people who will stand upon the threshold of the kingdom in days soon to come! True, the earth's crisis will be upon it, and Israel's travail-time of intense anguish, out of which, as in a day, a nation will be born to God. But for us is the

revelation of a brighter inheritance, higher as heaven is above the earth, the meeting-place of the redeemed, the dwelling-place of God and of the Lamb. Had we divine affections, such as should be formed by the revelation, how little would mere circumstances have power over the formation of a character like this! Granted that Satan's tactics for us have changed, and that instead of funeral pyres for martyrs, there are now premiums in abundance for unfaithfulness to Christ,—a condition of things formed indeed by a compromise between the Church and the world,—should this have power to dim the eyes of faith? What would it be to say this, but to own it right and reasonable that Satan should gain his object?

Christ in the world at least must be poor in it. It was the place, without any question, of His poverty. If, then, He be the example for us, how much does this imply? If He, too, gone out of the world, is the object for our hearts, where will our hearts be?

Approached from this direction, the next point is soon attained, the character of "the meek." Amid the lusts and strife of earth, if like others you have your portion to contend for, you must strive as they do. If you have nothing here to live for but God's will, it is sure, beyond doubt, that this will be done: you can afford to be quiet. Be sure for yourself of a Father's love and care always over you,—the infinite love and wisdom concerning itself with all your path, and such knowledge will of necessity subdue all the rashness of self-assertion, and make you careful only to give God His way, to cease from the folly of your own. Here, too, the Lord leads His own: "Learn of me," He says, "for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." There is the blessing of it now, and how great it is, "rest to your souls"!—rest from all restlessness,

quiet in the knowledge that God is God: what an inestimable joy is this.

When "the meek shall inherit the earth" is again the blessedness of that future time when judgment shall return to righteousness, the reins of government being in the hands of the Righteous One. It will be a wonderful thing in this world, whose history has been one long strife of ambition, and whose heroes have been so often made such by the hecatombs of their slain, to have the inheritance belong to the meek! Promise for the earthly people as it is, we shall still enjoy it, and in a better way. We are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," and shall reign with Him over the earth. We have no need, therefore, to covet Israel's promises, and should not be enriched by them in the least. Whether to them or to us, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

The third blessing is that of those that mourn; and here we are not to think, as exhaustive at least, of sorrow over our sins. Christ was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," and necessarily, as the Son of God in a world astray from Him. "For the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up," He says, "and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." (Ps. lxxix. 9.) His tears fell over Jerusalem. The cross He bore for men was fullest witness to the intensity of His anguish upon their account, while justifying the holiness of God in all He suffered for them.

Little need to dwell upon the causes for mourning in the world, such as we know it. Its open sores are revealed enough day by day, in a time when the most hidden things are exposed as a matter of course before the public gaze, as having unquestioned right to know everything! And yet, after all, these are only

specimens from the mass of evil and of misery too great to be gauged or realized. What must have been the oppression of it to Him whose eye saw through all, and whose heart had none of the callousness with which we throw off or the weakness which makes us faint under too great a burden.

But "they shall be comforted." There is a rest of God to come, a rest into which we shall enter; a sabbath-rest, where rest shall be not only allowed but sanctified. How sweet the thought of a "rest of *God*," where He with His holiness, He with His love, shall rest, and "rest in His love." Yes, this is possible still, and shall at last be actual.

There is yet one special form of sorrow to be noted, and it is one that men are feeling intensely to-day; not because there is more of it than in the past ages, or at least not that there is necessarily more. Rather, perhaps, because all these questions are coming up for answer, as the day of settlement nears, and the harvest of the earth approaches ripeness. "Judgment shall" yet "return to righteousness," long divorced as they have been, but it is not yet so: still the cry of oppression goes up into the ears of God, and He is quiet, and men think He regards not. And because they think so, they are rising up to-day, to take things into their own hand, and settle them with their own hands, and after their own fashion. Yet they can never be so settled. Where are the righteous that are fit to rule? Are the few who have shown their unfitness other than fair samples of the many that have never had a chance to try? Ah, no! "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

There is no hope in the rule of the many, then. There is no hope but in the rule of One whom men long since rejected, and whom they reject to-day. The cry, "We have no king but Cæsar," has been answered by the long reign of Cæsar. Men have chosen, and to-day choose, as of old: they may say, no doubt, "rather myself than Cæsar," but if that cannot be, "rather Cæsar than Christ." Try experiments and politics they may, and dethrone Cæsar! Christ they do not want.

Yet "blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. . . . stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

This is the remedy,—the only and unfailing one: and blessed, meanwhile, is the hunger after that which only the day of Christ will bring. There is One who can safely be trusted, only One; and He sits even now upon the throne of God, and waits till His enemies are made His footstool. While He waits, we can wait. The general state cannot be remedied until He comes; but even now abundant power is His, which He delights to use, in His way of fullest wisdom, for the good of His own. His long-suffering is salvation. He waits, not in helplessness, nor in inactivity, but to secure designs of perfect goodness, which eternity will unfold to us. Meanwhile this waiting becomes for us the discipline of faith, the opportunity to trace a little more on earth the path he has trodden, the extension of a special time of service, which He will remember. "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth, and serve them." (Luke xii. 37.)

(To be continued.)

JESUS, THE ONE !

JESUS ! the *only* One !
 The One that grace has given ;
 My soul, trust Him alone
 Of all in earth or heaven ;
 He gave His life upon the tree
 That I, the culprit, might go free.

Jesus, the *living* One !
 He lives no more to die—
 Full proof that all is done ;
 Yea, more, He lives on high ;
 He lives His precious blood to plead,
 He lives for me to intercede.

Jesus ! the *absent* One !
 Ah, few His absence mourn—
 Few “crown Him Lord” *alone*,
 Or sigh for His return ;
 And yet, while He remains away,
 Sin, tears, and death will hold their sway.

Jesus ! the *coming* One !
 He waits to come again ;
 He'll come to claim His own,
 And they shall live and reign :
 My soul, be waiting for the Son—
 Be watching for the coming One !

Jesus ! the *judging* One !
 To Him all judgment's given ;
 To Him each knee will bow,
 In hell, or earth, or heaven ;
 Oh, happy they who bow to *grace* !
 All else may dread to see His face.

R. H.

GRASS.

ONE of the most beautiful parables of our Saviour is that in which He teaches the lesson of human dependence upon Divine care: "If God so clothe the grass which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Nature in Summer impresses this parable upon our mind. The lesson of Jesus is illustrated and enforced by the silent but eloquent beauty of the May field. An emerald rainbow of mercy is then around the warm, quickened bosom of the earth, assuring us that He who clothes the naked soil will clothe us too. Nay, we see the very process by which the Divine covenant is being fulfilled going on day after day under our eyes. We see the flax extracting from the earth the materials of those fibres which are to be woven into garments for us. We see in our pasture-lands the sheep converting, by some mysterious vital action, the grass which they eat into snowy fleeces to keep our bodies warm. Our food and raiment come from the same humble source; and the grass may, therefore, well be employed to teach us our frailty and dependence upon God for our temporal blessings. We know that the same law which regulates and limits the supply of our *food* from the grass, also regulates and limits the supply of our *raiment* from the grass. We are apt to think that, by the aid of our vast mechanical appliances, we can produce the materials of clothing in unlimited quantity, but the slightest reflection will convince us of the fallacy of this idea. Wool and flax are in reality as difficult to produce as corn; nay, more so; for, while they are equally subject to the

vicissitudes of the season—to blights and storms and diseases—they cannot, like the corn be produced in every country, being confined to certain regions and peculiar climates. The annual stock of clothing materials, like the annual supply of food, is sufficient only for the annual consumption of the human race; so that, year after year, we have to work for our raiment as we have to work for our meat. We can no more accumulate and lay up in store our wool and flax than we can accumulate and lay up in store our corn. . . . And in all this we have a most convincing proof of the beautiful harmony that exists between the moral and physical laws of the universe. He who “causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,” and by this agency brings food and raiment out of the earth for man, has commanded us to “take no thought for the morrow.” And the limitations which He has imposed upon the production and preservation of our food and clothing, the only true riches of the world, teach us most impressively that “by taking ever so much thought we cannot make ourselves independent.” We are brought back from all our vain efforts and covetous desires after an inexhaustible store of life’s necessities, from the faithless faint-heartedness, which is too often the principal motive in the pursuit of the phantom independence, to a simple, childlike trust in Him who hath promised to feed and clothe us as He feeds and clothes the grass of the field.—*“Bible Teaching in Nature”* (McMillan).

“ But without faith it is impossible to please him : for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”—Heb. xi. 6.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Question 7.—In *HELP AND FOOD* for April, page 101, it is said that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was not at the cross, neither at the tomb. If Mary Magdalene was not the sister of Lazarus, then there is a difficulty to my mind. I have examined Scripture, and the Word seems to say she is. Are there two Marys who anointed the Lord?

Answer.—Mary was a favorite and common name among the Jews,—doubtless from Moses' sister Miriam,—so much so that in the same family the name was given twice (John xix. 25). Possibly, however, Mary of Cleophas was a half-sister, or even a cousin, called from intimacy a sister,—a usage not uncommon among the Jews.

Be this as it may, there is no scripture to identify Mary, sister of Lazarus, with Mary Magdalene. Indeed it is impossible, for the one came from Magdala, a town in Galilee, and the other from Bethany, a town near Jerusalem (John xi. 1, 18).

There are three passages which speak of Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus—Luke x. 38-42; John xi.; John xii. 1-9. Matt. xxvi. 6-14 gives the parallel passage to this last, without her name, but only that of the town, Bethany.

Mary Magdalene had been delivered from seven devils, and had devoted herself to ministering to the Lord (Luke viii. 1-3). She followed Him from Galilee, and was present at the cross (Matt. xxvii. 55, 56). She was early at the tomb, and was the first to see the arisen Lord (Mark xvi. 9; John xx. 1-18). Her history is therefore entirely distinct from that of the sister of Lazarus.

Neither must "the woman that was a sinner" (Luke vii. 36-50) be confounded with either of the women mentioned. Her name is not given, and the summary at the head of the chapter in our authorized version which calls her Mary Magdalene has not the slightest foundation for so doing. On the other hand, the anointing by this woman must not be confounded with that by Mary the sister of Lazarus. The first was during the earlier part of our Lord's ministry in Galilee; the last was just at the close, and at Bethany. Their objects, too, were different: the first was the worship of a penitent sinner; the last the anointing for His burial, by one who had long known and loved Him and entered into His thoughts.

To recapitulate: Mary Magdalene and Mary the sister of Lazarus were two distinct persons; so were Mary Magdalene and the woman in Luke vii.; there were two anointings of our Lord.

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS;

OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

CHAPTER VII.

(Continued from page 158.)

OUR writer, ignorant as he confessedly is of this glorious light of divine revelation, still speaks in praise of the feeble glimmer that human wisdom gives. From his point of view, wealth and wisdom are both good,—are a “defense” or “shadow” to their possessors; but still that which men generally esteem the most—wealth—is given the second place; for knowledge, or wisdom, has in itself a positive virtue that money lacks. It “gives life to them that have it,” animates, preserves in life, modifies, at least in measure, the evils from which it cannot altogether guard its possessor; and, by giving equanimity to a life of change and vicissitude, proves, in some sort, its own life-giving energy. How infinitely true this is with regard to Him who is absolute infinite Wisdom, and who is our Life, it is our health and joy to remember.

The Preacher continues: Ponder the work of God, but you will find nothing in anything that you can *see* that shall enable you to forecast the future with any certainty. Adversity follows prosperity, and my counsel is to make the best use of both,—enjoy this when it comes, and let that teach you that God’s ways are inscrutable, nor can you straighten out the tangle of His providences. Evidently he *intends* these vicissitudes that still follow no definite rule, so that man may recognize his own ignorance and impotence. In one word, reason as you may from all

that you can *see*, and your reason will throw no ray of light on God's future dealings. And there again, having brought us face to face with a dense, impenetrable cloud, Ecclesiastes leaves us.

How awful that dark cloud is, it is difficult for us now to realize, so accustomed are we to the light God's word has given. But were it possible to blot out entirely from our minds all that Word has taught us, and place ourselves for a moment just by the side of our "Preacher," look alone through *his* eyes, recognize with him the existence of the Creator whose glorious Being is so fully shown in all His works, and yet with nothing whereby to judge of His disposition toward us except what we *see*,—in the physical world the blasting storm sweeping over the landscape that but now spoke only in its beauties and bounties of His love and benevolence, leaving in its desolating track, not only ruined homesteads and blighted harvests; but, far worse, the destruction of all our hopes, of all the estimates we had formed of Him. In the world of providences the thoughts of His love, based on yesterday's peace and prosperity, all denied and swept away by to-day's sorrows and adversities,—awful, agonizing uncertainty! And, since all is surely in His hand, to be compelled to recognize that He *permits*, at least, these alternations "*to the end that* (with that express purpose) man should find nothing of what shall be after Him"! Reason, or Intelligence, with all her highest powers, stands hopeless and helpless before that dark future, and wrings her hands in agony.

But look, my beloved reader, at that man who speeds his way with fleet and steady footfall. His **swift tread** speaks no uncertainty nor doubt of mind.

Mark the earnest, concentrated, forward look. His eye is upward, and something he sees there is drawing him with powerful magnetic attraction quite contrary to the course or path of men at large. He presses against the stream: the multitude are floating in the other direction. As with the kine of Bethshemesh, some hidden power takes him in a course quite contrary to all the ties or calls of mere nature. Look at him,—irrespective of anything else, the figure itself is a grand sight. The path he has chosen lies through the thorny shrubs of endurance, afflictions, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watchings, and fastings. No soft or winsome meadow-way this, nor one that any would choose, except he were under some strong conviction,—whether true or false,—that will surely be admitted. For men have at rare times suffered much even in the cause of error; but never for that which they themselves *knew* to be false, and which at the same time brought them no glory,—nothing to feed their vanity, or pride, or exalt them in any way. Admit, then, for a moment, that he is self-deceived, under some strong delusion, and that the object of which he is in pursuit is but a phantom. Then mark the path in which that phantom leads: it has turned him from being a blasphemer, persecutor, and an insolent, overbearing man (1 Tim. 1), into one of liveliest affections, most tender sympathies, a lowly servant of all; it has given him a joy that no wave of trouble can quench, a song that dungeons cannot silence, a transparent truthfulness which permits a lie nowhere; and all this results from that which is in itself a delusion,—a lie! Oh, holy “delusion”! Oh, wondrous, truth-loving, wonder-working “lie”!

Was ever such a miracle, that a falsehood works truth?—that a delusion, instead of leading into marsh, or bog, or quicksand, as other will-o'-the-wisps ever and always have, leads along a morally elevated path where every footstep rings with the music of divine certainty, as though it trod upon a rock! Such a miracle, contrary to all reason, is worthy of acceptance only by the blind, childish, credulity of infidelity. Whatever the object before him, then, it is *real*; his convictions are soberly and well founded; he runs his race to no visionary, misty goal; but some actual reality is the lode-star of his life. Let us listen to his own explanation: “forgetting those things that are behind, reaching forth unto those that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” But Solomon, the wisest of the wise, groans no man can find out “that which shall come after him”; or, in other words, that future of which Paul sings: I have heard a voice that has called from heaven, and looking up I have seen a Light that has darkened every other. One in beauty and attraction infinite,—to Him I press. *He is before me*, and not till Him I reach will I rest. Blessed contrast!

Now, my dear reader, let us also seek to keep our eye on that same Object, for the man at whom we have been looking is one just like ourselves, with every passion that we have, and the One who drew him can draw you and me,—Who satisfied him can satisfy us, for He who loved and died for him has loved and died for us.

And since we are not now contemplating the wondrous cross, but His glory, let us sing together:—

Oh, my Saviour glorified!
Now the heavens opened wide
Show to Faith's exultant eye
One in beauteous majesty.

Worthy of the sweetest praise
That my ransomed heart can raise,
Is that Man in whom alone
God Himself is fully known.

For those clust'ring glories prove
That glad gospel "God is Love,"
Whilst those wounds, in glory bright,
Voice the solemn "God is Light."

Holy Light, whose searching ray
Brings but into perfect day
Beauties that my heart *must* win
To the Sinless once made Sin.

Hark, my soul! Thy Saviour sings;
Catch the joy that music brings;
And, with that sweet flood of song,
Pour thy whisp'ring praise along.

For no film of shade above
Hides me now from perfect Love.
Deep assurance all is right
Gives me peace in perfect Light.

Find I then on God's own breast
Holy, happy, perfect rest,
In the person of my Lord,—
"Ever be His name adored!"

Oh, my Saviour glorified,
Turn my eye from all beside.
Let me but Thy beauty see,—
Other light is dark to me.

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

CHAPTER V.

(Continued from page 161.)

THE last three blessings upon character relate to that in which the children of God manifest most distinctly their divine origin. In mercy, in purity of heart, in peace-making, the character of God Himself is manifested, as Light and as Love. It is directly said of the peace-makers that "they shall be called the children of God;" and here, assuredly, is the great office Christ has Himself assumed. In the first epistle of John, where the possession of eternal life by the professors of Christianity is in question, similar things are given as the signs of it; as there indeed it is we have the statements, "God is light," and "God is love." Therefore, "whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither is he that loveth not his brother." The two things must be found, then, in the same person, as in God they inhere together: love is not truly love that is not holy; holiness is not that, that is separated from love.

In like manner these seven beatitudes are but one sevenfold blessing. Blessing cannot dwell with cursing; nor the child of light be the child of darkness also. Such cross-checks as to reality are of the greatest possible importance, for practical use. In a world of shams there is nothing but needs testing; and with the flesh still in us, there is abundant room for self-deception. Saddest of all it is, that even Christians may not be unwilling to be a little blinded; with this additional necessity of course, that they cannot dictate as to the limit of this: the enemy to whom they capitulate will be bound by no terms.

Thus, "the merciful" must be that according to

what is God's own mercy. Mercy has respect to need in any form, and in its highest to the needs produced by sin. But indifference to sin itself would rob it of its divinest attributes, and be its unspeakable degradation. In face of the opposition of the world it is the unselfishness of love that "seeketh not her own." Nearest akin to meekness, of all that has been before, it is not simply self-government as that is, though it implies it, but is more positive in character, looking not upon its own things, but the things of others. It is the first hint, in all this, of *ministry*, and thus the beginning of distinct Christ-likeness.

And "they shall obtain mercy:" what they sow they shall reap, according to the abiding rule of harvest. Perhaps we would expect something more than this; as, from the parallel with what has gone before, this mercy found must look onward to the coming kingdom. But all the reward there is mercy, and it is well and needful to be reminded of it. So the apostle, after speaking of the self-forgetting love of Onesiphorus, who had refreshed and ministered to him in his bonds at Rome, prays, "The Lord grant unto him that he may find *mercy* of the Lord in that day." At our best as at our worst, it is to grace that we are debtors. Grace crowns even as grace saves.

And now we have emphasized the character of God as light: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." If we remember that the *eyes* are in the heart,* the connection is most obvious. Indeed this must be the qualification for seeing aright any thing that is worth seeing. But the glorious vision here is not so much the crown of all as it is the sum of all. If we look on to the complete day of blessing, as pictured in the apostle's words to the Corinthians,

* "The eyes of your understanding," Eph. i. 18, should be rather, "eyes of your heart."

we find "God all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28.) If we have set before us the knowledge of the new man, as done by the same apostle (Col. iii. 11.), it is "Christ all and in all." Christ being the "Word," "the image of the invisible God," these two things are ultimately one. To see God all, and to see Him everywhere, is to have the universe bathed in uncreated glory.

To see God thus implies ability for communion with Him. We must have a nature kindred with His in order to apprehend Him. When *He* was in the world by whom the world was made, the world knew Him not. And why? Not because there was not abundant witness. Not because mighty works did not testify of Him. He Himself declared the reason in that pregnant question which admitted but of one answer: "How can ye believe who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" The reason for lack of faith is always a moral one. The pure in heart can alone see God.

How blessed yet it is to know that as men get to realize but the hollowness of the world,—as they find its inability to satisfy the soul made for communion with God,—as there presses upon them thus the need of what is true, and indeed good and abiding,—that with this the kingdom of God is drawing nigh to them and at the doors! The vision is beginning to clear, even when as yet there is nothing before it but evil and sorrow manifest; and thus comes the cry to them by the consciousness of that awful distress, "*If any man thirst.*" It is not even said for what. As yet, it may be, he knows not, even afar off, that which would satisfy. But the appeal is here to him, in all its earnestness, all its confident assurance of the abundance that is with Him to do this, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink!"

He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

The Pharisee may cleanse the outside with most religious care, and see nothing; or see indeed the very opposite of the truth: but the soul brought, in its misery, to self-judgment, with its back on the world and self, shall see the glorious Vision which lies over against these, unseen by their votaries. Then to the Voice that questions, "Will ye also go away?" there is but one possible reply, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Amen.

And oh, for the bliss that lies beyond this! for the possibilities of vision beyond all that any one yet has made his own! for such is the unrealized wealth of our possession even here. Who is there among the followers of Christ to-day who does not seem rather to shun than court the glories of full vision? To us the sanctuary is completely open; the veil is rent from top to bottom; Christ is entered in, to give us entrance. Yet we imitate so much the unbelief of those who, in days past, besought God to put distance when He was drawing nigh, and to put a creature of His, though it were a Moses, abidingly between themselves and Him.

It is not by a dreamy and mystical approach to Him that we are brought into fellowship with Him. There must be the power of His Spirit, and for that a true and heartfelt surrender of ourselves to Him; but fellowship can only be according to the measure of acquaintance with Him, and this again through the revelation He has made to us of Himself. It is for this that the Scriptures are in our hand, and it is in the use we make of them that it will be shown how real is our desire of fellowship with Him.

This blessing of the pure in heart has even here no limit, one may well believe, that the spirit of man has ever found. The work of His Spirit in us is described by an inspired writer as "searching the deep things of God." Words which would seem not to become the Divine Spirit, if used with regard to His separate action, are, when understood of His gracious inworking in the people of God, a wondrous assurance of possibilities, to which we can put no limit. It is not, of course, that "face to face" vision that shall be. It is not a measure beyond that of Scripture: but then who has taken the measure of Scripture? Would we not expect to find more frequently than we do, such students as could scarcely be detached from their study of the sacred writings, even at the demands of nature for supply? And who is it that has said, "Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life?"

Beyond this scene in the joy that cannot yet be uttered, we shall feed still upon the "manna" of the earthly pilgrimage. (Rev. ii. 17.) Who, without loss that we cannot measure, can slight it now?

The seventh beatitude fills plainly the place of rest: "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God." Only it is rest in activity, and that is truest rest: just what that of eternity will be. The "peace" here spoken of will of course be also such as fits the company in which we find it here. The peace of God sums up all peace. When it is fully come there shall be no threat of evil from any quarter. Yet now how glorious is the victory of good in being able not only to enjoy, but to minister peace, while still the world is full of confusion and violence! How wonderful to know that that which is the only basis of true peace is that in which

also we see evil at its worst ! The world's worst crime—the bitter growth of its many centuries of hostility to God—its awful act of allegiance to the “prince” that it has chosen—has been the cross. But just its worst is that which—in the triumphing of good over it—gives absolute peace. The worst that man could do has but disclosed the infinite good in God ;—nay, He has met the full power of the enemy in the weakness of a “Son of man.” Goodness, in no power but that inherent in it, has defeated evil with all its accumulated strength. “Out of the eater is brought forth strength ; out of the strong, sweetness.”

Henceforth to despair of good is to despair of God. See, in this will-less, perfect submission of a perfect will, the obedience by which the slaves of sin are rescued, and many guilty are made forever righteous ! He has made peace by the blood of His cross ! God is glorified in His love and in His holiness, and is just in justifying them that believe in Jesus. How blessed now are the feet of those who are but the messengers of the gospel of peace ! who go forth with the trumpet of jubilee to proclaim the fruits of the day of atonement for the Israel of God ! Amen : let the voice of recall go forth, and the feeblest recount the praises of the weakness which has defeated the strong, and out of weakness brings forth strength everlasting.

Blessed, then, are the peace makers ! God is Himself that. They, then, “shall be called the children of God.” The Spirit of peace belongs to every true hearer of the wondrous reconciliation. Henceforth for whatever roughness of the road, their feet are “shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace ;” shoes like those of Israel of old that never wear out. Well may they be publishers of this grace to others !

(To be continued.)

F. W. G.

MARRIAGE.

WHAT I desire to say briefly on this subject is to them who are subject to God and to His word. All others view and use marriage as they do all other blessings—to gratify their own pleasure, even as the beasts which eat, drink, and enjoy life without a thought of accountability to Him who has made the provision.

To you especially, my dear young brothers and sisters who naturally and rightly contemplate marriage, do I address my words. It is the most important of all earthly events in a man or a woman's life, for it is something they cannot undo, which binds them until death, which throws them together in such intimate relations that they *must* either sweeten or embitter each other's existence, and which entails circumstances no less far-reaching than the endless age of eternity.

How soberly and dignifiedly, therefore, we should approach it. A pretty face is a pretty thing, but how vain to be governed in such a sober matter by a pretty thing. Earthly goods and social position have their value here, but how base and degrading to let them control such a serious act.

“Marriage is honorable in all.” (Heb. xiii. 4.) It is God who *created* it (Gen. i. 27), and who *instituted* it (Gen. ii. 24); and lest, because of the higher and better things which our Lord brought in, it should be presumed that He would look down upon marriage, He attends a marriage in Cana of Galilee (John ii.), and thus sets His seal upon it.

We need therefore not be ashamed of it, though we forget not that there are higher things, endowed

with superior honor, for "there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." (Matt. xix. 12.) They refused marriage, like Paul and others, to devote themselves more undistractedly to the service of God. (1 Cor. vii. 32-35.)

Being then of divine establishment let us bring God into it. Let us not treat it as a matter in which we simply consult our pleasure, our fancy, or our profit. Dare you, dear young friend, launch out on such a voyage without making God your counselor? Dare you link yourself in such a tie with one who is not a child of God? "What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever?" (2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.) What an awful "yoke" that binds together an heir of God and a despiser of Christ. It would seem that if the heart were at all right it would make such a union utterly repulsive.

Again, even among ourselves who are fellow-heirs of the glory of God, how dare you make your own prayerless choice?—for even among the children of God there are many who would not be suited to each other in such a tie. Who knows each one to the depths but God? Who understands fully the temperament that will match mine?—that will be able to bear patiently with my own faults, or be a corrective to my tendencies, and thus help me on in my desire to live for Christ here? How many make a fair show at the start, but turn out miserably? Who knows all this, and who can shield me from the host of evil but God my Father? It is not enough, therefore, to have the approval of fathers and mothers and friends, valuable and even needful as that is for

our happiness; their love is tried, but their wisdom is not far-reaching enough. The God who has created the ordinance must needs have the first and chief place in it if it is to be blest in all its length and breadth.

Oh, what mercy that even if in our lightness and the folly of ignorance and youth we have not given Him that place, His love to His dear children is such that, though we must reap what we have sown, He will yet turn all to our final blessing and profit. When our lion will is rent honey is found in the carcase.

But let me warn you in one thing: you will not find in marriage a perfect thing. Not that God did not make it perfect, but man has fallen since, and his fall has spoiled everything. The apple may still be sweet, but a worm is in it. The rose has yet its fragrance, but thorns grow with it. Willing or unwilling, everywhere we must read the ruin which sin has brought in.

So let no one dream of those wonderful people which a diseased fancy can picture. The most godly men and women have their weaknesses and their failings; and though such be easy to bear where there is genuine love, they have *to be borne*. People who have fed on novels and fanciful ideas, and who have been disappointed in their own course, especially silly women, may make you think that because you have something of that sort to bear as well as to be borne with, you are one of their heroes or heroines who were unhappily married, and therefore great martyrs. Such are not your friends. Turn again to God, your best, your constant friend. Let *Him* speak to you: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your

own husbands, as unto the Lord. . . . Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." (Eph. v. 22-29.) Mark, He does not say, Wives, demand of your husbands that they love you; nor, Husbands, demand submission from your wives. No, for this at once would be the opposite of the grace under which we are, which never claims but *gives*, and finally gets its claims by ever giving. Let, then, "every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband," (Eph. v. 33); and they cannot fail to enjoy all the sweets which marriage can give in the ruined creation through which we are passing. God will be with such, and where God is there is the best of everything. There will be no "skeleton" in that house. Trials and difficulties there may, there *will* be, for they are an absolute necessity for our development in Christ; but where God is there is the spirit of love, of unity, of mercy, of forgiveness, of compassion and tenderness. Sweet life of companionship yet vouchsafed to us in passing through a world so full of misery. Truly "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.)

P. J. L.

A HEART attracted by the Lord Jesus,—by His love, His goodness, His grace, His glory, is what delivers from self. The woman of Samaria discovering this in Christ—finding herself in the presence of the Son of God in grace, forgets her fears, her sins, her shame, her water-pot—herself, and runs to tell others whom she has found.

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

THE CHURCH.—ITS ORGANIZATION.

(Continued from page 147.)

WE have said that one great hindrance to the apprehension of the Scripture truth as to this subject was its simplicity. Let us bear this in mind, as we seek to place side by side with the misconceptions of human reason the simple teachings of God's word.

1. Instead of the Babel of many names, Scripture gives us but the One Name,—a name above every name (Phil. ii. 9),—a beautiful name (James ii. 7, Gk.), which is put upon all God's people without distinction—the name of Christ. They are called Believers (Acts v. 14), Disciples (Acts ix. 1), Christians (Acts xi. 26), and Saints (Eph. i. 1); but never is one of these names used to distinguish one portion of the body of Christ from another: on the contrary, they serve as links to bind them all together. Thus we have the answer as to the name of the Church organization. The names which God has given us in His word are enough: we need no others, and they would but divide and not unite us.

2. Next, in answer to the question to what form of doctrine the Church subscribes, Scripture answers, The word of God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine." (2 Tim. iii. 16.) "Thy word is truth." (John xvii. 17.) "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. xxiv. 35.) From these and multitudes of other passages we know that the Scriptures are inspired, that they are truth, that they are eternal, and that they are all-sufficient. Why,

then, should there be a creed? Is it to make the Scripture more plain? "All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge." (Prov. viii. 8, 9.) Can man's words state truth more plainly than God's? Is not a creed a slur cast upon the perfect word of God? If they were used as other writings upon Scripture, for purposes of exposition, this objection could not be urged against them; but when they tacitly accuse Scripture of being ambiguous, obscure, or not sufficiently definite for doctrinal statements, we must reject them.

3. What does Scripture put in the place of a regularly ordained clergy, taking charge of all ministry and worship? *The Holy Ghost*. He it is who dwells in the Church, His temple (1 Cor. iii. 16.), who teaches (John xiv. 26; 1 Cor. ii. 9-16), who leads our prayers (Rom. viii. 26, 27; Jude 20), and praises (1 Cor. xiv. 15). If He use instruments it is never by virtue of any office they may have: He is not confined to any one man. "All these [various gifts] worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." (1 Cor. xii. 11.) We will enter more fully upon this when we come to consider the subject of worship. We would here, however, seek to press upon every conscience the immense importance of the presence of the Holy Ghost, the presence personally and immediately of a Divine Person who has absolute authority and control, whose delight it is to minister the things of Christ to His beloved people, to unfold the Scriptures, to quicken the spirit of prayer and praise, to press upon us the importance of doing all things "decently and in order." Baptism

will not be neglected; the Lord's Supper will have a place and a meaning it never had before; discipline will be administered; the graces of liberality to those in need, and fellowship in the gospel will abound if He is unhindered, unquenched.

Does this seem like begging the question? It is God's answer to the needs of His Church. He knew we would fall into utter confusion, that we would multiply machinery, that we would resort to every expedient which the ingenuity of man could suggest—all in vain, save to show our helplessness, so He gave us the Holy Ghost. Rome claims the Pope as Christ's vicar on earth, with absolute power of control and direction. This pretension Protestantism rightly rejects, but fails to see the true vicar of Christ, "whom the Father will send in my name" (John xiv. 26), and therefore lays itself open to the taunt of Rome for its independency and rationalism. If we grasp this truth of the Spirit's presence we have reached an answer as to what is the teaching of Scripture regarding the organization of the Church; and we might put that answer in the form of a definition: "The obedient recognition of the immediate presence of the Holy Spirit, gathering believers to the name of the Lord Jesus, subjecting them to the word of God, and taking entire control of worship, ministry, and discipline." In the proper place we will enlarge upon the various features we have pointed out: at present we would call attention to the simplicity and yet sufficiency of this organization. Is anything lacking? Will contingencies arise not provided for? Impossible! The name of Christ; the presence of the Holy Spirit; the word of God to guide:—thus organized a company of believers is ready for any duty or privilege; and

no emergency can arise that will call for any new machinery. The Holy Spirit is all-sufficient.

Let us dwell upon this. The distinctive characteristic of the Christian dispensation is the personal and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. Faith is shown by counting on this presence. Human organizations, no matter how wisely effected and administered, are a hindrance to the manifestation of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. We know this is not believed by many conscientious Christians, but can only appeal to Scripture for justification, and entreat them to make trial of God's order, reminding them too of their responsibility so to do.

(To be continued.)

“COME, LORD JESUS.”

(Rev. xxii. 20.)

(G)H, happy day when Jesus comes
 To call His ransomed home!
 What joy 'twill be to see that One!
 O come, Lord Jesus, come!
 This world to me is not a home,
 I only *sojourn* here,
 Till that blest One “in beauty” come
 To greet me “in the air.”
 Till then His *presence* is my home,
 The sweetest home on earth;—
 A real taste of home to come,—
 The home now known to *faith*.
 And soon will faith be lost in *sight*,
 Then I shall share *His* home!
 No sorrow there! a home how bright!
 O come, Lord Jesus, come!
 Come! take me to that home of love,—
 Thy *blood's* my title there;
 Oh, take me to *Thyself* above,
 Thou Fairest of the fair.

*Oh, happy day when Jesus comes
To call His ransomed home!
What joy 'twill be to see that One!
O come, Lord Jesus, come!*

R. H.

STEWARDSHIP.

“If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?”—Luke xvi. 12.

THIS Scripture seems to reverse man’s natural thoughts, putting our own interests in the second place. We would say, if we were faithful in our own affairs we will doubtless take care of what belongs to another. Scripture reverses this. We are not really fit to care for our own interests if we have not been faithful in the concerns of others. God’s interests are first, and we are His stewards. He has intrusted us with His things. Here nothing belongs to us: we have forfeited the right even to live. But God leaves us here, and intrusts us with time, talents, opportunities, means, influence,—all that comes into our life,—as His stewards. “Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.” (1 Cor. iv. 2.) These things do not belong to us: if we think of them as ours we will make a wrong use of them, and be harmed by them as well. Our possessions are elsewhere,—reserved in heaven for us; and though through grace that inheritance does not depend upon our faithfulness here, a neglect of God’s interests here would show a failure to rightly value our possessions there. Self must not be the centre, the object, but God and His glory. Faithful in His things, we can even here enjoy those spiritual blessings which are ours.

NATURE AND THE ATONEMENT.

THE altar of nature, like the altar on the other side of Jordan, is not meant for burnt-offerings or for sacrifices. No sacred fire burns upon it; no true sacrifice for sin can be offered upon it; no effectual atonement for the sinner is made there. It is to the great altar on Calvary, in a manner, what the manger of Christ was to the cross. The manger was the place at which the beasts of the stall ate to renew their strength—at which vegetable life was sacrificed to support animal life; and the fact of our Saviour being laid in that symbolical place might be regarded as significant of the analogies of nature being fulfilled in Him. But we are not allowed to linger at the manger, we must pass on to the cross, where we have on that accursed tree the sacrifice of Christ fulfilling all the analogies of nature and all the types of grace—the symbols of the curse and of the restoration—and disclosing its own unique peculiarity of a true propitiation for human sin. The manger has no saving power. The dim revelation which it gives of the eternal mystery of love, wherein life lives by life taken, may constrain us, in humble reverence, like the wise men of the East, to pour forth our gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

But the cross saves and sanctifies us, because it tells us that the work of redemption is finished, and that God is now just while the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Jesus; and the full and clear revelation which it gives of the way of salvation constrains us, like the apostle Paul, to offer at its foot the far costlier offering of a life devoted to the service of God. At the manger we worship the God

who created and sustains us, and pour forth the gifts He has bestowed in thankful acknowledgement of His goodness; at the cross our worship is raised into devoted love to the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and our gifts lead to self-sacrifice, in imitation of His unspeakable gift. So should it be in regard to the altar of nature and the altar of Calvary. Let us not separate the one from the other. Let us not stop short, as many do, at the mere religion of nature, but press forward to the religion of the cross. While as intellectual beings needing instruction, we "consider the lilies how they grow," let us not at the same time neglect, as impure perishing creatures needing the great salvation, to "behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." And so associating the altar beyond Jordan with the altar at Shiloh, the one will be to us the pattern and the witness of the other. We shall find the same great truths stamped upon nature which shine forth in clearest light in redemption; and communion with the works of God will only deepen our faith in His word.

(*MacMillan*, "The Sabbath of the Fields.")

IN Phil. iii. we see the Christian as a racer, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" he presses toward the mark. All is motion; we are almost carried along in the current as we read the chapter. In the fourth chapter we see him standing fast. Here stability is the thought, as opposed to the fickleness so common. Each of these characteristics should be found in God's people: ever pressing on, yet ever standing firm.

THE MEANING OF THE CROSS.

THERE is nothing superficial or partial in the work of Christ on the Cross. It is not only the foundation of peace, establishing the ground upon which God can meet the sinner in grace, pardoning all his trespasses, but it effects a new relationship for the child of God.

1. It shows our relation to sin. "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" "He that is dead is freed [justified] from sin." (Rom. vi. 2, 7.) This is the fact: it is for faith to make it practical in our lives. "Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi. 11.)

2. The Law is the strength of sin (1 Cor. xv. 56), not the power nor the rule of holiness. The motions of sin are by the law. Sin takes occasion by the commandment to work the desires of the flesh in us. If we are under the law as a rule of life there can be no holiness,—only bondage. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 5, 8, 24, etc.) But how clearly does the cross separate us from the law! "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. vii. 4.) How carefully is the truth guarded here from the charge of antinomianism—of permitting sin! Nay, it is that we may *be* holy that we have become dead to the law.

3. But the cross not only shows our relation to sin and the law: it also marks our connection with the

world. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." (Gal. vi. 14.) The world is under judgment: it is going on in utter carelessness of its doom. We have anticipated that judgment, and in the person of our substitute have passed through and beyond it. That cross was what the world gave the Lord: His relations with the world were marked by it, and for us as well. How many heart-aches, disappointments, failures, as of Lot, would the people of God be spared did we but realize this truth, and not merely submit, but glory in that wondrous cross.

"Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the cross of Christ, my God.
All the vain things that charm me most,
I'd sacrifice them to His blood."

PERFECT, NOT SINLESS.

(Matthew v. 48; 1 John iii. 9.)

THE first of these texts has no bearing whatever on the question of perfection in the flesh. It is the revelation of the name of our Father which is in heaven, and the character practically which suits the kingdom of heaven. The mere Jew was responsible to render testimony to the righteousness of Jehovah; the believer now is responsible to show forth the grace of "our Father." Vengeance on the Canaanites was then a righteous thing; now "if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." The children are bound to sustain the family character, "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he

maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. . . . Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Other scriptures prove, if proof were needed, that sin still abides in the saint here below, however bound he is to disallow and mortify it. This text simply exhorts us to imitate our Father's grace, even to those who deserve His judgment.

The other scripture (1 John iii. 9) regards the child of God in that point which distinguishes him from the world, in the possession of a life from God which is absolutely sinless. No intelligent Christian will therefore forget that the flesh is still in us, though we are no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

THE more we think of the cross (we have come as sinners needing it, but as Christians, reconciled to God, we can sit down and contemplate it), the more we see it stands totally alone in the history of eternity. Divine glory, man's sin, man's perfectness, Satan's evil, God's power and love and righteousness, all were brought out and met there. Accordingly it is the immutable foundation of man's blessing, and of everything that is good in heaven and earth. Then, when our souls are reconciled, we look at Him and learn of Him: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest." He sees that the world had given Him up: there was no rest upon the earth. He searched with wonderful patience for a place of rest, but there was no such thing to be found. He knew it, and had tried it; the Son of Man had not where to lay (not merely outwardly) His head, but to rest His heart; no more than Noah's dove found rest for the sole of her feet. "I looked for some man to take compassion, but there was none." Yet feeling this, it is just there He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: take my yoke," etc., "and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

MY REFUGE IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE.

(Psalm lix. 16.)

IN THE NIGHT HIS SONG SHALL BE WITH ME.

(Psalm xlii. 8.)

PAST, restless day,
Ne'er to return.

I would forget,

And e'en would spurn

To look upon the foolish things

Which pierced my troubled heart like stings

To-day. My Saviour, let me rest

In quietness upon Thy breast.

Come, quiet night,

And cradle me

In thy soft arms;

I long to be

Alone, my blessed God, with Thee;

For then Thou seem'st so near to me.

Oh, kindly screen, that hides from me

All, all, my gracious God, but Thee!

Then may I ope

The fountain deep

Of my heart, Lord;

Nor would I keep

One word from Thee; Thy holy eye

Must search me; Thou couldst ne'er pass by

One thought unholy, act unkind;

I would unburden all my mind.

Self-judged, I'd lay

Me down, my God,

In arms of love,

Nor fear Thy rod.

Each day I'd pass unceasingly,

My Father, 'neath Thy watchful eye.

Thy love restrain my heart and feet

From thought and word and way unmeet!

O Thou, my God, my Saviour, be

My guide-star o'er life's dangerous sea!

H. McD.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Question 8.—Please explain Heb. xiii. 10: "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." Does it apply to those in system? S. H.

Answer.—The Epistle to the Hebrews, as its name would suggest, shows the contrast between Judaism and Christianity. A glance at the various subjects will show this. Prophets, angels, Moses, Aaronic priesthood, carnal sacrifices, the law,—are all contrasted with, only to give way to, the Lord Jesus Christ, who through His death and ascension to the right hand of God has displaced the worldly sanctuary and a worldly religion, to introduce His people into the presence of God in the joy and liberty of a spiritual worship, and to make them strangers and pilgrims here. The whole epistle shows that Judaism and Christianity are mutually exclusive. This is what the verse in question teaches. The altar is put for the whole system of Christianity founded upon the sacrificial work of Christ. Those who are united with Judaism—an earthly anticipative thing—have no right to claim any link with the spiritual heavenly fulfillment. The principle may, of course, be applied to any worldly system of religion which is but a feeble copy of Judaism. Care must be taken, however, not to press this in a harsh way, and to remember that the Lord has many who while outwardly linked with such systems are in heart separated from them, but lack knowledge and faith to "go forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach."

Question 9.—Please explain John iii. 3, 5. Is it true that it applies only to the Jews and to their entrance into the kingdom of our Lord upon the earth, as Son of David? J. N. G. W.

Answer.—The passage is by no means to be confined to the Jews, though it includes them (Ezek. xi. 19). The expressions "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" are similar, though not exactly synonymous. The latter is used in Matthew, the dispensational gospel, and applies to all forms of the kingdom, to the admixture of evil introduced by the enemy, etc. (Matt. xiii.) The term "kingdom of God" is more general, and often used in a moral and special sense, excluding evil in a way that the other term does not (Rom. xiv. 17, etc.). It is in

this sense that the passage in John is used. When our Lord sets up His kingdom in power, He will then purge it, leaving only those born again to enter into the millennial kingdom. Meanwhile it applies now spiritually.

Question 10.—What is the scriptural way to treat one who comes to the breaking of bread, an entire stranger to every one, and who desires to break bread with us?

Answer.—The breaking of bread is the expression of the fullest fellowship, and fellowship is always intelligence. We must know a person before we can know he is a child of God. If we received him otherwise, there would be no fellowship and no exercise of care or responsibility. Receiving means the fullest expression of confidence: how could we have that in one with whom all were unacquainted? One in a right state of soul would readily recognize the propriety of this, and would not force himself upon the consciences of the Lord's people. In this connection it might be well to suggest greater care in the matter of giving letters of commendation to those going where they are not known. If we realize our responsibility in this we will be careful to see that the letter is never omitted.

Question 11.—What is the scriptural way to receive one we are well assured is a child of God, untainted with moral evil or false doctrine, but who is connected with some denomination?

Answer.—Ecclesiastical knowledge is not a test of fellowship, but godliness in walk, doctrine, and association is. We could not refuse one connected with an evangelical denomination, simply for that reason. Our responsibility would then begin, and we should endeavor to enlighten him and lead him to separate in heart from that which is unscriptural. It must be added, however, that since the inroads of infidelity, under the guise of Higher Criticism, and of false doctrines of various kinds, especially denials of future punishment, much greater care must be exercised. We must guard, on the one hand, from a mere rigid exactness—"he followeth not with us";—and, on the other, from a looseness which would speedily quench the lamp of testimony, and reduce all to the level of that which surrounds us.

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

THE CHURCH.—ITS WORSHIP.

(Continued from page 187.)

THE noblest occupation for any creature is to be engaged in the worship of God. It is thus the seraphim are occupied, crying “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.” The varied orders of heavenly beings esteem it their highest privilege to be thus engaged; and it was for this that man was created. We cannot, then, have our attention called to a more important subject.

Particularly is it necessary at this present time to be clear as to what worship really is. In the common acceptance of the word, “public worship” includes prayer, praise, and preaching, for the edification of saints or the conversion of sinners. A moment’s thought will suffice to show, however, how incorrect this is. Even prayer is not worship,—most blessed privilege, and necessary as it is for every believer; but the asking for things which we need must not be confounded with the offering up to God that praise which glorifieth Him. One is receiving, or rather asking, *from* God; the other is giving *to* Him. Alas, that we have grown so selfish! We make everything to centre about ourselves,—our salvation, our joy, our life here, even our service,—everything, in fact, is valued in proportion as we imagine it ministers to our true welfare. God and His glory are left out. Little wonder, then, that thoughts are confused as to what worship really is, and that it has been relegated to a place of very minor importance.

And yet we shall spend eternity in worship: the song of praise here, feeble as it may be, is but the

prelude to that universal harmony of worship which will fill heaven and earth, when all things shall have been made new, and all things are at last beneath the sway of Him who possesses all. Until then praise will be feeble. But shall we who are a kind of first fruits of His creatures,—shall we wait for eternity?

Let us, then, take up this most important, and, we may add, edifying and refreshing subject, and endeavor to give it the attention it deserves.

A glance at the Old Testament will show that the whole religious service revealed to Israel was principally worship. There was a sanctuary,—a three-fold sanctuary, we might say,—court, holy, and most holy place; there was a priesthood, most carefully set apart to God; there were sacrifices, daily and special; there were special set times, or feasts, for the offering up of prescribed sacrifices. All this was to emphasize to the Israelite that he was a worshiper. The sacrifices which more particularly met his need, such as the sin- and trespass-offerings, were still presented to God in worship,—while a far more prominent place was given to the burnt-offerings, which were more directly acts of worship, of a sweet savor to God. A notable feature of the ritual was the repetition of this offering on certain occasions (Num. xxviii), while such was the multitude of beasts offered at the dedication of the temple that the altar of burnt-offering was not sufficiently large, and the court had to be used for a similar purpose (1 Kings viii. 64).

• The establishment of Jerusalem as the centre only brought this the more into prominence,—the courses of singing Levites and the various ordinances of David showing that “praise was comely.”

Having seen that praise was the characteristic of

Old Testament service, before passing to the New we will designate the points of contrast between worship in the two dispensations.

Between the worshiper and the immediate presence of God there always hung a veil, impassable to all save yearly to the high priest, on the day of atonement, when he entered in with the blood of the atonement sin-offering. All the blood of victims shed could not take away that veil because it could not take away sin. This veil, then, characterizes the worship of the Old Testament. God was merciful, but He would by no means clear the guilty. None dare, not even the most faithful, enter into His awful presence. The law, too, was in exercise,—“Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.” (Deut. xxvii. 26.) To every exercised conscience this surely must have put a check upon any full confidence he might have had in approaching God. The law, while it imposed a curse on the one hand, brought into bondage on the other, for making its appeal to the flesh, man’s nature, it could but stir up the enmity of the carnal mind. The sacrifices, while they might lull, could not banish, these fears; for if otherwise “the worshiper once purged would have no more conscience of sins.” True, faith could and did pierce through these “clouds and darkness” which were “round about Him,” and catch glimpses of His glory, and say “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good”; but even these were but glimpses, accompanied by oft-repeated confession of sins and entreaties for mercy. Such was God to His people under law, and such was legal worship,—giving glory to God for His majesty, wisdom, and power, but holding man off as unfit to stand before Him.

Passing on to the present dispensation, how great, how wondrous, the contrast! The veil has been rent in twain from the top to the bottom. The veil between man and God characterized Old Testament worship; the veil done away is the distinguishing feature of the New. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, . . . *through the veil*." What was a way of death to the Hebrew priest is a way of life to the Christian. There is no faltering, but boldness,— "boldness and access, with confidence." The right of entrance is the blood of Jesus instead of the blood of bulls and goats, which could never take away sin. The believer stands before God "clean, every whit," "once purged," with "no more conscience of sins." Well may he enter boldly into the very holiest; well may he now pour forth his full soul in freest praise:—

"Within the holiest of all,
Cleansed by His precious blood,
Before the throne we prostrate fall,
And worship Thee, O God."

Instead of the law, condemning and bringing into bondage, the Christian is under grace,— "grace reigns,"—the full unmerited love of God poured out upon us,— "no condemnation,"— "not under law, but under grace." Well may we dwell upon these precious themes. Would that all the Lord's people knew fully what they meant! Worship would be the result.

Growing out of this place of nearness, this freedom from the law, there is an apprehension of the nature of God never had before. Not a whit is the glory of His justice dimmed: nay, it shines with more dazzling brightness as its flames fell upon the Son of

God, the true sacrifice who hung upon the cross,—
“He that spared not His own Son.” But now we see not only justice, but love,—love in its fullness and in an intensity which none but God could have, and none but He can fully know,—

“God only knows the love of God.”

We see not glimpses now, but the full, steadfast shining out of “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” We know God as Father, we have the Spirit of adoption, we have the knowledge of eternal redemption. Precious truths, which were as buds hidden beneath their protecting sheath of types and shadows during the winter of law, have now burst forth into leaf, blossom, and fruit, to charm us with their beauty and delight us with their sweetness. We are in a new land,—resurrection land, risen with Christ, linked with Him who has said “I am alive forevermore.” Now can there be no question as to acceptance,—that has been fully settled; no fear as to eternal security,—that is in His hands who has said “Because I live, ye shall live also.” The grave-clothes of a carnal worship can but hamper now, and so must be laid aside.

In brief, we might say that Christian worship has its grounds in an accomplished redemption; its object is God the Father and the Son; its place the holiest,—the immediate presence of God; its power the Holy Spirit; its material the truths fully revealed in the word of God; and its duration *eternity*.

There are several points just touched which must be enlarged upon. There can be no question that God the Father is the object of Christian worship: “I have declared unto them thy name.” (John xvii.

26.) "The Father seeketh such to worship Him." (John iv. 23.) None would question this. Equally clear is it that the Son is the object of worship: "That all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him." (John v. 23.) Surely in the face of such a scripture we could scarcely conceive of any one teaching that the Lord Jesus Christ is not the object of worship, to be praised as equal with the Father. And yet such doctrine has been taught,—a direct insult to Him who in grace took a servant's form.

Many who heartily accept what has been said as to the worship of the Father and the Son, will hesitate to say that the Holy Spirit is not presented in the New Testament as the object, but as the power of worship. Let us be clear. We would not hint at the blasphemy of denying that the blessed third person of the trinity is divine. He is God just as absolutely as and equal with the Father and the Son; and as God surely is entitled to worship and adoration. But as the Holy Spirit, He is presented as the One who empowers for worship: "We worship *by* the Spirit of God." (Phil. iii. 3, R. V.) He does not present Himself, but takes, as it were, a subordinate place. Reverently speaking, as our Lord took the place of humiliation during His life upon earth, tabernacling in flesh (ever a Man in a body in glory), so, too, now the Holy Spirit has come to earth, and is content to dwell in our poor bodies,—temples of the Holy Ghost,—and in the Church of Christ. He is upon earth, as contrasted with Christ, who is in heaven with the Father, the object of worship. From this we trust it will be clear why we say the Holy Spirit is not presented in

the New Testament as the object of worship. He is the *power* for it, however. Our praises must be in His energy, or they are not truly praise. It is so with our prayers (Rom. viii). Equally so with praise. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. xii. 3.)

One word as to *who* are worshipers, under the the Christian dispensation. Under the law, the worshiper was, in one sense, any man who brought an offering; and in another, only the priest: in the fullest sense only the high priest, and he only once a year. Under the first definition any were worshipers; under the second, scarcely one. The first was too wide; the second too narrow. In Christianity all believers are priests (1 Pet. ii. 5, 9), and only believers are. None can worship God but those who are washed by the blood of Christ, and all such have equal access to Him. The idea of classes here, some having greater privileges, closer access to God, is most abhorrent to one taught of God, and cannot be too strongly characterized as most deeply dishonoring to the person and work of Christ. Yet this is the very root of Romanism, and by no means so rare in Protestantism as might be imagined. Nay, we must, in faithfulness, say that the very "notion of a clergyman" is potentially the germ of class priesthood. We are all priests; we all have the same nearness to God through Christ, and can all sing "Unto Him that loveth us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us a kingdom of priests (a royal priesthood, 1 Pet. ii. 9), unto God and His Father: to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

There is one high priest who everliveth (Heb. vii.),

through whom all our worship is presented in perfect acceptance, because linked with the sweet savor of His name, He stands forever alone as High Priest; but distinction among the priests of God—His worshipers—there is none. Of gifts of ministry we will speak later at length. We would at present only warn the reader never to confound priesthood and ministry: they are radically and entirely different.

We have thus far sought to present some of the leading characteristics of christian worship. But what has been said can apply to individuals entirely; and it must now be made plain that there is church worship as well as individual,—corporate praise. Not that the ground, object, or materials of the praise are different, but God has provided that the Church shall praise as a whole. The truths we have been considering in previous papers thus far will serve to make this clear. The unity of the Church, the link of the Spirit to a glorified Christ and to one another,—these and kindred truths necessitate the conclusion that we are “members one of another.” When, therefore, we come together, if according to God’s mind, we are not merely individuals, but form an assembly representing the whole Church. Our worship is now corporate. The praise and adoration are not merely of an individual, but of an assembly. Let us pause and admire the wisdom as well as the love of God in this provision. He knows we are social beings, that our joy as well as our sorrow needs to be shared, and that thus the one is increased and the other diminished. So in our highest service He has provided that we shall unitedly pour forth our tribute of prayer and thanksgiving.

(To be continued.)

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS; OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

CHAPTER VII.

(Continued from page 173.)

BUT the Preacher's experiences of anomalies are by no means ended. These alternations of adversity and prosperity, he says, whilst there is no forecasting *when* they will come, so there seems to be no safeguard, even in righteousness and wisdom, against them. They are not meted out here at all on the lines of righteousness. The just man dies in his righteousness, whilst the wicked lives on in his wickedness: therefore be not righteous overmuch; do not abstain, or withdraw thyself, from the natural blessings of life, making it joyless and desolate; but then err not on the other side, going into folly and licentiousness,—a course which naturally tends to cut off life itself. It is the narrow way of philosophy: as said the old Latins, "*Medio tutissimus ibis*," "midway is safety"; but Solomon is here again, as we have seen before, on a far higher moral elevation than any of the heathen philosophers, for he has one sheet-anchor for his soul from the evils of either extreme, in the fear of God.

As for the despairing, hopeless groans of "vanity," we, with our God-given grace, learn to feel pity for our Author, so for his moral elvation do we admire him, whilst for his sincerity and love of truth we learn to respect and love him. See in the next few verses that clear, cold, true, reason of his, confessing the narrow limits of its powers, and yet the whole soul longs, as if it would burst all bars to attain to that which shall solve its perplexity. "Thus

far have I attained by wisdom," he says, "and yet still I cry for wisdom. I see far off the place where earth can reach and touch the heavens; but when, by weary toil and labor, I reach that spot, those heavens are as illimitably high above me as ever, and and an equally long journey lies between me and the horizon where they meet. Oh, that I might be wise; but it was far from me."

Now, in our version, the next verse reads very tamely and flat, in view of the strong emotion under which it is so clear that the whole of the book was written. "That which is far off and exceeding deep, who can find it out?" The Revised, both in text and margin, gives us a hint of another thought, "That which is, or hath been, is afar off," etc. But other scholars, in company with the Targum and many an old Jewish writer, lift the verse into harmony with the impassioned utterances of this noble man, as he expresses in broken ejaculatory phrase his longings and his powerlessness:

"Far off, the past,—what is it?

Deep,—that deep! Ah, who can sound?

Then turned I, and my heart, to learn, explore.

To seek out wisdom, reason—sin to know—

Presumption—folly—vain impiety.

He *must* unravel the mystery, and turns thus, once more, with his sole companion, his own heart, to measure everything,—even sin, folly, impiety,—and more bitter even than that bitter death that has again and again darkened all his counsel and dashed his hopes, is one awful evil that he has found.

One was nearest Adam in the old creation. Taken *from* his side, a living one, she was placed *at* his side to share with him his wide dominion over that fair,

unsullied scene. Strong where he was weak, and weak where he was strong, now evidently was she meant of an all-gracious and all-wise Creator as a true helpmeet for him: his complement—filling up his being. But that old creation is as a vessel reversed, so that the highest is now the lowest,—the best has become the worst,—the closest may be the most dangerous; and foes spring even from within households. Intensified disorder and confusion! When she who was so clearly intended by her strength of affection to call into rightful play the affections of man's heart, whose very weakness and dependence should call forth his strength, alas, our writer has found that that heart is too often a snare and a net, and those hands drag down to ruin the one to whom they cling. It is the clearest sign of God's judgment to be taken by those nets and bands, as of his mercy, to escape them. Thus evil ever works, dual—as is good—in character. Opposed to the Light and Love of God we find a liar and murderer in Satan himself; corruption and violence in man, under Satan's power. The weaker vessel makes up for lack of strength by deception; and whilst the man of the earth expresses the violence, so the woman of the earth has become, ever and always, the expression of corruption and deceit, as here spoken of by our preacher, "her heart snares and nets; her hands as bands."

But further in his search for wisdom, the Preacher has found but few indeed who would or could accompany him in his path. A man here and there, one in a thousand, would be his companion, but no single woman. This statement strongly evidences that the gospel is outside his sphere; the new creation is beyond his ken. He takes into no account the sov-

ereign grace of God, that in itself can again restore, and more than restore, all to their normal conditions, and make the weaker vessel fully as much a vessel unto honor as the stronger, giving her a wide and blessed sphere of activity; in which love—the divine nature within—may find its happy exercise and rest. Naturally, and apart from this grace, the woman does not give herself to the same exercise of mind as does the man.

But then. is it thus that man came from his Maker's hands? Has He, who stamped His own perfection on all His works, permitted an awful hideous exception in the moral nature of man? Does human reason admit such a possible incongruity? No, indeed. Folly may claim license for its lusts in the plea of a nature received from a Creator. Haughty pride, on the other hand, may deny that nature altogether. The clearer, nobler, truer philosophy of our writer justifies God, even in view of all the evil that makes him groan, and he says, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have have sought out many inventions."

Interesting as well as beautiful it is to hear this conclusion of man's reason, not at all in view of the exceeding riches of God's grace, but simply looking at *facts*, in the light that Nature gives. Man neither is, nor can be, an exception to the rule. God has made him upright. If not so now, it is because he has departed from this state, and his many inventions, or *arts* (as Luther translates the word significantly), his devices, his search after new things (but the word "inventions" expresses the thought of the original correctly), are so many proofs of dissatisfaction and unrest.

He may, in that pride, which turns everything to its own glory, point to these very inventions as evidences of his progress; and in a certain way they do unquestionably speak his intelligence and immense superiority over the lower creation. Yet the very invention bespeaks need; for most truthful is the proverb, "Necessity is the mother of invention"; and surely in the way of Nature *necessity* is not a glory, but a shame. Let him glory in his inventions, then; and his glory is in his shame. Adam in his Eden of delights: upright, content, thought never of invention. He took from God's hand what God gave, with no need to make calls upon his own ingenuity to supply his longings. The fall introduces the inventive faculty, and human ingenuity begins to work to overcome the need, of which now, for the first time, man becomes aware; but we hear no singing in connection with that first invention of the apron of fig-leaves. That faculty has marked his path throughout the centuries. Not always at one level, or ever moving in one direction,—it has risen and fallen, with flow and ebb, as the tides; now surging upward with skillful "artifice in brass and iron," and to the music of "harp and organ," until it aims at heaven itself, and the Lord again and again interposes and abases by flood and scattering,—now ebbing, till apparently extinct in the low-sunken tribes of earth. Its activity is the accompaniment usually of the light that God gives, and which man takes, and turns to his own boasting, with no recognition of the Giver, calling it "civilization." The Lord's saints are not, for the most part, to be found amongst the line of inventors. The seed of Cain, and not the seed of Seth, produces them. The former make the earth their

home, and naturally seek to beautify it, and make it comfortable. The latter, with deepest soul-thirst, quenched by rills of living water springing not here; with heart-longings satisfied by an infinite, tender, divine Love, pass through the earth strangers and pilgrims, to the Rest of God.

Let us glance forward a little. The Church is not found on earth; but the earth still is the scene of man's invention; and with that surpassing boast "opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, or is worshiped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God," he heads up his wickedness and ingenuity together, in calling down fire from heaven and in making "the image of the beast to breathe." (Rev. xiii. 14, 15.) 'Tis his last crowning effort,—his day is over,—and the flood and the scattering of old shall have their awful antitype in an eternal judgment and everlasting abasing.

But the heavenly saints have been caught up to their home. Is there invention there? Does human ingenuity still work? How can it, if every heart is fully satisfied, and nothing can be improved? But then is all at one dead level? No, surely; for "discovery" shall abide when "invention" has vanished away,—constant, never-ceasing "discovery." The unfoldings, hour by hour, and age by age, of a Beauty that is infinite and inexhaustible,—the tasting a new and entrancing perfection in a Love in which every moment shows some fresh attraction, some new sweet compulsion to praise!

Discovery is already "ours," my reader,—not invention; and each day, each hour, each moment, may be fruitful in discovery. Every difficulty met

in the day's walk may prove but its handmaid; every trial in the day's path serve but to bring out new and happy discoveries. Nay, even grief and sorrow shall have their sweet discoveries, and open up to sight fountains of water hitherto altogether unknown, as with the outcast Egyptian mother in the wilderness of Paran, till we learn to glory in what hitherto was our sorrow, and to welcome infirmities and ignorance, for they show us a spring of infinite Strength and a fountain of unfathomable Wisdom, that eternal Love puts at our service! Oh, to grow in Faith's Discoveries!

Philip had a grand opportunity for "discovery," in the sixth of John; but, poor man, he lost it; for he fell back on creature resources, or, in other words, "Invention." Brought face to face with difficulty, how good it would have been for him to have said, "Lord Jesus, I am empty of wisdom, nor have I any resources to meet this need; but my heart rests in Thee: I joy in this fresh opportunity for Thee to display Thy glory, for thou knowest what Thou wilt do." Oh, foolish Philip, to talk of every one having a *little*, in that Presence of infinite Love, infinite Power. Do I thus blame him? Then let this day see me looking upward at every difficulty, and saying "Lord, Thou knowest what Thou wilt do."

The morning breaks, my heart awakes,
And many thoughts come crowding o'er me,—
What hopes or fears, what smiles or tears
Are waiting in that path before me?

Am I to roam afar from home,
By Babel's streams, in gloom despondent?
On sorrow's tree must my harp be
To grief's sad gusts alone respondent?

The mists hang dank, on front and flank,
My straining eye can naught discover;
But well I know that many a foe
Around that narrow path doth hover.

Nor this alone would make me groan,—
Alas, a traitor dwells within me;
With hollow smile and heart of guile
The world without, too, plots to win me.

Thus I'm beset with foes, and yet
I would not miss a single danger:
Each foe's a friend that makes me wend
My homeward way,—on earth a stranger.

For never haze dims *upward* gaze,—
Oh, glorious sight! for there above me
Upon God's throne there sitteth One
Who died to save—who lives to love me!

And like the dew each dayspring new
That tender love shall onward lead me:
My thirst shall slake, yet thirst awake
Till every breath shall pant:—"I need Thee."

No wisdom give; I'd rather live
In conscious lack dependent on Thee:
Each parting way I meet this day
Then proves my claim to call upon Thee.

I'd not ask strength, but learn at length
The calm that's found with perfect weakness:
Thy shoulder's mine where I'd recline,
And there my pride is *shamed* to meekness.

Then Lord, thy breast is, too, my rest;
And there, as in my home, I'm hidden,—
Where quiet peace makes groanings cease,
And Zion's songs gush forth unbidden.

Yes, e'en on earth may song have birth,
And music rise o'er Nature's groanings,—
Whilst Hope new born each springing morn
Dispel with joy my faithless moanings.

(*To be continued.*)

F. C. J.

“IF A MAN DIE, SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN?”

NATURE gives no answer to this question. That is, it gives no samples of resurrection,—no samples of bringing that which was dead to life. Persons have advanced what they thought to be samples, and they have passed current, embellishing many a discourse; but, after all, they are no real samples of resurrection. Reference has been made to the vegetable kingdom. The things of that kingdom have been spoken of as springing into life when the icy hand of winter is removed. But that is no springing into life. It is only the manifestation of a life which existed while that icy hand was on it, and which simply prevents its springing forth. Reference has also been made to the animal kingdom to find something which amounts to resurrection. For instance, the butterfly emerging from its chrysalis, or golden-colored sheath, has been presented as a sample of coming from death to life. But it fails to help in this direction, for surely there is no coming from death to life, but only a coming from one condition of life into another. The insect is alive when in its external case, and is even so before as a caterpillar. It simply comes forth from its chrysalis as a butterfly, or perfect insect. That is all; but no passing out of death into life. In short, as the learned christian author, Dr. Hugh MacMillan, says, “There has never been, in all the physical world, a single example of life raised from actual death: all its revivifying processes attach only to things that are alive and representative of life.”

But, thank God, we have revelation, which gives us the fullest authority for believing in the resurrec-

tion of the dead. The blessed son of God, who came from heaven to bear witness to the truth, gave, in the following solemn utterance, the substance of the teachings of the Old and New Testaments on this important doctrine: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," or judgment, as the Revised Version renders the word. Revelation also informs us of the order which will be observed in the accomplishment of this great event. Believers who have fallen asleep, meaning the dead saints, will, we are taught, rise at the coming of the Lord; and, at the same instant, those of the saints who do not sleep, but "who are alive and remain," will be changed to immortality without passing through death, and the raised and the changed will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and so be forever with Him. But the rest of the dead, the Word tells us, live not again till after the thousand years' reign, when they will come forth from their graves, and be judged according to their works. And what God has thus said in *word*, surely He is able to carry out in *power*. Indeed, He has already furnished samples of resurrection,—samples, real samples, of raising the dead to life. The widow's son was brought to life in answer to the prayer of Elijah. The son of the Shunammite was raised from the dead in response to the entreaties of Elisha. The dead man who was cast into the sepulchre of Elisha, was brought to life as soon as he touched the bones of the prophet. Not that there was any power in the bones, but God, for some wise purpose, used the

occasion to display His power in bringing the dead one to life. In the New Testament samples of resurrection are recorded. Jairus' daughter, who had just died, was raised at the Lord's word—"Tabitha Cumi." The son of the widow of Nain, who was being taken to the grave, was brought to life as soon as the compassionate Jesus touched the bier, and uttered the words "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." Lazarus, who had been in the grave four days, came from the embrace of death at the bidding of the same blessed One, saying "Lazarus, come forth." After the Lord Jesus had gone to heaven, the same divine power accompanied the gospel testimony on earth. Two samples of restoration to life are mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. When Tabitha, a devoted disciple, died, Peter, who was at another place, was sent for, who having come "kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body said, Tabitha, arise"; and she arose from the dead, and he "presented her alive." The young man who fell from the third loft, or story, while Paul was preaching at Troas, and who "was taken up dead," was brought to life.

The above samples, however, were simply cases of bringing from death to life,—to life such as they had before. They were still mortal. But they were real samples of bringing the dead to life, which could only be by supernatural power,—the direct power of God. But revelation warrants the hope of a resurrection of a higher order; for though it may be from corruption, it is to incorruption. We have a unique sample in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. That blessed One knew no sin, and death could have no claim on Him. But when He in love put Himself in our place, He had to bear the judgment and death due. But

having done that, righteousness being satisfied, death had no further claim on Him, and therefore "it was not possible He should be holden of it." Hence God could not suffer His Holy One to see corruption. "He whom God raised again saw no corruption." "Behold," He says, "I am alive for evermore." And though the dead saints rise from corruption, yet the risen and glorious body of Christ is the sample of theirs, for when He comes we are assured that He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." This "change" will, of course, equally apply to the saints who are alive at His coming, who will not sleep, but be changed in a moment from mortality to immortality. And I may here say that we have two samples of this recorded in the sure word, namely, Enoch and Elijah, who were translated to heaven without seeing death, their bodies doubtless being changed.

A word may be said on those who rose from the dead closely after the Lord's resurrection. When that blessed One yielded up His life, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." This, we may be sure, was a divinely given testimony to the efficacy of the wonderful death which had just taken place; the rending of the veil being a sign that the true veil was rent, and that the true holiest was "made manifest"; also that Judaism was at an end. The graves being opened, and many saints coming from them after the Lord's resurrection, told out the glad news that death and

the grave, and him that had the power of death, were conquered through the Cross; and that believers might henceforth exultingly exclaim “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” We may feel sure that those who arose from the dead in that hour of joyous triumph, arose to incorruptibility, thus forming a suitable accompaniment of the resurrection of Him who had gone into death for them, and come out of it with the keys of hades and death at His girdle. Happy thought that power is thus in the hands of love!

It would seem that something slightly analogous to this occurs after the resurrection of those who are Christ's at His coming,—that is, in a martyred remnant being raised, who believes God's further testimony after the Church is gone,—including those mentioned under the Fifth Seal, and those subsequently killed under the beasts of Rev. xiii. These, as well as the saints of the past and the present, will have part in the first resurrection (Rev. xx. 4). Though they rise after those who rise when the Lord comes, yet they share in the same resurrection—“the resurrection of life”; for “they live and reign with Christ.” To find this last point fully treated, consult a recent volume entitled “The Revelation of Christ,” by F. W. Grant.

In closing, I may say that our blessed Lord, in reply to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, and had asked Him a question simply to bring the doctrine into ridicule,—appealed to the word and power of God and not to Nature, saying, “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.” If they had known the Scriptures they would have known that they taught the resurrection; and

if they had known the power of God, or taken it truly into account, they would have had no difficulty with the doctrine, and their foolish question would never have been asked. It is for man to find out what God says, and bow to it. What He has said in word, He is able to make good in act. God has spoken, and faith desires no more. Every difficulty is thus gone. Even true reason is more than satisfied.

As believers, it is for us to know that we are already in a new life, being alive in Christ, and that we are to pass through this scene in the power of that life, waiting for God's Son from heaven, when the poor body will be redeemed, and we shall be like Him, and be ever with Him. A blessed hope, surely! To God and His Christ be all the glory! R. H.

LONGINGS OF THOSE WHO KNOW THE LORD.

WE long, blessed Lord, Thy coming to see,—
To enter the mansions made ready by Thee,—
To gaze on Thy beauties in bliss without end,—
To dwell with Thee, spotless, dear Saviour and
Friend.

This world is a vale of sin and of tears,
And tardily move its sorrowful years;
Creation is doomed to travail in pain
Till Thou shalt appear to bless her again.

The moments seem longer because of Thy love,
Known only by those who are born from above;
They can not refrain, but constantly cry
“Come, take us away to be with Thee on high.”

Appear in Thy glory, Thy power display,
Oh, end this sad night, and bring in the glad day;
And reign on Thy throne, as by prophets foretold,
Thy kingly “beauty,” yes, fully unfold.—R. H.

NARRATIVE OF THE LORD'S BURIAL AND RESURRECTION.

IT was a solemn hour when "Jesus, having again cried with a loud voice, yielded up His spirit."

The rent veil, the earthquake, the rent rocks, the opened tombs, were loud announcements from God that the mighty victory was won, that heaven was opened, the holiest entered, and the great sacrifice accepted! "And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned."

The body must needs be removed from the cross. Where were His apostles? And His brethren, where were they? Had all forsaken Him? There were yet two disciples, who, though they had feared to confess Him while He lived, now come boldly forward to render the last sad tribute of affection to His lifeless body. Joseph of Arimathea asked leave of Pilate to take Him away. It was readily granted. He went, therefore, and bought fine linen. And Nicodemus, the same who came to Jesus by night, came, bringing a mixture of spices, about a hundred pounds weight. "They took therefore the body of Jesus, and bound it up in linen cloths with the spices, as is the custom of the Jews to prepare for burial." Many women were there who had followed Him from Galilee, and who had viewed from afar the whole scene of the crucifixion, among whom was Salome, the wife of Zebedee, and Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and Mary Magdalene. The two latter drew near, and sitting opposite the sepulchre, saw how His body was laid. As the Sabbath drew on, a stone was hastily rolled to the door of the sepulchre; and they departed, and remained quiet on the Sabbath, according to the commandment.

Thus Joseph and Nicodemus divided between them the honor which ought to have been shared by others; but none lent a helping hand.

“Late on the Sabbath, as it was the dusk of the next day after the Sabbath” (our Saturday evening), “came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary” (of Cleophas) “to view the tomb” (Matt. xxviii. 1). They returned home, and, joined by Salome, “bought aromatic spices, that they might come and anoint Him.” (Mark xvi. 1.) In the dead of the night, or early morning, the Roman soldiers still keeping guard at the tomb, “there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descending out of heaven came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His look was as lightning, and his clothing white as snow; and for fear of him the guards trembled, and became as dead men.” (Matt. xxviii. 2-4.) Little sleep would Mary Magdalene have that night. Alarmed and solemnized, and probably impatient for daybreak, she at length wandered alone to the sepulchre. It was yet dark when she entered the lonely garden. All was still. The terrified guards had fled. Startled at finding the stone rolled away from the empty tomb, she ran to tell Peter and John. They hastened to the spot, and found it even so, as she had said. There lay the undisturbed linen cloths, just as they had been placed; the handkerchief that was about His head folded up separately. Peter went into the sepulchre; John followed. The Lord had more than once told His disciples that He must suffer, and on the third day be raised again. These words possibly might have been recalled to remembrance as John looked upon the empty grave-clothes. “He saw, and believed.” Not from the holy writings had he learned that thus it must be: “He *saw*, and believed; for as yet they knew not the scripture that

he must rise again from the dead." (Ps. ii., xvi.) The One who loved him was alive again, and by divine power had communicated the blessed truth to his soul. He left the abode of death, and returned home. He had the high pre-eminence of being the first of the apostles to believe in the resurrection from among the dead, and this before the Lord had showed Himself alive to Mary. Not having yet seen the risen Lord, of John it might be said, as of believers now, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Mary, seeking His dead body, lingered at the hallowed spot, and again looking into the sepulchre as she wept, saw two angels sitting there. They inquired the cause of her sorrow. It was soon told. So intently was she absorbed with the one Object of her affection, that she manifested no alarm at the appearance of the heavenly visitors. Turning back, the gardener, as she supposed Him to be, said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Tell me, she answered, where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary." At the sound of that well-known voice, familiarly calling her by name, she recognized her Lord and Master: it was Himself. Her ready obedience was as beautiful as her affection. At His bidding, she hastens to carry the joyful message to His "brethren"; but, like her Lord, had to taste the sorrow of rejected testimony: "And they, when they had heard that He was alive, and been seen of her, believed not." (Mark xvi. 11.)

Up to the time of her first departure from the sepulchre, all must have taken place a little before sunrise. By this time another company of women were on their way to the sepulchre, bringing the aromatic spices and ointments, that they might come

and anoint Him. It was very early in the morning, at the rising of the sun. (Mark xvi. 1, 2.) "There was Joanna," the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, "who had been healed of wicked spirits," (Luke viii. 3; xxiv. 10); Salome, the wife of Zebedee; and the other Mary, mother of James and Joses; and other women that were with them. "And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" No men were with them. "And when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great." (Mark xvi. 4.) But the angel who had rolled away that stone, whose look was as lightning, and before whom the guards trembled and became as dead men, was no longer sitting upon it. He was not seen thus by Mary Magdalene, when she entered the garden. "Entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and he said unto the women, Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus the crucified [One]. He is not here, for He is arisen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay; and go quickly and tell His disciples that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him."

Matthew passes over without notice the visit of Mary to the garden. The break between verses 4 and 5 of chapter xxviii. is very perceptible. John supplies the parenthesis: the thread of the interrupted narrative is resumed at verse 5. With fear and great joy the women ran to bring the disciples word. As they went, the Lord met them: they held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. If the words of the women seemed to the apostles and others as idle tales, the Lord could speak to them in another and more striking way. A strange company of unearthly witnesses visited Jerusalem that day, in confirmation

of the great truth of resurrection from among the dead: "Many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Would the disciples still doubt? Some did.

The Lord's heart yearned over Peter. His mission was still to bind up the broken-hearted, and to comfort those that mourned. Peter was restored. The Lord walked miles with two sorrowing disciples, as they walked and were sad, on their way to Emmaus. He opened their eyes, and they knew Him. He showed Himself suddenly in the midst of the eleven, and those that were with them, as they sat at meat. Thomas was unhappily absent. They were troubled at His presence, but He soon dispelled their fears. He showed them His hands and His feet. Eight days elapsed, and again He showed Himself to the disciples, Thomas being present. He was convinced, and confessed Him as his Lord and his God.

They seemed to have forgotten His words, "Tell my brethren that they go into Galilee: there shall they see Me." It might have been a fortnight or more after this message to the women, that some of His disciples had returned to their old occupation at the sea of Tiberias. Why were they loitering thus on their way to the mountain where He had promised to meet them? That meeting had not yet taken place, for "this was now the *third* time that He showed Himself alive to His disciples."

If it was in Galilee that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, they must have arrived tardily at the appointed spot. Thomas was not the only indifferent one. In patient grace He awaited the arrival of the last straggler before showing Himself in their midst. No wonder that when they saw Him "some doubted," others worshiped. How

different will be the next great gathering of His redeemed ones! "He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

After this He was seen of James, and lastly of all the apostles. This last interview was possibly the longest and most important of all. The apostles were at home and at ease in His presence. They received His commandments, and spake freely together of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. He led them out as far as to Bethany, and in parting words of blessing was received up into glory.

Ten times had He showed Himself alive after His passion. In each case His appearing was sudden and unlooked for, without intimation or warning. He *appointed* a meeting in Galilee, but neither the day nor the hour was named. We wait to see Him again, according to His promise. May we not infer that, without any premonition, He will at some unexpected moment call us up to meet Himself in the air? We ask not for signs: enough that He who loves us has said, "Surely, I come quickly. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments." J. M.

(From "*Words in Season*.")

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Question 9.—Please explain Heb. ii. 2: "The word spoken by angels." S. H.

Answer.—The phrase means the law, which was given through angelic instrumentality. (Acts vii. 53; Gal. iii. 19.) In Psalms lxxviii. 17, we are told they were present at Sinai. They were God's ministers to execute His judgments, and were therefore fittingly present at the giving of the law. In the first chapter of Hebrews we see the place occupied by them,—a place of exalted privilege, but infinitely below Him who is the object of their worship, v. 6. The "word spoken by angels" is contrasted with the "great salvation" spoken by the Lord and His apostles, and confirmed by the Holy Ghost. The thought is, If disobedience of the law was most surely punished, how much more will a neglect of salvation through grace result in destruction.

UNREVISED NOTES OF A LECTURE

ON THE SECOND CHAPTER OF NUMBERS.

NUMBERS is the book of the wilderness—the world as that for us. There are three books before this. We must come to Numbers—the fourth book—in God's way; that is, *through* these books; and His way is a perfect one.

Genesis—which means beginning—is the book that speaks of life—the book of the Father: the producer of everything.

Exodus speaks of redemption. It is the story of a people redeemed out of Egypt, whence we all come. It was the place of bondage, and we must all find it a place of bondage before we accept deliverance out of it.

Leviticus—the book of holiness. Salvation once known, He brings us to His sanctuary: we become worshipers. After all this, we come to

Numbers, which gives us the journey through the wilderness. Of course, beloved, with God it is we journey. After the knowledge of God, we come to practice, and Numbers is the book of practice.

In the first three we have God's name in trinity. In the beginning of His book, Genesis, we have God as a *Father*. In Exodus it is the *Son*—a Saviour. In Leviticus—the sanctuary—the book of holiness—it is the *Spirit*. In the fourth book it is the *creature*. It speaks of the frail, the poor, weak creature. We need not fear to know ourselves when, along with this, we learn the grace of God.

Have we *all* here to-night got there? Are we all born again? Have we the knowledge of the Father? Have you all learned to cry, *Father—Abba Father*?

Do you know what it is? But you must also learn what salvation is. Are you able, or afraid, to say, "*I am saved*"? There is no presumption in it—not a bit. If you were drowning in the river, and if some one saved you, you would not think it presumption to say, "He saved me," would you? We are saved by Christ's work alone.

The beginning of their pilgrimage was after the Passover. What does this mean? It was the time when the judgment of God passed over Egypt, and God taught His people the way of escape. It was the last way man would take. How would the blood of an innocent lamb keep out the judgment of God? *We* can read it simply. It spoke of another Lamb, and God said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Are you, then, under the blood-mark? Have you, beloved friends, accepted the judgment of God against you, and looked up at the blood-marked lintel and door-post? I deserved *death*; so *death* is my doom; but my doom is fulfilled in the death of Christ: now, therefore, death is my shelter; and so, blessed be God, that is the way of shelter still. Whatever the condition may be, we are saved by the virtue of the blood of the Lamb slain. Is this your trust now? You ought to, you must, know that blood is the dividing line between saved and unsaved. If you trust in that, then "blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

But, another question. Do you know what it is to be *holy*? If you have known what it is to be justified, you must also learn what it is to be holy. We have it through Christ, not as righteousness which is imputed, yet Christ is the sanctification of His people—"who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteous-

ness, sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) *He* is the sanctification of every one that believeth.

But how?

In dropping your own righteousness, you got the righteousness of God; now drop your own holiness, and you'll get holiness. This Christ—if I have a heart for Him,—and all who are saved have this, haven't they?—look at Him! This itself is the beginning of holiness. Be true to this, and you'll be holy. All through the world here, there is what the heart of man craves naturally. Now, because He has saved us, our hearts follow Him up there, *new-naturally*. It is not, We must do this or that, but "If ye love *me*, keep my commandments, and my words." This is the way to change you, says the apostle. How? "From glory to glory." You *begin* with this—glory! "We all, with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit." (2 Cor. iv.) 3:18

How do you get the sunshine in your face? Go and sit in it. That's all, isn't it? Go, put your face in His sunshine, and you'll be changed from glory to glory. This is the third step—Leviticus—true holiness.

Now, until you have learned these three steps, you are disqualified to walk through the world. I am afraid this disqualifies a good many. If you have Christ for holiness, you are competent to walk with Him through the world.

Numbers is a book of warfare. You find here at the start a camp, a register, fighting men, etc. We haven't got to fight the flesh. *Don't fight it!* It is stronger than you, *if you fight it*. He says, turn

away from it; "*abstain* from fleshly lusts"; "reckon yourselves *to be dead indeed* to sin." That is faith. You can't get on one step without faith. "Reckon" (that's faith—faith is the reckoner) "yourselves dead *indeed* unto sin." Now how can I fight the flesh? Can a dead man fight? You know it is an absolute impossibility. I am not talking about the world, but about the flesh—myself. "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" That's a plain argument—we died to it when Christ died (Rom. vi.). We are alive to God *in Christ*. Christ did it all. He died for sin—yours and mine. Now what is my relation to Him? I am dead by His cross. This is not experience, but I see it by faith; so the apostle says "reckon." Turn your back upon sin, and your face toward Christ, and walk on. If you *feel* sin in you, don't think that it is you any more. Don't fight it; run away from it. This may not seem manly, but it is God's way. Israel, when they came to the Red Sea, with their enemies close upon and around them, could not fight. Instead of God putting arms into their hands and fighting Pharaoh, He opened the Sea, and said to them, "Just walk in here; walk this way." The *east wind* opened the sea, during the *night*. This speaks of calamity; and beloved, this calamity is the cross—the dark night of calamity that fell upon Christ. The cross ends sin before God as well as sins. You cannot change sin in yourself; you are not called to make anything of yourself. What is the Christian called to, then? He is called to make something—everything—of Christ.

Israel is four camps—three tribes in each. What does this mean? It is *our* spiritual history that is here. These tribes are *our* picture. Look at it, then.

Judah means *praise*; and *Judah* goes forward first. On the *east side*, toward the *sunrising*: anything in this? Oh yes; we associate something in our minds with the East. The east wind was the wind of the desert, and it dried up and killed everything. It is what confronts you as an enemy, this east wind—always. Is the world an easy place, or a hard place, for you? They were going east, and had to face this east wind. *JUDAH* led, and faced it. These are *our* types, let us remember, and *every* word is the *word of the living God—perfect*.

But the East is also the *sunrise*, blessed be God. The sun rises *beyond* the wilderness. But who is the sun? It is Christ. That's why you journey toward the East, toward the sunrising. Although, beloved, the east wind comes from there, beyond that the sun rises. When Jehoshaphat went to fight the Ammonites (east wind), he put the *singers* (*Judah—praise*) in the front, and God gave him the victory. *Judah* had the trumpet—the trumpet of praise. If you sound the trumpet as the trumpet of alarm—the spirit of prayer—there is always, thank God, the spirit of praise too—prayer and supplication *with thanksgiving*—*Judah* is in the front. *Judah* is the lion—the great lion; who shall stir him up? I tell you, beloved, the spirit of praise is the spirit of power.

Judah is, literally, *confession*. But of what? Your sins? Oh no; but of Him—what He is, what He has done; and this is praise. The nearest place to God is filled by a Man who died for the children of God. Shout out what Christ has done, and what He is to you, in the hour of trouble, and the end of the conflict is sure before you begin. *He* is the Captain of our salvation. If the world is against you, you need

a captain. You find the world a hard place because Christ found it a hard place. Carry Christ with you wherever you go, and you'll see if it is not a hard place. But "if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye." (1 Pet. iii.)

On the other hand, if you want to know what joy is, link yourself with Christ. The story of the first Spanish martyr—I have often told it—shows us this. They made bonfires of God's people in those days; they'd do it still, if they dared. He was being burned at the stake for Christ's sake. Thinking he might recant when partially burnt, they took him out of the fire, and took the gag out of his mouth. His reply to their inquiry was, "Did you envy me my joy?" And they thrust him in again, and quickly finished their work. Wasn't Judah—this son of Judah—sounding the trumpet? Judah is a strong man, but he doesn't use carnal weapons—only a trumpet. His leading man was Nashon (the diviner), son of Amminadab (the people of the liberal giver).

Balaam divined in a superstitious way. The people of God do not divine naturally, but as the fruit of the liberal giver—God—who giveth to all liberally, with both hands, and with all His heart. So, if you are one of His people, you can divine; you can say to what confronts you even as an enemy, It is the messenger of God. Able to divine His ways with us by the abundance of the gifts of His grace to us, we can ever say, "My Father is above all;" "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." If it is an enemy who does everything against me, still I say, The Lord sends him. If you say, But there is a black heart back of the hand that smites me, I reply, There is a loving heart back of the black one, and

“all things work together for good to them that love God.” If you walk with God, you’ll meet the bitter wind of the desert *by the glorious sunshine of His coming*. How cheerfully, beloved, how happily, how holily will you meet it all thus! To be holy, you must be happy; so walk *with Him*, beloved brethren. In every trouble run to Him. Not very like a warrior, that; but you’ll gain the victory through Him, and get the everlasting crown that He will give you at the end.

F. W. G.

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS;

OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

CHAPTER VIII.

(Continued from page 212.)

STILL continues the praise of “wisdom.” For if, as the last verses of the previous chapters have shown, there be but very few that walk in her paths, she necessarily lifts those few far above the thoughtless mass of men; placing her distinguishing touch even on the features of her disciples, lighting them up with intelligence, and taking away the rudeness and pride that may be natural to them.

“Man’s wisdom lighteth up his face—its aspect stern is changed.”

If this, then, the result, listen to her counsels: “Honor the king,” nor be connected with any conspiracy against him. It is true that authorities are as much “out of joint” as everything else under the sun; and instead of being practically “ministers of God for good,” are but too often causes of further misery upon poor man; yet wisdom teaches to wait and

watch. Everything has a time and season; and instead of seeking to put matters right by conspiracy, await the turn of the wheel; for this is most sure, that nothing is absolutely permanent here—the evil of a tyrant's life any more than good. His power shall not release him from paying the debt of nature; it helps him not to retain his spirit.

This too I saw,—'twas when I gave my heart
To every work that's done beneath the sun,—
That there's a time when man rules over man to his
own hurt.

'Twas when I saw the wicked dead interred,
And to and from the holy place (men) came and
went.

Then straight were they forgotten in the city of their
deeds.

Ah, this was vanity!

Thus our Preacher describes the end of the tyrant. Death ends his tyranny, as it does, for the time being at least, the misery of those who were under it. Men follow him to his burial, to the holy place, return to their usual avocations—all is over and forgotten. The splendor and power of monarchy now show their hollowness and vanity by so quickly disappearing, and even their memory vanishing, at the touch of death. And yet this retributive end is by no means speedy in every case. Sentence is often deferred, and the delay emboldens the heart of man to further wickedness. Still, he says, "I counsel to fear God, irrespective of present appearances. I am assured this is the better part: fear God, and, soon or late, the end will justify thy choice."

Beautiful and interesting it is thus to see man's unaided reason, his own intelligence, carrying him

to this conclusion, that there is nothing better than to "fear God;" and surely this approves itself to any intelligence. He has impressed the proofs of His glorious Being on every side of His creature, man. "Day unto day uttereth speech;" and the Sun, that rejoiceth as a strong man to run his race, voices aloud, in his wondrous adaptations to the needs of this creation on which he shines, His Being—His eternal power and godhead. Not only light but warmth he brings, for "there is nothing hid from the heat thereof," and in this twofold benevolence testifies again to his Creator, who is Love and Light. Further, wherever he shines he manifests infinite testimonies to the same truth. From the tiny insect that balances or disports itself with the joy of life in his beams, to the grandeur of the everlasting hills, or the majesty of the broad flood of ocean—all—all—with no dissentient, discordant voice, proclaim His being and utter His creative glory. Nor does darkness necessarily veil that glory: moon and stars take up the grand and holy strain; and what man can look at all—have all these witnesses reiterating day and night, with ever-fresh testimonies every season, the same refrain,

"The Hand that made us is divine,"

and yet say, even in His heart, "There is no God!" Surely all reason, all wisdom, human or divine, says "Fool!" to such.

Thus, step by step, human wisdom treads on, and, as here, in her most worthy representative, "the king," concludes that it is most reasonable to give that glorious Creator the reverence due, and to "fear" Him.

But soon, very soon, poor reason has to stop, con-

founded. Something has come into the scene that throws her all astray: verse 14—

“’Tis vanity, what’s done upon the earth; for so it is,
That there are righteous to whom it haps as to the
vile;
And sinners, too, whose lot is like the doings of the
just.
For surely this is vanity, I said.”

Yes, man’s soul must be, if left to the light of nature, like that nature itself. If the sky be ever and always cloudless, then may a calm and unbroken faith be expected, when based on things seen. But it is not so. Storm and cloud again and again darken the light of nature, whether that light be physical or moral; and under these storms and clouds reason is swayed from her highest and best conclusions. And the contradictions without are faithfully reflected within the soul.

“And so I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labor the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.” Here we get the heralds of a storm indeed. They are the first big drops that bespeak the coming flood that shall sweep our writer from all reason’s moorings; the play of a lightning that shall blind man’s wisdom to its own light; the sigh of a wind that soon shall develop into a very blast of despair.

What a contradiction to the previous sober conclusion, “It shall be well with them that fear God”! Now, seeing that there is no apparent justice in the allotment of happiness here, and the fear of God is often followed by sorrow, while the lawless as often

have the easy lot,—looking on this scene, I say, “Eat, drink, and be merry;” get what good you can out of life itself; for all is one inextricable confusion.

Oh, this awful tangle of providences! Everything is wrong! All is in confusion! There is law everywhere, and yet law-breaking everywhere. How is it? Why is it? Is not God the source of order and harmony? Whence, then, the discord? Is it all His retributive justice against sin? Why, then, the thoroughly unequal allotment? Here is a man born blind. Surely this cannot be because he sinned before his birth! But, then, is it on account of his parents’ sinning? Why, then, do the guilty go comparatively free, and the guiltless suffer? Sin, surely, is the only cause of the infliction. So the disciples of old, brought face to face with exactly this same riddle, the same mystery, ask, “Master, who did sin—this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither.” Another—higher, happier, more glorious reason, Jesus gives: “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” So the afflicted parents weep over their sightless babe; so they nurse him through his helpless, darkened childhood, or guide him through his lonely youth, their hearts sorely tempted surely to rebel against the providence that has robbed their offspring of the light of heaven. Neighbors, too, can give but little comfort here. Why was he born blind? Who did *the sin* that brought this evident punishment?

Oh wait, sorrowing parents! wait, foolish friends! One is even now on His glorious way who shall with a word unravel the mystery, ease your troubled hearts, quell each rebellious motion, till ye only sor-

row that ever a disloyal thought of the God of Love and Light has been permitted; and, whilst overwhelming you with blessing, answer every question your hearts—nay, even your intelligences—could ask.

Oh wait, my beloved readers, wait! We, too, look on a world still all in confusion. Nay, ourselves suffer with many an afflictive stroke, whose cause, too, seems hidden from us, and to contradict the very character of the God we know. One only is worthy to unlock this, as every other, sealed book—wait! He must make Himself known; *and, apart from things being wrong, this were impossible.* “The works of God must be made manifest.” Precious thought! Blessed words! Sightless eyes are allowed for a little season, that He—God—may manifest *His* work in giving them light—accompanied by an everlasting light that knows no dimming. Tears may fall in time, that God’s gentle and tender touch may dry them, and that for ever and ever. Nay, Death himself, with all his awful powers shall be made to serve the same end, and, a captive foe, be compelled to utter forth His glory. Lazarus is suffering, and the sisters are torn with anxiety; but the Lord abides “two days still in the same place where he” is. Death is allowed to have his way for a little space—nay, grasp his victim, and shadow with his dark wing the home that Jesus loves; and still He moves not. Strange, mysterious patience! Does He not care? Is He calmly indifferent to the anguish in that far-off cottage? Has He forgotten to be gracious? or, most agonizing question of all, Has some inmate of that home sinned, and chilled thus His love? How questions throng at such a time! But—patience! All

shall be answered, every question settled—every one; and the glorious end shall fully, perfectly justify His “waiting.”

Let Death have his way. The power and dignity of his Conqueror will not permit Him to hasten. For haste would bespeak anxiety as to the result; and that result is in no sense doubtful. The body of the brother shall even see corruption, and begin to crumble into dust, under the firm and crushing hand of Death. Many a tear shall the sisters shed, and poor human sympathy tell out its helplessness. But the Victor comes! In the calm of assured victory He comes. And the “express image of the substance” of the Living God stands face to face as Man with our awful foe, Death. And lo, He speaks but a word—“Lazarus, come forth!”—and the glory of God shines forth with exceeding brightness and beauty! Oh, joyous scene! oh, bright figure of that morn, so soon approaching, when once again that blessed Voice shall lift itself up in a “shout,” that shall be heard, not in one, but in every tomb of His people, and once more the glory of God shall so shine in the ranks upon ranks of those myriads, that all shall again fully justify His “waiting”!

It was indeed a blessed light that shone into the grave of Lazarus. Such was its glory, that our spirits may quietly rest forever; for we see our Lord and Eternal Lover is Conqueror and Lord of Death. Nor need we ask, with our modern poet, who sings sweetly, but too much in the spirit of Ecclesiastes,

Where wert thou, brother, those four days?
There lives no record of reply,
Which, telling what it is to die,
Had surely added praise to praise.

The resurrection of Lazarus does tell us what it is for His redeemed to die. It tells that it is but a sleep for the body, till He come to awaken it,—that those who thus sleep are not beyond His power, and that a glorious resurrection shall soon “add praise to praise” indeed.

But do not these blessed words give us a hint, at least, of the answer to that most perplexing of all questions, Why was evil ever permitted to disturb the harmony and mar the beauty of God’s primeval creation, defile heaven itself, fill earth with corruption and violence, and still exist even in eternity? Ah, we tread on ground here where we need to be completely self-distrustful, and to cleave with absolute confidence and dependence to the revelation of Himself!

The works of God must be manifested; and He is Light and Love, and nothing but Light and Love. Every work of His, then, must speak the source whence it comes, and be an expression of Light or Love; and the end, when He shall again—finding everything very good—rest from His work to enjoy that eternal sabbath, never to be broken, shall shew forth absolutely in heaven, in earth, and in hell, that He is Light and Love, and nothing but that.

Light and Love!—blending, harmonizing, in perfect equal manifestation, in the cross of the Lord Jesus, and—Light now approving Love’s activity—in the righteous eternal redemption of all who believe on Him; banishing from the new creation every trace of sin, and its companion, sorrow; whilst the Lake of Fire itself shall prove the necessity of its own existence to display that same nature of God, and naught else—Love then approving the activity of Light, as we may say.

As Isaiah shows, in the millennial earth, in those

“Scenes surpassing fable, and yet true—
Scenes of accomplished bliss”—

there is still sorrowful necessity for an everlasting memorial of His righteousness in “the carcasses of those men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and (mark well the *sympathies* of that scene) they shall be an abhorring to all flesh.” Love rejected, mercy neglected, truth despised, or held in unrighteousness, grace slighted,—nothing is left whereby the finally impenitent can justify their creation except in being everlasting testimonies to that side of God’s nature, “Light,” whilst “Love,” and all who are in harmony therewith, unfeignedly *approve*. All shall be right. None shall then be perplexed because “there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous.” All shall be absolutely right. No whisper shall be heard, even in hell itself, of the charges that men so boldly and blasphemously cast at His holy name now.

God is all in all. His works are manifested; and whilst it is His strange work, yet Judgment is His work, as every age in Time has shown; as the Eternal age, too, shall show—in time, this judgment is necessarily temporal; in eternity, where character, as all else, is fixed, it must as necessarily be *eternal*!

Solemn, and perhaps unwelcome, but wholesome theme! We live in a time peculiarly characterized by a lack of reverence for *all* authority. It is the spirit of the times, and against that spirit the saint must ever

watch and guard himself by meditation on these solemn truths. Fear is a godly sentiment, a just emotion, in view of the holy character of our God. "I will forewarn whom ye shall fear," said the Lord Jesus: "Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." The first Christians, walking in *the fear of the Lord* as well as the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied; and when Annanias and Sapphira fell under God's judgment, great *fear* came on all the *church*; whilst apostasy is marked by men feeding, themselves without fear.

All shall be "*right*." It is the wrong and disorder and unrighteous allotment prevailing here that caused the groans of our writer. Let us listen to them. Their doleful, despairing sound shall again add sweeter tone to the lovely music of God's revelation, speaking, as it does, of One who solves every mystery, answers every question, heals every hurt; yea, snatches His own from the very grasp of Death; for all is *right*, for all is *light*, where Jesus is, and He is coming. Patience! Wait!

F. C. J.

(*To be continued.*)

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

THE CHURCH.—ITS WORSHIP.

(*Continued from page 204.*)

THE great occasion for Church worship is when believers are gathered together on the first day of the week to break bread: not that praise should be limited to that time, but then we have it in its completeness. We are then, or should be, "gathered to

His name." (Matt. xviii. 20.) The Lord is in our midst, to lead our praises (Heb. ii. 12). The Holy Spirit is present to guide, according to the word (1 Cor. xiv. 25); and the memorials of our Saviour's dying love are there to be partaken of.

We cannot emphasize too strongly the importance, nor call the attention of believers too earnestly to the precious privilege of each Lord's day thus gathering about His person to offer true worship to His God and our God, and to Himself as well. It was the practice of the early Church (Acts xx. 7), only discontinued when carnality, in the form of sacramentarian superstition, had crept in. Let us not be misunderstood. It is simply a memorial feast. It conveys no life nor grace of itself. The passage in John vi. does not refer to it, but to the believing reception of Christ, who died for our sins. And yet who that has enjoyed the reality of the Lord's presence at His table, has realized the presence and guidance of the Spirit of God, has had his heart lifted up in worship to his Father and God, and the soul of each knit like the soul of one man to his brethren's,—who that has enjoyed such a privilege would forego it, or lengthen the time between the holy, happy seasons? Here it is the Church that worships, with none to preside, none to dictate the form, but each one free before God to be guided according to His word.

If it be asked what is the character of the worship, we must refer to the preceding pages. It is Christian worship in its fullest sense,—united, unhindered. If, now, Church worship is of such a character, we need not say that only Christians can truly join in it. If otherwise, either the sinner would be elevated to

a place he could not occupy, or the saint would be degraded to the level of a pleader for mercy. How unseemly for one who knows Christ and God's love to pray for deliverance from His "wrath and everlasting damnation." How unseemly, on the other hand, to put such words in the sinner's mouth as "We praise Thee, O God: we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord." And how utterly inconsistent and perplexing to make each utter both!

From what we have just said we need hardly add that all Church worship should be in truth. How much this most palpable truth is ignored can be seen at a glance in any ordinary church hymn-book. Here for the sake of sentiment, poetry, or even rhyme, doctrines are presented utterly subversive of the truth of the gospel.

"Help me to watch and pray,
And on Thy grace rely,—
Assured if I my trust betray
I shall forever die"!

What worship can there be in words which every Spirit-taught believer knows are utterly unscriptural and misleading?

We might multiply instances, but will leave this matter with the Christian reader, entreating him to make conscience of his singing, to refuse to utter the sweetest words (if such words could be sweet) which cast a doubt upon the grace and love of Christ.

We need hardly suggest that the meeting at the Lord's table being to remember Him, and so largely taken up with worship, should not be confounded with a teaching or preaching meeting. There may be teaching, but it should ever be of an appropriate

character, calculated to elicit worship. On the other hand, there may be a need for a word of exhortation addressed to the conscience, but let the feast remain a feast to the Lord.

Beloved reader, having taken this imperfect survey of the worship of the Church, suffer a pointed question. How do you worship? By the Spirit of God? Where do you worship? In temples made with hands, or in the holiest? Is your thought of praise, the music of the great organ, with trained and paid singers, or the melody of hearts, united to Christ and to one another, pouring out in worship the treasures of grace which have been made known to them?

May the Lord touch the conscience of His beloved people, and woo them from the vanity of a mere form of worship by giving them to taste of its blessed reality.

VI.—MINISTRY.

We have now reached the point where we can safely take up the subject of Ministry without, by undue prominence, suggesting an overshadowing pre-eminence given to it in the thoughts of most.

In the previous papers we have seen the Church as the body of Christ, so contemplated in Scripture—as essentially, really, and organically one. We have seen the priesthood of all believers, and the prominence of worship in the Church economy. All these were matters of the first importance, needing to be clearly understood before we come to the subject of ministry. It may be a surprise to some to speak of ministry, as we now know it, as a temporary thing; and yet a moment's thought, with a glance at a few scriptures, will convince us that such is the case. In the list of gifts from an ascended Christ mentioned

in Ephesians, we have both their continuity and their duration given: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: *till we all come*, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 12, 13.) Gifts will not fail so long as the body of Christ is being formed, and so long as it needs edifying, and the saints perfecting. They will continue "until we all come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," which will be when we are with Him in glory. Then there will be no further need for, and hence no further existence of, ministry as we now know it. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." (1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10.) While saints were to covet earnestly the best gifts, they were shown a more excellent way—the following after *love*, which should endure when the necessity for gifts had passed (1 Cor. xii. 31).

We need hardly say that the *results* of ministry will abide forever, in the characters of the saints which have been formed thereby, and in the glory thus done to our blessed Lord; nor that rewards for faithful ministry will most surely be given and enjoyed through eternity. But this only shows that it is a thing of the past, the necessity for it gone with the earth-history of the Church.

So long, however, as the Church is upon earth, so long as sinners are to be brought into it, and saints to be edified, will there be absolute necessity for ministry, and that of a most varied and complete kind.

Let us now see what Scripture teaches as to the Source, Character, Power and Exercise of true ministry.

(1) The Source and Author of all true ministry is the glorified Head of the Church—the Lord Jesus Christ. “Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men . . . and he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints,” etc. (Eph. iv. 8–13.)

We are reminded in a parenthesis (vv. 9, 10) that all gifts are the purchase of the death of Christ, that His ascension was preceded by His descent first into the grave. So is our adorable Lord ever contemplated now, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen.” (Rev. i. 18; Heb. i. 3; ii. 6–9.) As glorified, He has bestowed gifts upon men. That Church which He loved and for which He gave Himself, has not been forgotten or neglected by her absent Lord. He has sent down from His own presence in the glory all that is needed for the ingathering and upbuilding of His beloved people. As we enjoy the varied gifts of ministry, let us every remember their source. In this way we gain a clear perception of two things: the love and care of Christ, and the dignity of all Christian ministry. “No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it, even as the Lord the Church.” (Eph. v. 29.) In every gift, the more or less prominent, we see the love of Christ. True ministry there could be none apart from His gift. The effect, then, of enjoying it should ever be to lead our hearts up in grateful, adoring love to Him. But if on the one

hand His love is manifested, no less, on the other, do we see the dignity of all ministry and the responsibility attaching to it. "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts xx. 24.) "For I neither received it" (the gospel) "of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. i. 12.) Such and many other scriptures show the dignity attaching to a Christ-given ministry. Let no man despise it; in so doing he despises Christ.—"He that despiseth you, despiseth me." Nor let any man think to add to the dignity of Christian ministry by investing it with high-sounding names, official position and the circumstance attaching to human greatness. All this is but putting gaudy tinsel upon fine gold. If Christ is the source and author of ministry, it follows as self-evident that there is no place for, and certainly no need for, human authorization. Any attempt at such is but an interference, no matter how well meant, with the prerogatives of Another.

(2) As to the character of ministry, it is most varied and complete, taking in its range all manner of service needed for the Church. In the list already quoted from Ephesians iv., we have apostles and prophets: these are connected with the foundation, "and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." (Eph. ii. 20.) We need hardly say that these are New Testament prophets, not Old—men who spoke directly for God, often indicating in a supernatural way His mind as to the present or future. The apostles were intrusted with the plant-

ing of the Church and nourishing its infancy, as well as providing it for its whole earthly history, along with the rest of Scripture, with an infallible guide. This we have in the apostolic writings, which are equally with the whole sacred volume, absolutely and perfectly inspired. (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16; 1 John iv. 6.) Thus, while we have not personally with us the apostles, we have them in their writings.

Evangelists, as their names would suggest, are heralds of the glad tidings, preachers of the gospel of the grace of God, who awaken the careless and win souls to Christ. It is not every one who is an evangelist, though all should have the love of souls, and be ready to point the sinner to Christ. But men who are evangelists by gift have the true passion for souls, true longing and travailling in birth for them; they are instructed how to present the gospel, how to gather in the souls, to distinguish true anxiety from false, and reality from mere expression. It is their joy to bring sinners to Christ, to see those who were in the world brought into the Church. The evangelist is a man of prayer, for he realizes that the work is all of God, and that "methods" are but of little worth. He is a man of faith, who counts on the living God. He is a student of Scripture, that he may present only the truth to souls. He is a man of courage, not fearing to go even where "bonds and imprisonment" may await him, that he may carry the glorious gospel of the blessed God to the perishing. He is a man of energy, instant in season, out of season. He is a man of perseverance, never faltering, nor discouraged if he fails to see immediate fruit from his labor. Lastly, he is a man of humility, glorying in another's work and success, above all,

saying from the heart, "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

If it be asked where are there such men, our answer must be, The Master knoweth. Doubtless there are many who while not ideally what we might expect, are truly Christ's—evangelists endowed and sent forth by Him, and showing in the blessed results of their labors that they are His gifts. As we look upon a world lying in the wicked one—the millions of souls in heathen darkness who have never heard of Christ—the millions in the bondage of Rome—the millions in Protestant lands, strangers to the grace of God—the multitudes at our very doors who fill the churches and say, "Lord, Lord," but who, it is to be feared, know Him not—shall we not pray for evangelists? that those already in service may be stripped for their task, and that others may be raised up to go everywhere preaching the Word? Let the younger brethren ask themselves, in the presence of God, if He have not called *them* to this work. Let us all be more aroused to the need of a perishing world around us, and be more intensely in earnest. Above all, let us be more in prayer than ever.

(*To be continued.*)

THE PATIENCE OF NATURE.

(Extract.)

MARVELOUS is the mute, steadfast patience of vegetable life. It is through this that all the processes of life are carried on so perfectly in the plant. There is no restlessness, no self-will, no weariness, or self-conscious waywardness, to frustrate these pro-

cesses. The most complete harmony is discoverable through all its parts, and woven in the very fabric of its nature. The buds appear in their proper order and place, the leaves have a fixed arrangement, the flowers blossom at determinate points. Not a leaf varies from its position, or a blossom from its order, any more than a star from its orbit. By its patient abiding in the vine, the branch receives without interruption the vital forces and juices that are needful to develop its growth and produce fruitfulness. Through storm and sunshine, through darkness and light, through winter and summer, there is nothing to hinder the intercommunion of vital substances and impulses between the branch and the vine. It is this patience that we are required to imitate, this faithfulness that we are to cherish. What is, in the plant, a matter of necessity—an unconscious result of unconscious physical powers—should be, in the believer, the blessed result of a living faith and a devoted love.

SATISFIED.

I SHALL be satisfied;
 Yea, but not here,
 Where sin and death abide,
 And every tear
 Proclaims the heart's unrest,
 The hungry, longing breast,
 For that which satisfies,
 And husheth all our cries.

I shall be satisfied
 With Christ above.
 Whate'er He hath denied,
 'Twas all in love.

Oh, for this little while,
Grant thine approving smile,
And let me walk with Thee,
Saviour, unfalteringly!

I shall be satisfied;
No gift of thine
Ever thy face shall hide,
Saviour, from mine.
When I thy likeness wear,
Thou wilt no longer fear
To grant my heart's desire:
To this, Lord, I aspire.

I shall be satisfied;
Yea, and heart-free,—
Earth's fetters all untied
Eternally.
The desert path I'll trace,
Enraptured with the grace
That used such gentleness
In all my waywardness.

Heaven shall be satisfied
To have its own.
Earth shall be purified,
And cease its groan.
Then shall thine own heart rest
With her thy love hath blest.
Thou, and thy chosen bride,
Lord, shall be satisfied.

H. Mc D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Question 10.—Please explain Matt. xviii. 10. To what does the expression, "their angels," refer?

Answer.—The first fourteen verses of this chapter are devoted to showing wherein true greatness consists. Again and again did the spirit of emulation show itself among the disciples, and notably so in connection with the prophecy of our Lord's sufferings, as in the passage before us, taken in connection with

Mark ix. 30-37. More painful yet, this was manifested at the last Supper, when, we would think, all selfish ambition would be checked by the sorrow pressing upon them; but such are our hearts.

In answer to their inquiry, who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, our Lord placed a little child in their midst, and said that only those with the childlike, humble spirit could have any place in the kingdom. Such little ones were not to be offended—better far to be drowned, to lose an eye, a foot, or a hand, than to be an occasion of stumbling. Nor were these little ones, insignificant as they might be in men's eyes, to be despised. On earth they were thrust aside, forbidden to approach the Lord; but how different in heaven! There they had the place of closest access into the immediate presence of God. This brings us to the expression "their angels." The meaning of the whole passage being clear, we have only to ask what construction of the words in question is most scriptural. Does "their angels" mean guardian angels, those who are appointed to care for the little ones? In support of this view, Dan. x. 13. 20, 21 is cited, to show that there were special angelic princes over nations, as Grecia, Persia, and Israel. Hebrews i. 14. it is claimed, would show the same guardianship in the case of individuals. Of course, it is perfectly clear that angels do minister to the people of God, more especially in the preceding dispensation, as now we have the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. But is the thought of individual guardianship a scriptural one? Does it not rather savor of Rome? National oversight is something different, and hinted at in the mention of "principalities and powers;" but, then, do individuals have evil guardians as well as holy? No other Scripture has a hint of such a thing.

Nor is such a thought suggested in the passage we are considering; indeed, it would do violence to the context. On earth little ones may be despised; in heaven their angels behold the face of God. "Their angels," then, simply means the little ones themselves, but in spirit, not in body. We have this use of the word angel for the disembodied spirit in Acts xii. 15. Peter had been shut up in prison under threat of death. The saints had come together to pray for his deliverance; and while so engaged, Peter, set free by the angel of the Lord, came and knocked at the gate where the saints were. On being assured that it was Peter himself, they said, "It is his angel;" that is, he has been slain, and this is his spirit.

A similar, though symbolic, use we have of the word angel in

the epistles to the seven churches (Rev., chaps. i-iii.). Here the angel is the star or light of the Church, the spiritual part, we might say, represented at the close of each epistle by the words, "he that hath an ear."

We would say, then, that Scripture does not warrant the thought of special guardian angels. They are *all* ministering spirits, engaged, unseen by human eye, in errands of providential care and mercy for the heirs of salvation. They are not prominently brought forward in the New Testament, doubtless for the simple reason that Scripture, foreseeing the misuse by men of this ministry, putting it in the place of Christ and the Holy Ghost, has kept them in the background. Christ, the Sun, has eclipsed the other lights which in darker days might come more prominently into view.

Question 11.—Please explain John viii. 6, "Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground."

Answer.—The first and obvious thought would be that our Lord was seeking to arrest the attention of these accusers of the sinful woman. The silent pause, the quiet writing on the ground, as though writing in their hearts, might well serve to make them pause too, and let memory do its work, reminding them of sins on their part. But failing to touch consciences, hardened by self-righteousness, in this way, He rises, and in unmistakable words says, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her;" and again the pause and the writing, to impress it upon their hearts. And now even their dull consciences are aroused; not, alas, to lead them in confession to Him who is perfect love as well as perfect light, but to leave the light of that presence where all things are detected.

But our Lord's acts were, beyond question, symbolical, and intended by their very character to convey spiritual truths. His feeding the multitude was intended to show not merely His divine power and goodness, but to symbolize the spiritual food—Himself—which gives life to the world (John vi.). When He opened the eyes of the blind man (John ix.), the spittle and clay cannot but suggest the contrast with the defiling nature of the act in the Old Testament (Number xii. 14.). Therefore we can expect to find a significance in each part of this action of our Lord.

The dust of the earth suggests death.—"Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." The writing cannot but remind us of those writings of God, the one upon the tables of stone, in the law, and the other upon the wall—"found wanting;" While the Lord's stooping, Himself, to write thus would suggest both the holy requirements of the law, the fact that they had broken it, and that He in grace would stoop to take His place in death to set the sinner free. "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death" (Ps. xxii. 15.). On this ground He can say to the poor child of sin and shame, "Neither do I condemn thee: Go, and sin no more."

THE HEAVENLY CALLING.

(Eph. ii. 1-13.)

THIS precious portion of the inspired word, which gives the most exalted view of the christian calling, emphasises the fact that we are indebted to the grace of God, and the blood of Christ, for this marvelous position, of which we could not even have thought. "God, who is rich in mercy," thought of this. "By grace ye are saved." "Ye who sometimes," or formerly, "were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." And how nigh are we thus brought? "Made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" or, as it is expressed in the first chapter, "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Israel was blessed with all temporal blessings in earthly places on condition of keeping the law. Those who believe in Jesus are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places as the gift of grace through His precious blood.

It must be by grace that we have this calling on high. Even if Adam and Eve, while in their state of innocence, had been given a place in heaven, it would have been a matter of pure grace. By their obedience they could only keep their first estate. They could not earn a higher one. If so, it must indeed be grace which gives us a place there, — us who were away from God, lost and undone through sin; lying, as a christian poet expresses it, "at hell's dark door." But while grace alone might have been sufficient to give our unfallen parents a place in heaven, it required more than grace to give us a place there; that is, it required grace to lay a basis

on which God could righteously pick us up, and give us a place in His holy presence. Justice required that sin be atoned for; as, without it — “without shedding of blood—is no remission.” Hence it is said in our passage that we are “made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

The first three verses tell us of the condition in which grace found us, namely, “dead in trespasses and sins,” etc. But God who is rich in mercy, loved us in this condition, and sent the Son of His love to meet our deep need. He came where we were. Yes, while “a certain priest,” and “likewise a Levite,” could look on, but bring no relief — in other words, while Judaism could really do nothing for either Jew or Gentile, He who was rich in glory, and for our sake became poor, proved Himself to be the good Samaritan, — *He came where we were!* He did this in the fullest sense, — He put Himself in our place, died as our precious substitute on Calvary’s cross, as an atonement for the trespasses and sins in which we were dead; thus, to meet our sad condition, He became, in a sense, dead with us. He who knew no sin was made sin for us, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, that we by His stripes might be healed. And then, as a proof of finished atonement, God, as is stated in the previous chapter, “raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.” And as the exceeding greatness of the power which wrought this in Christ is to us-ward who believe, therefore, in the next chapter — the portion we are dwelling upon — it is

said that "God, for His great love, wherewith He has loved us . . . hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us," Jewish and Gentile believers, "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Of course, the value of Christ's atoning death is not divinely appropriated to us till we receive Him in a true faith. But as soon as we do receive Him, the value of His death is ours, and therefore we are at once in God's eye seen as dead with Him—a truth taught in other epistles of Paul,—that is, we are seen as having died with our Substitute when He gave His life for us on Calvary; and, as a consequence, we are, as stated in the passage before us, quickened with Him, raised up with Him, and seated in the heavenly places in Him. In short, we are at once identified with Christ in His death, resurrection, and ascension, which took place more than eighteen hundred years ago. Yea more, we are identified with Him as now seated in the heavenlies. We are seated there in Him. As sure as He lives before the face of God, we live also. Such is the present exalted position or standing of all true believers in Jesus, however poorly they may be taught in these precious truths. Of course, the work of Christ is perfect. If so, the standing of believers before God is perfect. It being in Christ, it must be perfect. Thus we start with perfection. God must have perfection,—He must have it *for us*; and therefore, in His great love, He provided it at His own cost. Hence we can in deep lowliness bring Him perfection by pleading Christ, by trusting in Him whom He delivered to death for us, and who is now in His presence in cloudless acceptance as our representative. Praise our God for this gracious and

perfect provision! He has given us One on whom we can rest our weary souls with the fullest confidence—One in whom the pure light of heaven cannot discover a spot or a flaw; and as He is, so are we in God's thoughts.

“We praise, then, our God; how rich is His grace!
We were far from Him once—estranged from his face;
By blood we are purchased, are cleansed and made nigh,
And blest in His presence, *in Jesus*, on high!”

We have next, verse 7, God's purpose in giving us this perfect standing in His presence, namely, “That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Thus, while we have even now this exalted position *in* Christ, and thereby a present object for the heart, we have a bright and sure hope of being *with* Him where He is,—the position and the hope being inseparably connected. “If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” The hope, our verse tells us, is to be realized “in the ages to come.” The saints who depart this life before the Lord comes are now with Him; but the apostle here passes over that, and fixes the eye on the great hope, when the whole family, in redeemed bodies, will be at home—

“Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.”

This world has had its ages. This age is called “the present evil world” or age. Satan is designated “the god of this world”—of this age. No wonder, then, that though God can and does work in this scene, He cannot rest in it. His holiness cannot rest where sin is, and His love cannot rest where misery is. If,

then, our fellowship is with Him, we, entering into His thoughts, walking with Him, we cannot rest here. But "in the ages to come" when all things will be brought in accordance with His mind, He will rest, and when He rests, His children can rest. They enter into *His* rest—a rest which will be forever.

"There we shall bathe our weary souls
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across our peaceful breast."

God can then freely "show" all that is now in His heart—freely and fully "show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." God is exercising the riches of His grace toward us even now, blessed be His name; but we walk by faith, then by sight; all will be fully manifested forever. Beside, all will be absent which here vexes and annoys, and everything present which can minister to our perfect and ever-enduring blessedness. And the brightest thought of all is, that we who were undone and defiled by sin, shall "be holy and without blame before Him in love" forever—in spirit and body suited to His holiness and love.

"Yes, in that light unstained,
Our sinless souls shall live;
Our heart's deep longings more than gained
When God His rest shall give.

"His presence there, my soul,
Its rest, its joy untold
Shall find, when endless ages roll;—
And time shall ne'er grow old."

"Our God the centre is—
His presence fills that land,
And countless myriads, owned as His,
Round Him adoring stand."

And all this "through Christ Jesus." We shall need Him in glory as well as now.

And we now are to walk according to all this, and in the sense and power of it. The apostle mentions this in verse 10, and exhorts thereto throughout the epistle. Though the apostle teaches in verses 8 and 9 that we are saved by grace through faith, and not by works, yet in the next verse he says, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Thus, though we are not saved by works, but simply on the principle of faith, yet, being saved, we are to walk as saved persons. When we are "created in Christ Jesus," in other words, when we are quickened with Christ, raised up with Him, and seated in heaven in Him, surely we are saved, justified, born again, and good works must come in here, not to get this place in Christ, but because we are in it. The subsequent exhortations in this epistle accord with this. Says the apostle, "I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." "Be followers," or imitators, "of God, as dear children, and walk in love as Christ hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us." Thus we are to imitate the One to whom we are brought, and the love which brought us there. "For ye were sometimes," or formerly, "darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light." Further, we are exhorted to "put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." He is ever busy seeking to get us down from a sense of our heavenly calling, for if he can do even that, our walk, though it may to the eye of the natural man be correct, yet

it will not be a heavenly walk, and we cease, till restored, to be a real testimony for Christ. Whereas, if we, in spite of all the powers of evil, maintain a true sense of the place which grace has given us, and of the consequent hope, and walk in the power which is for us, others may notice that our eye is on the unseen—that our backs are toward this poor world from which, through the cross, we have been delivered, and that our faces are set toward that into which, through grace, we are brought, with its bright outcome.

In closing, it may be well for us to be reminded that the apostle prayed that these Ephesian Christians might have “the eyes of their understanding enlightened,” or, rather, the eyes of the *heart*, as the original word means, enlightened, that they might really know the calling of God, and its blessed hope. And surely we no less need prayer for this end. Oh, let us see that we have much more than an intellectual knowledge of these things. Let us be more before our God, asking that the eyes of our hearts may be more and more opened—that we may see with growing clearness our calling on high, and the sure hope it gives; so that the eyes of the heart seeing all this, the poor heart, prone to be untrue, may be taken captive in view of abounding grace, which has done, and will do, all this for us; and then out of the heart the mouth will speak; yea, more, the feet and the hands; that is, we shall have a word for Christ, also we shall run with alacrity in the path of obedience, and be glad to serve in any way, and this to the glory of our God and Saviour. God is our sufficiency for this.

R. H.

UNREVISED NOTES OF A LECTURE

ON JOSHUA XV. 1-12.

EVERY word of this chapter, largely a list of names, is a precious storehouse of meaning for the edification of the people of God.

First, we will see how God placed His people in the land. 'These things happened unto them for types. The *type* is the chief thing, this means ; and thus it gives the New Testament truth in the Old. The light of the New enables us to search it out. Every type is a prophecy. Thus we have the plainest ground for the assurance of the inspiration of God's word, and it is capable of being made perfectly simple. I trust we shall find in it the truth which sanctifies.

The people of Israel represent the Christian family, and so every tribe illustrates one aspect of the children of God. Judah means "praise." In Genesis xlix. all these names are dwelt upon by Jacob, and Judah has a beautiful significance. Judah is the Royal tribe, the law-giver, as the one who was to have the sceptre till Shiloh came ; and it did. Then they refused Him, and it was taken away. Till then it was the seat of empire, and this will return to it again, for the Lion of the tribe of Judah is the Lamb that was slain.

In that tribe was the capacity for rule. Judah represents believers as a worshiping people, and this is ever the secret of strength. Israel's sweet psalmist and Solomon were of the tribe of Judah. It is the spirit of praise that is the spirit of power. It is also what enables us for the battle-field, and so we

find Jehoshaphat putting the singers in the front of the army, and God gave him the victory when they praised the Lord.

Judah has thus the first place when they come into the land beyond Jordan, and is apportioned its inheritance before any of the other tribes have anything. Judah has nearly all the south of the land (Simeon only certain cities, and Dan also inside Judah). Judah's territory ran from the salt sea to the Mediterranean. What we have to learn in all this is, that God's thoughts about His people find expression in it; nothing is accidental. What is shown in placing this tribe thus is that for rest in the land there must be the spirit of praise; He must have worshipers. In those words of Psalm xxii., "O Thou that inhabitest the *praises* of Israel," we see that the praises of His people furnish His dwelling-place. The blessedness, too, of heaven is constant praise. The infidel ridicules this as the monotony of heaven, but it is the expression of the heart filled up to overflow. It is the proof that the heart of man is brought back to God absolutely. It is unprompted praise, as when the Lamb takes the book, in Rev. v., the elders fall down at once and worship. It is the necessary outflow of hearts that are full. Is it not this that shows us God for what He is?

Judah (meaning "praise") is the first to enter the land and the last to leave; and when he does leave, it is a complete break-up.

Joseph next inherits.

In Joseph, which means "adding," two tribes, or a double tribe, take a place in the land. This brings us to 2 Pet. i: "Add to your faith virtue,"—that is, courage, etc. Add is not exactly the thought, as a

man in building would add one brick to another. It is rather the kind of addition which a plant or tree makes to itself from air and soil; and so the bud, flower, and fruit come. And so it is in Christianity. The new nature has in itself the nature of God morally, and so of necessity it unfolds in us the likeness of God. We need exhortation, of course. Alas, how much of feebleness of growth, and in many what would seem to be none at all! If a plant throws out branches, there must be the hidden work of spreading roots as well. See Peter's failure. He did progress, and the failure became a necessity for progress; by it the ground became more plowed up and the roots got better hold, and in due time the fruit came.

In Joseph, then, there is the spirit of progress—courage first added, that the rest may be right. Let me say, if we have faith, the next thing we want is "virtue" (valor). In the midst of a hostile world, you will need to show your courage. And so we find, in Rom. x., while with the heart man believes unto righteousness, with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Unless a man bears outward testimony to Christ in the world, you cannot credit him with faith; but faith in the believer is invigorated by the act of confession. We have only to have courage, and leave results and consequences to God. Joseph has first to know the pit, as afterward the prison; and if we haven't this courage, how are we to get on to knowledge, which follows it? How should God give us knowledge, when we have no mind to use and walk by it? "Whereto we have attained, let us walk by it." If we do use it, and walk in it, we shall have to suffer for it; even

perhaps as Joseph, who was separated from his brethren.

Manasseh means "forgetting"; Ephraim, "fruitfulness." We must know how to forget old experiences. A man busy with what is before him is not occupied with what is behind. So Paul, "forgetting the things that are behind, I press toward the mark, for the Prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus;" he presses on to that which is before, viz., Christ in glory. Alas, how little of this Christians really show!

Ephraim and Manasseh represent the practical side of Christian life—what the world looks for. It does not trouble much about worship, but it insists upon your being a good man. You must have good fruit. We have, then, in Ephraim on the north, and Judah in the south, the two sides of Christian character which (strangely) tend to fall apart—on the one hand, those who are strong for doctrine; and on the other, the mass who think very little about that. They love Christ, and are all for service, but care little about doctrine. The Bible, for them, has far too much in it. Even as to the Lord's coming, etc., they think there is no need of these things. The falling apart in Israel began rather in Ephraim than Judah, though there was fault in Judah. These things, then, have significance.

Judah lay to the south; east of it the Salt sea, the Sea of Judgment, and Jordan running into it. Jordan, the river of death, runs down from beginning to end without watering anything, and falling at last into the deep pit of 1,300 feet below the Mediterranean; and it never returns out of it—from it there is no escape. Yet it is but a "lake." And so God

does not speak of Eternal Judgment as a *sea*—as a boisterous element, but as a “*lake* of fire,” subdued under His hand. There is no mutter of blasphemy, no indulgence in sin there. Judah rises up from the lake right up to where the Temple of God and the voice of praise are; and it will be forever so.

Judah, then, to the south; Ephraim to the north, between them an interval, as if already ready to fall apart. They are apart: are they to remain so? God has two tribes to put between to hold them fast. On the Jordan side, Benjamin: what does Benjamin mean? Jacob means “heel-catcher;” he was always grasping—grasping—often after what God wanted him to have; but his methods were any thing but right. As with the birth-right, so all through. Never waiting quietly upon God; never trusting Him; full of restlessness, which, alas! characterizes so many, and which is so often mistaken for spirituality. At Peniel he is crippled in this human strength, learns to cling to God instead of wrestling with Him; and at Bethel that the secret of power is subjection to Him who is El-bethel, “God of His own house.” On the way to Hebron, Benjamin is born. Rachel disappears; and Benjamin takes her place. Son of my sorrow, she says; son of my right hand, says Jacob. Benjamin is the type of Christ *in us*,—Christ as power on earth, as in Galatians: “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth *in me*.” What does this mean? It is not conversion, or life merely. He has looked into the face of Christ, and seen it dimmed with the agony of death for him. He has looked into heaven, and seen the glory shine out of that face; and now the cross is the end of Paul.

Christ is in the glory. He is the One to glory in. God has accepted Him for you; but He is also to be accepted by you *for yourself*. . . So Benjamin beautifully links these two—worship and fruitfulness—together. Be you sure this is the true and real hold-fast. It is as Christ is before us, as we abide in the sunshine of His glory, that we find what holds these things together in the Christian, and among Christians. It is now no more self, good self or bad self, but Christ that lives in me; and so will the heart well up in praise and worship, as well as overflow in fruitfulness.

The praise and worship are thus maintained on the one hand (Judah) with fruitfulness on the other (Ephraim). Benjamin holds both fast in power. Can we then say, beloved, “this *one* thing I do”?

It is easier to make Christ a whole object than half an object; we like, alas! better our own way, and have at last to meet God, not displayed as the true friend He is, but, Jacob-like, in opposition. We might have all the joy without the sorrow, all the gain without the loss. How much better it would all look to us when we look back in eternity, and we shall look back. Beloved, Christ is all. How blessed to let Christ clasp together for us our praises and worship, doctrine, and fruitfulness and activities in service.

And if there be a want in your soul unmet, then listen to those blessed words, “If any man thirst, let him come *unto Me* and drink, and *then rivers* of living water will flow out of you. How? Drink! Nothing else? Nothing! As surely as you drink, out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water! F. W. G.

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

THE CHURCH.—ITS MINISTRY.

(Continued from page 248.)

WHEN the evangelist has awakened the sinner and led him to Christ, through the power and blessing of the Holy Spirit, he has introduced him into the Church. Here his work as an evangelist ceases. To be sure the saved soul will love to hear the gospel of salvation again and again for his joy and establishment. He will find, if he goes on with God, that his relish for the simple elementary truths of redemption increases. To lose taste for the gospel is to lose taste for the love of God, and is one of the surest marks of spiritual declension. But though he delight in it, he no longer listens to it as one who needs to be saved. In that sense he is out from under the care of the evangelist, and needs other ministry.

We might remark, in passing, that the evangelist, in the love which he surely has for new-born souls as their spiritual father, will see to it that, as they have through the Spirit of God been introduced into the Church, the body of Christ, so also they will be brought into fellowship with that Church as it may have local expression. It is strange to think of a true evangelist, with a real passion for souls, after they have been brought to Christ, showing indifference as to their ecclesiastical associations. And yet, do we not hear of new converts being advised to enter "the church of their choice," or of their family? Was it thus when the gospel was put before them? Were they left to make choice of various ways of salvation, as by the law, or reformation, or by religious profession? Ah, no! they were told there was

but one Way, and that out of Christ they must be lost forever. Scripture was given to prove this, and they were not left alone until they had accepted God's way of salvation.

So should it be in the matter of church fellowship. The evangelist—in imitation of the good Samaritan—having bound up the sinner's wounds, pouring in the oil and wine—the blood of Christ witnessed to and applied by the Holy Spirit,—brings the wounded man to the inn, where he can be taken care of. And in this matter of church fellowship, surely as great care should be taken as in the matter of salvation ; for God's honor is in question in both cases. So, instead of inviting the new convert to enter the church of his choice, he should rather be shown that he is already in the Church, a member of it, and now should simply recognize those who, in the place where he resides, form the local assembly. Scripture is here, as in all else, the guide. In answer to the objection that this would plunge him into difficulties, our answer must be, they are not made by the Word of God, and can all be resolved by it. We are bound to sadly own that it must be bewildering to the soul who has just found peace, to be brought face to face with the sectarianism which is our common shame ; nor need we wonder if many are stumbled. But Scripture has a remedy even here, and the obedient following of that infallible guide will give relief, in its simplicity, for those who are really desirous of learning and doing God's will.

But to return. The evangelist introduces the convert into the Church. Here ministry of a new kind awaits him. After evangelists, in the passage we are considering, come "pastors." The word is liter-

ally "shepherds," and fittingly designates those whom the Lord has qualified to "feed the flock of God." The sheep of Christ need care. The "good Shepherd," who laid down His life for them, will see that they are not merely delivered from the enemy, but guarded, led, and fed as well. It is here that the importance of the gift of pastor is seen. His it is to look after the Lord's people; to see that they do not go astray, and to seek to recover them if they do; to comfort them under affliction; to cheer and sympathize with them under trial; to warn them if they grow worldly or careless. He must be watchful, prayerful, constant. He must watch for souls as one who must give account. The pastor's work is necessarily largely of a private character. He need not be a public speaker, nor apparently take a prominent place. He deals largely with individuals alone, or in the retirement of the family circle. Here the true pastor finds his sphere of service, nor is it a limited one. And how such an one is welcomed by the Lord's people. Here is one who can rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep,—ready to give counsel, encouragement, or correction. Beloved brethren, can we be sufficiently thankful for pastors? What would the Church of God be without them?—open to the attacks of the enemy, the weak neglected, the wanderers unsought, the unruly unwarned. And is it not well for us to pray that this precious gift of Christ may be more recognized and made use of? Let those who have the care of Christ's flock awaken afresh to their responsibilities. They have a work which no man can do for them. That such a gift exists at the present time who can doubt, with this scripture before them? But externality and superfi-

ciality are the characteristics of the day. Showy talents, eloquence, popularity, are now the most appreciated, and the useful ones, which look beneath the surface, which minister to the true health of the body of Christ, are too often despised and neglected. As a consequence the saints suffer ; they grow lean, and where a true pastoral care might develop them into usefulness, they shrivel up into spiritual decrepitude, and remain weaklings all their lives.

Of the qualifications for pastoral care we need but speak briefly. They are given in general in those passages which speak of oversight, and eldership. Of office we shall speak in a short time, and will ask the reader to dismiss from his mind, for the time being, all thought of official character in considering the following passage : " This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop (literally, if a man desire oversight) he desireth a good work. A bishop then, must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre ; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous : one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity ; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God ?) not a novice lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." (1 Tim. iii 1-14, see also Titus i. 6-9; 1 Pet. v. 1-4.)

In general we would say, that the pastoral gift is the gift of rule and oversight. As is well known the word translated to rule (Matt. ii. 6, Rev. ii. 27 etc.,)

means literally to shepherd, and is rendered "feed," in Jno. xxi. 16, Acts xx. 28; 1 Pet. v. 2, where pastoral care is spoken of. Rule in Scripture is service, and he rules best who serves best.

We have noticed as one of the qualifications for a bishop that he must be "apt to teach, which means that he must be able to meet and answer questions, and make use of Scripture, in the performance of his duties. Closely linked, however, with the gift of pastor is that of teacher. In a distinctive sense, as contrasted with pastor, the teacher is he who is gifted to unfold the word of God. All God's children have an unction from the holy One, and need not that any man teach them; yet this does not do away with the need of teachers, as divine gifts. It is because they know all things that they are written to. (Jno. ii. 20, 21.) By the Spirit they can understand, and so receive that which is given to them. They are privileged, and required, all of them, to search the Scriptures for themselves, and will be richly rewarded for diligent search. And it is the most diligent who will most appreciate the teacher—one who is able not only to understand but to impart truth.

Of the importance of this gift it would be almost impossible to speak too strongly. It is the truth that makes free, and keeps free; and it is the work of the teacher to minister the truth to the people of God. The word of God is to be unfolded, its perfections to be exhibited, its doctrines expounded, and its difficulties explained. The teacher is the student of this Book; he gives himself wholly to it. In days like this where all sorts of error abound, from the open blasphemy of the infidel to the countless forms of parasitic growth which profess to be derived

from the Scriptures,—in days like these when the very foundations are being undermined, we need teachers, men who turn us back to the “law and the testimony,” and show us that, in the midst of the confusion of tongues, there is still a voice that speaks with no uncertain sound. It is the teacher who must meet the assaults of annihilationism, restorationism, higher criticism,—evils which have fastened themselves upon the very vitals of professing Christendom, and which are eclipsing many testimonies, and doubtless leading many souls to destruction. It is the teacher who leads us into the deep things of God’s word, and by satisfying us with good, leaves no relish for evil.

The Lord did not intend that we should stop with the gospel of our salvation. That is but the beginning. Yet how prone we are to remain just there, to leave the wondrous truths hidden in the mines of Scripture, and to go on all our lives as babes and paupers.

The teacher prevents this, and for those who will hear, opens the treasure-house and brings out “things new and old.” Let us pray for teachers; that they may be kept dependent, and so, free from error; that they may keep the even balance of truth, and so present “the whole counsel of God;” and that the study and impartation of the treasures of God’s word may never be with them a cold intellectual task, like the water which rusts the iron pipe through which it passes; but rather that all their service may be as the river which brings beauty and fertility to its own banks while it bears refreshment on to the country beyond.

Such, then, are the gifts of an ascended Christ to and for His Church. They are given for the whole

Church, not for a part of it only. An evangelist or a teacher is such for the whole body of Christ. No denomination can claim them, no local assembly monopolize their services. The pastor may never exercise his functions beyond the pale of one assembly, yet he is a gift to the whole Church, and ministers, in his place, to the entire body.

There are other scriptures which give us the same gifts in somewhat different form, but these are the main ones, and others are modifications or parts of these. See Rom. xii. 4-8, where prophecy, exhortation and teaching, rule and ministry, would all doubtless be included under the teaching and pastoral care of Ephesians. So also in 1 Cor. xii. we have the gifts of the Spirit where, leaving out those which were of a miraculous and therefore temporary (1 Cor. xiv. 22.) character, all might be grouped again under the pastors and teachers of Ephesians.

While not all have the characteristics of, or qualifications for, prominent service in any of these ways, it is still true that all are needed, and none can be ignored. None are too insignificant to render valuable service. Nay, "those members which seem to be more feeble are necessary." Every member of the body is a member of Christ, and is gifted to do a work which will edify the whole. How can he know his gift, and how exercise it? Not by thrusting himself forward, in restless service, but simply by abiding in Christ. "But holding the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. iv. 15, 16.)

How beautifully does each member fall into its place and do its appointed ministry here! And what is the secret of this harmonious and effectual working?—*holding the Head.*

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS; OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

CHAPTER IX.

(Continued from page 240.)

THE last two verses of Chapter VIII. connect with the opening words of this chapter. The more Ecclesiastes applies every faculty he has to solve the riddle under the sun, robbing himself of sleep and laboring with strong energy and will, he becomes only the more aware that that solution is altogether impossible. The contradictions of nature baffle the wisdom of nature. There is no assured sequence, he reiterates, between righteousness and happiness on the one hand, and sin and misery on the other. The whole confusion is in the sovereign hand of God, and the righteous and the wise must just leave the matter there, for "no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them." What discrimination is there here? Do not all things happen alike to all? Yes, further, does not Time, unchecked by any higher power, sweep all relentlessly to one common end? Love cannot be inferred from the "end" of the righteous, nor hatred from the "end" of the sinner; for it is one and the same death that stops the course of each. Oh, this is indeed an "evil under the sun."

Darker and darker the cloud settles over his spirit; denser and still more dense the fogs of helpless ignorance and perplexity enwrap his intelligence. For, worse still, do men recognize, and live at all reasonably in view of, that common mortality? Alas, madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead; and then all hope for them, as far as can be seen, is over forever. Dead! What

does that mean? It means that every faculty, as far as can be seen, is stilled forever. The dead lion, whose majesty and strength while living would have even now struck me with awe, is less formidable as it lies there than a living dog. So with the dead among men: their hatred is no more to be feared, for it can harm nothing; their love is no more to be valued, for it can profit nothing; their zeal and energy are no more to be accounted of, for they can effect nothing; yea, all has come to an end forever under the sun. Oh, the awfulness of this darkness! "Then I will give," continues Ecclesiastes, "counsel for this vain life in conformity with the dense gloom of its close. Listen! Go eat with joy thy bread, and merrily drink thy wine; let never shade of sorrow mar thy short-lived pleasure; let no mourning on thy dress be seen, nor to thy head be oil of gladness lacking; merrily live with her whom thy affection has chosen as thy life-companion, and trouble not thyself as to God's acceptance of thy works—that has been settled long ago; nor let a sensitive conscience disturb thee: whatsoever is in thy power to do, that do, without scruple or question;* for soon, but too soon, these days of thy vanity will close, and in the grave, whither thou surely goest, all opportunities for activity, of whatever character, are over, and that—*forever!*"

Strange counsel this, for sober and wise Ecclesiastes to give, is it not? Much has it puzzled many a commentator. Luther boldly says it is sober christian advice, meant even now to be literally accepted,

* I believe this is distinctly the bearing of these words, and not as in our version.

“lest you become like the monks, who would not have one look even at the sun.” Hard labor indeed, however, is it to force it thus into harmony with the general tenor of God’s word.

But is not the counsel good and reasonable enough under certain conditions? And are not those conditions and premises clearly laid down for us in the context here? It is as if a whirlwind of awful perplexities had swept the writer with irresistible force away from his moorings,—a black cloud filled with the terrors of darkness and death sweeps over his being, and out of the black and terrible storm he speaks—Man has but an hour to enjoy here, and I know nothing as to what comes after, except that death, impenetrable death, ends every generation of men, throws down to the dust the good, the righteous, the sober, as well as the lawless, the false, and the profligate; ends in a moment all thought, knowledge, love, and hatred;—then since I know nothing beyond this vain life, I can only say, “Have thy fling;—short, short thy life will be, and vain thou wilt find this short life; so get thy fill of pleasure here, for thou goest, and none can help thee, to where all activities cease, and love and hatred end forever.”

This, we may say, based on these premises, and excluding all other, is reasonable counsel. Does not our own apostle Paul confirm it? Does he not say, if this life be all, this life of vanity under the sun, then let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die? Yea, we who have turned aside from this path of present pleasures are of all men most miserable, if this vain life be all.

And are we to expect poor unaided human wisdom to face these awful problems of infinite depth without finding the strongest evidence of its utter incapacity and helplessness? Like a feather in the blast, our kingly and wise preacher (beyond whom none can ever go)

is whirled, for the time being, from his soberness, and, in sorrow akin to despair, gives counsel that is in itself revolting to all soberness and wisdom. Nothing could so powerfully speak the awful chaos of his soul; and—mark it well—in *that same awful chaos* would you and I be at any moment, my reader, if we thought at all, but for one inestimably precious fact. Black like unto the outer darkness is the storm-cloud we are looking at, and the wild, despairing, yet sad counsel, to “live merrily” is in strict harmony with the wild, awful darkness, like the sea-gull’s scream in the tempest.

Let us review a little the path of reasoning that has led our author to where he is; only we will walk it joyfully in the light of God.

“No man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before him.” We have looked upon a scene where a holy Victim—infinately holy—bowed His head under the weight of a judgment that could not be measured. It was but a little while, and the very heavens could not contain themselves with delight at His perfect beauty, His perfect obedience; but again, and yet again, were they opened to express the pleasure of the Highest in this lowly Man. Now, not only are they closed in silence, but a horror seems to enwrap all creation. The sun, obscured by no earth-born cloud, gives out no spark nor ray of light; and in that solemn darkness every voice is strangely hushed. From nine till noon the air was filled with revilings and reproaches—all leveled at the one sinless Sufferer; but now, for three hours, these have been absolutely silent, till at last one cry of agony breaks the stillness; and it is from Him who was oppressed and afflicted, yet opened not His mouth; was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so opened He not His mouth:—“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani”—“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!”

There, my beloved readers, look there! Let that cross be before us, and then say, “No man knoweth

love or hatred by all that is before them." Are not both revealed there as never before? Hatred! What caused the blessed God thus to change His attitude towards the One who so delighted Him that the heavens burst open, as it were, under the weight of that delight? There is but one answer to that question. *Sin*. Sin was there on that holiest Sufferer—mine, yours, my reader. And God's great hatred of sin is fully revealed there. I know "hatred" when I see God looking at my sin on His infinitely holy, infinitely precious, infinitely beloved Son. * * * *

Let us meditate upon, without multiplying words over this solemn theme, and turn to the Love that burns, too, so brightly there. Who can measure the infinity of love to us when, in order that that love might have its way unhindered, God forsakes the One who, for all the countless ages of the eternal past, had afforded Him perfect "daily" delight, was ever in His bosom—the only one in that wide creation who could satisfy or respond, in the communion of equality, to His affections—and turns away from Him; nay, "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him"; "He hath put Him to grief." Ponder these words; and in view of who that crucified Victim was, and His relationship with God, measure, if you can, the love displayed there, the love in that one short word "so"—"God *so* loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son;"—then, whilst viewing the cross, hear, coming down to us from the lips of the wise king, "No man knoweth love or hatred." Hush! Ecclesiastes, hush! Breathe no such word in such a scene as this. Pardonable it were in that day, when you looked only at the disjointed chaos and tangle under the sun; but looking at that cross, it were the most heinous sin, the most unpardonable disloyalty and treason, to say now, "No man knoweth love." Rather, adoringly, will we say, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that

we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. And *we have known and believed the love that God has to us.*"

Yea, now let "all things come alike to all:"—that tender Love shall shed its light over this stormy scene, and enable the one that keeps *it* before him to walk the troubled waters of this life in quiet assurance and safety. Death still may play sad havoc with the most sensitive of affections; but that Love shall, as we have before seen, permit us to weep tears; but not bitter despairing tears. Further, it sheds over the spirit the glorious light of a coming Day, and we look forward, not to an awful impending gloom, but to a pathway of real light, that pierces into eternity. The Day! We are of the Day! The darkness passes, the true light already shines! Then listen, my fellow-pilgrims, to the *Spirit's* counsel: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore, *let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that are drunken, are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the Day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.*"

Our poor preacher, in the darkness of the cloud of death, counsels, "merrily drink thy wine." And not amiss, with such an outlook, is such advice. In the perfect Light of Revelation, lighting up present and a future eternity, well may we expect counsel as differing from this as the light in which it is given differs from the darkness. "*The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the Day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.*" Amen and Amen.

(To be continued.)

“THAT WHICH I SEE NOT, TEACH THOU ME.
TEACH ME TO DO THY WILL,
FOR THOU ART MY GOD.”

ANOTHER lesson learned, my God, with Thee !

I thank *Thee* for the victory won.

I did not know I'd need to learn this one,
And marveled why such exercise should be,
As o'er my task I bent most bitterly,
Examining my heart with scrutiny.

But e'er the discipline was overpast,

I knew that I had deepest need to learn

This too. My Master, may I ever turn
To Thee when heaviness upon my heart is pressed
By some new sight of self I had not guessed!
I would this burden, too, upon Thee cast.

Then let me learn, though deep may be the pain.

I would not leave Thy school, my God ;—'tis well,

For through Thy discipline I'll have the more to tell
Of the surpassing grace and loveliness
Of Him who used my utter worthlessness
For His own glory and my endless gain.

Yea, let me learn; I would not pass my days

Indifferently, in carelessness and ease,

But from the world and all its folly cease—
At every step take counsel with Thy word,
And walk in sweet communion with Thee, Lord,
While to Thy blessed name be all the praise.

God's school is thorough, and the course life-long ;

The object-lesson is His blessed *Son*;

The theme is endless when thou'st once begun;
But if thou'st ever tasted its sweet lore,
Thy thirsty soul will surely long for more,
And *Christ* become thy *one, eternal* song.

H. Mc D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Question 12.—Can you harmonize 1 Cor. xi. 5, with 1 Cor. xiv. 34. If women are to prophesy in this dispensation, where, or on what occasions are they to do so, as it was not permitted them to speak in the assemblies?

Answer.—Prophecy is speaking directly from God, often revealing things in a supernatural way, but always conveying a direct message from Him. 1 Cor. xiv. 34, shows women were to be silent in the assembly; therefore, evidently, the prayer and prophecy spoken of in the eleventh chapter, was of a private character, no doubt in the home.

Question 13.—Is it according to Scripture that Christ used fermented wine in instituting His Supper? Must it be fermented, thus changing its nature before it can symbolize the blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot?

Answer.—The wine used at the Lord's Supper was unquestionably that partaken of at the Passover; the same, without doubt, also used in the drink offerings. Scripture speaks of no other kind of wine, and this was of such a character, that the abuse of it by the carnal Corinthians, resulted in drunkenness. (1 Cor. xi. 21.)

Unfermented grape juice is not wine, and when the natural process of fermentation has been arrested by chemicals, or in some other artificial way, it becomes anything but a suitable symbol of the blood of Christ.

The remedy for drunkenness, as for all other sin, is Christ alone. If all liquors could be abolished from the world, that would not blot out one sin. All should have horror for drunkenness, as for every other sin; and surely those who are endeavouring to diminish its evils, for Christ's sake, are entitled to respect and sympathy. But we are persuaded that God's way is the only true one—"Make the *tree* good, and his fruit good." When a man is born again he has a new nature which has no desire for sin; and if he mortifies his members, which are upon the earth, if he reckons himself to be "dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus," sin will not have dominion over him.

BRIEF NOTES OF AN ADDRESS

ON JOSHUA XIV. 6 TO END, AND XV. 13-19.

THIS is not a mere historical lesson. I believe it is a lesson specially pressed on *us* in a time like this. Caleb was the one man of his time, a true-hearted man, who, when a whole generation abandoned God, wholly followed Him. When everything is drifting away, beloved, what a thing it is to stand and act thus. When those whom once we looked up to go this way and that;—how like sheep the people of God are; how easily, also, they run this way and that! But the good part is to follow the shepherd, and we shall never be saved from the responsibility of doing this. Of late, more than ever before, this has been shown. Nor is it enough to say we will not follow this man or that,—which may be, after all, mere independency; but we must be *wholly following God*. This will make us independent of man indeed, and dependent on God sufficiently to be willing to follow any by whom He may be pleased to show us what is *His* way.

The babes in 1 John ii. had an unction from the Holy One and knew all things, and needed not that any should teach them. We might take this, and easily run into independence, and so nourish a pride that is far from God. Pride and humility, in a sense, lie very close together. The most thorough pride may be nursed upon a text like this. But mark how it is put before us: the unction is from the *Holy One*, and this reminds us that “the knowledge of the *holy* is understanding.”

“Ye know all things,” means simply what that does as to the blind man restored to sight. When we

say we can see everything, it does not mean that we can see Australia; but with a clear day and good eyes we can see anything that is presented to us. So it is here: as anointed of the Holy One, we can discern what is of God and what is not.

Caleb means "whole-hearted." This characterized him. We do not know what gift he may have had; he lived for God with all he had; and so may any here. No more is needed.

In Joshua xiii. and xiv. the tribes get their inheritance; in xv. the lot of the tribe of Judah is detailed first, and at the end the cities of Judah. In the middle we have Caleb's portion and blessing. Here we have God showing *us* how to get possession of our inheritance as Caleb got hold of his.

How old we get so quickly, but should we spiritually? Truly not. Eternal life is not destined for the grave; and here is a man who does not ever grow old. He had a receipt against old age. It is man's link with God that is power over nature, and we can walk with God and not grow old.

At forty years he spied out the land, and forty-five years later he is as vigorous to go in and "possess" as at first to spy. What is all the weariness and strengthlessness which so characterize the people of God, the witness of; but that we are too little like Caleb.

In Numbers, when the spies searched out the land, Hebron was the special place which got their attention. Hebron means "communion." The glorious fruitage of Eshcol belongs there, and Caleb gets it. It is worth being a Caleb to get the place of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

But all the power of Satan is *there* to keep them

out. The choicest blessing is the very thing the enemy would take possession of. The Anakim—the long-necked race—dwelt there, and called it the city of Arba,—Kirjath-arba, “a strong man,” I suppose, and the head of the Anakim. They were giants; but, beloved, giants are never the favorites of God. Little “Davids” are rather the men after His own heart.

Let us look at the names of the three leaders of these children of Anak, whom Caleb has to do with.

Sheshai,—white.

Ahiman,—who is my brother?

Talmai,—my furrows.

These Anakim are the children of pride; as it was said, “Who can stand before the sons of Anak?” He who is the High and Lofty One, and Who inhabiteth Eternity, however, dwells not with such, but with the humble and contrite heart,—with him that trembleth at His word. But what is “*white*” in a son of Anak? It is self-righteousness. They are too big, too self-sufficient, too apt to talk of themselves; and the child of God, alas, is capable of being self-conscious. He is not a son of Anak, of course, but the son of Anak has possession of him. “Who is *my* brother?” This is self-esteem in another way. It expresses pride of race and circumstances, and nobody equal to him. “My furrows.” What *I* have made with *my* plow. My work, at least, I can take pleasure in. Everything in a son of Anak circles around self. Here again, alas, Christians can be kept out of Hebron (communion) by such things,—pride of character, pride of connection, spiritual pride of one’s doings.

Caleb is ready to take possession of the land at eighty-five. He has no doubts. Only he says, “if

the Lord be with me." It is not *doubt*, but *lowliness*, and a very safe thing to say. Beloved, if the Lord be with us, what shall we not do? It is all right for us to speak of *no confidence* in ourselves, but don't let us stop there. Why do we not go on and have *the most perfect confidence* in God? This we want just now. Men of knowledge are going this way and that, and the people of God are scattered like sheep; and sheep *can* scatter, you know. If we have attained true self-judgment, it will not be to give up confidence in God. Breaking with self is the way of true confidence in God. If there be not confidence in God, be sure of this, there is not the thorough break with self-confidence. "If God be with me," says Caleb, and so may we. Why may I not be able to drive out the Anakim, even if others have fallen? Ah, to be sustained by His arms, we must be weak enough to rest on them our whole weight. They *are* under us, but we want to *feel* them under us, by this.

There is no great history: the account is perfectly simple. He drives out the children of Anak, and takes possession: that is all. The man of greatest experiences in Genesis was Jacob, and the wonder is that most of them were before he became Israel: after that we find very few indeed. He nearly drops out of the history. Only a few more steps to Hebron, and then no more of the experiences of Jacob. What is the *power* of God? Is *He* going to make a difficulty of doing anything? If He works, and we work His work, there is no need of even the consciousness of power. We rest in His arms, and let Him do it. Caleb drove out Anak, and took possession: that is all.

One thing more I am anxious for, for us all. Not only Hebron he gets. This is not all of the land he covets. There is something to complete "communion." He wants Debir, the name given to the most Holy place in the Temple of God. Its original name was Kirjath Sepher, meaning the "City of the Book." When a Caleb gets the book into his hands, it becomes a living oracle (Debir),—that from which God speaks to His people.

Joshua answers to Ephesians; and for the conflict there, we have only one offensive weapon. It says, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." So our version reads. Is this enough for me? Too much. I'd need the greatest mind and the biggest heart ever was to hold that sword. It is too heavy, had I to wield all that. It should read, "The sword of the Spirit, which is the *saying* of God,"—enough to suit a little hand, and yet do marvelous things. It is the needed word for the time, which the Spirit gives,—a weapon fitted to my hand for the occasion.

This is what we want,—the *living* Word for this moment, to-day for to-day and to-morrow for to-morrow. We want this; and if it be the sword of the Spirit we must be in the *power* of the Spirit to use it. But if with God thus, babes or old men, we shall be successful warriors here.

These Anakim may remind us, then, of our great need. The infidel evolutionist says man has fallen upward,—from a mere animal he has become a man. In a way it is true: an upward self-assertive rise has been his fall. It is an *awful* fall. Brethren, let us fall *down* before the Lord. In the scripture conflict between good and evil, *Michael* is the Warrior Angel;

and why Michael? It means "Who is like God?" Wasn't this the very thing Satan tempted man with, "Ye shall be as God"? Michael answers this in the end, and smites the Devil out of heaven. Oh that the Anakite spirit kept no saint out of his Hebron now. Thoroughly humbled, we shall find communion simple. Where we found it first we find it still. Jesus in His baptism goes where all those poor people went, who came as sinners to the baptism of repentance, empty and humble. They had nothing to talk about but their sins. Jesus says I must go there.

God made everything out of nothing, and so the New Creator of our souls delights to work, and works still. Conscious only of our infirmities, we may glory in these: for the power of Christ shall rest upon us.

F. W. G.

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS; OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

CHAPTER IX.

(Continued from page 278.)

BUT once again our Preacher turns; and now he sees that it is not assuredly possible for the advice he has given to be followed, and that even in this life neither work, device, knowledge, nor wisdom, are effective in obtaining good or in shielding their possessor from life's vicissitudes. "The swift"—does he always win the race? Are there no contingencies that more than counterbalance his swiftness? A slip, a fall, a turned muscle, and—the race is not to the swift. The strong—is he necessarily conqueror in the fight? Many an unforeseen and uncontrollable event has turned the tide of battle and

surprised the world, till the "fortune of war" has passed into a proverb. The skillful may not be able at all times to secure even the necessities of life; nor does abundance invariably accompany greater wisdom, whilst no amount of intelligence can secure constant and abiding good.*

Time and doom hap alike to all, irrespective of man's purposes or proposings, and no man knows what his hap shall be, since no skill of any kind can avail to guide through the voyage of life without encountering its storms. From the unlooked-for quarter, too, do those storms burst on us. As the fishes suspect no danger till in the net they are taken, and as the birds fear nothing till ensnared, so we poor children of Adam, when our "evil time" comes round, are snared without warning.

Absolutely true this is, if life be regarded solely by such light as human wisdom gives: "Time and doom happen alike to all." The whole scene is like one vast, confused machine, amongst whose intricate wheels, that revolve with an irregularity that defies foresight, poor man is cast at his birth; and ever and anon, when he least expects it, he comes between these wheels; and then he is crushed by some "evil," which may make an end of him altogether or leave him for further sorrows. All things seem to work confusedly for evil, and this caps the climax of Ecclesiastes's misery.

Here is the sequence of his reasoning :

* There seems to be an intensive force to these words, constantly and in each phase becoming stronger, in evident antithesis to the "work, device, knowledge, and wisdom," that Ecclesiastes had just counseled to use to the utmost in order to obtain "good" in this life.

Firstly, There is no righteous allotment upon earth; the righteous suffer here, whilst the unjust escape. Nay,

Secondly, There is an absolute lack of all discrimination in the death that ends all; and,

Thirdly, So complete is that end, bringing all so exactly to one dead level, without the slightest difference; and so impenetrable is the tomb to which all go, that I counsel, in my despair, "Eat, drink, and be merry, irrespective of any future."

Fourthly, But, alas! that, too, is impossible; for no "work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom," can assure freedom from the evil doom that haps, soon or late, to all."

Intensified misery! awful darkness indeed! And our own souls tremble as we stand with Ecclesiastes under its shadow and respond to his groanings. For the same scene still spreads itself before us as before him. Mixed with the mad laughter and song of fools is the continued groan of sorrow, pain, and suffering, that still tells of "time and doom."

A striking instance of this comes to my hand even as I write; and since its pathetic sadness makes it stand out even from the sorrows of this sad world, I would take it as a direct illustration of Ecclesiastes's groan. At Nyack on the Hudson a Christian family retire to rest after the happy services of last Lord's Day, the 21st of October—an unbroken circle of seven children, with their parents. Early on the following morning, before it is light, a fire is raging in the house, and four of the little children are consumed in the conflagration. The account concludes: "The funeral took place at eleven o'clock to-day." That is, in a little more than twelve hours after retir-

ing to sleep, four of the members of that family circle were in their graves! Here is an "evil time" that has fallen suddenly indeed; and the sad and awful incident enables us to realize just what our writer felt as he penned the words. With one stroke, in one moment, four children, who have had for years their parents' daily thought and care, meet an awful doom, and all that those parents themselves have believed receives a blow whose force it is hard to measure. Now listen, as the heathen cry, "Where is now their God?" Why was not His shield thrown about them? Had he not the power to warn the sleeping household of the impending danger? Is He so bound by some law of His own making as to forbid his interfering with its working? Worse still, was He indifferent to the awful catastrophe that was about to crush the joy out of that family circle? If His was the power, was His love lacking?

Oh, awful questions when no answer can be given to them;—and nature gives no answer. She is absolutely silent. No human wisdom, even though it be his who was gifted "with a wise and understanding heart, so that none was like him before him, neither after him should any arise like unto him," could give any answer to questions like these. And think you, my reader, that nature does not cry out for comfort, and feel about for light at such a time? Nor that the enemy of our souls is not quick in his malignant activity to suggest all kinds of awful doubt? Every form of darkness and unbelief is alive to seize such incidents, and make them the texts on which they may level their attacks against the Christian's God.

But is there really no eye to pity?—no heart to

love?—no arm to save? Are men really subject to blind law—"time and doom"?

Hark, my reader, and turn once more to that sweetest music that ever broke on distracted reason's ear. It comes not to charm with a false hope, but with the full authority of God. None but His Son who had lain so long in His Father's bosom that He knew its blessed heart-beats thoroughly, could speak such words—"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings." Here are poor worthless things indeed that may be truly called creatures of chance. "Time and doom" must surely "hap" to these. Indeed no; "not one of them is forgotten before God." Ponder every precious word in simple faith. God's *memory* bears upon it the lot of every worthless sparrow; it may "fall to the ground," but not without Him. He controls their destiny and is interested in their very flight. If it be so with the sparrow, that may be bought for a single mite, shall the *saint*, who has been bought at a price infinitely beyond all the treasures of silver and gold in the universe, even at the cost of the precious blood of His dear Son,—shall *he* be subject to "time and doom"? Shall his lot not be shaped by infinite love and wisdom? Yes, verily. Even the very hairs of his head are all numbered. No joy, no happiness, no disappointment, no perplexity, no sorrow, so infinitesimally small (let alone the greatest) but that the One who controls all worlds takes the closest interest therein, and turns, in His love, every thing to blessing, forcing "*all to work together for good*," and making the very storms of life obedient servants to speed His children to their Home.

Faith *alone* triumphs here; but faith *triumphs*; and

apart from such tests and trials, what opportunity would there be for faith *to* triumph? May we not bless God, then, (humbly enough, for we know how quickly we fail under trial,) that He *does* leave opportunity for faith to be in exercise and to get victories?

God first reveals Himself, and then says, as it were, "Now let Me see if you have so learned what *I am* as to trust *Me* against all circumstances, against all that you see, feel, or suffer." And what virtue there must be in the Light of God, when so little of it is needed to sustain His child! Even in the dim early twilight of the dawning of divine revelation, Job, suffering under a very similar and fully equal "evil time," could say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord:" accents sweet and refreshing to Him who values at an unknown price the confidence of this poor heart of man. And yet what did Job know of God? *He* had not seen the cross. *He* had not had anything of the display of tenderest unspeakable love that have we. It was but the *dawn*, as we may say, of revelation; but it was enough to enable that poor grief-wrung heart to cry, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Shall we, who enjoy the very meridian of revelation light;—shall we, who have seen *Him slain for us*, say *less*? Nay, look at the wondrous *possibilities* of our calling, my reader,—a song, nothing but a song will do now. Not quiet resignation only; but "strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with *joyfulness*,"—and that means a song.

How rich, how very rich, is our portion! A goodly heritage is ours. For see what our considerations have brought out: a deep *need* universally felt; for

none escape the sorrows, trials, and afflictions, that belong, in greater or less degree, to this life.

The highest, truest, human wisdom can only recognize the need with a groan, for it finds no remedy for it—time and doom hap alike to all.

God shows Himself a little, and, lo! quiet, patience, and resignation take the place of groaning. The need *is* met.

God reveals His whole heart fully, and no wave of sorrow, no billow of suffering, can extinguish the joy of His child who walks with Him. Nay, as thousands upon thousands could testify, the darkest hour of trial is made the sweetest with the sense of His love, and tears with song are mingled.

Oh, for grace to enjoy our rich portion more.

But to return to our book. Its author rarely proceeds far along any one line without meeting with that which compels him to return. So here; for he adds, in verses 13 to the end of the chapter, "And yet I have seen the very reverse of all this, when apparently an inevitable doom, an 'evil time,' was hanging over a small community, whose resources were altogether inadequate to meet the crisis—when no way of escape from the impending destruction seemed possible—then, at the moment of despair, as 'poor wise man' steps to the front (such the quality there is in wisdom), delivers the city, comes forth from his obscurity, shines for a moment, and, lo! the danger past, is again forgotten, and sinks to the silence whence he came. But *this* the incident proved to me, that where strength is vain, there wisdom shows its excellence, even though men as a whole appreciate it so little as to call upon it only as a last resource. For let the fools finish their babbling, and

their chief get to the end of his talking; then, in the silence that tells the limit of their powers, the quiet voice of wisdom is heard again, and that to effect. Thus is wisdom better even than weapons of war, although, sensitive quality that it is, a little folly easily taints it."

Can we, my readers, fail to set our seal to the truth of all this? We, too, have known something much akin to that "little city with few men," and one Poor Man, the very embodiment of purest, perfect wisdom, who wrought alone a full deliverance in the crisis—a deliverance in which wisdom shone divinely bright; and yet the mass of men remember Him not. A few, whose hearts grace has touched, may count Him the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely; but the world, though it may call itself by His name, counts other objects more worthy of its attention, and the poor wise man is forgotten "under the sun."

Not so above the sun. There we see the Poor One, the Carpenter's Son, the Nazarene, the Reviled, the Smitten, the Spit-upon, the Crucified, seated, crowned with glory and honor, at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens; and there, to a feeble few on earth, He sums up all wisdom and all worth, and they journey on in the one hope of seeing Him soon face to face, and being with Him and like Him forever.

F. C. J.

(To be continued.)

No WORLDLY gain, no earthly advantage, could compensate for the loss of a pure conscience, an uncondemning heart, and the light of your Father's countenance.

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

THE CHURCH.—ITS MINISTRY.

(Continued from page 272.)

(3) **H**AVING seen the various classes of ministry, we are now to inquire whence comes the power for its exercise. And this brings us, again, face to face with that most evident fact, which is also most constantly ignored, that the Holy Spirit is present in the Church as the only power for ministry, of whatever kind. This is, in a way, admitted by all evangelical Christians, only to be practically denied by the various schemes for usefulness adopted in the different denominations.

What is power? Is it the eloquence that attracts and holds multitudes under its spell? The apostle answers for us—"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.) Here, as in other things, "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God," Who "has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; . . . yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things which are; that no flesh should glory in His presence." (1 Cor. i. 27-29.) We measure power by work done, not by the show made. The work of an evangelist is that of bringing souls to Christ. One may be a very attractive and eloquent preacher; he may draw thousands to hear him; nay, large numbers may profess to have been saved under his min-

istry; but the only test of his power is whether souls have been truly saved. If that has been the case, then we know that the Holy Spirit has been at work; for new birth is His work alone, by the word of truth, no matter what instrument may have been used.

So, too, with the teacher. He may be a learned man, a scholar, as was Moses in all the learning of the Egyptians, and yet be without power to impart in any living way the unsearchable riches of Christ. "The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. ii. 11.) There may be the greatest accuracy of Scriptural doctrine, without one particle of power.

The same may be said of the pastor. One may be never so well qualified naturally to sympathize with, guide, cheer, and admonish his brethren, and yet fail in every particular to accomplish anything for God. Power in an evangelist is shown in the conversion of souls; in a teacher, in the divine instruction and upbuilding of the people of God; and in a pastor in their true, real shepherding. We repeat—alas! that we all profess to believe it, but so little realize it—that there is not one particle of power apart from the operation of the Holy Spirit. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, . . . For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but *all these* worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." . . .

And God hath set some in the Church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." (1 Cor. xii. 4, 7-11, 28.) The very mingling, in these verses, of so-called supernatural gifts with the more ordinary ones, is significant. Is it not meant to show us that in the things of God all operations are supernatural? that the true exercise of the gift of teaching is as much a divine function as the working of a miracle? and that the one requires the Holy Spirit as much as the other? Were this truth acted upon, we would see less dependence upon man and more upon God. We would see more true prayer, more deep self-judgment, and we would, as a result see more divine power exercised. Man's power, alas! is like Saul's armor for David, only a hindrance. How often must God strip His people, as in Gideon's day, of all earthly strength, showing them that the treasure is in earthen vessels—and vessels to be broken at that—that the excellency of the power may be seen to be of Him alone. (Judg. vii. 1-20; 2 Cor. iv. 5-10.)

Let it not be thought for a moment that we would despise knowledge in its true place. Ignorance is no more power than knowledge. There is no virtue in ignorance. Let the man of God be a diligent student. If he is well instructed in human knowledge, it can be of great value. The only danger is in substituting this knowledge for the power of God. Beautiful it is to see the man of learning, laying it all at the Lord's feet, and, as an empty vessel, waiting to be filled and used by Him. But we will leave this portion of our subject as one upon which we need, not instruction, but exhortation, not theory but practice. May God

awaken His servants afresh to see where their weakness and their power lies.

(4) We come now to that which is closely related to what we have just left—apparently the same subject. If the source of all ministry is an exalted Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the only power, the whole question as to its exercise would seem to have been settled. And such, we are persuaded, is really the case. A Christ-given and a Spirit-used ministry is assuredly all that the Church of God needs. And yet just here we are brought face to face with a subject which perhaps more than any other, demands our earnest and prayerful examination,—a subject which claims attention from its great antiquity, as well as its great and overshadowing prominence in the present economy in the professing church. We mean the clerical system, which rests upon ordination for its authority. This system had its beginnings in the early church; it was practised, no doubt, very soon—perhaps immediately—after the times of the apostles. It has taken root so deeply in the very organism of the professing Church that none of the deliverances granted by God to His beloved people from time to time, have availed to loose its hold. It has survived the reformation under Luther, when the Church received again in clearness the foundation truth of justification by faith; it remained after the great awakening of the eighteenth century had revived the people of God. It flourishes amid the gorgeous ritualism of the Roman and Anglican establishments, and no less does it thrive surrounded by the inornate simplicity of Presbyterianism and the independency of Congregationalism. We see it accompanied by all the pomp of ecclesiastical splendor—robes, music,

anointing, and all the circumstance devised by man's ingenuity, and borrowed from all times and all religions: we see it also in the simple "laying on of hands," or the modest "minute of approval" in some religious society. Nay, had we eyes to see, we might doubtless trace it in the entirely informal "recognition of gift," which carries with it the weight of authority not divine.

Well may we pause and examine this system. Its very universality demands this, and the fact that it confronts us when we seek to establish the simplicity of scriptural order. Can it be true that what bears the test of orthodoxy so well—"Semper, ubique, ab omnibus"—always, everywhere, and by all observed—is after all a human invention entirely contrary to the spirit and teaching of the word of God? In all humility, but in all firmness, our reply must be, Yes.

Man is slow to believe God. Even the saved soul finds roots of unbelief still remaining. It is hard to trust, and to go on leaning upon an invisible arm. There can be but little doubt that this unbelief on the part of God's people—this unwillingness to lean upon Him alone, has been the origin of all the various substitutes which put something visible between God and the soul—some visible authority, some one who has official right to speak for God. Coupled with this is the principle of succession—the power to hand down from one to another the authority originally received from God. It makes very little difference through whom this succession comes—whether through bishops, the successors of the apostles, or through the ministers and elders who received their ordination at the hands of the apostles—in either case

the principle of succession is established, and in favor of this principle there is no scripture, but very much against it.

Succession denies the cardinal truth that the Holy Spirit is just as really present and as fully active now as when He first descended to form the Church at Pentecost. Instead of teaching us the presence of the One who is all-sufficient to call, equip, and sustain the servants of Christ, it points us back through the intervening centuries—centuries filled with all manner of unspeakable departure from God—to the original call of faithful men set apart for a special work, which work ceased on the establishment of the Church.

If we ask for Scripture for this, we are pointed to the various passages which speak of ordination in the Acts and the epistles. We must therefore take up these scriptures, and see what they have for us on this subject.

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.” (Tit. i. 5.) The word translated here “ordain” is *καθίστημι*, meaning to establish, or set up. It is translated “ordain” also in Heb. v. 1; viii. 3, referring to the high-priesthood. We have the same word, variously translated, in Matt. xxiv. 45—*made* ruler; Luke xii. 14—*made* judge; Acts vi. 3—*appoint* over this matter. It is the word of most frequent occurrence in connection with the establishment of authority. In Mark iii. 14—“And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him”—the word is simply *made*, *ποιέω*; 1 Tim. i. 12, “Putting me in the ministry,” the word is here “place,” *τίθημι*, translated in chapter ii. 7, *ordain*. The same word

is used also in Acts xx. 28—"over which the Holy Ghost *hath made* you overseers,"—and in 1 Cor. xii. 18—"God *hath set* the members, every one of them, in the body as it hath pleased Him." It is interesting to note that every one of these passages refers to God's act, whether it be putting the apostle into the ministry, placing elders over the church at Ephesus, or setting all the various members in the body according to His pleasure.

In Acts xiv. 23 we have another word—*χειροτονεω*: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church." In 2 Cor. viii. 19 the same word is translated *chosen*, which is a more literal rendering, as it means to stretch out the hand, to point out or designate a particular person. (Some authorities would suggest the idea of raising the hand, as in voting, and deduce from this the election by the people of their officers!)

These are the passages which refer to ordination. We must now look at the persons ordained, and the manner of their induction into office. This latter is said to have been by the laying on of hands. This expression is used frequently in the gospels, as showing our Lord's manner of healing. The significance of the act seems to be that of taking possession of for the bestowment of blessing. In the Acts we have it used in connection with the bestowal of the Holy Ghost. (Acts viii. 17, 18; xix. 6.) The thought of conferring something is evident here as well as in the case of Timothy, (1 Tim. ~~ii~~iv. 14; * 2 Tim. i. 6,) where a gift was actually bestowed in this way. No sober student of Scripture would claim such a thing from ordination now.

* It was by prophecy—a supernatural pointing out—with laying on of hands.

When the deacons were appointed by the apostles, (note, not by the saints, but by the apostles,) "they prayed and laid their hands on them." (Acts vi. 6.)

In Acts ix. 12, 17 the act is one of bodily healing, and typically of spiritual; while in Acts xiii. 3 it was the act of the saints, expressive of fellowship in the work to which the apostle Paul, and Barnabas, had been called by the Holy Ghost. The lesser surely could not have ordained an apostle.

In 1 Tim. v. 22 he is exhorted to "lay hands suddenly on no man," to identify himself with no man until he was clear as to his worthiness, whether for fellowship, service, or office.

The passage in Hebrews vi. 2, we need hardly say, from its connection, refers to the Old Testament practice of laying on of the hands of the worshiper upon the victim, designating it as his substitute, and thus identifying himself with it. (Lev. i. 4, etc.)

The persons ordained were deacons, elders, and bishops. Acts vi. 1-6, in connection with 1 Tim. iii. 8-13, where there seems to be an allusion to Stephen in verse 13, makes it quite clear that the seven appointed by the apostles to care for the distribution of temporal means were deacons. Titus i. 5-7 shows beyond a question that elders and bishops were the same persons. See, also, the parallel passage, 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2, and Acts xx. 28, where the word "overseers" is but a translation of *ἐπίσκοπος*, bishop. We have really, then, but the one case of bishop or elder to examine.

Elder is a word that has descended from the patriarchal times of Israel. (Ex. iii. 16.) The family was the model of government, and in the family the father, as the elder, had authority. This was trans-

ferred to the nation, where the heads of houses became the heads of the nation; and in this sense we have frequent mention of the word in the gospels and Acts. (Matt. xxvi. 3, 47, 57, 59; Acts iv. 5, 8.) In Acts xi. 30 we have the first application of the word to the leaders in the Church of God, and thereafter it is quite frequently so used. (Acts xiv. 23; xv. 2, 23; xx. 17; 1 Tim. v. 1, 19; Tit. i. 5; 1 Pet. i.; 2 John i.)

Just here we might call attention to the distinction between elders and bishops. Elder was, as we have seen, the ordinary title of the leading people among the Jews—the rulers. It means simply an older person, and is used apart from the idea of office in such passages as 1 Tim. v. 1, 2 (where we have elder women, the feminine form of the word); 1 Tim. v. 19; 1 Pet. v. 1; 2 John i.; 3 John i. Older men were naturally the ones qualified for oversight; and from them the apostles appointed bishops or overseers. Elder, then, designates the person, and bishop the work to which he was called. From what we have seen, the terms were used interchangeably.

We have now the material before us from which to gather the teaching of Scripture as to ordination and office in the church of God.

We find that Titus was left in Crete for the purpose of establishing elders or bishops in every place. The qualifications are given—the same as in 1 Tim. iii. There is no mention of laying on of hands by Titus, nor by Timothy, in connection with the description of the qualifications of a bishop. It is inference indeed—probable, we might say—that Timothy ordained elders; and it would be further inference that this was by the laying on of hands. Taken,

however, in connection with the ordination of deacons, to serve tables (Acts vi. 1-6), where hands were laid upon them by the apostles, there is no reason for opposing the thought that Timothy or Titus did set apart elders as bishops in this way. The important point to guard, however, is that this laying on of hands was not exclusively applied to ordination, but was, as we have seen, a simple and ordinary act accompanying healing, the gift of the Holy Ghost, identification and fellowship in service. Paul and Barnabas indicated God's choice of elders in every assembly. (Acts xiv. 23.) Here, again, there is no mention of laying on of hands, though it might naturally accompany the choice. The omission is significant, as showing how comparatively unimportant the act was.

One thing, so far, is clear—that the appointment of elders was restricted to those who were especially commissioned by the apostle. So far from this showing that succession in office was contemplated, it does the reverse. Neither Timothy nor Titus were elders or bishops. Timothy was a young man. We never read of elders or bishops ordaining their successors. There is no hint of such a thing. Ordination then was an apostolic act, done either directly by the apostle or by those commissioned to act for him.

It is important to note that the name and functions of the elder were derived from Judaism, and that the synagogue furnished the model for this office. We should not overlook the fact that the book of Acts is a history of the transition period from Judaism to Christianity, and that many Jewish practices were permitted during this time to make the change as gradual as possible. Timothy was circumcised.

(Acts xvi. 1-3.) The decrees at Jerusalem (Acts xv.), while they declared freedom from the ceremonial law, forbade those practices which would stumble the conscientious Jew—eating strangled things, and blood. Every Sabbath the apostle went into the synagogue to preach. What wonder, then, that in establishing the assemblies he should, under divine guidance, have set up elders to rule? God was tenderly caring for his beloved people, and would give them no needless shocks. This is the thought underlying the whole book of Acts.

But where have we a hint that ordination was to go on? 1 Corinthians is pre-eminently the book of church order, and yet we have no mention of church officials. The house of Stephanas (1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16) addicted *themselves* to the ministry of the saints, and the brethren were exhorted to recognize by obedience their devoted service. In 1 Thess. v. 12, 13 we have the same thought. Office and ordination are not even suggested. In Phil. i. 1 bishops and deacons are mentioned, but only as part of the assembly at Philippi, to share with the rest the precious unfoldings of Christ in that epistle.

As the Church emerged from the influence of Judaism, it laid aside the swaddling-bands of customs which were appropriate only to a state of infancy, and was left free to be guided and controlled by the Holy Spirit alone. While we bless God for the apostles—the visible representatives of Christ's authority on earth—we recognize that they were connected with the foundations of Christianity, and were never intended to be perpetuated. They have given us the inspired epistles. They nourished the infant Church, and they are now waiting with the Lord until He

comes. Then their names will be displayed in the twelve foundations of the heavenly city. But there is not a whisper of Scripture that they have representatives upon earth.

But with the presence of the apostles goes ordination to office, as we have seen. Having passed from under the care of inspired men on earth, the Church has likewise passed from that which was a witness of that care.

So then we are left, not in a state of ruin or incompleteness, but as God intended we should be left, with the Holy Ghost as the only representative of divine authority, and the word of God our all-sufficient guide. The gifts remain, gifts of oversight, as well as of teaching; but the office, the designation by apostolic authority of a certain person for a certain place, has passed. It is well, too, to remember that gift was always distinguished from office even in the apostles' days. They never ordained men to preach or to teach, but only to take charge in the Church. A deacon might preach as did Stephen (Acts 7); not, however, because he was a deacon, but because he had a gift from Christ. An elder might labor in word and doctrine (1 Tim. v. 17), not because he was an elder, but because he had the gift. The exhortation in Rom. xii. 6-8 was to saints, not to office-bearers:—"Having then gifts differing *according to the grace that is given to us,*" etc.

It may be urged that the apostle provides for succession in 2 Tim. ii. 2. "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." But a glance will show that it was the *truth* which Timothy had received he was to transmit to faithful men—a responsibility which remains for all time.

We are living in times of ruin. That which came so fair from the hands of the Lord, has become so mutilated as to be practically unrecognizable. The failure is ours, and ours alone. Even now the Church

should be "as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Her failure, we are persuaded, is not due in any degree to the lapse of ordination of any kind whatever; but to the want of obedient recognition of the Lord's authority and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

If the Church were just as God would have it today, we are persuaded we would not have ordination in it.

And so we return to the wondrous simplicity of God's order for the exercise of ministry: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.) If this is not enough, we can never have more.

To all objections about unworthy men thrusting themselves forward, disorder and irregularity, we can only say, if there is faith and subjection to God, there will be no such difficulties; if there is not faith, the sooner we realize it by being permitted to fall into confusion, the better. God never intended we should get on without Him. Peter on the water, sinking and crying for help, may not have been as decorous an object as his fellows sitting in the boat, but who was nearer to the Lord? Let us never exchange His all-sufficient power for the formal proprieties of a human ministry.

In closing this part of our subject we would again call attention to the fact that for godly men, whether ordained or not, who are Christ's gifts to the Church, we have only the highest regard and affection. We recognize their gifts. We lament that they should be fettered by this system which we have been examining. Let us pray for all Christ's servants everywhere.

LOVE, AND BROTHERLY LOVE.

THERE is another principle, which crowns and governs and gives character to all others : it is charity, love properly so called. This, in its root, is the nature of God Himself, the source and perfection of every other quality that adorns Christian life. The distinction between love and brotherly love is of deep importance; the former is indeed, as we have just said, the source whence the latter flows; but as this brotherly love exists in mortal men, it may be mingled in its exercise with sentiments that are merely human, with individual affection, with the effect of personal attractions, or that of habit, or suitability in natural character. Nothing is sweeter than brotherly affections; their maintenance is of the highest importance in the assembly; but they may degenerate, as they may grow cool; and if love, if God, does not hold the chief place, they may displace Him—set Him aside—shut Him out. Divine love, which is the very nature of God, directs, rules, and gives character to brotherly love; otherwise it is that which pleases us—that is, our own heart—that governs us. If divine love governs me, I love all my brethren; I love them because they belong to Christ; there is no partiality. I shall have greater enjoyment in a spiritual brother; but I shall occupy myself about my weak brother with a love that rises above his weakness and has tender consideration for it. I shall concern myself with my brother's sin, from love to God, in order to restore my brother, rebuking him, if needful; nor, if divine love be in exercise, can brotherly love, or its name, be associated with disobedience. In a word, God will have His place in all my relationships. To exact brotherly love in such a manner as to shut out the requirements of that which God is, and of His claims upon us, is to shut out God in the most plausible way, in order to gratify our own hearts. Divine love, then, which acts according to the nature, character, and will of God, is that which ought to direct and characterize our whole Christian walk, and have authority over every movement of our hearts. Without this, all that brotherly love can do is to substitute man for God. Divine love is the bond of perfectness, for it is God, who is love, working in us, and making Himself the governing object of all that passes in the heart.

J. N. D.

I'LL PRAISE THEE FOR IT *ALL*, SOME DAY.

IF joy, rebuke, or grief, or pain,
 Thou sendest, Lord, 'tis *all* my gain;
 For *all* things work for good to one
 Who loveth God and His dear Son.

Each sorrow Thou hast sent to me
 Has only drawn me nearer Thee—
 The place where most I love to hide,
 Blest Saviour, in Thy wounded side.

Each step of mine that was unmeet
 Has only brought me to Thy feet,
 To learn, by these my willful ways,
 The deeper story of Thy grace.

Each joy Thou giv'st me by the way
 But tells me of that glorious day
 When joy unspeakable, divine,
 Shall fill Thy heart as well as mine.

If there are those who love me here,
 It whispers of a love more dear,
 More deep, more infinitely blest,
 Unmixed with sorrow, full of rest.

If anguish fill my breaking heart
 When called from one I love, to part,
 It does but loose me from this shore,
 And makes me long for Thee the more.

So, Lord, whate'er my lot may be,
 If only I may walk with Thee,
 And talk with Thee along the way,
 I'll praise Thee for it *all*, some day.

H. Mc D.

PLAINFIELD, *July 15th, 1894.*

DEAD.

FOR some years I had felt there was something wrong. Indeed, though at times earth's ambitions occupied heart and hands, yet there was an aching void—a spot within—which nothing had yet reached. The crisis had come at last. The awful truth had dawned upon me that all my past efforts had been in vain: after all, I was only a poor, helpless, incorrigible sinner. But at the same time a light, glorious as it was sweet, had shined into me. It was the revelation that Jesus had done the work which was necessary to save such a sinner. And what a revelation! What peace it gave! What assurance! I could almost glory in being a sinner, since I had such a Saviour. If Jesus had made propitiation for my sins I was free. And indeed I *was* free, and praised God for it from the depths of my soul. Worship was no longer a form, confined to a place or a time,—it was “in spirit and in truth.”

But sorrow was soon renewed. The company of God, my Father,—the fellowship of Christ, my Saviour and Lord,—were the sweetest part of life now. To read the Scriptures, to sing, to pray, to meet with them who enjoyed what I did was a hundredfold more than I had ever found in anything in the world before. But, all of a sudden, while engaged in prayer perhaps, or reading the Scriptures, or other holy exercises, some unholy thought, unbidden and hateful, would pass through my heart. This startled me. The sight of Christ on the cross suffering the judgment of sin had been so vivid that nothing now could shake the assurance of the redemption which was mine through it, but how could I stay close to the God

whose Presence I loved, with such unholy thoughts passing through me? I could not, for I knew His holiness too well to think that He could allow that. If in prayer, I could only leap from my knees and flee, as a poor leper would have done had he suddenly found himself in the Temple of Jerusalem.

What could I do now? Nature perhaps was too well fed and cared for. Starve and subdue it then, and comfort will return. For one whole year that was tried, and with such austerity were its claims repressed that bones once well covered now stuck out. But all was of no effect: the sin was there at the end as at the beginning.

At the time when the case seemed hopeless I was reading the Epistle to the Colossians. Chapter III had been reached, and the first clause of its third verse had arrested my attention. It said "*For ye are dead.*" I answered "O Lord, that I might be dead, and not be distressed any more by the sin that is in me!"

I returned to my verse, and it still said "*For ye are dead.*" And again I uttered the same prayer to God.

Once more, and with a strange emphasis, the verse said "*For ye are dead.*" And now the sweet light which had broken in a year before broke in afresh. I had thought that to be "dead" was by some special experience: now it broke upon me that it was a *fact*. God had put me to death in the death of Christ, and in that death I had died once and forever. So now He could say to me "*For ye are dead,*"—not ye *ought to be*, as I had thought. And if I had indeed thus been put to death in and with Christ, then had I also been raised up in and with Christ. So the first verse of my chapter spoke.

As the blessed truth of all this broke upon me, and illumined at once a vast portion of the Scriptures—indeed their great underlying mystery—I could but exclaim, What a fool I have been! Here have I been this long time trying to kill a man who was already *dead*.

Now I could stay on my knees, keep on peacefully in all intercourse with God despite the consciousness of sin within. That sin is the very nature of the man that God put to death on the cross of Christ—the “old man.” The painful experience I had gone through had taught me to hate it, and made me thankful beyond expression at such a deliverance from it. Now, free from that dreadful self, I could “serve in newness of spirit,” and “bring forth fruit unto God.”

* * *

“COVET TO PROPHECY.”

(1 Cor. xiv. 39.)

WHY prophecy?

“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort.” (v. 3.)

Under “edification” comes salutary instruction, warning, admonition, reproof, correction, pruning, etc.

“Exhortation” recovers from dejection that might result from the former, and stirs up with cheer the drooping spirit; calls upon men to arise and build; fires them with a spirit of loyalty. “Quit you like men, be strong.” (chap. xvi. 13.)

“Comfort” is soothing, consolatory, binding up, sympathizing. “God of all comfort: who comforteth us in our tribulation.” (2 Cor. i. 3, 4.)

Prophecy, in the Christian sense, is never a cold theological exposition of abstract truths, but an un-

folding of the ways of God as *applicable to the present necessity*.

It knows nothing of partiality,—favors none. It sees departure from God quickly, and admonishes and exhorts. It will not pale before even an apostle. (Gal. ii. 11-21.) Men are never free from the necessity of prophecy.

He who prophesies utters the very mind of God for the hour. (1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.)

He need not be surprised if much suffering follows his ministrations. He must practice his own preaching. As the prophets of old had to be the *living* exponents of their own words, so must he who prophesies. Sobriety, then, is incumbent upon those who prophesy, and a sincere godly life.

"Ye may all prophesy . . . that all may learn, and all may be comforted." (1 Cor. xiv. 31.)

Prophecy has to do much with the negative, or human, side of things. The positive, or divine, side usually comes second and last—"comfort."

The flesh in us hates prophecy. The "spiritual" love it. (v. 37.)

John was a prophet. His ministry was corrective, restoring. It was like a mighty "ax . . . laid unto the root of the trees" when it began. (Matt. iii. 10.) It said "Behold the Lamb of God," (John i. 29, 36), as it continued. It glorified the Lord Jesus as it departs: "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John iii. 30.) "They shall fail," is said of "prophecies," that is, cease (1 Cor. xiii. 8), "when that which is perfect is come." (v. 10.)

The Lord Jesus Himself was an unceasing prophecy. He is the Son of Man, Son of God. The Prophet drives them out of the temple, none the

less the Son of the Father. (John ii. 16, 17; Ps. lxi. 9, etc.)

He notes everything that is wrong, and does not try to win the self-righteous. The breach is simply widened, for He is the "Truth." (Matt. xv. 1-14; xxi. 23-27.) Yet the sincere are instructed patiently. (ch. xv. 15-20.) The obedient are graciously borne with in tenderest love. (John xvi. 12-15.)

Not that "His own" are always obedient, for they are *exhorted* to obedience, but those who are characteristically so.

Prophecy looks at that which is wrong, and rebukes it; calls to repentance; instructs by presenting the truth; exhorts to be obedient to it; comforts the truly penitent.

It is a ministry which insists upon the truth being made practical. It is, then, *the ministry* for all time and every emergency.

There can be no *practical* Christianity without it. Then let us all "covet to prophesy," not forgetting the "comfort."
S. A. W.

THE TONGUE

Is "*a world of iniquity.*" It "*boasteth great things.*"
 "*an unruly evil.*" "*defileth the whole body.*"
 "*tamed by no man.*" "*setteth on fire the course*
 "*full of deadly poison.*" "*of nature.*"
 "*set on fire of hell.*"

"Speak not evil one of another."

THESE are solemn words. And which of us has not suffered in some way by this "little member." Having suffered makes us perhaps more careful for a time. But how easily we slip into the old way, when not on our guard!

If we lived in God's presence consciously, our words would be weighed by His thoughts of them, and not by our faulty human measure.

I know of no one thing which can be the cause of more misery among God's people than a wrong use of the tongue; of nothing which can rake up more filth and vileness, enmity, strife, and bitterness, or that can make the heart more sore.

God in His Word has told us of its capabilities in this direction, and we need only take the warning.

I do not speak of railing, or of open slander,—these are more tangible things,—but of the little whisperings and insinuations, the needless repetition of that which does not tend to promote love. “Love worketh no ill.” The habit of criticising each other, we all know, is wrong, and yet how much it is done! Sometimes it may be thoughtlessly, but if so, let us wake up to the mischief it works.

It is certainly damaging to one's soul, and has a baneful influence upon others. It destroys holy affections, inevitably cripples an assembly, and ruins all testimony, if allowed in the family.

And I would here beg of you mothers (as you love the Lord, and desire, in these days of increasing evil and difficulties, to bring up your children in the fear of the Lord,) to cut it short, without mercy, in your homes, at your tables. If you do not, it will eat all the spirituality out of your house. This may seem like strong language, but not stronger than God's word would warrant.

Young and old are responsible alike to God and to each other.

We have all felt at times, no doubt, under peculiar pressure, the relief which comes in unburdening the

heart to some one who we believe will add their prayers to ours; it may be in our own behalf, or that of some loved one whose good alone we seek. To this there could be no objection; but such confidences should be held sacred, and that which is confided *repeated to none but God.*

I see no warrant for uncovering the faults and failings of others except to carry them to God with one consent. Oh, if we could only keep this in mind, how much sorrow would be saved !

But I fear that when we allow such things in ourselves, and suffer them to pass unrebuked in others, it shows a sorrowful lack of the exercise of love. This repeating of little matters, back and forth, is contemptible, soul-withering, and not worthy of those professing godliness. It sets fire to the evil of our natural hearts, burning from one to another, driving out peace, joy, love, and all the blessed fruits of the Spirit, and wounding the hearts of those we *profess* to love.

As those who are called to reflect Christ Jesus in a world which is keen to mark our follies and inconsistencies, and to cast slurs on the name of our blessed Master because of them, let us examine our own hearts in the presence of God.

Remember, "out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh," and if the heart is not filled with Christ, rest assured, it will not be empty.

The days are evil, and the character of the professing church is Laodicean. Let us watch, therefore, lest we lose our own joy, and stumble the weak.

OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS; OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

CHAPTER X.

(Continued from page 293.)

THE climax of Ecclesiastes' exercises seems to have been reached in the previous chapter. The passionate storm is over, and now his thoughts ripple quietly along in proverb and wise saying. It is as if he said "I was altogether beyond my depth. Now I will confine myself only to the present life, without touching on the things unseen, and here I can pronounce with assurance the conclusion of wisdom, and sum up both its advantages and yet inadequacy."

The proverbs that follow are apparently disjointed, and yet, when closely looked at, are all connected with this subject. He shows, in effect, that, take any view of life, and practically wisdom has manifold advantages.

Ver. 1. The least ingredient of folly spoils as with the corruption of death the greatest wisdom. (There is only One whose name is as ointment poured forth untainted.)

Ver. 2. The wise man's heart is where it should be. He is governed by his understanding, (for the heart in the Old Testament is the seat of the thought as well as of the affections, as the same word, "*lehv*," translated "wisdom" in the next verse shows), a fool is all askew in his own being. His heart is at his left hand. In other words, his judgment is dethroned.

Ver. 3. Nor can he hide what he really is for any length of time. "The way," with its tests, soon reveals him, and he proclaims to all his folly.

Ver. 4. Yielding to the powers above rather than rebelling against them, marks the path of wisdom. This may be an example of the testing of "the way" previously spoken of, for true wisdom shines brightly out in the presence of an angry ruler. Folly leaves its place,—a form of expression tantamount to rebelling, and may throw some light on that stupendous primal folly when angels "left their place," or, as Jude writes, "kept not their first estate, but left their habitation," and thus broke into the folly of rebelling against the Highest. For let any leave their place, and it means necessarily confusion and disorder. If all has been arranged according to the will and wisdom of the Highest, he who steps out of the place assigned him rebels, and discord takes the place of harmony. The whole of the old creation is thus in disorder and confusion. All have "left their place." For God, the Creator of all, has been dethroned. It is the blessed work of One we know, once more to unite in the bonds of love and willing obedience all things in heaven and in earth, and to bind in such way all hearts to the throne of God, that never more shall one "leave his place."

Vers. 5-7. But rulers themselves under the sun are not free from folly, and this shows itself in the disorder that actually proceeds from them. Orders and ranks are not in harmony. Folly is exalted, and those with whom dignities accord are in lowly place. It is another view of the present confusion, and how fully the coming of the Highest showed it out! A stable, a manger, rejection, and the cross, were the portion under the sun of the King of kings. That fact rights everything even now, in one sense, to faith for the path closest to the King must be really

necessarily the *highest*, though it be in the sight of man the lowest. Immanuel, the Son of David, walking as a servant up and down the land that was His own — The Lord Jesus, The Son of Man, having less than the foxes or birds of the air, not even where to lay his head, — Christ, the Son of God, wearied with His journey, on the well of Sychar, — this has thrown a glory about the lowly path now, that makes all the grandeur of the great ones of the earth less than nothing. Let the light of His path shine on this scene, and no longer shall we count it an evil under the sun for folly and lawlessness to have the highest place, as men speak, but rather count it greatest honor to be worthy to suffer for His name, for we are still in the kingdom and patience of the Lord Jesus Christ, — not the Kingdom and Glory. That shall come soon.

Vers. 8–10. But then, Ecclesiastes continues, is there complete security in the humbler ranks of life? Nay, there is no occupation that has not its accompanying danger. Digging or hedging, quarrying or cleaving wood, — all have their peculiar difficulties. Although there, too, wisdom is still evidently better than brute strength.

Vers. 11 to 15 turn to the same theme of comparison of wisdom and folly, only now with regard to the use of the tongue. The most gifted charmer (lit. master of the tongue) is of no worth *after* the serpent has bitten. The waters that flow commend the spring whence they issue. Grace speaks for the wise: folly, from beginning to end, proclaims the fool; and nowhere is that folly more manifested than in the boastfulness of assertion as to the future.

“Predicting words he multiplies, yet man can never know
“The thing that shall be; yea, what cometh after who shall
tell?
“Vain toil of fools! It wearieth him,—this man who knoweth
naught
“That may befall his going to the city.”

This seems to be exactly in line with the apostle James: “Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain: ye who know not what shall be on the morrow.”

Vers. 16–18. The land is blessed or cursed according to her head. A well-marked principle in Scripture, which has evidently forced itself on the notice of human wisdom in the person of Ecclesiastes. A city flourishes under the wise diligence of her rulers, or goes to pieces under their neglect and sensual revelry. For the tendency to decay is everywhere under the sun, and no matter what the sphere,—high or low, city or house,—constant diligence alone offsets that tendency.

Ver. 19. The whole is greater than its part. Money can procure both the feast and the wine; but these are not, even in our preacher's view, the better things, but the poorer, as chapter vii. has shown us. We, too, know that which is infinitely higher than feasts and revelry of earth, and here money avails nothing. “Wine and milk,” joy and food, are here to be bought without money and without price. The currency of that sphere is not corruptible gold nor silver, but the love that gives,—sharing all it possesses. There it is love that answereth all things:—the more excellent way, inasmuch as it covers and is the spring of all gifts and graces. Without love, the circulating medium of that new creation, a man is poor indeed,

—is worth nothing, nay, *is* nothing. (1 Cor. xiii.) He may have the most attractive and showy of gifts: the lack of love makes the silver tongue naught but empty sound,—a lack of love makes the deepest understanding naught; and whilst he may be a very model of what the world falsely calls charity, giving of his goods to feed the poor, and even his body to be burned, it is love alone that gives life and substance to it all,—lacking love it profits nothing. He who abounds most in loving, and consequent self-emptying, is the richest there. The words of the Lord Jesus in Luke xii. confirm this: “So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” The two are in direct contrast. Rich here—laying up treasure for one’s self here—*is* poverty there, and the love that gives *is* divine riches. For he who loves most has himself drunk deepest into the very nature of God, for God is Love, and his heart fully satisfied with that which alone in all the universe can ever satisfy the heart of man, filled up,—surely, therefore, rich,—pours forth its streams of bounty and blessing according to its ability to all about. How thoroughly the balances of the sanctuary reverse the estimation of the world.

But, then, how may we become rich in that true, real sense? To obtain the money that “answereth all things” under the sun, men *toil* and *plan*. Perhaps as the balances of the sanctuary show that selfish accumulation here is poverty there, so the means of attaining true riches may be, in some sort, the opposite to those prevailing for the false—“quietness and confidence.”

The apostle, closing his beautiful description of charity, says: “Follow after charity.” Ponder its

value—meditate on its beauties—till your heart becomes fascinated, and you press with longing toward it. But as it is difficult to be occupied with “Love” in the abstract, can we find anywhere an embodiment of love? A person who illustrates it in its perfection, in whose character every glorious mark that the apostle depicts in this 13th chapter of Corinthians is shown in perfect moral beauty—yea, who is in himself the one complete perfect expression of love. And, God be thanked, we know One such; and, as we read the sweet and precious attributes of Love, we recognize that the Holy Spirit has pictured every lineament of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wouldst thou be rich, then, my soul? Follow after, occupy thyself with, press toward, the Lord Jesus, till His beauties so attract as to take off thy heart from every other infinitely inferior attraction, and the kindling of His love shall warm thy heart with the same holy flame, and thou shalt seek love’s ease—love’s rest—in pouring out all thou hast in a world where need of all kinds is on every side, and thus be “rich toward God.” So may it be for the writer, and every reader, to the praise of His grace. Amen.

Where are we, in time, my readers? Are we left as shipwrecked sailors upon a raft, without chart or compass, and know not whether sunken wreck or cliff-bound coast shall next threaten us? No; a true divine chart and compass is in our hands, and we may place our finger upon the exact chronological latitude and longitude in which our lot is cast. Mark the long voyage of the professing Church past the quiet waters of Ephesus, where first love quickly cools and is lost; past the stormy waves of persecution which drive her onward to her desired haven,

in Smyrna; caught in the dangerous eddy, and drifted to the whirlpool of the world in Pergamos, followed by the developed Papal hierarchy in Thyatira, with the false woman in full command of the ship; past Sardis, with its memories of a divine recovery in the Reformation of the sixteenth century:—Philadelphia and Laodicea alone are left; and, with mutual contention and division largely in the place of brotherly love, who can question but that we have reached the last stage, and that there is every mark of Laodicea about us? This being so, mark the word of our Lord Jesus to the present state of the professing Church: “Thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, but knowest not that thou art poor, and blind, and naked, and wretched, and miserable.” Yes, in the light of God, in the eyes of the Lord, in the judgment of the sanctuary, we live in a day of *poverty*. It is this which characterizes the day in which our lot is cast,—a lack of all true riches, whilst the air is filled with boastings of wealth and attainment.

Further, I can but believe that we whose eyes scan these lines are peculiarly in danger here. Thyatira goes on to the very end. Sardis is an offshoot from her. Sardis goes on to the end. Philadelphia is an offshoot from her. Philadelphia goes on to the end, and is thus the stock from whence the proud self-sufficiency of Laodicea springs. If we (you and I) have shared in any way in the blessings of Philadelphia, we share in the dangers of Laodicea. Yea, he who thinks he represents or has the characteristics of Philadelphia, is most open to the boast of Laodicea. Let us have to do—have holy commerce—with Him who speaks. Buy of Him the “gold purified by the fire.” But how

are we to buy? What can we give for that gold, when He says we are already poor? A poor man is a bad buyer. Yes, under the sun, where toil and self-dependency are the road to wealth; but above the sun quietness and confidence prevail, and the poor man is the best—the only—buyer. Look at that man in Mark's Gospel, chapter x., with every mark of Laodicea upon him. *Blind*, by nature; *poor*, for he sat and *begged*; *naked*, for he has thrown away his garment, and thus surely *pitiabie*, *miserable*, now watch him buy of the Lord.

“What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?”

“Lord, that I might receive my sight.”

“Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.”

And the transaction is complete; the contract is settled; the buying is over. “Immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.” Yes; there is just one thing that that poor, naked, blind man has, that is of highest value even in the eyes of the Lord, and that is the quiet confidence of his poor heart. All Scripture shows that that is what God ever seeks,—the heart of man to return and rest in Him. It is all that we can give in the purchase, but it buys all He has. “All things are possible to him that believeth.” In having to do with the Lord Jesus we deal with the rich One whose very joy and rest it is to give; and it is surely easy *buying* from Him whose whole heart's desire is to *give*. Nothing is required but *need* and faith to complete the purchase.

Ver. 20. The next counsel of human wisdom is to avoid a word, even in secret,—nay, even a thought,—of rebellion against those in authority. But who can thus control the thoughts? What can check the word of chafing against authority? Does not the clearer

light of Revelation again show us the "more excellent way"? Suppose the King has "loved me, and given Himself for me"?—has been "wounded for my transgressions, bruised for my iniquities"? His royal head crowned with thorns for me, indeed; and the "rich One for my sake has become poor," shall I—can I—curse "the King," or speak evil of this rich One? Impossible.

"No man speaking by the Holy Ghost calleth Jesus accursed." Human wisdom never could have thought of such a way to do away with that rebellion against authority which is natural to the heart of man.

F. C. J.

(To be continued.)

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

THE CHURCH.—ITS DISCIPLINE.

(Continued from page 306.)

IN taking up the subject of Discipline in the Church of God, we should be impressed with its great importance on the one hand, and with the danger, on the other, of approaching it in a careless or legal way. When we consider the almost universal neglect of discipline and the corresponding weakness thus occasioned to the Church, we feel doubly the importance of examining the teachings of Scripture on the subject, and of endeavoring to impress upon all the responsibility that rests upon every member of the Church of Christ in this respect.

We are living in lawless times. The air is full of independence of all kinds of authority,—in the government, the workshop, and the home. We need not wonder, then, if the same spirit characterizes the professing church. As in the days of the judges in

Israel, every man does that which is right in his own eyes. Authority is scoffed at, and the idea of godly subjection to one another is resented as an insult to manhood. It seems to be a characteristic of these "last days" that a sense of responsibility is wanting, too often even among the people of God. And yet grace and responsibility go hand in hand. "There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared." (Ps. cxxx. 4); and the grace which brings salvation also teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Tit. ii. 11-15). A careful, godly walk is the vessel in which the grace of God exhibits itself, and where it is wanting testimony fails and shipwreck is the result (1 Tim. i. 19, 20). A people may be intrusted with vast stores of precious truth; they may speak with ease and precision of "standing and state," "eternal security," "resurrection life," and all the rest of the unspeakably precious doctrines recovered for God's people in these last days; but if the walk do not in some measure correspond to the truth that is held, it is worse than useless,—it is absolutely injurious. Let it be remembered that in the epistle which most fully unfolds the grace of God and the heavenly position of the saint, there is the most ample and minute instruction as to the walk upon earth of the believer whatever relation he occupies (Ephesians, fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters). The Corinthians (1 Cor. i. 5-7) were enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge, coming behind in no gift, yet such was the condition of the assembly that the apostle could only speak to them as to babes, and was obliged to correct in the severest way their tolerance of awful moral and doctrinal evil (chaps. v. and xv.). But we need say no more to justify us in

examining this most important subject with care and prayerfulness.

There are seven points to be considered: the Necessity for discipline; the Object; the Occasion; the Character of it; the Spirit in which it is to be administered; the Recovery of those who have been dealt with; and the Authority for discipline. We will briefly consider these in the order given.

1. That the Necessity for discipline exists will not be questioned by any who have eyes to see or a heart to understand the teaching of Scripture. False professors creep into the professing church unawares, while men sleep (Matt. xiii. 25), and when once within exhibit either in doctrine or walk the fruits of evil. It is this presence of false professors among the people of God that accounts for the warnings as to continuing in the truth which we find in the epistles to the Hebrews and Corinthians,—the “ifs” which have troubled so many of God’s people. The possibility of the presence of such people among the children of God would of itself show the necessity for discipline.

But it is objected that in the very parable to which allusion has been made, wheat and tares were to grow together until harvest; and this, it is claimed, would obviate the necessity for action that might “root up also the wheat with them.” When we see, however, that “the field is the *world*” and not the Church, and that our Lord teaches the impossibility of eradicating evil once introduced into the kingdom or outward sphere of responsibility—Christendom—it becomes plain that He was only showing the futility of using an arm of flesh to put down evil. Rome has failed to observe this, and in the many efforts to

weed out what was thought heresy has really but persecuted the saints of God. Even had the doctrines been evil, this parable shows we cannot stamp them out. But this is no warrant for the Church to allow evil men in the midst of saints. Them that are without God judgeth; but the saints are distinctly told to put away from among themselves the wicked person (1 Cor. v. 12, 13).

But alas the necessity for discipline is seen not only from the possibility of the presence of false professors, but from the fact that the flesh still exists even in the true child of God. This is not the place to discuss the two natures in the believer. It is sufficient to refer to such passages as Gal. v. 13-25 as proof that such apparently contradictory scriptures as 1 John iii. 9 and 1 John i. 8 are not really so. In the one we have the normal state of the Christian when walking in the Spirit, and in the other the existence of that "flesh" which makes sin possible. Spiritual pride is a most dangerous thing, and one of the most awful and perilous forms of it is that self-complacency which claims sinless perfection for the child of God.

Not only has the believer the flesh, the old nature, in him, he is also in a world that is away from God, a very death-chamber (Numb. xix. 14, 15), where, if he is not covered with a covering of the Lord, he will be defiled. The devil, with all his wiles, is ever ready to make use of the world and the flesh to lead the child of God astray. A glance at Scripture history will show how often this has been done. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David were all men of God, yet each one, at some period in his life, fell into sin. Peter is a notable New Testament example. Surely, with these instances before us, it is

needless to ask if the believer can fall into sin; and this shows the necessity for discipline.

2. We come next to inquire the Object contemplated in discipline. Our first answer must be the glory of God, the honor of His holy name. In 1 Cor. v., in connection with the case of discipline then brought before the Church, the apostle declares (v. 6) "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." He does not mean that all the Corinthians would commit the same sin as that awful crime of the case in question; but he does mean that indifference to the Lord's honor, carelessness as to the conduct of those who professed His name, would, if persisted in, give character to the whole assembly. We beg the reader's earnest attention to this point. Many will say "I have only myself to look after: I am not responsible for other men's sins." Our scripture answers most convincingly for every subject heart, and the exhortation which follows shows the path of duty (v. 7): "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, *as ye are unleavened.*" This last states what is the fact before God,—we are unleavened, sanctified by the one offering of Christ. Since this is the case, we are to maintain this unleavened condition practically by purging out the evil, that we may always be a new lump, an unleavened company. If this is not done we link the holy name of Christ, our passover, with the leaven of malice and wickedness. How solemn the thought!

But a secondary object in discipline is the recovery of the erring one and his restoration to communion with God and His people. Unjudged sin in the believer leads to death (1 Cor. xi. 30). God must intervene if we do not. The flesh is to be destroyed

(1 Cor. v. 5). If no notice is taken of sin it will go on until all are defiled. If the offender is dealt with in faithfulness we may expect to see the results. Our object should not be to get rid of a disagreeable or disgraced person, hoping never to see him again, but rather in the confidence that our firmness will be owned of God in leading him to true repentance. Such is especially the case in the minor forms of discipline which we shall presently consider, but even in the extreme of cutting off we may look for God's blessing on the offender.

3. We are ready now to see what are the Occasions for discipline. The passage we have been considering (1 Cor. v.) shows that immorality, whether of the grosser licentious kind as that which was the occasion of the chapter, or the less repugnant forms, such as maliciousness, covetousness, and railing, was a matter for the most faithful dealing. Scripture does not give us a list of all known sins; we are told in general what the works of the flesh are (Gal. v. 19-21), and we find wrath, strife, seditions, mentioned along with lasciviousness, witchcraft, drunkenness, and murder. *Wickedness*, no matter what form it may take, is what must be dealt with.

But there is a class of evil even more dangerous, because more subtle, than immorality. Wicked doctrine may go in company with an outwardly blameless life; indeed, such is often the case,—both Satan and his ministers are often transformed into angels of light. In all matters where there is no fundamental truth in question love will allow the largest liberty. To make, for instance, the question of baptism a test of fellowship, or views as to this or that text of Scripture, would be narrow and sectarian.

The apostle rebukes it (Phil. iii. 15). But when a doctrine is introduced that touches the person of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ,—His divinity, His true yet absolutely sinless humanity,—the perfection of His atoning work or His coming glory, there is no place for charity, falsely so called. In like manner, if the truth of justification by faith, freely by God's grace, be denied, or the necessity of regeneration, or the final and eternal doom of the impenitent—whether by annihilation or restorationism, in any of their forms—be denied, we are in the presence of an evil more deadly than drunkenness or immorality, for it is more deceptive. A man may hold and teach most blasphemous doctrines, and withal be as pious in his language as the most devoted child of God. Let the beloved people of God be on their guard. The enemy has ten thousand forms of deadly error with which to beguile the simple. As to doctrinal evil, as well as moral, "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (Gal. v. 9.)

But there may be the most pressing need for discipline where the person has been guilty of neither moral nor doctrinal evil. We mean *association* with it. At first sight this may not seem so clear, but the scriptures we have been considering lead us up to it. If a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, then the lump partakes of the character, in God's sight, of the leaven. If a company of God's people knowingly associate with a wicked person, a drunkard, or a thief, or one who holds false doctrines, they are as defiled, in God's sight, as though personally holding or practising the evil. For what is their state of soul? Are they not indifferent to the holiness of God, to the honor of His name? Could we associate with one

who assailed the character of our friend, our wife, our parents? And can we go on with one who blasphemes that name which is above every name? Would not even the world hold us as guilty?—nay, *more* guilty? For he perhaps is blinded by Satan, and may think he does no harm; but those who associate—with open eyes—with known evil are deliberately indifferent. “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” (2 John 10, 11.)

Let the reader weigh this matter well. When Achan had committed his trespass, it was said “*Israel* hath sinned” (Josh. vii. 1, 11), and when the awful sin of Gibeah was committed (Judges xx., xxi.), the whole tribe of Benjamin was held responsible, because they refused to give up the offenders. The reverse is seen in the case of Bichri at Abel (2 Sam. xx. 14–22). And can we not see the wisdom of God in thus holding associates with evil as responsible as the doers of it? What guarantee would there be that evil would ever be judged? The whole company of Christians would be defiled by the presence of unjudged sin, because of the false tenderness or indifference of some.

4. The Character of discipline varies with the nature of the evil with which it has to deal. There is no hard, fast, uniform way of dealing with it. There can be no code of laws laid down, no method of unvarying procedure adopted. We shall see, when we come to consider the spirit in which it is to be administered, that discipline is a priestly function; it has to do with communion, and only in communion

can one be guided. The punishment is not the same in all cases. Draco might make every offense punishable by death, but we cannot exclude from our fellowship every grade of wrong-doer. This will appear, however, as we proceed.

We may divide discipline into three classes,—preventive, corrective, and preservative. Preventive discipline begins with reception into fellowship. The assembly of God is responsible as to whom it receives. A person must be known to be not only a Christian, but one who is walking consistently. If a new convert, it should be clear that he has really believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he recognizes His claims upon him: if he has been some time a Christian care should be taken that he is godly in walk, association, and doctrine. Reception is by the assembly, and there should therefore be the fellowship of all with the act. An introduction by several who have examined the case and are competent to judge will usually suffice. We need hardly warn against mere human judgment. Guidance comes from God alone, and His mind should be sought in every case. Joshua and the princes of Israel seemed to have abundant evidence to justify them in receiving the Gibeonites without asking counsel of God (Josh. ix). Let us remember this. How many persons who have been carelessly received have afterwards given much sorrow, and drawn away others after them. But even where the person should be received, he may need an awakening of conscience which can best be done at that time. "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." (Rom. xv. 7). Here we have the tempering together of grace and care, which should ever characterize discipline.

Having been received into the assembly of God's people, the person now comes under all the varied care and ministry of the Spirit of God. And here much in the way of preventive discipline may be accomplished. If there is a tone of godliness, an elevation of piety, a wholesome example set by the assembly, much evil can be prevented. How many cases of falling into open sin may be traced to the lax tone of a gathering! Where all are worldly, it is easy for one specially so tempted to fall into covetousness. A general habit of "whispering" will open the way for backbiting and railing, while a care against the very appearance of such things will be often a sufficient check against the tendency. The Lord graciously awaken His beloved people to see their responsibility in these things. When the body is in a debilitated condition, those forms of disease to which a person may be specially liable make their appearance, which would have been kept down by a healthy vigorous tone. So is it in spiritual things: if an assembly is going on happily in the things of Christ, engaged in the work of the Lord and ministering to one another in love, sin will not likely lift its head.

Passing on now to corrective discipline, we find it necessary, when, either through our carelessness or in spite of our care, evil does arise in one or another. But it has not yet developed into actual flagrant sin. Here is where the pastor's care and wisdom is needed. A wholesome loving warning may often check the person in a course that would have led to fatal results; a rebuke administered in all firmness, the withdrawal of our company from a disorderly brother, not counting him as an enemy (2 Thess. iii. 6-15), even

the public rebuke before all (1 Tim. v. 20): these means may correct the evil before it goes too far, and they often will. This corrective discipline is almost entirely individual, rather than by the assembly. It is to prevent matters from coming before the assembly. It is the work of the spiritual (Gal. vi. 1), and its effect is restoration. It is washing one another's feet (John xiii.). Of personal trespass we do not speak here, as not properly Church discipline.

But alas, sin may fasten itself so deeply upon a person that none of these means are efficacious. The person is defiled,—he has committed a sin that cannot be dallied with. To hesitate now would be treason to the Lord. If the assembly is to maintain itself in communion with the Lord, it must purge itself from leaven, and the wicked person must be put away. All wicked persons must be so dealt with. Without enumerating the offenses, all will understand what cases are meant. Whenever evil is manifested as wickedness, there is but one word, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Cor. v. 13.)

But it must not be on mere suspicion that he is so dealt with. The evil must be manifest, or acknowledged by the person, or established "in the mouth of two or three witnesses." (2 Cor. xiii. 1.) If these are wanting, then there must be waiting on God and asking him to bring all to light. But the suspected person could not be allowed to go on as if all were well. The directions in the case of the leper (Lev. xiii.) furnishes some needed instruction here. There were certain clear and unmistakable signs by which the disease could be recognized, and when these were present the most immediate action was demanded:

the leper was put out of the camp. So there are clear cases of wickedness which need but to be seen to be recognized as such. Prompt putting away is the only thing to be done. But there might be certain symptoms which looked like leprosy,—a boil, a burn, baldness,—and which yet were too obscure to be treated as such. It would be manifest injustice to put such a suspected person out of the camp, and equally would it be unsafe to leave him at large. He was *shut up* seven days, until the disease should have manifested itself; and if doubt still remained he was again shut up. Even after being discharged, if the disease appeared he was at once dealt with.

Now there may be evil in a person,—some of nature's humors may come to the surface, or spiritual decay (baldness) may be manifest. Such symptoms are sad and call for attention, but unless there is the characteristic sign of real wickedness it would not do to exclude the suspect. Spiritual decrepitude is not absolute wickedness, and such a person is not defiled, but in danger. He would not be held under suspicion. The being overtaken in a fault, the rash hasty speech, the ebullition of temper,—all these sad manifestations of the flesh are not leprous, though leprosy may be developed out of them.

Where the evil is of a serious character, yet not fully developed, it will not do to let the person go on as if all were well, he must be "shut up," not allowed to enjoy the freedom and privileges of the assembly of God,—not permitted to break bread,—until his case is made plain, either by a full development of evil or by his recovery.

Even where all suspicions have been removed, and

the person goes in and out among the saints, if the evil reappear as positive wickedness, he must be put away. The maxim of the world, that no one must be tried twice for the same offense has no place. The Church is not a court of law. The leper was put "outside the camp," away from association with the people of God and the worship of God. So the wicked person is "put away from among yourselves." The apostle could deliver to Satan, which seems to have been authoritative act of power. (1 Tim. i. 20; 1 Cor. v. 5.) It may be questioned whether the Church has this power, and it is immaterial. The point is that the Church has a duty to put the wicked person out, and obedience is all that is needed. When outside, the person is no doubt in Satan's world, and may feel the power of his enmity, as did Job, for other reasons.

It need hardly be mentioned that a person put away is to be let alone. How abhorrent the thought that we could have social intercourse with one too wicked to remain in the company of the saints. "With such an one no not to eat."

(To be continued.)

IN the epistle to the Romans the law is looked at in a different way from that in the epistle to the Galatians. In Romans it is looked at from the side of human experience of it. "That which was ordained to life *I found* to be death." (Ch. vii. 10.) It is his own experience, what it turned out to be on trial. In Galatians, on the other hand, the question is not so much how *man finds* it, as how *God gave* it. So much the more weighty is the argument as against the Galatian heresy, that it is God who is shown to be against it.