

HELP AND FOOD

FOR THE

Household of Faith.

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OLD GROANS AND NEW SONGS;

OR, NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

CHAPTER XI.

(Continued from page 324.)

WE are drawing near the end, and to the highest conclusions of true human wisdom; and full of deepest interest it is to mark the character of these conclusions. Reason speaks; that faculty that is rightly termed divine, for its possession marks those who are "the offspring of God." He is the Father of *spirits*, and it is in the spirit that Reason has her seat; whilst in our Preacher she is enthroned, and now with authority utters forth her counsels. Here we may listen to just how far she can attain, mark with deepest interest, and indeed admiration, the grand extent of her powers; and at the same time their sorrowful limit,—note their happy harmony up to that limit, with her Creator; and then, when with baffled effort and conscious helplessness, in view of the deepest questions that ever stir the heart, she is able to find no answer to them, and groans her exceeding bitter cry of "Vanity," *then* to turn and listen to the grace and love of that Creator meeting those needs and answering those questions,—this is inexpressibly precious; and with the light thus given we must let our spirits sing a new song, for we are nigh to God, and it is still true that "none enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth." Joy and praise have their dwelling ever within those boundaries; for He inhabiteth the praises of His people.

In the first eight verses of our chapter we shall thus find man's Reason running in a beautiful parallel

with the divine, and yet in marked contrast with the narrow, selfish, short-sighted policy of the debased wisdom of this world. Their broad teaching is very clear; look forward,—live not for the present; but instead of hoarding or laying up for the evil day, cast thy bread—that staff of life, thy living—boldly upon the waters, it shall not be lost. You have, in so doing, intrusted it to the care of Him who loseth nothing; and the future, though perhaps far off, shall give thee a full harvest for such sowing. But, to be more explicit, give with a free hand without carefully considering a limit to thy gifts (“a portion to seven and also to eight” would seem to have this bearing), for who knows when, in the future, an evil time to thee may make thee the recipient of others’ bounty.

Can we but admire the harmony, I say again, between the voice of poor, feeble, limited human wisdom and the perfect, absolute, limitless, divine wisdom of New Testament revelation:

“For I mean not that other men be eased and ye burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want; that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality.” This is very closely in the same line. But Solomon continues: Nay, see the lessons that Nature herself would teach (and he is no wise man, but distinctly and scripturally “a fool,” who is deaf to her teachings, blind to her symbols). The full clouds find relief by emptying themselves on the parched earth, only to receive those same waters again from the full ocean, after they have fulfilled their benevolent mission; and it is a small matter to which side, north or south, the tree may

fall, it is there for the good of whoever may need it there.*

The accidental direction of the wind determines which way it falls; but either north or south it remains for the good of man. In like manner watch not for favorable winds; dispense on every side, north and south, of thy abundance; nor be too solicitous as to the worthiness of the recipients. He who waits for perfectly favorable conditions will never sow, consequently never reap. Results are with God. It is not thy care in sowing at exactly the right moment that gives the harvest; all *that* is God's inscrutable work in nature, nor can man tell how those results are attained. Life in its commencements is as completely enshrined in mystery now as then. No science, no human wisdom has, or—it may be boldly added—ever can throw the slightest glimmer of clear light upon it. Thy part is diligence in sowing, the harvest return is God's care. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand" is wisdom's counsel here, just as a higher wisdom teaches "Preach the word: be instant in season and out of season."

Thus human reason and divine wisdom "keep step" together till the former reaches its limit; and very soon, in looking forward, is that limit reached. For listen now to her advice, consequent on the fore-

* The current interpretation of this clause, that it speaks of the future state of man after death, seems hardly in keeping with the context, and certainly not at all in keeping with the character and scope of the book. Ecclesiastes everywhere confesses the strict limitation of his knowledge to the present scene. This is the cause of his deepest groanings that he cannot pierce beyond it; and it would be entirely contrary for him here, in this single instance, to assume to pronounce authoritatively of the nature of that place or state of which he says he knows nothing.

going. Therefore she says "Let not the enjoyment of the present blind thee to the future; for alas there stands that awful mysterious Exit from the scene that has again and again baffled the Preacher throughout the book. And here again no science or human reason ever has or ever can throw the faintest glimmer of clear light beyond it. That time is still, at the end of the book, the "days of darkness." As poor Job in the day of his trial wails: "I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." So Ecclesiastes says, "let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many." Oh sad and gloomy counsel! Is *this* what life is? Its bright morning ever to be clouded,—its day to be darkened with the thoughts of its *end*? Oh sorrowful irony to tell us to rejoice in the years of life, and yet ever to bear in mind that those years are surely, irresistibly, carrying us on to the many "days of darkness." Yes, this is where the highest intellect, the acutest reason, the purest wisdom of any man at any time has attained. But

Where Reason fails, with all her powers,
There Faith prevails and Love adores.

Where the darkness by reason's light is deepest, there Love—Infinite and Eternal—has thrown its brightest beam, and far from that time beyond the tomb being "the days of darkness," by New Testament revelation it is the one eternal blessed Day lit up with a Light that never dims; yes, even sun and moon unneeded for "The glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof." Think of a Christian with that blessed hope of the coming of his

Saviour to take him to that well-lighted Home—His Father's House—with the sweet and holy anticipations of seeing His own blessed Face,—once marred and smitten for him; of never grieving Him more, of sin never again to mar his communion with Him, of happy holy companionship for eternity with kindred hearts and minds all tuned to the one glorious harmony of exalting “Him that sits upon the throne and the Lamb,”—of loving Him perfectly, of serving Him perfectly, of enjoying Him perfectly,—think of such a Christian saying, as He looks forward to this bliss, “All that cometh is *vanity*,” and we may get some measure of the value of the precious word of God.

But now with a stronger blow our writer strikes the same doleful chord: “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.”

One would think that there could be no possible misunderstanding the sorrowful irony of the counsel “to walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes,”—expressions invariably used in an evil sense (compare Num. xv. 39; Isa. lvii. 17); and yet, to be consistent with the interpretation to similar counsel in other parts of the book, expounders have sought to give them a *Christian* meaning, as if they were given in the light of revelation and not in the semi-darkness of nature. But here the concluding sentence, “know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment,” is quite unmistakable.

But here is indeed a startling assertion. Where has our writer learned, with such emphatic certainty,

of a judgment to come? Have we mistaken the standpoint whence our book was written? Has the writer, after all, been listening to another Voice that has taught him what is on the other side of the grave? Does Revelation make itself heard here at last? Or may, perhaps, even this be in perfect harmony with all that has gone before, and be one step further—almost the last step—along the path that unaided (but not depraved) human Reason may tread? In a word, does Nature herself give Reason sufficient light to enable her, when in right exercise, to discover a judgment-seat in the shadows of the future?

This is surely a question of deepest—yes, thrilling—interest; and, we are confident, must be answered in the affirmative. It is to this point that our writer has been climbing, step by step. Nature has taught him that the future must be looked at rather than the present; or, rather, the present must be looked at in the light of the future; for that future corresponds *in its character* to the present, as the crop does to the seed, only exceeds it *in intensity* as the harvest exceeds the grain sown. Thus bread hoarded gives no harvest; or, in other words, he who lives for the present alone, necessarily, by the simplest and yet strongest law of Nature, must suffer loss: *this is Judgment by Nature's law*. This, too, is the keynote of every verse—"the future," "the future"; and God, who is clearly discerned by Reason as behind Nature, "which is but the name for an effect whose Cause is God,"—God is clearly recognized as returning a harvest in the *future*, in strict and accurate accord with the sowing of the *present*. This is very clear. Then how simple and how certain that if this is God's irrefragable law in Nature, it must have its fulfillment too in the moral nature of man. It has been one of the chief sorrows of the book that neither

wrong nor confusion is righted here, and those "days of darkness" to which *all* life tends are no discriminative judgment, nor is there anything of the kind in a scene where "all things come alike to all." Then surely, most surely, unless indeed man alone sows without reaping,—alone breaks in as an exception to this law,—a thought not consonant with reason,—there must be to him also a harvest of reaping according to what has been sown: in other words a *Judgment*. Although still, let us mark, our writer does not assume to say anything as to where or when that shall be, or how brought about, this is all uncertain and indefinite: the fact is *certain*; and more clear will the outline of that judgment-seat stand out, as our writer's eyes become accustomed to the new light in which he is standing,—the fact is already certain.

Solemn, most solemn, is this; and yet how beautiful to see a true reason—but let us emphasize again not *depraved*, but exercising her royal function of sovereignty over the flesh, not subject to it—drawing such true and sure lessons from that which she sees of the law of God in Nature. It is a *reasonable*, although in view of sin, a fearful expectation; and with exactness is the word chosen in Acts: Paul *reasoned* of judgment to come; and reason, with conscience, recognized the force of the appeal, as "Felix trembled."

Thus that solemn double appointment of man: death and judgment has been discerned by Nature's light, and counsel is given in view of each. Did we say that our writer had reached the climax of his perplexities in view of death in chap. ix. when he counseled us to "merrily drink our wine," now judgment discerned, death itself even not necessarily the end, at length soberness prevails; and with an evident solemn sincerity he counsels "Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity."

(To be continued.)

F. C. J.

THE MURDERER'S WILL.

SOME few years ago, in one of the Australian colonies, a man named C—— was outlawed for some crime he had committed against the state. As a consequence of this the troopers were sent out on his track, as he had taken to the bush.

Not many days after they had started in pursuit, one of the troopers, who had become separated from his comrades, not suspecting he was anywhere near the man he was in pursuit of, had dismounted, and, stooping down at a water-hole, was refreshing himself. At that moment the outlaw, who was watching him from behind a tree where he was hiding, fired at and wounded him, then with the butt-end of his rifle he dashed out his brains.

Such a brutal murder, added to his other crimes, redoubled the vigilance of the police, and a liberty so diabolically purchased was but of momentary duration. The miscreant was taken, tried, and condemned to be hanged.

Just before the sentence was executed the murderer made a will, leaving all the property he possessed to the widow of the murdered man, supposing, perhaps, to make a kind of reparation for the dreadful deed he had committed. A notice of this duly appeared in the morning papers.

The next morning another announcement appeared with expressions of astonishment, in which the readers pretty generally shared, when it became known that the widow refused to receive either stick or straw from the hands of the man who had murdered her husband.

A woman of a noble mind indeed!

How could she, who was inconsolable at the loss of one who was nearer and dearer to her than any other on earth, be a debtor to the bounty of him whose hands were wet with her husband's blood? Every loving heart and every upright mind would be inexpressibly shocked at the bare mention of such a thing.

Let our beloved fellow-believers reflect that this

incident exactly sets forth the relationship that exists between the world and themselves as part of the bride of Christ, together with the conduct suitable to this blessed relationship.

The world has murdered Him, around whom all the renewed affections play. It has cast Him out, and stands condemned of this act by the Holy Spirit, whose very presence here demonstrates the guilt of the world, in respect of its unbelief in rejecting the Son of man. As it is written, He shall convict the world "of sin, because they believe not on me." (John xvi. 9.)

One of the functions of the Holy Spirit here is thus to testify against the world; and, in fact, His very presence, as stated above, is a witness to its guilt, for He would not be here if Christ had not been murdered by the world.

The world is then, by the presence of the Holy Spirit, put into the place of the prisoner in the dock; while the Holy Spirit is as the witness in the box, upon whose testimony the prisoner's guilt is proved.

Men and women in the world are either in collusion with the world, or they are in the current of the testimony of the Holy Spirit against it.

Which is it with us, dear reader?

Would it not be an anomaly to see the witness in the box, leaning forward and fraternizing with the prisoner in the dock, or receiving favors from him?

Is it not equally an anomaly to see Christians eagerly seeking the favors, the honors, the emoluments of the world, whose hands are imbrued with the blood of their Lord?

If natural affection and uprightness of mind repudiate such a thing, as in our illustration, how much more should spiritual affection, and that loyalty of heart to Christ which resents every insult offered to Him, lead the Christian to repudiate all the overtures of the world, which are only made with a view to draw away the affections from Christ?

How wily an enemy is the devil, the prince of this world! How speciously he uses the world as an in-

strument in his hands to tempt the believer! Alas, how frequently is he successful!

Yet, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John ii. 16, 17.)

The "young men" in John, though they be strong, and the word of God abideth in them, and they have overcome the wicked one, nevertheless have need of the exhortation

"LOVE NOT THE WORLD."

We should beware of it as a thing which always appeals to us, and from which we are never free, but as we abide in Christ.

The need of the day is loyalty of heart to Christ; and this in repudiation of the claims of the world, which, as a siren, would entice the soul, and rob it of its joy, and render at the same time all testimony against itself valueless. The testimony of Lot seemed as an idle tale to the men of Sodom,—his sons-in-law. Why? Because Lot valued and sought after the riches and honors of Sodom.

May the Lord in His mercy raise up and sustain amongst His people a band of loyal, true-hearted "young men," who shall go forward for the prize of their high calling, refusing to look back to the world or to go back in heart to it. His grace alone can accomplish this.

And surely if natural affection can sustain a true-hearted and cruelly bereaved woman in integrity of conduct toward her deceased husband, the Christian may count upon grace to be sustained by divine affection for the One who is not only dead, as far as this world is concerned, but who laid down His life for him,—sustained in quiet devotedness to Him, loyally refusing the overtures of the murderer, and testifying against him in the current of the Holy Spirit's witness in this world.

May the Lord grant it to both readers and writer.

G. J. S. (*Extracted.*)

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

THE CHURCH.—ITS DISCIPLINE.

CHAPTER X.

(Continued from page 336.)

5. **W**E now come to a most important branch of our subject,—the spirit in which Discipline is to be administered. When the apostle wrote about the wickedness in Corinth, he was grieved to see the utter indifference—nay, apparent boasting—as to the matter. It may be true they did not know what to do, but would not every right-minded saint have been overwhelmed by the shame that had come upon the Church of God, and would not He Himself have removed providentially a wrongdoer if there was no other way to be rid of him? Their indifference showed an entire lack of conscience. The most uninstructed *spiritual* person would *mourn*. (1 Cor. v. 2.) How differently the apostle felt: “Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears.” (2 Cor. ii. 4.)

A case of wickedness in an assembly assuredly ought to lead to deep exercise on the part of all. True humility, instead of saying “Lord, I thank Thee,” etc., will rather say “Search *me*, O Lord.” “Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Frequently, too, there will be occasion for self-reproach. Had the erring one been looked after? Had he been prayed for? Had a godly example been set him? Surely such questions as these will arise in one truly realizing the shame of such things. An undressed wound may become gangrenous, and amputation become necessary; but would not the physician who had neglected to take the proper care

of his patient be ashamed of his work? And how many cases of extreme discipline are made necessary by these neglected cases? "He that ruleth . . . with *diligence*."

But this sorrow and humility—this self-judgment—will only make the truly exercised the more firm in vindicating the honor of the Lord. Joshua arose from lying on his face, and executed the Lord's penalty upon Achan. (Josh. vii.) After all, His glory is the only thing to be sought. The case of the woman in John viii. is not in point here. There it was the infliction of the law by men themselves guilty; here it is the act of broken-hearted saints resorting to a last act to keep unsullied the precious name of Christ. But we may learn in what spirit we are to act. How shocking would be the thought of a judicial trial, as if we were the judges! How loathesome the gloating over the wretched details of the evil!*

Nor must we forget that love—love to the offender and to each other—will fill the hearts of those truly exercised. Not love at the expense of truth, but love which mourns while it smites, like God's love, when He chastens.

We have seen in the case of the leper that the priest was to judge. The detection of evil is a priestly

* It is not necessary that the whole assembly should be dragged into the particulars of a case of wickedness. A few careful, godly brothers, who have the confidence of the saints, should go thoroughly into the matter, and when all is clear report the *results* to the assembly, which will then act by putting away the wicked person. Occupation with evil, even when necessary, is defiling; and as few as may be should be engaged in it, and these should wash their garments. (Num. xix. 21.) Above all, should such matters be kept out of the conversation. "Let it not be *named* among you, as becometh saints." (Eph. v. 3, 4.)

function, and this means communion. Why is it that so many cases of discipline fail to command the consciences of God's people, and are the occasion of dividing them asunder instead of uniting them? Is it not because the saints have forgotten their priestly position,—their place in the sanctuary,—and that in communion alone can they have guidance and power? Instead of this, how often is the subject the food for conversation and thought and strife until there is no power. Saints need to be much alone with God—much occupied with Christ—when evil has to be dealt with.

In concluding this part of our subject, we will see the spirit produced in the Corinthians by the apostle's faithful dealing. "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." (2 Cor. vii. 11.)

6. But we pass from the consideration of these sad but most necessary matters to the bright side of our subject. Thank God there is a bright side, and that where there has been faithfulness in the path of duty there is the joy of seeing the wanderer restored. We can almost feel the thrill of the apostle's gladness as he wrote of the recovered brother, "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." (2 Cor. vii. 4.)

Restoration is what was prayed for, hoped for, expected. While one put away is to be let alone, this does not preclude the thought of looking after him, after the lapse of some time. Especially should this

be done if he is weak and untaught, and if he has bowed to the Lord's judgment. Of course, those who put a bold face on it, or who continue in sin, can only be left in God's hands.

Marks of true recovery are very plain. There will be a sense of sin against *God* (Ps. li.),—a judging of the root of it, a submission to God's governmental dealing, even when undue severity may seem to have been used by the saints,—these are some of the clear proofs of true recovery. If there was trespass against any, the wrong will be righted as far as possible,—the dishonest gains refunded,—the bitter, false accusations, withdrawn; and, we need hardly add, the sin will be forsaken. Until there is personal restoration to communion with God there can be no thought of reception by the assembly. The steps in the reinstatement of the cleansed leper (Lev. xiv.) to his privileges are interesting and instructive in this connection. It was the priest who was to examine the healed man, and the various rites in his restoration are most suggestive of complete recovery.

It will be noticed that the leper, even after his restoration to the worship of God, “remained abroad out of his tent seven days,” and this would suggest that even after personal recovery an interval may elapse before the person is restored to his privileges in the assembly. There are many reasons for this: if the offense has been glaring or disgraceful, it is fitting that the world should see the genuineness of the repentance. It will not hurt, too, to deepen in the individual a sense of his sin. In addition to this, it is well to remember that the tender consciences of the saints have been sorely wounded, and the offender will gladly allow time for the healing of the shock

inflicted. Anything like insistance upon his immediate reception after confession, or resentment at delay, would show that the work in his soul had not been complete.

On the other hand, the assembly needs to guard against a hard, proud, unforgiving spirit. When the consciences of all are satisfied, there should not be needless delay in confirming their love to their recovered brother. "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. (2 Cor. ii. 6-8.) How gracious, how loving, and yet how holy are all these directions.

And may we not add that when the restored brother is again in his place, his sin is not to be remembered? True, *he* will not forget it; but shall the others, by look or manner, betray lack of confidence? Ah, we are too much like the world, which "forgives, but cannot forget." Neither can we say such an one must keep silence, and never again expect to be used of the Lord. It was Peter, the wandering sheep, who was made a shepherd for others. (John xxi.) When David was restored he would teach transgressors God's ways. (Ps. li.) He will walk softly the rest of his days, a chastened person, but a happy and a useful member of the body of Christ. "He restoreth my soul, he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

7. Having thus, partially and imperfectly, followed our subject through its various divisions, we come finally to the authority for Discipline,—wherein and how far it is binding upon the people of God.

“Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in [unto, Gr.] my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. xviii. 18-20.) This scripture is not addressed to the apostles, as a similar one (John xx. 23), nor to Peter alone (Matt. xvi. 19), but to the prospective Church (Matt. xviii. 17). It will be seen that the authority for discipline and the power of prayer are both linked with His name, and intrusted to the two or three gathered to that name.

Here, then, we have the authority for discipline, and higher there could not be. Bound in heaven! How solemn! The sanction of God Himself, and the judgment recorded in His presence! What are the decisions of the courts of men, —supreme courts and courts of appeal? How small they seem beside that word —“bound in heaven.” There is no appeal from that decision,—its authority is absolute, its judgment final. And such is the authority for discipline in the Church of God.

Let us, then, examine this scripture. Does it intrust to fallible men a dangerous power? Can it not be misused? And has not Rome, with this very authorization, made havoc of the Church? Our fears, however, are groundless. One passage makes all clear, “Where two or three are gathered to *my name*.” Can His name be linked with unrighteousness? Could one steal, lie, bear false witness, in the name of Christ? Gathering to His name is not a formal thing. It

means that nothing is to be done inconsistent with that name. It means the most absolute subjection to the authority of that name,—therefore the most implicit following of scripture, the most entire dependence upon the Spirit of God. Who can conceive of a wicked or unrighteous prayer being answered? Must it not be for what is *according to His will?* (1 John v. 14.) Just in the same way must discipline be according to His will, if it is to be bound in heaven. As well may the bandit have prayers offered for the success of his murderous attack upon the traveler, and thanks after its accomplishment, as for any number of men, no matter by what name called, to claim divine sanction for what is not God's holy will.

But this only brings out into clearer relief the absolutely binding nature of every act of righteous discipline. No one dare despise it, or refuse to be bound by it. No one dare appeal from it, for it is Heaven's decision.

The instruments of this judgment may have been but two or three unlearned and ignorant men, but they have given voice to the judgment of God! We repeat, *if it has been righteous judgment*. See the divine sanction in the binding and loosing by the Corinthian assembly: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit [present in spirit] with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. v. 4.) "To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also; for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it, in the person of Christ." (2 Cor. ii. 10.)

This makes simple our next proposition: that an act of discipline, according to God, of any assembly is

for the whole Church, and binding upon it. Is it not bound in heaven? To be explicit, a person righteously put away in Corinth is out of communion with the whole Church of God. He is out at Ephesus, at Philippi, at Rome. He could not go to Ephesus and have his case reopened there: that would be to appeal from the judgment of Heaven. This grows out of the truth of the one body: to deny it in word or deed would be to say there is not one body but many. Oh, how God's people have neglected this!

We cannot refrain from pointing out here the necessity of letters of commendation between the assemblies of God (2 Cor. iii. 2), for those not known. The neglect of this brings in carelessness, a disregard for the Lord's honor, and may be the cause of much sorrow. Let the worldly-minded scoff. God has intrusted His people with a priceless treasure, has made them guardians of the honor of His holy name: let them take care.

But it may be asked, Is it not begging the question to say a decision is bound in heaven *if* it be righteous? Is not this the very thing to be proved? And must not every act of discipline be examined before it can be accepted?

Our first answer must be—We cannot get on without God. We have the Holy Spirit present in the Church for the very reason that we could never get on by ourselves. We would, indeed, be like a household of children—orphans—without the Comforter. He being present, to guide according to the Word, will and does give confidence to the Church in those so guided. Suspicion will have no place, but fullest confidence. We will believe unless we are compelled not to believe.

It must be remembered, too, that all ordinary acts of discipline are clear and their righteousness self-evident. Excommunication is not an every-day occurrence, and discipline is the exception, not the rule. Where the great underlying principles of the Church of God have been understood, as imperfectly set forth in these pages, difficult cases will not be of frequent occurrence.

But when they do occur, what is the remedy? Let us suppose that an assembly has unrighteously put away a person not really wicked. It comes to the ears of Christians elsewhere, and they are bound to take knowledge of it. But how? Not assuredly taking up the subject at a distance, and going over it. The presumption is always in favor of the righteousness of the act, and the suspected person most assuredly could not be received when under discipline. Let them go to their brethren in the assembly where the judgment has been given. They will, if in the right, be most ready to spread the case before the inquirers, and give all the reasons for their action. If mistaken they will gladly retract, on its being made plain to them.

There is, however, a possibility that the assembly acted unrighteously, when it will be the duty of the inquirers to seek to bring them to repentance, graciously and patiently, yet firmly. It will not help such an assembly to bow to their unrighteous decision: rather it would confirm them in their evil. Surely prayer, constant and fervent, with humiliation, will not be forgotten.

If the assembly persists in its unrighteousness it can no longer be recognized as an assembly of God, and the effort must be made to deliver individual

souls from it. But we repeat, if the principles of the Church of God are clearly understood, rare indeed will be the need of refusing an entire assembly.

We might add that when questions of discipline have arisen in an assembly, and there is inability to come to a common judgment, it would answer somewhat to the condition of a house suspected of leprosy. (Lev. xiv.) The house was to be shut up until it was manifestly defiled or clean. So with an assembly where strife or discord over discipline occurs (God prevent such cases!), let the assembly be “shut up,” not received from until its true condition be manifest.

Is it not true that over-severity in some act of discipline (we speak not of manifest and flagrant wickedness) is the reason why the act of an assembly does not command the consciences of God’s people?

The Lord bless these thoughts to His people, and lead them into paths of righteousness as well as of peace.

(To be continued.)

“PERILOUS TIMES.”

AS the end draws near the darkness grows more dense. Satan plies his wiles with an adroitness and a dexterity that is truly alarming. As an angel of light he passes on,—soiling, beguiling, bewildering, and deadening the consciences and hearts of the Lord’s sheep. He especially presses “grace” and “love” (?), in the way of toleration; and amazingly he succeeds, and where we would least expect it. Those who yesterday were confirmed are to-day questioning; those who pressed on then with steady

tread are now reeling; those who seemed to be pillars are but broken reeds.

The present vortex has whirled nearly all into a realm of vagaries, and all is uncertainty. To these no longer is church position clearly defined; and the place of separation is surrendered for a field that offers more room for the energy of nature. The man down here is taken up, and supersedes the Man in the glory. . . . But, if His love is grieved and disappointed in them He knows that His sheep hear His voice: hence the appeal, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." How solemn the thought—we are associating His name with all we are going on with. Is it a wicked world, the corrupt systems, or even a professed assembly of God: from the place in which evil and iniquity is openly allowed and tolerated we are to "depart." "Truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." (Isa. lix. 15.) But what does it matter if we go up or down in the views or opinions of men? It is *before Him* we walk. And that service which is rendered purely with reference to Him will be least understood and least appreciated. (John xii.) Do not succumb to the devilish delusion that a narrow path is incompatible with a large heart. In 2 Cor. vi. no sooner does he say "Be ye also enlarged" than he adds "Be ye not unequally yoked together," and "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." Let us keep in mind God's order—"The wisdom that is from above is *first* pure, then peaceable."

Separation should be intense, and perpetual. "Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, *afar off* from the camp." (Ex. xxxiii. 7.) When the thought of returning to that from which

God had separated him entered Jeremiah's heart, he would say "Let them return unto thee; but *return not thou unto them.*" And yet he was enjoined to "take forth the precious from the vile."

Some claim the liberty of crossing the lines of separation, for the accomplishment of good. Any such might learn a lesson of poor Balaam: "I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord to do *either good or bad* of mine own mind." Saul tried this. God had said "utterly destroy all." But he consulted his own mind as to doing good, and "spared *the best* of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice *unto the Lord.*" But even though it was "the best," and "unto the Lord," it involved disobedience to His word, and was utterly rejected. "To *obey* is better than sacrifice." (1 Sam. xv.) If this principle of unlimited obedience were acted upon we would not be ranging at will, nor glorying in a liberty that is license, nor seeking a large place to display what we know. We would find ourselves really "without," but with Him. (Heb. xiii. 13.)

Ours is the place of "His reproach," but the place of communion, sweet and hallowed; and the place where we may prevail with God, and thus accomplish results which shall be left for display at the Judgment-seat. (Gen. xviii. and xix. 21; Isa. xlix. 4.)

I know this is *down*, but it is the way to "the brook," where we "*lift up* the head." (Ps. cx. 7.)

Until He comes may we walk in the power of an ungrieved Spirit,—threading our way through this labyrinth to the praise of Him "who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

F. C. B.

WHAT IS MAN?

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field: the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the seas.” (Ps. viii. 4-8.)

THE beast was *made* out of existing material by a word—the earth “brought them forth” (Gen. i. 24): man was a distinct *creation*,—God’s inbreathing constituting him a living soul. Thus the formation of his body and this inbreathing are directly from God, in strong contrast with the beast. Moreover, God *consults* as to man: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” (Gen. i. 26.)

Man *represents* God, and man was created *like* God, however sin may have marred the image and spoiled the likeness.

Man is a triune being, having spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess. v. 23; Job x. 1, 11, 12). The spirit is the seat of the understanding,—that is, his intellect or reason, that by which he knows. (1 Cor. ii. 11.)

The spirit links man with God, who “*is a Spirit*” (John iv. 24),—is “the Father of spirits.” (Heb. xii. 9.)

The beast has no understanding (Ps. xxxii. 9); and man that is in honor and understands not is *like* the beasts that perish (Ps. xlix. 20; cf. 2 Peter ii. 12). “There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.” (Job. xxxii. 8.) Beasts have not spirit. (Isa. xxxi. 3.) This spirit is formed by God. (Amos iv. 13, margin; Zech. xii. 1.)

Soul is another thing. It is the seat of the appetites, passions,—as love, hatred, and the like. Every

beast, every fowl, and every creeping thing, has a soul (Gen. i. 30, margin), and man has it in common with them.

Spirit and soul are never confounded in Scripture. (Isa. xxxviii. 15, 16; Job vii. 11; Luke i. 46, 47; Heb. iv. 12.) "In whose hand is the soul (*nephesh*) of every living thing, and the breath (*ruach*, 'spirit') of all mankind." (Job xii. 10.)

In one place only, where man confesses his ignorance, his vision limited to what is "under the sun," is spirit connected with beasts, and there he asks "who knows?" *No answer.* (Eccl. iii. 19-21.) God's order is "spirit, soul, and body,"—spirit first. Had man been controlled by his spirit in Eden he would have hearkened to God and been safe, but he allowed his soul—his desires—to lead him. (Gen. iii. 6.) He desired to become as God, and he became his own god: his belly is his god. (Phil. iii. 19.) Soul became uppermost, and man has been *soulish* (or soul-led, *ψυχικός*) ever since. See this word in Jude 19; 1 Cor. ii. 14; xv. 44, 46; James iii. 15.

A good illustration of a man governed by his soul is afforded by the drunkard. A shrewd, intelligent professional man is addicted to drink. He has an excellent wife whom he loves, bright children of which he is exceedingly fond, a snug little property which he values, and all going to ruin, and he knows it as well as any one can tell him. Why does he persist in his cups? His soul is uppermost, his appetite governs.

Death is separation of soul and body. (Gen. xxxv. 18.) "The body without the spirit is dead." (James ii. 26.) At death the body goes to the grave. (Gen. iii. 19; Eccl. xii. 7), and the spirit returns to God

who gave it,—that is, to hades or the unseen world. The distinction between body and soul at death is carefully maintained in Scripture. The blessed Lord's body was not allowed to see corruption, nor His soul left in hades. (Acts ii. 27, 31.)

If in Ecclesiastes the view is limited to that "under the sun," in Luke xvi. 19–31 the curtain is lifted, and we are allowed to look beyond. This is not a parable, as many suppose; for the Lord says "There *was* a certain rich man," and "There *was* a certain beggar." Here we see that in the unseen world some are comforted whilst others are tormented. So far as this life was concerned, of the two paths one might have preferred the rich man's, but its "end," how awful! To see this "end," however, one must be "in the sanctuary of God" (Ps. lxxiii. 17), and the gulf is fixed and impassable.

One of the two crucified thieves went at once to Abraham's bosom, for he was a child of Abraham. (Luke xxiii. 43; Rom. iv. 16.) He believed God: the other went to the place of torment, to keep company with the inhabitants of Sodom. (Jude 7.) In hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments," and seeth "Abraham *afar off*, and Lazarus in his bosom." At death the believer passes at once into the presence of the Lord,—he is "absent *from* the body, present *with* the Lord." (2 Cor. v. 8.) It is surely wondrous joy and blessing to *serve* Christ down here, as Paul did (Phil. i. 21); but there was something still better, "far better," and that was to be *with* Christ up there,— "To depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." To live and serve Christ was precious,— "to die is gain,"—gain because death would take him to be *with* Christ: in that sense death is a servant, as Paul,

Apollos, etc. (1 Cor. iii. 22.) So that "death is ours," along with the other seven servants there mentioned.

The glorified body he does not receive until the Lord comes (Phil. iii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 52), but the body is not the man, since there may be "a man in Christ, out of the body." (2 Cor. xii. 2, 3.) Peter was soon to "put off" his body (2 Peter i. 14); and, as we have seen, the believer is "absent from" his body, when "present with the Lord."

Both Lazarus and the rich man, in Luke xvi., were without bodies, and both conscious,—one comforted, and the other tormented. Thus death is not ceasing to exist. These two did not cease to exist at death, but went to their several abodes, where the gulf was "fixed." "*After* death the judgment." (Heb. ix. 27.) The wrath of God *abides* on the unbelieving. (John iii. 36.) It is *after* man has killed the body, which is as far as he can go, that God can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matt. x. 28; Luke xii. 4, 5.) The first death ends—not in extinction, but—in *resurrection*. "All that are in the graves . . . shall come forth . . . they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of Judgment." (John v. 29.) "And death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire.* And this is the second death, and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx. 13-15.) The second death is the lake of fire, and not extinction, as the beast and the false prophet have already ex-

* This is in the eternal state, after earth and heaven have fled away.

isted 1,000 years there, when Satan is cast into it. (Cf. Rev. xix. 20, and xx. 10); and the torment is day and night, for ever and ever, in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. (Rev. xiv. 10, 11.) Thus it is clear that the portion of the believer and of the unbeliever are alike eternal, the same word being used as to both (Matt. xxv. 46),—a twofold and abiding witness to the righteousness of God (2 Thess. i. 5-10). On the one hand the eternal fire from which, as a brand, the believer has been snatched; on the other, the eternal glory which has been despised by the sinner.

All such passages as Mal. iv. 1, 3, refer to the punishment of the wicked *on earth*, and have to do with the *first* death, not the second. All the subjects of those judgments must hear the Son of God, and *come forth* (John v. 29) and stand before the great white throne. (Rev. xx. 12.) They are judged according to their works,—a *discriminative* judgment (Luke xii. 48), which would be impossible if extinction were their common doom.

Existence is not life. The rock exists, but it has not life. The Egyptian of 3,000 years ago exists in the Smithsonian Institute, at Washington, in the form of a mummy, but he does not so live. Life really and fully consists (1) in the possession of all the faculties; (2) their exercise in the sphere God has appointed; and (3) for the purpose God intended.

The sinner has not God in view, does not live *for* God, so is dead in trespasses and in sins. (Eph. ii. 1, 5.) So is the Christian widow who lives in pleasure: "she is dead while she lives." (1 Tim. v. 6.)

He who has not eaten of the flesh and drunk the blood of the Son of man has no life in him (John vi.

53), while he who has the Son has life (1 John v. 12), has the capacity—the nature—to enjoy life as it is before God, and perform its functions, but his environment is not yet adapted to the life he has received; he has not yet “entered into life.” (Matt. xviii. 8, 9.)

When the blessed Lord comes the external sphere will be made to correspond with the life we have received: each will be adapted to the other,—the external and the internal,—and both perfectly suited to God. That, indeed, will be “life,” according to God’s original purpose. (Tit. i. 2.) Happy is he who hears Christ’s word, and believes Him who sent Him. He has eternal life, and will not come into judgment. (John v. 24.) Again: “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” (Rev. xx. 6.)

It may be added that the soul is never said to sleep. Sleep is but another term for death. (John xi. 13, 14),—only applicable, however, to the child of God, as to whom death is abolished. (2 Tim. i. 10; Heb. ii. 14, 15.) It is not really death to him: he really never dies. (John xi. 26; viii. 51.) No longer the king of Terrors, it may afford a special opportunity of glorifying God. (John xxi. 19; Phil. i. 29.)

“And hath *raised us up* together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” (Eph. ii. 6, 7.)

J. B. J.

NOTES OF A LECTURE BY F. W. GRANT.

Gen. xxxii. 22-32; xxxiii. 18-20; xxxv. 1-15.

I REALIZE, beloved brethren, I might have taken something less familiar than what I have read, but we must be led of God; and when I come to speak I feel as if the whole Bible were shut up to me, but this one portion.

The lesson of Jacob's history must be a very remarkable one, when we see how God has emphasized it. Out of fifty chapters in Genesis, Jacob's life stretches over twenty-five. Though not always in the front, yet he is noticed within these chapters. God calls Himself the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob,—three names with which He is pleased to identify Himself. This is His memorial, and it is as such He speaks to Moses afterward. He has identified Himself with *them*, just as in the New Testament He has identified Himself with one blessed name; and He is now the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now there is no other name but that. In Abraham we have, in a way, given us the Father. In Isaac we have the Son. We need one more to complete the series, and in that one more (Jacob) we have the Spirit.

Jacob is his natural name—the Supplanter, but really the heel-catcher,—the one always grasping, grasping,—always ready with his hand. Spiritually he is Israel,—a prince with God. Before he comes to be this, however, there is a long discipline,—the work of the Holy Ghost in him,—and then he comes out as silver tried in the furnace—bright for God. The worse the material, the more intractable, the better it shows the workman; and this is just what

we have here. It is from a Jacob, by God's grace, an Israel is formed. This is the Holy Ghost's work now.

I want to look at these passages which are marked by two altars: the one — *El-elohe Israel*, God the God of Israel; and *El Bethel*, God the God of His own House. These two things speak of turning-points in Jacob's history. The apostle tells us that before the children were born God made His choice (Rom. ix.), saying, "the elder shall serve the younger." All that we are, and all that we ever shall be, comes out of what God has wrought, out of what is His choice; that is, out of His heart, and not our own. We need not wonder at this, for out of the heart of man come—what? Evil thoughts, etc.,—evil, and only evil. Out of the heart of God what comes? Rather, may we not say, what does *not* come that is blessed?

In God's will it is the energy of love always,—love that masters, love that makes us His, and that makes us followers of Him. He is the God of judgment too, as we fully see in Jacob's case; but, beloved, judgment is his strange work.

But Jacob is born in divine favor. What has he to do but just to be in the hand of Him who would mold him? What, but just to be quiet in the hand of God? But at the end of his life he has to say "few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." A *long* life, we should say; and yet, after all, the years that count, so to speak (there are many years of ours, as well as his, that may not count, are there not?) are few and evil. This Jacob's hand,—how many things it will lay hold of, always filling itself and never full, and so God has to let the days and months and years

pass on, until at last he has to give up, and meet God face to face, and then get relief.

Let us see about this catching hand of Jacob. God had said "The elder shall serve the younger." Yet in nature Esau compares favorably with Jacob: indeed, his noble bearing stands in contrast with the supplanter,—the heel-catcher. But all comes out when Esau comes in from the chase, hungry and weary. Recklessly he would barter away his birth-right, for he did not value it, which Jacob takes advantage of, and buys it for a mess of pottage. Esau is stamped as a profane man: Jacob, after all, is not a profane person. He covets a right thing. His heart is set upon what is good and what is of God; but he is mean and grasping, instead of waiting upon God.

Again, God speaks of multiplying his seed like the dust of the earth. Now the dust has to be ground up beneath your feet, and that is the way he is to be multiplied,—all this suggesting the low and groveling spirit that characterized him naturally.

Another thing: Isaac gets old, and wants to bless his sons before he dies. Without right estimate of the divine judgment, naturally he likes Esau. He is not enough with God to see what He is about, and thus he would bless Esau. That is all changed; and Jacob,—how simply *he* might have rested in God just now, and as surely have got the blessing. What a strange thing a man should think he can wrest from God the blessing He has to give,—is ready to give! But alas, we must pay our toll,—our tribute to Satan. Men do it, Christians do it, we do it. Don't you think we do? Not openly, perhaps, so as to realize what we are doing; but it is done. We want His blessing, but how often, like Jacob (for we *are* Jacobs),

we take underhand means to get it. Look at all that weary way of his. Let us take God's word for it: let us trust Him, and let Him work things Himself. He will soon carry you—just as soon as He is able—into the blessing he has for you, into the contemplation of Himself,—only lie in His hand.

But Jacob's hand is again upon his brother's heel, and the result is, he is cast out of his father's family for many years. He is cast out into a world where others do with him just what he has been doing with his brother. What you sow you shall reap, says God; but in that way you learn exactly what it is you have been sowing: you learn the evil of your own way.

Oh, beloved, that we might submit to God, and learn His way of blessing, without the long journey so often trod.

Bethel he comes to. It is the house of God. His father's house lost,—a beggarly wanderer,—God opens another home. He doesn't exactly let him in, but He lets him look in; and when His government has done its work He will let him in. When he is homeless and houseless, his head upon a stone for a pillow, then he finds what he himself calls "the house of God and the gate of heaven." And then come those tender assurances, finishing with the words, "And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whithersoever 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." The Lord refers to this when speaking to Nathaniel in John i. Men have their ladders, but they are all too short. Christ is the ladder that reaches to heaven itself. Jacob doesn't see all this,

but he sees God at the top, who makes him those exceeding great and precious promises: "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, . . . and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xxviii.)

Do you ask, What has Jacob done to deserve that? Nothing whatever. He deserved much else that follows, but he certainly hadn't deserved this. How good God is, and how good to see God saying he must not be discouraged or cast down, or let his knees knock together. But how do we account for this?

In Psalm lxxiii. the psalmist was envious of the foolish when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. He sees how many of the good things of this world men have. It was too much for him. All the day long he was plagued, and chastened every morning; but at length he went into the sanctuary, and then understood he their end. He finds out then that all these good things that men get do not bring them nearer God, but that God insists we must be ground down to the dust, and *then* he blesses, and *there*.

I don't go round the street to take up every child to chasten him, but I chasten my own. This is what God does. But, beloved, God doesn't want to do this with His children. He wants them so near Himself He will not need to do it.

So in Padan, Jacob must toil double. He reaps away at what he had sown, and all those years would seem as if they had no effect upon him at all. Had they none?

Now when he again gets back to the border of the land, to Mahanaim, he seems to have not learned any lesson. The word Mahanaim speaks of "two hosts,"

—the Lord's host and his own. He sees God, but he sees Jacob also has something pretty big; but this, beloved, is never a sign of being *with* God. On the contrary, to be so will manifest him as a man broken to pieces. A broken and contrite heart He will not despise. Though high and lofty, and inhabiting eternity, He will dwell with such. We would rise up and be something, *as Christians* be something, and God must beat us down, beat us down, beat us down, until we lie down and let Him have His way; and until He lifts us up in His way and His due season. But now he is to meet his brother, and he begins to plan and plot as the Jacob of old.

At the place "Penuel" God meets him as a stranger, —as one hostile to Him. Jacob has all this heavy load of meeting Esau, whom he had so wronged, as an enemy. He has this additional load laid upon his shoulders,—He meets God, and He is against him, and wrestles with him. Don't mistake, beloved, if circumstances are against you. It is God. Take it from His hand. Jacob's will has not been God's will, and there must be conflict; and even when right things were in question, he could not wait to get them in God's way. Do you know, the more you believe in yourself the less you believe in God, and the measure in which you fail to trust God is the measure in which you trust in yourself. You see people who have no ability to meet anything. They wrestle with God, and wrestle and gain nothing, just as Jacob wrestled and got nothing, for indeed he got nothing by the wrestling.

But how much can a man wrestle when his thigh is out of joint? Jacob will wrestle! Very well: God will show His strength. He must break him down,

and He breaks him down. The angel says—strangely says—"Now let me go." And Jacob, in another voice—no more a wrestling man, but with a dislocated thigh—says "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." What is he doing? Clinging—not wrestling now, but clinging! Our weakness clings to God, and from that weakness God cannot drag Himself away. Oh, how blessed this! We look at ourselves, and we force God to come in; and, at all cost, break us down. Then, and not till the wrestler is changed to a clinger,—*then he prevails*.

Put your arms, in ever so much weakness, around Him, and do you think He will turn away? Will the Almighty God tear Himself away from the weakness of His creature? Oh, no! Oh, no! Let us, beloved brethren, appropriate all this, and enjoy the blessedness of such an one. The angel now says, "What is thy name?" And he replies, "Jacob." (Supplanter.) Do you say now, "I am a poor worm, wriggling and trying to make my way along the earth." Then God says, "*Now*"—not till now—"thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a Prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Oh, beloved, cling—don't wrestle. Wrestle, and He is strong against you; but cling, and He is not strong at all *against* you, but strong *for* you.

Jacob now says "Tell me, I pray thee, Thy name." But He will not. Do you want to know? Well, Jacob didn't find out. He learned one lesson: he learned himself, in some way; but he goes on into the land when he gets through with Esau, and has escaped the wrath he so much dreaded, and at Shalem, a city of Shechem, he builds there an altar, and calls it *El-Elohe-Israel*, "God the God of Israel." But if

we only learn God as one who shelters and cares and keeps,—that is not enough. Do you rest satisfied with knowing that God belongs to you, or have you gone on to this—that you belong to God? How easily the child of God sets aside the word of God, and resting satisfied with getting to heaven! Getting salvation, they are indifferent as to how far they obey His word. That is making use of God,—*your* interests are in question. But has God no interests? Jacob has no thought beyond this—that God is something very good for Jacob, as he says just here, I have seen God face to face, *and my life is preserved*,—although he had only met God in the dark night, and didn't see His face at all,—asked His name and didn't get it. So, after all, Jacob *remains* Jacob; and after God had said “Thy name shall no more be Jacob,” He has afterward to call him Jacob again. The higher critics—those very wise men—do not see that these things agree, but I tell you they *do* agree, and it is well if we find it out. Again, Jacob has “power with men, and shall prevail,” but in the next chapter he does not prevail. Instead, he and his family are in danger of being exterminated. At least, he expects or fears this. We shall not go over that sorrowful history, but the lesson for us is plain. We may have power in a certain sense, and not have it. An engine filled with steam might do great damage if it had not rails to run upon; and *God's* will is the track upon which we are to run, in the power of the Spirit of God.

And now (chap. xxxv.), “God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and make *there* an altar unto God.” He had made it in the wrong place. Bethel is the house of God, and he is going there. See the effect:

"put away the strange gods," etc. Now he is going to see God,—see Him in the light, and not in the darkness. God is to be the only God now,—only His will must be owned. Jacob will be Jacob so long as he doesn't own that. Oh, when the sense of that grace of God has come into his soul, how it beats him down, and what a past he had!

But he goes up to Bethel. He comes to Luz (separation). The break with his past is now complete for himself and all his, and he builds his altar. He calls it *El-Bethel*,—God the God of His own house. What a change! Long ago that house had opened its door, and Jacob remembered that; and now it is "God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram," and blessed him. But what about the long intervening time? Ah, all that long time had been wasted and lost. Now God reminds him his name is Jacob sure enough, but it is to be no more practically that: "Israel shall be thy name."

Now, beloved, I want to urge that God has a house of His own, and He wants not that He should be conformed to our house, but that we should be conformed to His. Do we need power? Then it must be power to do His will,—to serve Him. Which is best, God or we? His will or ours? God's will or Jacob's? Oh, if we claim a right to our own way we may get it, but we shall prove it a bitter misery. If we know God, we shall cry night and day to Him "Don't give me my will, give me Thine." If you have met God face to face, He will be all glorious to you, and you'll be in the dust forever: you'll be like Job, when he met God face to face, and he says "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye *seeth* Thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in

dust and ashes." That was the repentance of a saint, but one learning to see himself in the light of God. This is the very secret of holiness. He abhorred himself and his ways, and now he says, like Jacob: "God is to be the God of His own house, the house that opened its doors for me when I was a poor homeless wrecked sinner, and at last brought me in there to enjoy all its blessedness."

The power of that name of Israel will never be known by you till your whole soul bows in reverence before His face. Have you really looked God in the face, and don't care how much you obey Him or do His will? There is but one place for us,—down, down in the dust, in the presence of God,—the God of His own house,—in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you want to know what power is, remember that, if you want to glorify Christ, you'll never lack power,—the power of the Holy Ghost; but if you want to glorify yourself, like the engine off the track and full of steam, you can't have power but to do evil,—evil to yourself and others.

CHRISTIANITY is the life of Christ communicated *to* the believer—dwelling *in* him—and flowing out *from* him, in the ten thousand little details which go to make up our daily practical life. It has nothing ascetic, monastic, or sanctimonious about it. It is genial, cordial, lightsome, pure, elevated, holy, heavenly, divine. Such is the Christianity of the New Testament. It is Christ dwelling in the believer, and reproduced, by the power of the Holy Ghost, in his daily practical career.

C. H. M.

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

CHAPTER XII.

(Continued from page 7.)

OUR last chapter concluded with the words, "For childhood and youth are vanity": that is, childhood proves the emptiness of all "beneath the sun," as well as old age. The heart of the child has the same needs—the same capacity in kind—as that of the aged. *It needs God.* Unless it knows Him, and His love is there, it is empty; and, in its fleeting character, childhood proves its vanity. But this makes us quite sure that if childhood can feel the need, then God has, in His wide grace, *met the need*; nor is that early life to be debarred from the provision that He has made for it. There are then the same *possibilities* of filling the heart and life of the young child with that divine love that fills every void, and turns the cry of "Vanity" into the Song of Praise: "Yea, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise."

But our writer is by no means able thus to touch any chord in the young heart that shall vibrate with the music of praise. Such as he has, however, he gives us: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

This counsel must not be separated from the context. It is based absolutely and altogether on what has now been discerned: for not only is our writer a man of the acutest intelligence, but he evidently possesses the highest qualities of moral courage. He

shirks no question, closes his eyes to no fact, and least of all to that awful fact of man's compulsory departure from this scene which is called "death." But following on, he has found that even this cannot possibly be all; there must be a *judgment* that shall follow this present life. It is in view of this he counsels "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," whilst the effect of time is to mature, and not destroy, the powers He has given thee: for not forever will life's enjoyment last; old age comes surely, and He who made thee, holds thy spirit in His hand, so that whilst the body may return to dust, the spirit must return to Him who gave it.

We will only pause for a moment again to admire the glorious elevation of this counsel. How good were it if the remembrance of a Creator-God, to whom all are accountable, could tone, without quenching, the fire and energy of youthful years, and lead in the clean paths of righteousness. But, alas, how inadequate to meet the actual state of things. Solomon himself shall serve to illustrate the utter inadequacy of his own counsel. What comfort or hope could he extract from it? His were now already the years in which he must say "I have no pleasure in them." A more modern poet might have voiced his cry,—

"My age is in the yellow leaf,
The bud, the fruit of 'life,' is gone:
The worm, the canker, and the grief,
Remain alone!"

His youth was no more: its bright days were forever past, never to be restored. What remains, then, for Solomon; and the myriads like him? What shall efface the memory of those wasted years, or what shall give a quiet peace, in view of the fast-coming

harvest of that wild sowing? Can Reason—can any human Wisdom—find any satisfactory answer to these weighty questions? *None!*

Verses 2 to 7 beautifully and poetically depict the fall of the city of man's body under the slow but sure siege of the forces of Time. Gradually, but without one moment's pause, the trenches approach the walls. Outwork after outwork falls into the enemy's hands, until he is victor over all, and the citadel itself is taken.

Verse 2.—First, clouds come over the spirit: the joyousness of life is dulled,—the exuberance of youth is quenched. Sorrow follows quickly on the heel of sorrow,—“clouds return after rain.” Those waves that youth's light bark rode gallantly and with exhilaration, now flood the laboring vessel and shut out the light—the joy—of life.

Verse 3.—Then the hands (the keepers of the house) tremble with weakness, and the once strong men (the knees) now feeble, bend under the weight of the body they have so long borne. The few teeth (grinders) that may remain fail to do their required service. Time's finger touches, too, those watchers from the turret-windows (the eyes): shade after shade falls over them till, like slain sentinels that drop at their posts, they look out again never-more.

Verse 4.—Closer still the enemy presses, till the close-beleaguered fortress is shut out from all communication with the outer world; “the doors are shut in the streets”; the ears are dulled to all sounds. Even the grinding of the mill,* which in an eastern

* This differs from the usual interpretation, which makes this verse a metaphor of the mouth and teeth. This has been rejected above, not only on account of the direct evidence of its faultiness,

house rarely ceases, reaches him but as a low murmur, though it be really as loud as the shrill piping of a bird, and all the sweet melodies of song are no longer to be enjoyed.

Verse 5.—Time's sappers, too, are busily at work, although unseen, till the effect of their mining becomes evident in the alarm that is felt at the slightest need of exertion. The white head, too, tells its tale, and adds its testimony to the general decay. The least weight is as a heavy burden; nor can the failing appetite be again awakened. The man is going to his age-long home*; for now those four seats

and the fanciful interpretation given to the "sound of grinding," but for the twofold reason that it would make the teeth to be alluded to *twice*, whilst all reference to the equally important sense of "hearing" would be omitted altogether. I have therefore followed Dr. Lewis's metrical version:—

"And closing are the doors that lead abroad,
When the hum of the mill is sounding low,
Though it rise to the sparrow's note,
And voices loudest in the song, do all to faintness sink."

Although, I might here add, I cannot follow this writer in his view that Ecclesiastes is describing only the old age of the sensualist. Rather is it *man* as *man*,—at his highest,—but with only what he can find "under the sun" to enlighten him.

* The word rendered above "age-long," in our authorized version "long,"—*man* goeth to his *long* home—is one of those suggestive words with which the Hebrew Scriptures abound, and which are well worth pondering with interest. To transfer and not translate it into English we might call it "olamic," speaking of a cycle: having a limit, and yet a shadowy, undefined limit. The word therefore in itself beautifully and significantly expresses both the confidence, the faith of the speaker as well as his ignorance. *Man's* existence after death is distinctly predicated. The mere grave is not that olamic home; for the spirit would, in that case, be quite lost sight of; nor, indeed, is the spirit alone there,—the *man* goes there. It appears to correspond very closely to the Greek word Hades,

of life are invaded and broken up—spinal-cord, brain, heart, and blood,—till at length body and spirit part company, each going whence it came,—that to its kindred dust, this to the God who gave it.

Thus to the high wisdom of Solomon man is no mere beast, after all. He may not penetrate the Beyond to describe that “age-long home,” but never of the *beast* would he say “the spirit to God who gave it.” But his very wisdom again leads us to the most transcendent need of *more*. To tell us this, is to lead us up a mountain-height, to a bridgeless abyss which we have to cross, without having a plank or even a thread to help us. To *God* the spirit goes,—to God who gave it,—to Whom, then, it is responsible. But in what condition? Is it conscious still, or does it lose consciousness as in a deep sleep? Where does it now abide? How can it endure the searching Light—the infinite holiness and purity—of the God to whom it goes? How shall it give account for the wasted years? How answer for the myriad sins of life? How reap what has been sown? Silence here—no answer here—is awful indeed,—is *maddening*; and if reason does still hold her seat, then “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,” is alone consistent with the

“the Unseen.” Man has gone to that sphere beyond human ken, but when the purposes of God are fulfilled, his abode there shall have an end: it is for an “age,” but only an “age.” All this seems to be wrapped up, as it were, in that one phrase—*Beth-olam*, the age-long home. How blessed for us the light that has since been shed on all this. That in One case (and indeed already more than that One) that “age” has already come to an end, and the first fruits of that harvest with which our earth is sown has even now been gathered. We await merely the completion of that harvest: “Christ the first fruits: afterwards they that are Christ’s, at His coming.”

fearful silence to such questions, and the scene is fitly ended by a groan.

Deep even unto the shadow of death is the gloom. Every syllable of this last sad wail is as a funeral knell to all our hopes, tolling mournfully; and, like a passing bell, attending *them*, too, to their "age-long home"!

Oh, well for us if we have heard a clearer Voice than that of poor feeble human Reason break in upon the silence, and, with a blessed, perfect, lovely combination of Wisdom and Love, of Authority and Tenderness, of Truth and Grace, give soul-satisfying answers to all our questionings.

Then may we rejoice, if grace permit, with joy unspeakable; and, even in the gloom of this sad scene, lift heart and voice in a shout of victory. We, too, know what it is for the body thus to perish. We, too, though redeemed, still await the redemption of the body, which in the Christian is still subject to the same ravages of time,—sickness, disease, pain, suffering, decay. But a gracious Revelation has taught us a secret that Ecclesiastes never guessed at; and we may sing, even with the fall of Nature's walls about us, "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Yea, every apparent victory of the enemy is now only to be answered with a "new song" of joyful praise.

It is true that, "under the sun," the clouds return after the rain; and, because it is true, we turn to that firmament of faith where our Lord Jesus is both Sun and Star, and where the light ever "shineth more and more unto perfect day."

Let the keepers tremble, and the strong men bow themselves. We may now lean upon another and

an everlasting Arm, and know another Strength which is even *perfected* in this very weakness.

The grinders may cease because they are few; but their loss cannot prevent our feeding ever more and more heartily and to the fill on God's Bread of Life.

Let those that look out of the windows be darkened: the inward eye becomes the more accustomed to another—purer, clearer—light; and we see “that which is invisible,” and seeing, we hopefully sing—

“City of the pearl-bright portal,
City of the jasper wall,
City of the golden pavement,
Seat of endless festival,—
City of Jehovah, Salem,
City of eternity,
To thy bridal-hall of gladness,
From this prison would I flee,—
Heir of glory,
That shall be for thee and me!”

Let doors be shut in the streets, and *let* all the daughters of music be brought low, so that the Babel of this world's discord be excluded, and so that the Lord Himself be on the *inside* of the closed door, we may the more undistractedly enjoy the *supper of our life* with Him, and He (the blessed, gracious One!) with us. Then naught can prevent His Voice being heard, whilst the more sweet and clear (though still ever faint, perhaps) may the echo to that Voice arise in melody within the heart, where God Himself is the gracious Listener!

Let fears be in the way, we know a Love than can dispel all fear and give a new and holy boldness even in full view of all the solemn verities of eternity; for

it is grounded on the perfect accepted work of a divine Redeemer—the faithfulness of a divine Word.

The very hoary head becomes not merely the witness of decay, and of a life fast passing; but the “almond-tree” has another, brighter meaning now: it is a figure of that “crown of life” which in the new-creation scene awaits the redeemed.

If appetite fail here, the more the inward longing, and the satisfaction that ever goes hand in hand with it, may abound; and the inward man thus be strengthened and enlarged so as to have greater capacity for the enjoyment of those pleasures that are “at God’s right hand for evermore.”

Till at length the earthly house of this tabernacle may be dissolved. Dust may still return to dust, and there await, what all Creation awaits—the glorious resurrection, its redemption. Whilst the spirit—ah, what of the spirit? To God who gave it? Ah, far better: to God who loved and redeemed it,—to Him who has so cleansed it by His own blood, that the very Light of God can detect no stain of sin upon it, even though it be the chief of sinners. So amid the ruins of this earthly tabernacle may the triumphant song ascend above the snapping of cords, the breaking of golden bowls and pitchers, the very crash of nature’s citadel: “Oh, death, where is thy sting? Oh, grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This meets—meets fully, meets satisfactorily—the need. Now none will deny that this need is deep,—*real*. Hence it can be no mere sentiment, no airy speculation, no poetical imagination, no cunningly

devised fable that can meet that need. *The remedy must be as real as the disease, or it avails nothing.* No phantom key may loosen so hard-closed a lock as this: it must be real, and be made for it. For suppose we find a lock of such delicate and complicated construction that no key that can be made will adapt itself to all its windings. Many skilled men have tried their hands and failed,—till at length the wisest of all attempts it, and even he in despair cries “vanity.” Then another key is put into our hands by One who claims to have made the very lock we have found. We apply it, and its intricacies meet every corresponding intricacy; its flanges fill every chamber, and we open it with perfect facility. What is the reasonable, necessary conclusion? We say—and rightly, unavoidably say—“He who made the lock must have made the key. His claim is just: they have been made by one maker.”

So by the perfect rest it brings to the awakened conscience—by the quiet calm it brings to the troubled mind—by the warm love that it reveals to the craving heart—by the pure light that it sheds in satisfactory answer to all the deep questions of the spirit—by the unceasing unfoldings of depths of perfect transcendent wisdom—by its admirable unity in variety—by the holy, righteous settlement of sin, worthy of a holy, righteous God—by the peace it gives, even in view of wasted years and the wild sowing of the past—by the joy it maintains even in view of the trials and sorrows of the present—by the hope with which it inspires the future;—by all these we know that our key (the precious Word that God has put into our hands) is a reality indeed, and as far above the powers of Reason as the heavens are above the earth, therefore necessarily—incontestably—DIVINE! F. C. J.

(*To be continued.*)

JESUS, MY JOY.

JESUS! Thou sum of all my joy,
 For Thee I yield each earthly toy;
 In Thee I have all good;
 I give not up what's worth a thought,
 I gain what has been dearly bought,—
 The price Thy precious blood.

The joys of earth live but a day,
 The meteor's flash, and haste away,
 And leave a gloom behind;
 Thy joy, blest One, is evermore,
 It lives when earthly joys are o'er,
 It is a heavenly kind.

I gladly, then, leave all for Thee,
 Thy love, O Christ, hath set me free,
 It's won a grief-worn heart;
 Oh may I in Thy footsteps haste,
 Till I have crossed this dreary waste,
 And come to Thee apart.

Oh joy of joys to dwell with Thee!
 From every snare and sorrow free!
 And see Thee face to face!
 Oh, may this hope my spirit cheer,
 The moments I'm continued here,
 A witness of Thy grace.

R. H.

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

THE CHURCH : MISCELLANEOUS FEATURES.

(Continued from page 20.)

HAVING now, through the mercy of God, examined the teaching of Scripture upon the fundamental principles which underlie the Church of God, it only remains for us to note some of the applications of these principles to various questions which arise in their carrying out.

CHURCH MEETINGS.

The keynote of the Church is unity,—gathering together to the Lord. The disciples “were all, with one accord, in one place,” on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 1), just prior to the formation of the Church. The three thousand new converts that were added to them on that day continued daily, with one accord, in the temple.’ In the joy of that first love it seemed to be one long meeting, scarcely discontinued at all. And yet, even at that time (exceptional as to many things—the immense number of visitors at Jerusalem, the great temple still open to them, the need of further leading, etc.) there were certain characteristics which serve as a guide in settling the nature of Church meetings. “They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.” (Acts ii. 42.) We have here indicated, besides fellowship, which would apply to all meetings and the whole life, three features which marked the Church life of these saints: Teaching, Breaking of Bread, and Prayer. We do not mean that at once separate meetings were devoted to each of these,—rather that all their gatherings were so

marked. But as the Church emerged from what must of necessity have been but temporary, as the link with Judaism was severed, we find regular meetings for a special purpose. "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread." (Acts xx. 7.) Here at a specified time (the Lord's day), at a specified place, together, for a specified purpose (to break bread), the disciples met. That this was their regular weekly custom is manifest from the form of expression. They did not come together to meet the Apostle, but to break bread. That this custom was universal is seen from 1 Cor. xi. 20: "When ye come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper." (Because of their abuses. See verses 21-34.) That what he wrote for the Corinthians was for the entire Church is seen from chapter xi. 16; chapter xiv. 33.

We have already dwelt somewhat upon the nature of this holy feast in the paper on Worship. It is only necessary to note the prominent place it occupies. Not even an apostle's presence could set it aside. No frequency could mar its freshness, when partaken of in the proper spirit. It exhibited before the saints that great foundation-fact upon which their own life and the structure of the Church rested. Christ's body and blood, His death, His love unto death, the solemn and touching circumstances of that death, the blessed and eternal fruits of that death, the adorable Person who thus loved His Church,—were and are presented before the eye of faith, to awaken the affections, arouse the conscience, renew the strength, and call forth the worship of His people. At the same time, in the one loaf was presented, ever before the saints, the one body of the Church of Christ. (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.)

The Lord's Supper, then, is the chief meeting of the Church. It is the only one distinctly specified, and it occurred weekly. It naturally follows that it gives character to the whole meeting. Teaching there may be, prayer, and exhortation; but the breaking of bread should ever be the prominent feature, and all else subordinated to and influenced by that. But if the Lord Himself is before us, and our state is right, praise and worship will predominate. Each meeting will be a foretaste of that endless praise of heaven, when, gathered about Him, the whole company of the redeemed will burst forth in one eternal anthem of praise. "Till He come" may we anticipate that blessed time every Lord's day.

We must add a word as to the awful desecration of the Lord's Supper. To say nothing of the multitudes who partake of it avowedly as a mere form, how many are there who come in a careless unjudged way to the Lord's Supper. It was so in a gross way at Corinth, where gluttony, pride, and drunkenness were indulged in. It is none the less so now, where multitudes in full fellowship with the world and its ways, with no knowledge of a full salvation, nor desire for that knowledge, with sins unconfessed and unforsaken, sit down at the table of the Lord. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." How can God's children sit down with those who they *know* are walking in an ungodly way? Do they not, by this very looseness, show an indifference to God's holiness which must sorely grieve the holy Spirit of God? It is no question of salvation, but of honoring God,—a question which should be as important to us as that of our salvation. But we leave this to the exercised conscience of the reader.

But the Church requires instruction, and has its needs. It is therefore most fitting that there should be special meetings for these purposes, that the meeting for the breaking of bread may be left free for its own peculiar purpose. Love attracts us to the Lord, and therefore to one another. Meetings for prayer, and holy, happy conference, will be as frequent as circumstances and the duties of daily life will permit. We need hardly say that daily work is not to be neglected for the sake of multiplied meetings, nor the duties each one owes to his own family. This would be the disorderly walking which the apostle rebuked. (2 Thess. iii. 6-12.) Still when every duty has been met, there remains for all the opportunity of attending meetings, and the exhortation "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together *as the manner of some is.*" (Heb. x. 25.)

A regular meeting for prayer and exhortation during the week is not only suggested by the constantly recurring needs of the Lord's people, but by Scripture as well. How many and varied are the needs of the Church, and how blessed it is to come together for this purpose,—the saints pouring out their hearts to God, interceding for one another, remembering the sick and afflicted, and pleading for blessing on the Lord's work! Ah, beloved brethren, let us never neglect the prayer-meeting: we grow cold when we fail to avail ourselves of its privileges.*

One of the characteristic features of the day is shallowness,—ignorance of and distaste for the word of God. Private and prayerful study of the Scripture

* For an excellent practical paper upon this subject the reader is referred to "Prayer and the Prayer-Meeting," by C. H. M.

is the great remedy for this, and it is also a most helpful exercise for the Lord's people to come together during the week for this purpose. The reading meeting not being provided for in Scripture (though most scriptural in its spirit) is necessarily an informal gathering. It is in this meeting that the gift of the teacher is most enjoyed. Without definitely presiding, the one instructed in the Word imparts to his brethren, answering questions and unfolding Scripture. It will be found most helpful to take up and go regularly through different books of the Bible, the New Testament, and particularly the Epistles, as presenting the full light of God's truth. This meeting should be guarded from useless speculations and mere vapid commonplaces. When there are none of experience and knowledge of the Word, it will often be found best for the Lord's people to come together and read some profitable work, with their Bibles in their hands, reading the references, and turning to passages suggested. Such a practice will be found most helpful, and open the way to much profitable conference. We would not have it understood that one must be thoroughly taught in the Word to conduct a reading meeting, still a measure of familiarity with Scripture and some ability for communicating it are essential. We need hardly add that God meets and blesses His hungry people when they are looking to Him, no matter how little gift there may be among them.

In addition to this, the saints may come together to hear whatever a servant of the Lord may have to impart to them in the way of addresses on Scripture; but such meetings being entirely on the responsibility of the individual teacher do not properly come under

our subject. The same may be said of the evangelist's meeting for preaching the gospel. But of that later.

Before leaving the subject of Church meetings we must look at one most important feature; and to do so we will recall the great characteristic fact of Christianity—the presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Church. We have already seen, in the paper on Ministry, that Scripture does not recognize official position in the Church. If this is true as to ministry, much more is it so in worship. To have one man preside over a company of Christians and assume all the functions of worship and ministry is not only a practical denial of their priesthood, but a usurpation of the place of the Holy Ghost. This may be done ignorantly, and with the best of motives; but it is none the less an ignoring of the sovereign power of the Spirit to guide and control every man severally as He will. The fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians is the simple directory for worship, as the twelfth chapter gives the constitution of the Church. “How is it, then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. (1 Cor. xiv. 26.) While the apostle here may be pruning off the exuberance of licence, the great principle of liberty for the Spirit of God to use whom He will is established. The only check is “Let all things be done unto edifying.” “For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.” (v. 33.) The women were to keep silence in the churches. But of this we will say a few words later.

We have then a most simple and effectual guide in our worship. We are in the Lord's presence, and the Holy Ghost is there to guide. There is no need to have a man to preside. That would only interfere with the liberty of the Spirit. It may be asked, Will not disorder come in? And our reply must be that the Spirit of God is more able than man to control disorder. God never intended that we should get on without faith or dependence upon Him. Where there is subjection to the Lord, and a godly consideration of one another, there will be the sweetest liberty and real divine power. Let the attempt be made in the fear of God, and the blessed results will be manifest.

(To be continued.)

AT the marriage-feast of Cana, it is the *servants* who are in the secret and intimacy of Jesus. The Governor and guests, and Mary herself, are at a distance. "If any man *serve me*, him will my Father *honor*."

"WHAT are ye thinking of?" we may ask ourselves again and again, day by day. Whereon are we spending our diligence? What are the calculations of our minds in moments of relaxation? Is it the flesh or spirit that is providing food for us?

Do our affections, which stir within, savor of heaven or hell? What a strong moral thought is proposed by the Lord here, "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another?"

Joy is that which is *primary*; toil, danger, and sorrow, are only *subservient*.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUESTION 1.—Please explain the apparent contradiction between 1 John ii. 27, “Ye need not that any man teach you,” and the fact that teachers were given to the Church.

Answer.—The preceding verse shows that it was human teaching the apostle was guarding them against. They had an unction from God,—divine perception,—and were therefore independent of human teachers, who after all could but seduce or lead them astray. But this, so far from casting a slight upon God-given teachers, opens the way for them. We have eyes, we need no one to see for us, but we do need to have things *pointed out* to us. And this is exactly the function of the teacher; he points out what is in God’s word. We then can see it as well as he. A few verses above, in this very chapter, ver. 21, the apostle says he has written because they know the truth; that is, had the faculty for apprehending it when shown to them. This, so far from obviating the necessity for his writing, was the justification for his doing so.

Q. 2.—What is the meaning of the expression, “If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked”? (2 Cor. v. 3.)

W. S. H.

Ans.—This third verse has evidently not the same meaning as verses 2 and 4. There the expressions are “clothed upon” and “unclothed,” referring respectively to the resurrection body and the disembodied spirit. In verse 3, however, we have not “unclothed,” but “naked,” which seems to have a distinct moral meaning in Scripture—unfitness for the presence of God. (Rev. iii. 17, 18.) Instead of “clothed upon,” we have simply “clothed,”—having the “best robe”—Christ—put upon us. The verse, then, means simply that the apostle was saved, was ready to depart and be with Christ. He was already clothed, and therefore had no fear of being found naked, even if unclothed as to his mortal body. The thought seems to be suggested naturally from the second verse. He is then speaking of the natural hope of the Christian of being “clothed upon,”—having his resurrection body,—and adds, “If, indeed, being also clothed, we shall not be found naked,”—that is, if, indeed, we are saved people, and not mere professors.

BRIEF NOTES OF A LECTURE.

PROPHECY.

1 Cor. xiv. 1-6; Num. xi. 24-29.

THE structure of this part of Corinthians is very beautiful and perfect. From the first to the tenth chapters we are given the fencing off of the Church from the world. The subject of Corinthians is the Church from the world. Corinth was the notorious type of the world, and the Church is here, *first* of all, fenced off from those influences which were already beginning to make themselves felt in it.

He begins with the *wisdom* of the world which was gotten at the fall, and which man loves and values so much. This is met by the preaching of Christ crucified. After this he looks at another form of evil which characterizes it—the lusts of the flesh. This is taken up, from chapter v., and instruction given as to dealing with this form of sin.

Next he goes on to *association* with evil, and shows they cannot have *fellowship* with evil practices: “Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils.” (chap. x.)

Beloved brethren, how necessary to *us* all this is. Try to keep a garden without a fence to keep out those destructive beasts that prowl around, and what sort of a garden would you have?

Now we go inside the fence, in chapter xi., to see what the Lord's garden is,—to see what the Church is to Him and to us. First, everything is put in its place inside, in relation to the man and the woman. Their creation place is emphasized as still to be maintained in the church, and, of course, with Christ

head of all. Then we find the Lord's people gathered at the Lord's table, on the ground of the wonderful work He has accomplished for them,—to remember Him they are gathered to Him thus. Then, and not before, Christ having His place, we learn (chapter xii.) that believers are members of Christ's body, and members one of another; and this implying the ministry of each to each, as with the members of the natural body.

In the *thirteenth* chapter the apostle goes on to show how needed, to help and to build up, is a spirit of love which makes us servants one of another; and in the fourteenth chapter we have actual ministry in the assembly, in which love finds its voice and serves: "He that prophesieth edifieth the Church," and "speaks unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort."

Thus it is prophesying he singles out particularly; and his singling out of this puts emphasis upon it. He desires "rather that ye may prophesy." "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but *rather* that ye prophesied." Out of all the gifts (tongues, etc.) he singles prophesying. A "tongue" was, in the assembly, a most manifest sign of the spirit of God at work, and yet he brings this forward only to contrast it with what, in the eyes of men, is scarcely a gift at all. There was from the beginning danger in this way that there would be a slighting of it, if no more. In an earlier day to the Thessalonians he says, "Despise not prophesyings."

But what is this prophesying? That should not need, one would think, the question. If it had not fallen into extreme neglect, it could scarcely require it. *Do we*, beloved brethren, think much about it?

Perhaps, as uttering predictions, and a power passed away. But to understand better its true character, let us go back to the old times of Deuteronomy, back of Christian times, and before ever God could speak plainly as He has now spoken to us. At the very beginning of the past dispensation, prophecy is instituted by God as a special thing.

In Deuteronomy xvi. and xvii., judge and king and priest are provided, in view of their need in later days. The judge preserves righteousness: God is light. The priest maintains love: God is love.

Beyond both these is the prophet in chapter xviii.; but this is something different entirely from either. The judges were appointed by men, and king succeeded king, while the priest had his successional place, son succeeding his father. But there was no such provision in connection with the prophet. Each is raised up and put in his place by God Himself, and it is his responsibility to make God's voice heard in the midst of His people. The judge would serve the people in the administration of righteousness, and the priest in the exercise of mercy and help; but the prophet testified to the living God, constantly thinking of His people and their need, and wanting to speak to them with His own voice (hedged by the warning that He would avenge His insulted majesty if a false prophet should arise and speak). God, because He loves, must utter His voice, and tell out his heart in words suited to the moment, and that voice is with the prophet.

How beautifully this is carried out! In Numbers, when the people begin to get away from God, when the manna is despised, it is the voice of the prophet that comes in to recall. Moses himself complains of

the burden of the people, and part of Moses' spirit is taken and put upon the seventy elders standing round the Tabernacle, and they prophesy. Two are specifically mentioned who continue in the camp: Eldad, God loves; Medad, love;—answering—is it not?—to the love that delights to draw them to Himself. How blessed that call! Oftentimes when His people are slipping away, in a voice tender with His love (and oh how tender it is!), which feels as intolerable their slipping away, He speaks to them by the prophet, and calls them back to Himself. And so here.

In Samuel (1 Sam. xix. 18–24) we have a lovely picture illustrating this. Samuel is surrounded by prophets, in a minor sense; and it is in this minor sense I want to speak especially now. What a power of God there is in our being thus with God! David flees from Saul to Samuel, and Saul sends messengers to take David; but soon as the messengers come into the presence of the prophets they fall under the power of the Spirit, and “they also prophesied.” Saul himself finally comes up. He will do better; but in like manner he feels the power of God, and the old saying is revived, “Is Saul also among the prophets?”

So in the midst of Judaism itself, with all its distance, God broke through it, and if there were a foregleam of Christianity to be found in it, was it not there?

Now in Corinthians the apostle goes back to this prophesying as being *so* needed by His people, and here not necessarily in the highest sense. All could not be apostles and prophets, as laying the foundation, but there is another—a minor—kind, of which He speaks, and which he covets for them. There is no selfishness with him in this desire. You remember in

that beautiful picture in Numbers, when Eldad and Medad were prophesying, and Joshua runs to Moses and would have stopped them, how fine is his reply: "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them. *Now* this is really the case: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Have not all the Lord's people the Spirit? The Lord has given it, and with it the capacity for prophesying, at least in the sense in which the apostle speaks. If practically we do not find it, it is because we are so dull and unsanctified as not to notice or perhaps as to forbid it,—to "quench the Spirit of God."

Prophesying is a gift all may have, and it is developed out of the spiritual life of the soul. It is with him who has the mind of God at any time, for anything in living power in his soul,—and who can have the mind of God thus, and not utter it? It is the voice for the occasion,—the voice of the living God still, uttering itself at the suited moment. As Peter also says: "If any man speak, let him speak as oracles of God; if any man minister, let him minister as of the ability God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." We may well covet that.

A beautiful testimony is here in Deuteronomy. The Levites had their place in connection with the tabernacle, but as to their dwelling-places, were scattered through the land. If, however, any one desired in his heart to live nearer the habitation of God, room was to be made for him, and provision found for him there: he was free to sell his patrimony, and minister there before Jehovah his God.

God says to any who desire to be near Christ, "Come near." He opens the door to them, and draws them with His tender love. The world's maxim is "There is always room at the top." God's maxim is "There is always room *at the centre*." And the centre is indeed the top, is it not? Nothing could stop God's love to men, and that love desires nearness. He says, as to this Levite, "Does he seek after me? Let him come: oh, let him come *near*." And, beloved, God speaks that way still. God forbid we should despise this prophetic ministry. There is no revelation, of course; but it is His word as the Spirit of God can apply and utter it. Not, as one mentioned recently at Pittsburgh that a man said (turning over the leaves of the Bible), "The dead leaves of a dead book," but the living words of the living God.

When Caleb claims and takes his patrimony it is Hebron (communion) he takes. He also gets Kirjath Sepher (the city of the Book). The Book of God and Communion. He drove out the sons of Anak. Just the biggest giants Satan plants there, but, as with a wave of his hand, he drives them out. No great effort or work, he just drives them out; but this is not all: he takes Kirjath Sepher, and calls it Debir; and Debir means "oracle." The city of the book becomes the oracle.

When the Word applies itself in a living way to the soul, then it is you are ready for a place among the company of the prophets; for people are never with God to find Him dumb. He is one who seeks to speak to us of all He is; and when we draw near, it is then He makes Himself known; and this is what constitutes essentially a prophet. It is this I want to speak of and press, at the present time, beloved

brethren. A word from God,—a word, the fruit of communion,—a word that has burned in your heart,—a word like that which burned in the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, when He talked to them,—such words make prophets. They are words that fill the heart and overflow it,—words meant to be uttered, and that will make themselves heard.

Prophecy is the fruit of divine love seeking us. It is that which is the charm of the Psalms,—that everywhere through the book the heart is seeking God, and getting answer. Has this been true of us, beloved,—the heart and the flesh crying out for the living God, desiring to be moulded by Him, and His Word speaking to us and stamping itself upon our souls?

These chapters of Corinthians lead to this. We are members of Christ's body, and members of one another. The body is an organic thing,—part fits part. There is strict individuality, but the individual is for the whole; and yet he is the individual.

First, there is absolute need of individuality. Man to-day makes a confederacy,—a machine; and human souls are subjected to pressure, and heart and conscience are left out. Great bodies of this kind have no heart and no conscience. Did you ever know of a corporation that had a heart or a conscience? Why, heart and conscience are *individual*, and each one of us must remain that; but with God, thinking for one's self, judging for one's self, in the fullest 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.

God's word speaks so that the poorest and simplest may hear and understand. His word is *not* for philosophers and learned people, but for those who know

what it is good for practically. The simplest Christian knows *this*. How precious that word to him,—how good, how holy! Our *sins* are individual, and we have to do with God about these; and that word that says to the heart, “Thy sins are forgiven thee,” who would miss the individuality of this?—those tender tones that say to the heart, “Thy sins are forgiven.” Thus are we brought to rest, and thus we begin and continue to walk with Him. All this is individual. Conscience is the throne of God in my soul; and if I give up my conscience, I dethrone God in my soul. Oh, beloved, I want to insist on this,—God’s authority over my soul, as if there were not another in the wide world but myself. If we die, we have to go out one by one, to present ourselves to God. And oh, I say, beloved brethren, let us be with God now,—be near him now,—accustom yourself to His voice now,—and then the way is marked out by Himself. Then, as in those old psalms, it will be true of us, “I will guide thee by mine eye.” How near and how familiar we must be, to be guided by His eye. If near enough, we can act upon a look, and this implies we are by His side waiting for His look; and no matter how much we may know of His mind, we must be in the constant sense of nearness to have it for the moment.

At the mount they had learned that a man can hear God speak and not die; yet they said, “Don’t let Him speak any more.” They shut Him out, and didn’t want to hear Him. Wouldn’t you think people were speaking that way again, putting persons and things between themselves and God, lest He should come too near or they come too near to Him.

But if He must stand back, if they must not hear

His voice directly, He must still speak to His people, and He says, "I will raise them up a prophet, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them *all* that I command him." And thus His love follows them, and He speaks to them still.

But if the body were all individuals, or, as the apostle says in his illustration, were all an eye, where—what—would the body be? But spiritual life and growth are involved. If members, we are all joined together, and so members one of another, and the idea is that each individual member should serve the other.

Perhaps some one says, "I do not see that I have any gift for this." How the apostle puts all that aside! "*Much more* those that are feeble are necessary." So you *are* "necessary"—every one of you—to one another and the whole. Do you say, "I don't know what my gift is"? I say, it is not necessary you should know. Live your life in God's presence and to God, and you'll not need to look at yourself to find your gift. God puts you in the midst of a world full of necessities, and He presses on you, "Here are souls that need some to pity, and seek them out," and you go out with what God has given you—to seek and reach and minister to them.

As to woman, God didn't mean the head to be where the heart is, or the heart to be where the head is, and so He has given her her place,—and a great place; and though He forbid her the public platform, yet He is with all to carry the word that the soul of the needy requires. There are prophetesses as well as prophets, and there is a place for the woman as well as for the man. So all God's people are free—with the ability He has given, and in the place He has put them—to tell the world the grace of God; and so all

His people are free to help one another in the things of God, and to build one another up.

It is not an official thing. Philip's daughters did not prophesy in the assembly. I am quite sure of that, for this very chapter makes it plain; but they did not neglect the gift in their proper sphere; and this is the very thing which is so sadly—so widely—neglected.

Let me remind you again, beloved, that God says, "If any one [man or woman] speak, let him speak as oracles of God." This is not only "let him speak the Word," but that every word shall be uttered as a word *from* God. This is not beyond either your capacity or mine.

What can hinder this, but insubjection to Him? Is there not abundant power of the Spirit of God to completely control and fill with the Spirit? And if this be not true of us, brethren, why is it but because we are filled with other things, alas! And so the importance of self-judgment; and in the very act a bubble comes up from the fountain; and if this were habitual, beloved, what would there be in result? The fountain of the water of life would bubble up; and isn't that what we need? If you have the reality of this in your souls, you will be living for God, and walking with God, and serving God; and, as in the days of Samuel, if people come in as enemies even, it will result in their falling down, and owning (as the apostle says) that God is with you of a truth. And, beloved, we shall be like those of whom it is said, in the days of the apostles: "Then they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."

F. W. G.

MEDITATION AT THE LORD'S SUPPER.

AGONY of agony !

Listen to that awful cry
Piercing through mysterious night
When cloudless sun gives out no light!
Hark! It beats 'gainst black-brass sky—
“Eli lama sabachthani!”

Agony of agony !

What the pain of Calvary?
Not the mocking taunt nor blow,
Not the thorn that tears the brow,
Not the great indignity
Of sinners striking Deity.
Not the rods that furrows plowed,
Not the ribald soldier crowd,
Blinding first, then even hitting—
The vilest on His features spitting—
(Jew as well as Gentile spitting)
On that Face so greatly scarred,
Soon by deeper sorrow marred.
'T'was not these that forced the cry,
“Eli lama sabachthani!”

Agony of agony !

What the pain of Calvary?
Never moan nor grief-fraught wail
Followed the nerve-tearing nail—
True He speaks—He is but pleading—
For His slayers interceding.
Meekest Lamb to slaughter come !
Sheep before her shearers dumb !

'Tis not shame His Spirit grieves
As He hangs betwixt the thieves;
Not the gibe of passer-by,
Nor more cruel priests that cry,
“Saviour He of others! Save
Himself He cannot from the grave.”

Even not the cruel smart
Added to that gentle Heart,
When He with true human pain
Looked for pity—looked in vain.
It needed deeper agony
E'en than these to wake the cry,
“Eli lama sabachthani.”

Agony of agony!
This the pain of Calvary—
Bow, my soul, in solemn awe,
From thy foot the sandal draw.
This is truly holy ground,
Here is mystery profound.
Few thy words—but let thy thought
Be with deep emotion fraught:
Tremble whilst Truth speaks to Guilt,
Telling why that blood was spilt;
Weep e'er whilst sweet Mercy's voice
Bids thy broken heart rejoice;
Praise whilst Love and Truth unite
To flood thy heart with heavenly light,—
Trembling, weeping, praising, learn—
(*Let it in thy spirit burn*)
Thy sins, thyself, hast caused that cry—
“Eli lama sabachthani!”

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[Pause—nor shame if 'scape a sigh,
 Or a tear thine eye bedews
 Melting soul, and brimming eye,
 Fit the scene on which ye muse.
 Sighing here speaks not of grief ;
 Gentle tears are love's relief.

Yea, for since I've learnt my part—
 In that solemn scene I ponder
 Mem'ries of a broken heart
 Tenderly must linger yonder,
 Whilst, to make such visions clear,
 No lens like a contrite tear.]

But e'en whilst the city's walls
 Those sad echoes back are flinging,
 Golden sunlight once more falls ;
 And the birds resume their singing.
 That dread storm is past forever,—
 Past! to be repeated—*never!*

List ! His voice again is heard
 In the calm of Conqu'ror, sending
 Forth His spirit with a word,
 To His Father all commending;—
 Speaks, but with no breath of sighing—
 Dies, but with no sign of dying!

Thus He's numbered with the dead,
 For by man no bone is broken.
 God alone may bruise *this* "*Bread*"—
 Man may loose love's mightiest token—
 One last blow—the soldier's spear
 Fills our cup with "*Wine* to cheer."

Nevermore shall unbelief
 Put its cruel mark upon Him;
 Nevermore shall pain or grief
 Leave their scarring traces on Him.

Henceforth love alone shall pour
 On His feet her richest store.

Sing, ye angels ! ye whose eyes
 Long to scan redemption's story :
 See your own Creator rise,
 But now robed in other glory—
 Hail your Lord your God again
 "As a Lamb that hath been slain !"

Sing ye saints, who know the bliss
 Of the word, "thou art forgiven"—
 Know the rapture of God's kiss;
 Be *ye* not outpraised by heaven !
 Which, think ye, should love Him most;
 Sinners saved, or angel host ?

"Sing, my soul !" each saved one cries,
 As we sit around His table,
 "Mine the song whose note should rise
 High o'er all. If I were able,
 Saint and angel I'd outvie,
 None can *owe* so much as I.

"Though my fullest song is faint—
 Though my fire's but smould'ring ember—
 Though my praise oft turns to 'plaint—
 Lord, I can at least '*remember*.'

This I do as now we sup,
 Break the bread and drink the cup."

"NON SUM."

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

CHURCH WORK.

(Continued from page 55.)

UNDER this head we wish to say a word as to Missions, Evangelization, Sunday-Schools, Tract Distribution, &c.

These, as may be seen, are not distinctly *in* the Church, but rather done *by* members of the Church on their own responsibility,—largely, however, with the fellowship of the saints. For every faithful evangelist, whether in the home or foreign field, for every devoted Sunday-school teacher, visitor, and every tract-distributor, we would unfeignedly bless God and pray. Let us never forget this. How much they need the prayers of the Church, for their guidance and support. We need only add a few words. Would that the principles of the Church, as laid down in Scripture, were recognized by all these workers. If human machinery, human reliance, were set aside, and for them dependence upon God and subjection to His word substituted, there might be less *apparent* work, but oh how much more *real* work. We cannot refrain from warning against the unequal yoke with unbelievers in the Lord's work. The world's money is taken to convert the world; unsaved teachers are set to teach unsaved children.

Let us not be understood as criticising the Lord's beloved and honored servants, of whatever name. We merely point out in this, the briefest way, some of the features which strike us as being evidently unscriptural. To all engaged in any work for Christ we would say, Do not forget the word of God, or the

Holy Spirit. See that your seed is the incorruptible seed of the word of God, and that your methods are none but those of the Spirit of God. Distribute no tracts but those of whose scripturalness you are assured. Resort to no sensational methods to attract or divert the masses, but rather preach Christ to perishing sinners,—a full gospel, in the unction and power of the Holy Ghost. Do not seek to multiply apparent conversions, but rather leave all that to the sovereign power of the Holy Ghost, whose work alone it is. Holding up the hand, coming forward to the anxious-bench, rising for prayer,—all these and any other human methods for driving men to decision are, to say the least, most questionable, and are calculated to turn the eye from CHRIST ALONE. Individual work with inquirers is most important, and has been blessed to countless souls. Brethren, let us awake to the work of God. The time is short.

CHURCH AMUSEMENTS.

It is in no spirit of satire that we place this subject immediately next to that of Church Work. God forbid. The theme is too solemn. The world is under judgment: Satan is blinding men's eyes while he leads them a few steps more over the brink into eternity. Hell awaits the unsaved. This earth is stained with the blood of Christ, who, when He was here, devoted every hour and moment to His Father's will. In such a world the Church must ever be a witness against the prevailing levity and indifference. How solemn, then, is it to hear men pleading for amusements—to attract the masses, to keep up the interest of the young people. The pleasure of God's people is found in the unspeakable joy of learning

more of Christ. "In thy presence is fullness of joy." The craving after worldly amusements is the sure sign of an empty heart. "The full soul loatheth a honeycomb." When the heart is filled with Christ, His word and works, there is no desire for what the world calls pleasures. Not that there is to be an ascetic severity in the child of God,—far from it. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, *joy*." "They *began* to be merry." But how infinitely removed is this holy joy—this heavenly elevation of mind—from the vain levity of this poor world. Amusements in the Church do but form the taste for the fuller enjoyment of the same in the world. The Church entertainment is but the training-school for the theatre. Let us hear the word of God: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii. 15.)

CHURCH BUILDINGS.

"The first covenant had ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary." (Heb. ix. 9.) Solomon's temple was the fitting house for the types and shadows of the Old Testament dispensation. Christ has entered not into places made with hands, but into heaven itself; and through the rent veil has opened the way for us to enter there, by faith, and worship in the presence of God. (Heb. ix. 11, 12; Heb. x. 19–22.) There is, then, no such thing as an earthly sanctuary now. The very thought is foreign to the genius of Christianity. Any building, then, which, by its form or furniture encourages the thought of a worldly sanctuary really misrepresents Christianity, and is a step backward to Judaism. The Church is a heavenly

body, and all its testimony should be of that character. If we are pilgrims, our places of meeting should have about them nothing to contradict that fact. Simplicity should characterize them. There should be nothing to attract the attention; they should simply be convenient places of meeting, neatly kept. It is significant that we have no mention of Church buildings in the New Testament. Who ever thinks of what kind of a meeting-place the saints had at Corinth, Ephesus, or Rome? Not infrequently the Church-meeting was in the house. (Rom. xvi. 5; Philem. 2.) At Troas the saints met in a room in the third story. (Acts xx. 8, 9.) Paul at Ephesus made use of the school of Tyrannus, for his daily interviews with inquirers. (Acts xix. 9.) As in many other things, the imitation of Rome is but too manifest in the "church architecture" of the day; and of the tendency of all this it is needless to speak. All such things are straws on the surface, which show the current of the stream,—the course of this world. Comment is needless on the subject of music and forms of worship in general. The spiritual mind judges as to all this.

THE MONEY QUESTION.

A glance at the reports of a Church congress, or the columns of a religious weekly, will show at once the prominence of this subject, at least in the thoughts of most persons. Turning to the New Testament, we fail to find this prominence given, though, as in all else, enough is said to guide the people of God. At Pentecost the gift of means was as liberal as the sense of the grace that had been shown. There were none that lacked: houses and lands were freely dis-

posed of to meet the needs of the poor. (Acts ii. 44, 45; iv. 34-37.) The effort to make this appear like the socialism of the day fails entirely when we see the unique position of the believers at Jerusalem. There were large numbers of strangers, and many poor. Needs were great and pressing; love was ardent, faith bright. But even then it was entirely voluntary, not compulsory. (Acts v. 3, 4.) The love and faith remain for all time; the conduct is left to the individual believer, though liberality is ever the mark of those who have learned of God. Community of goods is not, however, inculcated in the Scriptures, and is entirely foreign to their spirit. The rich had their duties, and the poor theirs as well. (1 Tim. vi. 17; James i. 9, 10.) All able were to work that they might have to give,—not to the common purse, but to the needy. (Eph. iv. 28; 2 Thess. iii. 10, 12.) The needy poor (Jews) at Jerusalem were remembered and ministered to by their Gentile brethren. (Acts xi. 27-30; Gal. ii. 10; Rom. xv. 25-27; 2 Cor., eighth and ninth chapters.) This liberality was to be shown wherever the need appeared,—even to the world, as ability was given. (Rom. xii. 13; Gal. vi. 10.) But it can be easily seen that these scriptures do not cover all the cases which seem at the present day to call for the expenditure of money.

That the object of many of these calls is proper and necessary we have no question. The Lord's servants are to be supported while they work for Him at home and abroad; necessary expenses in the securing of meeting-places have to be met; the poor have to be cared for; Bibles and tracts to be printed and circulated. But while allowing fully for all this, we are compelled to say that money occupies a

very different place in the hearts of God's people than it did in the days of Paul. Now it would almost seem that the world is to be evangelized by money. Mission reports are often a column of receipts and expenditures. The problem of carrying the gospel to the heathen seems to be largely a financial one.

Far be it from us to despise the devotedness and zeal of many earnest souls; but we cannot hesitate to point out these signs of the times. Costly and gorgeous buildings for meeting-places are erected, which call for immense sums of money; large salaries are paid to brilliant and attractive preachers, who are employed in much the same way as persons engaged in secular work; unconverted singers are hired to furnish attractive music that will draw the crowd and please. To meet all these expenses there is the constant appeal for money. The unconverted are encouraged to contribute; all sorts of amusements are devised to raise money; and thus the Church, the chaste virgin espoused to Christ, is linked with the world. What wonder, then, that in this rush after money the Holy Ghost is ignored, the word of God neglected and disobeyed? "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Brethren, the last and least thing God needs for the carrying on of His work is money. Devoted hearts,—consecrated, instructed men of God, who, with His word in their hands, will carry His gospel everywhere,—every member of the body of Christ, in his or her place, filled and constrained by His love, doing their appointed work,—these He needs and longs for; but money cannot regenerate souls or build up saints. Why, then, make so much of money?

God's servants need to live, and it is His ordinance

that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things." (Gal. vi. 6.) "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Cor. ix. 7-15.) These and other scriptures show that the servant of the Lord is to be ministered to by those who have received the Word at his hands, and by other Christians. From the unsaved they were to take nothing. (See 3 John 5-8.) Think of the incongruity, to say the least, in preaching to a company of unsaved persons, telling them of God's gift, beseeching them to accept it, assuring them they can give nothing to God till they receive Christ,—that they are enemies to God,—and then taking up a collection! Does it not make the ungodly scoff? Does it not belie the solemn truth that has been preached?

But to return. While the servant of God is to share in the temporal things of the saints, there is not a hint of a bargain between them. To fix a salary is to degrade the whole service, and to make the laborer not a servant of Christ, but of man. He is to look to the Lord who has employed him for support,—not to his brethren. Deep may be the exercises through which he may pass to learn to trust his blessed Master, but precious and real are the results. He is free from all that he may the better serve all; and his ministry has none of the savor of a bargain, the work of a hireling, but the freshness and spontaneity of love. While the ministrations of the saints are given not grudgingly, as under compulsion, but in the sweet constraint of love, and unto Christ.

While the servant looks to his Lord for support, the Lord looks to His people to be the channels of that supply which is as unfailing as His love and care. From the form of the expression it is evidently expected that the Lord's servant should live in the same comfort that is enjoyed by those among whom he ministers. The Lord would not have His saints burdened beyond their means that His servants may be in affluence; nor would He have their appearance or circumstances to be a reproach at once to Himself and His people.

Very few and simple are the directions as to all this. "On the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." (1 Cor. xvi. 2.) At the time when Christ and His love appeal to his heart, *each one* was to set apart an amount proportionate to his earnings—and this was to be used for the Lord, as He might direct,—for the poor (as in that immediate case), for the Lord's servants laboring at home or abroad, or for whatever might call for such help. It was to be given "not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver," (2 Cor. ix. 7), as He, blessed be His name, is. Besides this, all are at all times stewards of God's things, and are to minister them under His eye and for Him.

As to money for buildings, the Church is not an earthly corporation, and needs not to own houses and lands in this world. At any rate, a simple and suitable building, of moderate rent or price, would at once relieve the saints of a burden and be a testimony to our strangership here. But we will say no more on this matter: our apology for speaking of it at all must be the need of scriptural instruction on the subject.

"God is able to make all grace abound toward you;

that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." (2 Cor. ix. 8-15.)

(To be continued.)

REFLECTIONS ON JOHN XVII.

OUR LORD is here, under most solemn circumstances, expressing His mind as to three things: Himself; His people; the world. As to Himself, that He should be received back into the same place He left when He came into this world, in answer to God's love for it: As to His people, that they might be kept from the evil: As to the world, His solemn refusal to ask for it, because it hath not known the Father. Within the brief space of five verses He expresses His desires as to Himself, while the remainder is occupied with His thoughts as to His people, the world, and their connection with it. If we take up the last two first, how short and simple withal the story! "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them" (verse 14). The witness of Jesus here is His last witness of the world before the Father; and what a character He gives it! For, no matter how we regard it—whether as that system of things in which men find their occupation and pleasure, or over which Satan is god and prince—the Lord declares its character: that of hatred of God's work and of those to whom He has given that word. If therefore you have it hidden in your heart, that fact only brings out against you the world's deep-seated enmity.

The reason of this is, man hates God and everything connected with God. In the fifteenth chapter (for all from chapter xiii. to xvii. is one discourse) there are three things in prominence: abiding in Christ, hated by the world, and witnessing for Christ.

Abiding in Christ is not position in Him before God, far out of reach of law and condemnation, but carrying in my soul an abiding remembrance of what I once was—a sinner under sentence of death—and of what I am now—a sinner saved by grace. It was the Samaritan leper that returned to give thanks. Having no earthly priest to go to, to distract his mind by religious ceremonies, and in the deep sense of defilement that shut him out from God's presence, he could now

“Fall at His feet, and the story repeat,
And the Lover of sinners adore.”

Hence, to abide in Christ is to remain in this place. There it is God communicates the secrets of His love; and without the knowledge of deliverance from one's defiled condition by sin, there can be no worship. Judah's prince was Nahshon. Judah means *praise*. Nahshon—a diviner—one that can divine the mysteries of heaven, and in the knowledge of heaven's mind about Jesus can worship Him.

This is what our Lord assures us of—that the man who has this will be hated. What is it we are speaking about? It is the thorough hatred the world has for the man abiding in Christ. So that in John xv. the three characteristic words are “abide,” found in the original thirteen times in the first sixteen verses; “Hate,” found seven times in verses 17 to 25; and “witness”—“ye shall bear witness” (verse 27). And He prays they may be taken not out of the world, but

kept from the evil. Beloved brethren, let us, then, rather than touch the defiled and the defiling thing, realize the Lord's own awful judgment of its character. He passed through it; gave full proof to it of His eternal divinity; and yet His final word concerning it was: "O, righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." How, then, can we who have been redeemed from it find our delight in it, or in those who are of it?

As to Himself: He desires to be received as man back into the same place of glory He had with the Father before the world was. Who here would withhold Him from that place? Is He not worthy of that place? Were there a place higher still, would we not exalt Him there?

God only knows how to play upon our affections. Who else could do this?—who win our love as He?

W. H. J.

December 16th, '94.

[The beloved writer of these lines fell asleep the day after their writing—absent from the body, present with the Lord.—ED.]

THE TERMS "Father," "Son," "Husband," &c., in the Old Testament are not based on a community of nature, but only on covenant relationship, and could, therefore, be broken. In the New Testament, all is based on the possession of a common nature: we are *born* of God, and therefore possess His nature; He is our Father, we His children. The Spirit of Christ dwells in us and unites us to Him—He is our Head and we are His body. Relationships thus formed cannot be broken—they are eternal.—P. J. L.

A WILE OF SATAN.

THE next mode by which the enemy succeeds against a soul is popularity. Balaam devised this mode of entrapping and overcoming Israel after they had left the wilderness, and were in the vigor of a new generation about to enter the land. It is important to note that whenever Satan uses a new stratagem it is the one most likely to ensnare his intended victim in the advance he has made. The aim of the world is now to flatter the people of God. They are invited to join them in social life. Woe be to the Christian when he stands so well with the world that he can be received socially. The man of God could not be popular with the man of the world. The great proof of power in a heavenly man, as typified by Israel in Canaan, is that he is an exterminator of the old inhabitant. The man in the flesh is allowed no place. Hence no one can be popular either in ministry or socially but he must in some way, compromise the truth of God. Alas, they find "That the dead are there: and that her guests are in the depths of hell!" In this world where the Christian naturally expects opposition, it is not to be wondered at that any measure of acceptance is hailed with pleasure. Surely the enemy expected that he would have beguiled Paul and Silas when the woman with the spirit of divination so favorably proclaimed them.

The more popular a servant of God is, the less the measure of truth he enjoys and declares. The danger of popularity is that like Israel I become corrupted by the very element which commends me. The

man who ministers to the human element in others, and thus calls forth commendation, is sure to increase that element in himself to his sore loss and sorrow.

J. B. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Question 3.—Will you kindly give the thought of the Porter in John x. 3. If it is John the Baptist, what about the “other sheep” of verse 16? Do they enter in by the door of baptism? Does the “opened door” of Rev. iii. 8 have any connection with the Porter?

Answer.—The “fold” in this chapter is evidently the Jewish fold. The “door” to this fold in verse 1 is not to be confounded with the door to salvation in verse 7, which is Christ Himself. The door is the divinely official entrance of the true Shepherd, contrasted with the claims of false prophets who “climbed up some other way.” The “door” for Israel’s Shepherd was that He should be of the seed and city of David, with all the moral and official qualifications marked in the promises of God throughout the prophets. Christ entered by this “door”—He fulfilled these promises, and met all the divine requirements. Hence, when He presented Himself for His public ministry (Matt. iii.) He was openly recognized in a threefold way:—the voice from heaven, “This is My beloved Son;” the descent of the Holy Ghost—abiding upon Him; and the human testimony of John the Baptist as an instrument making Him known as the Lamb of God, the Son of God. The Porter, then, was the one who had charge of the door—the one who could authoritatively declare that Jesus was indeed the Christ—the Shepherd of Israel. In a subordinate sense this could be John the Baptist, but of course, the true Porter, the only one with authority, is God Himself.

We would hardly say there was “connection,” in thought, between the Porter in John x. and the opening of the door in Rev. iv. 1. Though of course it is God who opens this too, and it is Christ who is before us there—the Lamb.

The “other sheep” of John x. are the Gentiles who are brought to Christ, not however into the “fold” of Judaism, but into

the "flock" of Christianity. We need hardly say that baptism has nothing to do with admission into this flock.

The open door of Rev. iii. 8 seems plainly to be a door for service (see 1 Cor. xvi. 9) and has no direct connection with the passage we are considering.

Ques. 4.—What should be the primary object on coming together on the first day of the week,—worship, the remembrance of the Lord, or the breaking of bread?

Ans.—It would be difficult to sever these objects in our minds. If we come together properly to break bread, it must be in remembrance of Christ and this will surely produce worship. The disciples came together to break bread (Acts xx. 7) The act of breaking bread was the purpose of their coming together, but surely in remembrance of Christ.

In this connection we would earnestly call attention to the meeting for breaking of bread. We have instruction at the Bible Readings, we have unburdened our hearts at the Prayer Meetings, and having judged our walk, we come with free hearts to break bread—to meet the Lord. Surely the meeting will be distinctively one for tender memories, melted hearts, and adoring worship. All teaching, exhortation, etc., will be entirely subordinate. Christ Himself will be before us, the one commanding object.

Ques. 5.—How is Matt. xviii. 20 fulfilled while the Lord is in heaven?

Ans.—Of course, He is not visibly present, but who that has gone to His table to meet Him has been disappointed? Very real, very blessed, is His presence there. He is a divine being, filling all things, as God everywhere present, specially and personally so when He manifests Himself to the two or three gathered to His name.

But there is more. We too are in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. ii.); we also have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." (Heb. x.) There as Man we find Him and gather around Him. It is all real to *faith*, not yet to sight.

OUTLINES OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

WOMAN'S PLACE IN THE CHURCH.

(Concluded.)

“FOR ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. iii. 26–28.) From this passage many sincere persons have concluded that the new dispensation has obliterated all the distinctions hitherto existing—that now all believers occupied exactly the same position before God, and were equally free to exercise all the functions of the entire body. In a very important sense all this is true. The passage before us shows that all believers are alike children of God—that *in Christ* the old distinctions of Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female (as under the law), have been set aside. We stand no longer in the flesh, but in Christ. In this sense, unquestionably, there is no distinction. But when this is transferred from our standing before God, and applied to the various responsibilities of Christian life in this world, the very foundations of God's order are unintentionally overturned.

One would thankfully acknowledge that the godly who give to woman the same service in the Church as man, shrink with horror from carrying the principle to its full extent. We therefore beg that it be clearly understood that we are *not* referring to the practice of many pious persons, but to a principle of interpretation of Scripture. What would become of the home

life, of the man's responsibility to nourish and cherish his wife, to give all honor unto her? What becomes of the mother, guiding the house—her true sphere, leading her children—and all the gentle sympathy and loving ministry which is associated with the name of woman? We therefore unhesitatingly say that there is a distinction between man and woman, a distinction which originates in creation itself, and never to be ignored so long as the present order obtains. To this every right-minded person instantly assents, and we pass on therefore to show from Scripture that woman's place in creation fixes her place in the Church as well.

"The head of the woman is the man. . . . The woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power [Gk., authority,—a covering upon the head as a sign of being under the authority of her husband—Gen. xxiv. 65], because of the angels." (See 1 Cor. xi., 1-16.) The general meaning of this passage is very clear. The apostle is speaking of the woman's unquestionable right—equally with the man—of praying and prophesying; and exhorts that they be covered when so doing, as a token—even to angels, who watch with interest the conduct of Christ's saints—of that subjection to authority which the very order of creation emphasizes.

That the relative place of the man and woman in creation is a witness to something higher—to Christ and the Church—none can question with Scripture before them. (See Eph. v. 22-33.) And the woman is exhorted to imitate the subjection of the Church to

Christ, in her subjection to her husband (verse 24). It is the shame of the Church that it has left that place of absolute subjection, and doubtless the other has followed largely as a result.

Similarly we have her part in the fall added: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression." (1 Tim. ii. 11-14.) She was deceived, beguiled by the serpent, showing the folly of her having left the place of dependence; Adam's guilt was, in some sense, deeper, for he yielded up his authority and disobeyed with open eyes. But the simple point is obvious—and, we would reverently add, it is *God's* word we are examining. We are not even left to make our deductions from these facts: they are put upon the face of the text. He who wills may read. We add another quotation: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but to be under obedience, as also saith the law [an added witness]. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the Church." (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.)

Gathering up the teaching of these Scriptures, we see clearly that creation, the fall, and the law, all unite in pointing out the place of subjection of the woman: that it is to be shown outwardly; that it is to be shown by silence in the assembly. If it be objected that the apostle contradicts himself (1 Cor., chaps. xi. and xiv.), in one place permitting and in another prohibiting the public ministry of women,

we reply that, apart from the irreverence of the thought and its denial of inspiration, it does not in the least follow. In the eleventh chapter he gives directions for women when praying or prophesying; in the fourteenth he tells them to be silent in the assembly. The one place permits ministry, but does not indicate where it was to be exercised; the other distinctly says it is *not* to be in the assembly. Evidently then prayer and prophecy was to be outside the assembly. This is so clear that it needs no further comment. In contrast it is said *the men* (Gk.) were to pray everywhere. (1 Tim. ii. 8.)

But we have just entered upon the subject of woman's proper sphere of service. How varied, manifold, and essential her duties are! Had she ten lives instead of one, they could be fully employed. Her sphere is the private one. Where love and sympathy are needed; where gentleness, tenderness, are required; in dealing with the young, the sick, the distressed; in going from house to house, seeking out the neglected, cheering the desponding, pointing the sinner to Christ—here is woman's work; and what a work!

And all this can be distinctly gospel work. Certain women labored with the apostle in the gospel (Phil. iv. 3); certainly not merely in ministering to him of their substance, or providing for his comfort, but, we may well believe, in dealing with anxious souls, seeking out and instructing the new converts, and constantly seconding the public labors of the apostle. How the devoted servant of Christ would be cheered by knowing that godly women were praying and working with him; that as he planted the seed, they followed the public work up! Did not Priscilla, with

her husband, expound unto Apollos the way of God more perfectly? (Acts xviii. 26.)

The assembly of Cenchrea was blessed in the services of a faithful woman (Rom. xvi. 1, 2) who perhaps in that very ministry went to Rome. At any rate, we can well believe her service continued, wherever she might be. Our prayer should be for more faithful women to engage in the Lord's work. They are imperatively needed; the work languishes for lack of their presence in it. May our God richly bless every woman who is engaged in His service!

But have we not shown that the sphere is a private one? Will the public platform add to her usefulness, or will it not rather divert her from her unique and proper sphere?

We add a word for man. God never says they are to compel the women to be in subjection. He does say they are to imitate Christ's love and tender care for the Church in their treatment of their wives.

Let the men awake to the tremendous responsibility that rests upon them, to minister to the Church of Christ, to preach the gospel to a perishing world. Let them lay aside carnal ease, and work under all the energy of a love and faith inspired of the Holy Ghost, and there will be little cause of complaint that women transcend their sphere. Lord, awake Thy people!

THE INTERCOURSE BETWEEN ASSEMBLIES.

It is interesting and refreshing to note the greeting sent by the apostle from one assembly to another—at the close of his epistles—not only to and from individuals but to and from all the saints. In like

manner he would tell the saints in Rome of the work of the saints in Macedonia and Achaia. (Rom. xv. 26.) He would stir them up at Corinth by telling of the devotion of those in Macedonia, and conversely. (2 Cor. ix. 1-4.) All the assemblies of Asia sent greetings to those in Achaia. (1 Cor. xvi. 19.) The great opening for the gospel at Ephesus is told to Corinth. (1 Cor. xvi. 9.) A brother from the saints at Philippi, bearing their gifts, seeks out the apostle at Rome and ministers to him. (Phil. ii. 25, 30.) Titus, Timothy, Apollos, and other servants of the Lord, passed from one assembly to another, bearing news of joys and sorrows, and linking practically the Lord's beloved people together. An epistle would be sent to all the churches in Galatia (Gal. i. 2); that to the Corinthians took in all the saints in all places. The assembly at Laodicea was to have the epistle to Colosse read to them, and was to send theirs to the Colossians.

All this is exceedingly interesting as showing the common life and common interests that throbbed through all the Church. It was, it *is*, one body. Let God's people do likewise now. Let the needs, the joys and sorrows, of one assembly be known and felt by all. Let there be interchange of loving greetings, of visits. Let them share their joys, and double them—their sorrows, and halve them. Let us make the precious truth of the One Body of Christ so real and practical that none dare say it is but a theory. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another."*

* The reader will have noticed that no place has been given in these papers to the subject of Water Baptism. This has been done

CONCLUSION.

That the preceding pages give but an incomplete and imperfect presentation of this most important subject, we must sorrowfully confess. And yet if it results in a clearer apprehension being gained of the nature, dignity, and destiny of the Church of Christ, we shall indeed bless God.

Several thoughts are suggested. If the Church of God is what we have described, what is the state of mind that becomes us as we look around at its present condition? Instead of a heavenly people, waiting for God's Son, we see a worldly, seeking to make a name upon the earth; instead of "One Body," many divisions; instead of the realized power of the Holy Ghost in all worship, ministry, and discipline, we see human expedients and organization. Instead of separation from the world, we see the Church at home in the world, and linked with it. Will not every lover of Christ with tears admit that we have not made too dark a picture? Ill does it become us to make accusation against others: rather let us all acknowledge our common sin and shame, and bow under the mighty hand of God. Where is that Church, with all

advisedly. In the same epistle where, speaking of the Lord's Supper, the apostle says, "I have received of the Lord," (1 Cor. xi. 23,) he says of baptism, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." (1 Cor. i. 17.) We need scarcely say that this does not mean to cast a slur upon an ordinance of the Lord, but that it has to do, not with the Church, but the kingdom—the place of responsibility upon the earth. We are baptized into the Church by the Holy Spirit, (1 Cor. xii. 13,) and by water into the kingdom. (Matt. xxviii., 19.) The subjects being, therefore, different, we have entered into no discussion of water baptism. As to its place and importance, we have not the slightest question.

the ardor of its first love, which He established here to witness for a rejected and absent Lord? Ichabod!

But what is the remedy? Can we restore the fallen Church? Can we make things as they were at Pentecost? Alas, no! We are in the "last days," the "perilous times." The coming of the Lord alone can sever the wheat from the tares.

But are we to sit still and go on with worldliness and disobedience of the word of God? Let Scripture answer. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. ii. 19-21.) Christ is the same; His word the same; His grace the same. He is outside this world and worldly systems of religion, however much He may own and bless individual faithfulness. "Let us go forth, therefore UNTO HIM without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." (Heb. xiii. 13, 14.)

All who in simple faith and dependence upon the Lord act upon His word, will find Him ever true to that word, ever ready to uphold His poor, feeble, and fearing ones who at His bidding go to Him walking upon the water; ever ready to make good in practical realization His promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them."

Shall we or shall we not seek to act upon the principles of the Church of God? Who dare refuse? Who dare let expediency decide? Let us take the question into our closets, and decide alone with God.

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

CHAPTER V.

(Continued from page 179, Vol. XII.)

THE seven beatitudes which are connected with character are followed now by two which are connected with the opposition of the world to those who have this. For the world is in active opposition to God, and so to those who resemble Him, or remind it of Him. This opposition is indeed disguised more or less in many ways, and so that those who exhibit it may be themselves unconscious that they are doing this; nay, unconscious that they are of such a spirit. For few indeed would own even to themselves a condition, so terrible as this. Hence have come in the false gods which have been invented to satisfy the religious principle in man, and yet allow him to follow his lusts and passions with as little check as possible, or even with the approbation of a misguided conscience. And hence even under the form of Christianity people can picture a God after their own heart, and serve him with quite unconscious heathenism.

The persecution of which the Lord speaks here is of two different kinds,—for righteousness, or for His Name's sake. In the first case, it is for character; but it is to be noticed that it is represented as less violent and radical than the latter is. Correspondingly, the blessing pronounced is here the greater.

With righteous conduct there may not be linked the open testimony which brings out opposition; and, if it be without personal claim on the beholder, it may even be admired, or at least approved, by him. It is another thing when it does make this claim; when the honesty of a servant, for instance, interferes with his employer's profit. Then he may have to suffer: and this is so common a case that it calls for little remark.

When suffering is for Christ's sake, it is because testimony for Christ presses His claim upon the conscience, and it is *felt*, however little *admitted*, that one has to do with Him. As often said, a man who will smile at a Mohammedan may curse a Christian; and he who will quietly enough discuss the Koran grows hot and angry in disputing against Scripture. Truth has sufficiently its own evidence with it to make this difference; which is therefore but unwitting homage paid to it by those who mean nothing less than this, "Blessed are *ye*." He turns from the mere abstract "they" in the former case, to speak as it were directly into the hearts of these sufferers,— "Blessed are *ye* when men shall revile and persecute you, and say every evil thing against you, falsely, for My sake." With this comes the fuller recompense: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you."

This "reward in heaven," addressed, as few realize it to have been, to Jewish saints whose portion as such would be earthly,—and so the Lord has applied before the language of the thirty-seventh psalm,—and in immediate expectation of the kingdom being set up on earth,—is really stranger than it looks to those who contemplate it from a Christian standpoint. *Our* portion is recognized rightly as being in heaven;

and it is so much the accustomed thing to think of the saint as dying and going there, that we have largely lost sight of the meek inheriting the earth, or else injuriously misapply it. For it is certainly not the rule with the meek now, and in seeking to make it such they would lose their character.

But the Lord, with all Israel's blessings in His hand, offering Himself to them as Messiah to bring them in for them, naturally speaks according to the scriptures which have in view the time in which He will be received, and they will be blessed under Him upon earth. According to this view, it is the "reward in heaven" which becomes more exceptional and difficult to understand.

But these blessings—millennial, as we call them,—being then lost to them through unbelief, belong in their primary sense to the future yet; to a remnant brought to God in a time of trial such as has never yet been known, and who will have to pass through it to enjoy their promises. Of these many will be persecuted even to death, and thus lose what we may call their proper portion. They will thus receive, in the goodness of God, the higher blessing of which the Lord here speaks. Deprived of earthly, they will enter into heavenly blessing, and so are seen in the book of Revelation (xx. 4-6) as a special company of *martyrs*, *added* to the saints of the first resurrection, already upon their thrones.

For *us* there is, of course, no difficulty in an application, which is as true for us as if there were no others who had concern in it. The prophets, of whom our Lord speaks in this connection, dealt with men by the word of God which was given to them to communicate, "and which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute?"

The apostle Peter speaks similarly of these two

causes of persecution (1 Pet. iii. 14; iv. 14), and with corresponding emphasis of blessing for those "reproached for the name of Christ." With him it is present, however: "the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you": but who can measure what is implied in this?

Such treatment at the world's hand involves also in itself a place of privilege and responsibility from God which the Lord now sets before us, and which is twofold, answering to this twofold rejection. First, "ye are the salt of the earth." Salt is that which resists corruption; there being in it also a special powerful diffusion which makes it a suited image of active and aggressive power. Mere passivity is, in fact, inconsistent with righteousness itself; even what we call "passive resistance" is more than this. There is the government of a moral principle, in obedience to which the whole man braces himself up, if but to endure. Example also becomes precept, and that of the most effectual kind: words may be merely words, and light as the breath that forms them. The willing sufferer is so truly the witness, that the old word for witness has come to belong to him. The "martyr" is pre-eminently the "witness."

But this leads on to the second thing, which is just testimony. "Ye are the light of the world: a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel; but on a candlestick: and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

From "let men see your *good works*," people often imagine that these are the light itself, and thus make the two things that we are considering practically one. Indeed they are made for one another: sep-

arate them, and there is at once a fatal deficiency in each. What testimony to Christ can there be without the life-giving evidence? But then, again, what evidence in the life, if the lips are silent as to Christ? Nay, this may be construed in such a way as to make the truth of no consequence.

“For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight:
He can’t be wrong whose life is in the right.”

But it is truth which sanctifies; and the life *cannot* be right, that is not governed by it. But this is still the most serious effort of the enemy, where Scripture has place. “For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light,” says the apostle: “therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed into the ministers of righteousness; whose end,” he nevertheless adds, “shall be according to their works.” (2 Cor. xi. 14, 15.) Here these “ministers of righteousness” *press* the life, to deny the truth; and as no more successful argument is found than the evil lives of its professors, so, next to this, and in the same line with it, the good deeds of those who are without it or deny it, is Satan’s wisest one.

Thus it needs the light to shine upon the good works, that they may be seen as such, and “glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Apart from this, they may glorify humanity, or glorify any lie under the sun. Christ is He with whom, in the full reality of it, “light is come into the world,” and if “men love darkness rather than light,” it is, as He Himself says, “because their deeds are evil.” (John iii. 19.) We must not be afraid to say this after Him. Did any of us come to Christ because we were good enough without Him? or because we were good at all? And if all have need of Him, why have they need of Him?

There are some, thank God, who are yet profoundly conscious that in His light alone they have seen light, and that there is no light for the world but only in Him. Thus, if *they* are the light of the world, they can only be so by reflecting Him. Let us remember, then, the responsibility we have of bold confession of Him. It is not even righteous to hide from men in need what He has done for us, and what He is ready to do for every one in need. No; the light is not for the bushel, but for the candlestick: it is not for ourselves that the light is lighted: the world has right to it, and can produce its right, under the broad seal of Christ's commission.

One may perhaps object: "But *my* good works! Alas, this is just my difficulty. With all my inconsistency, I fear that it would more dishonor Christ than honor Him, for *me* to confess Him." One can understand such language; one can even respect the motive; and yet it involves an essential mistake. We are never called to *show* our good works, or even to be *conscious* of them. The Lord's lesson as to almsgiving perfectly illustrates the rule as to all such things: "let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." He is not here, we may be sure, teaching something contradictory of this. He takes for granted that there will be good works, indeed: true faith in Him will surely have its fruits; but *faith* is the very opposite of self-occupation, and still more of self-satisfaction.

If it be Christ that occupies us, the sense of His perfection will give us true self-judgment: it will be as impossible to be careless of evil as it will be to be pretentious. We shall "boast in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." This will make the confession of Him both sweet and safe. We shall let our light shine before men, and, poor as we shall

ever be in our own account, there *will* be fruit seen in us which shall glorify our Father. This joy in Christ itself will be the best evidence to commend Him to others.

F. W. G.

(*To be continued.*)

THROUGH earth's deepening gloom and darkness
Shines for us a cheering ray,
And it makes the longing greater
For His bright appearing day.

Long the heavens have now retained Him;
Strain we oft our wistful eyes:
"Hope deferred" makes sick hearts weary,
Till *our* SUN's glad beams arise.

Blessed hope! — the dawn is nearing
Of that cloudless morning's light,
When together, gathered round Him,
We shall bear His image bright.

Sigh we for *our* absent BRIDEGROOM;
Scattered Israel needs *their* KING;
Groans indeed the whole creation
For the long-predicted SPRING.

[*Selected.*]

THE LORD, in Matthew, meets the Jew as their Messiah; in Mark, He meets a needy world as the servant of that need; in Luke He meets the human family, to speak with them as the one only sanctioned Son of Man; and in John He meets the heavenly family as the Son of the Father, to train them for their heavenly home.

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

CHAPTER XII.

(Concluded.)

THIS brings us to the concluding words of our book. Now who has been leading us all through these exercises? A disappointed sensualist? A gloomy stoic? A cynic—selfish, depressed? Not at all. Distinctly a wise man;—wise, for he gives that unequivocal proof of wisdom, in that he cares for others. It is the wise who ever seek to “win souls,” “to turn many to righteousness.” “Because the preacher was wise, he still *taught the people knowledge.*” No cynic is Ecclesiastes. His sympathies are still keen; he knows well and truly the needs of those to whom he ministers: knows too, how man’s wretched heart ever rejects its own blessing; so, in true wisdom, he seeks “acceptable words”: endeavoring to sweeten the medicine he gives, clothes his counsel in “words of delight” (margin). Thus here we find all the “words of delight” that human wisdom *can* find, in view of life in all its aspects from youth to old age.

For whilst it is certainly difficult satisfactorily to trace the order in detail in the book,—and perhaps this is perfectly consistent with its character,—yet there can be no question but that it begins by looking at, and testing; those sensual enjoyments that are peculiarly attractive to *youth*, and ends with the departure of all in *old age*, and, finally—dissolution. There is, evidently, that much method. We may also, further, note that the body of the book is taken up with such themes as interest men who are be-

tween these two extremes: occupations, business, politics, and, as men speak, religion. All the various states and conditions of man are looked at: kings, princes, nobles, magistrates, rich and poor, are all taken up and discussed in this search for the one thing that true human reason can call absolutely "good" for man. Further method than this might perhaps be inconsistent with the confusion of the scene "under the sun" he is regarding, and his own inability to bring order out of the confusion. There would be thus true method in the *absence* of method, as the cry of "Vanity," doleful as it is, is alone in harmony with the failure of all his efforts. Yes, for whilst here he speaks of "words of delight," one can but wonder to what he can refer, unless it be to something still to come. Thus far, as he has taken up and dropped, with bitter discouragement, subject after subject, his burdened, overcharged heart involuntarily has burst out with the cry, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" Words of delight! Find one in all that we have gone over that can be to a guilty sinner's ear a "word of delight"—such as it can really *take in as meeting its needs*; for this seems to be the force of the word here translated "acceptable": so perfectly adapted to the needs of the heart it addresses that that heart springs joyfully to embrace it at once. We have surely, thus far, found none such. A Judge has been discerned in God; but small delight in this surely, if I am the sinner to be judged.

Verses 11-14. Wisdom's words are not known by quantity, but quality. Not many books, with the consequent weary study; but the right word—like a "goad": sharp, pointed, effective—and on which

may hang, as on a "nail," much quiet meditation. "Given, too, from one shepherd," hence not self-contradictory and confusing to the listeners. In this way Ecclesiastes would evidently direct our most earnest attention to what follows: "the conclusion of the whole matter." Here is absolutely the highest counsel of true human wisdom—the climax of her reasonings—the high-water-mark of her attainments—the limit to which she can lead us: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

Who will deny that this is indeed admirable? Is there not a glorious moral elevation in this conclusion? Note how it gives the Creator-God His rightful place; puts the creature man in the absolutely correct relationship of obedience, and speaks with perfect assurance of a discriminative judgment where every single work, yes, "secret thing," shall be shown out in its true character as it is good or evil in His Holy Sight: where everything that is wrong and distorted here shall be put right.

It is truly much, but alas for man if this were indeed the end. Alas for one, conscious of having sinned already, and broken His commandments, whether those commandments be expressed in the ten words of the law, as given from Sinai, or in that other law which is common to all men, the work of which, "written in their hearts," they show: conscience. There is no gleam of light, ray of hope, or grain of comfort here. A judgment to come, *assured*, can only be looked forward to, with, at the best, gloomy uncertainty, and awful misgiving; if

not with assured conviction of a fearful condemnation ; and here our writer leaves us with the assurance that this is the "conclusion of the whole matter."

Who can picture the terrors of this darkness in which such a conclusion leaves us? Guilty, trembling, with untold sins and wasted years behind ; with the awful consciousness that my very being is the corrupt fountain whence those sins flowed, and yet with a certain judgment before in which no single thing is to escape a divinely searching examination : better had it been to have left us still asleep and unconscious of these things, and so to have permitted us to secure, at least, what pleasure we could out of this present life "under the sun," without the shadow of the future ever thrown over us.—yea, such "conclusion" leaves us "of all men most miserable."

I would, beloved reader, that we might by grace realize something of this. Nor let our minds be just touched by the passing thoughts, but pause for a few minutes, at least, and meditate on the scene at this last verse in the only book in our Bible in which man at his best and highest, in his richest and wisest, is heard telling us his exercises as he looks at this tangled state of affairs "under the sun" and gives us to see, as nowhere else can we see, the very utmost limit to which he, as such, can attain. If this sinks down into our hearts, we shall be the better prepared to apprehend and appreciate the grace that meets him there at the edge of that precipice to which Reason leads but which she cannot bridge. Oh, blessed grace ! In the person of our royal Preacher we are here indeed at our "wit's end" in every sense of the word ; but that is ever and always the place where another hand may lead us, where another Wisdom

than poor feeble human Reason may find a way of escape, and "deliver us out of our distresses."

Then let us turn our ear and listen to another voice: "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." But stay. Is this the promised grace of which even now we spoke? Is this the deliverance for which we hoped? A judgment-seat still?—from which still no escape for any: and a "reception" according to the things done, whether they be good or bad! Wherein does this differ from Solomon's "conclusion of the whole matter"? In just two words only—"Of Christ." It is now the "judgment-seat of Christ." Added terror, I admit, to His despisers and rejectors; but to you and me, dear fellow-believer, through grace the difference these two words make is infinity itself. For look at Him who sits upon the judgment-seat;—be not afraid; regard Him patiently and well; He bears many a mark whereby you may know Him, and recognize in the Judge the very One who has Himself borne the full penalty of all your sins. See His hands and His feet, and behold His side! You stand before *His* judgment-seat. Remember, too, the word He spake long ago, but as true as ever, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and beliveth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life"—and as we thus remember both His word and His work, we may be fully assured, even as we stand here, that there must be a sense, and an important sense, in which judgment for us is passed forever. I may not be able to harmonize these Scrip-

tures; but I will cleave, at least, to that which I clearly understand, in other words, to that which meets my present needs (for we only truly understand what meets our need); afterward, other needs may arise that shall make the other scriptures equally clear. He bore my sins—the judgment of God has been upon Him, cannot, therefore, be upon me—into that judgment I shall never come.

Then why is it written we must all appear (or rather “be *manifested*,” be clearly shown out in true light) before the judgment seat of Christ? There is just one thing I need before entering the joys of eternity. I am, as Jacob in Genesis xxxv., going up “to Bethel, to dwell there.” I must know that everything is fully suited to the place to which I go. I need, *I must have*, everything out clearly. Yes, so clearly, that it will not do to trust even my own memory to bring it out. I need the Lord “who loved me and gave Himself for me” to do it. *He will*. How precious this is for the believer who keeps his eye on the Judge! How blessed for him that ere eternity begins full provision is made for the perfect security of its peace—for a communion that may not be marred by a thought! Never after this shall a suspicion arise in our hearts, during the long ages that follow, that there is one thing—one secret thing—that has not been known and dealt with holily and righteously, according to the infinite purity of the Judgment Seat of Christ. Suppose that this were not so written; let alone for a moment that there never could be true discriminative rewards; might not memory be busy, and might not some evil thought allowed during the days of the life in the flesh; long, long forgotten, be

suddenly remembered, and the awful question arise, "Is it possible that that particular evil thing has been overlooked? It was subsequent to the hour that I first accepted Him for my Saviour. I have had no thought of it since. I am not aware of ever having confessed it." Would not *that* silence the song of Heaven, embitter even *its* joy, and still leave tears to be wiped away? *It shall not be.* All shall be out first. All—"every secret thing." Other Scriptures shall show us how these things are dealt with. "Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it (that is, the day) shall be revealed in fire, and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." (1 Cor. 3.)

That day is revealed in fire, (Divine judgment,) and gold, silver, precious stones—those works which are of God—alone can stand the test. All others burn like "wood, hay, stubble."

Look forward a little. In the light of these Scriptures, see one standing before that Judgment Seat. He once hung by the side of the Judge Himself upon a cross on earth. See his works being manifested. Is there one that can be found gold, silver, precious stones? Not one. They burn; they all burn: but mark carefully his countenance as his works burn. Mark the emotions that manifest themselves through the ever-deepening sense of the wondrous grace that could have snatched such an one as is there being manifested from the burning. Not a sign of terror. Not a question for a single instant as

to his own salvation now. He has been with Christ, in the Judge's own company, for a long time already, and perfectly established is his heart, in the love that said to him long ago, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Now as all his works burn, the fire within burns too, and he is well prepared to sing "unto Him who loves us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." And yet stay:—Here is something at the very last. It is his word, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation, and we indeed justly, for we receive the the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss. Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Gold! gold at last! as we may say; and he too receives praise of God. Yes, not one that shall have the solemn joy of standing before that tribunal but has, in some measure, that praise. For is it not written, "then" (at that very time) "shall every one have praise of God." "This honor have all his saints."

Where and when does this judgment of our works, then, take place? It must be subsequent to our rapture to the air of which we have spoken, and prior to our manifestation with Christ as sons of God. For by all the ways of God, through all the ages, those scenes could never be carried out before an unbelieving hostile world. Never has He exposed, never will He so expose His saints. All will be over when we come forth with Him to live and reign a thousand years. "The bride has made herself ready," and the robes in which she comes forth—the white linen—are indeed the righteousnesses of the saints, but these have been "washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb."

But "*all*" must stand before Him; and not even yet has that been fulfilled. Cain and the long line of rejectors of mercy and light, ever broadening as time's sad ages have passed till their path has been called the "broad way," have not yet stood there. Has death saved them from judgment? No, for we read of the "resurrection of judgment"—the judgment that comes necessarily after death, and includes the dead, and only the dead. "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which in them, and they were judged every man according to their works, and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Here, too, we see an exact, perfect, retributive, discriminating judgment. The Book of Life bears not the name of one here. There is that one broad distinction between the saved and lost—the "life-line," as we may call it. How carefully are we told at the very last of this Book of Life, that we may most clearly understand, for our comfort, that the feeblest touch of faith of but the hem of His garment—perhaps not even *directly* His Person, but that which is seen surrounding His Person, as the visible creation may be said to do—(Psalms cii. 25, 6) let any have touched Him there,

and *life* results. His name is found in the Book of Life, and he shall not see the second death. Apart from this—the second death: the lake of fire!”

And yet, whilst “darkness and wrath” are the common lot of the rejectors of “light and love,” there is, necessarily, almost infinite difference in the degrees of that darkness and fierceness of that wrath, dependent exactly on the degree of rejection of light and love. As our Lord tells us, “he that knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” All is absolutely *right*. Nothing more now to be *made* right. The ages of eternity may roll in unbroken peace; with God—manifested in all the universe as light and love—all in all.

And now, dear readers, the time has come to say farewell for a season to our writer and to each other. Let this leave-taking not be with the groans of Ecclesiastes’ helplessness in our ears. We have stood by his side and tested with him the sad unsatisfying pleasures connected with the senses under the sun. We have turned from them, and tried the purer, higher pleasures of the intellect and reason, and groaned to find *them* equally unsatisfying. We have looked through his wearied eyes at this scene, restless in its unending changes, and yet with nothing really new. We have felt a little, with his sensitive sympathetic heart, for the oppressed and down-trodden “under the sun,” and groaned in our helplessness to right their wrongs. We have groaned, too, at his

and our inability to understand or solve the contradictory tangle of life that seemed to deny either the providence, or the goodness, of a clearly recognized Creator. We have followed with him along many a hopeful path till it led us to a tomb, and then we have bowed head with him, and groaned in our agonizing inability to pierce further. We have seen, too, with him that there is not the slightest discrimination in that ending of man's race, and worse, even than groans to our ears, has been the wild, sad counsel of despair, "Merrily drink thy wine." But quickly recovering from this, we have wondered with great admiration as our guide's clear reason led him, and us, still on and on to discern, a final harvest-judgment that follows all earth's sowings. But there, as we have stood beside him in spirit, before that awful judgment-seat to which he has led us, and turned to him for one word of light or comfort in view of our sin and wrong doings—the deepest need of all—we have been met with a silence too deeply agonizing, even for the groan of vanity. Groans, groans, nothing but groans at every turn !

And then with what relief—oh, what relief, ever increasing as the needs increased,—have we turned to the Greater than the greatest of men "under the sun," and, placing the hand of faith in His, we have been led into other scenes, and have found every single need of our being fully, absolutely, satisfactorily met. Our body if now the seat of sin and suffering, yet we have learned to sing in the joyful hope of its soon being "like Him forever." Our soul's affections have in Him a satisfying object, whilst His love may fill the poor, empty, craving heart till it runs over with a song all unknown under the sun,—

our spirit's deep questions, as they have come up, have all been met and answered in such sort that each answer strikes a chord that sounds with the melody of delight ;—till at last death itself is despoiled of his terrors, and our song is still more sweet and clear in the tyrant's presence, for he is no longer a "king" over us, but our "servant." Even the deepest, most awful terror of all to sinners such as we—the Judgment-seat—has given us new cause for still more joyful singing; for we have in that pure clear light recognized in God—our Creator-God, our Redeemer-God—a love so full, so true,—working with a wisdom so infinite, so pure,—in perfect harmony with a righteousness so unbending, so inflexible,—with a holiness not to be flecked or tarnished by a breath,—all combining to put us at joyful ease in the very presence of judgment—to find there, as nowhere else possible, all that is in God in His infinity told out ("love with us made perfect,") and that means that all the creatures' responsive love must find sweet relief in a song that it will take eternity itself to end. In our Father's House we only "begin to be merry," and end nevermore, as we sound the depths of a wisdom that is fathomless, know a "love that passeth knowledge";—singing, singing, nothing but singing, and ever a new song!

May God, in His grace, make this the joyful experience of reader and writer, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

F. C. J.

EVERYTHING that surrounded Adam, the first man, might well have pleaded for God against the enemy. The sweetness of the whole scene, the beauty of that garden of delights, with its rivers which parted hither

and thither, the fruits of the perfume, with the willing service of the thousand tributary creatures, all had a voice for God against the accuser.

But Jesus was in a wilderness which yielded nothing, but left Him an hungered; and the wild beasts were with Him, and all might have been pleaded by the accuser against God.

All was against Jesus as all had been for Adam, but He stood as Adam had fallen. The man of the dust failed, with all to favor him. The man of God stood, with all against Him. And what a victory was this! What complacency in man this must have restored to the mind of God. To achieve this victory Jesus had been led up of the Spirit into the place of battle, for His commission was to destroy the works of the devil (1 John iii. 8). He now stood as the champion of God's glory and man's blessing in this revolted world, to try His strength with the enemy of both, to make proof of His ministry; and to the highest pitch of praise, He is more than conqueror.

But *He was conqueror for us*, and therefore at once comes forth with the spoils of that day to lay them at our feet. He had been alone in the *conflict*, but He would not be alone in the victory. He that soweth and He that reapeth must rejoice together. It was an ancient statute of David, that he that tarried by the stuff should share with him that went down to battle. But a better even than David—one, not only of Royal but of Divine grace—is here; and accordingly Jesus the Son of God comes forth from the wilderness to publish peace, to heal disease, to meet all the need of those who were the captives of this enemy, and to let them know that He had conquered *for them*.

THE SALUTATIONS IN ROMANS XVI.

THERE is a beautiful fitness in the place occupied by these salutations, forming, as they do, a suited close, not merely to this last section of the epistle, the practical walk, (chaps. xii.-xvi.,) but to the entire book. They are the simple unstudied outflow of the apostle's heart to those dear to him, but express at the same time the practical results of that grace known and experienced which has been revealed in the body of the epistle. It has been rather the fashion to decry doctrine as something cold and hard, and to clamor for love, nothing but love. This is as senseless as it would be to exalt the fruit above the tree that bears it. We must have love, but we cannot have it at the expense of truth, which gives it intelligence, consistency, and power. This we may learn from the position of our chapter. Further, it can be seen that all these expressions of grace are in entire accord with what are usually termed the harder, more Calvinistic doctrines of Scripture. Man's lost condition; his utter helplessness; the absolute worthlessness of works for justification; faith the one essential; the sentence of death upon self the necessary prerequisite for a holy walk; tribulation the portion of the believer here; the sovereignty of God in electing grace;—these and kindred themes the despiser of doctrine would say were enough to dry up all the springs of natural affection in man's heart. But if they do dry up natural affection—a thing not for a moment admitted—they do but furnish a fitting channel for the outflow of those divine affections which find their expression in the salutations before us.

We have here not a mere list of names of saints to whom greeting is sent, but many a delicate touch of appreciation and commendation, as the loved name calls up faithful service in the past.

Rome was the great centre whither all the business of the empire gravitated. This easily explains the wide circle of acquaintances the apostle had there. Aquila and Priscilla, and doubtless many other Jewish Christians, had been forced to leave Rome by the edict of the emperor Claudius (Acts xviii. 2). When this severity relaxed, they naturally returned. Others, like Phœbe, had probably gone to Rome from the various assemblies. Doubtless some of these saints were converted to Christ while away from Rome—possibly some at Jerusalem, some at Antioch. Some were there who had been in Christ before the wonderful conversion of Paul. Some were, without doubt, his own children in the faith.

Nor can we believe that the very names of these saints are without special significance, having found so much of profit in that way in the Old Testament. We have, too, warrant to expect the same in the New. Our Lord gave names to Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. The name of Stephen (a crown) is significantly appropriate to one who gained the first martyr's crown; and the name of Paul (little) suits well the one who counted those things which had been gain to him as loss for Christ. His previous name recalls Israel's first king, the man after the flesh, head and shoulders above the rest of the people. Timothy, one who honors God; John, Jehovah is gracious; and other names will be readily recalled as peculiarly appropriate to those who bore them.

Without attempting an exhaustive examination of

the significance of the names in the chapter before us, we will take up a few of the plainer ones, and see what lessons we can gather from them.

The lowliness of service, which yet does not escape the Lord's eye, is suggested in the first name here being that of a woman—Phœbe. She has served at Cenchrea, and carries with her to Rome the commendation of the apostle. Her name is the feminine of Phœbus—the light-bearer;—and does not faithful, though it be lowly, service make the Lord's people light-bearers?

In Prisca and Aquila (ancient and eagle?) we have that union of wife and husband in the Lord's service as beautiful as it is, alas, rare. They risked their lives in serving the apostle. Fittingly in this well-ordered household, there is an assembly. For God's assembly could not appropriately be lodged in a disorderly household. Possibly the meaning of their names may suggest the happy mingling of conservatism and zeal.

Epænetus (to be praised) is a beautiful name for one who was the first-fruits of Asia (R. V.) to Christ. Well is it for us when our course is worthy of commendation. And His eye which is as a flame of fire is kind as well as quick to mark that in us which is deserving of His praise.

Mary (bitter), in sweet contrast with her name, has been a devoted servant to the saints. But He always turns bitter to sweet. Andronicus (conqueror) and Junias (younger) are marked as having been fellow-prisoners as well as kinsmen of the apostle, that is, Jews. In this warfare it is no disgrace for the victor to be a prisoner. The world sees him in chains, God sees him a conqueror. So in every strait, when

weakness and necessity seem to have their way with us, we can still be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Amplias (increasing) is a good name. "Not as though I had already attained." When we are satisfied, we are going backward. Let us press forward.

Urbane (urbanus, of the city) can well remind us to what city we belong. "Our citizenship is in heaven." It is the heavenly-minded saint who is indeed a helper.

Stachys (an ear of corn) suggests the fruitfulness of the divine life. It is not a *grain* of corn merely, that which has life, but an ear, that which has seed for sowing. Ought we not to be ears of corn, with the good seed to spare, ready to sow beside all waters?

"Apelles (separated) approved in Christ." How these words fall together. To the world, his name suggests, one who will not walk with it; with a reputation perhaps of being a recluse. He walks apart, as one whose heart and associations are elsewhere. But he is "approved" by the Master. Ah, beloved, can we take the meaning of this name as suited to our walk? Are we separated unto God, and thus approved?

The friends, or family, of Aristobulus (the best advice, or adviser)—those who have taken the best advice. Who but the Lord gives that? and we may be sure those who take His counsel will have His salutation. Are you in doubt as to your path, perplexed, well-nigh hopeless? Go to the best Adviser, and you will surely be guided aright.

Other names, no doubt all of them, in this list are most suggestive: Phlegon (burning, zealous), Her-

mes (interpreter), Philologus (lover of the word), Nereus (a candle), are all so clear in their meaning that no word is needed to apply them. Taken altogether, we might say we have in these names the various characteristics in the child of God which meet His approval, and to whom He sends a loving greeting.

But there was another class at Rome, not mentioned by name, of whom the apostle speaks here, not to send them a loving greeting, but to warn the saints:—they were to be avoided. They might use “good words and fair speeches,” but they were not building the saints up on their most holy faith, nor knitting them together in love, but were dividing them, and causing them to stumble—practically diverting them from the doctrine—as in this whole epistle—which they had learned. These get cold neglect, in most marked contrast with the warm and loving greetings in the first part of the chapter. Be it ours, beloved brethren, to walk so humbly before our God that the blessed Spirit may ever minister His greetings to us, and not show by His grieved silence that we are among those unnamed ones who are to be marked and avoided.

JESUS did not commit Himself to them, because “He knew all men.” Man cannot outwardly be affected or improved so as to be trusted by God. As another has said, “Man’s affections may be stirred, man’s intelligence informed, man’s conscience convicted; but still God cannot trust him.” So Jesus shows one of such for the benefit of all. “Ye must be born again.”

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

CHAPTER V.

(Continued from page 99.)

FROM the seventeenth verse to the end of the chapter, we have a new and very distinct section of the "sermon on the mount," in which the Lord takes the place of One greater than Moses, confirming, expounding, and bringing out the spirituality of the law, while He at the same time supplements and perfects it, not hesitating to put His own words in a place of higher authority than those spoken "to them of old time." For "the law made nothing perfect" (Heb. vii. 19), and what Moses had to concede on account of the hardness of men's hearts (chap. xix. 8) could now, in the light which had come in with Christ into the world, no longer be permitted.

There are fittingly *seven* subsections here, ending with the enjoining (in the seventh) of this very perfection, as required of children of the perfect "Father in heaven," who were to manifest as that their Father's character. The higher the place accorded, the higher becomes the standard necessarily. But there are many questions which the whole subject raises here, and which we must take up seriously and consider patiently, in the order of their suggestion.

First of all, the authority of the law is maintained (verses 17-20), and in the fullest way. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of

these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Now in the first place we have to consider of what the Lord is speaking here. "The law and the prophets" was the recognized phrase for the Old Testament as a whole, the scriptures of a dispensation already past, but which had not passed themselves with the dispensation. Thus in the gospel of Luke (xvi. 16) He says again: "The law and the prophets *were until John*: since that time the kingdom of God is preached." Thus it could be said that they were passed, and they were not passed. They were passed as the sole and governing truth: that was now come (or at least at hand) for which they had been preparing the way; and necessarily this must be now the higher truth, but which must in its turn bear witness to and establish what had gone before it. No truth can pass away. The more complete that is, to which we have arrived, the more surely must it embrace and set in their place all lower and partial truths which have anticipated and led on to it.

Thus then Christ came not to destroy the law or the prophets. He came to "fulfill," or complete them—as the word means. What would the Old Testament be without the New? Very much like a finger, pointing into vacuity!

But it is plain that the Lord is not speaking here simply of the ten commandments, though these have their place, and a foremost place, in His thoughts, as is manifest by what follows. But "the law," in its

use in Scripture, is by no means confined to this, and the addition of "the prophets" shows that it must be taken in its widest acceptance.

This "fulfillment" could not be therefore simply by His obedience to the law, though He *was* fully obedient, but implies the bringing in of something additional; as plainly even the mere fulfillment of the prophets must be by the addition of something to the prophecy.

But He goes on to speak now specifically of the law; and He affirms with His emphatic "verily" that "not one jot or one tittle"—not the smallest letter, nor the projection of a letter*—"shall pass from the law untill all be fulfilled." This last word, let us note, is really a different word from the previous one which is similarly translated, and means "be come to pass"; and this coming to pass could not refer to the fulfilling of commandments. The ten commandments could not be spoken of as something which had to come to pass. But this last expression would have naturally to do with the law in its larger significance, which must in this way even include the prophets also; and thus the phrase "until heaven and earth pass" would be the real equivalent of "all things being fulfilled." For beyond this the Old Testament gives us only the promise of a new heavens and a new earth (Isa. lxv., lxvi.), about which it says nothing.

Every jot and tittle of the law remains then, never to pass away through the ages of time. It is all confirmed as divine, and therefore stable; but which, of course, does not mean that types and shadows were

* Which in several Hebrew letters is the only distinction between them, as between the "r" and the "d," the "h" and the "ch," etc.

not to give way to the substance when it should come, or that the "new covenant" would not replace the old: for this would be a contradiction of the Old Testament itself, which affirms this. No: the law abides in all its details; and *therefore* in all the limits it imposes on itself, and for all the purposes for which it was given; and *for no other*. This is simple enough, one would think, to understand; and yet it is not understood by those, for instance, who would from words like these impose the yoke of the law upon the necks of Christians. For this it is not enough to tell us that the law abides. It is none the less necessary, as the apostle says, that "a man use it lawfully." And he adds to this, in illustration, that "the law is not made for the righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient." (1 Tim. i. 8, 9.)

But the Lord's next words, for many, show without any doubt the perpetual and universal obligation of the law. For here He speaks plainly about doing or not doing, teaching or not teaching, one of the least even of its commandments, and of the recompense or retribution following for this. But while this is certain, it is no less clear that it is to Jews—to men under the law—that He is addressing Himself. Christianity is not come, nor the kingdom of heaven; nor is the former even announced as yet. The Lord is simply making a special application of the principle He has declared, to the case of those before Him: whether this is to be in fact wider, is not to be inferred from this particular case.

When we come in fact to Christianity, we find, especially in the epistles to the Romans and Galatians, the relation of the law to the saints of the present dispensation carefully argued out. And here two things are emphasized for us. First, that the "*righteousness* of the law" is "fulfilled in us, who

walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 4.) There is not, there cannot be, any giving up of what is right, of what is according to the nature of God Himself. The Christian standard cannot be lower, but is in fact higher than the legal one, in the same proportion as the Christian position is higher than the Jewish, and as the power communicated in Christianity transcends any that was known in Judaism. The Christian position is in Christ before God. The Christian standard therefore is to walk as Christ walked. The Christian power is that of the indwelling Spirit of Christ. As the greater includes the less therefore, so the righteousness of the law is included in the Christian righteousness.

But secondly, this does not mean that we are *under* the law. We are *dead to it*, that we might be married to Christ, says the apostle (Rom. vii. 4); not the *law* is dead*, but *we* are; and that, that we may bring forth fruit to God.

It would take us far from our present subject to discuss all this; but the simple statement of it ought to guard us from the confusion into which so many have fallen, that the perpetuity of the law, as our Lord states it here, implies that the Christian is in any way *under* it. This, not the possible meaning of a few texts, but the whole doctrine of the apostle, denies and sets aside; and conversely, the whole truth of Christian position would be denied by it. The Lord is speaking here to Jews,—to those confessedly under the law, and in view of the coming kingdom, which through their rejection of the King has not come even yet for them, and which, when it

* The mistake of the text of verse 6 in our common Version is corrected in the marginal reading, as it is also in the text of the Revised.

does come, will bring about a different condition of things for Christianity, as indeed the sermon on the mount itself assures us. This will be plain as we pass on.

And now the Lord proceeds to develop the righteousness that He requires, in contrast with that of the scribes and Pharisees, those zealots for the external. The second table of the law is here pressed, rather than the first, evidently because on this side man is most accessible,—his conscience is most easily roused. Men can invent all sorts of coverings to hide from themselves their state Godward; but if this be tested by their conduct towards men, who are His natural offspring, made in His image, it is not so possible to conceal from oneself the truth. Corruption and violence were of old the characteristics of a world which had reached the limit of divine longsuffering. (Gen. vi. 11–13.) The Lord takes therefore the sixth and seventh commandments of the law to illustrate the righteousness which He proclaims, expanding and spiritualizing that which was said to those of old time, so as to make it a new moral revelation to those that hear Him. Moses' commandments become thus, as it were, His own, who is shown thus as greater than Moses himself,—the Prophet of the new dispensation.

“Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that whosoever shall be angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire*.”

* The local courts in Israel were able to give “judgment”; the “council” of seventy, or Sanhedrim, investigated the graver mat-

Here it is simply "Thou shalt not kill," that stands as the sixth commandment. The addition of the penalty to it was nothing more, however, than what the law itself justified, and God himself had long before declared should be: "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." The *executive* law in Israel could go no further than this. It could not deal with the state of heart, but with the outward act only. But the law as expressed in the tables of stone applied not merely to the positive deed; and the appending the executive in this way to the moral law inferred that the two were equal in what they covered, as they were not. Thus the state of the heart was left out of view, in the estimate of accountability toward God, and the whole practical bearing of the law was nullified for the many.

But now the kingdom of heaven was drawing nigh, in which another estimate of things would be made and acted on. Anger in the heart where causeless, and the railing charges which men so lightly bring against each other, would be all crimes against an authority which had at its command not mere physical penalties limited by the temporal life; but the awful fire of Gehenna,—hell itself. It is not meant that under this divine government no mercy would be shown: that is not the point, nor what the words express. But such things would be within the range of jurisdiction, and man would be made to realize that there is a God who judgeth the hearts, and by whom actions are exactly weighed.

But this cuts deep; and it is meant to do so. We shall find directly how the Lord applies it all to rouse

ters, as blasphemy and heresy, which "Raca" perhaps implied. "Fool" goes further still, as in Psalm xiv. 1: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

the conscience of His hearers, and make them realize the impossibility of mere human righteousness in the sight of God. Thus in fact Israel was going on blindly with the adversary to meet the Judge, and they needed to come to terms with him or abide the issue. And indeed their righteousness must exceed all the vaunted righteousness of their trusted leaders, or they would in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

CHRIST'S WAY WITH AN ERRING SOUL.

THE story of Peter's fall and recovery is a striking illustration at once of the innate weakness and wickedness of the human heart and of the Saviour's patient grace and tender mercy. He is indeed the "Good Shepherd," who always goes in search of the lost sheep, and never rests until He finds it and brings it back on His shoulders rejoicing.

In connection with the faithful warning of impending danger, Jesus had given to His over-confident disciple the comforting assurance, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." How much Peter owed to that prevailing prayer of His great High Priest and ours, who can tell? But for it, like the wretched Judas, he might have sunk into despair, and rushed headlong to suicide. When he realized the results of his treachery, the miserable "son of perdition" "*went out and hanged himself.*" Whereas Peter, who was a true penitent, overwhelmed with a sorrowful sense of his shameful denial of the dear Master, "*went out and wept bitterly.*" There we have the contrast between *remorse*, or the "sorrow

of the world, which worketh death," and "godly sorrow, which worketh repentance to salvation." The Lord Jesus prayed for Peter; and so, grievous as was his fall, his faith failed not utterly and finally. Where should the best, the strongest, of us be but for the all-prevailing, never-ceasing intercession of our great High Priest?

After His resurrection, our Lord gave evidence of His unchanging love, even for the unfaithful and the unworthy, by sending a special message to his recreant apostle. Said the angel to the woman at the sepulchre, "Go tell His disciples, and Peter, that He goeth before them into Galilee." "*And Peter*"! Wonderful words of grace! A golden postscript, truly! Yes, "find *him*, the broken-hearted man, who so basely denied and deserted his Master; tell him that the Master lives, that He pities, that He loves him still." O, what must have been the effect of that surprising message on poor crushed Peter! How it must have caused the tears to rain from his eyes—tears of joy mingled with sorrow, like sunbeams glinting through April showers! He was not despised, he was not disowned, he was not forgotten, but freely forgiven! There are various kinds of forgiveness. There is the forgiveness that washes its hands of the culprit, and refuses to be further troubled on his behalf—the least estimable form of forgiveness; and there is that which proves itself sincere by the effort which it afterwards makes to help the penitent. Such was Christ's forgiveness of Peter; and such must our forgiveness be, if we would be followers of Him.

There is no account of the first meeting between the Saviour and His penitent disciple. The hand of

Inspiration has wisely drawn the curtain of silence around that scene. We only know from the evangelist John, and from Paul in the fifteenth of 1st Corinthians, that Peter was the very first of His apostles to whom the Risen Lord appeared. But near the close of John's Gospel there is the narrative of a most memorable interview of Jesus with His once wayward but now restored follower. The place is by the quiet lake side. The time is in the gray dusk of the early morning. Peter, with several of his fellow-apostles, has been fishing all night. They are tired and hungry. With His characteristic considerateness, which never overlooked the wants of the body, their Master has provided an appetizing breakfast. After the welcome meal had been finished, "Jesus saith to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?'" Ah, once he had protested, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will *I never* be offended"! Poor weak human nature!

"Man's wisdom is to seek
His strength from God alone,
And e'en an angel would be weak
Who trusted in his own."

That is a lesson which many a one since Peter's day has had painfully to learn. No longer boastful and self-confident, but humbled by sad experience, Peter says nothing about *others* to their disparagement and his own advantage. No, it is simply, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." Three times the searching question is repeated, "Lovest thou Me?" It is an obvious reference to the threefold denial. The rebuke was gentle, but faithful, and Peter deeply felt it, as the Master meant

he should. He is the Good Physician, and we may be certain that when dealing with a sin-sick soul, He always aims at a perfect cure. Therefore he uses a severity which is as needful as it is wise. He makes no mistakes, He never lost a case; if necessary, He will not spare the knife. Oh, do not wince or complain if you are under His skillful treatment. He hurts only that He may heal. And so Peter's wound was probed with saving result.

What now is *the evidence which love thus examined, thus avowed, and thus accepted, is required to give of its sincerity?*

"Feed My Lambs." "Feed My Sheep." "Feed My Sheep." The evidence of love, then, is to be found *not in sentiment, but in service*. Jesus seems to say to Peter, "Warm feelings, exalted words, loud professions, are not enough. If you do indeed love Me, as you say, show it practically by ministering to those for whom I gave my life." It was a truth which Peter needed to be taught. His was an ardent, impulsive, emotional nature. In a gush of excited feeling he had once declared his readiness "to die" for his beloved Master. He must learn that it is much more acceptable, and far more difficult, to *live* for Christ than to die for Him. There are some of us, too, who have to learn the same lesson. Protestations of willingness to die for a loved person or cause are cheap and common enough. A young man has been heard to say: "My mother! she is the best and dearest woman in the world: let any one dare speak a word against her: my mother, I would *die for her*!" Would he? But the dear old lady does not want her boy to die for her. She only asks him to come home a little earlier at night; occasionally to

go with her to meeting, and sit by her side; to show her some little attention. Such simple things display love for a mother more effectually than any amount of cheap heroics !

And so the Lord Jesus does not ask His disciples, except in rare instances, to die for Him. He asks them to *live* for Him. Yes, day by day, to live for Him in patient, uncomplaining, self-denying service of others—service which, if done to the lowliest in His dear name, He will accept as done to Himself. *This* is the proof of love. The unselfish deed of kindness, prompted by a loving heart, to a sinning, sorrowing, needy human creature is better than countless raptures of emotions which terminate in themselves. To be worth anything, these must be translated into action. “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.” The noblest hymn of praise is a Christ-like life !

“Lord, it is my chief complaint
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love Thee, and adore;
O for grace to love Thee more!”

W. F. W.

AT THE transfiguration, I observe that the heavenly and glorified strangers talk with Jesus about His decease. Fit theme for such a moment! For that decease is to be had in everlasting remembrance. The glory will celebrate it. The whole order of heaven, the redeemed, the angels, and all creation, will own it, as we see in Rev. v. For *the glory* owes itself to *the cross*—as the trumpet which ushered in the Jubilee was heard only on the day of Atonement; the time of restitution and refreshing, in this manner, owning its dependence on the smitten Lamb of God (Lev. xxv.), or on the decease of Jesus.

TWO TYPES COMPARED.

“I being in the way, the Lord led me.”—Gen. xxiv. 27.

IF Abraham offering up Isaac suggests to us the Father giving the Son, we are naturally led to find in Jacob, as some one has suggested, the agency in some way, in this scene, of the Holy Spirit. It must be, of course, the Spirit ever in us, and exercising us, through all our failures and wanderings. Who would have thought of Jacob's life suggesting to us the agency of the Spirit? yet how clearly it does! for as Jacob's life was in the far country, but the end in blessing at last, so the Spirit in the believer, in the Church, with us forever, has been checking, humbling, breaking down, and lighting up, these eighteen hundred years, and will lead home at last to eternal rest.

All this history of Jacob's life, until his return to the land, occurs in the latter days of Isaac.

If we compare these latter days of Isaac with the latter days of Abraham, we shall find in those of Abraham a brief history that compares, but contrasts, with that of Jacob in an interesting and instructive way, evidently so placed of God to strike our attention. I refer to the twenty-fourth of Genesis, to the brief history of Abraham's servant—the Spirit in type—sent to the same far country to bring home the bride for the son. Here we have, in beautiful contrast—no failure and no wandering—and yet a history that takes us over the same track as that of Jacob. How great the difference! In the one, we have the perfect action of the Spirit; in the other, the human failures that are reflected to-day in the

history of the Church, mingled with the recoveries and leadings on by the same Spirit.

How richly are we furnished then by our God in His word!—a history that shows how we might do, and the perfection of the Spirit's guidance; and again, a history that warns us, and yet assures us, or happily reminds us, how the Spirit of God is ever with us through all our failures.

Moreover, the history of Abraham's servant is set in a framework of Abraham's latter days; and the history of Jacob in a framework of Isaac's latter days, in such a way as to tell us very distinctly that we are invited to note the parallel, as already referred to. In Abraham's case the *servant's* history comes in between Abraham's victory over mere natural affection in offering up Isaac, and the end of his days, when his two sons bury him. In Isaac's case the history of *Jacob* comes in between Isaac's *failure* to overcome mere natural affection and self-indulgence in desiring to put Esau first, and the end of his days, when also his two sons unite in burying him. So Abraham showed his energy, and held the reins of government, to the end; he directed his faithful servant, in sending for Isaac's bride, with emphasis and particularity; and finally he gave gifts to, and sent away from Isaac, the sons of the concubines. Nothing was left to haphazard, or to be corrected by God's overruling mercy afterward. In such a framework is set the beautiful picture of the faithful servant's obedience to him that sent him.

But what precedes Jacob's history is Isaac's failure to govern himself or his house. The reins drop from his hands; Rebecca's energy directs Jacob in his fraud and arranges his flight; and though Isaac's life is

prolonged until Jacob's return from his long wanderings, nothing more is said about him until the mention of his death and burial. Abraham dies at 175, and is buried by Isaac and Ishmael; and Isaac dies at 180, and is buried by Esau and Jacob. Isaac, whose eyes were dim long before, has to live on and on a generation or more, to witness the working out of what his self-indulgence had set in motion—but to see God's overruling hand in unfailing mercy.

Note, in contrast with Jacob's fugitive life and self-seeking, the happy path of Abraham's faithful servant. He goes forth having taken care to know the mind of his master—he goes forth an honored servant intent on serving his master—he is aware that he is sent on important business, counting on guidance from above, and is aware that he carries a message bringing rich blessing and joy to the recipient. Where Jacob is carried on by circumstances, and delivered again and again by providential dealing of God, the faithful servant, consciously obedient and counting on guidance, beholds the way opening before him, and is filled with joy. “And the man bowed down his head and worshiped the Lord; and he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham. . . . *I being in the way*, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren.” (Gen. xxiv. 26.) So when he leaves with Rebecca, he leaves not by stealth, as Jacob did, but openly, with the consent of all, under the sure hand of God, and pursues his journey, with no hindrance, to the end. May we be consciously doers of the Lord's will, knowing the joy of that word, “*I being in the way, the Lord led me*”!

In Abraham's servant, then, we have the unhindered leading of the Spirit; in Jacob, the patient

dealing of God, by the Spirit, with us in all our wanderings, to the journey's end.

May we note both the goodness and severity of God! May the heart be won by His patient grace and long-suffering! God is for us. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

E. S. L.

THE house the Lord enters is Martha's. The Spirit of God tells us this as being characteristic of Martha; and into her house, with all readiness of heart, she receives the Lord, and prepares for Him the very best provision it had. His labors and fatigue called for this. Martha well knew that His ways abroad were the ways of the good Samaritan, who would go on foot that others might ride, and she loves Him too well not to observe and provide for His weariness.

But Mary had no house for Him. She was, in spirit, a stranger like Himself; but she opens a sanctuary for Him, and seats Him there,—the Lord of her humble temple. She takes her place at His feet, and hears His words. She knows, as well as Martha, that He was wearied; but she knows also that there was a fullness in Him that could afford to be more wearied still. Her ear and her heart, therefore, still use Him, instead of her hand or her foot ministering to Him. And in these things lay the difference between the sisters. Martha's eye saw His weariness, and would give to Him; Mary's faith apprehended His fullness underneath His weariness, and would draw from Him.

CLOSE TO THY SIDE.

CLOSE to Thy side, my Saviour,
 I'm shielded from all harm;
 Beneath Thy broad wings' shelter,
 I'm covered from the storm.
 O, bind my wayward heart to Thee,
 And bid my wand'ring eyes to see
 The depth of all Thy love to me,
My Saviour!

Teach me that sweet dependence
 Which knows not fear nor care,
 But childlike rests upon Thy breast
 And finds all solace there.
 O, never let me from Thee stray
 Into the distance, far away,
 But keep me close to Thee, I pray,
My Saviour!

Only as in *Thy presence*,
 I've power to conquer sin;
 Only as *Thee rememb'ring*
 Can I the vict'ry win.
 O, draw this cold, dull heart to Thee,
 And may its meditations be
 Filled with sweet memories of Thee,
My Saviour!

And I would walk the desert
 As cleaving to Thy side.
 Rule in my heart, and ever
 My faltering footsteps guide.
 The rest which sweet obedience brings
 Is his who e'en so closely clings
 To Thee—he hears *Thy whisperings*,
My Lord, My God, My Saviour!

H. Mc D.

“ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACTHANI.”

Read Matthew xxvii. 45-53.

THOUGH no mention is made in the above passage of the Lord Jesus having put Himself in our place, or of His dying for our sins, yet nothing could possibly account for His being divinely forsaken but the doctrine of atonement. At His baptism a voice was heard from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Then on the mount of transfiguration, when He was about to start for Jerusalem for the last time, the same voice was heard from the excellent glory, saying again, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,” adding, “hear ye Him.” Speaking to His enemies of the Father, He could say, “I do always those things that please Him.” He was truly the obedient One,—“obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Then, surely, we may boldly affirm that nothing can explain the meaning of that bitter and solemn utterance, “Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani?” but the awful, yet blessed, fact that He had taken the place of us guilty, undone sinners—that He was in the place of sin-bearing,—that He was enduring the judgment due to us—that He who knew no sin was being made sin for us,—the “darkness over all the land from the sixth hour unto the ninth hour” being, as we may suppose, an outward sign of what that blessed One was passing through for us—drinking the dark and bitter cup to the dregs, that we might drink the cup of salvation. In short, He was forsaken during those long hours that we might be owned forever. Oh, may the eyes of our hearts be

fully opened, that we may have a deep and growing sense of His love in thus giving Himself for us, and may our lives be an expression of heart truly, fully, and forever won.

But in the above portion of holy writ, we can not only read the doctrine of atonement, but we can read its perfect,—its far-reaching efficacy. When the Lord Jesus had yielded up the Ghost, “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” The hand of God did this. If man had rent it, he would have done it from the bottom to the top; but it being rent from the top to the bottom, showed that the power was from above. The rending of the veil of the temple was doubtless meant as a sign, not only that Judaism was at an end, but that grace had brought in something infinitely better—that the true veil was rent—that the way into the true holiest was open,—in other words, that sin was truly and fully atoned for, so that those who believe in Him who shed the blood of atonement, being, through that blood whiter than snow, may pass into the very presence of God without terror or danger. In view of this, the apostle could say, “Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” It may be remarked here that though the flesh of Jesus, is regarded as the veil, in the above scripture, yet it could not be meant that His flesh was the hindrance to our entering

into the holiest, sin being that; but it was needful that His flesh be rent,—that He should be put to death in the flesh, that the hindrance might be removed, and we be brought to God, and be before Him in acceptance, according to all that He is. Thus the rending of His flesh in death was the rending of the veil. Love has broken every barrier down.

“The burning mount and the mystic veil,
With our terrors and guilt are gone;
Our conscience has peace that can never fail,
'Tis the Lamb on high on the throne.”

But to say this truly another veil has to be rent. Though the veil is fully rent on the divine side, that is on God's part, yet there is another veil—a veil on man's side, mentioned by the apostle Paul as a veil on the heart. (2 Cor. iii. 15.) Though he is speaking of Israel, yet there is a veil on the hearts of all. This barrier has to be broken down—this veil has to be rent—rent in twain from top to bottom, otherwise we cannot see the things which are freely given to us of God. It is when that veil is rent, and every shred of it gone, that we can from full and exulting hearts sing,—

“Sweetest rest and peace have filled us,
Sweeter praise than tongue can tell;
God is satisfied with Jesus,—
We are satisfied as well.”

Happy when that blessed One, who is “precious” in the eyes of God, is precious in our eyes. This is true fellowship with God—the soul entering into His thoughts—seeing as He sees, according to our little finite measure. Oh, how sweet when it is so! It is

then that out of the heart, the mouth, and life will speak His praise.

But we have further proof of the sufficiency of the atoning death of the Lord Jesus. We read, "And the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many of the 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." All this doubtless was intended as a witness that the power of death and the grave was broken through the cross, and that those who believed in Him who had thus died for them, might go on their way rejoicing, triumphantly saying, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

And soon the full and everlasting results of the cross will be introduced. Yes, He who was forsaken of His God, and who is now on His Father's throne, is coming again, when the saints who still sleep, will be changed from corruption to incorruption, and the living saints be changed from mortality to immortality, and the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory," be fully and joyously brought to pass. The precious ransom was paid on Calvary, and we are waiting in sure hope for the bright outcome. Love, then, to Him who has done all that love could do, must constrain us to be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, being assured that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

R. H.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUESTION 6.—Please give an explanation of the shining of Christians as lights in the world. Is it unto God, or unto men? In Matt. v. 16, it seems as if it were to men; but in Phil. ii. 15, it looks as if it were unto God. I find that much activity which is not of God, passes for “shining as lights in the world.” If the world cannot understand Christ, nor the springs of a Christian’s action, can the true shining of a child of God be really seen by it, especially as the world is blind?

Answer.—The verse following Phil. ii. 15 explains its meaning. Read the last clause of the 15th and the first of the 16th, and we see the character of the shining. “In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.” Here we are told we are to shine in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, and we are to shine by holding forth the word of life. So also the other passages. In 2 Cor. iv. 6, the light has shone into our hearts in order that it might shine out in the life; or, as the apostle says in verse 2, by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

It is sorrowfully true that much that passes for Christian activity is but the energy of the flesh; but this must not lead us to class all service done to the Lord under that head. Thank God, in the midst of the abounding evil there is some true shining, which not only is marked by the eyes of Him who walketh among the candlesticks, but is seen by the world. That the world is dark and blind does not prevent the shining of the light. “The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” “The world knoweth us not because it knew Him not.” These scriptures, while they show the blindness of the world, at the same time show that the light has come to them. “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” Men are responsible to act upon the light which God gives. “While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.” Each of us, in our little measure, is to be a light during our Lord’s absence. Surely, in view of the nearness of His coming, all His own should rise and “trim their lamps.”

QUES. 7.—Amos viii. 11: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." In what sense, if any, can this scripture be applied to the condition of things now?

Ans.—Of course, the context shows—verses 12, 13—that the passage directly concerned the kingdom of Israel, the idolatrous ten tribes, and it exhibits the judicial blindness brought upon them for their departure from God. No doubt, also, it will have its application in days to come, when the apostate and idolatrous nation will find a like famine. But we too are living in the "last days," which correspond morally in many ways with the times noted by the prophet. These days are marked, among other things, by a neglect—a despising—of the word of God: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." And as a result of this despising of God's word, is there not a corresponding "famine," to which, though of course in a secondary sense, the words of the prophet might be applied? Men who call themselves Christian are robbing the people of the Scriptures. Under the guise of Higher Criticism, open infidelity has come into the Church. As a result, the great doctrines of the gospel are practically denied. Sin, atonement, assurance, a separate walk, and waiting for God's Son from heaven, are doctrines no longer endured by the many, as, alas, they are no longer preached by the many. There has been, on the part of one at least of the larger religious bodies, an open condemnation of these views; but it is only too evident that the canker spreads elsewhere, and that even where it has been openly condemned, an equally dangerous—if not more, because of its insidious nature—form of the evil is spreading. The Lord grant we may be mistaken, but signs are not wanting to show that this evil is spreading.

Then, too, even where the integrity of God's word is not outwardly questioned, the world has come in and absorbed the attention of God's own people to such a degree that the Scriptures are literally crowded out. Beloved brethren, let us awake, lest we too find amongst us practically a famine! What a privilege to be permitted in any measure to minister God's word to His dear people!

PORTERS IN THE LORD'S HOUSE.

1 Chron. ix. 17-34.

“**I**F any man desire oversight, he desireth a good work.” (1 Tim. iii. 1.) Such is the simple rendering of a verse which is often used to establish an official ministry. Work and not office is the thought, and most assuredly any who have ever been called of God to such a service have realized that it is no light matter to bear a burden of such responsibility.

But the very fact of the responsibility attaching to such service only emphasizes its importance. And may we not well ask ourselves at the outset whether that oversight to which God attaches so much importance has the same value in our eyes? Or are we, in the democracy of the age, learning to despise any effort at godly care? The Lord graciously awaken all His beloved people to the fact that we are our brothers' keepers, and that He has intrusted some of His servants with the gift² of oversight! — *work, not*

The porter or gate-keeper answered to the overseer in the New Testament. It was a position of dignity, and in connection with the city government was usually in the hands of older, grave men. The duties of the porter were to open and to close the gates morning and evening, and to see that none entered but those who were clean, and so, ready to come into God's holy presence. It will be seen at a glance that their position was no easy one rightly to fill, and one in which they needed all the grace and guidance of God on the one hand, and on the other the love, prayers, and submission (in the Lord) of their brethren.

There are three main points of interest in connection with the porters and their duties: first, they were Levites; secondly, they were under priestly control and guidance; and thirdly, they were subject to the word of God, not to their own inclinations or prejudices.

The Levites were given to Aaron the high priest and his sons to minister about the holy things, to prepare and assist in their priestly functions (Numb. iii. 5-13). Work characterized them, as worship did the priests. They fittingly represent that service to which all in the Church are called—service of one kind or another. And as out of these Levites some were called to be porters or doorkeepers, so some of God's people were called to the special service of care-takers. Theirs it is to exercise in a spiritual way just the same care as to who is to be received, as of old the porters did as to who could enter the courts of the Lord's house.

If it be asked how we are to know them, and how are they to know they have been called, our answer is, Scripture gives us the qualifications for a man who desires oversight, and we are to recognize him by those qualifications; and the Spirit of God lays the service upon his heart and shows him the work he has to do. Let it not be for a moment thought that we are asking for anything like class ministry—we are simply claiming for the blessed Spirit of God the right to use in the Church those whom He has qualified and called for this special service. It is a gift—a gift to Christ for the service of His beloved people.

But secondly, these Levite porters were to be under the direction of the priest. This means, of

course, first of all, that the Lord's servants are to be ever subject to Himself. He is the only Lord and Master, and all are His servants. Higher honor there cannot be. Unless they are subject to Christ, they will not do His bidding, nor will they carry out His will. But this means they must be in communion with Christ; their own souls must be in a right state. If this is not the case, if the Levites are not subject to the Priest, there will be failure in either or both of two directions: they will be too easy, indifferent to the Lord's honor, and allow to enter those whom He would exclude; or, on the other hand, refuse those whom He would make welcome. Well may we pause and ask, who but one in communion with the Lord is competent for such work? Just here we would not be misunderstood as saying that the doorkeepers *decide* as to who shall be received; that rests finally with all the saints; but the care and work are with those whom the Lord calls.

We cannot emphasize too strongly this priestly side of the matter of reception and exclusion. An anointed eye is needed to detect leprosy, or its absence; and even when there may be no outbreking sin, there may be good and true reasons why some should be refused. If the soul is in communion with Christ, all this will be plain, when, alas! to the carnal mind there is nothing by which to judge. Eli is a picture of this; carnally indulgent to his sons, he would rebuke a true-hearted pleader at the throne of grace. It is in communion alone that we can see aright; and if communion be lacking, all else is *worthless*. Whenever times of difficulty come upon us, calling for this oversight, let us see to it that we are always consciously in the presence of the Lord. Let the loose

or hasty word be checked; let the worldly-minded judge themselves. It is no trifle, beloved brethren, to be engaged in such holy and solemn work.

It is instructive and significant that the priest who had especial care over the porters was Phinehas—he who in the days of Israel's sin at Beth-peor stood forth in all firmness and executed judgment upon the wrong-doers. His very name is significant—"Mouth of brass"—the words of his mouth inflexible. Such is the character of our Lord as high priest. If He has a heart to sympathize with His weak and erring people, His sympathy has nothing of weakness in it. Because He is our high priest, and has made a perfect atonement for us, this insures judgment upon our ways, and the severest chastening when it is needed.

Let it be repeated, it is under subjection to our Priest and Lord in this Phinehas character—this inflexible firmness in judging evil—that any can be really porters, care-takers, in the house of God. Significantly does the Scripture add, of Phinehas, "and the Lord was with him." Firmness, then, and sympathy are the controlling thoughts in oversight.

But, in the last place, the porters had a guide. In no case were they left to their own thoughts, feelings, or prejudices, as to whom they would receive. Of Levi, again, it is said, "Who said unto his father and his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant." (Deut. xxxiii. 9.) No question as to family ties, love, or friendship, can enter here. It must be simple firmness for the Lord; and this a firmness that has been already shown within the limits of

one's own household—"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.*" (1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.) "Having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly." (Tit. i. 6.) Here we see that the firmness has been in exercise in a circle where, alas! too often love degenerates into weakness. Here is the school where God's porters learn their lessons—the place where they are proved.

But to return: they have a guide—an infallible one. They might err in their opinion of a person, and in their feelings toward him; but if they go according to the word of God, they cannot go amiss. For instance, in the case of one suspected of leprosy, the directions for its detection were laid down so simply that there need be no mistake; and if the matter was not clear, the person was set aside until his true condition was manifest.

Beloved brethren! suffer a word of exhortation. Ye who have the care of the Lord's lambs and sheep laid upon you—as you think of the immense responsibilities intrusted to you, and of the qualifications for that care, do you not feel like saying, "Who am I"? Is there any thought of self-satisfaction, or self-sufficiency? Nay, do you not feel rather like falling upon your faces, owning your own personal failure, and entreating the Lord's grace and guidance?

And we, beloved brethren, to whom perhaps the Lord has not intrusted in so direct a way the care of His people—have not we a work to do? Have we strengthened the hands of those who were seeking, in confessed weakness, and with many shortcomings, to serve Christ and His Church? Have we, by

prayer, and in love, sought to uphold them? or have we, by our criticisms, our harsh judgments, our hastily-formed opinions, and, above all, our total disregard of their service, and of subjection one to another in the Lord, only weakened the little vestige of godly oversight there was left—only caused the feeble flicker of the lamp of testimony to burn more dimly?

If such be not the case, we need not shrink from the question; but if in any degree we have failed in these directions, let us all get low before our God, humble ourselves under His mighty hand, and He will lift us up.

"WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION."

NEARLY every one is familiar with the above words from Philippians ii. 12. Not a few quote it as if it applied to unbelievers, and use it therefore as an exhortation to them to look after the salvation of their souls. By examination, however, it is easy to see who are the persons addressed. In the first verse of the epistle, we read, "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, *to all the saints* in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi." He is thus speaking to *the saved* people in Philippi; *not* to the *unsaved*.

In Ephesians ii. 8, 9, the same apostle says: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

Notice, *not of works*; and in Philippians he says, *work out your own* salvation. Do they not conflict? By no means—God's word cannot conflict with or

contradict itself. To say the Bible contradicts itself is infidelity! and alas for the rapid strides in that direction through the falling away from that simple faith which alone gets a right comprehension of the word of God! In Ephesians ii., we are taught *how* we are saved—by grace, through faith: not of works. Our works have nothing to do with it—we are saved by grace, and grace alone.

In Philippians, we—the saved ones—are taught that there are snares and circumstances which await us in our path through life, of which we need to beware. Paul as a father among his children had helped his beloved Philippians out of those snares, and thus saved them from their evil ends. Now he was away from them, and he warns them to be no less obedient in his absence than they had been in his presence; nay, rather more so on account of his absence, since they must now look out for themselves—ever remembering that it was God who, by His Spirit, was working in them the willing and the doing of His good pleasure.

The fact that what the apostle had taught them was the “good pleasure” of God Himself was surely enough to call for “fear and trembling” lest they disobeyed it in any part. It was not the slavish fear of perishing which false teaching would make it; for the Saviour says of His sheep, “they shall never perish;” but it was that holy fear and trembling produced in the soul by the Infinite Love which has saved us, lest we should grieve it. M. M.

“Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? *follow thou Me.*”

SANCTIFICATION.

IF we have really learned that "Christ is all," we shall give Him His place as that in everything we may have to say on the doctrines of Scripture. "The Lamb is the light thereof" as well as of the bright unseen which awaits those who are His. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." He is the theme of all God's precious word, and the key thereto.

Though much has been written on the subject of sanctification, yet it seems to be imperfectly understood, even by those who say most about it. And why is it so? Is it not owing to the obvious fact that Christ has not His true and full place in professed Christian teaching?

The inspired Word says: "Of Him"—that is, of God—"are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and *sanctification*, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor. i. 30, 31.)

Thus Christ is the sanctification of those who are of God in Him. He, as man in glory, is the measure of their sanctification, or separation to God. He is as much their sanctification as He is their righteousness. So that while Luther could say, "My righteousness is in heaven," he might with equal propriety have said, "My sanctification is in heaven."

Christ being divinely constituted the believer's sanctification is, of course, founded on the work of the Cross. He had to purge our sins by the shedding of His precious blood before He could appear in the presence of God for us. "We are sanctified

through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." "Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate."

Christ therefore is the *positional* sanctification of all true believers. They "are sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. i. 2)—sanctified in another, in their *Representative*. And of course their sanctification in this sense is at once and ever "entire." "Ye are complete in Him" may be said to souls the moment they truly believe. They are as fully sanctified in Him as they are justified. Therefore positional sanctification—that is, sanctification "in Christ Jesus"—being clearly taught in God's word, any teaching on this subject which does not contain this main part must be essentially defective.

Christ being thus the positional sanctification of believers, their *experimental* sanctification is the knowledge and enjoyment of Him as that. It is Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith; and the more they know Him, the more they live in the joy of their entire sanctification in Him. In this sense they "are sanctified . . . by the Spirit of our God." Christ, speaking of the Comforter whom He would send, said, "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." We are exhorted to be "filled with the Spirit;" and being thus filled, we shall be filled with Christ, for the Spirit does not occupy us with Himself, but with Christ, enabling us to exult in Him while we have "no confidence in the flesh."

The sum of what I have thus far said is expressed in few words by our blessed Lord—"Ye in Me, and I in you."

Practical sanctification is a holy walk. Believers

are to walk in accordance with what Christ is for them before God. They are to express Him as their sanctification in their spirit and deportment,—they are to walk even as He walked,—thus practically manifesting that holy separation to God which they have in Christ, till they are called to be with Him in glory forever. “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” is a Divine direction to all who are “sanctified in Christ Jesus.”

It will be readily seen that while a person is entirely sanctified *in Christ* when he first believes, yet sanctification, as a matter of experience and practice, admits of growth; for the child of God is to experience and express Christ more and more, day by day, during his stay in this scene of evil. “Grow in grace” is the direction of the Spirit to “all that are in Christ Jesus.”

Thus the believer may look up to heaven and behold his sanctification as well as his righteousness in the Person of the glorified Christ, till his soul is filled with the sight and his whole life is governed by it. “We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

“Possessing Christ, I all possess,
Wisdom, and strength, and righteousness,
And *sanctity complete*.”

“CHRIST IS ALL.”

R. H.

WHEN JESUS was thirsty and tired at Jacob's well, He forgot it all in giving out other waters, which no pitcher could have held, or well, besides his own, supplied. Jesus was saying there, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

A MIND MADE UP WITHOUT GOD.

THE forty-second chapter of Jeremiah has, it seems to me, a sober lesson for the present time, to which the Lord's people may well take heed.

The patience of God had come to an end toward Israel. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had laid siege against Jerusalem, taken and destroyed it, slain the nobles of Judah, and carried the chief part of the people in captivity to Babylon.

But "the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and of the poor of the land, of them that were not carried away captive to Babylon." Jeremiah had remained also in the land with this feeble remnant, and they were already being cheered and encouraged by the words of Gedaliah: "Dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it will be well with you. . . . Gather ye wine, and summer fruits, and oil, and put them in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that ye have taken."

Further encouragement follows: "When all the Jews that were in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that were in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, . . . even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came in the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruits very much."

But new sorrows soon returned. A conspiracy issuing from the king of the Ammonites had been formed against this reviving remnant. A traitor had

carried it out; and now, in the despair of discouragement, "they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem, *to go to enter into Egypt.*"

But they hesitate here. They know well that Egypt is not the place where God leads His people. But the place where He puts them is a place of judgment if they walk not with Him—a place of strife and battle with the enemy without or within; and they are weary of difficulty.

This is a solemn moment for them: two ways are open to them; one is to fall on their faces, confess to God the sins which caused their break-up, the carrying away of their nobles to Babylon, and their present distress, and *abide there* in obedience and confidence under the blessed God whose encouraging words might well banish all their fears and stir up their hearts: "If ye will abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down; and I will plant you, and not pluck you up; *for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.*" Oh how this tells of a Father's heart, after the chastening which His hand had to inflict!

The other way is to yield to their natural feelings, and go where they think they will find a path in which they will see war no more.

Solemn, solemn, indeed is the hour! Will they abide where God can identify Himself with them in the fullest way, despite their weakness and circumstances of shame; or will they follow their inclination, and hear God's voice but to prophesy their ruin?

Alas! the test but brings out their true condition. While professing apparently the honest desire to

know what the mind of the Lord is, and the readiness to obey it whatever it may be, they have already set their faces toward Egypt. Their minds have been made up without God. Their state is so low that they cannot exercise faith. They send Jeremiah to inquire of the Lord; but in reality it is to get His approval of the path which suits their state. They cannot openly give up the path of obedience, but their wills are opposed to it. They soon find an excuse, therefore, which satisfies them: "Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely; the Lord our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there; but Baruch the son of Neri-ah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon."

Accordingly they return to Egypt, to prove the message sent to them,—“It shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt; and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you, there in Egypt. . . . I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon. . . . and when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, and deliver such as are for death to death; and such as are for captivity to captivity.”

Beloved brethren, does this bit of Israel's history need comment? Is our spiritual discernment not able to recognize God's voice to us in it at this special time? The chastening of our God has been sore upon us. He is holy and just in it; we deserved it. It leaves us a poor, feeble remnant, exposed to the

pity and ridicule of some, to the assaults and accusations of others. Shall we turn to worldly principles and ways to escape difficulty? or shall we confess our sins and abide with God in the place of chastening, but also of grace and truth? Shall we *submit* in brokenness of heart and be yet blessed and for blessing? or shall we turn to Egypt and be utterly consumed? Shall we hold that fast which we have? or shall we let it go? Have we faith to abide where faith alone can abide? Brethren, this requires *reality* and *lowliness*. Here we cannot preach one thing and do another, and yet abide. We cannot enjoy the sweets of grace and refuse the responsibilities of it. When our adorable Lord left His glory above to come down here in grace after us, every step was real, and its cost real. "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Had this remnant of Israel had the character of true disciples, they would not have thought of Egypt to save their lives; for a true disciple hates "his own life also," and is free therefore from the thought of saving this or that; he has nothing to do but obey his Master.

Grace saves that it may make disciples. If it be received and held with a single eye, it makes discipleship the glory of this life, though it be in suffering and loss. If not, it produces a light, frivolous spirit—the spirit now so prevalent with holy things, which lightly esteems, or even despises, what is not directly for man's enjoyment. Christ will do as *Saviour*, but as *Lord and Master*, revealer of God's will and glory, to be in all things solemnly heard and obeyed, He is not wanted.

Beloved, the days *are* evil. Man fills the vision, not Christ. Therefore "truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey."

The Lord show us mercy, and keep us abiding with Himself, waiting patiently on Him, in no haste to forget our Meribahs, yet full of confidence and hope in Him! This He will not deceive. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is !

P. J. L.

How beautifully do these chapters (Luke i. and ii.) rise upon our view! A long and dreary season from the days of the return from Babylon had now passed; but *here* the morning breaks, the heavens are opened, and the wastes of Israel are revisited. And all was in the twinkling of an eye. Who had counted on this a day before? The priest was at the accustomed altar; the virgin of Nazareth at home amid the ordinary circumstances of human life; and the shepherds, as they were wont, watching their flocks,—when the glory of the Lord shines, and one fresh from the presence of God appears. And Gabriel can stand without reserve in the holy place with the priest, and without reluctance in the poor dwelling of the virgin. Such are the ease and grace of these heavenly visits—happy pledges of days still brighter, still to come! But Gabriel, the messenger, though he stand at the altar, will not, like the angel of Jehovah of old, ascend in the flame of the altar; nor, like Jesus-Jehovah afterward, though he stand in the temple, speak of himself as greater than the temple. For he fills his place as a servant, and takes no higher. This is blessed.

J. G. B.

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

CHAPTER V.

(Continued from page 125.)

THEIR whole method was a false one. They valued apparently God's altar, loading it, Cain-like, with gifts defiled by the hands that offered them. The Lord warns them therefore to be reconciled with their justly offended brethren before presuming to bring such offerings; and while the application here is, of course, to Israelites, the principle as manifestly applies to us to-day. A sinner coming to God is not at all in question: for he can only come as what he is, and has the explicit assurance that he will be received. Even the Pharisees said truly of the Lord, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." He Himself said, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." Abel too, bringing his sacrifice to God, "obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying"—not of his works, nor of his character, but—"of his gifts." (Heb. xi. 4.) How impossible, if it were otherwise, to have any assurance at all! for as to how much could we never set ourselves right with brethren! Blessed be God, it was for our sins that Jesus died, and our sins are the best of titles to the Saviour of sinners.

But while God would never turn away a sinner thus seeking Him, or delay even for a moment the reception of such an one, this is not to hinder any possible restitution to those we may have injured, but the very contrary. For now we come under the rule before us, and as saints, we are to "lift up holy hands" to God (1 Tim. ii. 8). A *sinner* cannot possibly yet lift up holy hands; but for a saint this is

absolutely necessary for communion. And how many suffer sadly in their souls because of an unjudged condition in these respects! For such the Lord's words here have the gravest importance.

Those to whom they were addressed, however, were Jews, in no wise taking the place of sinners, nor yet truly saints, but legalists, going on with the law in which they boasted, and not realizing that Moses, in whom they trusted, was necessarily their greatest adversary (Jno. v. 45). Judgment must be the end, if they did not in the meanwhile reconcile themselves to him, by the offering of which already the law had spoken, but which the glorious Speaker Himself was to provide. This He does not, however, go on to in this place. He is convicting them of a need without the consciousness of which, all revelation of God's way of grace would be impossible to be understood. The judgment reached, they would by no means come out from it until they had paid the uttermost farthing.

Hopeless then would be their confidence in the law. But the Lord has not yet done with it for the purpose of conviction, and of clearing it from the mistakes and perversions of the scribes. He goes on therefore from the sixth to the seventh commandment, to show once more that out of the heart the positive transgression came, and that what was in the heart to do was in effect done as to the guilt of it. Opportunity had lacked, and that was all.

And he urges that if the right eye or hand caused men to stumble, it were better to cut them off and go on maimed through life, than to preserve these and go whole into hell. Better sacrifice what might seem most necessary, than give oneself up to the tyranny of sin.

Clearly no asceticism or self-mutilation is intended

by such an injunction; but men excuse, by the plea of necessity, what they find to be the constant provocative of sin. God's law admits no such excuse, whatever the pretext.

In connection with this commandment, the Lord takes up also the law of marriage, to refuse the laxity which even Moses had permitted, and still more the license of the rabbins. Moses had on account of the hardness of their hearts only been able to modify somewhat the existing custom of divorce. The "writing" which he had "commanded" was in the interests of social order, not of license, which the prevalent school of Hillel favored in the most shameless way. The Lord peremptorily, and on his own authority, restricts the allowance of it to that one ground which plainly destroys the very idea of marriage; and declares the putting away of one's wife for any other cause to be making her to commit adultery by another union. Also he who marries such a divorced one commits adultery.

The Lord's words, while addressed to Israelites, cannot surely be less binding upon Christians of the present day. It is plain that Christianity cannot be supposed to require a lower morality than He enforces here, not as a national or ecclesiastical regulation, but just *as* morality. What was "adultery" according to Him must be ever adultery; and no law of man can alter this in the slightest degree. Let the Lord's people look to it, in a day when men are doing their own will with continually more audacity.

He proceeds now to another matter, in which again that which was at least tolerated under the law is forbidden in the new morality which He is enforcing. "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths," plainly speaks of vowing

—of promise under oath. There had been great abuse of it, as Israel's history makes evident, men not hesitating to vow recklessly to God the dictates of their pride and passion and self-will, to find themselves then entangled by what seemed their *duty*. Careless profanity had come in at the heels of this, and God's name been profaned by light appeals to it on every occasion, modified according to conscience or the lack of it by every kind of circumlocution and indirect expression of what they dared not openly give utterance.

Our Lord sweeps into His prohibition all these evasions of the third commandment, putting them into the same category with that which was once permitted. "But I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your word be yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

Man's utter weakness, so fully and simply demonstrated, is made (at least in part) the basis of the prohibition here. God might swear; for He could accomplish; and knew, too, all the consequences of what He was pledging Himself to. Beautifully we find thus this grace in Him when seeking to assure the soul of His creature, so ready to doubt the perfect faithfulness even of His God: "Wherefore God, willing to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things,"—His word and His oath; His word really as certain as His oath, but not to man,—"wherein it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for ref-

uge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (Heb. vi. 13-18.)

We then, on our parts, are to be far from what is so suited to His strength, and so ill-suited to His feeble creatures. The legal covenant had, however, in its essential features the character of an oath; and the last chapter of Leviticus looks at them typically as failing under it, in contrast with the One who did not fail.* The law, therefore, until man was fully proved by it, could not forbid the vow. It is an anachronism, and worse, that it should be imported into Christianity, and that we should hear of covenant-vows, the baptismal *vow*, etc., so contrary to the simplicity of Christ's institutions for us, and to the grace which alone we know to be our strength. The vow is wholly passed away, but to make room for Christ's strength to rest upon us, our very infirmities to be gloried in on this account (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10). God's oath is sworn to us, that His abundant grace shall bring us through.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

IN the poor sinner of Luke vii. all the hidden fountains are opened at the bidding of the grace of Christ. She knew that He had accepted her, sinner as she was, and this commanded her heart. It left her *without an eye for the Pharisee's feast or an ear for his scorning*, for Jesus had drawn her apart from everything; and to come near Him, as near as love and gratitude and worship could bring her, was all her concern.

* See the "Numerical Bible," Vol. I.

DIVINE HEALING.

THERE is such a thing as becoming one-sided in regard to truth of God; that is, one truth is taught and pressed to the almost utter exclusion of that which God has ordained should be held in connection with it. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Therefore, if we decline to accept truth which may make less of a doctrine than we would like to see made of it, we do so to our own hurt, and are not *thoroughly* furnished unto *all* good works. The soldier who disdains using his entire equipment, preferring one portion above another, will likely come to grief in some stage of the conflict. Even so with that Christian who takes but one side of the truth of God.

These facts are true in regard to the doctrine of "Faith Healing." That the Scriptures teach it is our privilege to go to God with all our difficulties and needs, spiritual and physical, is quite true; and many a child of God has had the answer to believing prayer in the form of renewed health or deliverance from diseases of various forms. Far be it from us to weaken in any the sense of dependence upon God for the healing of the body, for we believe that did Christians trust the Lord more and man less about such matters, it would be more honoring to God.

However true though it is that God does answer faith, we desire to present a few considerations in regard to this subject; and if we pass them over, we will become one-sided; and while seeking to retain

a particular truth, we shall pour contempt upon other portions of His blessed word.

Sickness is often the result of sin. This will be plain from the reading of the following: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and *sickly* among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." Unjudged sin was bringing weakness, sickness, and even death, upon the Corinthian Christians. It is not directly within the scope of our subject, but note in passing that God had a reason for sending death to them: it was, as the thirty-second verse tells, that they "should not be condemned with the world."

Under certain circumstances, the plan for the sick one to follow is laid down in James v. 14, 15. Read the fifteenth verse, and note that this also takes notice of the fact that it may be sins which caused the sickness. It does not state positively that such was the case, but "if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

We may safely conclude that sickness in some cases is brought on by the Lord because the subject of the chastening has been walking in unjudged sin.

But to say that all ill health and sickness is thus caused, is to go farther than Scripture takes us, and is unsafe for us. In fact, we are plainly given to understand that earnest, faithful work for the Lord Jesus Christ may be the cause of ill health which nearly terminates in death. In Philippians ii. the apostle Paul refers to Epaphroditus, and says of him in the twenty-seventh verse, "For indeed he was sick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him."

Then, in the twenty-ninth verse, "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation: because *for the work of Christ* he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me."

In this connection it is well to turn our thoughts to the one whom the apostle calls his own son in the faith. Would that more of the Christian young men of our day were filled with the same faith and love as was Timothy! of whom Paul says, in the same chapter in which he refers to Epaphroditus, "For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state; for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel." (vers. 21-23.) Read the first few verses of 2 Tim. i., and you will surely say, "Timothy must have been a real man of God."

Yet, though Timothy was faithful to the Lord, to His people in general, and to the apostle Paul in particular, he was one who had *often* infirmities, and stomach difficulties. Well, such being the case, should he not exercise faith, and *thus* be cured of his trouble? Will the apostle not write recommending him to do so? Let us see what he did write, through the leading of the Holy Spirit:—"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." So Paul really recommended Timothy to take a little *medicine*, in the form of wine. True, it was a little he was to use, and as a medicine; and being in the habit of taking water, had to be *told* to take wine.

The apostle Paul had power to heal persons of diseases. Is it not strange that he should leave one of

his helpers at Miletum sick? In 2 Tim. iv. 20, he tells us he did so:—"Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." Neither himself nor Paul exercised faith as to the restoration to health of Trophimus. Has the Lord nothing to teach us by this fact? Can we not learn by it that it is not always the Lord's will that His children should receive faith for the healing of disease? and that, had it been a wrong thing for Trophimus to be sick, Paul would not have left him there, but would have counseled "faith healing," or would have exercised his own God-given power?

Once more: in Colossians iv. 14, the apostle speaks of "Luke, the *beloved* physician." Now, here was one of the Lord's people who was a physician; not only so, he was a beloved one to Paul. If sickness is always a sign of unjudged sin in the one who is sick, and it is sinful to take medicine for relief, would Paul refer to one whose profession was to administer medicine as the "*beloved*" physician, when he knew that *his* was a profession whose very nature led him to prescribe a course of treatment which would then be actually sinful? Thus we see that the word of God does not lead us to suppose that one who is a physician is following a profession which is contrary to the will of God, seeing the word "*beloved*" is a term of special affection.

Now, while the Scriptures do teach that the One who, while upon the earth, said, "According to your faith be it unto you," is still able to give the faith to trust Him about bodily ailments, and, in response to faith which He has given, is able to heal the disease, yet it is well to maintain an even balance of truth; and remember that, in wisdom which no man can

rightly question, God teaches us that there are two sides to the question of healing.

The object in writing the foregoing is not to weaken, in any degree, a humble dependence upon God for the healing of the body, but to bring out the other side of truth from the word of God, which seems to be passed over by many. If the reader is one of these, we trust the Scriptures quoted will do the Lord's work.

Should God enable any to trust Him for healing, give God the glory, and not think of it as though it were a thing of merit to *man* that God healed the sick.

J. G. T.

[Sickness and infirmity are often sent as *preventives*, as well as for chastening. "Lest I should be exalted above measure . . . there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me." (2 Cor. xii. 7.) How much Paul owed to that thorn in the flesh, who can tell? With it also he had the assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Let us seek ever to be *exercised* by what the Lord sends upon us, rather than to get out of it as easily as possible.—ED.]

THE soul is the dwelling-place of the truth of God. The ear and the mind are but the gate and the avenue; the soul is its home, or dwelling-place. The *beauty* and the *joy* of the truth may have unduly occupied the outpost, filled the avenues, and crowded the gates; but it is only in the soul that its reality can be known. It is by meditation that the truth takes its journey from the gate, along the avenue, to its proper dwelling-place.

“HE MAKETH THE STORM A CALM.”

Ⓒ LORD, how wild the night is!
I cannot walk alone.

The sin within me frightens,
As oft from Thee I roam.
The dark, cold blast of winter,
The shiv'ring of the trees!
Dear Lord, the cold is bitter,
And drear the sighing breeze.

I long to have more likeness
To Thy sweet, wondrous grace;
I long to see the brightness
Of my Redeemer's face;
But clouds so often gather,
And raindrops wildly fall.
O kind and heavenly Father!
They hang there like a pall.

I pause, for, *look!* the glory
Of yon silver, golden bow
Still whispereth the story
Of One who knows my woe.
The silver, shining, telleth
The sweetness of His grace;
The gold, that glory dwelleth
In the dear Saviour's face.

And now my soul it husheth
In calm and sweet repose;
I lay the weight that crusheth
Aside, for Jesus knows.

“Let not your heart be troubled”
By the dark billows' foam;
For though the storm be doubled,
It bloweth, ever, *home*.

F. C. G.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUESTION. 8.—What is the spiritual significance of the towel wherewith our Lord girded Himself? (John xiii. 4, 5.) A. F. C.

ANSWER.—The symbolic teaching of John xiii. is exceedingly profitable and interesting. Briefly, we may say our Lord was teaching us that if we are to enjoy communion with Himself it must be with cleansed feet; that is, a walk which has been corrected by His word. Each part of this act is, without doubt, significant: the water typifies the Word (Eph. v. 26); the washing is distinguished from that of new birth, and is only that of the feet. In like manner, the towel is doubtless significant. We see first, that He is *girded* with it. That is the servant's attitude; secondly, He uses for them that with which He is girded, He simply applies to them the humility which characterizes Him; thirdly, the *material* of which the towel was made is significant; it was a *linen* towel (J. N. D.'s version)—the righteousnesses of the saints. It was His own holy life that enabled Him to approach His erring disciples and apply the Word to them. And, as He tells us, we should also wash one another's feet. But to do this, we must imitate Him. We must be girded, clothed with humility; we must use the word, and we must have the towel of practical righteousness. Lastly, we see the manner of applying the towel. The water cleansed, the towel dried. This no doubt answers to the healing, soothing, comforting action of our Lord by which He assures us that "as many as I love I rebuke and chasten." It is His restoring action. His word shows us our faults, and when these are confessed, He most graciously confirms us in the assurance of His love. So let it be with us: when the water has done its work, let the towel be applied, assuring our erring brother of our love to Him, and of the Lord's restoring grace. "So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore, I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him." (2 Cor. ii. 7, 8.)

QUES. 9.—"But though the city was seen to come down from heaven (Rev. xxi. 10), it is not here said to come down to the earth so as to be with men, as it does (xxi. 1, 3) when the new heaven and earth are come." ("Lectures on Revelation." W. K.) Does, then, Rev. xxi. 1, 3 imply that the tabernacle of God comes down to the earth in the eternal state?—"The tabernacle of God is with men." The "men" are evidently inhabitants of the earth transferred from the "first earth" to the "new earth," at the close of the millennium; that is, at the close of time; and "the tabernacle of God" is the heavenly saints. Is it then the

teaching of Scripture that the saints who go to heaven are to be brought back to earth as their final and eternal abode? The heavenly Jerusalem seems to come down from heaven at the beginning of the Millennium (xxi. 10), and again at the establishment of the new heaven and new earth; and in neither case it is said to come to the earth. It clearly does not in the millennial state; for day and night continue on earth. "While the earth remaineth . . . day and night shall not cease" (Gen. viii. 22); and a temple exists (Ezekiel); whereas in the New Jerusalem there is no night and no temple during this same period (xxi. 22-25), though kings and nations exist on earth, and there is need of healing of the nations (xxii. 2). That is, the heavenly Jerusalem comes close to the earth, but is clearly, by its condition, distinct from the earth in this millennial period. Christians (for example) who are on earth now, during the Lord's rejection, will reign with Him in heavenly glory then; while Israel, restored at last to "the country their fathers possessed (Jere. xxx.), and the Gentiles blessed with them (Gen. xii. 3), will walk in the light of this heavenly city—this "glory of God." Thus far there is a clear distinction between the heavenly and the earthly state; but in xxi. 1-3, describing the eternal state, what are we to understand by "the tabernacle of God is *with men*"? Do you understand it to imply (as W. K. does) that the city comes to the earth? and, if so, is the new earth the final abode of the heavenly saints? Then, of course, arises the question, Is not this a contradiction of the teaching throughout the New Testament elsewhere? Such as, "the hope that is laid up for you in heaven" (Col. i.); "to an inheritance . . . that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. i. 4); "great is your reward in heaven." (Matt. v. 12.) If the tabernacle of God comes to the earth, will God make the earth His dwelling-place? What distinct doctrine is taught or held among us as to this subject, "Heaven is our home?" Is it heaven, or earth?

ANS.—In addition to the Scriptures given in the question, proving that we are eternally a heavenly, not an earthly people, we might call attention to the following: "In My Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." (John xiv. 2, 3.) "Our citizenship is in heaven." (Phil. iii. 20.) "The hope laid up for you in heaven." (Col. i. 5.) "And so shall we ever be with the Lord." All these and other scriptures teach where our eternal home is. It is in heaven, where Christ is, where the Father is.

Regarding the expression, "The tabernacle of God is with men," it does not necessarily imply that it was *upon* earth, simply in close association with it. And His dwelling with them would imply the same—the close and divine intimacy then only possible. The Scriptures given compel this view—they do not obliterate the eternal distinction between heaven and earth, but emphasize it. The Church and the heavenly saints will be forever distinct from Israel and the nations who are eternally blessed upon the earth.

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

CHAPTER V.

(Continued from page 160.)

THE Lord now takes up the necessary principle of law, to contrast it with that non-resistance of evil which He enjoins upon His disciples. The righteousness of the law, of course, remains righteousness, but it does not require of any that they should exact for personal wrongs. There is no supposition, on the other hand, of the abrogation of law or of its penalties. The government of the world is not in question, but the path of disciples in it. Where they are bound by the law, they are bound, and have no privileges; they are bound, too, to sustain it in its general working, as ordained of God, for good. Within these limits there is still abundant room for such practice as is here enjoined. We may turn the left cheek to him that smites the left, or let the man that sues us have the cloak, as well as the coat he has fraudulently gained: for that is clearly within our rights. If the cause were that of another, we should have no rights of this kind, nor to aid men generally in escape from justice, or in slighting it. The Lord could never lay down a general rule that His people should allow lawlessness or identify themselves with indifference to the rights of others. He speaks only of what is personal to one's self,—“smite *thee*,” “sue *thee*,” “compel *thee*,” and here the law itself would recognize your liberty.

His disciples are not only to yield, but to show readiness, at least, to do more. They are not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome it with good. They are under a higher than any earthly govern-

ment, which will take abundant care of them, and are free from advocating their own cause or taking arms in their own defense. And they are partakers of such royal bounty that they are to be themselves bountiful. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away."

All this needs wisdom in following out, that it may answer to its end:—that God may be honored in it, and men be blessed. It must not be allowed to degenerate into a moral laxity which may counterfeit it, but thus be its opposite. True love alone will find here the way, but will certainly find it,—clear-sighted, as all true love is. To this, therefore, the Lord now goes on.

Men understand, at least, that they ought to love their neighbor; but their qualifications narrow even their idea of such a duty, while they have *invented* a duty of hate which no law-giver, perhaps, would dare inscribe upon his tables, but to which, nevertheless, there is given a too ready and practical obedience. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy" is what he would justify to his conscience, as he approves it in his heart. But the law has no other word but "neighbor" here, and no other duty but to love him: and the Lord specifically puts even one's enemies into this class. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies:" not even, "do them good" merely, though that might seem much, but *love* them. Hard work, indeed, and impossible, save in the light of a greater love: for every day that the sun shines, or the rain falls upon this evil world, which has turned away from God, such love is demonstrated, leading men to repentance. *God* blesses those who curse Him, does good to those who hate Him,—sets us the sweetest and most wonderful example of infinite compassion, which He who was Speaker here

has filled out to the full by taking His place among those despitefully used and persecuted, and pouring out not only His heart, but His heart's blood for His persecutors. Thus that which might seem impossible even with God, is in God become Man made actual.

When the Lord spoke, this last word had not yet been uttered; but He was there who was to utter it, the Son of the Father, and opening to men the way into divine relationship, which He encourages His disciples to apprehend and realize in a way unknown till now. "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven," implies acceptance of this wondrous place in such a way as to let it be manifest, in the character displayed. And how responsible are they to whom such grace is given! To live in it is to acquire power for it.

They must not, then, with this high place, accept the moral code that would suit even those typical sinners the publicans—those instruments of Roman greed and oppression. For these even were capable of returning love for love. For those whose Father is in heaven, nothing but perfection can be permitted as the standard,—His own moral perfection. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," is supreme, flawless perfection. And nothing else would do as a standard. The moment we admit evil into this, that evil has become part of the standard, and God is made to go with the thing He hates.

We must, however, distinguish between the having perfection *before* us,—condemning ourselves for whatever is not that, and honestly pressing after it,—and the self-flattery that can assert, "we have attained." It is in fact because perfection is before us, that we cannot say so. Will any one indeed venture to say he is morally perfect *as God is*? The highest

pretensions must surely shrink a little from making such a claim. Yet here is the pattern: we are to be "imitators of God, as dear children" (Eph. v. 1, *Gk.*), aspiring after that which will always be beyond us, and which, as being so, will always work in us self-abasement and humiliation, instead of self-complacency.

This, then, is to be the aim; and, while it is owned that we fall short, let us remember that the very falling short implies an aim: if we do not *aim*, we cannot fall short; if we only aim at something lower, *the standard is given up*; we are then doing our own wills, and not God's.

Let us remember also that there are two kinds of perfection, which it is important to distinguish from one another: perfection in *degree*, something that cannot be exceeded; and perfection, as wholeness, entireness. We say of a wheel, it is *perfect*, because it has all its parts, while, as to its workmanship, it may be very imperfect. Now the child of God may be feeble, and *is*; but as a partaker of eternal life, he should not be *maimed*. In God, love and light belong together: no one of these, apart from the other, could represent His nature. Love without righteousness would not be divine love. Righteousness without love would not be divine righteousness. So love, too, just to those who love us, may (as the Lord tells us) be a publican's love, not God's: it is not a feeble likeness, but a distortion, a misrepresentation. Where the new nature is, there the moral character of God is found,—infantile, perhaps, as to development, and yet in it the Father's image shines. "Love," then, "your enemies," says the Lord, "that ye may *be* the children of your Father which is in heaven."

This closes the second part of the sermon on the mount with the seal of divine perfection. The greater prophet than Moses speaks in it, with a brighter glory in His face than Moses's face could show.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?”

(Matt. xxii., 41, 42.)

A QUESTION asked by the Lord Jesus Himself, when on the earth, and within the hearing of many classes of people,—Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, disciples, and also the multitudes. What a throng surrounded Him that day, and how different the thoughts of each, and how perplexing this question must have been to most of them; and by it the thoughts of many hearts were revealed. A question never needed more than in this our day,—a question for all times, all classes, and all places; and, dear reader, I put it before you, whether a professing Christian or not, saint or sinner, “What think ye of Christ?” Strange and startling thoughts and statements are afloat, and have been for some time, concerning the peerless person of God’s beloved Son—Jesus, the Lord.

It is of all importance that each should have correct and right thoughts about Him, of whom it is written, “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father [Father of Eternity, Heb.], The Prince of Peace,” (Isaiah ix. 6), and “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,” (Micah v. 2,—margin, “the days of eternity.”) Let us, then, trace out, if but imperfectly, in the fear of God and with a holy reverence, some of the beauties and glories that are His, remembering as to His greatness “no man knoweth the Son but the Father.” (Matt. xi, 27.)

Of His greatness in Creation, a careful reading of Prov. viii., 22–31, John i., 1–18, Col. i., 12–19, Heb. i., will leave no doubt in the believer’s mind, that He

was with the Father in Eternity, and that it was He by whom all things were created. Creation, then, is presented as the work of His hands, and by Him all things subsist; not only this world in which we live, but all those mighty orbs in their immensity are upheld, sustained, and cared for by Him. Well we might as we read, trace out, or even think, of His person, work, ways, or word, fall down before Him as holy men of old, and exclaim, "We are unworthy to unloose the lachet of His shoes,"—a place assigned to the meanest slave. (Dan. x., Rev. i., John i., 27.) For soon the very earth created by Him and for Him will shine with His glory from pole to pole and from sea to sea. How careful should we be to curb every vain and unholy thought or word about One so great, so mighty in Himself and in all His ways, as Jesus Christ the Lord.

Let us now note a few of the precious foundation truths concerning His incarnation, and lowly life of love, grace, and compassion; and, as we do so, may it be with somewhat of the holy awe that would characterize the priest of old, as he entered the most holy place to take down the beautiful veil and cover the ark ere it commenced its wilderness journey. (Num. iv. 5, 6, 15; 17–20.) None but priests could witness such; none but they could do such work; none but they, sanctified and anointed, could tread the sacred inclosure; they only could see the separate parts, and what passed before their eyes were but the types; and shall we who have the antitypes, "the body which is of Christ," approach with less reverence the person and glories of the Lord Jesus? God forbid; for truly, "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified

in the spirit,” &c. (1 Tim. iii., 16.) Yet it was blessedly true, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself,” (2 Cor. v., 16,) and is yet true, “In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col. ii., 9.)

The angel announced to Mary not only the manner of His conception, but also the character of His humanity. “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee.” (Luke i., 35.) And to Joseph he adds, “that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.” (Matt. i., 20.) In these two passages we get clearly set forth the manner of His conception; and in this, Mary, of all women, appears alone, and a contrast. Of none other was this ever said,—neither Eve, nor yet of Eve’s many daughters. And in this our Blessed Lord appears alone. Of none other born of woman could such language be used. Even a John, although filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb, yet his conception was after the order of nature,—Elizabeth his mother, Zacharias his father. Not so Jesus. Mary was truly His mother, according to the flesh. He was “the seed of the woman,” yet not the seed of man. The Holy Ghost came upon her, and that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost. How important, then, is clearness on such a wondrous truth,—a truth which lies at the very foundation of our most holy faith.

Now we will look more closely at the character of His humanity; and, as before said,—and we do well to emphasize the fact,—that, as to the humanity of the Lord Jesus, He stands alone. The angel continues, by saying, “and that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Of

no other was it ever said, "that holy thing." Adam was created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. i. 26),—sinless, innocent, also upright (Eccl. vii. 29); yet it was never said of him, "that holy thing." Nay, this was reserved for Another,—even Adam's Lord.

Since the fall, of none can it be said, as to their humanity, that it was even as Adam's was, sinless, innocent. Humanity, in all born of woman after the course of nature, is sinful humanity,—and a perfect contrast to what Adam's was originally. Sinfulness is now inherent in all, as set forth by the psalmist, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. li. 5.) It only requires time in each case to make it manifest. The tree bears fruit after its kind. But when we turn to the Lord Jesus we learn that His humanity was of another character altogether,—not, as now, humanity sinful, nor yet that of Adam before the fall,—humanity innocent only, but humanity of a new and higher character, "that holy thing." And when we speak of His humanity, let it be understood this includes His very body of flesh and blood, not simply as we who are born again derive a new life, a new nature, but His very body, "that holy thing." True, "in all things He was made like unto His brethren," "was made in the likeness of sinful flesh," "and tempted in all things like unto us," yet it must be remembered, and with a holy care, it was only like or likeness, and in this "sin apart." Apart from all such thoughts as sin being in His nature, or even the thought of His nature being susceptible to such by trial or temptation, how careful the Holy Spirit is in the word of truth in guarding the sacredness of

His person, “tempted like as we,—sin apart.” (Heb. iv. 15, *Gk.*)

How blessed to view our Lord as such: truly man, yet, “sin apart;” true flesh and blood, yet, “sin apart;” true humanity, but “that holy thing.”

Next, let us never confound the character of the Lord’s humanity with new birth, true of all children of God, nor count them a parallel. It is true, when men are born again, they get a divine life and nature, yet their bodies remain the same, there being no change in this respect. For this change we await His return, when our bodies will be changed and suited for the new life given at new birth,—bodies of glory like unto His “body of glory.” (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) Yet this is all future for us, not true yet. Of Jesus only could it be said, as to His birth and His humanity, “that holy thing.” Hence the manner of His conception and the character of His humanity was not a parallel with the new birth; and these facts, so clear in sacred Scripture, we cannot emphasize too firmly. To confound the Lord’s humanity with Adam’s originally, or his race fallen, or yet with new birth, is to miss the mark, to make a great mistake, and belittle the greatness and perfection of the blessed Lord. He will by and by have a people in the glory, redeemed and glorified in a humanity just like His own, and with Himself, far beyond what Adam’s was, even as His own is far beyond Adam’s, and new birth is the first step toward this glorious end, but only the first step.

He was, as to His humanity, the true “meat offering” of Lev. ii., made of fine flour (that holy thing) mingled with oil (conceived of the Holy Spirit),—no sin, but holy, harmless, and undefiled. This is our

Saviour and our Lord; and how the Holy Spirit ever delights in the pages of Holy Writ to unfold the fullness and greatness of the person and glory of Jesus, God's beloved Son, "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence," and "that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father."

Let us now note, for a space, that period of His life on earth from His birth until about the age of thirty. It would seem the shepherds were the first to visit the babe, as instructed by the angel of the Lord; and after they found Him, as they were told, "wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger," they returned, glorifying and praising God for all that they had seen and heard. Truly blessed were the eyes that saw what they saw, and the ears that heard what they heard. This appears to be on the first day.

It was at an after period that the wise men from the East (Gentiles) who had seen His star, came that journey; and when they came they found Him in the house, with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped Him, and presented unto Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Again, when but eight days old, He was circumcised, according to the law, and received His name "Jesus," as was told Joseph.

Then, if Lev. xii. 2, is carefully read with Luke ii. 22-39, we learn thirty-three days after His circumcision, (making forty in all from His birth,) "when the days of the purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him before the Lord, and a sacrifice was offered." At this time, Simeon, a just and devout man, guided by the Holy Spirit, came to the temple, and taking the child in his arms, said, "Lord, now

lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

Anna, also a prophetess of a great age, coming in at that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

When He is twelve years old they go up to Jerusalem again, at the feast of the passover. At this time, when in the temple, He astonished the doctors there, by “His understanding and answers,” all perfect in its place. He says to Mary, “Wist ye not I must be about my Father’s business?” Yet we are told He went down with His parents to Nazareth, and was subject to them, and increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

One verse in Mark vi. 3 would lead us to believe He worked with Joseph (His reputed father) as carpenter; and no more do we know of this eighteen years of His life until He is baptized by John. Little is recorded in the first twelve, and less as to the after eighteen, except what we may gather from Lev. vi. 19-23, which we believe furnishes us with a beautiful type of what that period was. It is the exceptional meat-offering of the Jewish ritual, and offered only upon the day the High Priest was anointed. In Lev. ii. we get instruction with regard to the regular and continual meat-offerings, mingled with oil and anointed with oil, which set forth the whole human life of the blessed Lord while upon earth, as conceived of the Holy Spirit and anointed at the banks of Jordan, His whole life from the manger on to the cross.

This meat-offering furnished food first for God, then for the priest. God the Father found in that perfect life what gave Him joy and pleasure. Yea,

every step of it was what glorified God. (John viii. 29; xvii. 4.) We also (as priests) find in that perfect life, as recorded in the word of God, what is as meat and drink, which give the heart joy and gladness, especially that period from His anointing on to the cross, described more fully for us. But this exceptional meat-offering of Lev. vi. gives us more what that period of His human life was during His first thirty years from His birth on earth until His showing to Israel as the Anointed. This exceptional offering, if noted with care, was made with oil (not anointed); hence very clearly sets forth His life ere His anointing.

The priests did eat of the regular meat-offerings of Lev. ii., but of this exceptional offering of Lev. vi. they ate none. This was all for Jehovah,—all was put upon the altar. "This is the offering of Aaron and his sons, which they shall offer unto the Lord in the day he is anointed: the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meat-offering perpetual; half of it in the morning and half in the evening, In a pan it shall be made with oil. And when it is baken, thou shalt bring it in, and the baken pieces of the meat-offering shalt thou offer for a sweet savor unto the Lord. And the priest of his sons that is anointed in his stead shall offer it: it is a statute forever unto the Lord: it shall be wholly burnt, for every meat-offering for the priest shall be wholly burnt: it shall not be eaten." (Lev. vi. 20–23.) All, all was put upon the altar, and the holy fire consumed all; "it was wholly burnt," and every part of it "a sweet savor to the Lord," or a savor of delight to Jehovah. And let us again note, this was upon the very day the high priest was anointed; and this day represents the very

day the Lord Jesus was anointed by the Holy Ghost; anointed as prophet (1 Kings xix. 16), as priest (Lev. viii. 1-12), and before the sacrifice was offered up; and as King also (1 Sam. xvi. 12, 13). His life-work was more as prophet. When rejected by His people, we believe His first priestly work was at the cross, “to offer up Himself.” (Heb. vii. 26, 27.) This work being completed at the cross, He has now gone into the sanctuary with all the value of His atoning work, and abides there a priest until He appears again to Israel, to introduce the Millennium, when they shall behold Him not only as Priest but King and Priest. (Zech. vi. 13.) But at Jordan, when owned by God the Father and anointed by the Holy Ghost, He was at that time both Prophet, Priest, and King. Hence this anointing of the Lord Jesus answers to the type of Lev. vi., when as High Priest He was anointed; and how suitable that at this time such a meat-offering should be offered. At that time it was said that the whole offering was a savor of delight, “a sweet savor” to Jehovah; as in Matt. iii., “my beloved Son, in whom I have found all my delight.” (*Gk.*)

Now we can understand, as we look back, why very little is given unto us,—comparatively nothing—of those thirty years before He was anointed. He (blessed be His name!) was ever “that holy thing,”—proper material, as Lev. vi., for the holy fire to feed upon. This holy fire was burning during the whole thirty years, from its morning to its evening, as Lev. vi.,—not the fire of God’s wrath and hot displeasure, as some have strangely said, but the fire, emblem of God’s holiness,—ever feeding upon a perfect object of delight; in all this Jesus appears alone. Adam’s life was not this, nor yet any of Adam’s race.

Of Jesus, and Jesus alone, could Lev. vi. be true. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight" (*Gk.*), as in Lev. vi. "A savor of delight to Jehovah." (*Heb.*) Every moment of this period of thirty years was this, for God the Father. Bethlehem's manger, for a brief space, held that "savor of delight." The shepherds, and also the wise men, beheld this One—"the savor of delight." Simeon held such in his arms and gave thanks, and Anna spake of Him to all who looked for redemption in Israel. Egypt never had before nor since such an offering in her land. (Matt. ii. 14.) Scribes and Pharisees, when He was but twelve years of age, beheld Him the true meat-offering in the temple, the true answer to the Lev. vi. meat-offering. And when He went down to Nazareth, and was subject to His parents, and worked as a carpenter, until the age of thirty, every moment, at every step, in every place, His whole life was for God His Father, an object of supreme delight. As we look back and think of such, we can but worship and adore. Strange that any should ever, with the few brief notices of this period in the gospels, have thought otherwise. We need to curb our thoughts and control our pen as we write of One whose glories shine so prominently from beginning to end in the pages of the Holy Scriptures.

(*To be continued.*)

A. E. B.

"How many of the people of God have lives as little yielded up to Him, who must be governed by circumstances (bit and bridle) rather than by the eye of God! His desire for us is not the drudgery of a stopped will, but the freedom of a changed one."—*Numerical Bible, Notes on Psalm 32.*

WATERS TO SWIM IN.

Ezekiel xlvii. 1-5.

ISRAEL has been, prophetically, restored to their land; the shechina-glory, which had in the beginning of the book, left the holy places, has returned and taken up its abode in the new temple. The priesthood has been re-established, and intrusted with service and sacrifice, no longer anticipative, but memorial; and now from out the sanctuary issue living waters, which carry healing and fertility and life wherever they go.

Beautifully symbolic of the life-giving, healing ministry of the Holy Ghost, during the millennial age, are these flowing waters! symbolic, too, they are of the life and joy of the heavenly city, which, too, has its river, its tree of life, its varied fruits, and health-giving leaves, of which these in Ezekiel are the earthly shadow.

Our purpose, however, at present is not to dwell on the earthly or heavenly scene from a dispensational point of view, but rather to gather, in a very simple way, a few thoughts of God's grace, and the practical lessons they bring to us.

Refreshment always flows from God's presence. Blessed be His name, whether it be in Eden, the garden of the Lord, or in the dry and weary wilderness, streams of water flow, and must flow, for the needs of His people. Sometimes He may test their faith, and make them dig for the cooling stream, as with Abraham, or the elders at the end of the wilderness journey. Sometimes He may test their patience, and let them thirst awhile, and then cause the flinty rock to yield life and refreshment, but we

repeat it, refreshing flows from God, and from Him only. It is both His people's loss and their shame, when they forsake Him, the fountain of living waters, to hew out for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Dear brethren, do we always drink from this fountain? or are we ever weary of its sweet, refreshing flow?

“And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; and the waters were to the ankles.” Our faces are turned eastward, toward the sunrising, toward the coming day; and as we journey on toward God's day, we find His streams. This may well signify to us the refreshment of the spirit of God, ministering to us of His fullness, through the Word.

“Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; and the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through: the waters were to the loins.” The blessedness we knew when we first found the Lord is ever fresh; a charm, a joy, linger around that holy springtime of love that is well marked by the Spirit of God, to recall us, should we forget it.

But are first impressions the deepest, no matter how real? Nay, as we pass on through life, and the love of God becomes more fully known, the waters of that river deepen. The precious stream rises from ankles to knees, from knees to loins, until we can no longer sound its depths, they are “waters to swim in”—a mighty flood of love that can neither be fathomed nor crossed. Beloved brethren, what a picture of the love of God!

Does not our own poor experience bear this out? As we have gone on to prove the love of God, in many a time of trial, of weakness and of failure, have we not found our thought of Him deepen? The stream over which we, perhaps, walked as a thing quite within our comprehension—including forgiveness, justification, and peace—the stream deepens, and we find these truths have a meaning we had not before grasped, and fresh truths are added, so that we cannot so easily pass over. Day by day, as we go on, learning from His word and from His ways, we find ourselves beyond our depth, we are “lost in wonder, love, and praise.”

Surely this is a true and legitimate experience. Is not this God’s purpose for us? See how the apostle loses himself in this on-flowing stream?—“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 all the fullness of God” (Eph. iii. 17–19). Here are “waters to swim in,” which baffle all our efforts to sound or cross them.

Do any say this is too much for *me*, it is beyond *me*? It is the apostle’s prayer for *all saints*. Does it seem too great to be accomplished? hear how he mingles encouragement with glad doxology,—“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

It is ours then, dear brethren, to enjoy this fullness; and if we do not, where does the fault lie?

May our longing increase!—a longing that will not be satisfied save with the fullness of our God—“waters to swim in.”

DWELLING IN THE SECRET PLACE.

Psalm xci. 1-4.

FEARING God, we learn His secret—
 Dwelling in the secret place,
 There we lodge with Him, the lofty—
 Shadow'd by Almighty grace.

As the hen her chickens covers—
 With her feathers soft and warm,
 Spreads her wings for them to nestle,
 Free from fear and free from harm—

So God covers with His feathers
 Those who trust beneath His wing;
 And His truth, a shield and buckler,
 Makes their hearts with gladness sing.

Give me, then, to learn God's secret,
 Dwelling in the secret place—
 There to lodge with Him, the lofty—
 Praising His almighty grace!

A. J. R.

“THE sanctuary is our safe retreat at all times: it is the place where the world takes its true shape for us, where the entanglement with it is loosed, the darkness and mists disappear, sin is rebuked and banished, the holiness of truth is found. The peace of that serene Presence incloses us as with the glory of an eternal summer, unvexed by even the threatening of a storm. Here the head is lifted up over all enemies therefore, and the sacrifice of praise becomes the necessary relief of a full and grateful heart.”—*Numerical Bible, Notes on Psalm 27.*

HOW TO KNOW GRACE TRULY.

HOW difficult it is to learn our utter worthlessness, and thus the preciousness of divine grace! and yet to know one's self and grace is the only way to arrive at true, full, lasting peace. Learning what poor self is, in the presence of a just and holy God, is learning the preciousness of grace, and of Him by whom grace came. It was when Job said, "Now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," that he, doubtless for the first time, felt fully cast upon grace, and brought to taste its sweetness; and yet he was really on better ground than he was before, though he did feel himself to be "vile."

It was when Isaiah had "seen the King, the Lord of hosts," and had said, "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips," that he fully realized the value of that by which his iniquity was put away and his sin purged: for his heart was light, and he was ready to do any thing for God, saying, "Here am I: send me."

The presence of a holy God is the place in which to get to the full end of *self*; and we never know the full meaning and preciousness of grace till we get *there*. We may hold grace *doctrinally*, and may be able to give a very exact definition of the word "grace;" but we do not really know it, or fully taste its sweetness, till we know ourselves, by seeing ourselves as in the very presence of Him who is Light, and by entering into the meaning of the cross. Then, oh, then, how suitable grace is felt to be! So we may say of Christ, whom grace has provided for us; as long as we are occupied with *self*, having partial

views of our ruin, or feel that we have a leg to stand on, we cannot be fully cast on Christ, or see His preciousness. If so, then the sooner all, even *saints*, take their true place, the better, that is, as to self. But then saints have a blessed place before God, that is in Christ, He being their standing; and of this view of themselves they cannot have too exalted a conception, for that is simply exalting Christ. The apostle writes, that of "a man in Christ" he could glory, referring to his own standing in Him, "yet," he adds, "of myself I will not glory; but in mine infirmities;" saying, further on, "that the power of Christ may rest upon me." In this way when he was "weak" he was "strong."

Thus our place as believers is a *low* one and a *high* one,—low as to self, and high as to Christ. And the one who truly realizes these two places will not live to *himself*, but to *Him* who died for him and rose again.

Oh, what a relief to have self gone as worthless, and how blessed to have grace and the Gift of grace, filling the whole mind and heart and life and hopes!

R. H.

LOVING GOD'S WAY.

IT is blessed indeed to be learning more of God each day of our lives. With all earthly knowledge and enjoyment there is a consciousness of want, a sense of weariness and unrest. But when we are having to do with God, when we are learning His love and grace, learning that God is for us, then we find real joy and true peace and rest of soul. Then we are truly at rest, and it is by the truth that

we are thus set free from rest and doubt, fear and uncertainty. The more a Christian learns of God's way, the more he comes to love it. Before he knows what a blessed way it is, he shrinks from it often, because it is many times a way hedged up, apparently, with difficulties,—a way hard for the flesh to walk in, and a way of trial. But God deals with us so as to reveal His love, strengthen our faith, and lead us on to greater trust in Himself and His word. We should desire this knowledge of God, and of His way. It is not gained by doing or suffering some great thing: we learn of God and His way just where He has placed us, and in our daily work, our joys, our cares, and our responsibilities. We should always remember that God can come to us and make Himself known to us wherever we are. We may be shut up, be alone, or be in a place where the rush and hurry of the world are all about us. In any place we must come to know that we cannot keep ourselves or learn anything of ourselves. We must learn our own helplessness, and that God can keep and teach His people in any place where He has put them. And if we are not sure whether we are where He has placed us, we are to go to Him for wisdom, and to be shown His way.

Is it not very sad for a child of God to be living on, year after year, and gaining little or almost nothing in the knowledge of God and love of His way? How little Jacob learned about God in the twenty years that he was with Laban! On the other hand, Abraham's daily life was a walk with God, a continual learning more and more of God. God was watching over Jacob all those years (Gen. xxviii. 15), but how little he learned of God's care! He acknowl-

edged it, and realized it in a measure (Gen. xxxi. 5, 7, 9, 42), but his desire was not to know and enjoy God, but to have God give him flocks and herds. God Himself was Abraham's portion. God Himself satisfied the heart of Abraham. And when you turn over to Paul, you find a man who loved God's way above all else. You never find Paul settling down; he was pressing on. We cannot, and need not, be Pauls or Abrahams, but we can so yield to God and trust in Him that we shall be learning more of Him each day. We can so know Him that things which once troubled us greatly we can leave with Him, and each care and burden we can cast on Him. We can come to love His way, and delight in it, no matter how hard it may be for the flesh. We can cling to Him, rest in Him, submit to Him. We can see His hand all the time, can praise Him for His mercies, can ask and receive wisdom day by day and hour by hour. We can live either in abundance or in want, and rejoice in Him.

We ought to so yield ourselves to God, and trust in Him, that He will be more and more to us. What is the getting of money, for which men toil and strive, when compared with growing in the knowledge of God and in the love of His way? But if we cling to our own way and seek to do our own wills, if we are careless and slothful, if we love the world and neglect God's word, we shall not know the peace and joy of loving God's way. Chastening may be our portion; God may in mercy afflict us to bring us to Himself; He may remove some cherished object on which our hearts were set, but He will in all show His infinite love.

J. W. N.

“PORTERS IN THE LORD'S HOUSE.”

(Correspondence.)

NEW YORK, June 8, 1895.

To the Editor of “*Help and Food*”:—

DEAR BROTHER:—Referring to your article in the last number, I would ask your permission to add one or two remarks.

In the first place, I doubt if the “overseership” of the New Testament is exactly equivalent to the position of “doorkeeper” in the Old. The former seems to me always to have its sphere *inside the assembly*, which is not the case in the latter. “Take heed unto the flock of God, over whom the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, *to feed the Church of God*,” is quite a different character of service to that of doorkeeper. The “pastor” is not the “porter”; the two ideas conveyed by the words are quite different. But I would ask particularly your attention to an omission in your paper that seems to me somewhat serious. The overseers or bishops were intended to act alone in the local assembly with which they were connected. There was no universal overseership except in the Chief Shepherd. The very need of the work necessitated the one and precluded the other. They were to be men so well known in their own homes, having their own families in subjection, that their words, their rulings, in conjunction with the written Word, were received with the willing subjection of respect and affection that their *well known* lives commanded. This would not be expected if they went to other cities. On the other hand, they would thus be intimately acquainted with the little flock by which they were closely surrounded, also in a way that would be quite impossible in a wider sphere. They would know the particular dangers to which each one was exposed, the particular care therefore that each dear sheep needed. They would enter into every sorrow with the sympathy of trusted friends. Their words of counsel or faithful rebuke would naturally

come with all the weight of a confidence founded on long and close personal intimacy, which would be, from the very order of things, impossible in other localities where such intimacies could not be maintained. The blessed word shows how fully this order was carried out. Every gathering had its own bishops; nor is it anywhere suggested, that I am aware of, that they were to assume a similar position of overseership in any other locality than their own. The overlooking this important consideration has been fruitful of much mischief, as might naturally be expected.

The evangelist's work necessarily and properly takes in a wide circle. The more he goes to the "regions beyond" and preaches Christ where His name has not been mentioned, perhaps the better; his message speaks for itself. That message is from God, irrespective of the messenger; hence he is, in this way, the "*antipodes*" in his service to the pastor or overseer, who must, to carry on his service, *stay at home*. Perhaps the overlooking this, as does your article, may in some measure account for the state of things that article deprecates.

I am, my dear brother,

Affectionately yours in Christ,

F. C. J.

The object of the paper in question was to call attention to what the writer has long felt to be a grievous lack among saints gathered to the Lord's name. He willingly therefore gives place for the discussion of a subject so little regarded as this is. In the main the letter of our brother does not differ from what had been presented in the paper. We think a fresh perusal of that, however, will show that the writer was not contending for universal bishops in any sense, but seeking rather to awaken conscience on the *whole subject* of oversight in the Church of God—a matter, we feel pained to repeat, too much overlooked and possibly despised in this democratic age.

We sought in that paper to press upon our brethren the great need there was for oversight, and the fact that it was a gift especially intrusted to *some* of the Lord’s servants. That it is largely a local gift, we would not hesitate to agree, though we would remind our brother that eldership and pastorship are not exactly identical. The elder was a local officer during apostolic times; the pastor is a gift for the whole Church, and for all time (Eph. iv. 11-13). Thus while we would admit that the gift of pastor was more likely to be confined to the limits of the local assembly than that of the evangelist, we would hesitate to say that Scripture absolutely restricts its exercise to the place where he may be personally well known. A letter of commendation would open the door for the brother in gatherings where he was unknown by face, and the character of his ministry would soon manifest itself. We believe that very often gatherings have been much refreshed by the visit of a pastor who has gone amongst the saints, comforting, cheering, or warning, as need may be.

With regard to the distinction between the “porter” of the Old Testament and the “overseer” of the New, we think it no greater than we would expect from the difference of dispensations. The porter was not merely to discover if strangers drew nigh, but if the true people of God were clean. So now with the caretaker in the Church. But we judge this will hardly be questioned.

It only remains to note the qualifications for oversight, as mentioned in the paper. We can only emphasize their importance. We heartily agree with our brother that a knowledge on the part of the saints of a brother’s faithfulness at home would greatly enhance their appreciation of his service in the Church. How could they respect one whose lawless household showed laxity and inconsistency?

But we would shrink from applying this in such a way as to debar the pastor from exercising his gift anywhere. In the first place, his commendation opens the door for whatever service the Lord may give him ; and secondly, we rejoice to record that love "believeth all things," and a brother is not suspected but gladly welcomed by godly saints. However, the same qualifications are needed, and their lack would soon be manifest.

We would then, in conclusion, commend this whole subject of pastoral care, oversight, and reception, to our brethren. We trust our brother's letter will awaken further inquiry and interest. We believe that local oversight is too much lacking ; nor do we believe that this is largely due to the too great prominence given to visiting brethren. Faith gladly recognizes a gift, no matter by whom exercised, and these gifts never clash. Let the saints in each local gathering awake to prayer that God may develop the gifts of oversight among them, and they will never resent the pastoral ministry of a brother whom the Lord may send to serve them.

The important facts of the one body of Christ and of the unity of the Spirit necessitate the view we have presented.

EDITOR.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUESTION 10.—Please explain John i. 45-51, especially 48-50. It is evidently Nathanael's first acquaintance with Jesus. But why should it be considered a great thing for Jesus to see a man under a fig-tree ?

ANS.—The miracle was, that when Nathanael was *hidden* from human sight, the Lord saw him. This at once showed Nathanael that Jesus was the Son of God. It answers literally to the scene with the woman of Samaria. The Lord discerned her spiritual condition, as he did Nathanael's actual position, and by the same divine omniscience. Hence her word, "Come, see a man that told me all that ever I did: is not this the Christ ?"

QUES. 11.—Please give some thoughts on Luke ix. 57 to end.

ANS.—We do not have in this scripture the way of salvation, but that of discipleship. Of course, new birth, access to God, the sweet constraint of the love of Christ, must underlie all true discipleship. If they are not present, sooner or later, the one lacking them will turn aside. Hence our Lord tests those who would offer themselves for His service. They must expect to endure hardness, if they would follow One who had not where to lay His head. Ties of nature, no matter how strong and tender—even to burying a father—could not stand between the servant and his work. Note, it is when these right and good things are *put between* the servant and his Lord, when Christ is displaced, that they become a hindrance. It is similar to the passage where our Lord speaks of hating one's father and mother. When it is a question of loyalty to Christ nothing can be thought of as taking precedence of it,—not even the farewell to dear ones. But, we repeat, only the soul that knows grace can truly carry out the spirit of these teachings.

QUES. 12.—What were the divisions of Reuben, Judges v. 15, 16, and what is the spiritual truth underlying that scripture.

ANS.—The divisions of Reuben may refer to the divided sentiment prevailing in the tribe as a whole, or even in the individual. The lesson in either case is evident. A divided heart is ever a source of utter weakness. There may be great “resolves” and great “deliberations” (see Numerical Bible), but they go no further. It is significant that Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob, is thus characterized. Mere creature strength can never be whole hearted for God, and a divided heart means a weak walk. Well may we pray with the psalmist, “*Unite my heart to fear Thy name.*” As in the answer to the preceding question, the heart must be controlled by grace, and grace alone if it is to do aught for Christ.

The same truth applies to companies of saints, or to the Church at large. Divisions not only bring dishonor on Christ, but weakness on ourselves.

QUES. 13.—“Why is the tribe of Dan left out in the sealing in Rev. vii.?”

ANS.—It could not mean that Dan will fail as one of the twelve tribes to inherit a place in the land when it is divided among

them at the opening of the Millennium. In Ezekiel xlviii. we have not only his portion given, but one of the gates of the city named after him.

It would seem that we have in this list of twelve tribes sealed, the fact of Israel as a *nation* presented (twelve being the national number, Num. xvii. 2, 1 King xviii. 31, Acts xxvi. 7) not merely for millennial blessing, but for a place of dignity and rule. When it is a question of blessing and inheritance, each tribe has its portion—"All Israel shall be saved;" but when special approval is to be marked, while national unity is preserved (two tribes given to Joseph), God would by the omission of Dan declare His judgment of those principles which had marked that tribe, both historically and prophetically.

Historically, Dan was noted for idolatry (Judges xviii. 30, 31, 1 Kings xii. 29, 30; Amos viii. 14), and idolatry of so grievous a character that it was apostasy.

Prophetically, "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." (Gen. xlix. 17.) This prophecy of Jacob foretells the apostasy and the deceit that will, in the last days, mark those who follow the antichrist, which awakens the longing cry of the faithful, "Oh, that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion." (Ps. xiv. 7.) "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." (Gen. xlix. 18.) These characteristics of idolatry and apostasy will doubtless be found throughout the whole nation, but as they have been localized in the tribe of Dan, God would mark His judgment of that sin by omitting that tribe from mention in a place of honor, just as the descendants of Zadok were marked out for the honor of priestly service in the Lord's house, when others of the priestly family were excluded for apostasy from that privilege, though inheritors of blessing. (Ezek. xlv. 9-16.)

QUES. 14.—Do the expressions, "Kingdom of Heaven" and "Kingdom of God" mean the same thing?

ANS.—The first is used in Matthew only, and in parallel passages in Luke we have "Kingdom of God." In such places they would seem to mean the same thing. But underlying them there is a real difference, which many scriptures bring out. "Kingdom of Heaven" is a dispensational title, the external kingdom of an absent king—in heaven—here upon earth. "Kingdom of God" includes the added, in some respects contrasted, thought, the internal kingdom of a Person. It is used, therefore, by the apostle as a synonym for "the things of God." (See Acts xx. 25; Rom. xiv. 17.)

“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?”

(Matt. xxii. 41, 42.)

(Continued from page 182.)

NEXT, we will look at His temptation,—being owned and baptized by John, owned and anointed with the Holy Spirit by God the Father. Now a new scene opens up to our view: He is driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. What a contrast to His thirty years of retirement! We learn from Gen. iii. of the trial of the first man, Adam. Now, in grace, our Lord, the second man, will subject Himself to the same test. Adam failed, disobeyed, sinned. Christ, by the test, demonstrated what He was—as ever, perfect and holy,—perfect in dependence, perfect in obedience. Yet the circumstances are a perfect contrast: Adam tried under the most favorable circumstances; Christ, under the most *unfavorable*; Adam, in a garden; Christ, in a wilderness; Adam, with the animals tame and harmless; Christ, with the wild beasts; Adam, with a partner; Christ, alone. But as He during this time passed through various temptations, the test only makes manifest that He was as the pure gold; hence the secret of His triumph here was, as ever, He was “that holy thing;” His humanity was of a new character compared with that of Adam, and hence the enemy was completely foiled, and so leaves him for a season. How could He, ever divine, ever perfect, ever holy, have swerved from the path of holiness? Such a thing was impossible; and one would belittle the majesty and glory of His sacred person even to suggest it possible for Him to fail, to disobey, to sin;

—as was said ere that life closed, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." (Jno. xiv. 30.) He ever was that in Himself, perfect and holy; and although tried as the first man, yet, it must be remembered, it was *in grace* He subjected Himself to such a test, to make manifest the infinite worth of His person. Hence, by those tests, so much more severe than Adam's, inasmuch as the circumstances were so much more unfavorable, we learn the true character of His humanity, the true nature of His person—"that holy thing;" and the language of old would be inadequate to express the feelings of any taught of God, "Thou art worth ten thousand of us." (2 Sam. xviii. 3.) In grace, He came from heaven; in grace, submits in all things to the law, moral and ceremonial;—even the ordinance of circumcision was not passed by, and the little turtle-doves, or pigeons, were not withheld. In grace, He goes down to Nazareth, and is subject to His parents; in grace, permits John to baptize Him, as the rest who came for baptism. Yet personally He needed none of these things—yea, circumcision, sacrifices, and even baptism, all found their true fulfillment in Him. In grace, He subjects Himself to this deep trial, a temptation for forty days by Satan; yet during this brief period, as also in the previous thirty years, He was always that savor of delight to Jehovah; and the severer the test, the hotter the fire, it only brought out the more the sweet fragrance of His pure and perfect life. As we trace His path step by step, we can but triumph in His triumphs; we worship and adore.

We follow Him as He returns from the wilderness, and glance at a few leading features of that blessed

path of His, during His public ministry, from the wilderness to its end. “And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee; and there went out a fame of Him through all the regions round about, and He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.” (Luke iv. 14.)

Now we get in truth the true “meat-offering” of Lev. ii., not only made with oil (conceived by the Holy Ghost), but also anointed with oil,—“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with Him” (Acts x. 38); and hence His whole life from this time was one marked, whether His words or works, to be in the power of the Spirit of God. He taught in grace; it was in grace He healed also: every step in His blessed path was for the glory of God and the good of men; and while, as to His humanity, there was much in real contrast to Adam, whether in His unfallen or fallen state, yet we can find much also in which, bless God, there was a parallel. Hence we need to try things which differ, but with a suited reverence and godly fear, lest we should tarnish His person and glory in the eyes of any. If we view Adam ere he fell, Gen. i. and ii. show us his humanity was so constructed by the Lord in creation as to require food (chap. i. 29; chap. ii. 16); and work would be part of that delightful service he would render to the Lord his Creator (chap. ii. 15)—not the toil and sufferings as announced after the fall, in chap. iii. 17–19;—and the result of such a service, such work, would be to enjoy the gracious provisions of goodness and love, food and drink; and quite natural to learn of sleep also in chap. ii., ere sin entered

to mar all. From chap. ii., then, it is clear there was work; meat and drink and sleep also: hence to all ought this not to be clear, these are not the result of the fall? Yet now many things accompany these—pain, sorrow, disease, and even death; and they themselves are intensified in many ways through sin. Yet we believe it is of all importance to understand that daily work, food, and sleep, are not the results of sin, but were there, and so required by human nature, before ever man became sinful and depraved. Now since the fall these continue with us; but sin having entered, much more follow, pain, sorrow, disease, and even death, “the wages of sin.” Now we learn that the Lord, when He entered a body prepared for Him, was truly a man, of flesh and blood as we, yet apart from sin being there; and need we be surprised to learn, when He was here, of Him at times being hungry, thirsty, wearied, and even asleep? Surely not. And with a holy reverence and godly care for the glory of His person, could we say these were the results of the Lord Jesus having an inferior humanity to that given to Adam in the beginning? Surely not; and to say so would be to degrade the person of the blessed Saviour, from which every true believer would recoil. This we maintain was part of His perfect humanity, and hence He having accommodated Himself to such, He is able to give sympathy and succor to His beloved people now (Heb. ii. 17, 18).

And during this part of His perfect life on earth, when, ministering among men, He beheld the condition into which sin had plunged the whole human race—the sorrow, disease, sickness, and even death—He, ever perfect, could feel for such, sympathize with

the creatures of His hands; but were those feelings, those groans, those tears of His, because His humanity was upon a par with man? Surely not. Neither was it because His humanity was as Adam's simply. Nay, it was of a different character, we have seen—“that holy thing”: divine power was there; and because of such, no taint of sin could ever enter to tarnish His blessed, spotless person. Not only was there power there, but love and sympathy, true and divine; and hence we read in Matt. viii. that one part of Isa. liii. was fulfilled—“Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.” On the cross he bare sins; but here in Matt. viii., it was what He bare and carried during His life ministry; His love, compassion, and sympathy, were so real, so perfect, that, as He beheld the infirm, the diseased, He felt so keenly for them that He suffered in sympathy as much as if it was His own (Himself ever free from such, no sickness, no disease, could enter His perfect humanity, inasmuch as there was no sin there). How such truths as these, revealed in the word of God, exalt the Lord of life and glory! He could feel for the sick, yet Himself never so; pity those a prey to the many forms of disease, Himself never subject to such; take by the hand her who was stricken with fever, and lift her up, the fever not only leaving her but He never affected by it (Mark i. 30-32); touch the leper, yet Himself never defiled by such (Mark i. 41).

No; there was nothing in His pure, spotless humanity that could respond to sin, to Satan; no sickness, no disease, nothing of the pain and sorrow that belongs to the human race, the effects of sin in their nature, and hence nothing to leave Him open to

death, "the wages of sin." Nothing in Him to make this a necessity, and to say or hint at such would be to take antichristian ground and degrade the person of the Lord Jesus.

In grace, we have said, He came down from heaven; in grace He entered a human body (mystery of mysteries)—He, the eternal One; in grace we have beheld Him in His life of lowly service among men. Now, the question is strangely asked, Why did He die? if death was not a necessity of His human nature? In grace, we readily answer. It was "the wages of sin," the penalty due to us. He was free to leave as He came (Ex. xxi. 2-6; Matt. xxvi. 53, 54;)—free to go back to the Father; but then it was to carry out those divine plans between Himself and the Father before the world was, to accomplish the Father's will, and to deliver us from the awful penalty of sin and death and judgment. Hence death for Him was not a necessity of His human nature, but for us substitutory. What love, what grace, are thus expressed in the cross of Calvary! and how we need, as we contemplate such an act, to cry out, "Teach me"! for here we are ever learners, and such a scene as Calvary will keep us pupils and also worshipers through that day of eternity. Yet to be taught we need to keep close to the very words of holy Scripture.

True it is, that man is held guilty in crucifying the Lord Jesus, and His death is charged against the people to whom He came in richest love (the Jews). This is the cross from one point of view. Yet John x. 11, 15, 17, 18, which gives the other side, needs to be carefully weighed; given by the pen of one especially inspired to set forth His greatness, His

majesty, the personal and divine glories of God's only begotten Son. “No man taketh my life from me,” His own words. And although true man, perfect man, yet “God manifest in the flesh.” How many are the crowns that will deck His brow! The sea obeys Him; the fish of the deep serve His call; the wild beasts are harmless in His presence (Mark i.); the dead rise at His word; sickness, disease, leprosy, and all, flee when He, the “mighty God, the everlasting Father”—[Father of Eternity, *Heb.*] so wills to deliver and bless the creatures of His love and care. Now, what shall we say of His death?—a work so marvelous, an act so great, when there upon the cross they break the legs of one thief, then the other; but, lo, when they came to Him, “they found Him dead already.” (John xix. 33.) Why was this? The true fulfillment of what the same penman records in chap. x.: “I lay it down of myself.” The cup of suffering and judgment was drunk by Him, the “Lamb of God,” the substitute, in grace provided for men, and now having borne the judgment, having finished the work “He gave up His life,” no man taking it from Him, and thus the full penalty is borne. Of whom else could such be said? there is but one answer which will be to His eternal praise: None. No, not one. Never was there before, and never shall there be again, a death of the same character as His,—a work truly divine.

In the manner of His conception, we have seen Mary stands alone; in the character of His humanity, He appears alone; in the perfection of His holy life, He also appears alone; and now, His death is a perfect contrast to all others, a willing surrender of Himself on our behalf, and to bear the full pen-

alty and remove every barrier. We see His Godhead glory burst out amid all the darkness of such an hour: "He gave up His life." As we look back and think of such a life of perfection and beauty, and gaze upon the scene of Calvary, we can but exclaim, Oh, what grace! what love!

We have noticed in this sketch only a little here and there from those parts so full and rich with precious food, the four Gospels; and even in them, while there is such a fullness, yet they themselves bear witness to the fact of how little they have given us compared to the great fullness God has given us in His beloved Son (Jno. xx. 30; xxi. 24, 25; Col. i. 19). But if what has been imperfectly noticed will enable any to understand and to give a better answer to the Lord's own question we started out with, we will rejoice, "What think ye of Christ?" He was truly David's Son; but this falls short of the full answer—He was also David's Lord; or, as given by the same writer from the lips of an ascended and glorified Saviour, "I Jesus . . . I am the root and the offspring of David;" and we will add further, for the joy of all (amid the darkness of this our day, or amid the darkness of this night, which is far spent) who love the Lord Jesus Christ, "I am the bright and morning star" (Rev. xxii. 16).

A. E. B.

REST.—There are three rests spoken of in Scripture. First, the rest which, as sinners, we find in the accomplished work of Christ. Then there is the present rest which, as saints, we find in being entirely subject to the will of God; this is opposed to restlessness. There is also the rest that remains for the people of God at the end of the race.

THE MENACE OF WORLDLINESS.

“LOVE not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” (1 John ii. 15-17.)

THERE are in New Testament scripture two principle words translated “world”—*κοσμος* (*kosmos*), the word used here and throughout John’s writings; and *αἰων* (*aion*), found chiefly in Matthew and Paul’s epistles. The root meanings of the two words are entirely different: *κοσμος* means order, beauty; hence we have the word “cosmetic,” that which beautifies; *αἰων* means age, or dispensation—*ἀει ὤν*, existing always, the course of existence.* It

* In Heb. i. 2; xi. 3, we have *αἰων* where we might expect *κοσμος*. The meaning would seem to be the existing universe; not merely the earth, but the heavens as well.

The word eternal is a derivative from the one we are considering, and means “age-lasting.” From this, deniers of eternal punishment have sought to teach that the word meant limited, and not unlimited, time. A glance at a few scriptures will show the impossibility of such a rendering. The same word rendered “eternal” damnation (Mark iii. 29), “eternal” judgment (Heb. vi. 2), “everlasting” fire (Matt. xviii. 8), “everlasting” punishment (Matt. xxv. 46), is applied to “eternal” life (John iii. 15, 16), “eternal” weight of glory (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18), a house “eternal” in the heavens (2 Cor. v. 1), “eternal” salvation (Heb. v. 9), “eternal” redemption (Heb. ix. 12), “eternal” inheritance (Heb. ix. 15). The king “eternal” (1 Tim. i. 17) is the “king of the ages.” So that if we deny the eternity of judgment and punishment, we must likewise deny the eternity of life, salvation, and redemption; of glory and our inheritance; yea, of the very being of God!

is applied chiefly to mark time and condition, while *κοσμος* gives us the material world, primarily. "Be not conformed to this age" (Rom. xii. 2),—to the course of things in which we live. It is the "age" of this world (Eph. ii. 2), where we have the two words significantly joined together; and Satan is alike the prince of this world, *κοσμος*, (John xiv. 30; xvi. 11,) and the god of this age, *αἰων* (2 Cor. iv. 4).

The earth as it came forth from the hands of God was indeed a *κοσμος*, a thing of beauty, upon which he could look in blessing, and pronounce it "very good." Like the material part of man, the flesh, it was a fitted place for his habitation, as that was a suited vehicle for his spirit. But like the flesh fallen, when sin had entered in, which acquired a new and almost technical meaning—the evil nature,—so it, too, has in very many places a moral meaning, as seen in the passage we are considering. The world as it came from God's hands, is one thing; that into which sin has entered, has become, alas, quite another.

And yet the world about us is still, though with scars which witness of sin, a thing of beauty. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea." . . . (Ps. civ. 24, 25). It was by a rehearsal of some of His works of creation (Job xxxviii. xli.) that God brought Job into the dust before Him; again and again have we the same witness in the Psalms; and when the Son came from the Father's bosom to declare the Father's Name, He culled many a flower of divine truth from the field of nature. Seeds, lilies, sparrows, were in His hands fitting illustrations of a Father's power, wisdom, and care.

It is not an encouraging sign—quite the reverse—to see Christians turn from the study of nature. “The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.” It all speaks of God, not merely giving proofs of His existence, His eternal power and godhead (Rom. i. 20), but furnishing also, in countless ways, an exhibition of His character as well. He whose “tender mercies [seen in the varied and bounteous provision for the needs of the least of His creatures] are over all His works,” is a God *tender* and merciful. He who has painted with tints of loveliness earth and sea and sky, must be Himself infinitely beautiful—“the King in His beauty.” The very variety and lavish superabundance of all things in nature but suggest, as in a shadow, the infinite fullness there is in God.

The doctrines of grace, as revealed in Scripture, are shadowed in nature, had we but eyes and hearts to see. Changing seasons, storms and sunshine, all speak of God, and are meant to show us His character, when we have the light of revelation to guide us.

We repeat, then, that a neglect of nature is not an encouraging sign in the child of God; it means, but too often, a neglect of God. We need not wonder, if Christians have neglected the works of God in nature, that Satan should take them up and use them in a way the opposite of what was intended. What wonder that atheism, theories of evolution, agnosticism, should find their root in the natural sciences, when Christians have left Satan to be the guide in the search after truth? All this may show the darkness of mere human wisdom, but it shows also the coldness of heart of the child of God. Under the guid-

ance of the Spirit of God, and in subjection to the word of God, let the Christian astronomer sweep the heavens with his telescope,—he will learn of the infinite God; let the Christian biologist, under the same guidance, search with his microscope into the most hidden recesses of nature, and he will find the same God. He will be seen in the analyses of chemistry, in the laws of physics. He fills all things, and His truth is everywhere one; it is a reflection of Him who has revealed Himself in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let Christians wrest the facts of nature from Satan and use them for Christ. Among the thousands who are yearly becoming familiar with the features of nature, are there not some who will show us not merely the “footprints of the Creator,” but some of His features too?

We make no apology for what may seem a digression from our subject, for it is not, but has brought us into the very heart of it. *Worldliness is the world with God left out.* That is what our scripture teaches: it is what is not of the Father that is of the world. Lust, or desire, describes it—lust of flesh, lust of eyes, and pride, which is but gratified desire—gratified for the moment.

Covetousness, or desiring what we have not, is idolatry (Col. iii. 5). God is displaced. And conversely, where He has His place, there can be no covetousness, no lust. We are satisfied with His fullness. “He has said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*” (Heb. xiii. 5). Where the Father is left out, the empty soul craves; and though it had the whole world, it would be empty still, for God alone can fill the heart.

This, then, is the world. It is a Godless world. Worldliness may show itself in various ways. There may be the grosser, more sensual lust of the flesh; the more esthetic lust of the eyes; or the mere boasting in riches and possessions, the "pride of living"—the same word rendered "this world's good" in chapter iii. 17. But in whatever way it take possession of the heart, it is still the same—the Father is absent.

It was in this way that Eve was taken by the beguilements of Satan: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Gen. iii. 6). Good for food, answers to the lust of the flesh, the mere animal desires; pleasant to the eyes, gratifies the lust of the eye; and wisdom has been ever the principal food upon which pride has fed. Eve's sin consisted in putting these gratifications in the place of God—in direct disobedience to Him. Cain's apostasy seems more awful when we see him turn his back upon God and quietly settle down to enjoy the city which he had built, than when he cried out, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Lot took his first step in the course which ended so shamefully in the mountain cave, when he lifted up his eyes upon the well-watered plain of Sodom, "like the garden of the Lord," but with the Lord left out. Let us never, then, think lightly of that which is the root of all sin—departure from God. The apostle describes the hopeless condition of the Gentile world as "without God in the world" (Eph. ii.). And when with tears he would warn against

those whose end was destruction, and whose glory was in their shame, he described them as those who "mind earthly things."

The very essence, then, of worldliness is the exclusion of God, it matters not so much from *what* He is excluded, as the fact of His exclusion. Mere monasticism, no matter how severe, does not shut out worldliness, but shuts it in, rather. You may put a man behind stone walls, and never allow him to see God's fair world; you may deprive him of the luxuries of life, almost of its necessities, and yet have him as thoroughly worldly as ever. If the Father is excluded, there is worldliness. It is not enough to inclose a portion of ground with walls to make it a garden. Unless it be cultivated with good, it will produce more weeds than ever.

We have thus far been looking at the *nature* of worldliness. Of its desolating effects, we need not say much. "Whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James iv. 4). So distinctly does Scripture draw the line! How awful must that be, then, which is, like the carnal mind, "enmity against God!" That the child of God can take up with it, makes it all the more solemn. When the world has a place in the heart, coldness results. The first step to worldly Laodiceanism was Ephesian loss of first love. Is your heart cold, my brother? Do you, like Israel, grow weary of the sweet manna? Then look to it! for, like Israel, the leeks and garlic and melons of Egypt have drawn you from your Lord. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another;" when worldliness creeps in, we lose communion with God, and very easily divisions creep in to separate God's

people; gospel work ceases, or becomes a mere drudgery of routine; all spiritual activity ceases; the door is left wide open for some open sin, unless the mercy of God prevent. It may be business, it may be pleasure, it may be things right and harmless in themselves; but if they displace God, their work is done. Oh, what desolation worldliness has wrought! What bright, active, devoted Christians it has overcome!

We have spoken of the *menace* of worldliness. It is no evil far off from us. We are surrounded by it; it presses upon us from every side. It is active, energetic, under the guiding hand of its master, waiting only for an entrance. It is subtle, alluring. It has its attractions for the young Christian; nor is it powerless with the more mature. As the sand encroaches upon the oasis, as the sea presses upon the dykes, so worldliness presses upon us. Let us be on our guard. Well did our Lord know our danger when He prayed, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

The Church is threatened with three evils: false doctrine, divisions, and worldliness; and we may say with safety that worldliness is at the root of most of the power of the other two.

Having seen something of the nature and the effects of worldliness, and that it is an evil which threatens us now, we come to look simply at what is at once a preventive and a cure. It is the *Father's* presence. That which marked the world was His absence; and when He is present, there is faith, and, so, victory over the world.

But how suggestive, how alluring, is this word

Father! It reminds us of the Son, through whom we are sons, and through whom we have access to the Father. It tells us of relationship, of nearness, of affections. It does not speak of, though it suggests, a place; but it reminds us of a Person. *Mere* place could not produce holiness, but sin cannot lift its head in the Father's presence.

How sweet and how simple, then, is the cure for worldliness! Have we allowed it a place in our hearts? and, as a result, has coldness and much else come in? Let us return to the Father. Let no excuse prevent it. There is nothing that can be a necessity to keep the child from the enjoyment of the Father. No matter how deep the immersion, nor of how long standing, the Father's claims are strongest, and His grace, His restoring grace, all-sufficient.

We are living in times of awful worldliness. As in the day of Cain, man is using the inventions and the luxuries of the age to hide God from his sight. In that Church which should be a testimony for Him who was not of this world, is the home of worldliness. It is something perfectly awful to see how professed godliness is linked with the world. May God awaken His dear people! Oh, the shame, the reproach, the dishonor, that is brought upon His holy name!

What is wanted is not sanctimonious asceticism, that is but a sham; nor legalism, which brings bondage; but a bright devotion to One who loves us, who has our hearts, and in whose presence it is our delight to dwell. "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

CHAPTER VI.

(Continued from page 172.)

THE third section of the "Sermon on the Mount"—the principles of the kingdom, which are given for the government of those waiting for it—occupies the first eighteen verses of the sixth chapter. It has upon it the seal of a third section, as plainly bringing us into the sanctuary,—into the presence of our Father, and giving us a lesson of sanctification,—of the holiness that suits His presence. It thus corresponds with the third book of Moses, Israel's law-giver, while yet a greater than Moses is here.

The first verse is the text of the whole, which is then illustrated, amplified, and enforced, in three different applications. The text is: "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." The word is allowed to be "righteousness" here, as the Revised Version gives it, and not "alms," as in the common one. In the following verses "alms" is right.

This "righteousness" is then illustrated in three different applications, manward, Godward, and selfward, as alms-giving, prayer, and fasting. Each of these is an illustration, not a definition, as is clear. Alms-giving does not define our duty toward men; nor prayer that toward God; nor fasting, what we owe ourselves. In each regard our righteousness must go far beyond the illustration. And yet the illustration is in each case chosen, as we cannot doubt, in divine wisdom, and has a peculiar fitness to bring out the character of this righteousness, as

disciples are called to practice it, before their Father in heaven. This we shall surely see, as we examine them.

1. Alms-giving is chosen to express what is righteousness toward *men*. What is the reason of this? Such questions it is right and good to ask, if only we seek the answer reverently, and without forgetting that divine wisdom is not exhausted by the apprehension we may obtain of it. In this first case, as surely in the others also, we may think of more than one answer.

As the Lord is reproving a righteousness done before men, He naturally takes up that which would be most showy—most apt to be reckoned on to produce the desired effect. We are told by Him of those who sound a trumpet before them when they give alms, and that in the synagogues, as well as in the streets. The language is probably symbolical of the blazoning abroad, in whatever way, their acts of “charity;” while for this also they would naturally have the most plausible reasons, invented to cover the fact that they sought glory of men; but this *was* the fact. And alms-giving has also been one of the standard methods adopted by those who have sought this. It can be practised with so little personal sacrifice, while it meets so evidently one of the sorest of palpable needs that can be met; it has so the form of benevolence, that it seems like cynicism to question whether the spirit be there; it is *in itself* so *right*, and puts one so plainly in the *company*, at least, of those who do right: all this makes it of priceless value to those who love the praise of men. And those who do so can very readily attain their object; nothing, perhaps, is more readily or certainly secured. But then, alas for them, “they have their reward:” it is all that they will possess, forever.

On the other side, alms-giving as an example of righteousness is a significant witness that to show mercy is not something to be classed as supererogation, but that the ministry of love is after all only a debt—a due. To be righteous really carries no merit in it, although God in His grace may please to speak of recompense. “When ye shall have done all things that are commanded you,” says the Lord elsewhere, “say, We are unprofitable servants: we have *done* that which was our duty to do.” (Luke xvii. 10.) Only in a world of sinners such as we are, could the thought of righteousness—the mere fulfillment of duty—associate itself with any idea of merit. And with the comparative righteousness which is all that is ours at best,—a righteousness that still leaves us sinners,—how impossible should be the thought! But, to love, with all that should flow from this, is mere commanded duty; yea, to love one’s neighbor as oneself is the injunction of the law. The Christian standard rises higher still in its law of self-sacrifice and all its marvelous enforcement of this in the example of Him who has given us life through His death. Henceforth, for those who have known this, there is no possible margin of devotedness outside of that *duty* which His love has endeared.

Alms-giving shrinks in this way into a small thing indeed; while this diminution of it does not make it less imperative. It becomes only a finger pointing along a road which leads out into the infinity beyond. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich.” (2 Cor. viii. 9.)

And yet we cannot afford to forget the Lord’s words here, though to a people who could not know, as we know, such grace as this. Significant it is,

that, when He would, to these Jewish disciples, speak of righteousness manward, His illustration of it emphasizes *mercy*. All this is only magnified for us by our Christianity, in every particular. *We* are, above all, the witnesses of *grace*. Debtors to it absolutely, we are debtors to show it to others. Freely having received, we must freely give. How otherwise are we to reflect Him to men around?

And we need still the reminder: "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Alas, how Christians have forgotten such words in their displayed charities, justifying the display as letting their light shine! The contrast is manifest with what is here: *too* manifest to need enlargement.

2. The second illustration of righteousness is Godward; and here the Lord illustrates it by prayer: "When ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, to be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber; and when thou hast shut to thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

It is a striking thing that *righteousness* should be illustrated by that which is the expression of creature need and dependence. But all the sin in the world came in through man's forgetfulness of this. Nay, Satan became what he is in the same manner—"lifted up with pride" (1 Tim. iii. 6). Prayer is the expression of what is the very opposite of this. Think, then, of the utter and awful contradiction in terms, of praying to *God*, to be seen of *men*! "As

the hypocrites do," says the Lord; and yet, is not this an hypocrisy which creeps oftentimes into public prayers, where those who pray are, after all, not to be so characterized? Are not those who lead the prayers of others especially liable to act in some measure in this way? the consciousness of being before others leading them into petitions which are not dictated by felt need so much as by a sense of propriety of some kind? How much shorter, how much simpler, how different in various ways, might many of our prayers be, if we were alone before God instead of in the prayer-meeting!

This leads us on toward the next warning: "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what ye have need of before ye ask Him." This, if there be no need to explain or apply, still needs serious attention on the part of Christians.

Our Lord follows this with the divine model of prayer, which for fullness combined with perfect directness and simplicity so manifestly fulfills the conditions indicated. Nor only this: the order and proportion of the petitions are, with all else, perfect, and claim our earnest attention. They betoken a condition of heart which, wherever it is found, must insure answer,—the state of one over whom God's will is supreme,—for whom He is first and last, beginning and end. To realize such a condition would of necessity make us realize the meaning of those words of the Lord's, "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done to you." Clearness of apprehension would go with it,—confidence of success: "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much" (James v. 16).

A perfect *model* of prayer this is and must be : whether designed for a *form*, and especially whether intended for Christians, is another matter. The differences in Luke (xi. 2-4), now recognized in the Revised Version, would, of course, be one of the plainest arguments against this. Apart from this, the gift of the Spirit to Christians, for those who realize what is the distinct characteristic of the present dispensation, (John xvi. 7 ; Rom. viii. 26, 27,) and expressly named as the Intercessor within us according to God, may still more hinder such from interpreting it as a form to be used by the saints of the present time. That it is not in the Lord's Name is evident upon the face of it, and confirmed (if confirmation were needed) by His words to His disciples afterwards : "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name" (John xvi. 24); and this is a difference not to be remedied by supplying an omission where there is none, and making that really imperfect which is perfect. And this very perfection, for the disciples of that time in their transition state, would seem to suggest once more its *not* being intended as the suited expression of a Christian in the Christian state. One is more concerned, however, to point out the actual perfection of the prayer, than to dwell upon such distinctions in this place,—even though they have to do with differences vital to Christianity; but here is not the place for their examination. Let us consider now, briefly, the petitions contained in it, and what they imply.

F. W. G.

(*To be continued.*)

"To THE soul, fresh in its spirituality, the word of God—and oh, how can it be otherwise!—has more sweetness in its least statements (for they come from God) than any indulgence whatever of the mental powers."—*J. N. D.*

“ALIVE AFTER HIS PASSION.”

(Acts i. 3.)

BLESSED One! Thy passion's o'er,
 Thou wilt bleed and die no more;
 No more heard that bitter cry,
 “Eli, lama sabachthani!”

Thou wast, in the sinner's stead,
 By Thy love to Calvary led;
 There didst die upon the tree,
 That the guilty might go free.

All “the darkness” now is past,
 And “the veil is rent” at last;
 Thou hast burst the bands of death,
 Showing its atoning worth.

Thou art now in glory bright,
 Far from Calvary's *darkest* night;
 No more to be “led” that way,
 But abide in cloudless day.

Thine atoning work is done,
 Never more to be begun;
 “They of faith,” in *Thee* complete,
 And, through grace, for glory meet.

Thou wilt come to take them there;
 Joyful meeting “in the air”!
 Thou wilt lead them into rest,—
 They with Thee forever blest!

*Blessed One! Thy passion's o'er,
 Thou wilt bleed and die no more;
 No more heard that bitter cry,
 “Eli, lama sabachthani!”*

R. H.

May 18th, 1895.

THE CHURCH—PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

THE link of life binds each believer to our risen Lord. Were there but one Christian in all the world, the precious truths of a full and eternal salvation would be his.

The link of individual communion also holds each believer walking humbly, in practical fellowship with "the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ." Did all but one grow cold and worldly, the sweet privilege of walking and talking with God would still be his in all its fullness, though of course there would be sadness because of the state of the rest.

But when we speak of the Church we do not think merely of individuals, but of the whole body of Christ. Individual salvation and individual communion there must be, but the Church brings in thoughts of responsibility as well as of privilege.

These privileges and their accompanying responsibilities are unfolded to us in the Word of God. The Church is the Body of Christ, He the Head. It is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. It is therefore one. By the Spirit we are not only members of Christ, but members of one another. The unity of the Body is to be practically manifested by keeping the unity of the Spirit. The Church is one. But this means one not only in life, but in organism, possession of gifts, testimony, and discipline.

We cannot, if we would, shirk these responsibilities. We cannot go on as individuals, nor even as local assemblies. We are responsible to hold the truth, and seek to exhibit it, of the One Body and the One Spirit. May our God keep us from attempting any other path as seeming more easy.

ON PRAYER.

IN the Gospel of Luke the Lord is represented several times as engaged in prayer, a circumstance in exquisite keeping, surely, with the intention of the Gospel—which is to present Him to the gaze of adoring hearts as the Son of Man, perfect in His dependence upon God—and one fraught with deep significance to us. In this, as in all things else, He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps.

In the perfect dependence of the Lord we do not see that lifeless, impassive spirit which some affect, who profess to be so dependent as to be independent of times and seasons for prayer. Oh, no! And if it was His practice to withdraw for prayer, should it not also be ours?

In the midst of His work, and the height of His fame, Jesus retired to pray. There went “a fame abroad of Him; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed.” (Luke v. 15, 16.)

There must be this withdrawing of ourselves frequently into the sole company of God, if we are to do His work, and if we are to know Him at all as friend knows friend. Yet how disinclined the heart often is to it. How seldom are we really face to face, as it were, alone with God, unless forced into His presence to obtain some mercy, some needed boon! But for Jesus to withdraw Himself into the wilderness to pray, was for love to delight in the sole companionship of its object. “I am not alone, for the Father is with Me.”—*Extracted.*

DOES TIME ALTER THE MORAL CHARACTER OF AN ACTION?

WHEN the children of Ammon (Judges xi.) made war against Israel, and laid claim to a portion of their inheritance, the question of the title was three hundred years old. And Jephthah, in his answer to their insolent demand for the cession of this territory, went back over the circumstances occurring three hundred years before. He does not say, "Possession is nine points of the law," but goes back to the time when Israel passed around the country of Edom and of Moab, and did not molest them; but when Sihon came out and attacked them, they fought, and were victors, the Lord giving the enemy into their hand. He shows that it was by actual conquest that they gained possession, and this by the direct help of God. True, times had changed since then, and in degenerate days, when every man did that which was right in his own eyes," the Ammonites, instead of being slaves, were apparently masters, and in a position to dictate to once victorious Israel; but to faith, which rests on the unchanging God, all is unchanged; Ammon is the same proud foe of God, the land is still Israel's by right, and in the power that bestowed it they will keep it. "The times change, and we change with them," says the Latin proverb; but faith does not speak so; it never does.

The Jews as a nation are still under judicial blindness for their rejection of Christ—a blindness, blessed be God, that is removed the moment the sin is judged and the soul turns to the Lord. These eighteen hundred years have made no change in the moral char-

acter of that awful sin in rejecting the Lord of glory, nor in the present responsibility of those now identified with the Jews. In days to come, in the time of Jacob's trouble, the controversy will be as to "our brother Joseph," and "we were verily guilty" will be the confession of those who had not been born when the act was committed. The prophetic confessions of such scriptures as the fifty-first psalm and the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah show how real and how fresh the sense of sin in the rejection of Christ will be.

With Daniel (chap. ix.) the lapse of seventy years, and the prophecy of the return, only increases the humiliation, the heartfelt confession of sin—sin in which he had no actual part.

Is not the whole world under the heavy hand of God's government because of Adam's sin? We are under the blight of that disobedience still, as much so as was Adam the day he fell. Thanks to infinite grace, the awful consequences have been more than removed for those who by faith are linked with the second Adam. But who would dare to say the moral character of that act had changed in the lapse of six thousand years?

But there is no need to multiply instances. We are persuaded that all Christians will admit the truth of what we have presented. It is in the application of a principle that there is too often glaring inconsistency. Sin is sin whether committed one hour or one century ago; its moral character does not change with age.

On the other hand, how simple and blessed is the path of recovery! "We have sinned." The moment there is sincere confession and departure from the

evil, it is forgiven—communion is restored. We all know this way. Shall we not follow it? Does anything but pride prevent our walking in it? Other ways may seem to afford an *easier* way; this is the only *true* one. Sweet and precious names may be invoked in other interests—the names of our Lord, of the Spirit, of love—but they cannot do away with the need of which we have been speaking. Sin remains the same, and the only way to be free from it is by judging it and departing from evil. The Lord in mercy lead His own dear people into this path of lowliness, but of blessing—preserving them from every false way!

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 15.—How do you reconcile Ex. xiv. 16, 21, 22 with Heb. xi. 29? Was it not sight when they could see a clear path through the sea? “It is evident that the sea was not divided throughout at once, had it been so it would have been sight, not faith.”

ANS.—From the language in Exodus there seems to be no question that the waters were divided from shore to shore at once. A simple reading of the passage referred to, will make this clear. When Israel had passed over and Moses' rod was again lifted, the sea returned to his strength. There is not the slightest contradiction to the statement in Hebrews. The act was one of faith; God had prepared them a way and they, by faith, walked in it. Unbelief would have refused the way and bowed again to the Egyptians.

When we remember the typical meaning of the opening of the Red Sea we are compelled to accept this view. Death and judgment shut up the people of God under the power of sin, from which there was no escape. The seventh chapter of Romans gives the account of the hopeless struggle, the longing cry for deliverance, the hope in Christ; and the opening verses of the eighth chapter show the complete deliverance, connecting it with the death of our Lord which by “the law of the Spirit has made us free from the law of sin and death.” We need only ask, was the death and resurrection of Christ a gradual opening up of the way of escape, or did it not throw wide open the door of deliverance? Was not a shining path opened up from shore to shore? but is it not also a path in which faith alone can walk? Pharaoh and his hosts had an open way to pursue after the Israelites; but having no faith, it was but a way of death to them.

CHRIST THE KING:

BEING LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

CHAPTER VI.

(Continued from page 218.)

THE whole prayer is an address to God as Father: "Our Father which art in heaven." What underlies this title given to God is in fact a relationship never yet made known in its true character, between Him and the true disciples of this blessed Teacher. "I have declared unto them Thy Name," He says elsewhere, "and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John xvii. 26). This name of "Father" is something wholly different from those Old Testament titles, which had declared as the "Almighty" His power, or as the "Most High" His exaltation, or as "Jehovah" His enduring immutability. "Father" declares, not such things as these, but what is His heart toward us, while it gives us title to enjoy the love implied. The character of the tie is such as gives us claim and confidence,—a claim He cannot deny. How great an encouragement to the prayer of faith!

No doubt, there had been long before anticipations of what is here conveyed. At the very birth of the nation God had announced, "Israel is my son, even my first-born" (Ex. iv. 22). And this, which had been repeated in the law, and made the foundation of preceptive argument,—“Ye are the children of Jehovah your God” (Deut. xiv. 1),—might seem in itself to justify Israelites, such as were these disciples that had gathered round the Lord, in taking the place He gave them here. But in fact this, in the national ruin that had intervened, had passed away.

Israel was Lo-ammi, "not my people," though with a promise for the future of a restoration not yet fulfilled (Hos. i. 9, 10). They could not comfort themselves with assurances thus forbidden them to apply, —nor with a legal covenant to which God's faithfulness on His side could but make them partakers of curse rather than blessing.

God is, however, the God of grace and of resurrection. He does not, indeed, patch an old garment with new cloth. He does not even merely restore what is failed and gone. But He can replace it with that which is better; and so much better, that the old and removed blessing shall be seen to be but the shadow of that which replaces it. Both together thus witness, if on the one hand to the failure of man, on the other to the changeless goodness and grace of God.

Thus that old relationship to the Unchangeable had after all changed. The "children of Jehovah" were now as a nation outcast from Him. The tie, stable as it might look, had not the elements of endurance in it. As we look back upon it from the stand-point of the new revelation, it is simple to understand that Israel's sonship was not the result of new birth, as it is now in Christianity. An Israelite was not necessarily, because that, either a penitent or a believer in that God who had drawn nigh to him. A Jew was, as the apostle says, a "Jew by *nature*" (Gal. ii. 15); but that nature was not *new* nature. The child of law, as he shows afterwards by the type of Hagar and Ishmael (iv. 22-31), was but "born after the flesh," and showed the nature of the "wild man," as Ishmael did (Gen. xvi. 12). Thus there was no real nearness to God or fellowship with Him necessarily implied in sonship of this kind. Adoption there was in it, but not regeneration. Conse-

quently it never secured from eternal judgment, nor insured beyond death, nor even from day to day, but as obedience lasted or God's pity spared.

But the "Father," of whom Christ spoke to His own, was not the Father of the nation in this manner. Only the pure in heart should see Him, only the peacemakers be called His children. Even before this, although not having place in this gospel, He had taught Nicodemus the absolute necessity of new birth, and that, while that which was born of the flesh was only "flesh," that which was born of the Spirit—a divine Person—was "spirit,"—divine in nature (John iii. 6). Here, it is plain, is the foundation of relationship to God, a real new yet divine life communicated, which is therefore "eternal life." For "eternal life" is not simply that which (when it begins) abides, or has no ending. It is that which, though *in us* it begins, *in itself* never did. Receiving this, we are not merely *adopted* sons: we are that truly; but none the less we are *born* into the family of God and "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i, 4), children of God indeed.

How far all this had been entered into by the disciples as yet, is another question. That it was what was in the Lord's mind we know, and what He was leading them into,—what therefore underlay the teaching of the prayer. This Father in heaven, known for what He is, becomes thus rooted in the affections, supreme over the heart that has learned the cry of children. Of this the prayer at least is the expression. The first petition is one which shows how jealous for this Name revealed to it is the soul that has truly entered into the revelation. "Father, hallowed be Thy Name!" May no thought come in to profane this wondrous intimacy now existing; may grace not be abused to license; may all Thy

people worship with unshod feet in this place of nearness. Such surely will be the first cry of the heart that has felt—and in proportion to the way in which it has felt—the ecstatic joy of God so made known to it.

But the world knows not this joy, and the abounding evil is but the shadow upon hearts and lives that have turned away from the light of God. Hence the next cry necessarily is, “Thy kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!”

This, if true prayer, must be the outcome of a heart that is itself obedient. And what an absorbing desire this should be to us! The misery and moral ruin and dishonor to God on every side of us may well force from us a prayer like this. Where is there another like it for the magnitude of that which is embodied in it? God, as it were, everywhere set in His place; everything finding its relation to Him as the planets to the central sun: here is universal blessedness beyond which we can conceive no greater; all peace, happiness, goodness, are implied in it. And this is the practical power and glory of faith, that it sets us where from a full heart such a prayer can well; that it enthrones God of its own free choice upon that absolute throne which can alone be His; that it realizes His will to be only the expression of His glorious nature,—in which every divine attribute blends and harmonizes.

For this “kingdom of the Father,” we must look beyond all dispensations to the sabbath of God’s own rest. To confound it with the millennium would be an entire mistake, and necessarily lower its character terribly. The millennium, with all its blessing, is but a step towards this glorious consummation. It is earth’s “regeneration,” (Matt. xix. 28,) but *after* which, as in our own case, (not in it,) must come the eradication of evil and the change to eternal condi-

tions. The millennium ends in a final outbreak of evil, the most openly defiant that the world has ever seen (Rev. xx. 7-10). The judgment that follows reaches to the very frame-work of material things, and the earth and *its* heaven—the “firmament” of the second day (Gen. i.)—pass away in fire, to make way for that new heaven and earth in which righteousness shall dwell. Then, with all evil subdued and all things made anew, the Son of God, having brought about the very condition for which He teaches His disciples here to pray, will give up His separate, human kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. xv. 24-28), and the kingdom of the Father contemplated here will at last have come.

Important it is not to confound the temporary with the eternal, the divine outcome with any intermediate step. Such confusion is no less mischievous for the heart than for the mind; for where God rests alone should our hearts find rest. But for us it is true, that the kingdom of the Father will have come, even *before* the millennium, when, caught up to be ever with the Lord at His coming, the Father's house receives us. And thus it is that, in the parables of the kingdom, in the gospel we are now considering (chap. xiii. 42), when the present form of it is closed by the appearing of the King, it is said: “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, *in the kingdom of their Father.*” To this, even then, we shall have come.

With this petition for the coming of the Father's kingdom, the first half of the prayer ends. The petitions following are of a different character. They are the expression of personal needs in a state of things such as now surrounds us. Personal needs in the very highest sense, of course, the first class of petitions represents; but here it is God that is distinctly before the soul, and His glory that absorbs it. What happiness would it not be for us, if the glory of God were thus, and as taught of the Spirit, the first desire of the heart, the first thing to utter itself in our prayers!

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

SIMPLE NOTES TO A FEW VERSES OF AN OLD SONG.

THIS little book, for ages the subject of many and various interpretations, has been taken as an allegory of the love of Christ for His Church, an expression of the eternal love with which He regards her who is called the "Bride of the Lamb." The bridegroom of the type is Solomon; the bride, the Shulamite. The bridegroom of the *antitype* is One greater than Solomon, who in the closing scenes of Revelation is called "the Lamb." Let us remember, then, as we ponder the deep breathing of affection here, that it is but a feeble expression of His who "loved the Church and gave himself for it . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Oh, beloved! His church, His ecclesia, is not merely a bride, but a blood-bought bride, purchased by the sacrifice of the Bridegroom, redeemed at an infinite cost; and, though in itself poor and unworthy, lifted up to a throne with Him! Who, then, can imagine the deep thrill with which she shall linger on the chord,—feebly touched here,—“I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine?” In the words of a hymn:

“What a story,
There in glory,
We'll repeat.”

“The song of songs, which is Solomon's.” We are directly introduced to the author. He is called Solomon, and every one acquainted with Bible history must know him. A king, far more wealthy, and wiser, than any before or after, reigning over a united and prosperous people, he is in every way held up as

surpassing in glory. The Lord himself remarks, "Yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his *glory* was not arrayed like one of these." No statement of this is given in our song. It is enough that he is Solomon, and that it is his song. I have only mentioned it here for us to consider how suitably the writer is adapted to represent our Lord as king upon the throne of a greater kingdom, which too is an absolute monarchy, united and at peace. "The song of songs, which is Solomon's"—how suitable the introduction! We know how the manner of starting a hymn either causes a drag all through, or else wakes the whole being of the singer into animation. So it is with almost everything. There are three things which, to my mind, are absolutely essential for the enjoyment of a song: a good theme, an *understanding* singer, and a *heart* singer. Surely the Song of songs has these characteristics from the commencement, or that which will produce them.

The opening verse is simple. People are accustomed to ask, "What's in a name?" Well, at least, simplicity. It is about all of our language the dumb brute understands; but he does understand that. *Here* we have a name, Are there any other songs caused by a name, beloved? What will wake the sweetest music of heaven? Anything hard to understand, difficult to grasp? Nay, nay, the stammering tongue, the trembling lip, will not fail to pronounce and the weak intellect to grasp the name of "Jesus." Thank God, it is simple; it is not difficult.

"Jesus! How much that name unfolds
To every opened ear.
The pardoned sinner's mem'ry holds
None other half so dear."

“Solomon” means *peaceable*; and it may serve to remind us that this is a song of our home, of a time when trouble and sorrow, discord and strife, will be all past. He is now no more One that goes forth to war and to conquer, nor is it the time when He is being trodden under foot of men. It is the long harvest of God, when His toils are ended and He folds in His embrace her of whom He can then say, “Thou art *all* fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.” How cheering to think that this falls from the lips of our Saviour, concerning such as we are! “We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Beloved, let it comfort us even now, “No spot,” “no wrinkle.” “Thou art all fair, my love.”

“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!”

Here another voice breaks in with a rapture of longing; but there is no mention of the speaker's name. It is a spontaneous outpouring of affection that leaves no room for a formal introduction. Surely this is all in beautiful harmony. We have a precious parallel to it in the triumphant song into which His redeemed ones break at the name “Jesus,” introduced in the first of Revelation—“*Unto Him that loveth us.*” Faith's song of triumph is raised gladly before the battle and storm to follow; for is not “the shout of a king among them?” and is not the name of Jesus a shelter for them? In the verse of our song we have, instead of battle, communion in a place of rest. Happy scene to look forward to! Blessed rest!

There may be also another occasion for the omission of an introduction of the bride's name. The conduct of the bridegroom is beautifully one all through these chapters, while we find the bride often

vacillating and wayward. And the name given her portrays this in a striking manner. "Shulamite" means *a woman of Shunem*; and "Shunem" means *uneven*. Alas! the bride has, then, too good cause to omit her name; and well and happily for the type has she done so. Have you ever pondered the way in which John speaks of himself when questioned as to who he was? It comes in so beautifully: "I am the *voice* of one crying in the wilderness." As he thinks of the glory of Him who comes after him, he becomes so absorbed that he leaves self entirely out of sight, lest, on account of man's blindness, it should in some measure attract attention to himself. The principle which he enunciates is ever true, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Is not this also another motive in our Song? Who art thou, bold one, to speak so intimately to the King of kings? Ah, nothing in myself whatever. My name I shall not mention. I only venture to speak because of Thy grace, Lord Jesus. Thou hast chosen the poor things and the base things of this world. It is all of grace. It is all of Thee.

"Love so groundless,
Grace so boundless,
Wins my heart."

Reader, how is it with you and me? Does Jesus' name always awaken song on the lips and joy in the heart?

Are we always so close to Him that it touches some beautiful chord of memory, some wondrous association?

If not, there is surely something wrong, something amiss. The inspired apostle could exhort the Philipians to "Rejoice in the Lord alway." It is easy, peo-

ple say, to rejoice when circumstances are favorable. Beloved, do we always do even this? Take one of what ought to be the happiest moments, when as His ambassadors, we speak of His love to lost sinners, is that name always like a breath of sweet music on the lips, "a song in the night," to our hearts? Such it surely ought to be. Let us, then, ask ourselves these questions, and pray God to seach out the evil that hinders. That is the kind of preaching God delights in, and that which He must bless. Apart from this, how vain it all is! "Though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal"—an empty sound!

"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth."

The kiss in Scripture, as elsewhere, is a sign of affection,—sometimes of obedience and subjection. The New Testament exhorts brethren to "Greet one another with a holy kiss." Peter speaks of "kiss of love." We well know that people of a more demonstrative nature employ this way of greeting after the same manner that we shake hands. It may, therefore, sometimes not imply any great degree of intimacy. Here, however, the expression is an emphatic one, not "Let him kiss me with his mouth," merely, but, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." The verb means "to touch," and as thus translated, it has a wonderfully sweet ring to it. "Let him *touch* me with the kisses of his mouth." We all remember the words of the woman of Mark v.: "If I may but touch the hem of his garment I shall be made whole." What thrill must have passed through that poor sick body as it came in contact with the Lord Jesus! and I could not help

connecting it with this verse, "Let him touch me with the kisses of his mouth." How sweetly the words fall from her lips, while holy memories of His life upon earth flood in and fill the house of God with its fragrance !

"Awake, my soul, in joyful lays,
To sing Thy great Redeemer's praise;
He justly claims a song from thee,
His loving kindness, oh, how free!

"He saw thee ruined in the fall,
Yet loved thee notwithstanding all;
He saved thee from a vile estate—
His loving kindness, oh, how great!"

F. C. G.

"WE OWE something to Christ; and if He be dishonored and slighted, I may seek to win, but I cannot be the loving companion of, one who has deliberately denied my Lord. To me, to live is Christ. To own Him and dishonor Him, is worse than heathenism: it is to own and acquiesce in His dishonor, when I know better. The man who believes Christ to be God, and is the professed Christian companion of him who denies it, is worse than the latter. We may all, alas! err; but he who knows the truth, and accepts what he knows degrades Christ, is deliberately preferring ease and companionship to Him, though he may dignify it with the name of love. Every effort to recover is right; but a step in acquiescence is a step in disloyalty to One whom no one would have dared to dishonor, if He had not come down in love."—*J. N. D.*

THREE APPEARINGS.

(Heb. ix. 24-28.)

THE Son of God has come,—
"Appeared" in flesh to die,
 To put away our sin,
 And bring the sinner nigh:
 We trust in Him who came from God,
 And shed for us His precious blood.

He's gone within the veil;
"Appears" before God's face;
 His pleadings now prevail
 For all who bow to grace:
 Their cause is with the great High Priest,
 Who knows each one, cares for the least.

And soon He'll come again,
"Appear" His own to save;
 And they with Him will reign,
 And triumph o'er the grave:
 Oh, blessed day when He shall come,
 To take His blood-bought people home!

We gaze upon His cross,
 We know He's on the throne,
 We joy in all He is,
 And long to see that One;
 Oh, happy they whose hearts thus burn,
 And hail with joy His sure return!

May we express Him here,
 While He remains away!
 Soon, soon, will He *"appear,"*
 And bring His longed-for day:
 Oh, blessed One, we wait for Thee,
 Thy coming sets us *fully* free!

April 1st, 1895.

R. H.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

WHAT a theme for meditation ! And how varied are its lessons ! How dark from man's side ! There we see his enmity, malice, and hatred, against the spotless Lamb of God, Jesus, the Saviour of men. This was the dark background upon which God did display Himself in all that He was—in righteousness, love, grace, and mercy. How varied are the glories that cluster around that cross—shine out through the darkness, like the beautiful colors of the rainbow when the light breaks through the dark clouds after a storm ! Sin was there ; the world (Jew and Gentile), with all its united forces, was there ; and so was Satan and all the power of darkness. Yet amid all the darkness of such an hour, which finds no parallel, God was there. Man had sinned ; Justice demanded a sacrifice for sin. Love provided one, perfect and without blemish. Judgment did its strange work, its act, yet strange act ! Now what love and grace are seen, since Jehovah gave up His beloved Son to fill the gap, repair the breach, and put sin away ! The deity of the Lord Jesus, His incarnation, followed by His perfect life of love and grace, was taught and known before ; also, His resurrection and ascension into God's presence, carrying with Him all the blessed and precious value of His atoning death, have been declared since. But the cross is where sin was put away from before the throne of Heaven, where judgment was laid hard upon the perfect substitute provided for guilty, sinful man. It was at the cross the cry was heard, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ” Here is where He suffered, where He died, and where His blood was shed, (a precious

testimony that a life has been given up, and that Heaven's throne, with all its righteousness and purity, was fully satisfied); and in such a place, and at such a time, God Himself, who is encircled with light and true holiness, was fully glorified. Was it any wonder, and need we be surprised to learn, the veil was rent,—a testimony given that a work had been accomplished by which Heaven, even the holiest of all, was now thrown open, and faith invited to "enter in" and "draw nigh," because the blood is there, before and on the mercy seat,—the victories of the cross, with all their intrinsic value, laid before the very throne of God? Is it any wonder the bands of death were broken, and He raised from the dead the third day? Surely, surely not. It was this, we believe, led the Father to give up His Son, that He might receive Him back on resurrection ground, and receive Him back forever. And the result of such a work, so great and so perfect, as that accomplished at the cross, was that heaven itself might be opened, not only for the King of glory to enter in, but that also a people once guilty, once sinful, but cleansed by that blood shed, and saved by grace, might enter also at His call (1 Thess. iv. 15–18), and be gathered around the Son of God's love as a praising people.

How careful ought we to be when we speak or write of such a theme as the atoning sufferings of the cross, lest we should mar its perfection and beauty before the eyes of any; but rather behold it, as presented in the Scriptures, with wonder, love, and praise! Sacrifices pointed on to it for four thousand years; numberless types, shadows, and pictures, from Genesis to Malachi, had this in view; Moses and Elias, the honored two upon the holy mount, spake to Him

about it—"the decease He should accomplish"; the two ordinances of Christianity, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, keep this continually before us,—His death. The abiding memorial of it is ever upon the mercy seat, for God's eye to rest upon. It will be kept fresh in our memories in the glory, and in eternity—"a lamb as it had been slain"; and of its fullness, its efficacy, its sweetness, for us, we shall ever learn through that eternal day (2 Pet. iii. 18, margin, R. V.); and such a holy sense of the value of that work, as well as the value of Him who accomplished it, will fill every heart, so that there will be in the praises of the redeemed in the glory of His presence the constant remembrance of His sufferings, His death, His blood. May we rejoice in such more even now, and guard it, in the face of a hostile world, with a zealous care, as Abraham did the sacrifices of old, when he drave away the unclean birds (Gen. xv. 9-11)! Such a care, we believe, is needed at this time. The inspiration of the sacred Scriptures is assailed by many; the depravity of man is denied; and the deity of the Lord Jesus is looked upon with disdain. And what shall we say of the cross, and the perfect work there accomplished? It is by many even in the circle of Christian profession held in ridicule. We are truly in the evil day, and nearing its close. May every moment, as we get nearer the end, if we think of the cross of Calvary, and the sufferings there endured for us, lead us to exclaim, as did one so fully taught of old, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14).

A. E. B.

WANDERING.

“As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.”—Prov. xxvii. 8.

WE were all once wanderers, far from God, for whose glory we were made, and in whose presence alone we could be truly happy. Of the misery of that wandering we need but to be reminded—its bitterness and hopelessness. The Shepherd came to seek his lost sheep—traversed the distance between us and God, at infinite cost; and finding us, has brought us home again to God. So that we can now truly say, “Yea, the sparrow has found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts” (Ps. lxxxiv. 3). The sparrow seems to be marked in Scripture as the bird of loneliness, and of insignificance. “I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop” (Ps. cii. 7). “Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?” (Luke xii. 6.) The swallow is the bird of complaint and restlessness—the bird of passage” (Isa. xxxviii. 14; Jer. viii. 7). How fittingly do these birds represent, in a twofold way, the lonely, worthless, restless sinner who finds a home and a nest on God’s altars,—atonement and worship; and of the saint too as he looks forward to *his* nest, with the Lord forever!

But the wanderer has been brought back, the lonely sparrow has found society, the restless swallow has found a nest, through Him who is our altar, the One who has made peace, and by whom we worship. Now we can sing,—

“The wanderer no more will roam.”

Of the rest, the security, the joy of that "nest," what can we say? Is it not perfect, absolute, eternal? Is not every longing satisfied? and does not the heart of the wanderer find itself indeed at home in God's presence?

The soul has found its "place"—a place of access to God the Father, of nearness—the very holiest itself, into which we have boldness to enter by the blood of Jesus. It is also in a place of relationship, for the believer is born of God, a child of God. The spirit of adoption has been also given him, whereby he cries, "Abba Father." He is also in a new position, as quickened and raised with Christ; and in Him, in the heavenly places, he is a heavenly man, with heavenly associations, heavenly destinies. This is in some sort the place of every child of God. If he wanders from it, he is like a bird that wanders from her nest.

We need not dwell upon the absolute impossibility of a child of God really getting away from the place of salvation. Thanks to infinite grace, we have been "perfected forever" by the one offering of Christ; we have "eternal life," shall "never perish"; "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 38, 39). What ignorance it shows of the counsels of the Father, the work of the Son for us on the cross, and the work of the Spirit in us, by regeneration, to think that the the wondrous fact of eternal security in which they are united, can be by any pos-

sibility altered! There is, then, no danger, nor possibility, of wandering, in this sense.

But if it be impossible for the child of God to wander from his place of salvation, it is only too easy to forsake the place of communion. God has not only formed us for glory—to be His companions there—He has made us for Himself now, to enter into His thoughts, to enjoy His love. It is His purpose for us, His *desire*, that we should enjoy now all that is contained in that word communion:—the Father's love, His plans, His mind; the fullness, the unsearchable riches of Christ, whether in His Person or His work; the all-various display of truth flowing from these—in a word, the Scriptures: these are to be ministered to us by the Holy Spirit, whose delight it is. But the word of God is living and operative, and when rightly received ever produces the fruits of holiness and separation from the world. Where these are lacking, communion is impossible.

Need we say, then, that it is only too easy for the Christian to wander from his place here? The world and the Word do not agree. Let the things of this time secure our hearts' attention, and how quickly the taste for the word of God is lost! We cannot feed on Egypt's food and manna at the same time. With a taste for the word of God gone, the soul makes no further progress. The love and grace of God, the fellowship of saints, the glad service of self-denial, are forgotten; and nothing remains but the dull routine of what has become almost a meaningless form. “Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should

I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord" (Mal. i. 13).

When the link of communion is once broken, the wandering has begun; and who can tell where it will end? David's sin, and Peter's, and that of many others, alas, only show us how far declension may go when it once begins. Nothing but the sovereign mercy of God can prevent the wanderer from plunging into that which will be an open shame. Even where such extremes are not reached, there is a barrenness, a dearth, in the soul, which destroys all true happiness. Is the reader of these lines one who has wandered from his place—his place at Jesus' feet? He is indeed like a bird that has wandered from his nest—no rest, no comfort, no holy associations.

"Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up." "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine answer is turned away from him" (Hos. vi. 1; xiv. 4). There is but one way back to the place of communion, and that is to turn to the Lord, with true confession, and a simple apprehension of grace. How the Lord yearns to have His own back again! There is but one place for us, and that is the place of communion.

Closely connected with the subject of our relationship with God, is that to one another. If we are children of God, we are members of one family, and therefore brethren; if we have communion with God, we should also have it with one another. Unless there are grave scriptural reasons to the contrary, the children of God should all be together, forming in each place an expression of that church which is one body, linked in life, and by the Holy Ghost, both to

a glorified Head in heaven and to one another on earth. To have such fellowship one with another, there must be therefore subjection to the Head and yielding to the Spirit. The word of God, with its truths upon this most important subject, must be our guide if we are to have righteous fellowship one with another.

And is there anything more beautiful than a true scriptural order, not only in each local gathering of the Lord's people, but in the whole circle of fellowship? Here grace and righteousness control; the Spirit is ungrieved, and therefore engages us with the things of Christ. Or if sorrow come in, and difficulties arise, they but furnish fresh occasion for the exhibition of the all-sufficiency of the Lord. Subjection to Scripture is to be absolute—yea, to one another in the Lord—but all in grace, though with firmness. What a happy place! what a fellowship! It is a *nest*, not a prison to hold us by its walls and bars, but a nest whose warmth and protection are ever an attraction.

But, alas, the wanderers! The whole church of Christ should be thus gathered—not one missing, save those who for wickedness in walk or doctrine are not in their place. Instead of this, we see the flock of Christ scattered as sheep having no shepherd, following this or that leader, running here and there in hopeless and helpless confusion. Why is it? They have wandered from their place. Individual communion with the Lord there may be, but subjection to Him as the head of His Church there is not. Hence this confusion—a confusion which it is utterly impossible for us to change. The *nest* has been left, the true “place” forsaken—gathering to the Lord

alone, according to His word. Had every Christian in the world forsaken this place; had they gathered with one another round various rallying points—of man, or doctrine, or practice,—nay, had every believer in the world linked himself with such an association,—they would all of them have been as birds wandering from their nest. How easily the eye gets blinded by great names, and great numbers! Unless watchful, who is out of danger?

The remedy for such wandering is the same as for the individual departure from the place of communion. We are not to seek to better the thing with which we are connected, but rather to forsake that which is unscriptural and to return to the Lord and the simplicity of Scripture. If there is joy over the returning sinner, if also there is joy over the saint coming back to communion, we can rest assured that joy is not wanting as one and another of the Lord's people return to the "place" where He is all and *for* all—where He and His word control by the Spirit.

But when, in great mercy, the Lord has called a number back to Himself, let it not be thought that the admonition suggested in our verse is now needless. There is only too great danger of wandering from the place of separation from the world, of subjection to His word and authority. Many may be the causes which lead to this. The personal state of soul, natural ties of affection, neglect of Scripture,—nay, even the godly desire for a wider unity amongst God's people, if unchecked by the limitations put upon it by the word of God,—any or all of these may lead to a wandering from our place. It may seem to be an easy path and a simple way of getting over

many difficulties ; but easy paths are not promised, and there will be difficulties so long as we are here. Let us face them in dependence upon our faithful Lord, and not seek to avoid them by wandering.

Soon, beloved brethren, it will be a blessed impossibility to wander from our place. When we have been gathered home into the Father's house, we will go no more out forever. We will grieve the Lord no more, and give pain to one another no more. How soon that time may be here ! How rapidly the days are slipping by, and we shall hear the voice of our Beloved, " Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." How He will satisfy every heart then ! Will one desire to wander ? Ah no ! Then even now let us be satisfied with Him. Let Him fill our heart, till every restless longing is stilled ; till desire for change, for more room, for anything but Himself, is gone, and we sit at His feet. The Lord bind His people to Himself, till He come !

" THE business of those united, is Christ's glory. If Christians ever unite on a condition of that not being essential, their union is not Christian union at all. I have no reason for union but Christ, the living Saviour. I do not want any union but that which makes Him the centre and the all, and the hope of it. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren ; but to make that a plea for indifference to Christ's personal glory, in order to be one with him who, calling himself a brother, denies and undermines it, is, in my mind, wickedness."—*J. N. D.*

UNSHOD FEET.

WHEN Jehovah appeared to Moses in the wilderness, at Mount Horeb, in the burning bush (Ex. iii. 1-12), He said to Him, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground."

Likewise, when the delivered nation, after humiliating failures because of unbelief, had been brought into the land, and were about to enter upon its conquest, we have again the same words to Joshua (Josh. vi. 15): "And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy." Thus at the beginning and at the close, we might say, of the redemption history, we have this significant action on the part of the leader, as representing all the people.

We have in the bush at once the representation of the people, their affliction, and of the Lord with them in it—"In all their affliction He was afflicted" (Isa. lxiii. 9). The bush was a *thorn* bush, and in that way speaking of those who, as to themselves, instead of fruit had borne but thorns. The fire was the affliction and chastening put upon them by their enemies, and permitted by the Lord for their faithlessness. In the midst of it all the Lord was with His chosen ones, measuring out the suffering, and at the right time manifesting Himself for their deliverance.

It was at this time the Lord appeared to Moses, to send him on the errand of love and mercy to set His people free. "I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt."

But if it was in grace that the Lord had come down to meet His needy people, He was to teach Moses at the very outset that not one whit was the holiness and majesty of His presence to be ignored. Grace which brought Him near was not inconsistent with the holiness which would keep man in his true place. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet."

We do well to remember this at all times. In the preaching of the gospel it is most important. We present the love of God in all its fullness; the grace and tender mercy awaiting the returning sinner; the alluring and bountiful table spread for the hungry;—but let us never forget that the sinner is that, a rebel against the divine majesty, a trifier on the borders of eternity. Will not this put a check upon natural levity, and the flippant manner sometimes seen in presenting the gospel? Will not the preacher the rather feel himself in the presence of One who says, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet"? We believe that gospel preaching of this character will result in far deeper work than is now common. Let not grace, mercy, and love, be ignored; nor the joy that fills the soul and flows out be checked;—these cannot be in excess if along with them is carried and presented the sense of the righteousness, holiness, and majesty of God.

The same holds good in all the fundamental truths of the word of God. They are not truths for the head merely, furnishing the mind; nor yet even for the heart as well, drawing out the affections; but they are to put the soul in the presence of God, a presence where no flesh can glory, where nature is in its true place—the shoes are put off.

Beloved brethren, we have been intrusted with

many precious truths, recovered in their clearness through the special mercy of God in these last days. Let us see to it that the knowledge do not puff up, but that it be coupled with an ever deepening sense of our own nothingness and of the amazing pity and mercy of God. The full conception of Grace will ever lead us to say, Who am I? Perhaps it may not be amiss to say this particularly to beloved younger brethren—that they let reverence and lowliness go hand in hand with knowledge. Then they are safe, and the enemy cannot so easily lead them into error.

That a like scene is repeated at the close of the Wilderness and the beginning of their warfare in the Land, serves to emphasize that of which we are speaking. The judgments in Egypt were past; the mighty deliverance through the divided sea was an accomplished fact; the awful display of divine majesty and glory from Sinai was now a recollection; and the varied acts of mercy and judgment in the Wilderness were all behind them. They were now in the Land promised to them, and were to face new enemies, to enter upon fresh experiences. At the very outset, on the border-land, as it were, between the two experiences, they were reminded that it was with the same God they had to do. "The Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot."

Canaan, as we know, represents for us the blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Of the fullness of these blessings and their varied character we have but begun to taste. Without doubt that land, "the glory of all lands," with its "hills and valleys," its "brooks of water, and fountains and depths that

spring out of valleys and hills," is even more minutely than we had supposed a foreshadowing of those spiritual blessings even now made good to us by the Holy Spirit. The cities and villages which clustered thickly upon the hills and in the valleys all over that land; the tribal boundaries and location—all have doubtless a voice and a meaning for us, if our ears are open.

These are our portion; but like Israel of old, we find powerful enemies standing in the way of our entering upon the enjoyment of what has been given to us. There must be conflict if we are to enjoy what is ours. But the prerequisite to all success here is to be in subjection to the Captain of the Lord's host. Here is the world which Satan and the wicked spirits in heavenly places will use to keep us out of the enjoyment of our blessings. How can we meet and overcome them? Only by following our Captain. But His presence is a holy presence. We must be there with unshod feet—in holy reverence.

Particularly do we need this in what is called high truth. There is danger here lest speculation take the place of Scripture, and a mental trafficking in divine things supplant that meek and lowly spirit which ever becomes us. It is the lack of this that has led to many sad shipwrecks, and deep sorrows, to the people of God. Unholy speculations as to the person of our adorable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, His work, and its effects, have only too often resulted from a failure to loose the shoe from the foot when entering upon such holy themes.

We might also remark that a failure in this is but too often manifest when questions arise which affect the fellowship of the Lord's people. Here, if any-

where, it becomes us to be on our faces before God. Grave questions press for answer; a line of conduct is to be followed; scriptural principles to be maintained. Let us be in the presence of God in handling such themes. Let us be alone with Him often, constantly in the spirit of prayer, and we shall find the way made clear and a sweet and blessed sense of that holy presence with us all our days.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 16.—Could the Lord Jesus be said to have been in the power of the devil during the three days and nights of His burial, or ever at any time? Would not such a doctrine destroy the truth itself and deny His words to the converted thief, “To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise?” In this connection, what is the meaning of Psalm xxii. 21, “Save me from the lion’s mouth”?

ANS.—We do not think it scriptural to say that our blessed Lord was *ever* in the power of the devil. We was, notably at His temptation and at the cross, subjected to the assaults of Satan; but this is very far from saying He was in his power. When He was delivered into the hands of wicked men to be crucified and slain, all the malice and hatred of hell were concentrated against Him. But all was in vain. The very death in which evil seemed to triumph was the victory over the devil; “that through death He might *destroy* (annul, Gk.) him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. ii. 14). A vanquished foe can have no more power. The strong man is *bound*. “Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. ii. 15). The preceding verse shows that the *cross* was the subject. By that He made a spoil of principalities and powers, as by that He took away the law of commandments contained in ordinances. But if the cross was the victory over Satan, how could the grave be said to be in his power?

Again, after the cry, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani,” at the close of the three hours of darkness, our Lord “yielded up the ghost,”

or, as more correctly rendered, "dismissed His Spirit" (Matt. xxvii. 46, 50). As a result of His forsaking, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. How absolutely impossible to think of the way into the holiest being opened, and of the body of Him who opened it being afterwards under the power of the devil! Then, as has been noticed in the question, He says to the thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." How impossible to think of His being with the Father during those three days, and His body in the power of Satan! Or to hear Him commend His spirit into the Father's hands, while His body was to be in the devil's power! (Luke xxiii. 46). Or, after He had declared the accomplishment of redemption in the words, "It is finished" (John xix. 30), to pass, as to His body, under the dominion of the devil!

True He laid down His life, and His spotless body lay for three days in the grave. But it was not because there remained aught to be done, but to prove the reality of what had been accomplished. But while He lay in the grave, He saw no corruption. "It was not possible that He should be holden of death" (Acts ii. 24). His body lay there, in His grace—as all that He did was in grace—to show how completely and entirely He had accomplished the work the Father gave Him to do. The devil had nothing to do with that holy body.

At the cross our Lord did not have to do with Satan nor with man, though both were there, but with *God* about sin. The accompanying jeers and evil treatment and satanic hatred are as nothing compared with the bearing of wrath. He suffered without the gate—the hiding of God's face.

True He cried "Save me from the lion's mouth"—the malice and power of Satan, and man too—but the cry is not for the danger so much as for the *absence* of God. He, our adorable Lord, could at any moment have delivered Himself; the point of the cry all through the first part of Psalm xxii. was that what God had always done for the righteous, He now fails to do for His spotless Son. The blessed reason we know. But the lion's mouth was *before*, not after death, and even before death the anguish seems to pass, the worst is over, and calmly into His Father's hands He commends His Spirit.

We believe, then, it would be most foreign to the Scripture to speak of our Lord's body after redemption was accomplished, being in the devil's power.

A DIVINE MOVEMENT, AND OUR PATH WITH GOD TO-DAY.

PHILADELPHIA : WHAT IS IT ?

MY purpose is, as the Lord enables me, to follow the track of what I have no doubt to be a gracious movement of God in recent times, and with which as such all His people are necessarily concerned ; to seek to show the principles which characterize it, and their meaning and value as taught in Scripture ; to speak also of the difficulties and opposition through which it has had to find its way ; and in this my aim will be to exercise hearts and consciences (if unexercised) with relation to it, and still more to help those already variously exercised to a settlement of questions which at the present time are pressing heavily on many.

I do not propose, however, any *history* of the movement of which I speak. For this I have no special competence ; nor, if I had, would it serve so well the purpose that actuates me. It would raise question as to *facts*, and prejudice minds in opposite ways, by the introduction of names and persons, familiar and in reputation, perhaps the reverse. Our tendency is too much to make men commend the truth, rather than the truth commend the men who follow it. I shall look therefore at principles simply, with their necessary results (as far as these can be traced), only referring to history so far as may be necessary to explain their importance for us, and omitting wholly the names of those who have stood for them, or stood against them.

This may be deemed unsatisfactory by some, and

of course leaves the application of principles to be made by every one for himself. But with divine light as to principles, and a soul truly before God, the application will after all be comparatively easy. It will test us, of course, whether we be there; and that seems to me to be in His mind for us, in a special way, just now. Let us not seek escape from it; but that we may stand the test, and find the blessing which He surely designs us in it.

For He *does* design blessing. This is the end from which He never swerves. When special times of sifting come, the sense of weakness everywhere apparent, and the love we have to one another would make us gladly seek escape, for ourselves and for others also. But, thank God, it is as vain as it is unwise and unbelieving. Satan is the sifter of God's wheat, and it is a serious thing indeed to have to do with him; but sifting is the ordained method of purification. Take Simon Peter as the great example of it in the gospels: he is in special danger, foreknown by the Lord as specially to fail, and yet cannot be spared the sifting. "I have prayed for thee," says the great Intercessor; *not* that thou mayest not be sifted, not even that thou mayest not fail, but "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and, when thou art converted," (or restored, as the meaning is,) "strengthen thy brethren." Here was good to come, (even for one who might seem to have failed utterly under it,) from the sifting of Satan.

What comfort for us in this, whether we think of ourselves or of others! And if the Lord had for us, in His abundant goodness, any work for Himself ready to be put into our hands, what wonder if, first of all, He were pleased to let us also—perhaps find-

ing our way into it, even as Peter did, through our own self-confidence and imprudence,—find, though in sorrow and suffering, the value of Satan's sieve? We have, I believe, ground for the conviction that this is the meaning of what is now taking place.

But I go on at once to what is the matter that I have in hand, and raise the question which is at the head of this paper.

I do not propose now to work out the proof of what is familiar and accepted truth for most, perhaps, who will read these pages, that the Lord's addresses to the seven churches in Revelation contemplate, in fact, successive states of the Church at large, answering, in the same order, to the condition of these respective churches, or assemblies; and that unitedly they cover the whole period, from the apostle's day till the Lord takes us to be with Himself above. The great proof of this must be in fact the correspondence that can be traced between what is thus assumed to be the prophecy and its fulfillment; and this it is not difficult to trace as far as regards at least the first five churches.* Let us briefly attempt this.

1. Ephesus, to which, in its first fresh fervor, the doctrine of the Church was declared by the apostle, is shown heading here a history of decline. Outwardly things still look well. The secret of departure is only realized by Him whose heart, seeking ours, cannot but be keenly conscious of it, if *first* love is no longer there. Here is the beginning of the end,

* Those who have difficulty I may refer to "Present Things," published by Loizeaux Brothers, and where it can be obtained also, bound up in a larger volume, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ."

a root upon which evil fruit of all kinds will be found, if there be not recovery.

2. Smyrna next shows us the double assault of the enemy upon the Church in this weakened condition. Persecution on the part of the world, as under the Roman emperors; internally, the introduction of a bastard Judaism, such as in its beginnings had to be met by the apostle, notably in Galatia, and which, in contrast with the heavenly Church, develops as the enemy's seed, "the synagogue of Satan,"—the mixing together of true and false in a legal and ritualistic system claiming earthly position and promises, and already slandering—this I take to be their "blasphemy"—the faithful remnant.

3. Pergamos shows us then the pilgrim character of the Church lost: they are "*dwelling* where Satan's throne is." And while Nicolaitans ("subjectors of the laity") preach now their "doctrine," Balaam-teachers seduce the people of God into evil alliances with the world, and mere idolatry.

4. Thyatira carries this on to full development in Romanism, as we see to-day. That which Balaam-teachers did before as individuals, a woman (type, as we know, of the professing Church) does now, speaking as a prophetess, with the claim of divine authority, and yet branded with the awful name of Jezebel, the idolatrous persecutor of true prophets in Ahab's days. Here development in this line ends: a remnant is beginning to be marked out again ("the rest in Thyatira"), and prepares us for a different condition of things in the next address.

5. In Sardis accordingly, we have no indication of Jezebel or her corruption. There are things that have been received and heard, but they languish and

are ready to die. The general state is that of death, though with a "name to live," and a "few names that have not defiled their garments" in this place of the dead. It is easy to see that we have here the national churches of the Reformation, with their purer doctrine given of God, though hard to be maintained in the midst of what—as the world claiming to be the church—is necessarily "dead," with "a name to live." There is here, and all through, to this point, no possible difficulty of identification for a simple and honest heart, of what is presented to us in these churches.

But this brings us, as the next stage, to Philadelphia; and what is Philadelphia? This ought to be a question capable of answer surely, and of satisfactory answer too. There can hardly be a doubt, if the previous applications have been correct, that Philadelphia must be something following Reformation times, outside of the state churches which have already found their delineation, and something which the three hundred years that are past have been ample to develop. But there are things connected with the identification in this case which should rightly make us pause and be very sure of our ground in attempting any explanation.

Philadelphia has, as a whole, the Lord's approval in a way no other of these churches has; except indeed Smyrna, with which in another respect also Philadelphia is linked. For here the "synagogue of Satan" once more appears as there: there seems some recrudescence of the Jewish principles typified by this; or at least something brings these to the front in the Lord's address.

But it is intelligible why people should shrink from

appropriating to themselves the commendation that is found here; while yet that very commendation must cause every Christian heart to crave the character which our blessed Master *can* thus commend. Thus it *always* must have appealed to Christians; and since no circumstances of our time can ever render it impossible for us to fulfill the conditions necessary to His approval, there surely must have been Philadelphians in every generation of His people since these words were written. And here how blessed to see that what the Lord approves in Philadelphia is given in such absolutely plain speech. Keeping His word, not denying His Name, keeping the word of His patience: how simple all this seems; how simple it *is*, to a heart that is truly simple! And yet, if we apply it closely, *not meaning to let ourselves off easily*, these words will be found, I doubt not, capable of searching us out to the very bottom.

But though thus there have been Philadelphians in all times, a *Philadelphian movement* is another matter; and this is what we should look for, from the place of this address among the other addresses. We shall have to face this, if we would be thoroughly honest with ourselves, and would not deprive ourselves therefore of the blessing of such a commendation. For while it is very well to take heed that we flatter not ourselves with being what we are not, there is another thing that is to be considered, and that is, if there be such a movement, *our own relation to it*. And this may well cause us anxious inquiry, may it not? and it would be a strange disappointment indeed, were we to have to accept that such an inquiry as this could not expect to attain its end.

If the Lord have given me in His addresses to the churches to find a clue to His relation to the successive phases, complete or partial, of the Church on earth, then I must surely ask myself, where am *I* with regard to this? And if I plainly do not belong to that line of development which ends in Thyatira or Papal Rome; if also I do not belong to the state churches of the Reformation, or those similarly constituted, though they may not be established; am I to find *no* place in that which the Lord addresses? If I am, where must I find it, but in Philadelphia or in Laodicea?

Now if the Spirit of God be at work in the midst of such a state of things as Sardis implies, not merely to sustain a remnant, but in testimony against evil as a whole, in what direction will it necessarily be found working? Will it not be in separation between the living and the dead? that is, in leading Christians to seek out their company; or in giving expression to the "love of brethren"? which is only to say in English, in PHILADELPHIA?

Is it not plain that this has in fact characterized, in various degrees, many different movements that have arisen since Reformation times, in which more or less was affirmed the separation of Christians from the world, and the communion of saints as a visible reality? Every effective protest against the misery of an unconverted church membership has partaken of this character. And the maintenance of the diversity between the Church and the world has necessarily led on to the assertion of the related truth of the Church's practical unity. Philadelphia, "brotherly love," is a word which, going to the heart of the matter, covers surely all this seeking after the mak-

ing visible of the Church so long conceived as necessarily invisible.

Putting all together, we may take this as clearly what Philadelphia means. It stands for a broad and well-defined movement in the history of the professing church, and which has assumed many different characters. These differences may indeed be pleaded against its practical nature as defining any distinct path for the people of God to-day. But this is only a superficial view of the matter. There are other things to be considered, which will essentially modify this first conception, and make us realize the word of God, here as elsewhere, to be "quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword," and requiring from us a real and complete integrity in our obedience to it, in order to such blessing as the Lord sets before us. Let us turn to consider now the first warning which He gives us in connection with this matter.

2. THE OVERCOMER IN PHILADELPHIA.

The separation of the Church from the world, and its restoration to visible unity upon the earth! if *that* be in the heart of the Philadelphian, as in his heart it must be for him to be this, how the Lord's words appeal to us, "Thou hast a little power." Power equal to such work as this is plainly *not* his; though He will graciously acknowledge what there is. The ideal before him is an impracticable one; though, thank God, this is to be widely distinguished from an *unpractical* one. Infidels have rightly declared that the Christian standard is an impracticable one; but every Christian knows that to "walk as Christ walked" is very far from an unpractical ideal.

If you are acquainted at all with the feeble efforts of Christians in the direction of which we have been speaking,—of their inconsistency with one another, and with their real object, we shall surely realize, that, in the path in which Christ leads us, we have need of the deepest humility, if we would escape the deepest humiliation. It is not my object now to enumerate these; but the warning which the Lord gives to the Philadelphian is surely one that speaks volumes here, for it is upon his heeding it that all depends for him. “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” It is in this respect that overcoming is to be accomplished for the Philadelphian, as it is plainly the *only evil that is in view*.

But with this his “little power” unites, to make the warning more impressive. The unattainableness of the ideal, the little progress that we make toward it, the weakness manifest in others as in ourselves, all combine to dishearten and weary us. That seems to be often the failure of principles which is only the failure to *act upon* the principles. But this too is saddening enough. Let it be that the principles themselves have only failed by not being carried out, if they are too unearthly—too heavenly—for that which all the history of the Church has proved her to be, would it not be wiser to materialize them somewhat? If a lower path be more practicable, is it not after all the better? It is not realized that to give up a single point as to the Lord's will is to give up obedience as a principle. How many points we give up is then but a question of detail.

As a matter of fact, it will not be difficult to find the wrecks of failed Philadelphia strewing the centu-

ries since Luther. Every genuine revival, as being the work of the same Spirit, has tended in the same direction. It has brought Christians together; it has separated them from the world; it has proved afresh the power of Christ's word; it has revived the sweetness of His Name. The sense of evils in the professing Church, intolerable to the aroused consciences and hearts of His people, has forced many, in obedience to the Word, to "depart from iniquity." Alas, is it not the constant reproach of such movements that hardly has a generation passed before the spirit of them is departed, they have sunk to nearly the common level of things around; they have no more been able to retain the blessing than a child the sunshine it has gathered in its hand? If wedded to some principle which the natural conscience owns, or some assertion of right which men value as their possession, such movements may still grow, and faster than before, while the old men weep at the remembrance of the days they have seen, and realize their temple to be in ruins.

So simply all this takes place, that it is easy to see it *must* take place, unless the power of God prevent the natural evolution. The first generation had to break through natural surroundings at the call of God; they had learned of God, with exercised hearts, and followed Him through suffering and with self-denial. And their children come into the heritage their fathers had acquired for them, necessarily without the exercise their fathers had. Nature *attracts* them to the path, not warns them from it. They accept easily, and can easily let go. They know not the joy of sacrifice. They have not the vigor gained by painful acquirement. It is easy to predict what

will naturally follow; not necessarily from anything wrong in what they hold as truth, but from the incapable hands with which they hold it.

But the argument from such failure seems to be used so disastrously with souls to-day, that it is worth a deeper consideration. Does "success," as men count success, argue anything as to the goodness before God of that which succeeds? Or conversely, does failure and break-up, to any extent you please to name, prove that that which has been made shipwreck of was evil, or that there was evil at least inherent in it? Carry it out thoroughly and honestly, such a supposition, and see where it will land you. If you know the Apostolic Church, as seen in Scripture, and the blessed heritage of truth with which it was endowed at the beginning: tell me where shall I find this Church, when I come to the beginning of uninspired history? and where shall I find this truth possessed by her even in many of its fundamentals?

The answer is too plain and terrible, Scripture itself preparing us indeed for it. It was needful, even while this was being written, that Jude should exhort to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." And Paul speaks of the "mystery of iniquity already at work"; and he and Peter of the special evils of the last days. And John could find the signs of the "last time" in there being already "many antichrists" (1 John ii. 18).

Outside of Scripture, it is enough to say, in the language of another, that the historical church "never was, as a system, the institution of God, or what God had established; but at all times, from its first appearance in ecclesiastical history, the departure as

a system from what God established, and nothing else." And as to doctrines, "it is quite certain that neither a full redemption, nor (though the words be used once or twice) a complete possessed justification by faith, as Paul teaches it, a perfecting for ever by His one offering, a known personal acceptance in Christ, is ever found in any ecclesiastical writings, after the canonical Scriptures, for long centuries."*

But what, then, about this apostolic church which, in some of its most important doctrines, seems to have vanished out of the world in such a manner, for so long a time? Were its principles at fault or what, that it failed so quickly? What principles of Scripture shall we find that will secure *us* from failure, though they could not secure those who had them at the beginning? Is it not plain that Scripture exhorts us, if we be Philadelphians, to "hold fast"? and does not this recognize the danger of not holding fast?

No one need wonder, then, if the wrecks of Philadelphia are strewn along the road; while Rome retains, century after century, her boasted unity and power over souls. It is accounted for by the simple fact which Scripture recognizes, that error roots itself in the world more easily than truth. And so the Lord asks by Jeremiah (ii. 11): "Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit." Rather, then, may we argue the reverse way, that if, in an adverse world, and with Satan's power rampant, a people could find a way of steady increase and prosperity, this exceptional vigor would

* J. N. Darby. "Christianity, not Christendom," pp. 7, 22.

have to be accounted for, and not the fact of reverses and discouragements.

Yet after all, it should be clearly understood to what the Lord's warning words exhort: "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." What is that which they are called to "hold fast"? I beg my reader's earnest attention to the answer which the message itself gives: this is NOT *a certain deposit of doctrine* clearly. I do not mean to deny such a deposit—very far from that; nor, if there be such, that it is to be held fast. Necessarily it is; and yet, I say again, this is *not* what the Lord speaks of here; whereas in the message to Sardis, it is this unmistakably.

The comparison between the two is in the highest degree important. To Sardis it is said, "Remember therefore how thou hast *received and heard*, and hold fast and repent." There a measured amount, a clearly defined deposit, of truth is indicated: and this is simple and most instructive, if we recall what Sardis means. A wonderful blessing was given in those Reformation days. Many a truth of immense significance and value for the soul had they "received and heard." And they knew the value of it all; but in their eagerness to secure it for the generations to come, what did they do? They put it into creeds and confessions; and I say not, they were wrong in this. Nay, they had clearly a right to say for themselves and declare to others what they believed they had received from God. Those "confessions"—truly such they were in those days of martyrdom—read by the light of the fires kindled by their adversaries for the signers, are blessed witnesses to-day of the truth for which, when felt in power, men

could give their bodies to the flame, and quail not.

But the wrong was here: they took those creeds and imposed them—with all the emphasis that penalties enforced by a State-church could give—upon the generations following. Their own measure of knowledge was to be that of their children and their children's children. If there were error in the creed, that error must be transmitted with it. And all this was given into the hands, not even of spiritual men, but of the world-church they had reared up, to care for and maintain!

Necessarily the Spirit was grieved and quenched. He was leading them on—you can see it in Luther's letter to the Bohemian brethren—far beyond where they actually stopped. He was ready to lead them into "ALL truth" (Jno. xvi. 13). They put up their Ebenezers not to show simply that thus far the Lord had helped them, but as the *Ultima Thule* of knowledge. What wonder if they really, to those under the sway of these systems, became such! Henceforth it was to "what they had received and heard" in the sixteenth century that they looked back. The word now was no longer, as with the Reformers, when they *were* reformers, "On with the Holy Spirit of truth, our Teacher," but "*Back* to the Reformation."

The words of the Lord to Sardis are therefore precise in the marvelous accuracy which *His* words necessarily must have. "You have taken," they say, "the measure of truth you have, as if it were *all* truth: well, you have limited yourselves how much; but at least be true to what you have got: 'be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die'." In view of infidel criticism everywhere undermining to-day the foundations of Scrip-

ture itself, how are the Reformation churches responding to this?

But Philadelphia is called to "hold fast," too. Yes, but what? what she has, of course; and that is a little power, and Christ's *word* kept, and His Name not denied. Notice that there is no longer a measured quantity—"what thou hast received"; nor is it His "commandments" or His "words," but His "word." The distinction is so clearly drawn in the gospel of John (xiv. 21-24) that, although it may be familiar to most who read this, I shall briefly state it.

Love is not to be measured by profession or by emotion, but by obedience. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them," says the Lord, "he it is that loveth Me." The response to this is: "and he that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him."

But there is a deeper love than that manifested in keeping *commandments*. It is that which takes account of all His word, whether positive command or not. And here the response is greater correspondingly. "If a man love Me, he will keep my *word*"—so it should read, not "words"; "and my Father will love him, and *We* will come to him, and *make our abode* with him." Here it is plain that there is a fullness and permanency of communion not to be found in the previous case.

Philadelphia has kept—is keeping, as long as she remains Philadelphia—not His commandments, but His *word*: this as a whole. Not, of course, that she knows it all: that were impossible. But, just for that reason, she has not a certain amount of truth which she has received, and to which she is faithful. She is like Mary at His feet, to listen and be subject

to whatever He has to communicate. His word as a whole is before her. Not limiting the Spirit, she will be led on; for He leads on. Her ear is open. She has the blessedness of the man "that heareth Me," says the eternal Wisdom, "watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors."

Of course, this is no peculiarity of any special time; it is God's way at all times to lead on the soul that is just ready for His leading. And at all times of special revival this has been seen especially. But of late, many will recognize that Scripture has been opened to us more as a whole than at any former time since the apostles; and that this has been in connection with such a movement as had the features, if I have interpreted them aright, of what in the Apocalypse is called Philadelphia. Certain great truths being recovered to the Church have helped to open up in a new way the Old Testament as well as the New. The dispensations have been distinguished; the gospel cleared from Galatian error; the place in Christ learned in connection with our participation in His death and resurrection; the real nature of eternal life, and the present seal and baptism of the Spirit in contrast with all former or other operations and gifts; the coming of the Lord as distinct from His appearing: do we not owe it to the Lord to acknowledge without reserve what His grace has done? and must we not connect it with the fullness of Christ's word here, in contrast with the "what thou hast received and heard" of Sardis?

We must recognize it in order to admit the question, which to me, I confess, grows more solemn daily: Is this attitude still maintained, and is it to *be* maintained? are we to go on with the Lord still

learning, still to learn? or to make even these blessed truths a measure with which we shall content ourselves? A *large* measure is still a "measure"; and once getting back to merely "what we have received" is after all to accept the bucket (or say, the cistern) in place of the flowing well. At the feet of Jesus, who will presume to say we *have* the measure of *His* blessed Word?

(*To be continued.*)

AN ASSEMBLY'S CONDITION.

(Leviticus xiv. 33-57.)

WE come now to a third revelation, given, as the first was, to both Moses and Aaron, and which treats of leprosy in a house in the land. Leprosy in a man, or in a garment, could be known in the wilderness; that in the house could only be experienced in the land, and it was a direct infliction by the hand of God: "And I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession."

The priest, made acquainted with the occupant's suspicion about the house—for it was the duty of one in it to acquaint him with his fears respecting it—he was to order them to empty it ere he entered therein, that all in the house should not be made unclean.

Examining the walls, he judged if the marks were in sight lower than the wall—*i. e.*, not mere superficial marks. If they were, he shut up the house for seven days, for it was the plague which had attacked it.

Examining it again at the expiration of that time, if the marks had spread, the plague-stricken stones were to be taken out, the whole house scraped, new stones put in the place of the diseased ones, and the

whole replastered; whilst the stones removed and scrapings of the walls were all to be cast into an unclean place without the city. If the plague reappeared after that, there was nothing for it but the demolition of the whole building, and its stones, timber and mortar to be carried forth to an unclean place outside the city. Such a house was not to be suffered to remain in the land.

What care was to be exercised, and what patience! The plague really there, as evidenced on the first inspection, the priest waited to see whether or not it would spread. If it did, he tried to save the house by the removal of the diseased stones. If, however, the leprosy still worked, unsparing was the treatment to be pursued. But should the removal of some stones be sufficient to eradicate the plague, the priest offered for the cleansing of the house the same offerings as were enjoined for the leper on the first day of his cleansing. Atonement thus made for it, the house was clean, because the plague was healed. These offerings, however, were to be offered only in the case of the plague having ceased to spread after the stones had been taken out (ver. 48) and the house replastered. So it would appear that when the second examination of the house (*i. e.*, that on the seventh day) showed that the plague had not spread since the priest had first seen it, no sacrifices were required.

The house was then in a condition analogous to that of the man in whom the leprosy had all turned white (xiii. 13). It was clean. Such was the law.

To us, this affords instruction in type about an assembly in which evil has got a footing that requires to be dealt with; for the whole subject of leprosy in

these two chapters (xiii., xiv.) provides us with principles applicable to the circumstances in which a Christian can be found. Is he himself leprous, the disease still at work in him? Then putting away from the fellowship of the saints is the proper Scriptural way of dealing with him; and the assembly, certified of his state, is responsible to act as the word directs. Are his surroundings such as God's word forbids? He must get out of them at all cost to himself. Is any local assembly known to harbor evil, and which ought to be put out? The state of that assembly should be the common concern of all saints. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. v. 6). If it purges itself, so that the evil ceases to work, well and good. But should the disease still work, the authors of it and those infected by it must be put away. If that does not arrest the spread of the plague, the assembly must be broken up—*i. e.*, disowned as an assembly of God.

Do any ask for an example in Scripture of the assembly in general disowning any local assembly? We must answer at once that there is none, though we can point to Corinth as affording instruction about the whole case.

Evil leaven was among them. The apostle wrote to them about it; they dealt with it, and thus got clear of it (2 Cor. vii. 11). The visit of Titus, and his report about them, evidenced that to the apostle; so he proceeded no further. But was Paul unconcerned about it? No. Did he take the ground that none could urge a local assembly to act? No. And we may be quite sure that the one who could write as he did in 1 Cor. v. 2, 7, 13 would not have tolerated the retention among them of the evil about which he

wrote. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," he writes—a very plain intimation of the character they would have borne if the evil had not been purged out. And if he insisted on their dealing with the offender, would he—could he—have held intercourse with them as an assembly of God, supposing they had refused to act? His language evidences in what light he would have viewed them.

The Corinthians dealt with the offender as the priest did with the leper. But they did not do it till Paul, who was not locally connected with them,—his language proves that, (1 Cor. v. 7, 13)—pressed on them the need of action, and pointed out what should be done; and waited (and how anxiously) to learn what they would do. In this he acted somewhat like the priest who inspected the house, and then waited a week to see if the disease was still working. As an apostle he personally could do all this, and take such ground with them about the evil in question; for he was an apostle of Christ, and apostolic power was no light thing (2 Cor. x. 1–11, xiii. 2–10; 1 Cor. iv. 21; 1 Tim. i. 20; 3 John 10).

But what, some may ask, is to be done now, seeing there are no apostles? John xx. 21–23 supplies us with the answer. The disciples breathed on by the Lord Jesus, receiving from Him the Holy Ghost, were thereby authorized to act on earth for Him. That authority remains, and that is enough. The assembly, viewed in its general character, has power to act for Christ—to care for His glory as much as the assembly viewed in its local character. In both aspects it is the body of Christ (Eph. iv. ; 1 Cor. xii.), and in both it is regarded as having all its members, and therefore it is competent to act. God's word

gives no sanction to the thought that, whilst the local assembly must keep itself clear, the assembly in its general character has no power to deal with evil. It is surely responsible to cleanse itself as the house of God, and has authority to act for the Lord Jesus Christ.

We should also bear in mind the revelation of Lev. xiv. 46, 47, which tells us in what light those were regarded who went into a house after it had been shut up by the priest. They were by entrance into it made unclean, and had to wash their clothes in order to be cleansed. Would it, then, be fitting for any one not locally connected with it to have personal fellowship with an assembly in a state analogous to that of the house? We can all answer such a question. But we must remember that till the priest examined the house and found it unclean it was not shut up. So, surely, there should be an investigation into an assembly's condition corresponding to that of the examination by the priest, ere so serious a charge as that of leprosy within it could be held to be proved.—*From Vol. IV., "Bible Herald."*

C. E. S.

I OBSERVE in each place where the conversion of Levi the publican is recorded, that we are told immediately afterwards, he prepared meat for the Lord in his own house. For he was one of those whom Jesus came down from the bright heavens to visit. He was a publican, an owned and published sinner in the world, and Jesus was the Saviour. The faith of such, therefore, opened the door and entertained Him, made Him welcome in His own proper character, while everything else only kept Him outside still.

“BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY : HOLD FAST
THAT THOU HAST, LET NO MAN
TAKE THY CROWN.”

NOT my own, my blessed Master,
Thine was all the awful cost.
All the sorrow, shame, and suffering,
Thou didst bear for me, the lost.
Yea, but for Thy cross, my Saviour,
Sad indeed had been my lot;
Love for me made Thee the Sufferer,
Yet, for all, I loved Thee not.

“Thou hast measured all the distance”
’Tween me and a righteous God,—
Put away my sin forever
By Jehovah’s awful rod:—
Rod of wrath, that must have fallen,
But for Thee, upon my head.
Love beyond all human measure
Put Thee, Saviour, in my stead.

Blessed Name! than all names sweeter;
Precious love! than all more dear.
I would guard Thy Name, Lord Jesus,
With a holy, jealous fear.
Let Thy precious word, which guardeth
E’er that Name with jealous care,
Lead, and by its holy guiding
Keep my feet from every snare.

Never let my hand be given
Where the least suspicion lurks;
For I know, in these days, Satan
Under fairest guises works.
Not my own, my blessed Master,
I may *never* choose my way;
I am *Thine*, I love to own it,—
Love Thy leading, day by day.

Weak, defenceless, how dependent
 On Thine arm of love and strength!
 For through sorrow, storm, and trial,
 Thou wilt bring me home at length.
 Thou my strength and my Redeemer,
 All my joy and comfort be;
 Let my words and meditations
 Be acceptable to Thee.

And while still the path is narrowing,
 Evil pressing every side,
 Let me walk with fear and trembling
 While I in Thy love abide.
 Soon Thou'lt come, and then, retracing
 All the sorrow, it will seem,
 For the joy that I behold Thee,
 But the passing of a dream.

Courage then, beloved brethren;
 Only just "a little while"
 Here His holy Name to honor,
 Then, His all-approving smile.
 Little strength indeed is ours,
 But His tried and trusted word
 We'll hold fast the while we're waiting
 For the coming of our Lord.

Let us hold fast *all* He's given,
 Yet the wreck and ruin own;
 Let us overcome amidst it,
 Lest we, faltering, lose our crown;—
 Hold a little longer, surely,
 Break of day is at the door,
 Our deliverance is nearing,
 Then the warfare will be o'er.

In the joy of His own presence
 We'll rehearse the journey here,
 See how grace did gild the pathway
 And His love each bitter tear,—

See how, e'er, His hand was ready
 When the way was rough or steep,—
 How, though we but little knew it,
 He from dangers oft did keep.

Patience, then, a little longer;
 Wait, and sing thy midnight song;
 He is waiting, too, remember;
 He'll not keep us very long.
 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus,
 Let Him be our strength and joy,
 And the way can not be weary
 If His praise our hearts employ.

H. Mc D.

HINTS ON SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE.

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”—Eph. iv. 30.

THERE is often much confusion in the minds of Christians with respect to the Spirit's guiding; not only in individual walk, but in meetings. Let us, then, look into the Word together as to the divine fact. And first, as to the personality of the Holy Ghost.

Are we—ARE YOU, beloved—in the faith as to this: that the Holy Spirit is God in power, not an influence; but a person as real as we ourselves are persons? And are we consciously in the faith as to His dwelling in us individually? Now this must be the starting-point. We are not prepared to take a step together in our proposed investigation until we can answer these questions promptly, cheerfully, conscientiously, in the affirmative. “God is a Spirit” (John iv. 24). “When HE, the Spirit of truth, is come”—“HE shall glorify Me”—“HE shall not speak of HIMSELF”—“HE shall guide you into all

truth"—“HE shall be in you”—“HE shall teach you” (John xiv. 16, 17, and 26, and John xvi. 13-15). Here is personality—indwelling, guiding, teaching. And the apostle says, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Rom. viii. 9). Here we get the two sides of the question. “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” The human side is called “*the flesh*.” The divine side is called “*the Spirit* ;” and it is not the physical organism, the members of the body, but the active principle of self-will and lust in man, called “*the carnal mind*.”

Let us read from the seventh verse:—“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God [*margin*, the minding of the flesh], is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God”—governed and controlled by the principle of self-will and lust. Thus saith the Lord by the prophet: “I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor. vi. 16). This is the divine fact which constitutes Christianity. “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. vi. 19).

It is a divine fact, then, that the Holy Ghost, God the Spirit, dwells in every child of God. “Because ye are sons [children], God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. iv. 6).

The practical realization and the blessed experiences flowing out from this divine fact are quite another thing, and dependent upon faith; and faith is dependent upon intimacy of communion and fellowship with God; and communion is dependent upon prayer, confession, and self-judgment. Let us take up these points in their reverse order.

Self-judgment is really genuine repentance. It is that "godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of" (2 Cor. vii. 10). It is to meet God about ourselves and our sins, in the light of His holiness; and to take sides with God against ourselves in everything in us, of us, and about us, in word, thought, and deed, which is unlike to Christ.

And the difference between consecration and self-judgment is this: that consecration is a sort of piling up of all our good things before God; while self-judgment is casting off all the best, as well as the worst, as filthy rags, at His feet—"all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6). "All our righteousnesses." What are our righteousnesses? Are they not our best things? "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (Phil. iii. 7, 8). And beloved, Paul was not out of communion when he gives us the basis, or ground, of his self-judgment; but it was the blessed result of having met "the God of glory," "the man Christ Jesus," not only to see that all his sin and badness was judged in His cross, but also that all his goodness was judged also in the light of His holiness. The thief in the twenty-third of Luke confesses the just judgment of God upon his badness. Paul confesses the just judgment of God upon his goodness. And

this is confession not only before God but before men, and the basis of a proper self-judgment, and the true ground-work of a spirit of prayer. And with this we have the "continuing instant in prayer," and "praying without ceasing," because there will be always the deep and abiding sense of need which is a continual prayer and the true spirit of dependence, which is to "pray without ceasing." And if this be not the true spirit and atmosphere of our hearts, we shall not be profited by looking further into His word.

Standing, then, in the faith of these divine facts, we are prepared for the next step, which will be, first of all, to give Christ His right place. "No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and no one can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii. 3).

This presents the vital distinction between fleshly intelligence and spiritual intelligence, fleshly discernment and spiritual discernment, fleshly wisdom and spiritual understanding. The one—fleshly—can own, or acknowledge, His titles; and the devils can do that: but it is only by the indwelling Holy Ghost that any can give Him His proper place. For when He is properly enthroned in the heart, He will be properly recognized as enthroned in the heavens, where God has set Him. And only in the measure that He is enthroned in the heart, as Lord of all, will He be confessed by us. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and *shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead*" (Rom. x. 9). You see, it is owning Him as Lord, and giving Him His proper place as exalted to be "both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36).

"And that every tongue should confess that Jesus

Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 11). And it is in this that the theology of the present day is so sadly deficient. Men have come to have so much confidence in themselves, that they have but little confidence in God, and less confidence in the revelation which He has made of Himself in Jesus Christ. The sin question is ignored, and the blood of His cross is counted as an unholy thing; and doctrines dishonoring to Christ creep forth from many of the renowned universities of the land. I do not need to name them; they are legion. But it may be asked, What is the test? How shall we who are ignorant and unlearned detect these evil doctrines? How did Peter, John, and Paul? By the indwelling Spirit. Is that all? No; for we have seen already that the indwelling Spirit is one thing; the practical realization and the blessed experiences which flow out, are quite another; and these are the result of intimacy of communion, practical walking with God, *and the SPIRIT UNGRIEVED*. And it is the Spirit ungrieved who gives us "the mind of Christ," and, *through the Word, God's thoughts* about all these things. So that if we are in the Spirit as to practical walk, we are never at a loss as to that which is of "*the flesh*" and that which is of the Spirit, and Christ will always have His right place, as there can be no genuine faith in God apart from that which gives Christ the supreme place. From this standpoint, we see that the reason why so many are being led astray by the evil doctrines of "Christian Science," "Annihilation," and "Future Probation," is, that they know nothing of a practical walk with God, and have never given the Lord Jesus His right place.

C. E. H.

(To be continued.)

A DIVINE MOVEMENT, AND OUR PATH WITH GOD TO-DAY.

(Continued from page 269.)

3. "THOU HAST KEPT MY WORD."

THE more one realizes what is implied in the keeping of Christ's word, the more the central importance of it will be perceived. Instead of too much having been said about this, or its force having been unduly strained in what has just been said, we shall have to go further, and insist still more upon what is in it.

Truly to keep Christ's word implies the going on with Him in steady progress, permitting willingly no part of it to be dark, or barren, or in vain for us; not suffering ourselves to be robbed of whole books or chapters, and remaining content with this. Do we not, in fact, suffer this without a thought about it often, as if God had really given us too large a Bible for our use, and we were perplexed rather than served by the largeness of His gift? Do we in fact approve as true that saying of the apostle, which perhaps we may have even fought for as essential truth, that "ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"? Are we sure in our very souls, that this is true? and true of prophecy, history, type, parable,—yea, of the genealogies of Chronicles, and the lists of David's officers, and of the cities in Israel, and all else? Are we finding it so,—going on, at least, to find it so? and if not, are we nevertheless lacking nothing of that "furnishing unto all good

works" which for the apostle flows from this all-profitableness of every part of Scripture?

Let us be absolutely honest with ourselves, and with God. If it be not so, what does it mean that it is not so, but after all that we are taking the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture with a large reserve?—that to that extent we are orthodox perhaps, but not with a living faith?—that we are not thus just the "men of God" for whom "all Scripture" is to be thus fruitful?

Weigh this; consider it; see if it has not the serious import that is claimed for it. Take from a typical history the admonition. Was it no evil sign that Israel, brought into the land by the power of God, should yet fail, as she did so signally, to fill the bounds assigned her? Was it not, in reality, a sign of the most portentous character? Is it for us nothing that "there remaineth" for us also "very much land to be possessed"?

Two things—apart from sheer lack of faith in the inspiration of God's word—oppose themselves to this. They are both indeed unbelieving arguments; and, as practically fruitful in an evil way, need searching out and exposure for the deliverance of souls.

The first is an old argument of Isaiah's day against the divine "vision." Delivered to the learned with the request to read it, the answer of the learned is, "The book is sealed." The language is incomprehensible: history, type, parable, are strange speech, as to the interpretation of which people everywhere so disagree. What certainty can we have as to success where so many have failed? or what good can come as to conjectural interpretation?

As to the last, in general, none. Uncertainty as

to the truth makes one's footing like that in a morass: it is dangerous to proceed,—dangerous even to stand there. To keep on the firm ground of known truth is the plain duty of the Christian. Alas, it is to be confessed that Scripture has been used by many in so hap-hazard a way as to make it the mere plaything of the mind, hardly to be taken seriously. None the less is there certainty at every point, for him that in lowliness and in faith will seek it. “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God” is an injunction which here as elsewhere has the assurance appended, “and it *shall* be given him.” So it must be, if we are to believe that He deals truly with us. How can Scripture be profitable, if it is not to be understood? Let us use indeed the most perfect care as to interpretations that we accept; for such caution is in the interests of the truth itself. But if there be no certainty possible as to the truth—any truth, the whole truth itself—this we shall find to give indeed free license to the imagination. Holiness is “holiness of truth” (Eph. iv.).

But the second argument, which is also as old as Isaiah, is perhaps the most wide-spread and most fatal. It is the language of the mass, not of the leaders; of the “laity,” which assuredly becomes this wherever it is used. It is the language of humility apparently—generally of sloth and lack of exercise; it is this: “I am not learned.”

It denies at once the all-sufficiency of the Spirit of God as the Teacher of Christians; or it denies His presence with His people. It makes the apprehension of the things of God to be dependent upon the quantity of a man's brains, rather than upon the grace bestowed upon him. It makes the Christ who dwelt

among the poor and needy, now to reveal Himself to the men of leisure and wealth and cultivation. It makes the twelve apostles, those Galilean rustics, an anomaly for all future time. It gives the head an enormous practical advantage over the heart and conscience—the intellectual over the moral being. It constitutes the “learned” into the judges of truth for the unlearned; and makes Scripture filter through their minds before it shall be fit to be the living ministry of God to others. In a word, it puts things out of all moral, spiritual proportion, subjects the many to the few, and everywhere does the best it can to fulfill its own prophecy, and make Scripture for the mass inaccessible and impracticable. What wonder, if, under the sway of such belief or unbelief as this, people really find what they expect to find, and the “open Bible” of which it has become customary to speak, become in effect very little “open”? What wonder, if the Spirit, grieved and limited by the faithlessness of Christians, should be unable to “lead” us “into all truth,” according to the mind of our gracious God?

Is this to disparage any true learning? or to deny the right place of intellect in the things of God? No, assuredly: for, in spite of the sin that has come in, he who believes that God has made man, must believe (if *he* is intelligent) that God has made him altogether—understanding, reason, imagination, as well as conscience and heart—for Himself. Consequently, to receive the gospel, and to be in real nearness to God according to grace, is to have all these quickened and enlarged immeasurably. Let a man be only in earnest to *know* this God who has revealed Himself to him,—let this be what he desires as the

crown of knowledge,—every bit of truth that he acquires will be to such an one the means not only of sustenance, but of a *growth*, not monstrous, (as where the head developes till it becomes a parasite upon the body,) but of mind, heart, conscience, all alike and together, on towards the perfect, always proportionate, man.

Now this is the privilege of every Christian,—of the toiling masses, as well as the favored classes,—of those to whom Christ said, “Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat which endureth to everlasting life.” This meat is *knowledge*,—spiritual knowledge, true; but that is *knowledge*, and of the highest kind; and knowledge which is needful to the adjustment and power and productiveness of every other kind. Grant it to be true what the apostle tells us, that “all things were created by Christ and for Him,” how is it possible to see things aright until we have them connected with their end—with Him for whom they were created? But then it is evident that all natural science will become spiritual science,—all “-ologies” will (in the phrase of men) work into theology. What value will the world be to me, if it be not *God's* world? if it be His, made for the manifestation of Himself as Christ has revealed Him, how intense will be my interest in it! Christians are verily guilty for the unbelieving neglect which has let the natural sciences become almost the possession of unbelieving men, to read (and mis-read) at their will. Here again, unbelief being the prophet, it necessarily helps to fulfill its own prophecies, and the evidences of Christianity instead of standing firm upon the two feet—of Nature and Scripture—limp with one useless foot a burden upon the other.

Knowledge? yes, "labor" for knowledge! Get Christ the key to it, and the whole field lies open before you. Take possession for Him of all; unfurl the flag which claims for and hallows to Him the whole continent of human interest and research. *Labor*; be loyal, be in earnest: "every spot that the sole of your feet shall stand on shall be your own." Labor more earnestly than for what you call your necessary food: every instinct of your spiritual nature claims it from you; and these denied, starved, neglected, you may indeed dwarf yourself to any extent, miserably satisfied with what is next door to starvation: eternity will reveal to you the extent of your loss too late.

I believe assuredly that God has just now, as never before since the apostles' days, really opened the Bible, and put it into our hands open, and is testing us with it. Alas, alas, alas, if now we turn away! Are not these our own things? Have we faith in Him who has given them to us, that He has not, largely, mocked us with the gift? Are these immense riches our own, and shall we be only bewildered and oppressed with their immensity? Boundless the field is, true; but its green pastures, its sunny uplands, its glorious distances, would win us to their exploration. Where are the souls that can find in the needed "labor" only the necessary exercise for spiritual health and invigoration? Here are endless beauties and glories of worlds so little realized, which may be the possession of all, which actually *belong* to all of us! Do you say, little can be my measure? Beloved, have you earnestly striven to *find* your measure? Are you positive that you have ever reached your God-given boundary-line? Could you say it *to God*, that

you are honestly and with your whole heart endeavoring to learn with Him all that He has put into your hand as yours? If so, His rule will be found ever to apply: "To him that hath shall more be given." But where, then, will your limit be found?

Think, now, of what God has done for us in putting these things into our hand. Here, it is true, is ceaseless occupation for us: is that a loss or a gain? Can we ask it? With the necessity acknowledged of ceaseless occupation (on the part of most men) with the things of the world around us, just to get daily bread and clothing, is it loss or gain that we should have ordained for us at the same time a corresponding necessity of this kind?

For it *is* a necessity: "labor *not* for the meat which perisheth, *but* for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life" was spoken by lips that cannot lie or repent: and here the spiritual labor is pronounced the *more* necessary. Who will contest it with the Lord? Who will say that it was a rule applying to the Galilean peasants who could follow Him, not because of the miracles, but because they ate of the loaves and were filled, and yet a rule not applying to the hard-worked, toiling masses of to-day?

On the other hand, if it apply, this necessity of labor, must it not be a necessity in some way inherent in the conditions of the spiritual life itself, and which has its corresponding reward and blessing? May it not be, indeed, that, among other things, it shall be found to balance and relieve the natural one itself? The weight of the atmosphere is such that it presses upon the average-sized man with a weight of from twelve to fourteen tons. Yet we walk un-

der this enormous weight without being conscious of it : and why ? Because, as the air penetrates the body, there is an equal pressure acting outward, which prevents it from being felt. So the pressure of natural things may be met by the opposing pressure of spiritual things, that we may walk at ease and in freedom. And so it will be found. For the spiritual occupation is that in which the increase of faith and spiritual energy enables as with divine power ; and such it is.

Our land is a good land, but it must be *worked*, for its value to be realized. *Then* its return profits will make it impossible for aught to beggar us. Unworked, it will be found that our inheritance in heaven will yet leave us in poverty on earth. We need the constant occupation with our own things for realization. We need renewing in this way constantly, to meet the constant demands upon us in the world through which we pass. And thus God, in His faithfulness to us, has not put the truth into creeds, which we might learn by heart and lay aside ; nor has He written everything out plainly, so that there should be no difficulty. The conflicts and bitter controversies about even fundamentals, which at least we might have thought could have been spared us thus, have not been spared us, as we all are witness. Better it is, in God's thought, that we should have constant need of reference to our lesson-book, and that with all the earnestness induced by exercises of the most painful nature, than be allowed to sink into mere dullness and lethargy, as otherwise we are prone to do. By and by, we shall learn war no more ; meanwhile it is not an unredeemed evil ; and part of the reason why the remnant of the Canaan-

ites was not dispossessed of their land was that Israel might learn it.

Moreover truth is not taught always in Scripture in such plain form as the epistles give us. By far the largest part of it is not this. The Lord taught much in parables. The book of Revelation, with all the intensity of interest attached to it, is allegorical in the highest degree. The Christian truths in the Old Testament are taught in typical institutions and history which we are taught to "allegorize." The man of understanding in Proverbs is expected "to understand a proverb and its interpretation, the words of the wise and their dark sayings." So, "if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, *then* thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Nay, we are even told that "it is the glory of God to conceal a thing,"—hiding it where a diligent spirit shall find it as its reward.

But what does all this imply? What but labor, labor, evermore labor; a labor that cannot be delegated to another, though we all are meant to help one another in it. But here are no excepted "laity," to be fed with a spoon once or twice a week, and just take thankfully, and with little question, what is given to them. Here is no division of labor, secular things for the common people, and a special class to be addicted to the sacred; nay, we are to "be able to comprehend *with all saints* what is the breadth and length and depth and height." And we shall need all saints to help us to comprehend them.

Of course there are special "teachers"; no one

with Scripture before him could think of denying that. But Scripture does not restrict all teaching to the teachers, any more than it confines evangelizing to the evangelist, or prophesying to the prophet. Nay, it is the glory of all these special gifts to enable those whom they address to do without them, to send men from themselves to Christ. Sitting at His feet then, we hear Him say, without prejudice to any special gift, "One is your Master"—Teacher—"even Christ, and all ye are brethren" (Matt. xxiii. 8).

Teachers are special helps given to the Church by the ascended Lord, and he who would undervalue the help given dishonors the Lord from whom they have their mission and qualification. But it is no new thing in human history for men to turn special help into special hindrances, and so it has been eminently done in this case. The moment the teacher is allowed to give the authority to the truth, instead of the truth he teaches giving *him* authority;—the moment he is allowed to stand between the soul and the Word, instead of bringing him *to* this;—the moment he is made the *substitute* in labor in the divine Word, instead of the help and encouragement to this; then there has ensued the perversion of the gift, and it is now no wonder if disaster follow. The whole evil of the "Church teaching," by which is meant in fact the rule of man usurping God's rule, has come in at this door. Clergy and laity are then already formed.

What the word to Philadelphia presses upon us is that Christ's word—which all Scripture is—is given to His people; that they are commended of Him, who "keep" (or observe) it; and what I have been urging is that for this they must necessarily know—

know for themselves—what it is they keep; that here the whole breadth of Scripture is before them, and that they cannot have the spirit of Philadelphians who willingly allow any of it to be taken from them; whose Bibles are willingly permitted to lack, as it were, whole pages, whole books perhaps, of what is all inspired of God for profitable use; and that the need of *labor* in the Word, earnest, untiring, believing *labor*, is what is insisted on as necessary for all progress, for the maintenance of spirituality and a right state with God on the part of *all* the people of God,—not of a class, but of the whole.

Let me still press the last part of this theme briefly before I close. What a new state would begin for us, if we should—say, any little company of Christians, however feeble—if we should find that, between our necessary work in the world, and our still more necessary, and more fruitful, occupation with Scripture, our time was so fairly and fully taken up, that we should have little or none remaining for anything that was not absolutely *productive* and profitable; if all that was idle, vain, frivolous, disappeared out of our lives; if the newspaper were supplanted by news of fresh discoveries in the things of God, of fresh blessing poured upon our lives by them! It is the apostle Peter who exhorts us that “laying aside all malice and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speakings,” we should “as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we should grow thereby.” It is not, of course, that he desires us to remain “babes”—and to remain “*new-born*” babes would be impossible; the whole effect and pretty much the purpose of “milk”

is that these should "grow up," as he says here. The words are a figure in his use of them, and a very striking figure. There is conveyed to us in it some of that energy of soul which, under God, had surely helped to make *him*, the Galilean fisherman, the leader in divine things which he had become. We are to be, he says, as ardent after the word of God as a new-born babe is for its milk! And how much is meant by *that*! why the one business of the new-born babe is to secure its milk! Is it to be like that? is the word of God to be sought and longed for indeed after that fashion?

Then notice—what he puts indeed as an exhortation—the incompatibility of such occupation with "all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speakings." Must it not be that if the word of God becomes to us in this manner the nurture of our souls, all contrary things to this shall pass away out of our lives and perish, as the dying leaf falls, crowded out by the new bud? "Happy the people that are in such a case!" Is it not very much what is presented to us in the delightful picture of the Israelite in the first psalm: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful:" there is the negative side. Now for the positive—and that is what is the *power*: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate *day and night*."

A sweet and glowing picture; once more, look at the result: "And he is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, which bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Would it not be a blessed thing to be able to sit for such a picture ?

4. HOLY AND TRUE.

“Thou hast kept My Word” is the first matter of distinct commendation as to Philadelphia which we can lay hold of as showing what is in the Lord’s mind as to them; and I do not ignore in this that the people thus commended are, first of all, Philadelphians. All the more striking on this account is *what* He commends in them. It is of great import and worthy of fullest emphasis that, while it is to a company of people who are characterized by “love of brethren” He is speaking, His praise is *not* that “thou hast loved the brethren.” *This does not even form part of it.* His thoughts seem elsewhere : the commendation is, “Thou hast kept my Word, and not denied my Name.” Again, “thou hast kept the word of my patience.” Yet in the promise to the overcomer He does not omit what has reference to the name they bear: for on the “pillar”, which he who has here but “a little strength” finally becomes, is inscribed not only “the name of my God,” and “my new name,” but also “the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem.” This is the *home* of the “brethren,” and has, I believe, distinct reference to “Philadelphian” character. Yet, I repeat, in His commendation of them, He says nothing of this. Is it not right to ask ourselves the reason of what is at first sight so strange ?

Now the title under which the Lord addresses them fully accounts for it. They *are* Philadelphians whom he is addressing: it is thus plain that if people have not this character He has nothing here to say

to them. It is to those He is speaking, whose hearts would seek, if it were possible, the recovery of this "Church," which should have been like "a city set on a hill," or "a light upon a candlestick," but has *dropped*, alas, into the invisibility which men ascribe to it, as if it were the necessary and normal state. Yes, it is to these that the Lord is speaking; and the first words He utters remind *these*, the seekers of Church visibility, of His own essential holiness and truth: "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true." How much need will they have to remember *this*!

Think of the Church that is scattered, and which we would so desire to see restored: what are we to do for its restoration? Shall we proclaim to them all, that it is the will of God that His people should be together? Shall we spread the Lord's table, free from all sectarian names and terms of communion, and fling wide open our doors, and invite all that truly love the Lord to come together? For in fact the "one loaf" upon the Table *does* bear witness that we are "one bread, one body"; and there is no other body that faith can own, but the "body of Christ." Why should we not then do this?

I answer: "Tell them by all means that the Lord has welcome for all His own: that is right; but tell them it is the 'Holy and True' who welcomes, and that He cannot give up His nature." *How* has the true Church become the invisible Church? Has it been without sin on her part? is it her misfortune, and not her fault? Take the guidance of these seven epistles in the book of Revelation, and trace the descent from the loss of first love in Ephesus to the sufferance of the woman Jezebel in Thyatira, and on

through dead Sardis to the present time: can we just ignore the past, and simply, as if nothing had happened, begin again? What would it be but mere hardness of heart to say so?

Suppose your invitation of "all Christians" accepted, and that in the place in which you give out your notice, you are able really to assemble all the members of Christ at the table of the Lord;—bring them together with their jarring views, their various states of soul, their entanglements with the world, their evil associations:—how far, do you suppose, would the Lord's table answer to the character implied in its being the table of the *Lord*? How far would *He* be indeed owned and honored in your thus coming together? With the *causes* of all the scattering not searched out and judged, what would your gathering be but a *defiance of the holy discipline* by which the Church was scattered? what would it be but another Babel?

Can you think that visible unity is so dear to Christ, as that He should desire it apart from true cleansing and fellowship in the truth?

Surely this address to Philadelphia is completely in opposition—in *designed* opposition—to all such thoughts. Why should it be that here we have not the Lord presenting Himself as One who "has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars"—plenitude of spiritual power, and His people in His keeping—but as "the Holy and True"? Strange indeed it may seem that dead Sardis should be thus reminded, and not Philadelphia! But to Philadelphia such an utterance would seem as if it meant no less than the recovery of the Church by their means. To Sardis it is manifestly exhortation instead of assurance.

Philadelphia, even as Philadelphia, needs rather the warning that they must not mistake, in any sanguine interpretation of present blessing, what the days are in which they live, and that they must guard against such a conception of practical unity as would set aside all the value of unity. How perfect in its place is every word of God!

Let us notice then, again, what the Lord commends. "Thou hast a little power,—hast kept my word and not denied My Name,—hast kept the word of my patience." Every one must remark these "My"'s, which continue to the end of the address. They show that the true Philadelphian clings to Christ Himself, to His word, His person, His strangership in the present, His certainty of the future. His work is to obey Christ, hold fast the truth as to Him, be waiting for Him. The work of *gathering* may, so to speak, look after itself, if this be done. We are to be united by the Centre, and not merely or mainly by the circumference. And thus alone can there be anything that shall have fruit for God or commendation from Him who here speaks to His people.

It is easily to be seen then how the Philadelphian character may be lost by a false conception of it. "Brotherly love" is a precious thing when it is really what it purports to be; but see where the apostle, in his exhortation, puts it. "Add to your faith," he says, "virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and *to godliness brotherly love.*" If this be the order, (and as order he gives it,) how many things are needed to precede its proper development! No doubt all these things are in

the Christian in some sense at the beginning, just as petals, stamens, and other parts of the flower, are wrapped up in the bud before it opens. But there is a relation of these to one another shown in the order of appearance; and that is what is important here. No "love of brethren"—no Philadelphia—is true, save as these things are found in it. For it all, Christ must be both sap and sun; and this is what the word in Revelation emphasizes.

Philadelphian gathering is *to Christ*, then; and it is Christ who gathers. A common faith, a common joy, a common occupation, find their issue in that which is the outward sign of the spiritual bond that unites us. Who that knows what gathering at the Lord's table means would suppose that communion there could be other than hindered by the presence of what was *not* communion, any more than harmony could be increased by discord? Of want of intelligence I am not speaking: there is no discord in the presence of a babe; but an unexercised conscience, a heart unreceptive of divine things,—which means receptive of how much else!—how must the power of the Spirit be hindered by them! The Scripture rule for times of declension is—"with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. ii. 22); and the way to find these is not to advertise for them, but to "follow righteousness, faith, peace"; walking on the road in which they are walking.

It results, I am confident, that if we really seek the blessing of souls, *we shall guard with more carefulness, not with less, the entrance into fellowship.* We shall see that it be "holy and true," as He is with whom all fellowship is first of all to be. Careless reception is the cause of abundant trouble, and

may be of general decline. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Men cannot walk together, except they are agreed. When trial comes, those that have never been firm of purpose, never, perhaps, convinced of the divine warrant for the position they have taken, scatter and flee from it with reckless haste, carrying with them, wherever they go, an evil report of what they have turned their backs upon. Such persons are, generally speaking, outside of any hope of recovery, and often develop into the bitter enemies of the truth.

We are incurring a great responsibility if we press or encourage people to take a position for which they are not ready; in which, therefore, they act without faith. It is just in principle what the apostle warns us of, the danger of leading others without an exercised conscience, to imitate a faith that is not their own. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." No wonder there are wrecks all along the track of a movement for which this is so constantly required, and in which so many are endeavoring to walk without it. Ought we not to remember that it is the Holy and the True that is seeking fellowship with us? and that nothing but what answers to this character, can abide the test that will surely come? F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

TO REALLY expect Him, the coming One must be the object of my affections and my delight. If you told me some Prussian was coming, I would not care about that; but if it was my wife or my mother, how different! To have it really as our desire, then, all questions as to judgment must be settled, and we must have our affections on the Lord. J. N. D.

“WATCH AND PRAY,
LEST YE ENTER INTO TEMPTATION.”

“God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able
to bear.” (1 Cor. x. 13.)

FOR a time the way seemed easy,
Oh, my soul!
Peace and joy were all unhindered,
Happy soul!
Little did I think that still
Lurked within my breast a will
Which would soon with sorrow fill
All my soul.

With the confidence of childhood,
Thou, my soul,
Fearless in thy strength, petitioned
[Poor, weak soul!]
That the Lord would straightway prove thee;
For I knew, Lord, Thou didst love me,
And I thought that naught could move thee,
Oh, my soul!

Little knew I what I asked for,—
How would roll
Conflict after conflict over
Thee, my soul.
Peter-like, I loved my Lord;
But He took me at my word—
Sent a sharp and piercing sword
Through my soul.

All-enticing came the tempter,
Ah, my soul!
Fierce the struggle, in my longing
To control
All my being for His Name.
Yielding, I was put to shame—
Found my treacherous heart the same,
Faithless soul!

Ah! I never thought to grieve Him
Who could save
My poor soul from lasting ruin
And the grave.
But I did not know my heart,—
That it was the counterpart
Of all others; but the dart
Pierced it well.

Sinned against the God who loved me!
How I groan
Over that which brought Thee, Saviour,
From the throne,
In Thy love, to die, to bleed,
Live for me, and intercede!
Such surpassing grace, indeed,
Lord, I own.

Weak and wavering, still thou trustest,
Oh, my soul!
Christ thy strength—He will sustain thee,
Fainting soul.
Let me all my weakness feel,
Then Thy strength Thou wilt reveal,—
By Thy might, in woe or weal,
All control.

Then Lord, ever, in temptation
Let me plead
All Thy strength in all my weakness,
For my need;
And beneath Thy sheltering wing
All my heart's deep trial bring,
And Thou'lt teach me there to sing
Praise indeed.

Such deep exercise as is expressed in the above lines is not, as is frequently supposed, the result only of some gross, outbreking sin. What by many would be esteemed a small sin, has often caused a sensitive soul the deepest anguish and severest self-

judgment. Would to God we had always a tender conscience about *all* sin! Sin is hateful and hideous to God, in whatever shape or degree. We are apt to measure it by its immediate consequences, or the disgrace attaching to it, such as drunkenness, etc. But this is not God's way. He would teach us, first, that all sin is against Himself, against His holiness.

Every sin being the fruit of our sinful nature, comes under the sentence of God's wrath, even the cross of Christ, and must needs come under the severest judgment of the believer, if he would walk with God. He cannot go on with unholiness, however small it may seem; and if we do not judge the first approach of sin, our consciences will soon cease to be our faithful monitors, and who can tell to what lengths we may go? Oh, to shudder at the very approach of sin! but alas, how easily we are caught in the enemy's trap, if the shield of faith is down!

May the Lord help us, that we abuse not the grace of God, nor do despite to the cross of Christ, that we may not have to weep the bitter tears of Peter, nor cry with David, in his sorrow and humiliation, “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned!” Yet, if we will have our own way, He lets us have the sorrow of it. But blessed is he who, through the discipline thus incurred, reaps the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

H. Mc D.

WE NEED never be surprised if the Lord leaves us in difficulty; it is because there is something in us to be broken down, and which we need to be made sensible of; but grace is always behind all this. Christ is all grace, and if He sometimes appears to leave us to learn our weakness, still He is grace, perfect grace towards us.

J. N. D.

IT SHOULD be the common delight of all His saints to trace Him in all His doings. For where are we to have our eternal joys but in Him and with Him? What, beloved, can be suited to His delight, if Jesus and His ways be not? What is there in any object to awaken joy, that we do not find in Him? What are those affections and sympathies, which either command or soothe our hearts, that are not known in Him? Is love needed to make us happy? If so, was ever love like His? If beauty can engage the soul, is it not to perfection in Jesus? If the treasures of the mind delight us in another, if richness and variousness fill and refresh us, have we not all this in its fullness in the communicated mind of Christ? Indeed, beloved, we should challenge our hearts to find their joys in Him. For we are to know Him so forever. And learning the perfections and beauties of His blessed word, is one of the many helps which we have whereby to advance in our souls this joy in the Lord.

J. G. B.

MAY OUR faith be strengthened to do justice to God's love! That love claims our full and happy confidence. To render it only a diffident and suspicious trust is to treat it unworthily. May all such spirit of fear and bondage be gone! May the true Sarah in our hearts cry out, and cry out till it prevail, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son." For when the Lord does His work He does it in a way worthy of Himself. We are not to go forth with fear and suspicion, as though we could hardly trust the Arm that was saving us, but in such a way as will declare plainly that the work is the work of Him "whose love is as great as His power, and knows neither measure nor end."

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE.

No. 2.

(Continued from page 281.)

DEPEND upon this, beloved,—you study the word of God to no profit if not in a happy state of communion and fellowship with Him and while destitute of a spirit of prayer. Let me repeat,—faith is dependent upon communion; communion, dependent upon prayer, confession, and self-judgment. To be out of communion, is to be destitute of a spirit of prayer. Not but that one may say prayers; this is a very common thing—to find people saying prayers. It has been said, “Prayer is the expression of need.” The publican prayed; the Pharisee said his little prayer. The result of the publican’s prayer was that he was brought into fellowship and communion with God: “He went down to his house justified.” The Pharisee went down to his house pleased with his good thoughts of himself—a victim of self-deception, like many others who are saying prayers. Does my reader know the difference? Is it a sense of duty, or a sense of need, which brings you upon your knees before God? If a sense of need, you are occupied with the One who can meet your need; and you address Him in words, it may be, or in sighs, groans, and tears, if need be (Rom. viii. 26, 27). If a mere sense of duty, you are occupied with what you are doing, and you are saying a prayer; and accordingly as you are well pleased with your effort will be the interminable length of vain repetitions—a purely fleshly thing. But we are all in danger of this very same thing; even the best and most spiritually-minded Christians are in danger

of backsliding into this very same state of a dead routine of formality simply from neglect of confession and self-judgment. Show me a person who never confesses, and you will show me one who never prays. A dear servant of the Lord once said, "One bit of contrition is worth more in God's sight than all London filled with miracles." "To that man will I look, even to him who is of a broken and contrite heart, and trembleth at my word." (Isa. lxvi. 2.) Saying prayers does not increase faith; praying does. And in this way prayer increases the appetite and relish for the Word; and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Not by wrought-up feelings; this would not be faith, though often it is made the measure—as, when persons are happy, then they think they have faith; but this would be faith in the happy feeling, not in God; and as soon as the happy feeling is gone, the faith is gone. But the scripture says, "Faith cometh by hearing,"—not feeling,—“and hearing by the word of God.” Hence faith rests upon the word of God, and is as steadfast and abiding, whatever the feelings may be. Hence "Abraham staggered not at the promise of God, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." The blessed Lord Jesus recognized "little" and "great" faith: "O ye of little faith!" and "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." So that it is not a knowledge of the Word, but *the indwelling* of the Word: "If ye abide in Me, and *my words abide in you.*" It is the word of the living God, received into the heart, through the hearing of the ear.

One may, from head knowledge, repeat large portions of the Word without having it at all in the heart; while another might not be able to quote a

single verse correctly, yet could say, "I know it is the word of the living God; it has given me Christ and forgiveness of sins; it has given me peace with God and rest as to the future—yea, 'I know whom I have believed.' " And we may safely say that the largest, or strongest, faith is that which gives to Jesus the largest and highest place; so we may know just how much faith we have got, by the place which we give Him. And there can be no true faith in God now apart from Christ. He is the Jehovah of the Bible; in Him God is perfectly revealed. This is the faith once delivered to the saints, and is the groundwork upon which a soul enjoys the blessed experiences of communion and fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

And this, beloved, cannot be too strongly insisted upon in these days of religious infidelity. Do I speak too strongly when I say that anything and everything called religious which denies the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Bible is infidelity? To deny the inspiration of Moses and the prophets is to deny the divinity of Christ, since He quoted from both, thus acknowledging the divinity and inspiration of both: and "all Scripture,"—as the apostle has said,—"*is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness.*" (2 Tim. iii. 16.) This very state of religious infidelity is clearly told out to us in 2 Tim., third and fourth chapters. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers

of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." (2 Tim. iii. 1-3.) "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.)

The Spirit of God showed Jeremiah the sins and idolatries of his time, and he told it all out to the people; but they did not receive it; and hated him for his testimony. (See Jeremiah, forty-fourth chap.)

I dwell upon this point, that my reader may see that a vast amount of the religion of these days is but a sham, and not a whit better than the idolatry of Jeremiah's day. Do you think that the Spirit of God has led to the general order of worship of these days? God said by the prophet, "This people draweth near to Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor Me; but have removed their hearts far from Me; and their fear towards Me is taught by the precept of men" (Isa. xxix. 13); and the Lord Jesus also applied it to the people of His day. (See Matt. xv. 8)

Our Saviour said to the woman of Samaria, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." To the Athenians, Paul said, "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands;" and to the Philippians, "We are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.)

We see in Leviticus that *on the ground of an ac-*

cepted sacrifice the worshiper stood before God; and the sacrifice did not speak of any worthiness in the one who brought it, but of the offering. The offerer put his hand upon the head of the victim, "and it was accepted for him, *to make atonement for him.*" (Lev. i. 4.) Putting the hand upon the head was identification, typically presenting the offerer in all the value of Christ's acceptance before God. Now *we are accepted in the Beloved.*" (Eph. i. 6.) This gives us the grand truth of our approach to God,—a presenting to God not my good feelings, nor my good works, not myself at all, but the *sweet savor of Christ*; and thus "accepted in the Beloved."

The Holy Ghost has given us a good illustration of this in the case of Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon, when Paul sends him back to his old master: he writes to Philemon and says, "If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account." "Receive him as myself," says Paul. Surely, Onesimus has nothing to fear in returning to his master. Philemon is to receive Onesimus in the same brotherly love that he would receive Paul. Just so the believer comes to God, in the value of another. So our Lord declares in John xvii. 23, "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me."

C. E. H.

WE NEVER rightly use anything for our own good, except we use it for God's glory; he that aims to honor God in everything, effectually secures his own present and everlasting welfare.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUESTION 17.—Why does the apostle Paul, in the epistles to the individuals, speak of God as our Saviour? (Titus i. 3, etc.).

ANSWER.—In the epistles to the assemblies, the perfect standing of believers is as a rule brought into prominence, and salvation in its absolute aspect is the thought. In Philippians, however, we have it as deliverance from the daily straits through which the believer passes. In Titus we have presented the One who will bring His people through, who is their Saviour or deliverer from everything through which they pass.

QUES. 18.—In 1 Tim. i. 12, does the word “faithful” refer to Paul’s faithfulness in persecuting the Church before his conversion? If it does, can God ever own anything in man that may be good, before his conversion?

ANS.—We would say most decidedly that the apostle’s zeal in persecuting the Church, had not the slightest connection with his faithfulness in the ministry. God in His mercy chose him as a servant, and foresaw his faithfulness.

QUES. 19.—Please explain Luke xxii. 36–38, where the Lord speaks of the sword. What could have been His meaning in using that word, which is the emblem of judgment and violence, if His disciples were to practice meekness?

ANS.—The immediate context shows that our Lord did not intend to be understood literally. They said, “Here are two swords.” And He said, “It is enough.” One of those swords was used by Peter to cut off the ear of Malchus—a work immediately undone by the Lord. What would *two* swords avail against the numbers of enemies by whom they would be assailed? Evidently it was their unbelief that failed to grasp His meaning, as in the case of the leaven (Matt. xvi. 6–12).

The meaning of the passage seems to be this: Our Lord was about to leave them. While He was with them He had cared for them; He was to be no longer personally with them; and if that were *all*, then they must now look out for themselves. We know it was not *all*, and that the same power which had kept them heretofore would still be engaged in their behalf, though visible now only to faith. It was a vivid way of telling them that He was about to be crucified, and to leave them.

A DIVINE MOVEMENT, AND OUR PATH WITH GOD TO-DAY.

(Continued from page 298.)

5. "THOU HAST NOT DENIED MY NAME."

IT is a revelation of Christ's Word, and the freshened sense of relationship to Christ,—the new realization of what He is to His people,—that practically produce Philadelphia. Every genuine revival, as I have already said, necessarily has something of the spirit of this,—*tends*, at least, towards it. Of course, when I speak of revival, I do not mean simply the conversion of souls, even in numbers: the revival I am speaking of is of saints, not sinners, although naturally the *effect* of this will be seen in a new power in the gospel for the conversion of sinners. But when interest in the word of God is revived, and the love of Christ is felt in new power in the soul, increased communion with Him will issue in the "communion of *saints*" being more valued and more sought after, and the spirit of obedience will cause the "yoke" with those who are not Christ's to be an intolerable bondage.

If such a revival were felt in the whole Church of God, how surely would every chain of this kind be broken by the energy of the Spirit of God, and the whole Church be brought together! But such a thing has never taken place, and the consequence of local and partial revivals has been therefore in fact more or less to separate Christians from Christians,—those who can go on with the world and with the worldly from those who cannot do so. Hence every such movement has to bear the reproach, on the part both

of the world and of many Christians quite as much as the world, of causing divisions, which it is true it does and must do, and which the Lord's words declare He came to do—"not to send peace, but a sword," and to make a man's foes to be "those of his own household."

In a state of things like this, compromise and expediency soon begin to do their fatal work. That which the Spirit of God alone can accomplish is taken in hand by the wisdom of man, Scripture itself being perverted to its use—for they cannot do without Scripture. Truth must be partly clipped, partly suppressed, or else not insisted on; charity will be invoked, and liberal tolerance, with promise of wider and speedy results,—the seed in this case needing no "long patience" on the part of the husbandman. From such attempts have arisen the religious confederacies of the day, assuming soon the large proportions which seem so triumphantly to justify them, but in all which the "dogma," the unyielding truth of God, tends to be thrown out or ignored, that men may keep company with one another.

For the truth, somehow,—the uncompromising truth—*does* seem to rouse men, and set them at variance. The jarring sects of Protestantism, have they not arisen from those "private interpretations" of an open Bible, which wiser Romanism has condemned in favor of what is strangely affirmed to be "catholic," even while it is plain that put it to the free, unconstrained votes of the "Christian world," *catholic* it could never be. Rome's word, however, is *not* compromise, but "authority." Protestantism too loves not the word compromise, but rather "tolerance": you must be liberal in divine things, *where*

you have no rights; for the word of God, too, claims *authority*, and of the highest kind, as is evident, if it be that. Scripture is not, in that sense, tolerant: as how could he be who could write, "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the *commandments of the Lord*"? (1 Cor. xiv. 37.)

Scripture therefore—spite of Sunday-schools and what not—tends with its sharp-edged teaching to be in a certain disrepute to-day. As men did with Him of whom it speaks, in His day, so now: they *bow it out*. With studied respect of manner, they seldom allow it to dictate to them where its voice is unsupported by some other authority, or where obedience will cost them much. Few there are, it is to be feared, who are absolutely ready to receive and welcome all the truth of God; for, there is really no other reason, and *can* be none, why all Christians are not of one mind to-day, than this, *that they do not in heart desire at all costs to follow the truth*. "He that willeth to do God's will," says the Lord Himself, "*shall know of the doctrine*" (John vii. 17). How could it be otherwise, if God be what He is? But then what does the confusion abroad in Christendom at the present time, tell of the condition of soul prevalent among the true people of God themselves!

For the most part, it is not strife about doctrines that is so characteristic, as indolence and indifference about them. Some, very active in eager evangelism, have given them up pretty much, as only hindering their work. If they pause to realize the meaning of this, they will have to own that God has made a mistake, or they have;—God's word is not in

harmony with His work;—He from whose love to man the gospel has come, cannot have foreseen the effect of His truth! And how many, on the other hand, have just received what has come down to them from their fathers without exercise of soul about it! without following the apostle's well-known rule, to "prove all things, hold fast that which is good"!

As a consequence, many things carelessly received make Scripture, in all that is inconsistent with these, really unintelligible; and this lies really as an accusation, though they would not openly formulate it, against Scripture itself. It cannot fail to be so. The searching it, produces but perplexity. They hold to it in general—give it up as to minor details: would be astonished, could they seriously examine it, *how much* of what they believe God has given to them has thus exhaled altogether;—how much is but as a dead thing—dead without any lamentation over it—not the living word of God at all.

And this affects even the most central truths,—truths about the Person of Christ, truths about His work. How many conflicting views about atonement prevail in the so-called orthodox denominations! What is the remedy? why, leave out the "views" then, say many: do not define. But suppose Scripture does? This will mean in that case, "don't go too deep into Scripture." And that is what is at the bottom; we should know surely whose voice it is that suggests this. It is one and the same voice that says to one person, "Be humble: don't imagine that your opinion is better than anybody else's"; and to another, "Be charitable: good men differ about these things"; and to another, "Don't contend for this:

you will make enemies, you will lose your friends"; and to another, "You are not learned: don't occupy yourself with what requires a theologian to decide about"; and to another, "The Church has settled this"; and—getting more and more the dragon's voice—"Oh, but surely there are mistakes in the Bible: you do not mean to contend for verbal inspiration?" So the form of the argument varies; but the voice is that of the "liar from the beginning," him who "abode not in the truth"; and his aim is ever to discredit the truth. "Don't go too far." "Don't be too sure." "Don't be dogmatic." "Don't be uncharitable." The devil knows men well, and what is the chord in each that will be most responsive to his touch. He is a good chemist too, and can mix his poisons so that there shall be scarcely taste or smell of the principal ingredient: all the same it will *do its work*.

And amazing it is, the easy-going torpidity of Christians, that will allow their best blessings to be stolen under their eyes, and never discern it. In other matters they will be quite other men. "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light"; but now, with a large number of Christians you shall find (and not insignificantly) in worldly matters all the wisdom of the world, and in the things that should be their own things as Christians, the most childish capacity. I may seem to be wandering from what is before me, in dwelling upon these things; but in fact I am fully keeping it in mind all through, and that it is "he that hath ears to hear" that will listen to it. And the Lord insists upon this in all His addresses to these Asiatic churches.

What is the meaning of this word to Philadelphia, "Thou hast not denied My Name"? *You* have not, at any rate, denied it, my reader? I trust not, indeed: but perhaps you think of this as mere gross apostasy, or as the lapse under pressure of such days of persecution as have been, when a little incense thrown upon an altar to some heathen god would save one's life by abjuring Christianity. Few are tempted that way now, and you have no need to look closely at it: is that so? Yes, it may do, if we want to let ourselves off easily. But if Philadelphia in its deeper application just applies to such professedly Christian times as these, then it will seem surely strange that the not having done what few among us have any strong temptation at all to do, should be, in the Lord's eyes, a special commendation of Philadelphia! As to this also, we need not in that case lay much emphasis upon the warning, "hold fast that which thou hast"; and overcoming will not be in this application difficult;—or in another view of it we may say, perhaps, will scarcely be *possible*, when there is for the mass no difficulty to "overcome."

Have we possibly, then, misinterpreted it? For one would say, rather, that there would be on the contrary some special and exceptional suitability in the commendation and warning both, which would infer some special liability, *just on the part of Philadelphians*, to this specific sin,—some special trial in this respect to which they would be exposed! Can that be true? Does it seem unlikely? In the gross form in which we may be disposed to take it, yes. But is the gross form then the true interpretation? can it be so, when it leads to such a result as to

almost evacuate meaning from it, as applied to Philadelphia?

What is it, to deny His Name? What is "His Name"? All names are significant in Scripture; but the names of God and Christ, how specially, how transcendantly significant! If God acts "for His Name's sake," that means, to declare what He is. If we are "gathered to Christ's Name"—which is the true form of the words (Matt. xviii. 20), "to," not "in,"—it is because what we realize Him to be draws us (each and all together) unto Him. "His Name" is thus the revealed truth of what He is. He is away from earth; and we have not *Himself*, visibly, to come to. But the truth of what He is, draws us together, and as so drawn, we confess what He is to us, and so coming have the promise of His (spiritual) presence. This is how we are united together, as a wheel is; by the circumference surely; but if that were all—if it were the main thing—the wheel would have no strength: its strength depends above all, upon the centre; so our union is (in a way that transcends all that the figure can express) by the Centre, which Christ is to all of us: and this, in proportion as it is true, defines and secures also the circumferential union—that to one another.

Carry this back to our subject: think of what Philadelphia stands for and expresses. If the gathering of Christians is in question in it, and it is to a true Christ (to the truth of what Christ is) they would be gathered, then what more central for the Philadelphian than *not to deny this truth of what Christ is?*—this all-essential, all-sufficing Name!

Now another question—and let no one who values Christ treat it lightly: if there be a devil, the enemy

of God and man, the constant and subtle opposer of all good, and with such knowledge as such a being may have, of what it is that he is opposing, how would he seek to corrupt and destroy such a movement as that of Philadelphia? The answer is not in the least doubtful: *he would attack it at that central point upon which all depended*: he would attack the truth of Christ, His Person and work. As surely as that is true, so sure is it that a main test for the Philadelphian would be the CONFESSIO^N OR DENIAL OF THE NAME OF CHRIST, the Centre of gathering.

Look at this all through, and see if I have strained the argument in any wise. See if any link in it is missing, or if any is insufficient. If it be not, let us take one most evident step further. These addresses are prophetic: this particular address therefore is a prophecy. There is implied here then, in connection with this movement to recover (on principle) the Church of God, that there would be an attack of Satan upon the Lord Jesus Christ as the Centre of gathering. Has it been so? Brethren who have knowledge of the history of the last fifty years in relation to this movement, I cite you all to bear witness as to this before God: *have* there been questions affecting the Person of Christ and the gathering to His Name? I charge you, as you would listen to His word, to answer the question: has not history fulfilled this prophecy? And how then does the prophecy affect our position, whatever it may be, with regard to our Lord's own commandment here: "Thou hast not denied My Name"?

But again, let us remember that the great enemy of us all is one well versed in the ways of this terrible warfare. He has skill acquired in six thousand

years' multiform experience. "He is a liar, and the father of it." The covert and the wile are his. Nothing is more common than to see him in the garb of sanctity; and he is familiar with the habit and the speech of love. He can appear as an angel of light, and his ministers be as the ministers of righteousness. He can *be* Satan, and denounce Satan; only putting Satan for God and God for Satan. Well may we look to our armor; well may we cleave to the word of God; well may we be "praying with all prayer"; well will it be, if in truth it can be said of us, that "we are not ignorant of his devices." All the world is on his side. The flesh, even in a Christian, pleads for him. Nor can we meet him with his own weapons, nor foil him by the adoption of his own tactics. In the encounter with him we have always to keep in mind what Proverbs says of the "strange woman": "lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, her ways are changeable, that thou shouldst not know them."

Let us fix this firm in our minds, that the Lord here, in commending Philadelphia for not denying His Name, assures us of what is the *great* danger in such controversies as have arisen. The *great* danger is lest the Philadelphian in his aim to have together the people of God should forget in some way the gathering Centre, should link himself with the denial of the Name of Christ. We shall look at "links," if the Lord will, by and by; but let us already anticipate the apostle's warning words that one who "receives" or even "greet" the man who "brings not this doctrine" (of Christ) is "partaker of his evil deeds" (2 Jno. 10, 11); therefore that one who knowingly "greet" the denier of Christ's Name is "par-

taker" of that denial. The history—which here I do not give*—of the first attack of the enemy makes undeniably clear where it began. And as to those affected by it, it is just as clear where alone any *suspicion* even of such denial, or of greeting of the deniers, has attached. One body there was (of those divided at that time) which even those separated from, did not and could not charge with such denial, or with any compromising adherence to those denying. The same could never be said of the other side: there, if anywhere, (and the attack of the enemy is certain,) the danger-signals of the prophecy alone display themselves.

Satan here was certainly permitted to be the sifter of God's wheat, and he does well in that way what he takes in hand to do. Plenty of failure, no doubt, could be urged on both sides. Piety too could be urged on both. In a sieve things naturally get well mixed. So much the more important is it to stand clear upon the ground given by the prophecy, and see that while on the one side men were pleading for the Centre, the other side was all the time thinking of the circumference. Both surely need to be maintained, and it is quite possible, of course, to err on all sides; yet he who holds fast to Christ will find that Christ is attractive power for His people; it is Christ whom the Spirit of God glorifies; it is here that government of heart and mind is found. It is only from the centre that the circumference can be truly drawn. Philadelphia is neither praised nor blamed for her conduct in relation to the people of God, as we have

* It may be found in a "Statement for Examination," published by Loizeaux Brothers.

seen: it is "My Word, My Name, My patience," that are spoken of: and to get His point of view is all-important.

If Christ be honored, the Spirit of God is free, truth finds its place in relation to Him, and there is progress: souls can be led on. All that will, can judge in the case in question. The Spirit of God cannot be mistaken in this, or turned aside into other channels than those connected with the Rock from which the water flows. And here is a distinct and precious evidence of Christ's approval. Apart from this, the stream grows sluggish and dries up. Souls may be blessed and ministered to, for God is gracious; but the supply is elsewhere.

No one can, I think, deny these principles. If they are true, they will not mislead in honest application. Nor do I write a word for those who have no heart to make it.

6. THE QUESTION OF ASSOCIATION.

I turn aside for the present from the question of the doctrine of Christ, not as if there were no more to be said about it. There are counter charges and later developments which cannot be ignored; and I do not mean to ignore them. But already it will be seen that another matter has to be looked at in the light of Scripture, in order rightly to settle how far-reaching may be the guilt of the denial of Christ's Name. We have had in fact to refer just now to the question of association; but its importance demands a much closer examination, both to see how Scripture treats it, and that we may realize its moral significance also: this, of course, as Scripture puts it too. It is a question which is in such intimate relation to

the whole character of things to-day as deeply to concern us all; and Scripture is distinctly against principles which are so inwrought into the whole texture of society to-day as to make it difficult to gain the attention of Christians for what is adverse to them. Yet "the world passeth away; . . . and he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

The association of man with man is a divine necessity. The institution of the family recognized it from the beginning. The difference of capacity in men brings them necessarily together, the lack in one being met by another's efficiency. Union means ministry of each to each; the need of it being a most helpful discipline, the supply of it an appeal to affection and gratitude. The Church of God is an organization in which this principle is fully owned; a union founded upon both difference and unity: a body which is built up by that which "every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part."

Sin which has come in is everywhere, however, that which transforms all good into evil: the greater the good, alas, the worse the evil. The union which obtains so largely to-day is mere confederacy; we may often call it indeed conspiracy. In it the individuality which God's union always provides for and maintains is interfered with, conscience is oppressed, evil is tolerated for supposed final good, morality is superseded by machinery. God's word as to it by Isaiah is: "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. But sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself, and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread." (Isa. viii. 12, 13.)

Whether it be fear or whether it be greed that inspires the motive, the true fear of God is surely the one remedy for it all. This fear is the effectual purgation of all union from the evil which, if it be admitted, soon dominates and controls it; or else it sets God's free man loose from this control. Walking with Him, we cannot hold out the hand to him who refuses His will as sovereign. The end must be His end, and the way to it His way. To seek to join with evil is only profanity.

Necessarily therefore our associations are of the greatest possible importance. They witness to the path on which (whatever our profession) we are ourselves walking. We *can* only "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Scripture is full therefore of warnings and instructions upon this.

In the Church of God, where our relationship to one another is of His establishment, not of our own will, it is inevitable that the reconciliation of holiness in our ways with the eternal bond that unites us with one another should cause serious perplexity. The world in which the Church is, is its entire opposite, and the evil in it is ever appealing to the kindred evil in the saints themselves. Its hostility is not so much to be dreaded as its friendship: its peace is nothing else but covert war. Between its "prince" and our own not even truce is possible.

Already in the apostle's time the epistle which gives us the order of the Church of God shows us this threefold influence at work upon it. The wisdom of the world, the lust of the flesh, the power of Satan, were already invading the sacred inclosure; and the apostle has afresh to stake off its boundary-lines and

to repel the intruder. The foundation doctrine of the resurrection was being denied, and bringing their whole profession of Christianity into question. If such things could come in so soon in Corinth, as it were in the very presence of an apostle, how can *we* expect better times and to be permitted to escape necessary warfare? It is in his second epistle that he insists so earnestly that the yoke with unbelievers forfeits the *enjoyment* of the relationship to the Father as he would have us know it. We must come out from among them and be separate, and not touch the unclean thing, and *then* we have the assurance, "I will receive you, and be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The peril of evil association could scarcely be more emphatically affirmed.

But it has been said that this has only to do with unbelievers, and does not define our attitude toward the children of God. We shall have to look therefore at texts which speak of these. But before doing so, I would pause to deal with an argument which connects itself with such an objection.

It is urged that we must have direct Scripture, and not inference, to guide us in all these matters.

Now Scripture gives us principles, and not a perfect code of divine law; and it *necessitates inference* at every step. Inference is inseparable from a rational life; and God Himself condescends to "reason" with His creatures. "Come, and let us *reason* together, saith the Lord." The argument against reason in the things of God has been carried to lengths which are as unscriptural as they are irrational. Where does Scripture decry any God-given faculty that man has? Nowhere. In speaking

against what God has given, we speak, necessarily, against the Giver. Revelation everywhere honors God as the Creator by honoring His creation.

Sin has come in and perverted every faculty; but the work of God here is to purify and not destroy. When the soul begins to realize its relation to God, reason becomes most reasonable in accepting its creature-limit; and rationality pervades the life and character of the new man in Christ. One might as well say that if we have light, eyes become no matter, as decry reason in the things of God. *It is only in the light that eyes are of use.*

But moreover, God tests us by this very exercise of reason,—holds us responsible to have our eyes open, and to use them honestly. This “exercise” the apostle speaks of as being what *he* found necessary, in order to have “a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man” (Acts xxiv. 16). Exercise shows the man morally and spiritually awake; and by it he is kept in health and vigor. God therefore insists upon the necessity of this, and acts with a view to its being maintained. Scripture is so written “that the *man of God* may be perfect”;—not all the world, and not the drowsy and sleep-loving among Christians.

Now let us apply these things to the apostle’s words to the Corinthians, and we shall see that the refusal of such texts as having to do with fellowship among Christians is at bottom unspiritual and immoral. Does the principle involved in the question, “what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” apply only to a yoke with unbelievers? Suppose we are all believers, may we accept a yoke

with a *believer*, which implies that such communion is possible?

God is the same in His holiness, and in the requirements of His holiness, for one as for another, for saint and sinner alike: only that the sin of the saint is *worse* than that of the sinner, in proportion to the difference of light, and the grace which he has received. Thus then the *unequal* yoke may apply fully to a yoke between Christians, if one of these be allowing in himself the "unrighteousness" which cannot be gone on with in the unbeliever.

Because men will not "infer," that in no wise hinders the just judgment of God as to the matter. The consequences of our acts will as surely follow as if we swallowed poison in the belief that it was wholesome food. How many have in fact found the disastrous effects of alliances, whether social, commercial, or religious, which they have permitted themselves to contract under the pacifying illusion that they were lawful because on both sides Christian! How many, so deluded, have waked up to find that after all, the question in the prophet was a much deeper one than they had thought: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

In what various ways these principles affect our life is easily apparent. Wives go with their husbands in that which they believe wrong before God, because the scripture, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord," is supposed to release them from all moral responsibility. "Children, obey your parents in all things," is similarly quoted to reverse the moral nature of things, and set the earthly tie above the divine one. We are told too, that we have no Scripture warrant for judg-

ing assemblies, when, if it be true, the sins of these are not to be accounted and treated as sin elsewhere is. All these are the fruits of an immoral principle, as should be plain. And how can those who advocate and practise such things escape the woe of the prophet upon "them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter"? (Isa. v. 20.) The eternal principles of God's government are against them; and the immutable holiness of the divine nature.

To return, however, to the Scripture-teaching as to association.

The second epistle to Timothy gives us the last word of the apostle Paul, when the Church was already far gone in declension. There is no more talk of the Church as the "house of God," as in the first epistle. Though it was, no doubt, still that, he compares it rather, on the one side, to a "great house," with its vessels even for dishonorable uses; on the other, as it would seem, and in perfect moral congruity, to a house in ruins, of which still, however, the foundation stands. Notice the inscription on the foundation-stone: "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, *The Lord knoweth them that are His.*" Precious assurance! but what does it indicate? What but that the Church was lapsing really into "invisibility," save to the Eye of Him who can never fail to remember every one who in whatever feebleness has committed himself to Him for his salvation. But on the other side, what is the inscription? Just when all the difficulties of the path are being fully apparent,—just when evil might seem to have prevailed, and some laxity to

be almost unavoidable,—the clue-line for the path through all the tangle is found in this direction, simple as can be, straight as the undefiled ray of light, stable as the glorious throne of God: "And, let him that nameth the name of the Lord DEPART FROM INIQUITY."

Yes, thank God! here is the clue-line: here alone is absolute safety assured us. Let a man keep fast hold of this,—let him commit himself to it unhesitatingly, no matter what the question he is called to decide, individual, social, religious,—no matter what the issue may be,—no matter what may threaten him,—he may find his path through a desert-solitude, up over the most rugged mountain, down in the valley of death-shade, yet "the path of the just shall be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Yes, because the light of heaven is upon it.

Notice how the sacred Name that we have been thinking of is here: if one but name "the Name of the Lord"—so the editors read it,—the Name of Him to whom, in the face of man, he is to be subject—then he must depart from iniquity (unrighteousness). But what *is* unrighteousness? What is *righteousness*? Ah, you can only measure this aright as you think of the place in which the blood of Christ has put you,—of the grace that has been shown you, and which you are to show,—of the blessed path in which you are called to follow Him: here assuredly, simple as is the principle, you will find its working out to be enough to give you plenty of exercise from day to day.

But let us go on with the apostle:

"But in a great house there are not only vessels of

gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

This shows us the disorder, and the rule in a time of disorder, both with regard to separation from the evil, and with regard to association with what is good. "Those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" are clearly the same as those who "naming the name of the Lord, depart from unrighteousness"; and thus the man who purges himself from vessels to dishonor, *finds his own class*. But a question here arises, which I think has not been sufficiently considered: are the vessels to honor and the vessels to dishonor the only two classes here? If it be only those who purge themselves from the latter who belong to the former, then it is certain that all *unpurged* must be classed as vessels to dishonor, or there must be a *third* class, simply left aside, as *not* meet for the Master's use: a solemn condition in either aspect!

If it be asked, Are we to apply this to fellowship in the assembly? there is manifestly no exception. The following of "faith, love, peace," with those purged from evil associations, implies that the unpurged cannot be in the assembly. If these are unfit for the Master's use, they cannot have their place there where each and all are plainly to be used by Him. The members of the body are by the fact of being such in responsibility to edify one another. If

they are unfit for this, what disqualifies them for the one thing, disqualifies them for the other. If they cannot call on the Lord out of a pure heart, in what way can they call upon him? The assembly, if of one mind with the Lord, has to affirm His judgment.

The principle is again exemplified here: "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" The form of statement of it, put thus as a question, implies the clearness and positiveness of the answer. Every one's conscience, if it be right itself, is expected to respond.

Fellowship must be really such. It is the voice of the "Holy and the True" that is heard here. Let evil be sanctioned by one or many, fellowship with Christ must cease. We cannot walk with God, and go on with sin.

Thus Corinth with the incestuous person in the midst, was leavened by their guilty allowance of it: they had to purge the leaven out by self-judgment and separation from the evil, that they might be a "new lump." They were not, in their then condition, a new lump. The leaven then was in the lump, not in the individual merely. *In Christ* they were unleavened; and they must represent in their practical condition what grace had made them positionally to be.

This is a well-worn topic; and yet it needs still to be insisted on: for people still venture to say that, despite the allowance of evil in their midst, Corinth was yet unleavened. And if it were not, some add, it would be too late to purge out the leaven. The last assertion carries the figure far indeed, and denies the power of divine grace for every condition that can be found among the people of God. Yet it is

true that there seems to have been something exceptional in the state of things at Corinth, which can be pleaded for no other assembly since. It may have been the fact that as to them they did not as yet clearly know what to do,—that as yet such a case had not been provided for. But they might have mourned over it before God, that “he that had done this deed might be taken away from” them. He gives them the command now as to it, that none might be able to say they had not this any more.

They were to put away from among themselves that wicked person. Some object to saying “from the Lord’s table.” In fact, it goes further, to say, “from among yourselves.” To put away from the *table* simply, might for the careless be perfectly consistent with treating the person so dealt with as, after all, one of themselves in other respects. The apostle shows how much further it is to go, by adding, “with such an one, no, not to eat.” There was to be a refusal of all association, such as even at an ordinary meal.

A leavened lump means something that *in every part of it* is capable of communicating leaven. That is, in fact, the idea in “*old leaven* :” it means a piece of the old lump which could be introduced into the new for that purpose. It shows us that every one who sanctions the retention of evil is really a “partaker” of the evil. He practically denies the holiness of God, and cannot therefore himself be holy. It is not any physical contact, of course, that has wrought in this case. It is a corrupt and corrupting principle, that would associate the name of Christ with His dishonor, and in that sense *deny* His Name. Thus the Philadelphian is reminded that He

is "the Holy and the True." But holiness is lost in communion with evil.

Purging out the evil means separation from it. Here it is the assembly acting. In Timothy, he that will be a vessel unto honor must purge *himself* from the vessels to dishonor : that is, he must at all costs separate *himself*. If the assembly stand in the way of this, then,—to keep a good conscience, he must separate from the assembly. In this, then, there is the *judgment of an assembly*, which some deny to be scriptural. And in this case, if we take part with him who has rightly separated himself, we, too, must separate ourselves ; and thus judge the assembly. And if we do not take part with him, we are not with God.

We are forced, then, to judge ; and to judge every individual in this leavened lump : to go with those who deny the holiness of God, is to be ourselves unholy ; to deny the Name of Christ as the Holy and the True, is to *cease to be Philadelphian*.

7. "A CIRCLE OF FELLOWSHIP," OR INDEPENDENCY?

Another question must now be considered, which unites itself to that which we have been just considering. We shall find that "independency" is one of the most successful means of evasion of scriptural discipline that could perhaps be imagined,—one of the most successful snares by which the children of God can be seduced into resistance to the will of God, while to themselves they seem to be standing only for the principles of the Word, against "confederacy," for purity, and unsectarian maintenance of the Body of Christ. We must therefore look seriously and with sufficient care into the matter : first, at

what independency really is, and then at the fruits which make manifest the tree.

In its simplest and boldest form independency appears as the denial of any scriptural authority for any "circle of fellowship" outside of the individual gathering, wherever it may be ; and this denial is made in the interests, as they imagine, of unsectarian recognition of the one Church only, which is the body of Christ. The formation and maintenance of any such circle is, they maintain, sectarian, and the adoption by such circle of a common discipline is sectarianism full-blown. It constitutes the whole a "party," which may take the name of Christ, as some at Corinth did, and only be perhaps on that account to be the more avoided, as making that precious Name an instrument of division.

This charge is not, it may be, that of denying the Name of Christ, but it approaches it so nearly as to make it of the most serious consequence. Those who hold to a circle of fellowship and yet refuse the adoption of a sectarian name, with what is implied in this, can neither afford to give up their claim of gathering simply to the Name of Christ, nor accept the truth of what is charged against them. Let us examine then what is meant by these assertions, neither shaken from our convictions by their boldness, nor refusing to bring all these to the test of Scripture, as often as may be needful. That which is true will only gain in its hold on us by every fresh examination, and the only danger is in this being lightly and not thoroughly carried out. We should be thankful for any suggestions that awaken fresh inquiry.

Now what *is* a "circle of fellowship"? That *all* such is not forbidden must be believed by the ob-

jector himself, if he have but "two or three" gathered with himself in any local assembly. For this, I suppose, is not the whole "assembly of God" there, but something indefinitely less than this. Yet, here there must be a within and without, a being, in some sense, of us or not of us,—a something which is saved from being a party, not by having no walls or door, but by its having no *arbitrary*, no merely human, terms of admission. If it have *no* terms, then it is a mere rabble of lawless men, and as such to be refused by every Christian.

If you say, "No, it is Scripture to which we are subject," that brings in at once the implication that it is Scripture as you see it, not as your fellow-Christians see it; and you take your place as before the Lord, to be judged of Him in regard to this. Your being a separate *somewhat*, a "circle of fellowship," does not constitute you a party: you own Christians everywhere, as members of the body of Christ, and receive them wherever a scriptural hindrance to their reception does not exist, and you speak of being gathered simply to Christ's Name, without an idea that you are making the Name of Christ a badge, or sign, or instrument, of division.

Well, then, *in this place*, at least, there exists a gathering of Christians that I can recognize,—I suppose, *ought* to recognize,—apart from the whole body of Christians in the place. I say, "ought," because I have duties in regard to the assembling of ourselves together; and here alone I find those with whom I *can* assemble, no unscriptural condition being imposed on me. Were there another assembly in the same place and of the same character, *then* I should have to ask why they were not together: for the sin

of schism is a grave one in Scripture, and I should have of necessity to refuse this.

If, then, in this place, I repeat, there is a gathering that I can own, and must,—suppose, now, I went elsewhere and lived—found perhaps there also one that I had equally to own as gathered to Christ's Name alone, would it be right for me in the new place to refuse to own as a separate company, those in that from which I came, whom, when I was there, I had to own, and whom, if I were now there, I should have to own. Is it possible that my going from New York to Boston should make that wrong for me at Boston which at New York would be quite right, and if I went back there, would be right again? If so, that is independency in earnest; or else it is the most curious shifting of right and wrong that one can conceive of; morality shifting every few miles of the road, whichever way I travel. And yet, *if not*, we are connected in principle, to a "circle of fellowship"!

The recognition of each other by such gatherings throughout the world is, therefore, right; and everything opposed to it is false and wrong. Nay, it is impossible to maintain practically, if principles are of any value to us. For, were I taking the journey spoken of, must I not inquire for those who are of one mind with us in Boston? and would those in Boston expect anything else of me? To refuse a circle of fellowship may be held as a theory: the facts will always be discordant with the theory. *The theory itself cannot be truthfully accepted by any one who has given it any sober reflection*; except it mean independency of the grossest and narrowest kind; that is, associating where one will, and recognizing

obligations nowhere but where I will. And this would be indeed the most perfect sectarianism that could well exist.

But we are to recognize the whole body of Christ ! Surely, but not their unscriptural associations. In the interests of the body of Christ I refuse denominations; but in the same interests I am bound to accept the circle of unsectarian fellowship. The gracious words which, providing for a day of failure and confusion, sanction the two or three gathered to the Lord's blessed Name, *sanction* such gatherings in every place, and therefore a circle of such gatherings. It would be as sectarian to refuse identification with these as to take our place with the various denominations. Nay, it would be more so. Nor would it save us from this, to say we were acting for the good of the whole Church of God, when from Scripture itself the disproof is so easy.

Now, another step.

To accept these is to accept their *discipline*. For the Lord's sanction of the gathering is the express sanction of their discipline. Of course, I do not mean by that that they can add to Scripture, or invent a character of discipline that is not found there; nor yet that He could sanction what might be a mistaken judgment. He is the Holy and the True, the Lord and Master of His people always: and that is quite enough to say as to all this. But *authority* for discipline these "two or three" have; and woe to him who resists its rightful exercise: "If he hear not the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen man and a publican" is said of just such feeble gatherings as these.

It is plain that precisely the same thing is to be

said for the discipline as for the gathering itself: if it is to be respected at A where it is exercised, it is just as much to be respected at B or at C. If it be the decision of a local matter, then the Lord has plainly put it into the hands of those who are in circumstances to judge of it aright, though protest and appeal are surely to be listened to, and they are bound to satisfy consciences where honestly exercised about it.

As to a question of truth, as such it affects all consciences; it can be put before all: no local gathering has authority in any such matter; it would be making a creed to be subscribed. The truth as to Christ is a deeper and more vital matter, for we are gathered to His Name. Where truth of this kind is subverted the gathering exists no more, except as an instrument in the enemy's hand, and is to be refused, with all who take part with it.

If on the other hand, the question be of *facts*, then those who have them are bound (if these affect more than the local gathering) to make them known to their brethren; and here a circular letter may rightly have its place, not to establish a rule or principle of action, but as a witness: which of course is open to question, as all facts are, if there be contrary evidence, or that given be insufficient. No circular has authority in itself: it is purely a question of facts and of the credibility of the testimony.

With these limitations, which are the results of the frailty and fallibility which are common to us all, we have necessarily to own a circle of fellowship and the discipline connected with it, if we would be free from the charge of real independency.

And real independency is not of God, but always

and everywhere acts against Him. It is to make the members of the same body say to each other, "we have no need of you," and to deny the unity of the Spirit which should pervade the body. The more we lament and refuse the sectarianism which exists, the more are we compelled, and shall rejoice to own the body of Christ wherever possible. And this circle of fellowship, while it is not the "body," furnishes us with the means of owning this in a truthful and holy way, so far as the state of ruin in which the Church exists permits it to be done. With love to all Christ's own,—with an open door for the reception of all according to the conditions of truth and holiness,—such a circle is not sectarian, but a protest against it, while the meeting that refuses connection with it is sectarian in fullest reality.

And this is what is meant by the "*ground*" of the one body. It is as different as possible from any claim to *be* the one body, and does not in the least imply any sectarian conditions of intelligence in order to communion. The maintenance of a common discipline is in no wise sectarian, but *part* (and an essential part) *of that communion itself*: absolutely necessary if the holiness of God be the same thing wherever it is found, and not a thing for the "two or three" anywhere to trifle with as they list.

Independency, in setting aside the practical unity of the Church of God, sets aside a main guard of holiness itself. It makes this no object of common care; it does not seek common exercise about it. It releases from the sense of responsibility as to the house of God: it is my own house I am to keep clean after my own fashion. And this real laxity as to the people of God at large (but which is so consoling to an unexer-

cised conscience, that it is the great charm undoubtedly to multitudes to-day) naturally has the effect of lowering one's estimate of holiness altogether, and so prevents my own house being kept really clean.

Where, however, a circle of fellowship is *in fact* maintained, along with and spite of the protest against it, or where there is not the maintenance of a common discipline—where perhaps as the natural fruit of independency also, the unholy principle is contended for that an assembly cannot be judged for that which would compel the judgment of an individual, there, as is natural to expect, any local discipline almost can be evaded by a little dexterity. If the gathering at B will not receive you from A, it will from C, and C will receive you from A. No one is safe anywhere from the violation of a discipline which he himself recognizes as a scriptural one. Any particular person, if he be not too prominent, becomes lost to the eye amid the maze of bewildering differences. He who has conscience, and would fain be clear, has soon to resign himself to a general hope that what looks so like confusion will in the end conserve the interests of holiness; or in despair, to wash his hands of what he cannot avoid.

Yet it is an ensnaring system; for in this way pessimism and optimism both can find apology for it, and go on with it. One gets free of an amazing amount of trouble; and while not seeming to have given up all ecclesiastical ties, as many have, yet be practically as free as they for the gospel and from the wearying responsibility of being one's brother's keeper. Why should we be? when we only get our trouble for our pains, find a narrow path instead of

the broad, open one, which is so pleasant to all of us, and for this have only to shut our eyes at the proper time, and ignore what it seems we cannot help.

And in fact the countless small breaches of independency make less show than the terrible rents which we are exposed to otherwise. Why not let this sad-faced Merarite go, with his pins and cords of the tabernacle always getting into entanglement, and be content with Kohath and with Gershom?

Still, if the TABERNACLE OF THE LORD is to be set up in the wilderness, how shall we do without the pins and cords?

In result it will be found that it is the truth of God which suffers, and tends to pass away and be lost. What wonder when we begin with choosing what we will have of it, and what we will discard? *Fellowship* becomes a thing of most uncertain quality: and what wonder, if obedience to the Word have anything to do with fellowship? *Worship* is largely displaced in behalf of service: for we have lost the necessary pins and cords. We may go on with the help of what truth we can still borrow and find room for; but the truth tends somehow continually to slip away from us; and in the jangle of many utterances, it is ever getting to be of less account.

One's voice may be little heard in a day like this; but I would do what I can to press upon the people of the Lord first of all their Master's claim. I press that this independency, little as one may imagine it, little as many may care to entertain it even as a question, means ultimately shipwreck to the truth of Christ, because it means independency of *Him*. One

may find in it plenty of associates, for it makes little demands upon one and gives the kind of liberty which is so coveted to-day. The authority of Christ is not in it. It may support itself by the help of other names—names in repute as Christians too—and be in honor. It cannot have the commendation which Philadelphia, spite of its “little power,” finds from her gracious Lord:—

“THOU HAST KEPT MY WORD, AND NOT DENIED MY
NAME.”

(To be continued.)

F. W. G.

THE BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE.

“Enoch walked with God.” (Gen. v. 24.)

TO walk with God, O fellowship divine !
 Man's highest state on earth—LORD, be it mine !
 With Thee, may I a close communion hold ;
 To Thee, the deep recesses of my heart unfold :
 Yes, tell Thee all—each weary care and grief
 Into Thy bosom pour—till there I find relief.
 O let me walk with Thee, thou Mighty One !
 Lean on Thine arm, and trust Thy love alone ;
 With Thee hold converse sweet where'er I go ;
 Thy smile of love my highest bliss below !
 With Thee transact life's business—doing all
 With single aim for Thee—as Thou dost call :
 My every comfort at Thy hand receive,
 My every talent to thy glory give ;
 Thy counsel seek in every trying hour,
 In all my weakness trust Thy mighty power.
 Oh may this high companionship be mine,
 And all my life by its reflection shine,

My great—my wise—my never-failing friend,
Whose love no change can know, no turn, no end!
My SAVIOUR GOD! who gavest Thy life for me,
Let nothing come between my heart and Thee!
From Thee no thought, no secret, would I keep,
But on Thy breast my tears of anguish weep.
My every wound to Thee I take to heal,
For Thou art touched with every pang I feel.
O, Friend of friends! the faithful—true and tried,
In Thee, and Thee alone, I now confide;
Earth's "broken cisterns"—ah! they all have proved
Unsatisfying—vain—however loved;
The false will fail—the fondest, they must go!
Oh thus it is with all we love below.
From things of earth then let my heart be free,
And find its happiness, my LORD, in Thee;
Thy HOLY SPIRIT for my Guide and Guest,
Whate'er my lot, I must be safe and blest;
Wash'd in Thy blood, from all my guilt made clean,
In Thee, my Righteousness, alone I'm seen:
Thy home my home—Thy GOD and FATHER mine!
Dead to the world—my life is hid with Thine:
Its highest honors fade before my view—
Its pleasures, I can trample on them too.
With Thee by faith I walk in crowds—alone,
Making to Thee my wants and wishes known:
Drawing from Thee my daily strength in prayer,
Finding Thine arm sustains me everywhere;
While, thro' the clouds of sin and woe, the light
Of coming Glory shines more sweetly bright;
And this my daily boast—my aim—my end—
That my Redeemer is my GOD—my FRIEND!

C. H. I.