

HELP AND FOOD

FOR THE

Household of Faith.

Vol. XVI.

NEW YORK :
LOIZEAUX BROTHERS, BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT,
63 Fourth Avenue,
1898.

PRINTED AT
THE BIBLE TRUTH PRESS, 63 FOURTH AVENUE,
NEW YORK.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
According to your Faith be it unto you	80
Answers to Correspondents.....	54, 108, 168, 194, 259, 322
Bushel (The) and the Bed.....	197
Christian's (The) Relation to Governments.....	102
Church of God (The) Unknown to Christendom.....	122, 149
Comma (A) Removed.. ..	141
Correspondence	163
Correspondence on Baptism.....	239
CROWNED (THE) CHRIST:—	
Chap. xi. Head and Heir of all Things.....	3
xii. Head of the Body	30
xiii. The Bridegroom.....	58, 90
xiv. The Throne of God and of the Lamb.....	93
Death, from two Points of View—a Contrast.....	190
“Do not disgrace the Throne of Thy Glory ”	84
“Fig-Tree ” (The)	271
Fragments	88, 97, 329
From an Old Book	138
Gideon and His Companions	21
Has Water Baptism a Place in Christianity.....	172
“He Followeth not with Us”.....	325
HOPE OF THE MORNING STAR (THE):	
I. Its Meaning and Implications.....	225
II. The Old Testament and the New; Israel and the Church,—the Relation of Prophecy to each....	261
III. The Resurrection of the Saints, and the Great Tribulation	296
IV. The Tares, the Wheat, and the Harvest	330
V. The Saints in the Tribulation—who are they ?....	339
VI. Secrecy, Manifestation, and Signs of Imminence .	353

Inquiring of the Lord and Failing to Inquire.....	1
Kingdom (The), the Family and the Church.....	276
Meditation on Philippians iii.....	72
On Discipline: Its Spirit and Object	281, 313
Other Side (The).....	134
Our Vessel to be Steered where the Rocks are not	98
POETRY:—	
At Four Score and Four.....	29
Dust (The) of His Feet.....	325
Grace.....	212
I am not Mine.....	39
Loving (The) Voice	57
Nothing but Blood.....	355
Peerless Worth.....	89
Thou hast been a Refuge from the Storm.....	139
Unused Spices	118
Prayer and Prophecy Corporately Considered	289
Progress in Christian Conflict.....	40
Rebuilding Jericho	184
Redemption and Service	169
Resurrection the Evidence of Full Atonement.....	8
Salute Philologus	256
Secret (The) of Understanding Prophecy.....	51
Separate from the World.....	167
Shall I Disciple my Little Children.....	214
Taking Counsel, but not of God.....	66
“They Lacked Nothing ”	14
Transmitted Responsibility	113
Under the Oak	85
Watch and Pray.....	159
Why the Ball Dress was put off	136
Willing to be a Broom.....	120
With Jesus in the Desert.....	201
Yet not I.....	145

INQUIRING OF THE LORD

AND FAILING TO INQUIRE.

TWICE it is recorded in 2 Samuel ii. that David "inquired of the Lord," as if to attract our attention to this in a special way ; because immediately afterwards he takes a most important step, and no inquiry of the Lord is mentioned. Saul had perished, and "David inquired of the Lord, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah ? And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up ? And He said, Unto Hebron. So David went up thither," and his wives and his men with him.

But note what happens next. "And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah." There is no waiting to inquire of the Lord, and no appeal to the other tribes, at least, so we are bound to infer. And a step is taken that is manifestly not of God, because not according to His word. David was not marked out to be king over the house of Judah, but to be king "over Israel."

And the two humble inquirings of the Lord, pointedly mentioned just before, surely are meant to call attention to the lack of any such inquiring here. It reminds one of Paul being ensnared at Jerusalem. David was now amid his friends. When humbly inquiring his way, step by step, he was still an exile ; but now, as it were, at home again, it would seem that both he and the men of Judah acted by impulse, and not by the Spirit of God. And the consequences that follow are full of warning and instruction.

Abner made Ish-bosheth king over the other tribes, and war ensues; and acts of vile treachery and murder mark those years. And not until over seven years after is David anointed king over all Israel.

Surely all this had its influence towards the final rending of the ten tribes from Judah. And the later history of David's career shows the same spirit at work in him. When being brought back to his throne after the overthrow of Absalom, David's failure in this line is more signal than before. He now impatiently challenges the men of Judah for not being more forward to welcome him back when the other tribes were making demonstrations in his favor. The result is bitter words between the men of Israel and the men of Judah, because of Judah doing what David had himself incited them to do. "The king is near of kin to us," was the men of Judah's plea.

Let us beware of sectarian thoughts! David's failure in these two cases, and the consequences—for war ensued again in this latter case—are full of solemnity and full of warning and instruction. What far-reaching results may ensue from one step taken, at an important juncture, and especially by one whose responsibility is great, without inquiring of the Lord!

May the lesson be deeply impressed upon our hearts! and may we be well assured that any step taken without God must have an evil result!

E. S. L.

Do *you* believe God? If God be *God*, whatever He shall plan for us, is *positively* and *surely* the best; and could our eyes, at this moment, see by the light of eternity instead of time, we would always choose for ourselves that which God has chosen for us. "Jesus said unto him, what I do thou knowest not *now*, but thou shalt know hereafter" (John xiii. 7).

THE CROWNED CHRIST.

“And upon His head were many crowns.”

(Rev. xix. 12.)

(Continued from page 329, Vol. xv.)

CHAPTER XI.

Head and Head of all things.

THAT title which Isaiah gives to the “Child born”—the “Father of eternity”—leads us on to consider His relation to that eternal state of which He is Author. Here we shall find, indeed, in some sort an opposite line of thought to that which we have just had before us; and yet in fullest accord with it. For if, in what we have looked at, Christ has been seen seeking and working for the Father’s glory, until He can give up to Him the Kingdom, which He has taken to bring all things into agreement with His blessed will, it is surely in perfect accord with this to find that Christ is Himself the Centre of all the thoughts and purposes—the counsels of the Father. As in communion with the Son we have had the Father before us, so now in communion with the Father have we the Son. Our joy it is and wondrous privilege to be brought into communion both “with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

The Son is as the Word the Revealer of God, and, as the Word made flesh, the Revelation also. Creation, as brought into being by the Word, proclaims in broken and reflected rays the glory of its Creator. This is that house of God of which the tabernacle in Israel was a figure, and which the Son is “over” (Heb. iii. 1–6). Even in this from the beginning He

has been already serving, and to what service does it not pledge Him in result! For, as over it, and the Revealer, He must maintain the glory of that revelation, amid all the frailty incident to the creature; and it would not be the creature, if it were not frail, nor could other than frailty and dependence suit it.

Moreover, the higher the structure is carried,—the more complex and wondrous it becomes, the frailer it is; the more it climbs Godward, the greater the depth to which it may fall; the more richly the ship is laden, the more is the treasure which is in it exposed to wreck.

The service undertaken here by the Son is a service of love. Revelation is for the creature, not for God. The glory revealed in it is not to increase the wealth of the Revealer, but of him to whom it is revealed. God is not making gain out of His creatures, nor are they increasing His wealth at their own cost. "If thou hast sinned, what doest thou against Him? and if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto Him? if thou be righteous, what givest thou Him? or what receiveth He at thy hand?" Nay, love alone can count its riches in assuming such burdens. And God *is* love; and His glory is in the out-flow of His goodness; and of this Christ is the only complete expression. What simpler then than that Christ—not simply the Son of His love, but the Son become Man—is the end for which all creation exists? Divine love, as it is exhibited, confirmed, glorified in Him, is the only possible key to the mystery of our being.

Sin has come in, and we think naturally very different thoughts from these. "I *knew* Thee, that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not

sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed," is said in all human languages, in accents of assured conviction. Even the Cross, the most wonderful manifestation of divine love that could be made has been darkened and profaned by such blasphemous accusations. But the answer has been given by the lips of the patient Sufferer Himself, whose lifting up avails and shall avail, to draw men unto Him, and so to God. Yea, "He died for all, that they which live should no more live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again.

He has vindicated then afresh His hereditary title as "Son over the house of God;" and having finally consecrated it as a temple of praise for ever, He will abide the Head of it. For this is the "mystery of God's will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, for the administration of the fulness of times, to *head up all things in Christ*; both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in Him, in whom we also have obtained an inheritance" (Eph. 9-11, *Gk.*).

We must not confound this with millennial Kingship, or with anything which is to pass away. The "fulness of times" is not simply the last of probationary ages, but that to which they all pointed and led the way. Headship is not the same as rule over, after the manner of a king, but implies a closer, natural, and, so to speak, organic relationship. The head is the representative and interpreter of that to which he is head, and which would be defective in a terrible way without it. Such is Christ's Headship over creation; and Ephesians here completes the doctrine of the two epistles which precede and connect with it as positional epistles—Romans and Galatians. The

three are an ascending series, reaching in Ephesians their highest point and thus the widest view. For in Romans and Galatians His Headship is confined to man, and thus He is the second Adam of a new creation. That by itself would shut out angels; but they are not to be shut out, and the Lord's title here would necessarily include these also.

In the third chapter we find accordingly that "*every* family"—so it should be translated—"in heaven and earth is named"—or gets its title—"from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is, the relationship of God to Christ as Man, affects His relationship with all His intelligent creatures. It could not surely fail to be so. Christ's own place in relation to men must in some way avail for more than men; and the heading up of creation in Christ must bind it to God in a manner unspeakably different from its original relationship as creation merely. The character of man so commonly remarked on as a microcosm,—his nature thus putting him in relation to every part of the universe of God—becomes in this way a matter of highest and tenderest interest, as we realize this to be the nature assumed by the Son of God.

That He is the Son has here also its significance, as we see, and how the original and divine relationships shine through the acquired ones. Wonderfully accordant it all is, with all its surpassing blessedness. How "all things were created *for*" Christ, as well as "*by*" Him, we can clearly see (Col. 16); as well as how, not merely by His power, but in the link of such relationships, "by Him all things consist" (ver. 17).

Thus the Son is the "Heir of all things (Heb.i.2);

and sonship and heirship go together, not merely among the dying sons of men who, under death because of sin, leave their possessions to others; but sonship and heirship go together in things that are eternal, and where again that which is divine shines through and interprets the creaturely and temporal. The thoughts of God reflect Himself and spring out of His affections—out of the depth of His nature. Would only that there were more ability to receive and trace out what His word, the key of all, has opened so for us! Let us remind ourselves that it is in this very connection that we are assured that, “according to the riches of His grace, He has abounded towards us in all wisdom and thoughtfulness,* having made known to us the mystery of His will.”

Yes, God has thought of us, indeed, as those whom He has called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, and is training to be His co-heirs in His inheritance. Shall we not respond to His care and seek to grow more into “the mind of Christ”?

How tenderly are our thoughts drawn towards these glories of His by the reminder of our own personal interest in them. As here, where the mystery of His will to head up all things in Christ being spoken of, we are straightway reminded, “in whom also we have obtained an inheritance.” At the close of this chapter again, “He has made Him to be Head over all things *to the Church* which is His body.” In Colossians we find, in the verses most characteristic of the whole epistle (chap. 9, 10): “For *in Him*

* I cannot find a better word to express here the idea of *φρόνησις*, which the common version translates, most unsuitable surely, “prudence.” Others give “intelligence,” but being on God’s part toward us, this also seems hardly adequate.

dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete"—filled up—"in Him, *who is the Head of all principality and power.*" Such things as these, which assuredly we should most shrink from putting together, the word of God unites as if to challenge our attention by such connection; as if to make it impossible to possess ourselves of what is our own, without exploring the glories of Christ so linked with it.

F. W. G.

(*To be continued.*)

RESURRECTION THE EVIDENCE OF FULL ATONEMENT.

1 Corinthians xv. 13-23.

THIS portion of the word of God is the Holy Spirit's emphasis on the work of Christ in making atonement for His people. A clear apprehension of Christ risen from the dead is therefore of the utmost importance, as that which, through, of course, the instrumentality of the Spirit, discovers to and establishes in the soul an active sense of that glorious peace which Christ has made through the blood of His cross, and which He Himself is, and that, too, abidingly (Col. i. 20; Eph. ii. 14). In raising Christ our Lord from the dead our God has stamped indelibly the atoning work of His beloved Son.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John iii. 14, 15). Here is divine emphasis put on the need there was for Christ's death. But if it "behoved Christ to suffer," it equally behoved that He should "rise from the dead the third day." He could not

have entered "into His glory" otherwise (Luke xxiv. 46, 26). Here we get the risen Lord Himself emphasizing the need of His resurrection, as before we found Him putting emphasis on the need of His death. It is in the power of resurrection that He places the heavenly credentials, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, in the hands of His ambassadors. (2 Cor. v. 20.) All that had to be still waited for was the "Power from on High" (Luke xxiv. 49) — a Power which in due time was blessedly manifest. (Lev. xxiii. 15, 16; Acts ii.)

The types and shadows which of old spoke of Christ and His glorious work whereby He should answer all questions affecting the holiness and righteousness of God, making atonement for the sins of His people, types and shadows now interpreted for us by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, are not confined to the Jewish ritual alone; they are found in "Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms," concerning Him.

But let us examine briefly one or two of these precious types and shadows, viz.—

The golden candlestick, Aaron putting off the linen garments, and the cherubim of the mercy-seat.

In the light of the *golden candlestick* (Ex. xxv. 31-40), we get the Holy Spirit. The *candlestick* was outside the veil, where without it all would be darkness. (Ex. xxvi. 35; xxvii. 21.) And if its light be a type of the Spirit, as it surely is, how blessed to see that the Holy Spirit, illuminating the darkness, already speaks of the resurrection and ascension of Christ !

But there is another point equally worthy of our

attention.—Its seven branches (or perhaps, 1+6)—*Branch* and branches, as in Isaiah xi. 1, 2—display beautiful carvings of almond blossoms all over them. This fact at once reminds us of Aaron's rod which, on a memorable occasion (Num. xvii.), "brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." The rod was a mere branch of the almond-tree, and cut off from the tree was dead. Christ was "cut off out of the land of the living," was "cut off and had nothing." (Is. liii. ; Dan. ix. 26.) Here was life out of death—resurrection. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pet. iii. 18).

On the day of atonement, Aaron is seen to put off his linen garments. Why? The work is completed. (Lev. xvi. 23.) On the resurrection morning, as recorded in Matthew and Mark, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome are invited to behold the "*place*" where the Lord lay; in Luke and John it is the "*linen clothes*" that the early visitors are invited to behold. The "place" is empty, and the "linen clothes" are left there as a token of the Lord's resurrection and consequently of atonement completed.

After the "linen garments" were divested by the high-priest, he came forth to continue whatever shall be sweet savor to God. (Lev. xvi. 24, 25.) After the "linen clothes" are seen in the "*place* where the Lord lay," is there not sweet savor in the Lord's communion with His own then (Luke xxiv. 30, 41-43; John xxi. 5-12), and ever since? Is there not, both in Leviticus and in Luke and John more than a hint

of that Melchizedek sustenance and joy, which are so essential to an endless life, communicated (John xx. 22) to the children of faith! Christ is all.

Again, in Matthew it is, although the "angel of the Lord," one whose "countenance was like lightning"—almost the language applied to the Lord Himself in Rev. i. 16, and Dan. x. 6—who stills the fears of the early visitors at the tomb. In Mark it is a "young man" who does so (chap. xvi. 5, 6). This is beautifully characteristic of this gospel, for who is fitter for *service* than a *young man*?

Then we hear the voice of the suffering Saviour, exclaiming in anticipative sorrow—"He shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days!" (Ps. cii. 23, 24).

In Luke we see "*two men*" standing by the women in shining garments (Luke xxiv. 4-8), whose object is to awake them, as it were, by refreshing their memory with the Lord's own words. "And they remembered His words." I hope to refer to the "two men" further on.

But in John, the gospel of the Godhead of Christ, the gospel in which the deity of Christ is the theme, and full access into the Holiest found, from beginning to close, because, as we have learnt, there is no rending of the veil in John's gospel—faith finding the veil rent as it steps on to its glorious threshold—in this gospel, then, "*two angels*," are seen by Mary Magdalene, the intensity of the love of whose heart for her Lord and Saviour rivets her to the sacred spot where, though Peter and the "other disciple, whom Jesus loved," might go, she would abide, weeping. The position of the angels is significant. They are "in white, *sitting*, the one at the head, and

the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain" (John xx. 12). Here the angels are *sitting*, as if to indicate that that of which the cherubic figures of the mercy-seat (Ex. xxv. 18-22; Lev. xvi. 14) spoke in type was now accomplished in fact. But the angels could not satisfy Mary's heart. Their question of "Woman, why weepest thou?" hinted rather of Eden (Gen. iii. 6), where the "woman being deceived, was in the transgression" (1 Tim. ii. 14). The angels' question is repeated by the Lord Himself, but is followed by another that goes to the root of the matter, "*Whom* seekest thou?" Ah, well He knew she sought Himself, the adorable Person, "whom God has set forth a mercy-seat through faith in His blood" (Rom. iii. 25). *He* called her by name, for she was graven on the palms of His hands (Is. xlix. 16). Such was her joy that she would have thrown her arms about Him—that could not be: "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and unto my God, and your God." Blessed message! and so appropriately given and borne!

The transfiguration, so fittingly omitted in John, is very precious as recorded in Mark ix. Here, as I take it, the unsealed eyes of His own are privileged to gaze upon the High-priest, in His holy garments, anticipative of His assumption of that glorious place foretold of Him by the Voice in the psalm (Ps. cx. 4). For it is as risen from the dead that Christ is here regarded, and in Mark it is distinctly stated—"He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen till the Son of man were risen from the dead." Was there not a divine reason for

this? "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Peter "wist not what to say," and so *the flesh* would act to dishonor the Lord. Through its zeal would it build, ostensibly for the Lord. How much of this sort of thing is going on to-day, while the Holy Sprit is quenched, grieved, and resisted in the "great house" of profession, and the living word itself equally set aside!

This brings us to the consideration of the "two men" alluded to before. The "two men" who were seen with Jesus on the Holy Mount (2 Peter i. 16-21), if carefully compared as they appear in Luke ix. 30-32; xxiv. 4, and Acts i. 10, will be seen to be symbols of the divine testimony to the all-sufficiency of the word of God—Moses (the law) and Elijah (the prophets) were the "two men" who were with Christ on the Mount and who talked with Him, the subject being "His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." This is surely the wondrous theme of the word of God. The "two men" witnessed His resurrection and stamped it with the seal of His own words. The "two men" witnessed His ascension, rebuking the "men of Galilee" for gazing "toward Heaven." It is the living and unfailing word of God which they, and we too, must look into to learn all about Him and His coming again. This living and abiding "Volume of the Book," read in the sanctuary in the "light of the seven-branched Candlestick," as another has put it, will give us burning hearts, for thus indeed shall we hear Him talking with us by the way.

Blessed be God! He has defeated Satan's devices to nullify and render void the atonement. The enemy's devices are recorded for us in Matt. xxviii.

11-15, and in the arrogant utterances of the "Higher Criticism" of our own day. Yes, indeed, our blessed God has perfectly safe-guarded by type, shadow, and prophetic voice the invulnerable glories of a full and perfect atonement. Let the attacks of the enemy be ever so furious, "nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure" (2 Tim. ii. 19). Men may try as energized by Satan to lay another foundation; but the One that "liveth and was dead" is God's foundation, our joy, and our hope. Now, "Unto Him who loveth us, and has washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and the might to the ages of ages."

J. M.

"THEY LACKED NOTHING."

Deut. ii. 7; Neh. ix. 21.

THESE words tell us of the abiding faithfulness of Israel's God, yea, our God. Their history as a people across the desert serves only as an occasion to display more fully what God was. He it was who sent a Saviour and delivered them. In the wilderness they commence their journey as His people, but the journey for them in the end was long and testing; their path was one which could only be enjoyed as they walked daily in communion with Him and obeyed His word; and this is how they commenced the journey; when there was neglect of this in any stage of their history, the flesh in some way manifested itself, and murmurings and complainings took the place of the songs of joy with which they started. (Ex. xv.)

The flesh, even in a believer, can never enjoy a

path of faith and daily walk with God. This is fully demonstrated in Israel. Many times their hearts turned away from Him,—“the Rock of their salvation.” The forty years tell us what a miserable thing the flesh is. The book of Exodus (chaps. xv.—xx.), also Numbers and Deuteronomy witness this fact, as well as Psalms lxxviii., cv., cvi.

The mixed multitude were a source of trial to them *the whole way*. They did not leave Egypt wholly behind them when they entered the wilderness, for the mixed multitude came up with them (Ex. xii. 38; Num. xi. 14). Oh, that our gospel preaching had always that power with it which leads souls out fully, and causes a clean break with Egypt (the world). But with us, alas! as with Israel, it is often not so. Here their history is given as an example. (1 Cor. x.)

We are informed this “mixed multitude fell a lusting, and Israel also wept again.” When the eye and heart get away from God, grace is soon forgotten, and, as with Abraham and Israel, after the face turns toward the south country (Egypt—Gen. xii. 9), then the feet soon follow (Isa. xxx. 1-7).

Let us look at a few examples from their history. They said,—

1. “We remember the fish we did eat in Egypt freely: the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna (Christ) before our eyes” (Num. xi. 4-6).

2. “It was well with us in Egypt” (Num. xi. 18).

3. “Why came we forth from Egypt” (Num. xi. 20)?

4. “Would God we had died in Egypt” (Num. xiv. 2).

5. "Were it not better for us to return to Egypt" (Num. xiv. 3) ?

6. "Let us make a captain and return to Egypt" (Num. xiv. 4).

7. "Because the Lord hath hated us, He hath brought us forth out of Egypt" (Deut. i. 27).

Who would ever have thought such to be the language of a redeemed people, a people that had beheld the signs and wonders they had, a people who had sung such a memorial song as they had just before? (Ex. xv.) Yet such is the case; the flesh is still the flesh, and will be till the end.

But to walk with God, in a path of simple faith, and enjoy our abiding portion, in a glorified Christ above, we need to be reminded, again and again, by the Spirit, through the word of God, that there is nothing good in the flesh. (Rom. vii. 18.) It is enmity to God (Rom. viii. 7). Sin is condemned in the flesh (Rom. viii. 3), and we are to reckon ourselves dead to it (Rom. vi. 11). What a lesson for each believer ! a lesson we all need to learn when we enter a path in which the renewed man finds enjoyment in the precious things of Christ !

But they cross the desert, they reach the end of the journey, and ere they enter the goodly land, the land that flowed with milk and honey, Moses, their divinely appointed leader, reviews for them the past, goes over the whole history, and adds, "The Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand; He knows thy walkings through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing." Did they need water to quench their thirst? The smitten rock poured forth its refreshing stream. Did they need

bread to eat? He gave them bread from heaven. Did they need clothing? Their clothes waxed not old, neither did their feet swell—"they lacked nothing." His goodness, His love, His compassions were new every morning; and Nehemiah, at an after time, repeats to their children also, "They lacked nothing" (Neh. ix. 21).

We will now pass on to another scene and at another time, the wilderness with all its varied lessons, is a thing of the past, and we will glance at the condition of things in the land, not now so much a time of weakness and failure, but one of triumph, and peace, and blessing, as was witnessed in the bright days of Solomon. We will pass over the history that intervenes, in which, however, God's faithfulness is marked at every stage, and in time every obstacle is overcome, every enemy set aside, and the king of peace ascends the throne. The nation, the object of God's special care, enters into the consummation of blessings intended for it. There is one day, and only one, ever to eclipse it, the day yet future, when Solomon's Son and Solomon's Lord, will display His power and glory in His kingdom, which Solomon's but faintly foreshadowed. The reader will do well to take a glance at the first ten chapters of 1 Kings, and then he will see the order and progress of this time.

In chapter i. the false king is set aside, and Solomon the true king, by the appointment of the father, is anointed.

Chapter ii. 12, "Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was established greatly."

In chapter iii. we have Solomon in the wisdom and power of God in the kingdom.

Chapter iv. 20, "Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and making merry." "And he had peace on all sides round about him" (ver. 24).

The whole of chapter iv. is a wondrous picture of a future time not far distant,—a time that will reach on and touch the border line of eternity, and in verse 27, it is said, "they lacked nothing;" hence of the historic past and the prophetic future it can be truly said, "they lacked nothing." Blessed sufficiency! blessed fulness! and all this fulness treasured up for us now in the Christ above!

Next, we will notice briefly the same lessons of grace, love, and care, as manifested in the wondrous days of His humiliation here below in connection with those that walked with Him. He entered the path in lowly grace, and called the various ones from their several occupations; Matthew sitting at the receipt of customs, hears a voice, "Follow Me." He obeys; "leaves all, and follows Him." Simon and Andrew likewise, as they were busy at their nets, hear His voice, "Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men; and straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him." James and John were mending their nets, and the same voice calls them, "and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Him" (Mark i. 26-20).

Thus they leave their several occupations to be with Him (Mark iii. 14), to serve Him, and to preach His word. They walked with Him, they served Him, they preached the word of the kingdom, no stated

salary was promised them; this they were not to look for nor expect. Theirs was to be a path of faith; one in which, at its every stage, and all its various demands and needs, they were to look to and trust the One who had called them. All the resources of heaven and earth were at His disposal, as of old, the key of all those vast storehouses of Egypt was in the hands of Joseph; and Pharaoh directed all who were in need to "go to Joseph." So Jesus, our Joseph, held the key, and does still.

Did He fail them? Did He neglect them at any time? Surely not! He watched them at every step with an unwearied love and care,—blessed Master He was. He noticed the press at times and called them aside, to rest awhile (Mark vi. 31). If money were needed at times, His grace touched the hearts of the women from Galilee, and they minister unto Him (Luke viii. 1-3). At other times the sea was made to serve Him, and the fish delivered up the required means to meet the need; "for Me and thee" (Matt. xvii. 24-27). How soul-refreshing to trace His ways of grace when He was here among men, and at the close of such a life He asks them, "When I sent you out without purse and scrip, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing" (Matt. x. 9-14; Luke xxii. 35).

In this review we get the highly exalted path of a servant to profit by in this our time as then. True, our Lord is gone up on high, and is now Head of the Church, yet He still calls and sends forth His servants, some to go into "all the world to preach the gospel;" to others the Chief Shepherd says, "Feed My sheep," "feed My lambs." They are as those whom He called when on earth, to be with Him,

serve Him, and trust Him in every stage of such a path of service and not another. At every step of such a path, whatever the needs may be, there must of necessity be faith. Look, in every need, straight up to the Head of the Church. In John xv. 16, we learn the work each is expected to do—"bring forth fruit," and then the blank cheque is signed and left for the servant to pursue his path of faith, and fill in for what is required—"That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name He may give it you."

There will be encouragement needed to seek His face day by day. (Ps. xxvii. 8.) Are there demands made? They are to turn not to the world, nor yet to the Church; but wholly to Him; "go tell Jesus"! Study the example of Paul, the man of faith, in 1 Cor. ix., where he sets forth so clearly and fully the believer's responsibility in those matters, yet he adds, "Neither have I written these things that it should be so done to me." Faith shuts the servant up to the Lord alone. There are and will be times of testing, for the Lord is zealous of His pleasant fruit, and loves the faith that trusts and clings to Him; yet the Holy Spirit, through the apostle, has written, "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory in (Gk.) Christ Jesus."

And when this path of faith ends, the path of toil and labor, and the general review takes place, we will remember all the way, and when He again asks the question, "Lacked ye any thing?" what a tale this will tell! What a response will be given! Every servant, as he looks back and renders up his account, will exclaim, "Nothing, Lord, nothing!" What a prospect! What a day!

A. E. B.

GIDEON AND HIS COMPANIONS.

THE clear and soul-stirring blast of Gideon's trumpet had drawn around him a very large and imposing company; but this company had to be tested. It is one thing to be moved by the zeal and energy of some earnest servant of Christ, and it is quite another thing to possess those moral qualities which alone can fit a man to be an earnest servant himself. There is a vast difference between following in the wake of some devoted man of God, and walking with God ourselves—being propped up and led on by the faith and energy of another, and leaning upon God in the power of individual faith for ourselves.

This is a serious consideration for all of us. There is always great danger of our being mere imitators of other people's faith; of copying their example without their spiritual power; of adopting their peculiar line of things without their personal communion. All this must be carefully guarded against. We specially warn the young Christian reader against it. Let us be simple, and humble, and real. We may be very *small*, our sphere very narrow, our path very retired; but it does not matter in the least, provided we are precisely what grace has made us, and occupying the sphere in which our blessed Master has set us, and treading the path which He has opened before us. It is by no means absolutely necessary that we should be great, or prominent, or showy, or noisy in the world; but it is absolutely necessary that we should be real and humble, obedient and dependent. Thus our God can use us, without fear of our vaunting ourselves; and then, too, we are safe, peaceful, and happy. There is nothing more delightful to the true Christian, the genuine servant of Christ, than to find himself in that quiet, humble, shady path where *self* is lost sight of, and the precious light of God's countenance enjoyed—where the

thoughts of men are of small account, and the sweet approval of Christ is everything to the soul

Flesh cannot be trusted. It will turn the very service of Christ into an occasion of self-exaltation. It will use the very name of Him who made Himself nothing in order to make itself something. It will build up its own reputation by seeming to further the cause of Him who made Himself of none. Such is flesh! Such are we in ourselves! Silly, self-exalting creatures, ever ready to vaunt ourselves while professing to be nothing in ourselves, and to deserve nothing but the flames of an everlasting hell.

Need we marvel at the testing and proving of Gideon's companions? All must be tested and proved. The service of Christ is a very solemn and a very holy thing, and all who take part therein must be self-judged, self-distrusting, and self-emptied, and not only so, but they must lean, with unshaken confidence, upon the living God. These are the grand qualities that go to make up the character of the true servant of Christ, and they are strikingly illustrated on the page of inspiration which now lies open before us.

Let us proceed with the narrative.

"The people that are with thee are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands. Now, therefore, go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand."

Here the first grand test is applied to Gideon's host—a test designed to bring out the measure of the heart's simple confidence in Jehovah. A coward heart will not do for the day of battle, a doubting spirit will not stand in conflict. The same principle is set forth in Deuteronomy xx 8. "And the officers shall speak further unto the peo—

ple, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart."

Faint-heartedness is terribly contagious. It spreads rapidly. It withers the arm that should bear the shield, and paralyses the hand that should wield the sword. The only cure for this malady is simple confidence in God, a firm grasp of His faithfulness, a child-like trust in His word, true personal acquaintance with Himself. We must know God for ourselves, in such a way that His word is everything to us, and that we can walk alone with Him, and stand alone with Him in the darkest hour.

Reader, is it thus with thee? Hast thou this blessed confidence in God—this solid hold of His word? Hast thou, deep down in thy heart, such an experimental knowledge of God and His Christ as shall sustain thee even though thou hadst not the support or sympathy of another believer under the sun? Art thou prepared to walk alone in the world?

These are weighty questions, and we feel the need of pressing them upon the Church of God at the present moment. There is a wide diffusion of the precious truth of God, and numbers are getting hold of it. Like the blast of Gideon's trumpet, so the clear testimony which has widely gone forth of late years has attracted many; and while we quite feel that there is real ground for thankfulness in this, we also feel that there is ground for very serious reflection indeed. Truth is a most precious thing, if it be truthfully found and truthfully held: but let us remember that in exact proportion to the preciousness of the truth of God so is the moral danger of trafficking therein without a self-judged heart and an exercised conscience. What we really need is faith—unfeigned, earnest, simple faith, which connects the soul, in living power, with God, and enables us to overcome all the difficulties and discouragements of the way. Of this faith there can

be no imitation. We must either possess it in reality or not at all. A sham faith will speedily come to the ground. The man who attempts to walk by faith, if he have it not, must speedily totter and fall. We cannot face the hosts of Midian unless we have full confidence in the living God. "Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return." Thus it must ever be. None can go to battle save those who are braced up by a faith that grasps the unseen realities of eternity, and endures as seeing Him who is invisible. May this faith be ours, in larger measure, beloved reader.

It is full of instruction for the heart to notice the effect of the first test upon the host of Gideon. It thinned his ranks amazingly. "I here returned of the people twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand." This was a serious reduction. But it is far better to have ten thousand that can trust God than ten thousand times ten thousand who cannot. Of what use are numbers, if they be not energized by a living faith? None whatever. It is comparatively easy to flock around a standard raised by a vigorous hand, but it is a totally different thing to stand, in personal energy, in the actual battle. Nought but genuine faith can do this, and hence when the searching question is put, "Who can trust God?" the showy ranks of profession are speedily thinned.

But there was yet another test for Gideon's companions. "And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many, bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee, and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go." So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself, likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to

drink water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place" (vii. 4-7).

Here then we have another great moral quality which must characterize those who will act for God and His people, in an evil day. They must not only have confidence in God, but they must also be prepared to surrender self. This is a universal law in the service of Christ. If we want to swim in God's current, we must sink self; and we can only sink self in proportion as we trust Christ. It is not, need we say, a question of salvation; it is a question of service. It is not a question of being a child of God, but of being a proper servant of Christ. The thirty-one thousand seven hundred that were dismissed from Gideon's army, were just as much Israelites as the three hundred that remained; but they were not fitted for the moment of conflict; they were not the right men for the crisis. And why? Was it that they were not circumcised? Nay. What then? They could not trust God and surrender self. They were full of fear when they ought to have been full of faith. They made refreshment and comfort their object instead of conflict.

Here, reader, lay the true secret of their moral unfitness. God cannot trust those who do not trust Him and sink self. This is pre-eminently solemn and practical. We live in a day of easy profession and self-indulgence. Knowledge can, now-a-days, be picked up at very small cost. Scraps of truth can be gathered, second hand, in all directions. Truth which cost some of God's dear servants years of deep soul-ploughing and heart-searching exercise, is now in free circulation and can be intellectually seized and flippantly professed, by many who know not what soul-ploughing or heart-exercise means.

But let us never forget—yea, let us constantly remember—that the life of faith is a reality; service is a reality; testimony for Christ, a reality. And further let us bear in mind that if we want to stand for Christ in an evil day—if we would be men for the crisis, genuine servants, true witnesses—then verily we must learn the true mean-

ing of those two qualities, namely, confidence in God, and self-surrender.

There is something peculiarly striking in the fact that out of the many thousands of Israel, in the days of Gideon, there were only three hundred men who were really fit for conflict with the Midianites; only this small band fit for the occasion. This truly is a suggestive and admonitory fact. There were hundreds of thousands of true Israelites—truly circumcised sons of Abraham—members of the congregation of the Lord, who were by no means up to the mark, when it was a question of war to the knife with Midian—a question of genuine confidence in God and self-surrender. We are safe in saying that the men who were morally fitted for the grand crisis in the day of battle were not one in a thousand. How solemn! Not one in a thousand who could trust God and deny self.

Christian reader, is not this something worthy of deep and serious thought? Does it not, very naturally, suggest the inquiry as to whether it is otherwise at this moment? Is it not painfully evident that we live in a day in the which little is known of the blessed secret of confidence in God, and still less of 'the' exercise of self-surrender? In point of fact, these things can never be rightly separated. If we attempt to divorce self-surrender from confidence in God, it will land us in the deep and dark delusions of monasticism, asceticism, or ritualism. It will issue in nature trying to subdue nature. This, we need hardly say, is the direct opposite of Christianity. This latter starts with the glorious fact that the *old self* has been condemned and set aside by the cross of Christ, and therefore it can be practically surrendered, every day, by the power of the Holy Ghost. This is the meaning of those fine words in Colossians iii., "*Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*" He does not say, "*Ye ought to be dead.*" No; but "*ye are dead.*" What then? "*Mortify your members which are on the earth.*" So also in the profound and precious teaching in Romans vi., "*How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death?*"

What then? "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Here then lies the secret of all true self-surrender. If this be not understood and practically entered into, it will simply be *self* in one form trying to subdue *self* in another. This is a fatal delusion. It is a snare of the devil into which earnest souls are in imminent danger of falling, who sigh after holiness of life, but do not know the power of accomplished redemption, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost—are not built upon the solid foundation of Christianity.

We specially warn the reader against this insidious error. It distinctly savors of monasticism or asceticism. It clothes itself in the garb of pietism and sanctimoniousness, and is peculiarly attractive to a certain class of ardent spirits who long for victory over the lusts, passions, and tendencies of nature; but, not knowing how to attain it, are turning their back upon Christ and His cross, and betaking themselves to the resources of a spurious religion.

It is against this most mischievous and delusive system that the apostle warns us, in Colossians ii., "Let no man," he says, "beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances"—such as, "touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using—after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh" (Colossians ii. 18–23).

We deem it needful to say thus much lest any of our readers should at all mistake us on the subject of self-surrender. We desire it to be distinctly understood that the only possible ground of self-surrender is the

knowledge of accomplished redemption, and our union with Christ through the power of the Holy Ghost. This is the essential basis of all Christian conduct. In short, a known salvation is the basis; the Holy Ghost indwelling, the power; and the word of God, the directory of all true self-surrender.

But what did Gideon and his companions know of these things? Nothing, as Christians now know them. But they had confidence in God, and further, they did not make their own refreshment or comfort their object, but simply took it up by the way as a means to an end. Herein they teach a fine lesson even to those whose privilege it is to walk in the full light of New Testament Christianity. If they, in the dim twilight in which they lived, could trust God, and surrender self for the moment, even in measure, then what shall we say for ourselves who, with all our light and privileges, are so ready to doubt God and seek our own things?

Is it not painfully evident that, in this our day of light and privilege, there is but little moral preparedness for the path of service and conflict which we are called to tread? Alas! alas! we cannot deny it. There is a deplorable lack of genuine trust in the living God, and of the true spirit of self-surrender. Here, we may rest assured, is the deep secret of the whole matter. God is not practically known and habitually trusted; self is exalted and indulged. Hence our unfitness for the warfare, our failure in the day of battle. It is one thing to be saved, and quite another thing to be a soldier; and we cannot shake off the painful conviction that, in this day of widely extended profession, the proportion of work men and warriors would not be found a whit greater than it was in the days of Gideon and his companions. The fact is, we want men of faith, men whose hearts are fixed and their eyes single; men so absorbed with Christ and His cause that they have no time for aught beside. We greatly fear that, if the double test which was applied to Israel in the days of Gideon, were to be applied now to those who stand on the very highest platform of profession, the practical result would not differ very materially.

C. H. M.

AT FOURSCORE AND FOUR.

"When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me . . .
He will bring me forth unto the light, and I shall
behold His righteousness." (Micah.)

THE best of life is near its close,
For there is light at eventide ;
Faith's estimate of Christ's the cause,
And to the last will He abide.

Life has not all been bright afore ;
My day has mostly been a night,—
Life's good was blighted to the core,
The star of hope my only light.

And was this God's permissive will ?
I bow, and wonder, and adore ;
Life's sea's now calm ; He said, " Be still."
And He will guide to the blest shore.

No goodness in myself I see ;
What falt'ring in the darksome way !
All is of grace through Christ to me,
And grace has turned my night to day.

And soon He'll come who is the Light,
The Sun will rise and never wane ;
Life's day will then be *always* bright,
The child of day, " in life shall reign."

And should I not in flesh remain
Until He come, but fail and die,
The Word affirms, " To die is gain,"
What gain to be with Him on high !

And when He comes and gives a " shout,"
His dead will " rise," be " caught " away,
With those " alive," the Lord to meet,
And with Him be in endless day.

Oh, blessed be His peerless name,
What joy to see Him face to face !
While waiting here, I'll spread His fame,
And lastly shout, " Saved, saved by grace !"

R. H.

THE CROWNED CHRIST.

"And upon His head were many crowns.

(Rev. xix. 12.)

(Continued from page 8.)

CHAPTER XII.

Head of the Body.

WE read nothing of any "Body of Christ" (in the sense in which we are now considering it), until Christ is a man in heaven. Figure, as of course it is, the appropriateness of the figure depends upon this, that it is a relationship to Christ as Man of which it speaks. Being a figure, we are to examine its force as such, as Scripture develops it, expecting to find in it the instruction which all figures have: for, as in Israel's history, the "things that happened to them" (not merely can be used in a typical sense, but) "*happened* to them for types" (1 Cor. x. 11), so we may be sure also that in nature everywhere, according to the design of God, the clothing of the natural is but the veil of the spiritual; nor shall we "materialize too much" by allowing the glory of the light to shine through its earthly tabernacle.

This at once reminds us that the Lord compares His body with the temple of God, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. He spake of the temple of His body" (John ii. 19 and 21). And this is directly in the line of John's testimony, that "The Word was made flesh and *tabernacled* among us; and we beheld His glory,—glory as of an Only-begotten with the Father, full of grace and truth" (chap. i. 14). Here it is said, "was made flesh," not because He assumed nothing but a human

body, but because in taking flesh, He came within the sphere of human observation and knowledge,—here the direct revelation of His glory began. He was in the world and the light of it.

The body prepared Him was as the instrument of His Spirit by which His words and works made known the unique obedience which proclaimed Him the Second Man; while over all, through all, shone, in strange yet blessed harmony with this, the higher glory. Thus the body of Christ was the tabernacle or temple of God on earth.

Now the apostle, speaking of the responsibility of Christians, as flowing from their relationship to Christ, uses the same figure and connection of thought. The Church, as baptized by the Spirit of God, is one body, and that the body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 13, 27). Christians are also the temple of God for the same reason, the Spirit of God dwells in them (chap. iii. 16). These thoughts are here no further connected, but in another place in the same epistle (chap. vi. 15–20) he does connect them further, and applies them to the individual Christian and to his body as indwelt by the Holy Ghost. “Your bodies,” he says, “are members of Christ. Do ye not know 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; wherefore glorify God in your body.

Here in the Christian, as in Christ, the body is the temple of God, He being glorified in it by the devotion to Him of those members in which humanity even in its highest faculties is manifested. The practical life glorifies Him, not only in the character exhibited in it, but this as the fruit of divine grace

acting in virtue of Christ's blessed work, and by the Spirit of God.

It is not, of course, of the Church that the apostle is speaking, but of the individual; and therefore it is that he says that "your bodies are the *members* of Christ"—he could not go further. Yet the basis is the same, the being "joined to the Lord" by the Spirit; and the individual is thus in the same way the temple of God as the whole Church is. Thus far, at least, the individual represents the whole, the "living stone" represents or shows the nature of the whole building.

As the "body prepared" Him was that in which the Word was manifested, and the Life, thus seen, became "the Light of men, so now in the night of His personal absence, He has a Body in which (though not in that original brightness) the same Light shines. Thus the Body of Christ is always spoken of as here, in the place of manifestation. The Church is "the epistle of Christ, read and known of all men, written with the Spirit of the living God upon fleshy tables of the heart,"—written with the rays of that glory hidden from the world, but to faith unveiled: "for God who caused the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give *out* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iii.–iv. 6). Thus "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 16): in the body of Christ, as energized by His Spirit, and controlled by the unseen Head in heaven, the life of Christ continually renews itself on earth. For the body speaks of living activities, of an organic unity in which communion is wrought out in the ministry of every member to the whole: for no member of a body liveth to

itself, and the love of Christ to His own is reproduced in the mutual service which is love's outflow, and for which He who knows best our interests has provided by the variety and inequality of the gifts He has given, that we may be bound the more together by our mutual dependence.

Such is the Church which is Christ's body, in the thought of it which Scripture gives. The hindrances to realization of this, Scripture dwells upon also fully, and we are made to feel them painfully and continually. But these do not come within our purpose to consider now; as, indeed, it is not even the Church itself which is the object before us, but Christ in His relation to it. This, while it is in Him unspeakable condescension and grace, is even thus His glory forever, and shall fill the hearts of all the hosts of heaven with His praise. Yea, "unto God" shall "be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all the generations of the ages of ages" (Eph. iii. 21, *Gk.*).

In Corinthians the Church is contemplated in its order, fellowship, and service. It is the Body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 27), and therefore Christ is its Head, but the Head is not explicitly brought before us, save incidentally, "nor again the Head to the feet, I have no need of you. I apprehend no difficulty in applying this to Christ. The Church is, in that divine purpose which is the glory of divine grace, His "fulness:" the Head must have a body; and it is because of this wonderful relationship, that it is said, where speaking of the unity of the body notwithstanding its many members, "so also is *the Christ*." Some are beginning to apply even this to the Church exclusively—"the anointed *Body*. And they tell us even that, its being the complement of Christ is

not the idea of Scripture, and that, if here we take in Christ, the eye and ear which the apostle instances as parts of the body would belong to the Head; but even in Ephesians and Colossians the "Body is looked at as complete in itself, though deriving" from Christ. Nay, even "the force of 'He gave Him to be Head over all things to the assembly which is His body,' is said to be only "that He might in all things have the pre-eminence—be chief." "All these things," it is finally urged, "are only human figures;" "we have been materializing too much."

Now it is granted, at once, that the "body of Christ," as applied to the Church, is a figure, and therefore also the Lord's headship. They are figures of realities, to convey which all words are feeble. To materialize them would be profanity; but to take them as language the most suited that could be found to make us know what may be known and what God would have us know,—to take them at their fullest worth, therefore, instead of diminishing that worth, and so casting slight upon the communication of the Spirit who gave them,—this is what surely becomes us. The apostle himself assures us that we do "see by means of a mirror, in an enigma (1 Cor. xiii. 12, *Gk.*). Must we not, therefore, scan the more closely, look the more heedfully into, all the words of the enigma?

Now, it is certain, the apostle uses these terms, "head" and "body," very distinctly and determinately, in reference to the relationship between Christ and the Church. They are words not once merely, or casually used. We can see, indeed, that the figure fails before the full reality: for the body has to grow up to the stature of the Head (Eph. iv. 15),

and from the Head all the body maketh increase to the upbuilding of itself (16). Yea, Christ nourisheth and cherisheth the Church: for we are members of His body (v. 29, 30). And in Colossians we have a similar statement (ii. 19).

Thus the Body does surely "derive from the Head;" but that does not show that Headship of the body does not (so we are told) express authority. Certainly it is the very thing which in relation to the body the head *would* express; and this is, I think, why the apostle can speak of the eye and ear as in the body rather than the head. For eye and ear are not the governing part: the hearing ear goes with the spirit of obedience; it is the very part anointed with the blood in the Old Testament to express this. While the Church sees also, and is governed intelligently. But the head presides—governs. The crown is put on the head. To say, "not even the head* to the feet" is to say as much as can be said.

Again, "wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord: for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church" (Eph. v. 23). Will it be said that here there is no question of authority?

Mere authority, it is true, does not give the proper thought of headship, which springs out of relationship, with common interests, and generally implies a representative character. Head and body, while of course they may be contrasted with one another as such, are yet in union so intimate that any completeness of one without the other could only be the com-

* If the body is "complete in itself," and Christ is not here the head, what is this "head of the church," (if it mean any thing) which is not Christ?

pleteness of a corpse. Scripture certainly does not contemplate it as to the Church in Corinthians, as we have seen. It is negatived three times over by "the Head to the feet," so also is the Christ," and "ye are the body of Christ.

We might leave the passages in Ephesians and Colossians to speak for themselves ; only it is good to realize how God in them would lift us up as much as possible to the height of His glorious thoughts. Thus in Ephesians (i. 22, 23), "He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." There are the words, but how are we to interpret them? That Christ should be Head over all things,—that is not difficult to understand if He be what He is, the Creator of all things, the One *for* whom all was created, the One by whom all things subsist, and, yet again, the One who has been pleased to link Himself eternally with this creation of His by the manhood which He has assumed. But the apostle says, "Head over all things to the Church:" why and how "to the Church"? That cannot mean to limit what is absolute. It cannot mean (what would be a small thing to say in such connections as we have here) that *to the Church* God has made Him pre-eminent in all things,—even if that were the meaning of "Head over all. No, but this headship over all shows the fulness of His resources for that to which He is Head in such sort* that it is His Body. The Head over all is Head *to* a people so by the Spirit united to Him, that they are one with Him as

* ἡ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ.

a body is with its head ; thus His fulness, as the head must have a body in order that there should be a complete man. Yet, most marvelous to say, He who is in relation to this Body as His fulness, is Himself divine and filling all in all !

We can trace these thoughts in Colossians also, though with characteristic difference of presentation : " For in Him dwelleth all the the fulness of the God-head bodily, and ye are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power the Head, from which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God " (Col. 9, 10, 19).

It has been said by some one that we never read of the body of Christ in heaven : and true that is, surely, of the whole present time. The Church is not yet in heaven, and is never spoken of as part here, part there. The condition of the dead is not the question, though every saint absent from the body is present with the Lord. But against the Church the gates of hades cannot prevail ; and it remains upon earth until caught up to meet the Lord in the air, completed then by the recovery of all the many that in the meanwhile have been removed by death.

Till then the Body will not have reached the full stature of its blessed Head, so as to be perfectly fitted to Him, a work which is now being carried on by the continual energy of the Spirit of God, working by the gifts of His grace to accomplish this result. *When* this is accomplished, we cannot for a moment suppose that what has been carefully wrought out will come to an end, and serve no eternal purpose. We might as well think that our own bodies, perfected by the change of the living or by resurrection

from the dead, will then have fulfilled their purpose and be laid aside forever. Into the future of each we are indeed given to see little; but this should no more in one case than the other, hinder our belief in that future. We feel also that we can evidently infer from the service of the body here, a good deal as to its future purpose. What the body is to us now, that (only perfected) will it be to us forever. May we not as rightly infer that what the Body of Christ is to Him now, that (only perfected, for perfected we know it is to be) it will be to Him forever? And we have seen the actual link in meaning between our bodies and His: the scripture figures given us of God for our instruction may be counted on to instruct and not deceive us.

The body is the servant of the mind, and in all its parts speaks of special adaptation to its various needs. As we think of it often, and prove it in the diseased and maimed conditions which are the result of sin, we may deem it little beside a hindrance to the activity of the soul—a clog upon it. Yet the simple fact that we are destined to an eternity in the body should make us dismiss such hasty inferences. The body is, as we are at present constituted, a necessity even to the work of the mind itself in many ways; and the mind trains it, disciplines it, as well as uses it according to its will.

In how much may one apply this to the Body of Christ, while of course fully remembering how entirely it is of grace, not of necessity, that He is found in such relationship as this implies with men His creatures. Here, indeed, how often seeming an obstruction to His will, the light of life how little shining out of us so as to be His commendatory "epistle"

in the world, the Body how little, as to display, the temple of His glory yet! Still, the very discipline of His hand upon us, the experience of a grace which abides with us and does not give us up, the learning however slowly and imperfectly, something of His path, His cup, His baptism, all this assures us, of what His word reveals—a purpose to have us with Himself and for Himself, a drilled, disciplined, at last perfected “Body,” through which His Spirit will work out purposes of His love, of which as yet we can know little, but which will reveal a special, divinely given oneness with Himself, in which He will be glorified, His heart satisfied, as He sees in it the fruit of the travail of His soul. And to God shall be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, through all the generations of the age of ages. Amen. F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

I AM NOT MINE.

I Cor. vi. 19, 20.

I AM not mine. Christ Jesus gave
 His precious life, my soul to save;
 My mortal body also is,
 By right of purchase, even His.
 Lord, I am Thine: Thy temple fill
 With incense of Thy holy will,
 And grant that I may ever be
 Responsive to Thy ministry.
 Forbid, dear Lord, that I refuse
 To rightly use, or e'er abuse
 That which, in grace, Thou lendest me
 To glorify and honor Thee.
 I am not mine! Be this my song—
 My joy, that I to Christ belong;
 He paid the price, in blood, for me,
 And owns me for eternity.

G. K.

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CONFLICT.

THE glory of the gospel is its freeness. Without any "works of righteousness," the helpless and guilty sinner who believes in Jesus is justified and has eternal life. All efforts or struggles to *gain* salvation are a dishonor to Him who

"fought the fight alone"

and won the victory for His people. Of this we need scarcely be more than reminded in taking up a subject that speaks not of rest, but of conflict, and is the legitimate result of the rest obtained through the gospel.

But there is a conflict which though, alas ! frequent is neither necessary nor proper for the Christian to be engaged in—not necessary unless his own neglect has made it so. We mean that conflict with the flesh, with sin in us, which comprises so much of the history of God's dear people. It will be remembered that the first mention we have of Amalek as a hostile power is in connection with the strife and chiding of the children of Israel at Meribah, because they had no water. "*Then came Amalek and fought with Israel at Rephidim*" (Ex. xvii. 7-16). It was when they began to murmur, to be discontented with their pilgrim way through the wilderness, that the "lusts of the flesh" began to war against them. The connection of a passage upon this point in Deuteronomy is significant. (Chap. xxv. 17-19) "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt, how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary."

Feebleness of a spiritual nature is always blameworthy. Here was a mighty host, brought up out of Egypt, and in the eye of God, yea, and to sight, "there was not one feeble person among their tribes" (Ps. cv. 37). Their feebleness was shown in the lack of faith and earnest purpose to press forward. The stragglers in the rear were attacked by the enemy; had they been pressing forward they would have had the vigor to resist such an attack, and at the same time it would not have been offered. Their bold front would have compelled the enemy to keep his distance.

So is it at all times. When in the vigor and joy of faith we press forward, "forgetting the things which are behind," the eye fixed on Christ, the very first appearance of the lusts of the flesh will be met with such firmness that there will be little need for those fierce hand-to-hand conflicts with it, which, as we said, make up so much of the record of our lives.

The subsequent history of Amalek affords much material for careful thought upon this subject. It will be found that they were not, in the full sense of the word, inhabitants of the land of Israel's inheritance, though they did dwell—some of them—in the south of Canaan (Num. xiii. 29), the border district next the wilderness. Strictly they were children of the desert and did most of their fighting there.

Broadly, then, it is when "as living in the world" that we are more particularly exposed to the attacks of what answers to Amalek. On the other hand they did make raids into the land, alone and in conjunction with other enemies, but it was *always* when Israel had been unfaithful. Let us look briefly at some of these attacks.

They were the allies (Judges v. 14)* of Jabin, king of Hazor and of Sisera, in the memorable resuscitation of the northern foe who had been so effectually extirpated by Joshua 130 years previously. Spiritual foes never "die," except to faith, and only remain dead as that faith is in exercise. The whole book of Judges is a sad comment upon the failure of the people to go forward and to hold fast what they had gained. On the contrary, they departed from the living God, and so He must let them taste the fruits of their own ways. "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee : know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that My fear is not in thee" (Jer. ii. 19). Solemn words indeed which may well be prayerfully pondered by any tempted to depart even in thought from the fullest communion with our God.

We shall see presently what Jabin seems to signify, and only mention here that this second conflict with him is complicated with the league of Amalek. Wherever failure comes in, there we find not merely error to contend with, but the flesh in league with it. When one who has known God takes up any untruth, we have not simply to disabuse his mind of his error, but, alas ! to overcome the pride of his flesh which has now leagued itself with that error.

In like manner, when the Midianites who had been

* As this may not be evident to many, we add a note that the Revised Version renders the verse referred to, "They whose root is in Amalek," describing the situation of Ephraim as in chap. xii. 15. We are not clear as to this rendering. The LXX. renders it, "Ephraim rooted them out in Amalek." Most certainly the presence of the name is suggestive, and the spiritual meaning of what has been said is clear.

"vexed," for their corruption of Israel with their abominations (Num. xxv. 16-18; xxxi. 2-12), were permitted to make such a fearful inroad upon Israel, and to settle upon the land as locusts, Amalek was with them. Midian may suggest by its name—"strife"—that warring of the lusts in the members which is so common in the world. And now they are leagued with Amalek their natural allies, to make the bondage more complete and intolerable. Barak and Gideon are the champions who can meet such allied hosts and conquer them.

King Saul met his doom with Amalek. He began well (1 Sam. xiv. 48), but when sent to completely extirpate them, spared the best "to sacrifice to the Lord." Saul is the man after the flesh, and he will spare the flesh. It is David who is the true and final victor (1 Sam. xxvii. 8)—type of Him who triumphs over the flesh by displacing it. So much is this the case that when David slipped and had leagued himself with the Philistines, Amalek came in and carried all he had captive (1 Sam. xxx. 1).

We trust that what is suggested here will open up a subject for the thoughtful reader who will develop it from Scripture—the rise and progress of Amalek as an enemy of God's people. But we must pass on to that which is the theme more directly before us.

The conflict in the seventh of Romans is one which should soon be over. The walk in the liberty and power of the Spirit is the secret of deliverance from the power of the flesh. But there is another conflict, in Ephesians, which is a constant and necessary exercise of soul. To be warring with Amalek is a sign that spiritual decrepitude has come in; to contend with the "seven nations" of Canaan is the

mark of spiritual vigor. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places;" or, as more correctly, "against the universal lords of this darkness, against spiritual [hosts] of wickedness in the heavenlies."

Not to delay long over a simile familiar doubtless to all our readers, we simply mention here the well-known correspondence between the conflict in Ephesians and that in the book of Joshua. It is not the fact, which all would doubtless accept, that we would dwell on, but the application of that fact to some lessons which we believe may be fairly gathered from the account of those conflicts.

We will briefly gather up the teachings of the first part of the book which lead to the conflicts. The land is first of all given to them and then they are encouraged to go in and fight for it, to take possession of that which is their own. "Be strong, and of good courage" is the word here (chap. i). Next, the spies go over to Jericho—faith which looks at difficulties, not for discouragement, but for guidance, and finds opportunities thus to be the bearer of good news to any who may desire it (chap. ii.). Following this, we come to that which is the great type of the book—the passage of the Jordan, death and resurrection with Christ. Here the ark goes first; Christ must be alone in that which has stopped the waters of death and of judgment for His redeemed. Then His people follow; and in the two heaps of stones, in the bed of the river and at Gilgal,—we have, respectively, our identification with Christ in His death and resurrection. Gilgal is our making this truth a practical

reality to ourselves, in order to learn the great lesson of "no confidence in the flesh." Gilgal is the place of power; when we are there the enemy quails; the people, as it were, enter into a new covenant with God. Here the manna ceases, and they eat the stored corn of the land,—treasures of Christ in glory laid up for His people's food. At Gilgal they are brought face to face with the "Captain of the Lord's host" (chaps. iii.-v.).

It is the entrance, in somewhat of reality and spiritual power, into these preliminary lessons which makes possible the subsequent course of victory corresponding with Joshua's career. Alas! beloved brethren, have we not all cause for confession, as we smoothly glide over the surface of these amazing themes? We can talk, perhaps, quite well of "death and resurrection," "Gilgal," "old corn of the land," but are they substantial realities to our souls? If so, we are prepared to go on into actual conflict. And it is here that we would seek to point out more particularly what suggested the theme of this paper.

Jericho means "fragrance," and it typifies this world in its attractiveness, which lies at the very gateway to the land. Spiritually, there cannot be any attainment in the true knowledge of our inheritance as long as the world attracts us. Hence it is of immense importance, particularly for the young Christian, that the world should be no longer an object of attraction. If it is, it will shut out Christ's things. It is *the* great hindrance to-day to growth. We would most urgently and affectionately press upon our younger brethren the importance of this subject. "Love not the world," was written to the young men who were strong (1 John ii.).

As to the manner of conflict here, there are unquestionably lessons of much value to be gleaned from the history. Doubtless, the mutual exclusiveness is a point to be pondered. The gates of Jericho were straitly shut up, "none went out and none came in." How often does the Christian leave a way open, in his heart or thoughts, if nowhere else, for intercourse with the spirit of the world. So did not Paul when he could say, "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).

But there was to be no direct conflict until divine power threw down the walls. Everything emphasized the fact that all was of God; they had no power of their own. The priests were to blow the jubilee-trumpets and the ark was to be borne around the walls accompanied by the host. It was, typically, bearing Christ about and proclaiming His coming. Obedience, patience, and human weakness were emphasized by the compassing of the walls seven days. At the time appointed they fall, and vigor of faith has full play for unsparing judgment of evil.

We pass on quickly to Ai and Achan to notice the former rather than the latter. Of Achan it must suffice to say that he seems to set forth that spirit which would take some glory to itself (gold) which all belongs to God, and would in the very hour of triumph over evil make some compromise with it. The Babylonish garment was the first enemy, if we may so speak, before which Israel fell, and to Babylon itself they went at last. "He that hath an ear, let him hear." (Chap. vi.)

Now Ai is the exact opposite of Jericho. It means

"a heap of ruins," and presents the world as an object to be despised rather than to be allured by it. One who has truly and fully conquered Jericho, has turned it into Ai, and yet we can never treat this foe with contempt. The lesson here is plain : first of all it discloses unjudged sin, which always leads to presumption ; secondly, when this is judged—the troubler detected—the whole power of Israel must go against the enemy which had been regarded as already conquered. And in the ambushade and retreat, we learn the humiliating lesson which should have been fully learned at Gilgal.

If Jericho speaks loudly to the young Christian, does not Ai have a voice for the more mature ? Such may take it for granted that the world is powerless to overcome them, and yet, with some root of pride unjudged, are really under its power. They may congratulate themselves on having put off much in the way of dress, occupation, pleasure-seeking,—that linked them with it ; and under that plain exterior, that unworldly manner, they may, Achan-like, be hiding that which compromises them before God. "*Lord, is it I ?*" (Chaps. vii. and viii.)

When Ai has been conquered, at cost of much pains, and a great sense of weakness, a distinct step in advance has been taken. But one more test must be made before the tide of victory can rise so high as to sweep the whole land. There are the "wiles of the devil."

The plot of the Gibeonites was so transparent that one would be tempted to think,—did we not remember self,—that it must fail. In Ai they learned to have no confidence in their *strength* ; the Gibeonites teach them they can have none in their wisdom.

Perhaps it is more humbling to give up our wisdom than our strength. The position of this assault of Gibeon seems to indicate this. And yet had there been the least exercise of discernment, the faintest bit of recollection, it would have been impossible for them to hearken to the Gibeonites.

They showed their old shoes; Joshua could have replied, "Forty years did we wander in the wilderness, and our feet did not swell." They put forward their bread, and he could have replied, "We received fresh bread every morning." They could not be pilgrims seeking God, for He never let such grow weary, or feed on stale food. Let us note this: the true pilgrim is marked by *freshness*. How much have God's people loaded themselves down with the unequal yoke of Gibeon — alliances which in many cases *must* be respected, as where it is a personal link with an unsaved person by marriage. From much that would call itself the Gibeonite league it may be possible even yet for saints to free themselves, as in business, political, or ecclesiastical relationships. But enough has been said to indicate the lesson of Gibeon. (Chap. ix.)

One thing may be noted now: they are back at the camp at Gilgal. They seem to have learned at last the abiding lesson of "no confidence in the flesh." Have we not here distinct progress? Human thoughts, human strength, human wisdom have been all tried, and found wanting, and we come back to that which we should have learned at the first. Alas! we usually learn by experience, and not, as with Israel, does one lesson on a given point suffice: we need many.

But from chapter x. a change takes place. The

enemy, strong enough singly, now combines his forces, and will sweep from the land this invader. But now that they have learned their lesson of weakness, the combined forces are but "meat for them," they only serve to magnify the power of God. What a sweep of victory there is in the next three chapters! Here is the conflict at last where a holy joy can be felt, as one after another the "armies of the aliens are put to flight."

We enter but briefly into this latter portion, merely pointing out the salient features of the campaign. First, there is the conflict in the south. At the risk of being thought fanciful, we would suggest that as the subsequent inheritance of Judah, and as the land turned toward the sun, the south is connected with the thought of revealed truth. The truths of the Bible must first be recovered, and here we meet not the infidel, but the one who professes to know and love the Bible, but who makes use of it to support his false doctrines. Adonizedek is leader of this southern league; and his name, by its similarity to Melchizedek, "king of righteousness," while the first means "lord of righteousness," and both being king of the same place (apparently), would suggest that imitation of truth which is ever the mark of error.* Under the southern sky of Bible light and knowledge, how much deadly error holds sway. We will name but a few: Adventism, Annihilationism, Restorationism, and the like. These all profess to believe the Bible and quote it in support of their errors, but faith must and can dislodge them.

* For a most helpful and suggestive treatment of this whole subject, we would refer the reader to the notes in the *Numerical Bible*, at this point.

There is no faltering now, and we have many a touch that is most suggestive. Note how all terror has fled. Joshua says, "Come near, and put your feet upon the necks of these men." Where is the faith that will do this? Oh, for fearless faith that will meet error, and drive it from its professed hold upon the Bible !

Lastly, we come to the northern league, whose conquest completes the general occupation of the land. Jabin, we are told, means "understanding." And if the southern league typify that error which uses the word of God: the northern, as turned away from the sunlight, would suggest that side of error which denies the word of God, and flourishes upon the independence of human thought. It is commonly called rationalism, and lays its cold hand upon all knowledge, and even upon the word of God itself, and robs them for us of God Himself. Who that has been in the icy grasp of this northern foe, but knows his dread power. Infidelity, the deification of human reason, is this Jabin.

Blessed be God, this foe has no terrors for faith. "Suddenly" does the leader of God's host fall upon him, scatter his forces, and destroy his power of recovery. Would that we might see such victories to-day ! Man's reason is exalted, is made the supreme judge of all truth, even of God's revealed word. Where is the man of faith ?

Thus we have, imperfectly indeed, traced the believer's conflict, from the struggle with Amalek, the flesh, onward to the world, in Jericho, till learning his lessons, he can meet Satan himself in his strongest citadel and vanquish him.

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal,

but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 4, 5).

THE SECRET OF UNDERSTANDING PROPHECY.

DANIEL, as his name suggests, is the Gentile prophet. In this book we are in the times of the Gentiles. It is, as you see, the fourth in the list, corresponding thus to the book of Numbers, the wilderness or world book. We have not to do primarily with Israel at all.

The scene is laid in distant Babylon, which has usurped the place of Jerusalem and with Nebuchadnezzar as king, instead of one of the descendants of David. We have the concerns of the nations of the earth, but just so far as they refer to God's purposes.

There are many very instructive features in this book. Let us notice that just as the book of Numbers has in one of its earliest chapters that which characterizes, or should do so, the people as seen in that book—in the place and testimony of the Nazarite—so you have in the first chapter of Daniel the Nazarite place. When you come to the putting of the children of God in the world, and to the question as to how we are to walk in it, what is the first great principle that is to guide us? Numbers tells us.

In the sixth chapter of that book, a man to be a true pilgrim, a true and faithful witness for God in this world, must be a Nazarite; he must be separated from that by which he is surrounded. Abraham was the typical pilgrim, and he was the man who lived in a tent, isolated from others. In like manner, Lot is presented to us as

the child of God typically linked with the world, defiled by it, his testimony destroyed and he himself saved only as by fire.

Nazariteship is the only power by which we can walk in this world for God, if we are to be a testimony for Him. If His name is to be honored by us, it must be absolutely by our separation from everything that would defile, degrade, and drag us down. How often has the lamp of testimony been quenched by the Lord's people being mingled with the world, by our living here as those who have interests and objects in common with the world.

I say again, in Numbers you have the key-note of the whole book in that chapter on the Nazarite—separation in the midst of defilement. And here in the book of Daniel, the book where the world is going to lift its head and show its power, where we are going to have spread before us the history of the Gentile nations, the very key to it all is, the Nazariteship of Daniel and his brethren in the court of the king of Babylon. Think of that young man taken from Jerusalem—Jerusalem itself all in ruins—transferred to the very courts of the king of Babylon, the first nation of the earth; Babylon itself the first city of the earth, with all that would attract, all that would appeal to the natural man, and he himself there introduced not into some humble inferior position, but to be one of the attendants about the king himself; to be in the very line of promotion, to make a success of his life. And what does he do? The first thing he does is to cut the line that would link him with the throne of Babylon; he separates himself absolutely from everything that partakes of the character of Babylon. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat;" and in that purpose of heart I trace the success—if I may use such a word—of his life down here for God. In that separation from the dainties of the king of Babylon, the pleasures and the allurements

of that world-city,—I trace the secret of those wondrous revelations that God gave to Daniel.

For an illustration of the same thing take John in the book of Revelation, where he has opened up to him a still wider vision, where his eye takes in not only the earth, but the heavens, not only time but eternity; takes in the whole range of God's dealing with men, and His purposes, in connection with His blessed Son. What is the key-thought of that book? "I was in the island that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." Separate from all the glory and power of this world, John the lonely prisoner, in isolation, sees visions which no mortal eye can see; hears words that none but the anointed ear can hear, and opens to us the revelation of all the ways of God, introducing us into eternity itself.

Do you want to understand prophecy? Do you want to stand upon the pinnacle from whence you can look over all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them? Do you remember One who stood upon the mountain top and looked over all that glory, all that splendor of this world and its kingdoms, unmoved, unattracted by it? It was the blessed Son of God; and when Satan pointed out all to Him, and offered to put it into His hands, that blessed One, the true Nazarite, in heart separate from it all, would have none of it until His Father gave it to Him. So, I say, the Nazarite heart, the Nazarite position, the Nazarite separation in heart from the things of the world that would defile and clog, is the only proper spirit in which to come to and understand prophecy.

Prophecy is for the heart. I know nothing more deadening, nothing more injurious to our spiritual welfare than to be occupied with prophecy in a cold intellectual way. Look at the apostle Paul in the eleventh chapter of Romans. He has been unfolding God's dealings with Israel and with the Gentiles in the ninth, tenth, and

eleventh chapters. He has been quoting Scripture proof-texts as to prophecy, foretelling the time when Israel as a nation will be restored to the Lord; but, it is his heart that has been kindled by these things. His heart takes them up, and as he gets through with his subject, he bursts out in praise, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" If we are in true Nazarite spirit occupied with these prophetic subjects, we will find that they introduce us into the sanctuary of God Himself, to be occupied with Himself, praising and worshipping.—(*Extracted from one of the Lectures which are being published in "TREASURY OF TRUTH."*)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 1.—What may we ask Christ our Lord for, and what God the Father?

ANS.—Cold exactness is not so valuable in prayer, as ardent desire and simple faith. And yet there is a propriety in presenting certain petitions to our Lord and others to the Father. Doubtless many a Spirit-taught soul is guided unintelligently. In general, all that pertains to the Church, its testimony, order, and ministry would be referred directly to the Head of the Church. Thus Paul, when afflicted and apparently hindered in his ministry, appealed to the Lord. Equally, when it is the need of the child, or confession or supplication, the Father would be addressed.

There should ever be care not to allow the thought that our Lord Jesus is more accessible than the Father,—“the Father Himself loveth you;” and on the other hand, that the Lord is not equal with the Father.

In this connection also we may be allowed to point out a confusion in addressing the Godhead which surely it would be pleasing to our God to correct. It is painful to hear the expression, “O Lord our Father,” and thanks to the Father that *He* died for us.

QUES. 2.—Would you explain from God's word what is the nature of the meeting commonly called “The Prayer Meeting.”

What place is there in it for teaching or exhortation, or for the preaching of the gospel ?

If it is a *prayer-meeting*, should we not go with the expectation and desire that it should be really that ? How is it that so few pray, of those who attend this meeting ?

Ans.—The manner of life in New Testament times was, of necessity, far simpler than in ours. While they had meetings in which either prayer, teaching, or exhortation might be prominent, there is no distinct mention of what we would call a prayer, or a reading meeting exclusively.

The general exhortation as to meetings—"not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is" (Heb. x. 25)—would be our warrant for meeting together for prayer or for any other godly purpose. There cannot be the least doubt, that prayer has a prominence in the descriptions of Christian life that is too often forgotten. "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42). This gives the general practice of the early Church. When special needs arose, as in the case of Peter's imprisonment, there was unceasing prayer for His release, and at a meeting evidently for that purpose, he presented himself after his miraculous deliverance (Acts xii. 1-19, particularly verse 12). At Philippi (Acts xvi. 16), we have what is the nearest approach to the thought of an exclusive prayer-meeting. This passage at any rate shows that prayer was the prominent feature at a meeting where even such a teacher as the apostle Paul was present. We would gather from these and other scriptures, together with the general tone of the New Testament, that while there was no special meeting so designated, the prayer-meeting was the characteristic feature of the gatherings of God's people.

And what could be more natural ? They were weak and helpless, and felt it ; ignorant, and knew whence wisdom came. Certainly they would pray, both as individuals and as companies of Christians. Our shame is that we feel our weakness and ignorance so little, and that, we have little doubt, lies at the root of the lack of prayer and its answer. If we feel this, surely we can take courage to believe God is awakening us.

As to the remedy, it must be a divine one which awakens the saints to a sense of their need. We do not believe any arrangements of man can do this. We may *call* it a prayer

meeting, but that will not make it one. Felt need, earnest desire, a simple faith,—these will make the gatherings of the saints real seasons for prayer. We do not believe that any rule, written or understood, can give its true character to this meeting. The Spirit of God must be unhindered in His holy work of leading us in prayer, praise, exhortation, or whatever may be called for.

On the other hand, we believe with our correspondent, that there is great danger of neglect of united prayer. Surely, with all the occasion there is for it, it becomes us to be much in believing prayer for "grace to help." Sad it is indeed, with all our needs, personal and corporate, with all the Lord's work that should be done,—to see saints sit mute, or engage in what seems so little to be the "effectual fervent prayer of the righteous." How is it, in our assemblies, the voice of some is never heard in prayer? May there not be a subtle pride at the root of this—the feeling that we cannot pray as long or as eloquently as others? God forbid that such thoughts should prevail. The Pharisees, "for a pretense," made long prayers, and all those prayers recorded in the New Testament, even our Lord's matchless one in John xvii., are brief; while many a needy one uttered his petition in a sentence or two: "Lord, help me;" "Lord, save me;" "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." We long to see a spirit of deep earnestness in every saint, that will express itself in such pungent brief petitions. May there be thus many brief prayers, rather than a few lengthy ones. Far be it from us to criticise. Thank God for much real prayer; but do we not all feel our lack in this matter?

Where there is a real spirit of prayer, it will unquestionably be a prominent feature of the meeting; but how sweetly will a suited word of exhortation and encouragement suit with the prayer. As to a word of gospel at a meeting for prayer, it would hardly be suitable, unless the unconverted were present in such numbers as to warrant our turning particularly to them. We are to remember that the strongest testimony to the unsaved is the manifest presence of God in the midst of His gathered people. (1 Cor. xiv. 23–25.)

May our God awaken us as to our need in this matter, stirring us up to true prayer as never before. What joyous thanksgiving would soon mingle with the supplications!

THE LOVING VOICE.

CHILD of my tenderest love, I know thy care;
 Seek not to bear alone what I would share,
 Strange though it seem to thee, I laid it there
 With My own hand.

The burden presses sore, My child, I know,
 Oftimes thy bitter tears will overflow;
 And thou dost wonder why I leave it so,
 And yet love thee!

Think not I laid this on thee willingly,
 Or that in wrath, I seek to punish thee.
 Ah! no; My child is very dear to Me;
 'Tis for thy good.

Child of My love come near to Me, and I
 Will help thee understand the reason why
 I mixed for thee this cup of agony,
 And caused thee pain.

Sometimes of late, I've missed thee from My side,
 First in the morning, then at eventide.
 Shall it be ever thus? Oh! wilt thou hide
 Thyself from Me?

Have I not shown My readiness to bear
 My portion of thy grief, thy pain, thy care?
 Tell Me, My child, canst thou refuse to share
 My sympathy?

It was for thee I left My home above,
 Suffered on earth, then died, that I might prove
 My true, unchangeable, undying love.
 Could I do more?

Wilt thou not come, and find in Me thy rest?
 Wilt thou not stay, and lean upon My breast?
 Wilt thou not trust that My way is the best,
 Child of My love?

Bring Me thy heaviest woes, and thou shalt see
 How they will lose their weight when shared by Me;
 Thou'lt prove the sweetness of My sympathy,
 Child of My love.

(Selected.)

T. P.

THE CROWNED CHRIST.

"And upon His head were many crowns."

(Rev. xix. 12.)

(Continued from page 39.)

CHAPTER XIII.

The Bridegroom.

THE Church as the Body of Christ speaks, then, as we have seen, of service in subjection and fellowship with the Head. In the Bride we find it in a new aspect, in which, while association with Christ is just as prominent, there is rather the thought of rest than of activity; or it is the heart that is awake and in activity, Christ is seen as the Beloved of the heart, and in known and enjoyed relationship, its entire satisfaction and delight.

The "Body" is not the equivalent of the "Bride," and we miss much if we accept the one as substitute for the other. The incompatibility of the Church filling both these places has been, however, lately pressed, and that the members of Christ's Body are not the Bride, but part of the Bridegroom Himself. But surely, if these are both figures, there is no incompatibility here, and it is only by joining different aspects of truth in an incongruous manner—"part of the *Bridegroom*"—that they are made to appear so. Scripture does not so connect them, and to put

things in this way is only an unconscious self-entanglement of thought.

It has been also represented that the Church was a "mystery hid in God," during Old Testament times, and that this is inconsistent with there being any types of it in the Old Testament, such as Rebekah, for instance, has been taken to be: for types teach, and were meant to teach doctrines, and the mystery is not said to be hidden in Scripture, but in God. But this is to overlook the plain statement of the apostle, where after a direct quotation of Gen. ii. 24, ("the two shall be one flesh") following an application of the preceding history of Adam and his wife, he says: "This is a great mystery; *but I speak concerning Christ and the Church*" (Eph. v. 32). Now here the mystery of the Church as the Bride of Christ is found at the very beginning of the Old Testament.

Types by themselves teach nothing: they need the removing of the veil that is over them before they can be anything more than just history, ordinance, or what is upon the face of them. If Scripture were full of them, they would still be hid in God until it pleased Him to give the key to unlock their meaning. The distinction sought to be made is therefore quite unfounded.

It is true, that, as to the Body of Christ, the Old Testament, as far as we are aware, has no hint of it; while with regard to the Bride there are types from the very beginning. But not only so, the figure of marriage is used again and again with reference to the relation between Jehovah and Israel, as a people brought into intimate and unique attachment to Himself; and this both in the history of the past,

and in the prophecy of the future. This was, therefore, no mystery hid in God,—no secret to be brought out at an after-time,—and cannot refer to the Church which is Christ's Body. Thus in Jeremiah (xxxi. 31-34) God speaks of the covenant made with their fathers, when He took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, as of a marriage contract "which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband to them, saith the Lord." And in Hosea (chap. ii.) God judges them for their wanderings from Him as adultery, while He prophesies the return of the nation to her "first husband" as the result of His dealings with her in the time to come: "I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and went after her lovers, and forgat Me, saith the Lord. Therefore, behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor as a door of hope; and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt."

Then comes the renewal, but in a more intimate way, of the old relationship. "And it shall be at that day that thou shalt call Me Ishi, and shalt no more call Baali: for I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall be no more remembered by their name."

The change of title here is significant. "Ishi" and "Baali" both are used for "husband"; but the latter is strictly "lord, master," and implies simply the wife's subjection; whereas "ishi," "my man," as with similar words in other languages, goes back

to creation and the fundamental fitting of man and woman to each other, so that there should be real fellowship or kinship in the relation. The connection with the substitution of the one title for the other as to the true God and the dropping of the very names of the "Baals," the false gods, out of Israel's mouth, is therefore easy to be understood. They had only known God hitherto in the far off place of "master," not in the reality of His glorious nature, not in the affectionate intimacy which He sought. Thus there was nothing to hinder their being drawn away to "other lords" which had usurped His place. But now, in the future which He here contemplates, all would be changed, so as to make stable the relationship: "And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness and in judgment, and in loving-kindness and in mercies; I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness"—or "steadfastness"—"*and thou shalt know the Lord.*"

Here, then, is the end of all wanderings: and now "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah,"—"My delight is in her,"—"and thy land Beulah" (married): "for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married" (Isa. lxii. 4).

Here it is plain that to Israel, God's earthly people, it is that these promises belong. It should be as plain, surely, that the "Bride of the Lamb," united to Him in heaven before He comes forth to the judgment of the earth (Rev. xix.), is not Israel, and that the "new," the "heavenly Jerusalem," "Jerusalem which is above," (Rev. xxi.; Gal. iv. 26) can-

not be the Old Testament city, even in the fullest glory of her glorious time to come. Thus there are certainly two "Brides" contemplated in Scripture, a heavenly and an earthly one; and the objections made against this are really of no force whatever. For instance, where it is said: "The Bride in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea is Israel, or at any rate the elect of Israel; those who were *partakers of the heavenly calling* in Israel. Surely nothing could well be more contrary to Scripture than this. Was it with partakers of the heavenly calling that God made a covenant when He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt? Was it the elect in Israel who broke that covenant, though Jehovah was a husband to them? Was it these to whom He gave a writing of divorcement, and put them away? Is it a *heavenly* land, that is no more to be called Desolate, but Beulah (married)? Is it to an elect heavenly people that it is said, "Turn, O backsliding children: for I am married unto you; and I will take you, one of a city, and two of a family, and will bring you to Zion"? If these questions cannot be answered in the affirmative, then assuredly, whatever the New Testament Bride may be, the Old Testament one is not the same.

The writer allows even that "all the promises to Israel as a nation were earthly, and such are the promises here: they are national; although it is true that only those can enjoy them who undergo that spiritual change which our Lord emphasizes as needed by any who enter the Kingdom of God. As Isaiah says (iv. 3, 4): "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that

is written among the living in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning."

In the forty-fifth psalm the divine-human King, Messiah, is seen as the Bridegroom of Israel, and as to its being an earthly scene that is set before us in it there can be surely no question made. It was to such a Bridegroom that the Baptist testified (John iii. 29); and the parable of the virgins doubtless speaks of the same. In the whole prophecy (Matt. xxiv., xxv.) Israel is prominent, the Church coming in only in that part of it which assumes that parabolic form in which the "mysteries of the Kingdom," "things kept secret from the foundation of the world," had been before declared. And the virgins going forth to meet the Bridegroom, have been inconsistently taken by many to be the same as the Bride. To set this right in no wise affects the doctrine, if it does not rather make it clearer. At least the conformity with the Old Testament is plain, and with the position that Matthew holds as the connecting link between the Old Testament and the New.

In the passage in Ephesians before referred to there is much more than an illustrated appeal to wives and husbands in view of Christ's relationship to the Church. That relationship is stated in a very definite way in antitypical parallelism to that of the first Adam and the woman divinely given to him. Adam, we are distinctly told in Romans (chap. v. 14) "is the figure of Him that was to come." Christ is called in Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 45) "the last Adam." But notice the contrast also, which here as always, in one

way or other, obtains between type and antitype: "the first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit. The same parallel, yet contrast, is seen in this passage in Ephesians: "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. It was God who presented Eve to Adam: it is Christ who as the fruit of His own self-sacrifice presents the Church to Himself.

It is certain that here Christ is looked at as in a higher,—and so in some sense a contrasted—way, repeating the story of the second of Genesis. But that is not all: the apostle goes on to say: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife loveth himself; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church. For we are members of His body; [we are] * of His flesh and of His bones." Here two things are brought together which, in different ways show the ground of the Lord's care. We are members of His body: nearer to Him than that can nothing be. But this is by the baptism of the Spirit, and implies a prior, anticipative, originative work that shall prepare for it. The baptism of the Spirit effects *union*; but with whom then can *He* unite Himself? Now comes the answer: "we are of His flesh and of His bones.

But this carries us back at once to the Old Testa-

* The repetition of the "we are," or some equivalent of it, is necessitated by the insertion here of the preposition *ἐκ* ("out of") which separates the first statement from the latter one.

ment type again, and we hear Adam, after the whole of nature besides has failed to furnish a helpmeet for him, and when God to provide one has brought forth the woman out of his side,—we hear Adam saying, “This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.” Her origin is from him, though not in the way of nature, but of divine power. And now again has been produced by a mightier act of divine power, a people who have received their spiritual origin from the last Adam, out of His death-sleep, who is not only a living Spirit, but a “Spirit giving life. The earthly history has found its complete fulness of meaning.

And thereupon follows the saying, whether it was Adam's or not, which the apostle quotes and applies in the end of his exhortation: “for this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. The argument and justification for those apparently foreign unions, is founded upon that original fitting of the woman to the man which was made by God Himself the basis of origin of the whole family relationship. Thus it retains its place as prior to and beyond all other.

But the apostle's application is that with which we have here to do. He says of it: “This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.”

The mystery here then is spiritual, while God has manifested His interest in it by writing it out in natural hieroglyphics, impossible to be interpreted until He be pleased to give the key. “All these things happened unto them for types, and are written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.”

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

TAKING COUNSEL, BUT NOT OF GOD.

“Woe to the rebellious children, saith Jehovah, that take counsel, but not of Me; and that make leagues, but not of My Spirit, that they may heap sin upon sin.” (Isa. xxx.1.)

IT is a solemn thing to read such words as these, and still more so to think how applicable they may be to ourselves. Even as children of God, the proneness of our hearts is to act according to our own judgments; for the flesh in the Christian is not a whit better than in any other man. Whenever there is a listening to ourselves, we may be sure the same character of evil is at work that the Spirit of Jehovah was rebuking in Israel.

What for Israel was going down into Egypt is to us the taking counsel, not of God, but of natural wisdom, in any difficulty. It was the same fleshly wisdom which Israel sought; and of this, Egypt is the symbol in the ancient world. No country in the early history of men, was so distinguished for the wisdom of nature as Egypt. In later days, Greece and Rome sprang up, but that was long after that time to which this vision applied as a historical fact. They were at first little more than a number of contentious hordes. No such wisdom was found anywhere to the same extent as in Egypt. The great Assyrian who invaded Israel was characterized not so much by wisdom as by vast resources and appliances in the way of strength. Egypt depended mainly on good counsel, as if there were no living God,—on the counsel of man, sharpened by long experience, for it was one of the oldest powers that attained eminence. Accordingly, as they had been versed in the state-craft of the ancient world, they had an immense

reputation for their familiarity with means of dealing in national difficulties. . . . Israel when threatened by the Assyrian sought the help of Egypt : I am speaking now of the literal fact when this prophecy first applied. Though it did bear on the days of Isaiah, yet the character of the prophecy shows that it cannot be limited to that time: only a very small part was accomplished then. But between the two terms of Israel's past and future unfaithfulness, in turning to the wisdom of the world in their troubles, there is a serious lesson for us in the pressure of any trial that concerns the testimony of God. The tendency is immense to meet a worldly trial in a worldly way. That you cannot meet the world's efforts against you by spiritual means is what one is apt to think : so there is the danger of recourse to earthly means for the purpose of escape. What is this but the same thing that we find here ? And yet who that feels for the children of God and for the truth but feels the danger of this ? Be sure, if we do not feel the danger, it is because we are ourselves under the world's influence. The feeling of the danger, the dread of our own spirits, the fear lest we should meet flesh by flesh, is what God uses to make us look to Himself. God will never put His seal on self-dependence ; on the contrary, the great lesson the whole life of Christ teaches is the very reverse. He lived for* the Father : so " he that eateth Him, shall live for* Him."

It is in dependence upon Another, even Christ, as our object, that the joy and strength and wisdom of

* "On account of," J. N. D's translation: and in foot-note, "For the advantage of". . . I do not believe to be the sense of the passage. Perhaps 'by reason of.' "

the Christian are found. This we gather before the difficulty comes. Then "I can do all things through Him who strengtheneth me." Where we often fail is through acting from impulse. If we think to plan, instead of praying in real subjection to God, we need to fear for ourselves. What is rendered in 2 Tim. ii. 1 "intercession," and in 1 Tim. iv. 5 "prayer," means such intercourse with God, as admits of confiding appeal to Him. We can thus freely and personally speak to Him about all things, now that through the one Mediator we know Him as a Saviour-God, who has first spoken to us in grace and given us the access we have into this grace wherein we stand. Is it not then an outrage on the God who has thus opened His ear to us if we look to fleshly means? and yet who does not know that this is the very thing to which, perhaps, more than any other, the wise and prudent are prone.

In this way it seems that the moral lesson of this chapter is to be seen—it is taking counsel, but not of Jehovah. Hence God caused the land of Egypt to become the means of deeply aggravating their evil. "Woe to the rebellious children, saith Jehovah, that take counsel, but not of Me; and that cover with a covering, (or, as some prefer, that make leagues), but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin; that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at My mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt. Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be a shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt a confusion. For His princes are at Zoan, and His ambassadors are come to Hanes. They shall all be ashamed of a people that cannot profit them, that are not a

help nor profit, but a shame and also a reproach." "His princes" mean those of God's people, as the next chapter proves decisively. The prophet's irony thus expresses itself.

"The burden of the beasts of the south. Through the land of trouble and anguish from whence [come] the lioness and the lion, the viper and the fiery flying serpent; they carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people [that] shall not profit. For Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I called her Rahab (or arrogance) that sitteth still."

Not man's pride, but God's guidance avails for His people.

If we examine the New Testament for our guidance in these difficulties, we shall find just the same truth. If the apostle is speaking merely about the ordinary trials of each day, we have the same lesson in other words. Thus he tells us, we are to let our moderation be known unto all men, the Lord being at hand; that, instead of being careful or anxious about anything (not that we are to be careless, but not to be careful in the sense of anxiety), our requests should be made known unto God with thanksgiving.

Our strength, it is said, is in quiet confidence. Christians have a right to expect God to appear for us: He has entitled us to count on it. We may be perfectly sure, it matters not what the circumstances are: even supposing there has been something to judge in ourselves, if one tell it out to God, will not He listen? He cannot deny Himself. He must deny him that slights the name of Christ. Where He

now puts to shame, it is in our self-will : so far from His putting shame on such being a proof that He does not love them, it is precisely the proof that He does. But at the same time, let men venture to go beyond what God sees good for the discipline of His child, He soon takes up the rod: and there can be nothing more terrible than when the adversary exceeds the chastening that is just, gratifying his hatred toward them. For God will rise up in His indignation, and deal with them according to His own majesty; even the grace of the gospel does not set aside that. For instance, see in the second epistle to Timothy iv. 14. If persons bearing the Lord's name are carried away by their fleshly zeal, and fight against the truth of God, or those charged with the proclamation of that truth, God may use them for dealing with the faults in His people. God knows how to bring down His people where their looks are high because of anything in themselves, or that grace has conferred upon them. But when the limit of right rebuke is exceeded, woe be to those that fight against them, covering their own vindictiveness or envy under God's name. It is evident that the very grace of the gospel makes it to be so much the more conspicuous; for it sounds so much the more tremendous that God should thus deal in the midst of all that speaks so loudly of His love. The gospels also bring out in the words of our Lord Himself the wickedness of fighting against what God is doing even by poor weak disciples. This is the great lesson for us: we are not to consult our own hearts, or have recourse to the strength of man. When we flee to the various resources of the flesh, we slip out of our proper Christian path. Whereas the strength

of God has indeed shone in that foundation-pattern in which all the blessing of grace to sinners is contained; and it always takes this form for a Christian, and that is death and resurrection. There may very likely be a great pressure of trial; there may soon appear a sinking down under it; but as surely as there is the semblance of death, there will be the reality of resurrection by and by. Let no one be disheartened. The cross is the right mould for the blessing of the children of God. When we were brought to Him, was it not after the same sort? We knew what it was to have the horrors of the conviction of sin; but God was going to bring us for the first time into a place of special blessing.

It has always been so with His own. We find it in the case of Abraham, and in proportion to the greatness of blessing is the force of sorrow that precedes it. Isaac was given when Abraham was a hundred years old, and Sarah as good as dead. There was death, as it were, and he had to wait for a son. Even after the birth and growth of the child of promise, he had to surrender him—to offer up his only son to God. Directly that the singleness and truth of His heart was proved, and that the sacrifice in principle was offered up, the angel of Jehovah arrests his hand. How much sweeter now, when Isaac was, as it were, the child of resurrection! And so it is with all our blessings; it matters not what they may be. There must be the breaking down of our feelings, the mortification of self in a practical way, if we are to know what God is in blessing: our blessings are cast in the mould of death and resurrection.—(*Exposition of Isaiah, Kelly, p. 292.*)

MEDITATIONS ON PHILIPPIANS III.

“**F**INALLY, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” There are two words in this opening to which I wish to call your attention. One is the word “finally,” and the other is “Lord.” The apostle at the time of writing them, was in the hands of the Roman emperor, a prisoner for the cause of the gospel. Looking back over his course he might recall countless hardships that he had suffered, perils on land and sea, poverty, hunger, thirst, imprisonment and beating. He had met with opposition also in the Church as well as outside. Those who should have been helpers, had forsaken him. Some preached Christ of envy and strife. Past, present, and future, except to the eye of faith, were as gloomy as possible, and yet he says, after all these things, “rejoice;” and not, mark you, “rejoice in the Saviour,” but “rejoice in the Lord.”

Let me emphasize the difference a little; for the use of the latter title on this occasion is indeed much sweeter. It would be no great wonder for one in such circumstances to turn away from them all to rejoice in the Saviour. Surely this would be the soul's great satisfaction, but it betokens a loftier flight of faith to rejoice in the Lord, One who might have removed the trial, *but left it on*. Perhaps some reader of this paper has had a hard struggle all his life with poverty; perhaps another has been given up by friend and relative, to lead a lonely life in this vale of sorrows; perhaps another has toiled long and labored hard in the vineyard, to find his toil rewarded but with abuse and scorn, or indifference. To such the undercurrent of Paul's exhortation may

be searching: You know the Christ so well, that, (realizing His power to remove all these things,) you can yet rejoice in the *Lord*, specifically *as Lord*, perfect Master of every circumstance. "Though He slay me yet will I trust Him," blessed be God! rejoice in Him too. Such is the cry of those who know Him best.

"The spirit of praise is the spirit of power," and yet at the same time there must be a practical guarding against the enemies we have to meet. Jehosaphat with his singers in the forefront of the battle had his warriors behind them. So the apostle goes on to say, "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." Like the snapping, snarling animals that rove in packs through the streets of eastern cities, when night settles down, so these enemies swarm round us as we pass through this busy world, and our singing serves but to gather them more thickly to the attack. There is nothing Satan dislikes so much as rejoicing in the Lord, and he will do anything that he can to stop it. If his dogs cannot drown it with their howling, his concision will set up an imitation song to attract the attention away from it.

It has been thought by some, that the dogs, evil workers and concision all refer to one and the same class of people, but then it would seem that in that case the verb would not be repeated after each. It is true, however, that the concision are the class of whom they are in especial danger, as this is emphasized by the context.

It is interesting to notice how there seems to be a trinity of evil to oppose the good. The lust of the eyes, of the flesh, and the pride of life is a common

example, while we may notice the three motives suggested to Eve, the three temptations of our Lord; the three kinds of bad ground in the parable of the sower, and in this chapter, the threefold cord opposing. As if to meet this latter trinity, believers are here represented in three ways, worshiping God in the Spirit, exulting in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh. They who worship God in spirit and in truth, "for the Father seeketh such to worship Him," they who have found Christ Jesus exult in Him, for did they not, it would be proof they had not found Him; and because they know such an One has had to die for them, they realize how degraded their condition, and, in the "Sinless," their sin, not realized as such till they had seen Him, is really brought to light. No wonder it is then that the apostle tells us, that he had cast aside his own righteousness on account of Christ, and that he counted all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

Let us consider for a little the motive which actuated him. It is literally rendered the "projecting out (beyond all things) of the knowledge of Christ Jesus," and again he adds with lingering emphasis "my Lord." The word which I have translated "projecting out" is the same as is used for "promontory." Did you ever see a promontory? Do you know how it projects out beyond all things? I suppose that those who have seen the North Cape never forget it. It towers up so majestically a thousand feet above the sea. How puny are the waves at its foot! How the eye returns again to dwell upon it! How it absorbs the whole attention! So to the apostle is the person of the Christ. He is his Lord.

He is his Master. He is the One to whom his whole soul goes out in loyal devotion. The "shout of a king" is in his heart, and casting aside as it were his fisher's coat, impatient of the slow progress of the boat, he steps forth on the deep to meet Him. Let us look for evidence. "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things."

Here we have a practical proof of what he asserts. Sometimes *we* delude ourselves with the idea that He projects out beyond all things while it is very manifest to those around us, that it is not so. They *see us devoting so much time to ourselves*, to our personal comfort, that they naturally come to such a conclusion. But then, we console ourselves with the thought that after all this is due to the exigencies of the time, and that our heart is all right. But how about "the projecting out beyond all things." Alas! do not *exigencies* then do so? Paul let exigencies go. "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things." What a word for us to-day! How salutary! especially if we consider the words which he adds, "And do count them but dung that I may win Christ."

In a certain sense it may be much easier to suffer the loss of all things, than to keep them. Our conscience may demand that we give them up. It may say, "You will be denying the faith if you do not!" and so we may let them go, and then when they are gone cry out, as did God's people of old, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots and we did eat bread to the full." Is that our spirit? Alas! then we never *gave* up. It was a case of tearing from our reluctant hands, things which we were loath to yield. We saw the angel of the Lord stand-

ing with drawn sword across our path and we fled back. How sorrowful for us when we remember that Christ, in all His beauty, stood to welcome us upon the other pathway.

But let us ponder still and ask God to search our hearts: "I do count them but dung" says the apostle. Not much yearning after them there, was there? "I do count them but dung." He does not say, mind you, "I *would* count them as dung" with a suppressed "if it were necessary." It *is* necessary for the acquisition of the blessed Object before him. With him there was no desire to keep anything. His eye was single and his one desire was to strip off everything that might incommode him in the race. And so he ran. Beloved! do we so run? Can we repeat the following lines from our hearts?

"Yes, He is mine! and nought of earthly things,
Not all the charms of pleasure, wealth, or power;
The fame of heroes or the pomp of kings,
Could tempt me to forego His love an hour.
'Go! worthless world,' I cry, 'with all that's thine,'
Go! I my Saviour's am, and He is mine."

Passing over the next verse let us now consider a little that very familiar one: "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made comformable unto His death."

The first clause of this verse is worthy of much meditation. Did not the apostle Paul know the Lord? He whose whole soul had been singing with delight, even in the most adverse circumstances? *He* presses on to know Him. Later on we learn that he stretches forward (as a racer) towards the mark. Did you ever know of anybody doing that, who only

had a short distance to run? How strongly then this verse should speak to us. What an unbounded Elysium there is yet to enter upon. We had thought some time, after some glad vision, some close communion, that we had really seen the Lord; but no! it was only a clouded view, a far away prospect, for we realize that our knowledge has come nowhere near that of the apostle, and he still pressed on to know Him. The glorious light on the road to Damascus had been passed. The song in Philippi's jail had been sung, stormy seas had been crossed, the dead had been raised by that Mighty Name; through sickness, the cohorts of the adversary, hunger, thirst, and beatings he had gone, and still the tireless racer stretches forth towards the goal, the blessed knowing of his Lord and Saviour.

And how about us, brethren? We should press on with greater vigor than the apostle, for we have further to run, but do we? We should look more eagerly for His return, for the night is more advanced, but do we? We might almost see Him coming "skipping upon the hills," but do we, oh! do we? Here is a question well worthy of consideration. How grand to stand for Him, in these days of declension, a faithful and true witness. What a crown of glory we are letting slip from our hands if we do not!

"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection." Here is an additional clause to consider. Far off on a lonely mountain of Judea in the dark season of night, I see a few frightened disciples fleeing like sheep before a band of men with torches, gathered to take prisoner the Lord of Glory. Ashamed of his cowardice, one of them at last seeks

out the palace of the High Priest, and tremblingly warms his hands within. The other night (do we know anything about other nights?) he had been very valiant, with the foe far away, but now all is changed. He is a broken reed shaken with every gust of wind. Once he had heard that Voice, now so meekly answering His enemies, hush the angry tempest on Galilee. He had seen the dead arise from the grave at its bidding. "Lord though all men forsake Thee yet will not I forsake Thee," he had cried, and that same night with oaths and cursing he denies Him. Alas, for human strength and resolution! Alas, for poor man!

A few weeks pass and we see that same frightened flock publishing His blessed name to the whole world. They are no longer fearful, no longer trembling, but with earth and hell against them, they stand undaunted, undismayed, glorying in the name of Jesus. But what had wrought this wondrous change? Why, Christ had risen. Death had yielded up its Prey and they now preached Jesus *and the resurrection*. What a mighty power it was! but oh brethren, it is one thing to be able to talk about it, and another thing to know its power, to feel it in our lives. What a passport to true blessing and godliness in every thing if we *knew* more that the One who died on the cross is now, for us, seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens! And it is so, yes, it is so!

"And the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death."

Before speaking of this clause directly, I want to notice a point which although not in exact connection with it, is suggested by it. Until the Lord was taken from them, they knew but little of the fellowship of

His sufferings, and the reason is good to think upon. During all the time of the Lord's presence with them, *He* was the object of all man's hatred and malice. They shared but slightly in it. Let me indicate the reason by an illustration. I was burning some sulphur one day in a room with the blind pulled down. It burned with a slightly visible flame. I then happened to let the sunlight in and on looking down thought my sulphur had gone out. On pulling down the blind however, I saw that it was burning as steadily as ever. I experimented several times with the same result. Where *the sun shone the sulphur flame could not be seen*. And so it was when Christ the blessed Light of the world shone among us, the rays of those lights soon to fill the world were swallowed up in His glory, and men saw them not. Dear brethren, to-day we also can behold His glory, "the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth," and although 1800 years have passed since then, reading its story we bow our heads, and say from our hearts, "Truly this was the Son of God."

In closing this meditation here, I would ask the reader to join with me in petitioning that our hearts may be so filled by His beauty and glory that truly from our hearts we also may desire some sweet fellowship of His suffering. It is easy to write, it is easy to read, it is easy to be momentarily stirred by emotion, but what we need is that our lives may be wholly dominated and controlled by motives such as Paul's were that we may bear fruit unto life eternal.

"Blest with this fellowship divine,
Take what Thou wilt I all resign,
While as the branches to the vine,
Saviour, I cling to Thee.

"Blest be my lot whate'er befall,
 Who can affright or who appal?
 While as my God, my Rock, my All,
 Saviour, I cling to Thee."

F. C. G.

"ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH" BE IT UNTO YOU."

Matt. ix. 27-31 inclusive.

THIS is the principle, or law, of God's activity in His saints, as well as of His grace to sinners. In the scriptures before us we have a perfect and beautiful illustration of it, as to the latter class, and in the seventeenth chapter, of the want of faith on the part of the former.

The blessed Master had returned to His own city—Nazareth—and had "forgiven the sins," and healed "the man sick of the palsy," cured "the woman diseased with an issue of blood twelve years," raised the dead "daughter of a certain ruler," and "His fame had gone abroad into all that land;" so that when He departed thence, two blind men followed Him, beseeching Him to "have mercy on them." These, no doubt, had heard of the wonderful works wrought by Jesus, because "His fame had gone out into all that land," and in their extreme need, knowing full well this need, they were ready and willing to believe that He who could raise the dead must also be able to open their eyes. Therefore they came to Him, into the house, and the Lord knowing their thoughts, reading their hearts, said unto them, believe ye that I am able to do this? Do what? They had not told Him their desire, they had not asked Him to return their sight. but only to "have mercy

on us,"—Ah! but He knows what we desire before we ask Him. Then touched He their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it unto you," "and their eyes were opened." This is what they were expecting, what they desired and all they desired. It was "the end of their faith." "They received the end of their faith," even the opening of their eyes. On the same principle, the end of their faith may be the salvation of their souls (1 Peter i. 9).

Now faith is not an act of our own wills, as many imagine, but it is the gift of God. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James i. 17). "By grace are ye saved, *through faith*, and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God*" (Eph. i. 8). "Think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man *the measure of faith*" (Rom. xii. 3). Now the question will arise, how does God deal to us the measure of faith? Just as He gave the manna to Israel: "Every man gathering according to his eating," or his appetite for it. So God deals to us the measure of faith. As we desire it, as we require it, as we will receive and use it according to His will. He cannot give faith for that which is not according to His purpose. His purpose now is for salvation to man; a new life, a new creation by the Holy Spirit. To this end He measures to His saints as they need all requisite gifts by the Holy Spirit. He does not give faith for physical wants beyond that which is ordained under natural law; because He is not now dealing with the race on this ground. He did do this in the beginning of this dispensation for the establishment of the truth in the world; so that no excuse should be possible to unbelief: but now when

the testimony of physical miracles has been sufficient to this end, His real purpose of salvation in grace, through faith, is working out His will according to His own eternal purpose. We are therefore not authorized by the word of God to have faith for or expect physical miracles; though the spiritually miraculous is before our eyes in every soul born of God. He is now through grace, by faith, taking out of the already judged world a people for His Name (Acts xv. 14). Sanctifying, separating them from the world to Himself; to His fellowship, His society, His association!

Faith then being the gift of God, it may be said to be *the instrument* by which God calls men into this association. "If *any man will do His will*, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself." So spake the Lord to the Jews as recorded in John vii. 17. Also, "He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear not, because ye are not of God" (John viii. 47). *Subjection* then is man's part in salvation. Willing subjection. A heart for the truth, God's truth, the source of truth; the highest truth there is for man. A lover of the truth. Any man thus willing, "shall know of the teaching." Of such were the two men who came to the Lord in the ninth of Matthew. He drew them to Him, into the house, and through faith, granted them the desire of their hearts. Their eyes were opened.

Opening the eyes lets in the light. So also is it in spiritual things. The light of heaven flows in through the open eyes of faith. God opens the eyes of every willing, subject soul. As in the beginning of the new creation life, so is it to the end. "According

to your faith so be it unto you." We get on in heavenly things as we are willing to receive from God. He is always waiting to be gracious unto us, and His gifts are only limited by our desire for them. We gather the manna for our own eating, as much as we may; but no more than we use. It is gathering from day to day. It cannot be kept over. All not consumed spoils. No nourishment can be had from it. Christian progress, growth in grace, is from freshly feeding on the heavenly Manna every day, so that "to them that have, more shall be given," and we go on in "grace upon grace."

When the blind men were restored to their sight, Jesus commanded them that no man should know about it. But on the contrary, "they spread His fame throughout all that country!" They couldn't help it. It was more than poor human nature could keep hidden. Their hearts were full to bursting; and out of a full heart the mouth will speak: Hence they spread His fame throughout all that country. That is what all true Christians will do, cannot help doing, when their eyes are fully open and "the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" is poured from heaven into their souls. Then they will sing, by the Spirit, with all saints:—

"Our hearts are full of Christ, and long
Their glorious matter to declare!
Of Him we make our loftier song,—
We cannot from His praise forbear:
Our ready tongues make haste to sing
The glories of the heavenly King."

J. S. P.

“DO NOT DISGRACE THE THRONE OF THY GLORY.”

(Jer. xiv. 21.)

THIS remarkable language is used by the prophet at a time of chastening under the hand of God—a chastening which was richly deserved by the people. He acknowledges the righteousness of God in it, but in connection with that confession appeals to His unchanging character. He does not merely appeal to God's mercy and love; nor does he use the people's low condition as the great motive with Him. Rather, his appeal is to His throne, the throne of His glory. Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of that throne. Should He fail to uphold, to preserve His blood-bought people—that throne of glory would be *disgraced*. What holy boldness, what effectual intercession! It is similar to that of Moses, when Israel had provoked the Lord to anger (Num. xiv.) and He threatened to cut them off from being a nation,—“Then the Egyptians shall hear it;” or like Joshua's plea at Ai (Josh. vii.), “What wilt thou do unto thy great name?”

Yes, beloved brethren, our salvation and eternal security are indissolubly linked with the throne of God's glory. We often need chastening and reproof, but as soon would the throne of God be disgraced, as one of the least or most unworthy of His people perish. What security is ours! What rest!

“Our hearts have peace that can never fail,
'Tis the Lamb on high, *on the throne.*”

Let the walk, partake of that stability. . . “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.”

UNDER THE OAK.

1 Kings xlii.

THE ten tribes under Jeroboam had not only revolted from the authority of the son of Solomon, but had established centres of idolatrous worship at Bethel and Dan. Here was not only rebellion but apostasy, a most shameful return to the abominations of Egypt, from which they had long since been rescued.

God's faithful love even for such people, and His care for the holiness of His Name, leads Him to send a message, by one of His prophets, from the land of Judah to the idolatrous king of Israel at Bethel. He was to deliver His message of coming judgment. This was accompanied by special manifestations of God's power; the altar was rent, and the king's outstretched arm was withered, and only restored by the prophet whom he would have smitten.

Seeing the power of God manifest, the king changed his attitude. He invites the man of God to come to his house for refreshment and a reward. Mark, the king is not broken and penitent; he simply wishes to take the edge off the prophet's denunciation, and there could be no more effectual way than by getting him to accept his hospitality and a reward. Unquestionably there is much of this kind to-day. The world can endure strong language if it is not accompanied by corresponding conduct. But what must the impenitent think of those who preach most solemnly of the lost condition of men, of their enmity against God, the impossibility of their doing aught to please Him—and then taking up a collection, soli-

citing help from those whom they have declared to be Christ's enemies!

The prophet is firm, and refuses the reward and the refreshment, and according to divine instruction betakes himself homeward. "There is a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing." We are sure the king must have felt, even if he did not acknowledge, the solemnity of the prophet's words, backed by his conduct. Ah! the world may smile at those who walk apart from it, and have nothing to do with it to dull the effect of their warning, but it feels their testimony all the more keenly. Well does Satan know this.

So far the prophet has acted, to outward appearance, in faithful devotedness. He is now to be subjected to another test. There was an aged prophet, with some 'remains perhaps of past enjoyment of divine things, but utterly out of the current of God's thoughts, and in a place of disobedience. On hearing of what had occurred, he goes after the prophet of Judah. A false position covets companions. Alas, it is one of the characteristics of disobedience. Doubtless this was the motive—perhaps not fully known—which induced the old prophet to go after the man from Judah.

He finds him "sitting under an oak." For some reason, instead of getting away as rapidly as possible from the ungodly place, the man of Judah has slacked his pace, and is even taking his ease in what Bunyan would call "enchanted ground."

There are no trifles in Scripture, and without forcing the meaning here, it seems evident that the prophet had lowered the tone of his testimony. He had not done this publicly. In fact, when approached

by the old man he replies well-nigh as vigorously as he had to the king. But strong words are not always indicative of the true state of soul. In fact, sometimes we may seek to make up in intensity of language what is lacking in fervency of heart. Why is he sitting down in the enemy's country? Does it not tell more loudly than words that his *soul* was not shrinking from the defilement of the place?

May we not pause here and ask ourselves a few serious questions? "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." Do we *feel* this in our souls, or is it a doctrine with us? Coupled with the doctrine there may be certain lines of behaviour understood as consistent. Certain amusements are to be eschewed; certain practises are reprobated. How about the state of the mind? On what is it feeding? Ah brethren, do we not know something of that relaxation of the inner man that answers to sitting under the oak?

Let it be remembered that such times often succeed seasons of special faithfulness. The enemy knows us. Perhaps conscience has stirred us up to a pitch of faithful testimony beyond ordinary; we have stood for God among His enemies, and now alone, with no one to see, there is the casting off the unusual armor, and a little indulgence of self is allowed.

There was nothing *wrong* in sitting under the oak. It was what it indicated as the state of heart.

Just here comes the attack. But notice that it requires all the ingenuity of falsehood to ensnare the prophet. The old prophet claims that he too has had a word from the Lord, rather from an angel, to allow the man of Judah to retrace his steps. Might he not

have answered somewhat in the language of Paul to the Galatians, "Though we or an angel from heaven"? That the man from Judah could be deceived by a word as from God shows how far his soul had drifted. He goes back, to receive from the same lips the sentence of his doom. It is a solemn fact that if we want it we can find,—Satan will help us find—scriptures that can be perverted to suit our wishes.

May we be kept from all temporizing, and guard most closely our hearts. "Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

What a solemn picture is that of the dead prophet, the ass and the lion. The ass could have carried him swiftly, the lion could not have hurt him, had he abode in the path of obedience.

To instruct even the unconverted child in the Scriptures is always of great value. It is like laying a fire well, so that a spark alone is needed to kindle it into a flame. It is a good and wholesome thing for Christians to be most particular in the training of their children in a thorough knowledge of the word of God.

W. K.

REAL, deep knowledge of the ways of God is always accompanied by humility. There is no greater mistake, nor one more unfounded in fact, than the supposition that spiritual intelligence puffeth up; knowledge may—mere knowledge. But I speak of that spiritual understanding in the Word, which flows from the sense of God's love, and seeks to spread itself, if I may so say, just because it is divine love.

W. K.

PEERLESS WORTH.

“What have I to do any more with idols?” (Hosea xiv. 8).

HAST thou heard Him, seen Him, known Him?
Is not thine a captured heart?
“Chief among ten thousand” own Him,
Joyful choose the better part.

Idols once they won thee, charmed thee,
Lovely things of time and sense;
Gilded, thus does sin disarm thee,
Honey’d lest thou turn thee thence.

What has stript the seeming beauty
From the idols of the earth?
Not the sense of right or duty,
But the sight of peerless worth.

Not the crushing of those idols,
With its bitter void and smart,
But the beaming of His beauty,
The unveiling of His heart.

Who extinguishes his taper
Till he hails the rising sun?
Who discards the garb of winter
Till the summer has begun?

’Tis the look that melted Peter,
’Tis the face that Stephen saw,
’Tis the heart that wept with Mary,
Can alone from idols draw—

Draw, and win, and *fill completely*,
Till the cup o’erflow the brim.
What have we to do with idols,
Who have companied with Him?

THE CROWNED CHRIST.

"And upon His head were many crowns."

(Rev. xix. 12.)

CHAPTER XIII.

(Continued from page 65.)

Bridegroom.

IT is not of the Bride that we are now desiring to speak, but of the Bridegroom; but the one so implies the other that we are compelled to the course we have been pursuing. The recurrence of the type so frequently in the Old Testament, even from the beginning of the history, is full proof of how dear to Him is the thought of the relationship. Assuredly we shall not give these up from any preconceived idea that they ought not to be there. They *are* there, and speak so plainly for themselves, pictures though they may be only, that no unprejudiced mind can avoid seeing them.

Take Rebekah; and if Isaac be a type of Christ, and, in the twenty-second of Genesis, received back "in figure" from the dead (Heb. xi. 19), how is it that we find next Sarah, the mother (Rom. ix. 5) passes away, and then Rebekah takes her place in Sarah's tent as bride of the risen heir. Of the kindred already, she is called by a special messenger (as the Church by the Holy Spirit) to cross the desert in his company to meet her yet unseen Lord.

Take Asenath; and Joseph too is betrayed by his brethren, brought down to the prison-house and brought up out of it to be the Saviour of Egypt (the world); and *then* he must have a Gentile bride, while his brethren are strangers to him.

Take Zipporah (the "bird"—the heavenly bride); and again Moses is away from and rejected by his brethren when he finds her by the well—a Gentile too—and marries her.

Are such things, so fit in themselves, so fitting to their place in the history, mere casual happenings, which we may use, if we will, for illustration, but must not seriously press as having any design from God? Surely if design may be recognized anywhere without a label, we may recognize it here.

Now it is not contradictory to all this, and cannot be, to find that Old Testament saints looked for a city which has foundations; or even to believe, as I have long done, that this city and the New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb in Revelation; are the same thing. Once let us realize that the "city," however identified in some sense with its inhabitants, is yet in fact the habitation and not the inhabitants, and the difficulty begins to clear. The Bride-City may contain more than the Bride, as even the writer whose views I am referring to allows. The throne of God and of the Lamb are in it; and the twelfth of Hebrews distinctly shows us "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, apart from *both* "the church of the first-born ones, and "the spirits of just men made perfect."*

* In the tract to which I have been referring the names of the twelve tribes on the gates of the city and those of the twelve apostles on the foundations are taken alike to show the Israelitish character of the city itself, and the "portion" of the twelve as judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix. 28) shows these to be "separated off from the Church," the body of Christ. He even declares that "the Lamb is the special title of the Lord Jesus in relation to Israel, and the elect of Israel"!

"God has prepared for them a city" does not in this case imply necessarily what it is quoted for; and we may adapt the writer's own words otherwise than he would allow. "This holy Jerusalem may contain"—the saints of the Old Testament; "but it is not necessary on this account that we should *identify* them."

Turning from all this now, how blessed to think of this Bridegroom character of the Lord Jesus! It should be plain that it expresses His personal joy of love, in a way that the "Head of the Body" cannot, because it expresses a very different thing. A whole book of the Old Testament has been given to the expression of this relation of the Lord Jesus,—no doubt, in the first place to Israel; but capable of application all through to the higher and heavenly. Perhaps we have not a *New Testament* book of this character, for the same reason that we have not a New Testament psalm-book. It would rather belittle than truly represent it; if it were not, at least, to be a book too large for human handling. Christian psalmody finds in all else that has been written its material of praise. Its "song of songs" must also transcend utterance. And perhaps must be learned otherwise than any book of this kind could avail for.

Thus it is, after all, that one can say so little of what the Lord's Bridegroom character means. We see that all the nearest, sweetest human relationships

No wonder that it should be also discovered that "the Gospels are the *conclusion* of the Old Testament history, and not the commencement of Church teaching; except, of course,"—and how important the exception!—"so far as Christ crucified is the foundation of *all* blessing."

are taken up to image forth these more wondrous spiritual ones. And Bridegroom and Bride, always remaining in the first freshness of the sabbatic morning of their beginning, speak of a mutual abiding for one another, which is the revelation of a sufficing love, such as we are surely learning by the way as we go to meet Him, but which in the first moment of His presence will manifest itself as it had not been before.

In the moment of her presentation to Isaac, Rebekah took a veil and covered herself. We can but do so in the anticipation of that time.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Throne of God and of the Lamb.

THE Lamb is the well-known title of Christ in the Apocalypse, the book of the future. It expresses the patience of His humiliation, even to the death of the cross; but it characterizes Him still in glory. Even when the apostle is told of the Lion of the tribe of Judah having prevailed to open the book, the vision assures him that it is a "Lamb, as it had been slain."

The connection between the humiliation and glory is familiar to us. Because of that wondrous humiliation "God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly, earthly, and infernal beings, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9-11).

This is His personal exaltation, and as Man. He

has descended and is now ascended up, far above all heavens, and sits upon the Father's throne, waiting there until His foes are made His footstool. All things are to be put under His feet, though as yet we do not see this.

The Kingdom of the Son of Man, His millennial reign, is that in which this is accomplished. He has then a throne which He can share with others, as the Father's throne He cannot (Rev. iii. 21); and the saints reign with Him a thousand years.

But while the Father thus glorifies His Son, for the Son His personal exaltation is not the object. He takes the Kingdom to bring all things into eternal order, and thus bring in the rest of God. Having done this, the Kingdom in this form is given up; its object is achieved; "and when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28).

We can in this way understand both why the Kingdom lasts for comparatively so short a period, and yet why it occupies so large a place in the field of prophecy. In the Old Testament, save in Isaiah's promise of a new heavens and earth, we never get beyond it. And even in the New, while that promise is expanded for us in the sweet picture with which we are all familiar (Rev. xxi. 1-8), yet that which follows of the New Jerusalem goes back immediately, as to the time of view, to the millennium again. Only in this way could the leaves of the tree of life be for the healing of the nations (xxii. 2).

Beyond the thousand years the city itself abides, for it is eternal; and here is for us the fullest view that the book of Revelation affords with regard to

the eternal state. Yet it is both brief and enigmatic; and the eyes that have been upon it for many generations have ever yearned to see more clearly what is portrayed in it.

But upon this we do not mean to dwell at present. We are following, as we may, the Christ of God through all that changes into the changeless blessedness. What can we know of it? Little, perhaps, indeed; but we may at least distinguish some things that need to be, and where Scripture seems clear enough to save us from any presumptuous speculation in the matter.

For many—and some even of those who are theoretically clearer—the millennium has been practically too much identified with the eternal condition. It has given too much its character to eternity; while, on the other hand, I think it will be found that sometimes that which is eternal has been thought of as millennial.

The millennium, with that which immediately follows and connects with it, is a period of formation,—of labor, not of rest. First, things are set in order morally and spiritually; then physically also. It applies also to the earth solely; not (in the higher sense of the word) to heaven. The “new heavens” are firmamental, the heavens of the second creative day.

Now, as to the reign, when it is said of the saints that they reign with Christ a thousand years, we might naturally think that they would cease to reign, then, after this. Yet we find it said of those in the heavenly city, “they shall reign for ever and ever,” (or “the ages of ages”) the strongest expression used for eternity. And this may remind us that before the

thrones are seen set up as to the earth (chap. xx. 4), and before even the Lamb has taken the book in heaven (chap. v. 7), we have seen thrones around the throne of God (chap. iv. 4) and those occupying them who afterwards sing the song of redemption, and are therefore redeemed men (v. 9). Is there not here implied plainly a reign which, as it begins before the millennial reign, will not be limited by it?

As to the Lord Jesus, "all authority" is already His "in heaven and on earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18), and yet He has not taken His throne as Son of Man. He is on the Father's throne, which is not divided nor circumscribed by that "Kingdom of His dear Son," into which already He has "translated" us (Col. i. 13). Thus we cannot limit Christ's reign by the Kingdom of the Son of Man. And when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, "that God may be all in all," will that "Kingdom of the Father" more exclude His sovereignty? If all authority be His now, has it shut out the Father? Will the Kingdom of the Father any more shut out the Son?

If we need a more direct answer to such a question, we shall find it in what is said of the heavenly city, that "the throne of God and *of the Lamb* shall be in it." It is but one throne: two there could not be; and it is characterized in this way, as the "throne of God and of the Lamb. That which speaks of the lowest depths of humiliation gone into is joined with the incommunicable Name of glory: it is added to that to which no addition would seem possible. God accepts this addition; yet not as if it were the acceptance of anything extraneous to Himself: nay, in it He is become manifest in a glory before which the

hosts of heaven prostrate themselves in adoring wonder. In the Lamb God has found the expression of Himself He has been ever seeking,—the means of pouring out unhindered the fulness which shall make His creatures full; and thus from the throne of God and of the Lamb issues the stream of the water of life.

That it is the “throne of *God*,” declares at once that here we have before us what is eternal: not dispensational, not temporary. “That God may be all in all,” the Lamb has brought Him down to the lower parts of the earth, and taken humanity up to the height of heaven. The Lamb is henceforth the “Lamp” of divine light; as “the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple” of the city, the unveiled Presence in which worship shall be alike free and necessary. The mystery of the Person of Christ is the assurance that in no way whatever can God and the Lamb be separated ever.

But what an overwhelming thought it is, humanity united thus to Godhead, the Crucified upon the throne of God? And we, whom He has taken up from the depths in which He found us, to declare in us the fulness of divine self-sacrificing love,—we are following on to see Him where He is, with eyes at last able to behold His glory; changed ourselves into His likeness!

F. W. G.

(*Concluded.*)

THE man that has seen Christ, has seen the greatest wonder that God can shew him; only he has seen but little of Christ yet, for it will take eternity fully to exhibit His glories.

OUR VESSEL TO BE STEERED WHERE THE ROCKS ARE NOT.

IN the year 1879 when sailing north of Scotland, which is a very rocky coast, and therefore specially dangerous, I asked the captain if he knew where the rocks were; he replied, “No, but *I know where they are not.*” The night was dark, the sea was rough, but he was calm and undisturbed. I felt at the moment there was a *moral* in his words and behaviour for me, and for all Christians. We are mariners. We are passing over an ocean with rocks and shoals, and often with billows swelling high, and the night dark. We, therefore, need a sure chart for our guidance, showing us the track where “the rocks are not.” We have that chart in the sure word of God, which is indeed a light pointing out the path in the sea along which we may safely steer our vessel, and we be without danger or dismay, knowing that God will care for us, and save us from disaster, if sailing according to the chart He has given us.

In order to sail to the heavenly port, we must first see and own our deep need as sinners, and flee to the refuge which infinite love has provided for us in the atoning death of Him who is now the Captain of salvation. Being thus saved, the heart is to be won in view of the price paid for our redemption, and by the love which paid the price. The soul, being thus saved, becomes satisfied with Him who saves. Then it is his or her meat to do the will of God; in other words, to keep the ship in the track of His revealed mind,—in “the paths of the sea,” plainly laid down in the chart of His infallible word. When the heart is thus with God, and the purpose is simply to do

His will,—to sail strictly according to His expressed thoughts, He will care for the frail little vessel so that it will ride the troubled sea safely along, and will come into port without any serious mishap or loss. Those who thus sail may suffer, for the enemy is on the lookout for any who sail according to the divine chart; but that does not interfere with their safety, but may increase their speed toward the desired haven.

On that dismal night, in the North Sea, two vessels, not far from us, were lost. Perhaps if those in command had had the wisdom, skill, and care of our Captain (Turpin) they might have been saved. We should remember as Christians, that though we have a new nature, being born of God, yet we have the old nature also; and if we allow our love to grow cold, and the word of God ceases to have its true place with us, in this way the reins slip out of the hands of the new nature into the hands of the old nature, and we know well in what direction it will drive us. Christ and His word are not enough for a soul in that state; nay more, they are, or may be, really loathed, as the Israelites loathed the manna suited for them on the way to the goodly land. A person in this condition, begins to look around for something to meet the cravings of the nature which now holds the reins, and he sees that professors of religion, church-members, are enjoying all sorts of worldly amusements, and belonging, even ministers, to the different secret societies; and he begins to ask, Why may I not do the same? He soon persuades himself that there is no harm in these things. Next, he is sailing his barque in these waters. Should there not be entire shipwreck, the person may yet, through

grace, sorrowfully see and feel the dishonor he has done to the Lord. The full amount of loss will be seen at "the judgment seat."

But it may be so with some that they have to own that their love has waxed cold, and that the things of Christ have lost their freshness for them, and that they have a drawing to these worldly things, and may be, with some honesty, asking what they are to do. Dear souls, your way is plain as to what you must do, if you wish to pass over life's sea in safety, and not come to grief and loss. You have simply to go to God just as you are, and tell Him all your backslidings of heart, and all your hankerings after worldly associations, and amusements. Hide nothing from Him. Honestly confess all. Cast yourselves on His grace, and its provision in Christ; and thus you will recover your lost treasure, joy and delight in the things of God, and then, as a happy consequence, your desire for worldly pleasures and company will be gone, and you will be able exultingly to sing,

"I have seen the face of Jesus!
Tell me not of ought beside;
I have heard the voice of Jesus!
All my soul is satisfied!"

Being thus graciously delivered, and the joy of God's salvation being restored to you, you might ask yourselves, Could we have asked the blessing of God on those worldly things to which we inclined? Could we have asked Him to go with us into those things and places? Or could we have expected Him to meet with us there, and given us sweet communion with Himself, thus telling us that He was pleased to have us there? Surely in your very worst state of soul

you would have had to answer, No. Rather you would have wished to hide your desires and ways from Him. It is hard for one who has known the truth to silence conscience. But now being restored, and finding Christ, as before, to be an ample and satisfying portion, you can say to the votaries of earthly pleasures, "What, alas, charms you, charms us no more. We have returned to something sweeter and truer, and abiding,—forever abiding." Praise God. You can now join those who are crossing the ocean according to the heaven-given Chart in singing what the devoted Thomas Kelly wrote nearly a hundred years ago:—

"Led by faith, we brave the ocean;
 Led by faith, the storm defy;
 Calm amidst tumultuous motion,
 Knowing that the Lord is nigh:
 Waves obey Him;
 And the storms before Him fly.

"Rendered safe by His protection,
 We shall pass the wat'ry waste,
Trusting to His wise direction,
 We shall gain the port at last;
 And with wonder
 Think on toils and dangers past."

O beloved, let us ever keep before us what it cost to sever us from the world. The apostle Paul writes that the Lord Jesus "gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal.i.4). Then, how could we, with the agonies of the cross before the eyes of the mind and heart, and the word of God in our hands, go into "the evil" of that from which we have been separated at such a cost! "Be not conformed to this world" is written in our inspired Guide-book. Christians, let us sail our ship where it tells us *the rocks are not*. R. H.

THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATION TO GOVERNMENTS.

GOD ordained governments for man in his unredeemed condition in the world. The Christian is saved out of the world, and is no more called upon to go back into it to engage in politics than was Israel called upon to go back into Egypt; though governments are for the Christian, as well as for the world—as they are for all men. As a doer of good in the world the Christian is not to decide for himself what he is to do. His path is marked out by the word of God. The Word marks out for him a far higher witness and more powerful influence for good than he could ever have as a politician. In separation from the world, he sheds light upon it, praying, interceding for all men, and for those in authority. In mingling with men in politics he belies his own character at the start,* as if Israel had gone back into Egypt to reform it, or as when Lot went down into Sodom and sat in the gate.

But it may be said we are to mingle with men to reach them. But we are not to give up our character, which is separation from the world, and from every unequal yoke, or we cannot reach them with the testimony of God. As in Noah's time the ark was his testimony and the place of refuge, so now the Christian's testimony is the gospel. "As sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life" (Phil. ii. 15).

* Suppose a soldier slays an opponent, a fellow Christian he had been with in prayer a month before: this he professes to be ready to do, in war, if he is a *voter*.

In short, God ordained governments in mercy to men and to the Church; but He ordained the Church for a different purpose, a purpose upon which thorough confusion is thrown by the very thought of a Christian in politics. The very thought is a refusal of God's purpose, and a determination to substitute one's own purpose, and be a doer of good on mere human grounds.

And this brings to mind the root of the difficulty—the heart not submissive to the truth of God as to the fallen condition of man. This pervades the Church to its confusion and exposure to heresy in many ways. The heart is not serious, not in the realization of man's awful condition by sin, not really submissive to God as to His judgment of the world. Any link with the world defiles. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.” As to God's providential interfering or overruling in the governments of men the Christian is to be fully alive. He is a priest, and is to intercede, to pray, to give thanks “for kings” and “for those in authority” and “for all men,” that we may lead godly and peaceable lives (1 Tim. ii. 1). He is to be an example of orderly conduct, and ready submission to the law (Rom. xiii. 1–8; 1 Peter ii. 13–17).

How precious a true Christian testimony! how jealous should we be to maintain it pure; how falsified it is and ruined by politics, as by any kind of worldliness.

A second general consideration is this, the exhortations of Scripture *imply* separation from politics, as for example the one above referred to in 1 Peter ii.: “Obey every ordinance of man.” Evidently men

who make these ordinances are a company of whom the Christian forms no part, he is outside of them, but he is to obey the laws they make. It is like that word in Heb. ix. : "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Here again "men" are a company of which the Christian forms no part, he will never come into judgment and may not come into death, and will not come into it as having the sting of sin, and approaching judgment. It is an appointment for "men" but not for the Christian. So "men" are law-makers, but the Christian is separated from that company by the cross. He is a new man under Christ, the Head of a new and heavenly race.

A third consideration is this, already suggested necessarily, but it may be more definitely stated: a Christian engaging in politics must act without guidance from the word of God, and therefore without faith — and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. xiv. 23). This alas, is no difficulty with many, and reveals afresh a root of confusion in this matter: insubmission to God and to His word, human judgment displacing the spirit of obedience from the heart, and so lowering the tone of life and testimony of the Church in general. But any one who knows the blessedness of peace with God through the assurance of God's word is glad to apply the Word at all times, and is consciously weak if he goes beyond it or acts without it. "Thus saith the Lord" he must have for every step, and he finds guidance in the Word for everything. Otherwise how could it be to him, "a lamp to his feet and a light to his path"? (Psalm cxix. 105).

Let us apply this briefly to various relationships

and duties. In the relationship of a parent, of a child, of a husband, of a master, of a servant, of a subject under the government—in all these relations light is shed on the Christian's path; but none at all on his path as a politician, he has gone beyond the Word, and must act without it. In fact he is acting merely as a man, a natural man, not as a spiritual man, not as a Christian. We have an illustration of the Christian place of honor and sanctification in the place accorded Mephibosheth by king David. "Mephibosheth shall eat bread alway at my table," was the king's word. Ziba and his servants and his sons were commanded to till the land for Mephibosheth, and to bring in the fruits to him, but Mephibosheth was to eat bread at the king's table as one of the king's sons. Ziba was the servant of Saul. Saul's kingdom a type of the power and governments of the world that are to pass away before the coming Kingdom of Christ. Ziba's servants and sons may speak to us therefore of the men of this world, and of its governments who, occupied with earthly things, really serve the children of God. Whatever is done to promote good government and prosperity is a service by God's appointment for His glory and for blessing for all men, but especially for His own (1 Tim. iv. 10). But the Christian, like Mephibosheth, is at the king's table as one of the king's sons. He is a priest unto God and has too high and holy an occupation to turn aside to the work of the servants of Saul.

For a Christian to be even prime minister or President would be but a misuse of time and opportunity. Saul's servants are doing this work. The Christian is a worshiper of God, and one who is to hold forth

the word of life, and to be a witness for Christ, to walk as He walked, to "follow His steps"—leaving us an example (1 Peter ii. 21).

No steps of His can be found in the arena of politics. The following His steps will most certainly lead in a direction wholly apart from anything of that kind. Even the world can see this. They know very well the inconsistency of a Christian in politics.

Peace and joy are in the way of separation from the world, and the taking up our cross and following Christ, afar from Egypt's turmoil and unrest, and ungodly principles and ways. What we need is to have a clear perception of our heavenly calling. We wait to be taken to heaven where Christ is, and then He will appear and rule this world at last with perfect government, and establish a Kingdom that shall be forever (Dan. vii. 27).

Israel departed from Egypt and commanded repeatedly to be carefully separate from the Canaanites; and Abraham, called to leave his country, answers plainly to the equally plain teaching and commandments of the New Testament, as to the path of separation from the world, enjoined upon us.

Let us rejoice in our happy deliverance, and let us give thanks to God that we have been called to such an honorable testimony. May we by example and exhortation help one another, and seek the salvation of souls.

May we abide in Christ. In Him we are blest with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. By Him we have access to the very presence of God. No defilement is admitted there. Nothing that is of the spirit of this present evil age, but what must unfit one to approach Him.

Let us walk upon our high places, and see that no wile of Satan mars our worship and our testimony.

“Hold that fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown.” “Behold I come quickly.”

What if the priests who marched round Jericho with the ark and blew the trumpets, had left the ark and had gone into Jericho to work reform. Yet such is the course of Christians who go into the world to make it better. It is confusion and disobedience. Let us suppose Paul to have been turned aside from his work in the gospel to a political career however great, the thought is heart-breaking, and yet how many are ensnared and robbed of their crown, in this and kindred ways; for the unequal yoke is a snare in every line, whether in business, or marriage, or benefit societies, or politics. Do we not desire to honor the Lord, not to dishonor Him; to comfort our brethren, not to grieve them—to be true witnesses for Christ? “If any man serve Me let him follow Me.” “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever, and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols, for ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said: I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty.”

E. S. L.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 3.—Please explain 1 John i. 8: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” Also the same epistle, chapter iii. 6. “Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him neither known Him.”

ANS.—“Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” To say that sinning, in a believer, is a natural and necessary thing, is an awful denial of Christianity. We fear that a dreadful misuse has been made of the truth that the flesh, the old nature, still remains in the believer. True it is there, but does Christianity effect no change? Now chap. i. 8 assures us of the presence of sin as nature in all, even in the believer, and the more he walks in the light the more does he realize this. He knows too the value of the blood and walks with a good conscience.

Chap. iii. 6, with many other similar passages, shows the transforming power of divine life. Holiness is produced. One who goes on in sin has neither seen nor known Christ. We would note the use of the word “abide,” which suggests the presence of faith, and not merely a new nature. Of course, the nature will act, but the acting is what is here spoken of. Alas, it acts weakly in all, compared with what should be. However, all through John's epistle the line is clearly drawn between holiness and sin. “He that practices sin is of the devil.” “He that is born of God doth not practise sin.”

QUES. 4.—Is it according to the word of God to instruct saints in the assemblies to deny their little ones seats by their side at the Lord's table, and to relegate them to back seats because they are unconverted?

ANS.—So long as children need the eye of their parents they should unquestionably sit by them. A hard legalism which would force a separation is, we feel, not in accord with the gracious spirit of the gospel. On the other hand we believe, for the sake of order and to avoid confusion, persons who are not breaking bread—if present in any numbers—should be provided with seats separate from those who are to break bread. To these seats children might go when they reach a more mature age, nearly or quite grown. However, if there be but one or two persons to occupy such seats, it might seem ungracious to

insist upon an isolation which has no merit save to avoid confusion. A mere local position, we need not say, has no spiritual significance. If it fosters spiritual pride—"stand by thyself, I am holier than thou"—it is most injurious. On the other hand strangers take no offense if graciously shown to seats provided especially for them.

QUES. 5.—Does Hosea vi. 2 furnish any ground for the statement, based on our Lord's resurrection, that the return of Israel and the appearing of Christ will take place in the first part of the twentieth century? Some have argued from the seven days creation, a thousand years for a day, that the millennium will come at the beginning of the seventh thousand years.

ANS.—The passage in Hosea seems most clearly to refer not only to the national revival of Israel, but connects it with that which is the pledge of it—our Lord's resurrection. The familiar quotation in Matt. ii. 15 from Hosea xi. 1—"out of Egypt have I called My Son"—shows how Christ is ever before the mind of God, and what apparently refers to the nation only, has a deeper allusion to Him.

With regard to the chronological question, we believe that there are two mistakes;—one that the millennium is the seventh day, and the other that the world's history has been divided into definite periods of the same length. The seventh day is the day of rest, and points to that time where all labor is over—the eternal rest which God will have with His redeemed. This would make the millennium the *sixth* day, and fittingly we have the man and the woman—type of Christ and the Church—associated in dominion over the earth.*

With regard to the division of various periods of two thousand years each, as we believe it to be unscriptural, we can say but little upon it. We might remind our readers however that the coming of the Lord for His Church is an event absolutely independent of "times and seasons." It is imminent at all times—"nearer than when we believed." Instead of turning us to chronology, history or astronomy, the Spirit of God would occupy us with those heavenly scenes where our home is, and with the promise of our Lord, "Behold I come quickly."

* See as to this a "Chart on the course of time from Eternity to Eternity" published by Loizeaux Brothers, price 40 cents, with key.

QUES. 6.—In a case of discipline in an assembly, and the person under that discipline complains of injustice and appeals to the Lord's people elsewhere, do you not think that that assembly should be willing and ready to lay herself open to any investigation from without?

Does not the principle of "One Body, One Spirit, one Lord" make this even imperative? that is, would it not really be independency to refuse, though we may find some appeals very trying?

We necessarily uphold the discipline of the assembly toward an individual member, according to Matt. xviii. 18, else what but confusion and anarchy could be the result. Is it not, however, equally necessary to uphold the responsibility of each assembly to all the rest when occasion, such as above mentioned, requires it?

ANS.—The question carries with it the answer upon a subject of great importance in connection with the fellowship of the Lord's people. Unquestionably the local assembly is but an expression of the entire Church. It acts, as it were, for the Church. If any question as to a matter of discipline arises, and the local assembly is asked about it, not only courtesy and a love of truth would necessitate a full answer, but responsibility to the Lord demands that the consciences of those who share that responsibility should be fully set at rest. There is no such thing as "a purely local matter" in the sense that our brethren elsewhere may not inquire as to it. Suppose the assembly has erred, that self-will has prevailed; is all inquiry to be hushed under the plea that "the assembly has acted"? What becomes of the scripture, "if one member suffer, *all* the members suffer with it"?

On the other hand the opposite extreme must be guarded against. When an assembly has acted, it is to be supposed that it has done so righteously in the fear of God. That action should not be questioned in a light or trifling way, or without grave cause for fear lest all should not be right. The matter should then be laid before the assembly which most certainly would be expected to give opportunity for the fullest investigation. In general, when a righteous decision has been reached, whether by an individual or an assembly, there is a perfect willingness to submit the matter to the examination of others. The opposite would argue a weakness of conviction that feared the

light. May the Lord preserve His people both from self-righteous independency, and a meddling spirit.

QUES. 7.—Is there authority from the Scriptures for the thought expressed in one of our hymns, “He wears our nature on the throne”?

ANS.—Most certainly not if it be understood to suggest a hint of fallen nature. This were blasphemy. And yet alas in some quarters there are those who do not shrink from using such language, covered by forms of piety. They would say our Lord thus knew what temptation was, and could sympathize with us. All this robs us of a holy Christ. We need hardly say that the temptations which assailed him were only from without, never from within. If He was “in all points tempted like as we are,” it was “apart from sin.” But surely few of our readers need a word as to this.

On the other hand the expression in the hymn is simply a statement that our Lord was, and is still, a man. He wears human, not fallen, nature on the throne. It would correspond thus to that passage in Hebrews, “He took not hold of angels, but He took hold of the seed of Abraham” (Heb. ii. 16, *Gk.*); though the thought is not exactly the same.

It might perhaps be well to mention in giving out the hymn that it is not fallen but human nature—“the man Christ Jesus.”

QUES. 8.—Does Rom. xv. 7 speak of receiving into fellowship from outside, or those who are *in* fellowship as they go from place to place; as Phebe? Does the “wherefore” in verse 7 apply to verses 5 and 6?

ANS.—Evidently the “wherefore” is the conclusion from the whole previous paragraph, not only verses 5 and 6, but the entire previous chapter (xiv.) and the first verses of the fifteenth. This treats of reception, and would primarily refer to first reception and not the recognition of those already in fellowship, though it could also apply to that.

QUES. 9.—In trying to hold the truth in grace while faithful to others too, when should we withhold our hand from our brethren? Should it be done in personal disagreements, or when matters are not clearly manifest?

ANS.—As to the last question, we think it may be frequently said that personal questions may best be left to the Lord. There will be, of course, occasion for faithful dealing with one another

in personal matters, but such disputes are too often but occasions for mutual strife and enmity. Our conviction is that in the majority of cases the part of wisdom and of grace is to leave it to the Lord to manifest it in His time, either here or at His judgment-seat.

There are, however, cases not of a personal character which we cannot leave. If the person's state of soul involves the testimony, brings a reproach on the Lord, or stumbles His people, we are to endeavor to recover him.

First of all, we would be reminded of our own walk. "Ye who are spiritual," "considering thyself"—would surely beget in us a sense of lowliness that would give power.

Next, when we learn of a brother's state, if we are truly concerned, we will pray for him. Let us beware of that interest in the short-comings of others which does not drive us to our closets.

If there is self-judgment and prayer we can be ready to be led of God, who will at the right time and place lead us to our brother. We need hardly say this will be private. There is nothing more delicate than a case of departure from God. Let us beware of taking it up with either unclean or rough hands. Let no one think he can lightly rush in and settle a matter. We believe wrong attempts to right matters have often occasioned as much difficulty as the original trouble. The complicated cases are always difficult.

If we are now alone with our brother, and have in a spirit of grace gone over his course with him, we will in all probability gain him. If not, we may seek to win him together with two or three others. If he still refuse, he is to be treated as a stranger.

Often we may, after having exhausted all gracious ways, withdraw from a brother who is disorderly. We may avoid him, and no one else but himself may know it. This individual treatment is often blessed, where it is manifest that nothing but love prompts it.

How much the Lord's sheep need loving, faithful care. Do not the following words speak to our consciences? "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them" (Ezek. xxxiv. 4).

TRANSMITTED RESPONSIBILITY.

WE are creatures of extremes, and are apt either to unduly emphasize and distort a truth or to ignore it altogether. Perhaps in nothing is this more clearly seen than in the subject we are about to consider.

The doctrine of succession—call it apostolic, presbyterial, or by some other name,—is one of the most fruitful sources of error. Under its plea, in Rome, all sorts of unscriptural and disgraceful errors are maintained; and, with well-nigh every one, antiquity is supposed to guarantee accuracy, and to be an assurance of orthodoxy. Let us always remember that sin is ancient; that error began in the garden of Eden. Time then can never give sanction to what is unscriptural.

It is hardly necessary to more than mention a few of the errors which are supported by “them of old time,” as illustrations of this. The sacrilegious service of the mass has come down unaltered through centuries. The same may be said of the priesthood of Rome and the papacy. A long line of popes—with certain very troublesome breaks to those who rest the Church upon this foundation—reaches back into the very early centuries of the Christian era. Coming to doctrine, “the Galatian heresy”—of law keeping, observances of days and times—is as old as Paul, and still shows signs of vigor for evil.

Time then cannot make true that which is false. But let us look a moment at the opposite extreme. There are some who despise antiquity and who, like the Athenians are always ready “either to tell or to hear some new thing.” Such persons dwell upon

individual responsibility, and even where they do not go into extreme of error, seem to be always in danger of drifting. Thank God for many who, while they have this tendency, hold fast to the divine truth in the great fundamentals of that most holy faith which was "once for all delivered to the saints." But with these there will often be an instability in matters of great importance, which renders them unfit to be "pillars" in a true and scriptural sense.

Now is it not true that God's way lies between these two extremes? We are not blindly to follow the past as though time had made a groove for faith to run in; nor are we to set up to be new lights, as though Christianity did not exist before our time. Surely we are not to guarantee the permanency of error, by following the fathers blindly; we are to test everything by the word of God. But we are to remember that in all times of His church's history, God has had a witnessing people; that even when Elijah-like (alas how unlike Elijah in other respects) men may have said, "I, even I only am left," God has had His seven thousand. Beloved, does it not thrill our hearts as we think we are joined in faith and testimony with an innumerable number of God's elect in every time and place? Linked with Christ we are, indwelt by the Spirit too, but by virtue of this very fact linked with the whole Church as well. But this is not quite our subject.

With the establishment of Christianity at Pentecost and during the days of the apostles, God gave to His newly formed Church a body of divine truth—"all things pertaining to life and godliness." That truth covers every phase of divine life in the Church. We may divide it roughly into three parts—doctrine,

order, and practice. Of course, it is not our purpose to go fully into things; to do so would be to write a treatise upon Christianity. But at the beginning God, by the Holy Spirit, through inspired men, gave a mass of precious truth, as to Himself, as to Christ,—His person and work; as to salvation and all connected with it. At the same time and in the same way, He gave principles and details of conduct becoming those who belong to His Church; and He established a Church with ministry and order in which the truth and walk were to be exhibited. We might also add, that all this was connected with all His previous dispensations, in such a way as to harmonize most perfectly, and to manifest the holiness and wisdom of all His ways.

Thus in a most important sense the “apostles and prophets,” having laid the foundation, have passed away. We have none now save in the “living oracles” they have left us, our guide for all time. Neither can there be, in the sense of gift or authority, any such thing as apostolic succession.

But apostolic truth remains, and apostolic order and practice, and it is of this that we wish to speak, laying a word upon our consciences. Paul, Barnabas, Peter, John; Timothy, Titus, Stephanas—all these and countless others of faith and devotedness, have passed away. The whole fabric of divine truth—under God the Holy Ghost—was in their hands. They were to teach it, to maintain its order, to exhibit its fruits. Long since have they gone to their rest, but the Church remains. Others were brought in to continue the testimony which was intrusted to them. These also have “fallen asleep;” and so through the centuries this priceless heritage has

passed until at the present time it is in *our* hands. That which Paul stood for is now in our hands. The responsibility has been transmitted until it has reached us. The very fact that we are Christians necessitates this. Would we free ourselves from this?

We need not look around, near or far away, to find those to whom this trust has also been committed. Each of us for ourselves has it laid upon us to hold fast, to maintain the very truth for which Paul contended. Does not this solemnize? If *we* are unfaithful, we cannot think of others as being true, the responsibility rests upon us. But let us apply briefly in the way we have already indicated.

We are entrusted with all the doctrines of God's word, to know, confess and teach them. They are contained in their perfection in the word of God, but they are there for us. What diligence this means in study. What Christian dare leave his Bible closed, or but grasp a few of its simpler truths? We are to learn them all, and to be able to contend earnestly for the faith. If anything could accentuate the importance of this, it would be the almost universal departure of the professing Church from the truths of Scripture. Nay, that very Scripture is 'being questioned and treated as a merely human production. May each of us ask ourselves, What am I doing toward holding, and maintaining God's truth in this time of error?

But we look at another phase of this question. A divine order was established for the Church in its administration upon earth. Divine directions were given as to reception, discipline, ministry, worship—in fact no true activity of Christian testimony was

omitted or unprovided for. Here again *we* are brought to face our responsibility. It has not lessened since the apostles' time. In one sense, as ruin and weakness—all foreseen by the Spirit of God—have come in, greater care, we might almost say, is required in the administration of Church order. The word of God is to be searched as to its teachings upon this point, every indication is to be carefully noted, and we in a sense of weakness, are to take up the solemn load.

We are convinced that this is all too little realized by the vast bulk of the Lord's people. Self is so prominent in our thoughts, our own interests are so central, that we are apt to forget what is due to God, and the simple path of obedience in which we are to walk.

Is it said, So few walk that path? Then an added responsibility is laid upon those who are willing, in all their feebleness but in reliance upon unfailing grace, to walk it alone if need be. Who that thinks of this can fail to tremble, and to confess, as Daniel, our own and our fellows' sins?

Closely connected with this is the testimony before the world with which we are entrusted. Let us think of the saints of that early Church, and its unfaltering testimony; spite of mockery, temptation, yea *blood* it stood firm for Christ. Their testimony is ours, beloved brethren. How are we maintaining it? Apply the question to a hundred details, of private and corporate responsibility. Our walk before the world, our business and our home life, our conversation—these and all else are to be measured by the standard. As we think of those devoted ones, torn by beasts or tossed into the flames, with songs

of triumphant joy on their lips, does not the blush of shame tingle the cheek? We are not called to cruel mockings and scourgings, but to bear a little discomfort, to endure a little scorn; and how do we meet it? Alas!

Take the preaching of the gospel. If Paul was entrusted with its message, are not we also? if necessity was laid upon him, are we free? Are we less debtors than he?

How this thought of the same responsibility should move us. A child moves about his father's possessions, little thinking that some day they will be his to administer. His father dies, and he, come to years of maturity, must take up, not only the comforts and honors, but the care of that inheritance. So is it with us. The men of faith, from Abel down, have lived, witnessed, and died. Here are *we*, in their place, with all their responsibility upon us. God help us to feel and meet it.

UNUSED SPICES.

WHAT said those women as they bore
 Their fragrant gifts away?
 The spices that they needed not,
 That resurrection day?

Did Mary say within her heart,
 Our work has been in vain?
 Or counting o'er the spices bought
 Of so much waste complain?

Not so, for though the risen Lord
 Their spices did not need,
 Not unrewarded was the love
 That planned the reverent deed.

For though unused their fragrant store
 Yet well might they rejoice,
 Since they the first who saw the Lord,
 The first who heard His voice.

Sweet story, hast thou not some truth
 For my impatient heart?
 Some lesson that shall stay with me
 Its comfort to impart?

Have I not gathered in the past,
 In days that are no more,
 Of spices sweet and ointment rare,
 What seemed a precious store?

A little knowledge I had gained,
 A little strength and skill,
 I thought to use them for my Lord,
 If such should be His will.

Alas my store unused hath been,
 The strength I prized hath gone,
 My weary hands have lost their skill,
 And yet my life goes on.

In all the busy work of life
 I have but scanty share,
 And scanty is the service done
 For Him whose Name I bear.

So many hopes and plans have died
 In weariness and pain,
 My heart cries out in sore distress,
 Was all my work in vain?

Be still sad heart; thy hopes and plans
 Are known to One divine;
 He knoweth all thou wouldst have done
 Had greater strength been thine.

My unused spices, Dearest Lord,
 They were prepared for Thee,
 Yet if for them Thou hast no need,
 Let love my offering be.

(Selected.)

WILLING TO BE A BROOM.

(Luke xv. 8.)

“**W**HAT woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house diligently till she find it?”

We were recently asked at a Bible reading what the broom means in this parable. But, as this useful instrument is not mentioned in the verse, I had not given it much thought. However, as it is evident that the woman must use a broom to sweep with, the inquiry was not out of place.

We believe the “woman” here refers to the Holy Spirit, and the “house” to the house of Israel. God had lighted “a candle” in sending His Son into the world (*cf.* John i. 9), and the Spirit of grace in Christ was seeking the “lost sheep” amid the rubbish and filth of Judaism (*cf.* Matt. xv. 24).

The Son of God has returned to heaven and sent down the Holy Spirit to continue the work of grace until He shall return. The sphere of activity has widened out to the whole world, and the Divine Worker needs many brooms. This suggests Rom. x. 14. “How shall they hear without a preacher?” And if the broom is a convenient instrument for the housewife to sweep with, so must the Holy Spirit use instruments wherewith to draw out from their hiding-places the precious souls buried in sins and iniquity, the price of whose redemption, as the “silver” here suggests, was “the precious blood of Christ” (*cf.* 1 Pet. i. 18, 19). Are you willing then, to be a broom,—to be worn out in such lowly service as He requires? A broom, you know, must be well made

and fitted to the hand of the user, and thus ready for use when wanted. The thrifty housewife pays the price for one, and consecrates it to her service. So we have been "bought with a price"; and God has "created us in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. ii. 10). And we are told in Rom. vi. to "yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God." It does not suit the natural pride of our hearts to be assigned to so lowly a place as that of a broom, but this shows how we unfit ourselves for effective service by allowing high thoughts. You might like the *fame* of Paul, but are you willing to suffer in like manner, and then be "*defamed*" and "made as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things"? (1 Cor. iv. 13).

In our text the "one piece of silver" is emphasized, showing how God values one lost soul. God *feels* His loss, and is willing to pay the cost of its redemption. It is not hard here to read John iii. 16 into the context. The lighted candle is now the word of God with which we are illumined (*cf.* Luke xi. 36). The diligent seeking and sweeping sets forth the perseverance of divine love—"till she find it." But the humble instrument used in this loving search is not mentioned. Are you willing to give up reputation (*cf.* Phil. ii. 5, 7), and "present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," as His servant? Saith the self-emptying apostle, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos but ministers (servants) by whom ye believed?" (1 Cor. iii. 5). Are you willing then, in fellowship with the love of God, to be a broom: to be jammed into the filthy corners of the earth, through scorching heat or

piercing cold; to be crushed and bruised; to die, if need be, in order that the grace of eternal life may be carried into the haunts of sin, and to the precious souls for whom God gave His Son; that His heart may be filled with joy over one repenting sinner? Are you willing "for Jesus' sake" to be a nameless broom?

C. E. B.

THE CHURCH OF GOD:

UNKNOWN TO CHRISTENDOM.

IT is a fact, astounding as it may seem, that the Church of God, is to this day unknown to Christendom. The Church of God, built by Jesus Christ (Matt. xvi. 18), the one body (1 Cor. xii.), is founded upon the Rock that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God (Matt. xvi. 16). "THE MYSTERY" is referred to in the following passages: Mark iv. 11; Rom. xi. 25; xvi. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 7; Eph. i. 9; the whole of the third of Ephesians; also Eph. v. 32 and vi. 19; Col. i. 26; iv. 3; 1 Tim. iii. 9. Instead of this exhibition of the Church, the mystery, we have *sectarianism*, not the Church of God at all. This even the world can see, and hence the prevalence of infidelity throughout Christendom to-day, and the progress the world is so rapidly making down to the apostasy of the last days (2 Thess. ii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Peter ii.; Jude 17, 18, 19): I trust the reader will turn to all these references, that he may get a clear view of this subject. This appalling condition of Christendom has all resulted from the perversity of human nature, in having its own way, in spite of all the word of God and the example and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. He "came, not to do His own will, but to do the will of His Father who had

sent" Him. Christendom, instead, has gone its own way, in its own will, according to its own wisdom; and hence division instead of unity; human conceptions, instead of God's word; following men instead of God; some of Peter, some of Paul, some of Calvin, Wesley, or others. Men lost faith in God, and instead of believing in Him, and submitting to His word as to the gift of the Holy Spirit, "the unction from the Holy one," the One that should lead them into all truth, because they could not see Him they have walked by sight and set up human leaders instead of the divine One. Hence we have the world's church instead of God's; sectarianism instead of Christianity.

Laying aside the Old Testament scriptures for the present, though full of Christ in type and symbol, from Abel's lamb, and Abraham's sacrifice of his only son to the end of the book,—let us look at "the mystery of the Church" as made known for the first time from the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, after He had risen from the dead and ascended to glory, through Paul, chosen of God for *this special purpose*. This truth of the Church which characterizes this Christian dispensation was unknown until revealed through Paul. It was hid in God from eternity until Paul's day. It is not in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, or even in the Acts. In Matthew the Lord Jesus said "upon this Rock"—Jesus Christ the Son of the living God,—“I will (in the future) build My Church,” and not otherwise is it referred to in the Gospels. In Acts, though the assembly of the saints is called "*the Church*," as elsewhere in our translation, (more properly it should be translated "*the Assembly*,") Church truth was not then made known. What we have in

the Acts is, as it were, only the door of entrance, the vestibule of the Church *viz.*, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38). "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts xiii. 38, 39). This, the forgiveness of sins and justification by faith, is all that we get revealed in the Acts of the Apostles up to Paul. And this is all that Christendom has to-day or ever has had since the days of primitive Christianity. The Acts gives us the transition stage of progress over from Judaism into Christianity, but not its fullness or completeness. It was chiefly to the Jews though not refused to Gentiles, though the Jewish believers as a rule were "all zealous of the law," and then mixed up Judaism with their faith in Christ. See Acts xxi. 20.

This is the condition of things to-day in Christendom. It is Judaism and Christianity mixed together; and hence as Paul writes to Timothy of those days—they are "always learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. iii. 7), "Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof"—putting up human leaders in place of the Holy Ghost.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.

Much of the failure of Christendom is due to the fact that men have so rejected the divine Leader as Teacher, that they have not been able to see a rightly

divided Word. They have therefore mixed up the word of the different dispensations, giving to one that which is intended for another, so that they have lost the mind of God as to His things. They have neglected or forgotten Paul's caution to Timothy: "Study to show thyself *approved unto God*, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Tim. ii. 15).

In a rightly divided Word we have:

First.—"The glad tidings of the Kingdom."

Second.—The glad tidings of salvation by faith, or justification.

Third.—What Paul calls "*My gospel*"; the glad tidings of the Church of the living God. "*The Mystery of the gospel*" (Eph. vi. 19). It is this that is unknown to Christendom.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

This gospel, or glad tidings, was from God to the Jews, as representing all Israel and to them only. It was the good news that their long expected and long foretold Messiah was coming as announced by John the Baptist, and had come as taught by the Lord Himself and His disciples. "We have found the Messiah, which is being interpreted the Christ," was said to Andrew (John i. 21), Jesus Himself preached it (Matt. ix. 35). After *this* gospel is preached in all the world then shall the end of the Jewish dispensation come (Matt. xxiv. 41). Israel in unbelief rejected their own Messiah, and handed Him over to Gentile rulers, who nailed Him to the cross in obedience to Jewish clamor. This ended the gospel of the Kingdom for that time. It will however come in again after this Christian dispensation is completed. "God at the

first did visit the Gentiles *to take out of them* (not to convert the world, as the world's church claims) a people for His name. *After this* I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord" (Acts xv. 16). Over this restored and rebuilt tabernacle of David, the Lord Jesus will yet reign as the Son and Heir of David and the King of the Jews. Of this restoration, and the glory of Israel on the earth in the latter days, the Hebrew prophets spoke and wrote in the most glowing terms. In the confusion of sectarianism this glory has been commonly claimed for the Church, but this is only one of the many perversions of the word of God that has grown out of the confusion of Christendom. There is no Christian church foretold, except in type, in the Old Testament scriptures. It is "*the mystery of the gospel*" which was hid in God until revealed through Paul, by the Lord Himself from heaven.

THE GOSPEL, OR GLAD TIDINGS OF SALVATION BY
FAITH—JUSTIFICATION.

God had tried man, as of the Adam race, from the beginning; as unfallen in the earthly paradise, and as fallen, up to and through the deluge, through the times of Noah and Abraham, Joshua, Judges, Saul, David and Solomon—all the way to Jesus their own God-promised Messiah; and at every step man had proved a failure, unwilling or unable to meet the requirements of God as to righteousness. In Abraham God set forth all that sectarianism has, even to this day. He believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. This was justification by faith,

and Abraham became father to all 'them that believe.

Besides this teaching set forth in the Gospels and in the Acts, we have it confirmed unto us more completely and fully in the epistles of Paul; and specially in that great letter to the Romans in which he opened up the glad tidings of God to the Gentile world.

All His former dealings with man on the ground of works, doing for salvation, obedience, having failed, because of the depravity of human nature, the ruin wrought by sin—God in His great love and mercy opened up in Abraham a new way of salvation for man; even the forgiveness of sins; pardoning him in mercy, in view of the sacrifice for sin whom He had already prepared in His own counsels to be offered up when the hour should come. Salvation to Abraham, and in his day to all whom God had chosen, was by faith, even as now. "Abraham saw my day and was glad," said the Lord Jesus to the Jews. Abraham believed in the coming Saviour, just as we believe in Him after He has come. He *pre-trusted*, we *after-trusted*, so righteousness is imputed in both cases. See Rom. iv.

Christendom then at this day has only what the old patriarchs and prophets had *viz.*, justification by faith—imputed righteousness, a righteousness resulting from the forgiveness of sins. If sins are forgiven by God, the believer is thereby clean from sins and stands before God justified from all things from which he could not be justified* by the law of Moses.

* As to justification by faith the principle was laid down to Abraham, but as a revealed truth with all its consequences,—of freedom from law, known salvation etc., it was not known till after the cross.

This is righteousness, the righteousness which is of God, made by the blood of the cross of Jesus the Christ, and this is salvation. But it is not the gospel or glad tidings of the CHURCH; "My Gospel," as Paul calls it, or

"THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL."

After offering the truth of the gospel to the Jews in the Acts, Paul turns away from them fully and completely in the last chapter, after he had partially so done before, and opens up the glad tidings of God to the Gentile nations in his great epistle to the Romans. Rome was then the mistress of the world, and through her he opened up the truth of God to all the nations of the earth. Here we have fully set forth both the ruin and the redemption of man. Man ruined by sin so that "there is none righteous, no not one; none that understandeth, none that seeketh after God, all gone out of the way;" all gone away from God even after they had in the beginning known Him. Now all in sin following their own lusts, appetites and passions until they had become beastly and idolatrous, their ruin is complete. Out of this beastly condition God has made a way of complete redemption by Jesus the Christ, the anointed of God, and His death. He died that we might live, and live to God. "He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God *in Him*." "*In Him*," remember, not in ourselves.

The way into the Church is revealed for the first time by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself from heaven, through Paul, to whom the Lord appeared after His ascension and whom He even caught up into the third heaven, into Paradise, when were revealed to

him things so marvelous that he could not utter them! To him was thus committed "the mystery of the gospel," and it is fully set forth in his epistles beginning with the sixth of this epistle to the Romans. In the fourth chapter we have righteousness imputed to faith. In the fifth, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But though our sins are forgiven and we are happy in this consciousness, we have still the root of sin in us. It is in our nature as fallen creatures. It is *natural for us to sin*; yea as natural "as for the sparks to fly upward." We have a nature that cannot be forgiven with the sins. This nature is the root of sin. It is a *sin-nature* and though our sins may be forgiven, and we happy in the knowledge of it, we may find the fruit of this sin-nature springing up and we become conscious of sinning again and again—until we are led through all the experience of the seventh of Romans, and are ready to exclaim with the apostle "who shall deliver me from this body of death" (Rom. vii. 24). Though our sins were forgiven as set forth in the fourth and fifth chapters, we find we need something more than the forgiveness of sins and justification to bring us deliverance from sin. To be delivered, death must have come in; not physical death, not the death of the body, but the end of ourselves as men in Adam, as men in the flesh, as natural men in the earth, over and into Christ, the last Adam, the Head of the new race; God's new creation by Jesus Christ for an eternity of fellowship with His Son in glory.

"What shall we say then," after our sins are forgiven and we are justified and have peace with God,

Paul asks, in the sixth of Romans; "shall we continue in sin, that grace (the favor of God, to forgive us over and over again, day by day, and hour by hour) may abound?"—"God forbid" says he, "how shall we, that are *dead to sin*," not sins, but the principle—"live any longer therein?" If dead to *sin*, and the nature judged out of which the *sins* spring, how shall we live in that to which we have died, and are dead? It is impossible that we should! Our great teacher continuing in this sixth chapter goes on to show us that "our old man is crucified with Christ that the body of sin (not sins) might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve *sin*, the principle. For, or because, He that is dead is freed from sin." But free from it in the death of Christ. This for faith. This is deliverance from the body of sin, our old self gone. It is out of Adam into Christ! Delivered from all the sins, and the nature that is the root of them judged; so that "there is therefore *now* no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Nothing to condemn! sin is forgiven, sin in the flesh set aside, condemned, in the cross of Christ; "as He is so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17). All of God, by Jesus Christ.*

* There are in the Epistles four expressions which, though related, have not the same meaning; "sins," "sin," "the flesh," and "the old man."

"Sins" are the acts committed,—“the deeds done in the body,” for which men are judged. For the believer these are *forgiven*, through the death of Christ.

"Sin" is the principle, or power, which reigns in the natural man. It corresponds to Pharaoh the king of the Egyptians, from whom Israel was freed. Sin sometimes is closely linked in meaning with "the flesh," as "sin in the flesh," but it is

In the seventh chapter we have the believer carried out from under the law as a result of the death gone through with in the sixth chapter. In the sixth he is delivered from sin, which came in by Adam, through the death which Jesus, the Christ, bore for him and as his substitute; and now through this death he is also delivered from the law, being dead to that in which he had been held. The law is God's rule of right for man in the flesh, in Adam, but being dead to that—to faith—in which he was held he is now freed from the law, and is set into full liberty in Christ. He is God's freed man! Freed from sins, freed from sin, freed from the law! all by Jesus Christ and all the free gift of God to every living soul!

This brings us to the eighth chapter, wherein we get the result of this wondrous deliverance. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus"! Notice the *therefore* as well as the *now*. We have come to it by what has gone before in this epistle and hence the "*therefore*," and this

usually the principle which reigns in the sinner. It is never forgiven, but *condemned*, in the death of Christ.

"The flesh" is the *nature* of fallen man, so called from the lowest part of his being, the material part. This is always present in the believer, but he is to walk in freedom from it, in the Spirit.

"The old man," is the formerly responsible *person* in Adam. Paul's "old man" was what he was before he was saved; what he was in Adam, as contrasted with the new man, what he was in Christ. Our old man is annulled, set aside, by the death of Christ. As Paul has said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, *yet not I*, (the old I, the old man) but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). Scripture is always accurate in the use of terms, and it is well to grasp the distinctions suggested here.

place has never been reached before and hence the "*now*." The last clause of this first verse of the eighth chapter is an interpolation and does not belong there, but it comes in its proper place at the end of the fourth verse. "For (or because) the law of the Spirit of life (the blessed Holy Spirit) has made me free, or set me free, from the law of sin and death" (ver. 2). "The law of sin is in my members," as we see in the twenty-third verse of the seventh chapter, and the law of death, is the decalogue, or the law of the ten commandments, as we see in the same seventh chapter. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that you should be married, or united, to another, to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (ver. 4). Not by law keeping, but by power from God in virtue of our union with the risen Man in the glory! "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (ver. 9). "And the commandment . . . I found to be unto death" (ver. 10). "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me" (verse 11).

By the law of the Spirit of life then the saints are delivered from both the law of sin which is in our members, or in our flesh, or Adam nature; and also from the decalogue. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, (a sacrifice for sin) condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled (or completed) in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" which is the new life.

“If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin” (ver. 10).

In this eighth chapter, we get the highest round, so to speak, in the Christian ladder. It is new life, new creation, in the Spirit, in Christ, no condemnation, God's Spirit dwelling in us—children, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ! “The Spirit making intercession for the saints according to God.” “All things working together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called ones, according to His purpose.” “Foreknown and predestinated, that Christ might be the first-born among many brethren.” “He called them, He justified them, or counted them righteous, and He also *glorified* them.” So sure are they of the glory with Christ, that they are here spoken of in the present tense, as though it was already done, which it is, in His eternal purpose.

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all (all the saints) how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth (or counts us righteous) who is he that condemneth?” “It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again (all for His saints) who is even at the right hand of God (the place of power and authority) who maketh intercession for us.” Therefore nothing shall separate us, or can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! Herein is the consummation of that purpose. This is the standing of the Church of God which is the Bride of Christ, espoused to Him and now awaiting the coming of the Bridegroom. “I go to prepare a place for you, and if I

go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

J. S. P.

Concluded in next issue.

THE OTHER SIDE.

THERE are two sides of life's road,—the side on which are lying the suffering, the needy, the despoiled, the dying, and "the other side." The "other side" is a well trodden side. It is the easier side to go on. There is nothing to interrupt you. You do not need to lose time in stopping to help people who are weak, fainting, wounded, or in any need or trouble. It is hard for some to do anything for unfortunate people; it pains one's heart even to look at them in their distress. The "other side" would seem the better side for us to take. Yes, if comfort and speed and the saving of money and earthly success be life's real ends. But do you know where the "other side" goes to? If you will turn to Matt. xxv. 41, you will see the farther end of this delightfully easy road: "Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat:" etc.

We should not overlook the fact that the two men who passed by on the "other side" in the Lord's parable of the good Samaritan were regarded as religious men of the best type in those days. They were rated as good men,—typically good. They

professed to stand for God. They 'prayed for the people, and offered sacrifices for them. They were thought to have compassionate hearts, able to sympathise. Yet, when they were brought face to face with great human needs they "passed by on the other side." The religion of our Lord's day was weighed and found wanting. Faith without works is dead. The religion of Christ never takes a man on the "other side;" it takes him right among human needs. The priest and the Levite came, and brought no relief. Then God sent another man. This man differs from the others, he is Samaritan. He will not do anything for this wounded Jew. But see! he is stopping. He gets off his beast and goes over to the dying man. He bathes his wounds and lifts him up on his beast; bears him to the wayside inn where he personally cares for him over night, and on leaving in the morning makes provision for his care until he has recovered from his wounds.

This Samaritan did not take the "other side." He took the side of the suffering and needy. It cost him much. He lost time, and to a business man time is money. He put himself in danger from the robbers. He got his clothes soiled, dusty and bloody.

It was hard work for him to get the wounded man to the inn. Then it was an enemy he was helping. The "other side" would have been easier,—less costly. People seem to get along better not to worry with benevolence and charity, not to try to be kind to the unfortunate, not to trouble themselves with attempts to rescue the imperiled, or lift up the fallen, or save the heathen. Good Christian people who are active in city mission work could find much

pleasanter ways of spending their time than in visiting the slums, and in working among the degraded, trying to do them good. The Christ side is not the easy side to go on. Jesus himself did not find it easy.

But we know where this side comes out in the eternal world.—“Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, *come* ye blessed of My *Father*, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world :—I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat :” etc.

They had taken the side where the unfortunate were, and hands and heart had joined in service.

Which side are *you* on?—*Selected.*

WHY THE BALL DRESS WAS PUT OFF.

I WAS nearly twenty years of age, and had learned that Christ had died for my sins according to the Scriptures, and the knowledge of it filled my soul with joy and thankfulness. But though I had the sense of pardon, I had not deliverance from this present evil world; but was mixed up with its pleasures, its balls and concerts, when the Lord put a stop to it all. I was all dressed for a large party, and my mother and maid had pronounced the word “perfection,” when it was found that I had half an hour to spare before the carriage would arrive. Thanks be to God for that half hour! I dismissed my maid, and having locked my door, knelt down in prayer. On rising from my knees, I stood before the mirror, and felt ashamed before the Lord. I took up my

Bible; it opened at the eighth of Romans, and my eye caught these words "who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." I again stood before the mirror, when in an instant every part of my costly attire—each ornament, each piece of jewellery—seemed to speak:—all joined in one common chorus, "After the flesh! after the flesh!" For a moment there was a conflict. The coming scene, the brilliant drawing room, the gay, cheerful companions—all had their charms, and at that moment pressed strongly upon my heart. Again I turned to my Bible. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." All the love, the grace, the forgiveness, the kindness of God, seemed wrapped up in that little word, "no condemnation;" and all that it cost His own Son to secure for me that "no condemnation," His death of agony, His being forsaken of God, seemed all to unfold from that little word, "in Christ Jesus," and filled my soul with such a sense of God and His grace, that the conflict was over in a moment. With a quiet joy impossible to describe, I began to disrobe. I put off every ornament and all my costly attire; I put them off before the Lord—I put them off forever. When my relatives came in they found me robed in a simple evening dress! I told them how God had spoken to me through His word, and read the Scripture to them. It was a sore blow to my friends; but from that hour my whole life was changed; and, through grace, I have lived not unto myself, but unto Him who has loved me, and washed me from my sins in His own blood.

Home Friend.

FROM AN OLD BOOK.

GRACE never thrives in a negligent and careless soul . . . We read of "being rooted and grounded." Grace in the heart is the root of every gracious word in the mouth, and of every holy work in the hand. Now in a heart not kept with care and diligence, these fructifying influences are stopped and cut off; a multitude of vanities break in and devour its strength. . . . "How precious are Thy thoughts to me O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand, when I awake I am still with Thee." "My soul is filled with marrow and fatness, when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night-watches. My soul followeth hard after Thee; Thy right hand upholdeth me." . . . The stability of our souls in the hour of temptation will depend much upon the care we take in keeping our hearts. The careless heart is an easy prey to Satan in the hour of temptation . . . it is the watchful heart that discovers and suppresses the temptation before it comes to its strength. . . . I may say to the Christian who is remiss and careless in keeping his heart: "Thou shalt not excell." . . .

Furnish your heart richly with the word of God. . . . Be not discouraged Christian. The time is coming when thou shalt be discharged from thy labor, . . . when all vanity shall be removed from thy thoughts, and they shall be everlastingly and delightfully exercised upon the supreme goodness and excellence of thy God and Saviour; and when thou shalt lay down the weapons of prayers, tears, and groans, and put on the armor of light, not to engage

in battle, but to triumph forever through Him who has loved you and left you this gracious encouragement: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

Selected.

"THOU HAST BEEN A REFUGE FROM THE STORM."

By cloud and storm Thou teachest me.
While o'er life's main Thou leadest me;
The haven reached, at home with Thee,
I'll bless Thee for their ministry.

I may not know what storm, or shoal,
Awaits me on life's tide;
I may not know if joy, or woe,
Shall tend my footsteps as I go,
The while I shall abide—
Life's sea is rude and wide.

I only know the past is full
Of clouds of varying hue;
I may not see why this should be,
Or that, but oh, I know that He
(Though all should fail,) is true,
He'll safely bear me through.

This strange and tangled web I weave,
Mysterious to me!
His love alone could mark and own,
A work so miserably done,
Yet He accepts most graciously,
What love hath wrought imperfectly.

I may not draw aside the veil
That kindly intervenes:
But, come what may, I know some day,
He'll tell me in His own blest way,
What every trial means
By which my heart He weans.

No sorrow's ever small to Him,
By which I learn His love.
His tender heart feels every dart,
The bitter tear, that oft will start,
Doth e'er His pity move.
How infinite His love!

My grief, however great it be,
His greater heart doth know,
And oft I need—(though heart may bleed)
The knife that roots out some rank weed,
He will not let it grow,
Because He loves me so.

Forgive, if I should murmur, Lord,
And chafe against Thy ways;
Some day, this fast retreating past,
With all its dark'ning shadows cast,
Will all Thy mercies trace
And magnify Thy grace.

Ah! then I'll know, as now I would,
The wisdom of Thy ways.
A troubled dream this life will seem
When I shall catch the first bright gleam.
Of glory from Thy face.
Earth's clouds will have no place.

Life's storms and clouds and shadows o'er,
The school of sorrow past,—
The garnered grain needs not the rain—
Yet, through the discipline of pain,
And earth's rude tempest blast,
He'll bring me home at last.

These threat'ning storms that surge and roar,
These waves that wildly lash the shore,
But make me long for Thee the more,
And tell me, "night will soon be o'er."

H. McD.

A COMMA REMOVED.

“AND He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. iv. 11, 12.)

WE need hardly remind our readers that punctuation, as we now know it, is of comparatively recent origin. In the Greek manuscripts there is nothing of the kind, words and sentences following one another without marks of separation. While for us this would render reading more difficult, we must not think of it as affecting or necessarily obscuring the meaning. The arrangement of words in the sentence frequently took the place of punctuation most effectually, and sometimes a change of word or particle would render the meaning clear.

A striking instance of this last will be found in the latter clause of the passage at the head of this paper. In our authorized version—most admirable, and for all ordinary purposes, exact translation—the passage stands as we have quoted it. The English reader would think that “*for* the perfecting of the saints, *for* the work of the ministry, *for* the edifying of the body of Christ,” gave us three distinct and coördinate objects contemplated in the various gifts of Christ to the Church. He would not suppose that the word “for,” thrice repeated, is a translation of two different prepositions; and yet such is the case: “For (*προς*) the perfecting of the saints, for (*εις*) the work of the ministry, for (*εις*) the edifying of the body of Christ.”

The word also translated “perfecting” has perhaps a different meaning in the original. It is from the

same root rendered "mending" (Matt. iv. 21; Mark i. 19), "fitted" (Rom. ix. 22), "prepared" (Heb. x. 5), "restore" (Gal. vi. 1). The thought is not making perfect in the ordinary sense of the word, but fitting, preparing for a definite use,—as in a net, or a vessel.

Returning to the clause, having noted these points, it might be rendered, "for the preparation of the saints *unto* the work of the ministry, unto the edifying of the body of Christ." It will be noticed that we have now removed the comma after "saints," because of the change of preposition, and instead of having these coördinate objects for which gifts were given, we have one, "the perfecting or fitting of the saints;" and this again is for the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ.

But surely our object has not been to point out some nicety of grammar or translation. We believe that the passage as it now appears will give a fresh view of a most important subject, and correct a very grave error in which the Lord's people are constantly in danger of falling.

As the passage is ordinarily understood, there are certain "gifts" which Christ has bestowed upon the Church, men especially endowed and entrusted with the work of the ministry. The danger here is in regarding a certain limited class as entrusted with this work, so that the vast bulk of the Lord's people are either excluded or exonerated from the activities of the body. Many introduce a safeguard in the suggestion that *all* have one or the other of these gifts. We believe the rendering indicated will obviate either interpretation.

There are certain clear and well defined gifts of a

leading character, if we may so speak. The apostles and prophets are clearly connected with the foundation or establishment of the Church (chap. ii. 20). We have them in the inspired Scriptures, and in the order of the Church as at first set up. Evangelists, pastors and teachers, are the three gifts respectively for gathering in, caring for and instructing the Lord's people.

Now it is evident that these three gifts are entrusted to certain persons. The apostle asks in another passage, "Are all apostles, are all prophets, are all teachers?" (1 Cor. xii. 29). It will not do to say every Christian is an evangelist, or a pastor, or a teacher. Neither Scripture nor observation will bear this out. Evidently these gifts are special, and in a sense limited.

But if this be so, the upholder of the clerical system will say we have here our authority for a limited ministry—"a one man ministry." Notice how absolutely the Scripture guards against such an abuse. These special gifts are for "fitting the saints to the work of the ministry." It is the saints, all the saints, who are to engage in this work of the ministry, and for this they are fitted by these gifts endowed of Christ.

Next to the assumption of clerical authority even by one who has distinctly a gift, we believe that the effort to assume a gift unpossessed is unscriptural and injurious. It is not every one who can hold an audience and speak to edification, whether to saints or sinners; often the way of truth is evil spoken of because unsent men, presuming upon a "free ministry," intrude themselves where God did not intend them to go.

But worse even than this disorder is that clerical spirit so closely allied to Rome's priesthood, that they blend together. Let us keep the even balance of truth.

Returning for a little to the passage we learn that some, not all, are evangelists, and so on. But we learn further that the special work of these fits all the saints for ministry; and how varied is that ministry. We may not be teachers, but we may in our measure be "apt to teach," able to teach or help one another; we may not have a clearly marked gift as an evangelist, but we can tell of Christ to a sinner; we may not be pastors, but we can love, care for, and help one another.

There is not a single member of the body of Christ who should not be engaged in the work of the ministry; man or woman, each has his appointed place and service. None are exempt; none dare refuse at peril of impairing the usefulness of the body.

But who denies this? we are asked; why all these truisms? We reply, Because they are not believed and not acted upon. We would call the particular attention of those who know these things to them afresh. Gifted brethren, you say, preach, teach, and visit. Ah! gifted brethren are not given that the others should fold their hands and do nothing. They are rather to furnish all for the work. A teacher who does not prepare teachers, an evangelist who does not equip evangelists, is not only half doing his work,—he is hindering, or quenching, the Spirit. In like manner the saints who remain apathetic are quenching the Spirit.

No amount of precious truth can take the place of the activities of Christ's body. Nay, truth will lose

its power, or change to error if it find no response in the ministrations of love.

What a personal matter this is! Each brother and sister can ask, Am *I* being used in the work of the ministry? Am *I* edifying the body of Christ? If not, let us remember that no one can do it in our place. If we are idle, our work is never fully done, and the body suffers. May our hearts and consciences be stirred as to these subjects during the little time that still remains.

YET NOT I.

TRUE Christianity ever magnifies Christ, and we may test the claims of that which assumes to be true by proving whether Christ is glorified by it or not. Let us look at the inspired words of the apostle Paul: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). Now, much Christianity which is accepted as devout, looks for perfection in a result which may be summed up thus: "I am crucified." This being crucified is regarded as the highest attainment. Self is mastered; the world conquered. There is victory over passions and temptations, and the "crucified," being dead to all that to which he was once a slave, is in this world a superior power to the world. To such as have reached this elevation our paper is not addressed. But there are many who are striving to crucify themselves, to put themselves to death, to be master over themselves and the temptations and allurements of the world and their enemy, sin, and to those especially our few words are directed.

Now, the apostle does not say, "I am crucified," but he says, "I am crucified with Christ." It is quite possible to say, "I am crucified," and yet to leave Christ out of one's religion, and all the while to be an enemy of Christ's cross. "I am crucified" may be merely the outcome of fancied spiritual attainment and the result of spiritual pride. But "I am crucified with Christ" is in no sense whatever a sign of superior goodness; on the contrary, it is the evidence of the terrible nature of sin which demanded for our salvation the cross of the Son of God; and it is the blessed assurance that, vile as we are in ourselves, by being crucified with Him we have been judged and condemned, when Christ in mercy was judged and took our condemnation upon Him on Calvary.

"Crucified with Christ" does not allow us, in ourselves, one single standpoint before God. It sweeps away all our hopes of self-betterment, and of our dying to what we are by nature, and instead, it accepts with reverence and with love, the position our Lord and Saviour took for us on the cross in grace as our position. In His judgment we were judged, in His death we died. As a man might say of his substitute, "He died not only for me, but I died with Him," so we are privileged to say of our Saviour and Substitute, "He died for me and met my deserts, and I died with Him and receive the satisfaction rendered to God by His death."

Here is the true beginning for the Christian—"I am crucified with Christ." He does not, therefore, look to himself for power to die to himself, but he looks to Christ's cross and knows that there he was crucified with Christ. The cross of Christ is his

judicial end in the sight of God, and when by faith he takes in God's fact about himself, he starts his spiritual career with the reality of his utter badness by nature, and the condemnation of what he is by Christ's cross.

Having spoken of the end of the old, the apostle proceeds to the beginning of the new. "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The apostle lived in the energy of the Holy Spirit of God; he was a witness on the earth to divine love and power. Whence then this life? Of himself He had spoken: "I am crucified with Christ." Now of himself as the Christian, he in effect says, Though crucified, still I am a living man, spiritually, but the source of this life is Christ. This is not victorious self reasserting itself. It is not Paul, the Jewish Pharisee, nor Paul, the Christian Pharisee—no, Not I, not self, but Christ. "I live, yet not I, but Christ who liveth in me."

Neither could it be said Paul so became crucified that Christ could live in him, for he says, "I am crucified with Christ." He did not become crucified by slow degrees, but with Christ who was crucified on Calvary. To leave out "with Christ" would be to leave us a crucified Paul without Christ. And this would be that kind of Christianity which endeavors by following Christ, to arrive at Christ crucified, whereas God begins with Christ crucified for us and our being crucified with Christ, and thus opens up to us the Christian life in its power and faith.

"I am crucified with Christ" is grace and not attainment. It is the portion of every believer, and we should so deport ourselves as to conform to the reality.

"Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," is also not attainment; it is grace, absolute grace, and it is as much for us as for the apostle. There is none other life for any Christian whereby he lives before God in holiness than this: "Christ liveth in me." There are not two lives for the Christian whereby he lives to God, one more exalted than the other—one for the selected saints, the other for the general class. All God's children are in Christ, and Christ is in all God's children. But when we speak of the manner of our living, another subject is before us—then we have degrees of excellence before us, and attainment in practical holiness.

The apostle said, further, "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Now, in this there is attainment—there is spirituality and true holiness. From Christ he drew his strength for each day and hour. The wonder of his zeal, the beauty of his character, arose from Christ, in whom he lived daily by faith. Faith is our own. Each believer has faith for himself; and a life of faith is the personal and constant reliance of the soul upon the Lord in heaven.

It is very delightful to hear the great apostle say, "Yet not I," also of his labors for God. He magnified God's grace in all that God did by him: "I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. xv. 10). He gives us the true secret of power, of living and of working, and the secret is Christ, "not I."

THE CHURCH OF GOD:

UNKNOWN TO CHRISTENDOM.

Concluded from page 134.

PAUL ends the presentation of the glad tidings in the eighth chapter of Romans, and then goes on to other themes.

In the eleventh chapter he says, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (ver. 25). This will close this Christian dispensation when the dead saints shall be "raised, and the living ones changed in a moment, and all together caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall be ever with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 12). It is then that "the saints are clothed upon with their house (new bodies) which are from heaven" (2 Cor. v. 2). "For (or because) our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His body of glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself" (Phil. iii. 20). After this we are taught by Paul that Israel shall be taken up again, as God's earthly people, and the kingdom of Israel be restored, with David's Son, the Lord Jesus, as King, who will (as David in his day) subdue all the earth to His sway, until "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Isa. xlv. 23, and Phil. ii. 10, 11). This is the work of the blessed Lord Jesus when He comes again to earth, though the world's church, in its own darkness, pride, and

self-sufficiency, has usurped it, and is now striving in vain to accomplish it !

Paul concludes this epistle of the gospel to the Gentiles in these words : " Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to *my gospel* and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but *now* is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets (new dispensation prophets) according to the commandment of the Eternal God, made known for the obedience of faith " (chap. xvi. 25, 26). Again, " We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery " (1 Cor. ii. 7).

We come now to the next epistle of Paul (as our version is arranged) which is specially addressed to the Church, and contains special instructions for God's order in the Church on earth. Please keep this in mind, as it is important for a proper understanding of Church truth. All these epistles are to the saints and for their teaching and edification in the Church of God, " which is the pillar and ground of the truth "—or should be. They are not written for outsiders at all, and cannot be apprehended or understood but by the Spirit of God, whom only the saints have. He dwells in the saints, and is their great Leader and Teacher—by the word of God—if they only have the faith for Him. Here in the beginning, after forbidding any division among them—which command alone should extinguish all sects—he says, " We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery "—and much more : turn to your Bibles and read it (chap. ii. 7).

In the eleventh chapter we have some things for which he praises the Corinthian Church, and others in

which he does not praise, but condemns; and one of these is the disorderly manner in which they observe the Lord's supper. First, he tells them there are divisions (sects) among them, and that it is impossible to eat the Lord's supper aright in divisions, because it is in itself a symbol of the unity of the Church, all one in Christ Jesus. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (all of one mind with God) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? for we being many are one loaf, one body, for we are all partakers of that one loaf" (1 Cor. x. 16, 17). It is therefore impossible to partake aright of the Lord's supper in sectarianism, because it is in itself a type, or figure, of the one Body, the oneness of the body of Christ. "Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor. i. 13.)

In the twelfth chapter we have a full description of the Church, the one body of which all believers are members: "for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body;" and thus by the Spirit of our God are we all united together into the one body, and by the same eternal bond to our Head who is in heaven. Therefore as all the members of our bodies are completely subject to the head, so also should we all be subject to Christ in all things. His will for us and about us is fully made known to us in His word, which we have in our hands, and we all have "an unction from the Holy One," to enable us to understand and obey it. Our responsibility is to do this.

In the thirteenth chapter we have set forth the love which characterizes the Church. The word rendered "charity" in our version is better translated "love."

In the fourteenth chapter God even gives us the

order of worship in the Church. There is no clerisy in it. Clerisy is of man, not of God, and has no place in God's order for worship. Clerisy is believed by many to be the "Nicolaitanism" of Revelation ii. All worship, and all order in the Church, is of God by the Spirit, gathered by Him unto the name of the Lord Jesus, to remember Him in His death, and with Him in the midst (Matt. xviii. 20). He rules and reigns in His assembly, and all said or done is to be in subjection and obedience to Him. He is the Head, and we the members of His body, subject to the Head: for no man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost (chap. xii. 3). Here all things are of God, according to the order set forth in this fourteenth chapter. If one reads or expounds the Word, gives thanks, breaks the bread, sings praise, or exhorts the saints, it is to be by the Spirit and according to God.

The epistles to the Corinthians and also that to the Galatians, as well as all of Paul's earlier letters, are addressed to the Church; but later, in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, he addresses himself not to the Church, which is significant, but "to the saints and faithful brethren" as individuals: as though the churches had already begun to lose their first love, as is charged against the church at Ephesus in Rev. ii.

In these epistles is set forth the highest grade of Christian truth contained in the whole Bible. In Ephesians we have the highest blessings and privileges of the Church set forth. There is no justification in it, but the saints "blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ." "Herein is made known unto us the mystery of His will"—"the

eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, (the saints) according to the working of His mighty power, (resurrection power) which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 18 to end of chapter).

"We (the saints of which the Church of God is composed) are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus (new creation) unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (chap. ii. 10).

In the third chapter we have Paul's gospel specially set forth. It is a new dispensation, God's new order for the Church in the world, and is revealed to him out of heaven.

It is "the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men" (vers. 3-5). It was given to him, he tells us, "to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, to the intent that now (never before) unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ

Jesus our Lord" (vers. 8-11). There is much more of it in the chapter, which concludes with that wonderful prayer that the saints may be able, by the power of God, the Spirit, to comprehend the breadth and length and depth and height of all this; "and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, (out of which all this blessing comes) that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

In the fifth chapter, we have the relationship of Christ to His Church set forth under the figure of husband and wife. As the wife is—or should be—subject to her husband in all things, so is the Church to Christ. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of His body. . . . This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

What a marvelous intimacy exists between Christ and His Church! It is God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, united into one body by the Spirit, blest with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, united to Christ the Head in heaven by the Spirit, dead to this world and risen with Christ, as we get in Colossians; and now awaiting His return, thus to get our new bodies of glory, and go to be forever with Him in the Father's house above!

This is the mystery which had heretofore been hid in God, but is now revealed unto us by the Lord Jesus from heaven, through His chosen messenger, Paul. It is to him, "My Gospel," "The mystery of the Gospel," God's new order of things for His saints in this dispensation of grace.

In Colossians we have from Paul again, "I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to complete (*pleroo*) the word of God; the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to His saints." This mystery is revealed through Paul, and not through Peter, James, John or any of the other apostles. He was chosen to complete the word of God to man. It was incomplete until "the mystery of the Church" was revealed.

In the second chapter, we are told that "we are complete in Him," in Christ; "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" and "in Him"—all is in Him—"ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (chap. ii. 11). It is not "the sins of the flesh," as in the common translation, but the body of the flesh itself, the Adam nature set aside in the cross of Christ. The old man has been set aside forever as being unfit for God and incapable of being made fit; therefore he had to be cut off, and was cut off in the cross. This is why the Lord Jesus had to die. He died for us, was cut off as a substitute for us, and we in Him. Believers' accept this truth, by faith take their place with Him in death, the outside place, come to the end of themselves before Him, "reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin," and are made alive by the power

of God in new creation. It is the miracle of the new birth, and when so born we are entitled to all the privileges and blessings won for and freely given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is, "as is your faith, so be it unto you." The table is spread, the good things are all provided, come in and take all that you will have! We are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus"; but "in Christ" is out of Adam, to faith. This is resurrection life. It is "risen with Christ" and so beyond the cross, beyond death. It is life, new life, eternal life! It is God's new creation in Christ Jesus. It is, to faith, out of Adam, and "in Christ"; out of the world, and in the heavenlies!

"If then ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth, for ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 1-4).

We shall appear with Him when He comes to judge the earth, because the saints will have previously been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, as set forth in 1 Thess. iv. The appearing is set forth symbolically in the nineteenth of Revelation, when "the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

All this, and much more, is the portion of the Church. The way into it is through death and resurrection. Death with Him and resurrection "in Him." It is all of God, by Jesus Christ; real now to faith, and realized in all its fulness when "He that shall come will come and will not tarry."

This is the Church according to God's mind, as set forth in the Word; and which man in the unbelief of human wisdom has entirely missed; just as Israel missed the knowledge of their own Messiah. It is man's failure under this dispensation of grace as it was man's failure under the past dispensation of law.

THE WORLD'S CHURCH JUDGED.

In the book of Revelation we have set forth the Lord in judgment subduing the earth; and first we see the world's church judged in chapters two and three. The Lord Himself in person, as Judge, is set before us in the first chapter, judging the Church; and in the two next chapters the whole history of the Church in the world is symbolically described from the beginning. It is a sad picture of declensions through the whole of its seven stages, from loss of "first love" in Ephesus, to the pride, boasting and complete ruin of Laodicea,—spewed out of His mouth. Out of it all, only a little remnant that "have kept His word and not denied His name" remains! This remnant is the little church of Philadelphia—"brotherly love."

Out of this scene of judgment the saints are all caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and the whole scene changes to a heavenly one in the fourth chapter. Here is seen the Church in heaven, under the symbol of "the four and twenty elders." Now "the days of vengeance of our God" (Isa lxi. 3) are fully come, and the judgments of God are visited upon the earth from heaven, until the nineteenth chapter, in which the Lord with His saints descends to earth and rules and reigns over it in millennial glory.

In all this judgment of the Church, as set forth in the second and third chapters, we have at every step downwards the word of God sounding in our ears, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." The appeal, it will be seen, is to the individuals in the churches. "*He* that hath an ear let him hear," etc. The world church will never be reclaimed and brought up to the unity and fellowship of the Church of God revealed to us through Paul; therefore the appeal here is to the individual saints, as to Abram of old, to "leave their country, their kindred, and their father's house, and go unto a land that I will show thee." It is to come out of the world to Christ; to walk on the water to go unto Him, and this can only be in the faith that God giveth,—to the humble, believing, submissive soul. He is found now in the outside place, the place of rejection, as ever before. "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle (the worldly sanctuary); for the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high-priest for sin, are burned without the camp—in the outside place; wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate; 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. By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Heb. xiii. 10-16).

J. S. P.

WATCH AND PRAY.

WHAT a mighty influence this world exerts over us! It is ever interweaving something into the framework of our hourly life ; drawing a film between the soul and God, and deadening the keenness and sensibility of our spiritual perceptions. There is no moment when it is not upon us. Like the law of gravitation, which universally takes effect wheresoever it is not kept out by a special counter-action, so is it in our intercourse with the world. All the day long there is an influence playing upon us which draws our characters to the surface, and there fixes them ; it rushes upon us with an overwhelming torrent ; enters into the soul through our eyes and ears, and every inlet of the senses ; through our instincts, our wants, and our natural affections ; smothering or extinguishing every thing that would lead to something higher ; each day drawing a fresh, hard layer over the heart ; each energy laying another touch on the deepening character, and every moment fixing its colors with deeper steadfastness, until we live and act as if it were our only home.

For all this, we need a strong counteracting influence. Our life is too outward and visible among the throng of men ; we are not enough alone with God ; we live in the unreal, and become unreal ourselves. There must be the calmness of intercourse with God. God's presence is full of reality ; and His presence must be the antidote to the withering blight and the hourly infection of this world, and must abolish in us all that is not real and eternal. Never do we so put off the paint and masquerade of life as when alone with Him. The duplicities of the heart, which

the world had interweaved, are held in check, and by habitual communion with God are weakened and overcome. This is the only counteracting and transforming influence; and think as we will, we may rely upon it, that, if we are not under it, the world will most surely and deeply conform us to itself.

In our intercourse with it, a thousand tests touch us on every side; and if we would maintain uninterruptedly our communion with God, we must also be watchful. We must watch against sin, against the world, and against self.

We must watch against sin. Nothing so darkens the soul as sin, or produces so deadening an insensibility. And it gains an entrance with inconceivable subtlety. Just as we contract slight peculiarities of manner, tone, and gait, without knowing it, so in like manner, does the soul become warped and darkened by sin. It can hide itself from the conscience; it is most concealed at its highest pitch; and when it is at the worst, it is least perceived—it has no sensible pain. Thus our insensibility becomes continuous. We come to live without any true relation to the presence of God; consenting to the darkness of our own hearts; cold and dead in our affections; formal and lifeless in prayer; and the whole moral and spiritual nature estranged from God. Pride and vanity, self-complacency and envy, scornfulness and wrath—all follow in the train of this spiritual deterioration.

This is the cause of much of the insensibility and deadness of which people so often complain. *Sins unconfessed and forgotten lie festering in the dark*; and our whole communion with God and our spiritual character suffer in all its parts and powers. It is the deadness and insensibility consequent on this that

obstructs the spiritual life, and thrusts itself between the soul and the presence of God.

For all this, there is only one remedy—immediate confession. Come and throw yourself in to the arms of everlasting Love! Open the heart, with all its sins and stains, to Jesus. His love is the light in which we shall see our sins, and the light in which we shall see them forgiven.

Let nothing harbor or fester in the heart. If sins be allowed to linger, they will only taint and estrange it more; the sins and spiritual decays of to-day will run on into to-morrow, and to-morrow will begin with an inclination to a lower tone. One day heaps its sin upon another, and our spiritual decline gains in speed as it gains in time. In this, there is one specially alarming thought—the degrees are so shadowy, and the transitions so imperceptible, that it is like a motion too slow to be measured by the eye, or so intense as to seem like rest. If we are not much in the presence of the Lord, these decays will be always advancing.

The true secret of preserving our spirituality of mind, and maintaining our communion with God is, to bring our sin to Jesus the *moment* it is committed, and while it is fresh on the soul. In the street, in the throng, in the routine of every-day life, let the heart go up in unreserved confession. Let us guard against hesitation. Hesitation brings reasons for delay, and delay opens the door for forgetfulness. One moment's delay brings unknown hindrances. The suggestions of God's Spirit are like the flowing of the tide, which, taken at the full, will lift us over every bar—tarry and lose them, and we are stranded! Let us go *at once* to Jesus with them all. So shall

the "blood of sprinkling" be precious to our souls, and we too shall "walk with God."

We must watch against the world. On many Christians, this world weighs heavily, and lowers them to its own standard. Only the few rise above it. All its efforts are exerted to shut out the stern reality of the cross. Its pleasures and amusements, its mirth and its songs, its religion and its worship, find no place there, and cannot go with us into the presence of the Lord. Let us watch against the standard and tone of its society, against the spirit of its social life. To mingle with it in safety to the soul there needs gifts the very reverse of which make men its favorites—caution, retirement, silence; and its tone and spirit will surely be caught up unless we are in habitual intercourse with God.

We must watch against self. Unless God be the centre of the soul, it will be a centre to itself. Such a spirit is a deliberate contradiction of Him who made Himself of no reputation. Let us watch against ourselves; our self-pleasing and self-love; our tempers and our spirits; our inclinations and our aims; our desires and our imaginations; our thoughts and our words. Let us bring them all into His presence. There we shall see them as they are. There we shall learn the true character of them and of ourselves. In the light of His presence there are no illusions. All the colors and shadows, the false and changeful hues, the gloss and the glitter which we put upon ourselves in the world, and even in the light of our own conscience, are there dispelled. Thus shall our souls be filled with His brightness, and we shall "glorify God both in our bodies and in our spirits, which are God's."—*Selected.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

GENERAL MEETINGS.

AT our general meetings, mornings and afternoons are commonly occupied with readings and open meetings; the evenings are generally devoted to lectures. Might we not take a little profitable counsel here, and consider any possible danger, as regards our way as to the evenings?

Should we not be on our guard against deciding or arranging as to what we would prefer? Should not those who take the lead be jealously on their guard against this, so that what is ministered may be truly of the Lord—not human arrangement, nor human wisdom?

If no one announces beforehand his purpose to address us, would it not be better to assemble without soliciting any one, leaving the way open for any one who may be led at the time to speak to us?

If no one has been announced as desiring to lecture, and yet a certain one or other is counted upon, should we not be very careful to hold this desire and expectation with such reserve, that if some one else arises to speak we shall be ready to receive from him whatever is for edification?

These are delicate considerations, but the Lord will help us to keep the balance.

If we had spiritual strength would there not be place for lectures in open meetings? why should not the whole time be taken up by one, occasionally? Would not the power and edification manifested show to all that the lecture was of God—though no time was left for others—and others would be more free, in an open meeting, to shew their fellowship in prayer and praise? And even at a “lecture” would it not be well both for the speaker and his brethren to count upon the liberty of the Spirit, in any such open hearted expression of fellowship and

joy, as might especially be manifested at the close of a heart-filling address?

We will all agree that what is needed is that all should be led of the Spirit, whether those speaking or those who are silent. There is One who searches the hearts.

If we are in prayer and waiting upon God, the word of ministry will be the word suited for us. It will strengthen us for the way, it will fill us with joy. Deeply humiliating it is, both for speaker and hearers, when it is otherwise.

If our open meetings are sometimes humiliations, let us learn the needed lesson; let us not be discouraged; let us seek restoring grace. Let us pray without ceasing.

E. S. L.

WE commend our brother's remarks upon this most important subject to the prayerful consideration of the Lord's people. Our sweetest privileges may become snares if they are not used aright. Anything that comes between the soul and God, even though it be a gift from Him, is a snare. On the other hand each one is to recognize his personal responsibility to minister what the Lord may give. Two principles seem to be involved, which though, of course, not contradictory are clearly distinct: the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, on the one hand, and individual gift and responsibility for its use, on the other. At a general meeting, or any meeting, these principles are to be remembered and acted upon, not only when such a meeting may be in session, but during the intervals as well. A spirit of prayer should mark all our gatherings. Where God is thus owned and waited upon, there is little difficulty as to details. We do not believe it to be a mark of spirituality to sit in barren silence. Such silences are often a reproof for our lack of prayer and faith, and are alas too often broken in upon in mere fleshly energy. A *mere* "open meeting" will not remedy this. God *must* be

waited upon, must be counted upon. 'It is this we are sure our brother would emphasize.' May we not ask ourselves if the intervals between the meetings might not be given more to prayer, to silent meditation, or godly converse? We are persuaded that this is done in good measure, but may we not "abound more and more"? A sweet sense of God's gracious presence with us will result, and a quiet restfulness of spirit which is ready to be silent before Him, to hearken to others, or to speak ourselves, will mark our coming together.

Where this is the case the nature of the meeting will be easily understood. Those who have a word from God will be ready to give it, while those with a longer message will not hold back. Each will feel his responsibility.

But we do not think that this will necessarily exclude the lecture, or even its announcement beforehand. If a reading meeting is announced beforehand, may not a lecture also? If there be present servants of the Lord from whose ministry we have profited before, is there any denial of the Spirit's control, after waiting upon God, to give a meeting to such, in which it is understood that the meeting is entirely in the hands of the speaker, to use as God may guide? We do not think that such meetings should exclude the open meeting, nor, as our brother suggests, that even at an open meeting a long address may not be given. But it is merely a question of fellowship, whether a brother should not be conferred with beforehand as to whether he has it upon his heart to give us a lecture. Some of the most precious ministry we have received has been given to us in this way.

We need hardly say that such meetings should form but part of the general meeting. Ample time should be given for Bible readings and for the open meeting.

With regard to the open meeting, the saints we fear shrink from their responsibility. "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge" (1 Cor. xiv. 29). We have here a twofold responsibility: the proph-

ets are to speak "two or three," not in unlimited numbers, and the rest are to judge. Those who speak are to do so "as the oracles of God." What dependence, what holy fear, what singleness of eye are here involved. They are to speak too in limited numbers, "two or three." Saints are confused by a multiplicity of addresses. Doubtless this has been frequently ignored, to our loss.

But there is another side of this responsibility which is perhaps even more overlooked. It relates not to the speakers, but to the hearers: "Let the others judge." This does not mean, let them criticise. That alas, is too common, and nothing grieves and quenches the Spirit more quickly. But the hearers are to discern the Lord's mind as to what has been spoken. They are to try the words, "For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat. Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good" (Job xxxiv. 3, 4). It is just here that firmness and love find their place. Instead of speaking disparagingly of a brother's failure, or of the unsuitableness of his remarks, the responsibility of the saints is plain. They are to speak *to* such a brother, not of him. We believe this would most effectually check the spirit of criticism. If a brother manifestly violates the liberty of the Spirit, he should be spoken with gently, but firmly. It is this that will help to clear the open meeting from the reproach that rests upon it. We believe that if the forwardness and irrelevancy, so often deplored in secret, were charged to the brethren who offend—in all love and kindness—there would not be such shrinking from the open meeting. These precious privileges are of too great value to be trifled with for fear of offending a brother. If he is in a right state he will not be offended by the "faithful wounds" of a friend.

May we be permitted to add a further word as to the general meeting? We are sure the hearts of many have been pained by the great number of hymns given out

at meetings for breaking bread, and the 'general spirit of forwardness that sometimes has marked that holy season. Far be it from us to say a word that would check Christian liberty or put a damper upon Christian joy. But the heart yearns for the chastened quiet, broken only by the leading of the Spirit of God. Then a hymn will be the echo of heavenly praise, and every word will lift the heart to God.

We have much, very much to thank God for, but we trust we are not so satisfied with ourselves as not to "suffer a word of exhortation."

SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD.

WHEN the Lord was here He mingled freely among men of every class. He had come to serve men, even to the laying down of His life for them. He loved men, and their needs drew Him on.

But it was not hard for men to see that He was not as one of them. That He had come from another world, was actuated by motives different from theirs, loved not what they loved, and in His ways and words shed a light upon them which condemned them and made them either repent and follow Him, or resist and hate Him.

When He returned to His glory He left His people behind to continue this on earth. His Church as a whole should practically be here a Nazarite as was her Lord. But if, wedded to the world, she has ceased to be that, it is still both the privilege and responsibility of individual members of the Church to be what, as a whole, she ought to be.

This necessitates their separation from the church-

world as well as from the world itself. Nor is such separation to be confounded with that made by heresy: Heresy separates to be free to have its own way, and to make a centre of itself. Nazariteship separates because it cannot otherwise be free for Christ. Christ is its all. At whatever cost it must yield Him the obedience which is His due.

Nor is it the obedience of a hireling who works for pay. It is "faith which worketh by love." It is from a heart captivated by His grace. It is that living water which having first quenched the sinner's thirst, becomes "in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life" (John iv.).

The coming of our Lord is near. The heat of the day is well-nigh spent. What an encouragement for the hearts of His beloved people to be true to Him.

P. J. L.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 10.—It is frequently said that though the believer is born again and has a new nature, he also has the old nature. Scripture says our old man is crucified with Christ, and that means death. Is the flesh the same as the old nature, and what is the difference between the old man and the flesh?

ANS.—"The old nature" is not a scriptural expression, though its meaning is sufficiently clear. "The flesh" is the scriptural term and refers to that which belongs to the nature of fallen man. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." "The old man" refers to a person, responsible before God—what we were in Adam. This old man, this responsible man in the flesh, has come to an end in the cross. He has ceased to exist before God. But the flesh, the nature that belonged to that old man, still exists and has to be constantly judged and its lusts abstained from.

REDEMPTION AND SERVICE.

Num. iii. 39-51.

[T was the first-born of Egypt who were slain on the passover night, and the first-born of the Israelites who, sheltered by the blood of the passover lamb, escaped a like doom. The first-born is the heir, in whom the hopes centre, and he fittingly represented *all*, whether in the family or the nation. So they have always been taken as typical of all who, sinners as they were, were endangered by their sins and exposed to judgment; but who have been shielded from that judgment by the blood of the Lamb without blemish or spot. It is not our purpose to dwell upon this feature, admitted by all true Christians.

It will be remembered that immediately after the awful night in Egypt, before they left that land, God put in His claim of absolute and special ownership of all the first-born. "Sanctify unto me all the first-born, . . . both of man and of beast: it is mine" (Ex. xiii. 2). This right of ownership was emphasized by actual transference, in the case of clean animals to the Lord, and in the case of unclean animals and of man—solemn and suggestive association—by a special redemption. "All that openeth the matrix is mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep. But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the first-born of thy sons thou shalt redeem" (Ex. xxxiv. 19, 20).

When the nation was fully organized, if we may use such language, each tribe and individual having the appointed place, this divine ownership of the first-born was emphasized in taking the whole tribe

of Levi as the substitute for them. Nor was this a vague and general transfer, either in the service to be rendered by the Levites, or in the number of the men compared with the number of the first-born. There were twenty-two thousand Levites; and two hundred and seventy-three first-born above this number.

Men would have said this was "near enough." But no: each one of these had to pay a special ransom of five shekels, a substitute for a Levite lacking. Thus again was emphasized the fact of God's absolute ownership, by right of redemption, of each individual among the first-born.

We have said the Levites were called to a distinct service. They were "given to Aaron," and were to be employed, under his direction, in connection with the holy things of the tabernacle. Each part of the tabernacle was entrusted to some branch of the family of Levi. Into all this, most interesting and instructive, we do not enter here.

Passing now to the spiritual application of all this, little remark is needed. We have been redeemed from a bondage worse far than that of Egypt, and sheltered from a judgment compared with which that visited upon her first-born was as nothing. We have been redeemed "not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." As such we are no longer our own, "ye are bought with a price." And just as Israel's first-born were the Lord's, so are we, distinctly and absolutely.

Nor is this divine ownership in us an uncertain, vague thing. There is now no class of Levites who can be substituted for the first-born. All redeemed

are both. We cannot *transfer* our responsibility to substitutes. With Israel, when the first-born had seen the claim for his service laid upon the Levite, he could go on and seek his own concerns. But this is not so with us. We are the Levites, whose life-long service is to show the reality of the fact of our redemption.

See how exact this service-requirement is. There are no odd ones who, though redeemed, have no responsibility for service. Just as surely as an Israelite first-born was redeemed, so surely was service required of a Levite, or its equivalent. Is it not so now? Has God any idlers among His ransomed? Surely not; but each individual has a place in His service which no one else can fill.

And this is *service*. It is under the control and guidance of our great Priest that we are to render it, according to His mind, not according to our choice. Is there one who says, I have no service to perform? Such an one might well question his redemption. As to the nature of the service, Another must tell us. There is honor in doing the least thing for Him. But there cannot be a moment's doubt that somewhere in His work He would appoint us our place. Many who are not clear as to salvation anxiously seek assurance as to that, and the word of God gives it to us amply. Is there the same anxiety to ascertain our place in service, and to have the assurance as to that? Surely we cannot have a doubt that the Lord would have us know our true place.

It will be said, All this is old, simple and well understood. Quite true, but because it is old, we need to have our minds stirred up by it, in order that we may put our ministry to the proof. Redemption and

service:—how indissolubly are these two facts linked together in God's word. May they likewise be so in the lives of His redeemed people.

HAS WATER BAPTISM A PLACE IN CHRISTIANITY?

THERE is perhaps no doctrine in Scripture about which there has been more complete diversity of judgment than the subject of Baptism. It has been turned into the means of regeneration by Romanists and Ritualists, who hold that the priest by sprinkling a few drops of water upon an unconscious infant in the name of the Trinity makes it "a child of God and an inheritor of Christ's kingdom." For such to be born of water means to be regenerated by baptism, to be put into the Church, and in due time, after instruction, to receive the rite of confirmation and partake of the "holy communion." As to all this those for whom we write need no word. Superstition of the worst form marks it; worst because it borrows the outward forms of Scripture truth to enchain men in the slavery of heathen error.

Passing on to less glaring perversions of truth, we find ourselves amid a confusion of variant voices upon the subject, which has resulted in many breaches among the true people of God. More closely connected with Romanism than they would admit, are those who regard baptism as necessary to salvation. It is to be hoped that the faith of some who hold this is better than their doctrine, else it would be impossible, of course, to consider them as children of God. The fact of baptism occupying so prominent a place in their thoughts betrays a sad ignorance of those

commanding truths which control the heart and life, when held in power, and lift above all the petty occupation with that which may of itself be right.

But even where the gospel is to a good extent clearly understood, there is still a wide divergence upon this subject. What is its nature?—has it to do with the Church or the Kingdom? What is the proper mode?—is it sprinkling, pouring, or immersion? Who are the proper subjects?—believers only, households of believers, or all infants? What is the proper formula?—the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, or *in* or *unto* the name of Jesus Christ? Should it ever be repeated, if the proper subjects were not baptized, or in the proper manner, or with the proper formula? It is not the purpose of this paper to enter into the discussion of any of these questions. We simply state them to show the confusion that exists in the minds of most.

Our subject lies farther back. Some, in the reaction from controversy, and as a refuge from the confusion attending the matter, have wondered whether a question about which there is so much difference has *any* place in the dispensation of fully revealed Christianity. At any rate this would be a "short and easy method" of getting rid of vexatious questions, and would serve to bring together many of God's 'dear people who are held apart simply by the subject of water baptism. Briefly presented, their thought is that water baptism is an ordinance similar in significance to circumcision, and that it has been displaced by the baptism of the Spirit, which is the only Christian baptism. They would argue that it has nothing to do with the Church, admission into which is by the Spirit's baptism (1 Cor. xii. 13).

Water baptism was connected with the Kingdom, and this explains why it was practiced by the apostles after Pentecost, and all through the book of Acts. They urge however that we find no teaching as to its observance in the epistles of Paul, and that therefore it has ceased to be binding upon saints to whom the new ground of grace is fully known. There is now no purifying of the flesh;—it has been set aside, and all is of the Spirit.

Our first thought regarding this is that it is a result probably of the variant views we have already spoken of. Amid such confusion is not the simplest and easiest way to drop the whole subject? If water baptism has nothing to do with Christianity, why should Christians have anything to do with it? But the question presses at once, Is this God's way of getting rid of difficulties? If we are to drop every doctrine about which there are differences of judgment, we will soon strip our holy faith of all its most precious and distinguishing truths. Without doubt God has not intended that truth should be gotten without exercise. That which costs little is worth little, and truths accepted as a matter of course are not often valued as they should be. All will admit this as a general principle, and if it were applied in the case before us most of the difficulties would vanish. Then if the question were taken up prayerfully, in dependence upon God, we would be able to learn God's thought as to baptism, as to all else.

But let us look a little at Scripture-teaching regarding the place of water baptism in relation to Christianity. We purposely omit all examination into other questions, necessary as they are, in order to have settled in our minds clearly this primary

question. Is there water baptism in fully revealed Christianity? For those who have never had a question as to this, what we say may seem needless, but if it settle absolutely and scripturally in our minds the truth on the subject, our effort will not have been in vain.

It will be well to remember that the baptism of John was not Christian baptism, nor was that of our Lord and His disciples during His early ministry. This is clear as to John from its nature as given. He came to prepare the way of the Lord, as a prophet, preaching repentance "for the Kingdom of heaven is *at hand*." It had not yet been set up, for the King had not been owned. What he insisted on was repentance, the confession of their sins with a view to their forgiveness. There was not the full declaration of forgiveness on the basis of grace, but a kind of legal pardon as expressed in the words of the prophet, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. lv. 7). It was a call to the people to "break off their sins by righteousness," to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Those who were baptized took their place as disciples of John, waiting for a further development of truth. John therefore pointed on to the coming of One who should do more than this. He should baptize with the Holy Ghost.

Our Lord took up John's work where he laid it down. When He heard that John was cast into prison, He began to preach the same message, "Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is *at hand*" (Matt. iv. 17). The Kingdom was not yet established, but

there was this added feature, the signs of the Kingdom were performed. Still men took the general place of confession of sin, awaiting the coming Kingdom. It was in this connection that our Lord baptized,—as John ; and where there seemed to be a question raised that His baptism conflicted with John's, He left Judea (John iv. 1-3), and departed into Galilee. This baptism seems to have been confined to the earlier part of His ministry; we hear nothing of it later on. The King was presented and rejected; then everything waited for the setting up the Kingdom of an absent King, when baptism became a new thing and acquired a new meaning. This is alluded to for the first time by our Lord after His resurrection, when He gave the disciples a new commission (Matt. xxviii. 18-20; Mark xvi. 15, 16), the preaching of the gospel including repentance and remission of sins—salvation—in *His name*, unto which men were to be baptized as owning allegiance to Him, as members of the Kingdom of an absent King.

At Pentecost the Holy Ghost came down, and apostles and all believers were baptized into the One Body, the Church, by the Spirit. This marks the establishment of the Church—an absolutely distinct, new operation of God upon earth, though the eternal purpose of His heart (Eph. iv.). From now on believers were made members of that heavenly body which on its completion will be caught up to its true place with Christ on high—the bride, the Lamb's wife. The only admission into this body is by the baptism of the Spirit. Water baptism cannot admit into the Church—the body of Christ.

And yet in immediate connection with this proclamation of forgiveness, and baptism with water in the

name of Christ, is the promise of the Holy Ghost. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38). So it is all through the book of Acts. Believers were baptized, both men and women (Acts viii. 12, etc.). They also received the Holy Ghost. In the case of Cornelius, he *first* received the baptism of the Spirit, and this was followed by water baptism (Acts x. 43-47); in the case of the disciples at Ephesus this order was reversed (Acts xix. 1-6). But in whatever order received, it is to be noted that neither excluded the other. Only true believers received the Holy Ghost, but *all* who professed faith in Christ received water baptism. Paul, the chosen vessel for the revelation of the truth of the Church, both received and practised baptism as all the rest (Acts ix. 18; xvi. 15, 33; xviii. 8). This was the case both in Jewish and Gentile communities.

No one can rise from a perusal of the book of Acts without gaining the full conviction that baptism of water and of the Spirit, though absolutely distinct, went on side by side. Nor must it be forgotten that the assemblies formed—at Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth and elsewhere,—were those to whom the epistles unfolding Church position and order were written; some of them, as Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans manifestly written before Paul's imprisonment, recorded in the latter part of Acts, and others, as Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians, during that imprisonment.

Further, it is clear that in Paul's personal ministry he unfolded the same truths as in the epistles. We cannot, for instance, conceive that he preached one

thing at Thessalonica and a few weeks later wrote another. Indeed he distinctly states that his written and oral ministry were the same. (See 2 Thess. ii, 5; 2 Cor. i. 13). Therefore "Church truth" was taught by the apostle during the period covered in the book of Acts. The force of this must be seen at once,—water baptism was practiced at the same time when baptism by the Spirit was taught.

But let us examine the epistles as to what they teach regarding water baptism. They are most assuredly Christian epistles, and unfold the precious truths of grace and the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is from them we learn the doctrine, as in the book of Acts we learn the fact, of the baptism of the Spirit. What have they to teach as to water baptism?

"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into (Greek, *unto*) Jesus Christ were baptized into (unto) His death" (Rom. iv. 3, 4). It is not within our purpose to dwell on the significance of the act of baptism,—which is however plain enough—but to show that it was the recognized practice among Christians. This the verse quoted clearly does. The apostle asks, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" and the answer is, We are dead to sin, and that is emphasized by the act of admitting us within the pale of Christianity. To be a disciple of Christ, to be baptized unto Him, was to own death, and the very act of baptism was a burial. The apostle refers to the baptism as the universally recognized badge of discipleship.

We see a similar use, in a different connection in the next epistle (1 Cor. xv. 29), "What shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" Christian baptism is for, or in place of, the dead.

Saints died, passed off the scene, and fresh disciples took their places. They did so by baptism; that was their outward acknowledgment of the name of Christ. So here there is the recognition of, the taking for granted, the universal and necessary act of baptism.

“As many of you as have been baptized unto Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. iii. 27, 28). Here again, as in Rom. vi., the allusion is to the Christian act. There is neither Jew nor Greek, but Christ’s name is upon all who have owned Him, and baptism was the confession of that. “As many of you,” does not suggest that some had and some had not been baptized, in the original. The force would be “ye who have,” or “your baptism” teaches thus and so.

In like manner Ephesians, the great epistle of the One Body, refers to water baptism as the manifest ordinance of Christianity,—“One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. iv. 5). The connection here is very clear and interesting. “There is one body and one Spirit even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” In speaking of the one body, the Church, the apostle links the Spirit with it; but when he refers to the Lordship of Christ, and the faith of Christianity, he connects with it the baptism which is the badge of subjection to Christ and the acknowledgement of the Christian faith or doctrine. The first is the sphere of the Church, of pure grace; the second, is the sphere of the Kingdom, of responsibility. There is a third sphere, that of creation—“one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in us all.” Our only point here is that baptism has its distinct place, even in connection with other truths which show the unique place of the Church.

“Buried with Him in baptism” (Col. ii. 12). This is a similar passage to that in Romans, and alludes to baptism in just the same way, as the universally recognized way of assuming the Christian faith. Should it be suggested that here it is connected with circumcision, both of them ordinances which are done away in Christ, it is sufficient to call attention to the fact that the circumcision is described as that “*made without hands*” (Col. ii. 11): it was the circumcision, the death of Christ, in which we are circumcised. But it is not said the baptism was without hands. That was the normal Christian act which symbolized burial with Christ. The following clause should doubtless be rendered “in whom” and not “in which.” We are risen in Christ, not in baptism, and it is by faith in God’s work who raised Him from the dead.

Thus we have found that in Paul’s epistles, those which notably dwell upon Christian standing as in Romans, deliverance from law as in Galatians, Church truth as in Corinthians and Ephesians, and deliverance from ordinances as in Colossians, we have not merely allusions to the universally accepted practice of baptism, but doctrines drawn from it. The conclusion is irresistible. Christian truth and water baptism are in no way inconsistent; they accompany one another. How different with circumcision, “If ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing.”

But it will be asked, Did not Paul say “Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel”? He certainly did; let us therefore examine the entire passage, 1 Cor. i. 12-17. The verse quoted is at the close of the passage, and must be taken in its connection or its meaning will be lost. Paul had heard of

the divisions among the saints at 'Corinth. Among other names mentioned as leaders of parties was his own. He says, "was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" He here speaks of the only foundation of our salvation—the crucifixion of Christ,—and the universally acknowledged act of baptism—each in its place absolutely distinct, and yet each well known and recognized. That does not look like a denial of baptism.

He next, in allusion to the fact that baptism was the act of making disciples, says he thanked God that he had baptized but few—Crispus and Gaius; and the household of Stephanas—but why? because it had been abrogated? No, but "lest any should say that I had baptized in (Greek, *unto*) *mine own name*." Paul allowed others to baptize, lest the impression should prevail that he was making disciples to himself. We can readily understand how, when faith waned, men would boast that so great a leader as Paul had baptized them. The "Name above every name" would be eclipsed by that of His servant. Thus we read (Acts x. 48) that Cornelius was baptized at the *command* of Peter, not by him. How everything emphasizes the absolute supremacy of that one peerless Name. It is this thought that seems prominent in Paul's mind. He was not making disciples to himself—for Christ sent him to preach the gospel. Thus there is no thought of a denial of baptism, quite the reverse, but simply the assertion that Christ was supreme, and the gospel of Christ (introduction into the Church) was his chief work—baptism was necessary, but secondary.

But who that reads the book of Acts, can think of Paul denying baptism as binding? Did he see that

the households of Lydia and the jailor at Philippi were baptized, without a knowledge as to Christ's mission? Surely the question needs no answer.

The conclusion we reach therefore is definite and fully established. Water baptism was commanded by the risen Lord as a badge of discipleship in His Kingdom. As such it was administered by the apostles at Pentecost and throughout their labors in the gospel. The Church was formed at the same time by the baptism of the Spirit. The *truth* of the Church and of baptism by the Spirit was unfolded in Paul's epistles, and in the *same* epistles water baptism is frequently referred to as taken for granted. Those who see the distinction between the Kingdom of heaven and the Church should therefore have no difficulty as to the binding nature of water baptism into the Kingdom.

One further passage calls for a remark: "Which figure also now saves you, even baptism, not a putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the demand as before God of a good conscience; by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. iii. 21, J. N. D's. version). Just as Noah was brought through the waters of death in the Ark, so the figure of baptism saves—*i.e.* figuratively shows how we are saved—as setting forth our going through the waters of death in Christ. And now the demand, the response rather, of a good conscience before God is—not baptism but the resurrection of Christ. Thus the passage falls into line with all the others we have been considering. It contains a reference to baptism, as the well known act of reception into the pale of Christianity, and proceeds to enlarge upon the spiritual truths which it suggests.

We thus take up the question at the head of our paper, and unhesitatingly reply that if we are to follow the command of Christ, the practice of the apostles in the Acts, and their teachings in the epistles, water baptism has a clearly defined place in Christianity; it is the outward badge of allegiance and responsibility to the Lord, and therefore belongs to all whose place is in the sphere of that responsibility, all who name the name of Christ—the Kingdom of heaven.

Of the importance of this subject it is scarcely needful to speak. All Scripture is important, and demands implicit obedience. There are dangers we can only point out. Those who deny baptism have no scripture for the Lord's supper. They may inconsistently keep it, for the heart shrinks from disregarding our Lord's request. But the same Lord ordained, and the same apostles prescribed the one and the other. One is for the Kingdom, the other for the Church. May our gracious God make us obedient to His will.

This suggests one of the probable reasons for so much confusion and denial, as to baptism. Very many have no settled convictions on the subject. They have drifted along, practically ignoring it. The Lord abhors neutrality. Many do not know whether they hold so-called believers or household baptism. Many who accept household baptism do not obey God in having their children baptized. We would affectionately urge the Lord's people to seek His mind as to this matter. If they see what His will is, let them *obey* it. We believe there would soon be little inclination to reject what is so clearly the will of God—baptism in the name of the Father,

and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We would ask those who have hitherto refused this, to accept the truth, and to obey our Lord's word, remembering they are giving up that which is the distinctive act of confessing allegiance to Christ before the world. "As many of you as were baptized unto Christ have put on Christ."

REBUILDING JERICH0.

THE first city to be overthrown by Joshua and the armies of Israel, in taking possession of the land of their inheritance, was Jericho. The details of that victory are given in full. Everything seems to point out the prominence of the place as a type, and as the first place to be overthrown suggests what is the first step in true conquest in spiritual things.

Jericho was situated near Jordan—and is therefore suggestive of the nearness of death, and of judgment, to all that is fair in the world. Its name, "fragrance," describes the attractiveness of this world, while its great walls show how impregnable it is to any but a divine power.

This is what meets the Christian at the outset of that conflict in which he gets possession practically, not as a matter of doctrine merely, of his portion in Christ, in the heavenlies. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings, in the heavenlies, in Christ. But to enjoy them there must be a practical overcoming of the power of the enemy. The world is his great stronghold.

So long as the world controls the believer, so long as he has not, in faith and for himself, overthrown it,

he can make no progress in spiritual things; he remains a babe. Hence the immense importance of overthrowing it. Nor is it a slight task, nor can it be said that many have truly won this great victory. What is emphasized is the power of God. The ark is borne about by the priests, and the trumpets are blown. The people simply compass the city with these. The ark was the centre of all God's dealings with His people. It represented His throne, and the One who is that, as it were, for Him. The ark went before them opening the way through Jordan. It was a type of Christ going down into death for us, and rising again. So that now His people, as dead and risen with Him are a heavenly company. It is Christ then, and subjection to God as seen in Him, who is the power of victory over the world. Is Christ known in the power of death and resurrection? To "bear about" this is the sure precursor of victory over the world. We cannot exalt Him and be enslaved by the world. The trumpets are the call to arms, as it were, the declaration that the year of jubilee is near, and for us that the coming of the Lord is nigh. . . Thus Christ exalted, and His coming awaited and announced, are the weapons of warfare which are "mighty through God."

All else tells of weakness. No assault was made upon the walls; no battering rams were set. Day by day for seven days there was the procession of weakness—and yet coupled with the perfection of divine strength, as suggested by the sevens. It is the weakness of man that gives occasion for the power of Christ. Let us exalt Him alone, and with Paul we can say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Victory is assured, and the judgment is to be complete—everything is to be devoted or accursed. All is destroyed, or belongs to God. So with the world. If in spirit we spare aught of it, which is not surrendered to God, it will soon be our Master. Zoar, ("is it not a little one?") has too often betrayed and held captive the saints of God. Paul could say, "the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." For Him the walls of Jericho had fallen down flat, and everything in it was devoted.

Perhaps we need not so much exhortation as prayer for one another, that there may be, in a real sense, complete and practical victory over a world which bars the way to all progress. Is not the spirit of it increasing, and with those who once had clean escaped the corruption that is in it? Alas, with many who once had witnessed its downfall it has reasserted itself in much of its old power. One of the saddest things is to see this lapse under the power of a once conquered foe.

It is this which is suggested in the warning of Joshua as to rebuilding Jericho. "Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it" (Josh. vi. 26). This was directly fulfilled years later, when Hiel the Bethelite rebuilt the city (1 Kings xvi. 34). It is a solemn thing to trifle with the word of God; in due time shall it be found that it will all be fulfilled.

But let us look at this rebuilding of Jericho. It was in the days of king Ahab that it took place. The ten tribes had become established as an independent kingdom—independent not only of David's house,

but of David's Lord. The sin of Jeroboam always marked Israel—the calf of which Hosea speaks with such sorrow, as he plead for his God. Ahab not only continued in this golden calf apostasy, but added more sin of his own. "There was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord." It was in his days—days of universal declension—that Hiel the Bethelite rebuilt Jericho.

Bethel is a name in Scripture that will always recall the history of Jacob, and link this with God's house, the name given by Jacob to the place. He was a fugitive from his brother—with nothing save a staff—a wanderer from his father's house, who falls asleep upon the hard pillow which he had made for himself. Many a man has made a stone pillow for himself, out of his own self-will. It was while he was asleep, unable to help himself, that God reveals Himself, the God of sovereign grace and love, who will fulfil all His promises, preserve Jacob wherever he may go, and bring him back to the land in blessing. Such was Bethel. Years later, when sorrow and defilement had crept into Jacob's household, he was called back to that place (Gen. xxxv). "Arise, go up to Bethel and *dwell* there." The house of God was to be his dwelling-place.

The house of God! how much does that suggest. Its history spoke of grace and of power. "Holiness becometh Thy house O Lord forever." To abide under sense of grace, to be at home in the presence of God, to realize His holiness—such seem to be the thoughts suggested by the House of God. To dwell there means that one is born of God, is a member of His family, and partaker of the divine nature. How

solemn then for such an one (known by the place of his abode), to forsake Bethel and go down to Jericho, the place under curse, to rebuild that which is the direct opposite of the house of God.

And yet is it an uncommon thing for the child of God to rebuild the things which he once destroyed? Scripture, history, and experience alike furnish examples of this. Abraham, the man of faith, the pilgrim, goes down into Egypt because of the famine in the land. A land where all is dependent upon the rain of heaven, is the place where faith can be tested. The man on the water is the one who will sink, if the eye be taken off Christ. A famine in the land would be but the opportunity for fresh exercise of faith, but Abraham departs to well watered Egypt, where there was no danger, apparently, of famine. He had no suffering there, his strait was relieved, but what shame! and what contentions in his own household resulted from his bringing back the Egyptian handmaid Hagar.

David too, in his day, came perilously near rebuilding Jericho. He left the land of Judah—the abode of praise—and went down to the Philistines' land—the abode of formal profession. He lost, temporarily at least, his family, who fell into the hands of the Amalekites (1 Sam. xxx.).

In a spiritual way, the wisest of them all, king Solomon, was engulfed in that which wrought havoc and shipwreck in his life and testimony. How low did he fall, and yet his name Jedidiah, “beloved of Jehovah,” tells of his—and our—place in the heart of God. And these are not all.

But we must hold to our theme, which is the rebuilding of Jericho, the re-establishment of the world

in its place of supremacy and power. It is not general declension of which we speak, but of the special form of world-attraction, which is so mighty in these days. Hiel sacrificed, lost, his first-born and his youngest son in rebuilding Jericho. Literally, how often has this been verified. A child of God, in spirit takes up the world; it has its attractions, which draw him from Bethel, and in his own family he sees the sad consequences. Why is there so much in the families of the Lord's people to cause sorrow? Ah! have not the parents been rebuilding Jericho? Can parents expect to see their children saved out of a world by which they are themselves attracted? Eldest and younger are thus engulfed in that which has recaptured the parents. To recur a moment to a previous illustration, Jacob living away from Bethel, finds his family in the world. Thank God too, the way to return is open, and thus he has fresh power over his house. When he is at God's house, he can guide his own house.

Nor is this truth confined to the family. Take an assembly of God's saints. Let the world begin to creep into the thoughts and ways of the elder, and how quickly will it blossom into fruit in the younger. Young persons grow up under our eyes, we lament that they do not walk in a separate path, and again we find ourselves to blame—our worldliness has sacrificed them.

In like manner this heart-searching truth can be applied to our own spiritual state. The first-fruits of the divine love, "the joy of thine espousals," are lost as the world reasserts itself; and the later fruits of the Spirit cannot live in that baleful atmosphere. All is sacrificed, to *what*?

May our gracious God teach us His lesson in these things. Surely there is but room for prayer, confession and a fresh turning to Him. Need we add how ready He is to meet us at His house, and what wondrous recoveries His grace effects? Whether individually or unitedly, let us take to heart these things, and find still the blessing there is for us in a world despised and trodden under, that the things of Christ, and the word of God may be all in all to us.

DEATH, FROM TWO POINTS OF VIEW—A CONTRAST.

IT seems to me that we have somewhat to learn as to the scriptural way of looking at death from a practical standpoint. It is quite true that God has brought out in these last days, the two sides, I may say, of the gospel,—that is the blood of the cross by which our sins are met and put away; and also the resurrection of the blessed Lord by which we are delivered from sin, so that we can now sing:

“Death and judgment are behind us.”

All this is blessed and cannot be dwelt on too much. For it is in comprehending the full truth of this gospel as reasoned out in Romans by the apostle, where he says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth etc,” that we have full liberty and joy in the Holy Ghost.

But now let us look at death in a practical way. Scripture tells us that, “as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Here then

we get unfolded to us in a most remarkable manner, the fall of man and its dreadful results, as given to us in the book of Genesis, thus solving the riddle of man's existence. Dispensationally then, do we not see sin reigning in the power of death until Christ came? I would now call your attention to the incident so familiar to all who read Scripture, recorded in the first book of Kings ch. xiii.* It is the history of the "disobedient prophet." One cannot but feel that there is in this short history much to remind us of the fallen head of our race—Adam. The history of the disobedient prophet is short and simple. He was sent by Jehovah to reprove the wicked king of Israel—Jeroboam. And after delivering his message to the king, and curing him of the palsied hand, which had been stretched out against him, (thus showing the impotence of man on the one hand, as well as the grace of God on the other) he would have returned home, but the king invites him to stay and eat with him, which temptation the prophet promptly refused, saying, "I will neither eat bread nor drink water in this place, for so it was charged me by the word of Jehovah." Here was faithfulness like to Daniel in a later day, who, though under different circumstances refused the king's meat.

But as going through this world we are never free from the tempter. Now we must view Satan coming as an angel of light. It seems there was an old prophet dwelling at Bethel, "and his sons came and told him all the works the man of God had done in Bethel, and the words he had spoken to the king."

* The reader might refer to a paper in this magazine also upon this incident, but not touching the points here raised, entitled "Under the Oak," on page 85, of the current year.

He thereupon ordered his ass saddled and started to find him, which he did, "sitting under an oak." He then said to him: "Art thou the man of God that came from Judah?" He said, "I am." And now he persuades him to return home with him, by saying that he also was a prophet, and that an angel had spoken unto him saying, "Bring him back with thee into thine house that he may eat bread and drink water." "But he lied unto him." The result of this disobedience brings God's swift judgment upon him. For when he was on his return a lion met him and slew him. What a sad, sorrowful sight! The prophet who had as faithfully performed what Jehovah had given him to do, and then healed the king's hand, is now seen lying by the roadside a lifeless corpse. The lion too and the ass stood by it. God, as in Daniel's case had shut the lion's mouth. But now listen to what follows. His carcase is brought back by the old prophet "and laid in his own grave, and they *mourned* over him, saying,

"Alas my brother."

How sepulchral these words sound. Not a ray of hope or joy do they bring to the soul, no comfort, no light, but consistent you might say with the day in which they were spoken. And, too, what a mournful occasion this was! and those too who stood by him, as his body was lowered into the grave, might well have been clothed in the darkest shade of mourning. How much this reminds one of the prophet Jonah, who when in the whale's belly at the bottom of the ocean, said, "The weeds were wrapt about his head."

Let us now pass on many centuries in God's history, to the time when He was displaying His glory in His own beloved Son. What we have set before

us in His day, is not so much the power of the lion (Satan) bringing death into the world, but Christ the deliverer. He it was who brought life and incorruptibility to light, the One who came here and met the enemy, and by His own death upon the cross annulled his power.

Let us look now at the familiar incident recorded in the eleventh chapter of John's Gospel. We see there the blessed Son of God, the two sisters and Lazarus. Death has again made its sting felt. But for what purpose? "That the Son of God might be glorified thereby." And how was the Son of God to be glorified? In bringing from the tomb one whom the lion had slain. How wondrous to hear Him saying in answer to Martha, who had said in an almost hopeless manner, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day,"—"I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in Me though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." Sweet and comforting words, are they not? But again when Jesus said, "Take ye away the stone," his own sister would have put a hindrance in the way of the manifestation of the Lord's glory, for she said as though it were useless: "Lord by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days," thus showing how natural affection can never rise to God's thoughts, and often comes in to hinder the workings of God's Spirit, even where it is for the blessing of those we may love so tenderly. Let us learn a lesson from this. But He whose ways are perfect cannot be hindered thus, and so we hear Him saying, "Take ye away the stone." "Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid."

Now comes the simple, but not the less beautiful expression of confidence in His Father. "Father I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me." "And when He had thus spoken He cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus come forth.*" What a contrast this cry, with the lament of the old prophet of whom we have spoken. Put them side by side, and see how they appear:—

"Alas my brother,"—sin reigning in the power of death.

"Lazarus come forth"—"Eternal life the gift of God."

Yes, for His dear people death is past. We are now bathed in the light of His own blessed presence. No more to wear the habiliments of death, but to rejoice in that one who has forever set us free, that we might walk with Him in newness of life. Oh that we might be more consistent as to the place which His grace has brought us into. No more to be occupied with that which speaks of sin and the grave,—
 "Alas, my brother"—but rather rejoicing in view of what that blessed One has accomplished in His own resurrection from the dead. And may the words of Him who said, "Lazarus come forth" ever resound in our ears.

H. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 11.—Is the injunction as to women asking questions, in 1 Cor. xiv. 35, applicable to the reading meeting?

Ans.—The spirit of the scripture is to be taken, and this is clear. In any meeting of a public character, woman's place—even as nature would teach—is one of retirement. Thus wherever a meeting ceases to be private,—we will say in a private house, for instance, or in a meeting specially for the sisters—the scripture would apply. It is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules, in fact, they are to be deprecated.

In general we would say, that when a meeting has an assembly character, the place of the woman is clearly defined. But where a few of the Lord's people are studying the Scripture together, it would be a mistake to close the lips of any who desire to ask questions. Then again, there are different kinds of questions, those which in reality are for teaching rather than information, and those whose object is to get light. Perhaps the injunction, "I suffer not a woman to teach" might be considered with profit, by those inclined to ask questions of the first character.

QUES. 12.—How was king David justified in putting on a priestly garment, when the ark was brought from the house of Obed Edom to Zion (2 Sam. vi.), when he was not one of Aaron's sons, or even a Levite? Uzzah had, just before, been smitten for unlawfully touching the ark of God; and, many years after, Uzziah the king, was smitten with leprosy for attempting to do the priestly work of burning incense in the temple of the Lord (2 Chron. xxvi. 16-21).

ANS.—Two things seem clear: David's act did not go to the length of burning incense, but seems to have been the spontaneous outburst of joyous worship. Secondly, faith is above all forms, where it is God-given, and lays hold of Him, in a day of ruin. David ate the shew-bread which was not lawful but for the priests. Everything was in ruins, and David, type of Christ, was a fugitive. Indeed in both these cases we see the type rather than the individual. It was the Priest and King, in the first case in rejection, and in the second establishing the throne in Zion who is before us—David's Lord rather than himself.

In the case of Uzzah, doubtless a Levite, it was simply unbelief in all concerned. The ark was in the cart and therefore liable to be shaken. God's judgment falls upon the whole proceeding, and Uzzah, as prominent in the sacrilege, is singled out for the visitation.

King Uzziah attempted to intrude into the priests' office. "His heart was lifted up to his destruction." So instead of being a type of Christ, he was, in that particular, rather a type of the wilful king, "who opposeth and exalteth himself."

QUES. 13.—When we gather around the Lord's table, and engage in worship, is it proper to kneel at prayer, or should we sit? Some think that to kneel would be turning the back upon the Lord, who is at His table.

Ans.—It would be a very harsh, precise following the letter to apply such a precious scripture, as “there am I in the midst of them,” in the way suggested by some. We need hardly say that our Lord is not physically, bodily present. The thought that He is locally at the table savors of Rome’s altar—superstition. In kneeling we bow to Him, and therefore there can be no thought of “turning the back.” As said, the thought would take us back to external worship, according to the flesh.

We are fain to call attention to the tendency amongst many of the Lord’s people to sit during prayer. We are not under the law, nor under the letter, but reverence, even of posture and manner, surely becomes us. In the epistle which speaks of our highest position—in Christ in the heavenlies—the apostle writes, “For this cause, I *bow my knees* unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. iii. 14). The same dear servant in commending the saints to God, kneeled with them upon the shore (Acts xx. 36). Thus in public and private, he took the attitude of supplication. Surely this is becoming, and should be followed even at the slight inconvenience it may cost. In the *act* of breaking bread, it is needless to say that what is prominent before us is not prayer, nor even prolonged giving of thanks, but rather “do this,” and therefore order and quiet would suggest remaining seated, with bowed heads, as with adoring hearts we partake. But in all other acts of worship we may well imitate the apostle, either by kneeling in prayer or standing in thanksgiving.

A correspondent calls our attention to a book called, “In His steps, or What would Jesus do,” and suggests that a word of warning might be given regarding it. It is written from the standpoint of reform, and while there is much to stir up the conscience of those who think they should be improving the world, and much of righteousness in it, it is not a book calculated to lead in the simple path marked for us in the word “Christ is *all*.” Ah! how even earnestness does not lead to subjection to God’s word. It is sad when even well meant efforts are thus contrary to the simple gospel of the grace of God, and a testimony of pilgrim separation from everything here. Beside, the book is a work of fiction, which is always to be deprecated in holy things.

THE BUSHEL AND THE BED.

Mark iv. 21.

“**Y**E are the light of the world.” All else is darkness, and but for the shining of these lights there could be no living witness for God. “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life” (Phil. ii. 15, 16). None can question for a moment, then, the importance of letting our light shine. In the scripture just quoted we see how the light shines;—we hold forth the word of life. It is as the word of life is manifested by us that we are a testimony for God. Whatever then hinders that word from having “free course,” makes the lamp burn dim. It is not merely that the life is correct, the walk upright; there is to be an exhibition of divine *truth*, a sweet savor of Christ, if the light is to burn brightly. The world is not illumined by abstract morality; Jesus said, “*I am the light of the world.*” Thus anything that hinders the manifestation of Christ in the life is a quencher to the only light the world has in men.

That the Church's light is burning dimly is a truth we must sorrowfully own. The world sees but too little of the likeness of Christ, of the image of the truth, in His people. Any honest soul must admit this. What are some of the hindrances? We have two of them mentioned in the title of our paper, the bushel and the bed.

The bushel, or measure, may be taken as a badge of business. It is the sign of enterprise and activity. The bed, we need scarcely say, suggests ease, indo-

lence and sloth. Thus these two hindrances are exact opposites, and yet both hide the light.

This is significant; for in Scripture the truth does not lie in contradictions in the flesh. The bustling energetic man of business looks with contempt upon the sluggard. Such an one, he says, will never get on in the world; he is idle and worthless; he is hiding his light under a bed. On the other hand, the slothful one will say, What a sad thing it is to see one so absorbed in activity that he cannot quietly go on, enjoying the things of God; he is hiding his light under a bushel. The first one will quote "not slothful in business,"—forgetting perhaps what immediately follows, "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord"; while the second is apt to confound the works spoken of in Romans with those in James.

As a matter of fact each of these types is apt to think of himself as in a fairly good state, whereas each needs to see the beam in his own eye. The fact that he is not absorbed in business, does not prove a man spiritual, nor does absence of sloth. To let the light shine, one must be absorbed in Christ the Lord and His truth. There are many ways, alas, *not* to let the light out, there is only *one* way to exhibit it.

But let us look a little at these two ways of hiding the light.

We are living in days of enterprise and activity. It is a reproach in the eyes of the world to be slothful. Competition compels a man to exert himself, if he would succeed; while the prospect of advancement, the accumulation of wealth—all that would be included in the phrase "getting on in the world," tempts a man to bestir himself into an activity which is all-absorbing.

Nor is it unscriptural to "labor, 'working with our hands," to "provide for our own," to "work and with quietness eat our own bread," and that we may "give to them that lack." All this requires faithful performance of the daily work, in whatever calling we may be. It is well, however, to correct the misapplication of the phrase "not slothful in business." "Business," in these days, suggests the activities of secular life—the farm, or the merchandise. The word, however, has no suggestion of this, but alludes to the diligence and fervency of spirit that should characterize us in the things of God. "Not slothful in the *Lord's* business," explains it, just as He said, "wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" But how different is that from the use often made of this verse.

In the desire to "buy and sell and get gain," are we not forgetful that "godliness with contentment is great gain"? How solemnly are we reminded that the requests for wealth may be granted and yet leanness be sent also, leanness in the soul. What, beloved brethren, can take the place of soul-prosperity? "They that *will* be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts." How the needs increase with the added means, till what were luxuries become necessities, and these multiply, until the whole man becomes absorbed. Little room is left for the word of God, and His service. The light is under the bushel.

Is not the history of Lot an example of this? Business interests took him toward Sodom. It was wise, after the judgment of man, to go there, but it was the end of his service and of his testimony. So Jacob might settle at Shalem, buy his parcel of land

—not for a tomb, as Abraham—and settle down to prosperity, only to find shame and sorrow.

“Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord” (Lam. iii. 40).

Nor let it be thought that this is a snare only in the case of wealth. The poor are too often discontented, and struggling to be better off. It may be that such need the admonition more than others who are better off in this world's goods. None of us are exempt from the danger.

Turning now to the other side, little perhaps need be said of the bed. Faith is the exact opposite of indolence; it is the most energetic principle in existence. “Faith worketh by love.” And yet sloth is sometimes miscalled faith. One is idle and allows his affairs to go to ruin, and he calls that faith. He is sluggish and indisposed to exertion, and he suggests Mary in contrast to Martha. Let us be plain. Indolence is a *sin*. The man who does not show proper diligence in his daily work brings reproach upon the Name by which he is called.

If this be true in temporal things how much more is it the case in spiritual concerns. Men may be busy and active enough in temporal things and yet veritable sluggards in spiritual. There is time enough for business, for rest, for “harmless recreation,” and yet the dust of neglect accumulates upon the Bible. Let us rest assured that unless we bestir ourselves, the enemy will not allow us to gather the daily manna. Early rising, in spirit if not in letter, is suggested in the type. No sluggard can be a shining light.

We may add, no sluggard can make progress. He may slumber uneasily, may turn in his bed, half

wakened by the pungent probe; but he is like a door on its hinges, moving, but held fast. Does the bed of ease hold us? Brethren, what a shame it is when we let the Lord's interests suffer by our slothful neglect. Think of gospel service, of the ministry needed by the saints, of that occupation with the word of God from which all service must spring. Is it possible that we can hide our light under the bed of ease? May the Lord arouse us, that we may arise and trim our lamps during the little remaining time we are in the darkness.

“This *one* thing I do.” Whatever the hands may be busy about (Paul's often worked on tents) let the heart have but one object, Christ. Let His word—its study, its understanding, and obedience to it,—be our life work. “Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord. So that living or dying we are the Lord's.”

WITH JESUS IN THE DESERT.

IT is the desire of the writer to bring the person of the Lord before the writer and reader, and while dealing with a certain portion of His life, to make certain digressions from it, to accomplish this purpose. As all roads in Italy led to the Roman Forum, so all Scripture points to that Living Word of God, who was the perfect expression of all goodness and the love which, sin having entered, He desired to be manifested. Here then is the Holy of Holies of the Universe, entering into which we behold unveiled the glories of God. And how unveiled? Unveiled to disclose a lonely and wounded

Man, suffering at the hands of those whom He sought to save. Plato was almost a prophet when he makes Glaucon to say that the perfectly righteous man, without doing wrong, must all his life live under the reputation of being evil, in order that his disinterestedness may be perfectly manifested, and, by such a course, finally arrive at bonds, the scourge, and the *cross*!

Ever since the dove went forth from the ark, seeking some place where the waters of judgment did not rest, had the Holy Spirit of God sought among the millions and millions of the sons of men for one righteous one, and until the heavens opened over the Baptized in Jordan, and the voice of God broke out in ecstasy, "This is My beloved Son," He had failed. In the fourth of Luke, in answer to the challenge of God, we see Satan coming to tempt Jesus, and it is this portion upon which I wish to linger. Let us take the verses in order and study them.

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."

How different is the scene to that in which Adam and Eve fought and lost the battle with the Evil One. With the wilderness we associate the thought of loneliness, barrenness, and aridness. Sin is preeminently selfish, and the more selfishness prevails, the more lonely becomes the world. Each individual becomes a unit of interest; and love, "which seeketh not its own," is driven away. Unthankful and unloving is the heart filled with sin. It tramples under foot the dearest ties, it spurns the most solemn obligations, it ostracizes the world and the world it.

Home, the sweetest trace of heaven left to us, is gone forever. Such, in greater or less degree, have men made the world, and down to that to which they have sunk must Jesus come to renew the battle.

Thorns grow in the wilderness. So sprang they up when Adam fell, for his sake. After his sin he had sought to clothe himself with leaves from the trees (type of works of self-righteousness, no doubt,) and God causes thorns and briars to spring up where he labors. Thorns are undeveloped leaves, botanists tell us, and so this stunted growth, which pricks and tears, should prick his conscience with the futility of such working, and remind him that nothing cometh to perfection. But how the world groans under this thought. Man can band the earth with lightning, and make it his messenger, but God is hidden in the darkness, and no message reacheth him. He can number his bones and classify his thoughts, but he cannot see nor keep his spirit. He can sweep the universe with his glasses, while still beyond stretch the infinitudes of God, and a voice whispers, "Thou bringest no work unto perfection and thy creations slip from thy grasp." The wilderness is that in which *nothing* has been accomplished, and into it comes the Son of God to win the lost fight; and although man finally places upon His brow a crown of thorns, as if to say, "Nor yet hast *Thou* attained unto that which Thou didst seek," we look forward to the time when the crown of an everlasting Kingdom shall be placed upon His head amid the hallelujahs of His redeemed.

There is no *water* in the wilderness. The Spirit of God has been driven out. The refreshing streams from His presence have been lost in its thirsty sands,

but Jesus, full of the Holy Ghost, shall restore Him to it, and by His power, the wilderness shall blossom as the rose.

Jesus is led by the Spirit here, in Mark we see Him driven by the Spirit. He was led, for the influence was sweet and constraining. He was driven, for God's cause was to Him an imperative duty.

Dear reader, it is a very trite thing to say, but so ought we to be led. If the Spirit lead, there is power. Have you power? If He lead, there is joy. Have you joy? There is persistence. Are *you* persistent? Such are some of the questions we should put to ourselves. May God Himself grant us all diligence in our walk.

"Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days He did eat nothing, and when they were ended He afterward hungered."

The word "tempted" would be better rendered, "tried." He was tried forty days, and how severe the trial we may judge from the word, "afterward." It is a common thing for a soldier to be wounded severely during battle and not to be conscious of his hurt till after the struggle is over. And likewise it would seem here, that Satan has to relinquish his assault in order to let our Lord feel His physical suffering, and then to renew the struggle. Forty days without food, and yet not conscious of it. Forty days among the wild beasts, and they do not touch Him. Of course there were many reasons for their not doing so, but this would suffice: they could not, (shall I say would not?) touch Adam innocent; and here is One not merely innocent, but also holy. *They* will not touch Him, but when He returns to man's abode, he, wilder than the wild

beast, lays hands upon Him. Sad contrast ! solemn picture of whereunto man, "made in the likeness of God," has fallen, is it not ?

While our Lord is thus suffering from this bodily need, Satan renews the conflict: "And the devil said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word proceeding out of the mouth of God." Although Satan opens with his usual "if," it is evident, both from the Greek verb being in the indicative mood and from the force of the situation, that he is desirous above all things, that the Lord should remember His divinity and forget His humanity. The Lord is now about to enter upon that search for the bread, which He found at Sychar's well, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," and Satan's object is to stop His progress. He must forget that He is a man come to share the sorrows and needs of man. He must forget the sorrows and groans of a travailing creation, and if only that be accomplished the devil has won. Let but divine power come in for one instant, to relieve Christ's distress, and the Cross of Calvary would be blotted out from under the face of heaven. How good to remember that during those thirty-three years of His life it never did. As another has beautifully put it, "the water which He craved from Sychar's well would have bubbled up in homage to His lips, had he spoken the word." Ah ! the well was indeed deep, the well of the inexhaustible love of our God ! No, it was not, it *could* not be, power almighty to save *others* was rendered impotent by almighty love.

But what is our Lord's answer to the temptation ?

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word proceeding out of the mouth of God." Did you ever ponder what is meant? It may be very true that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God, but what has that to do with the question? Might not Satan say, "Truth, but Thou art to speak the *word*, (the *word of God*) and Thou art to make *bread*"! The word "man" stops him. "I am man," says the Lord; "I have come to occupy man's place, and, as man, must live and act." I believe, however, that there is something additionally sweet in our Lord's answer. "Man is to *live*, Satan; I must die that he may live." He is to live by the word of God, but were I to put forth My hand to make those stones bread, the word of God would not be life, but *eternal death* for him! All the glorious revelation of God's love would be rolled up and the cries of a lost world would be echoed back by a mute and voiceless heaven. Blessed be God! that before the heart of our blessed Saviour in the hour of His temptation was ever the lost sheep upon His shoulder, and that man was indeed to live and not die.

We may now notice, as admonition to our hearts, that man lives by *every* word. Are they all "life" to you, reader? Is the One who spoke them so dear that each word is treasured up as priceless? even when they seem dark and difficult to comprehend? "Never spake man, like this Man," said His enemies, but to whose voice are *our* ears open? To His, or are they forever filled with the din of this world? "They follow Him, for they know His voice, and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers." When various forms of pleasure entice us, (so-called harmless pleasure) how sal-

utary would it be for us to ask ourselves "Is it the voice of a stranger" ?

"And the devil taking Him up into an high mountain showed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto Him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me, and unto whomsoever I will, I give it."

This temptation, here the central one, is given last in Matthew which is evidently the actual order, for at the end of it Satan is commanded to depart and would unquestionably have to obey. For some reason then Luke departs from the natural order. What is it? At least we may see force in this sequence. It is in measure logical. Jesus has just said that He has come to live as man among men, to introduce real life among them, and Satan answers that he may have rule over them at once, (do all the good to them he wish), if He will but acknowledge him as overlord.

What a changed scene ! There stretched a sandy, burning plain, waste and desolate. No cooling stream to wet the parched lip, no soft shade to relieve the aching eye, no voice modulated by joy and satisfaction; only, perhaps, the howling of some beast breaks upon the ear with its weird echo, and now, at the devil's will, in one instant of time, burst all the kingdoms of this world and their glory upon the view of Jesus. Here is the kingdom He had sought and many another beside. "Far be it from Thee, Lord," that Thou shouldest gain them by the awful cross, the shame, and the spitting. Here is an easier road to the end, says Satan. Of course the Lord chooses, as the Lord, the other way.

At this point I wish to make one of those digressions to a subject which has been a cause of much joy. In looking at the cross, there is perhaps sometimes a failure to consider its cumulative grandeur,

“towering o’er the wrecks of time;”

and it is this which I desire to ponder. Each Gospel seems to have some peculiar beauty to add, and when gathered together they make such a scene as never has been approached in all the ages of eternity. May God enable us to consider it.

We know the sorrow and agony of our Saviour in the garden, how “His sweat was as it were great drops of blood,” and now we look upon Him as He approaches Calvary. His physical weakness as the hour is come is only hinted at, as if too holy a subject to be handled otherwise. In one story we are told that they laid the cross upon *Him*, while from another we learn that Simon a Cyrenian bore it. And as that great concourse leaves the city, there follow Him daughters of Jerusalem, weeping. Ah! how few tears had fallen for Him! Even His own disciples had left Him, while all that blessed path of love, which He had been treading, had’beèn rewarded with scorn and spitting. Surely, then, He will permit those tears to flow a comfort to Him, in His awful sorrow? No, beloved; not so! The heart of the Great Shepherd is full of *their* need, of *them*, and His word is, “Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for Me.” *The journey to the cross* is occupied in seeking others. “Thou shalt call His name Jesus,” for none would save as He.

But ponder yet, O blood-bought one! Now the road is past, and cruel hands nail Him to the cross. Infinite hatred crucifies Infinite Love. And as the

Awful Burden is raised between earth and heaven what cry breaks from the heart of Christ? "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken *Me*"? Ah, no! Some word of entreaty for help? No, no! "Father, *forgive them!*" Beloved, His first thought was still for us, even when the nail was driven in. "Then said Jesus, Father, *forgive them.*" Not, "forget them." Not, "don't punish them." In Thy wonderful love, "forgive them."

And now one who had railed on Him in His distress, turns and says, "Lord, remember me," and once again those Lips of Truth tell from an overflowing heart how He came to seek and to save. But how the thief must have seen compassion in that Face to ask to be remembered. *He*, a thief, remembered *by the holy Judge in His kingdom!* Ah, he has caught a look of compassion there, and from the very gates of hell he is snatched and brought to paradise! And methinks the hosts of heaven, amid the awful interest of that hour, bow their heads in adoring wonder while a sob of joy thrills every heart that even thus He conquers.

But must it be, shall God's face be turned from such an One? He was in the bosom of the Father e'er time began. He was God's Son, His *only* Son. In the volume of the book, was it written of Him, "I delight to do Thy will, O God." *Must* God forsake Him? Yea, but listen to that Voice as the time is at the door: "Woman, behold thy son!" "Then saith He to the disciple, Behold, thy mother!" Is it not enough, O blessed Lord, that Thou hast in Thine hour of deepest sorrow, raised one to heaven? Is Thy love so great, so infinite, so tender, that such small (comparatively) matters as these can call forth

Thy care? Truly, then, "herein is love;" there is no other. As the sun shineth in its strength, and blotteth out as darkness what men once called light, so has Thy Love swallowed up all other. "*Herein is love.*"

What an insult does Satan's offer seem, after such a story. "All these will I give thee, and the glory of them, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." But with all the unruffled calm of Divinity, He answers, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." It would be a good thing for us if the sword of the Spirit were ever thus at our command.

"And he brought Him to Jerusalem and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence, for it is written, He shall give His angels charge over Thee to keep Thee, and in their hands shall they bear Thee up lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." And Jesus answering, said unto Him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

There have been various speculations as to the exact part of the temple to which reference is made and interpretation has been based upon it, but it seems to me that all true interpretation must have regard to the fact that the whole scene is a prelude to His mission and, in fact, an attempt to entice Him from it. *In themselves* the things put before the Lord have nothing to do with sin, they are such merely relatively. (I am not speaking of the *terms*). Let us consider, then, the trial here put upon our Lord.

Again I must remind you that the scene is in the desert. There is nothing on any hand to bear wit-

ness to the Father's love. From this Jesus is transported to the place where God had especially communed with man. It is Jerusalem, it is the temple. Here gather the people to worship. "But if God has so cared for rebellious man," Satan seems to say, "Thou art the Son of God, but alone. Come, taste of Thy Father's care for Thee. His angels' will bear Thee up. He loves Thee with everlasting love. Yea, dost Thou not know that presently His angels *will* come and minister to Thee (see Mark)? Why, then, not feel His care *immediatcly*?"

Quietly comes the answer from One

"Unmoved by Satan's subtle wiles,"

"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." The real force of the word (here *ἐκπειραζω*); is "to try so as to bring out." "Thou shalt not place God in such a position as to make Him show Himself." How exactly is the answer adapted to the situation! By casting Himself down He would be putting God in such a position. (I do not think the words left out by Satan necessarily vitiate the thought). Christ will not do it. He will wait patiently His Father's own time.

And now, dear reader, let us, too, wait patiently for the time in which *He* will reveal Himself. We dwell in a wilderness too. (Is it true?) But in God's good time that threefold resurrection cry (the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God) shall break upon our ear, and we shall say "The voice of my Beloved! Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills!" and, trimming our lamps, go forth to meet Him, *borne up by Him*, no longer to dash our feet on the stones of this wilderness journey. Glad time for

us, will it not be? And all the more glad as we now enter into "wondrous stories of the glories" of His path down here.

F. C. G.

GRACE.

HOW sweet is the thought of God's grace
To one who's a sense of his sin!
It impresses itself on the face,
Which tells that all's tranquil within.

Then who would not know his sad case,
So plainly described in God's word,
And thus know the sweetness of grace,
And share in "the joy of the Lord"?

Unmerited favor is grace,
I must know that of merit I've none,—
I must know the truth of my case,
Or, the sweetness of grace is not known.

If on works I'm seeking to rest,
How little I know of my need!
Religiously "doing my best,"
On the "riches of grace" I can't feed.

Such cannot appreciate grace,
Though *God's way* of saving the lost:
They dream they are not of that class,—
They've merit of which they can boast.

But they boast in "a refuge of lies;"
"No difference," "All guilty," says God;
On the ground of "works" *they* are lost,—
They are cast on grace and the blood.

Would we know the depth of our need?
Let us think of Calvary's tree;
The Sinless One had to die there,
That we from our sins might be free.

A remedy so dreadful as this, '
Shows how desperate was our case;
It had to be met in that way,
Or e'en grace could never *act* grace.

But Christ was the gift of this grace,
In grace He suffered for sin;
Yes, God loved a sin-ruined race,
This, this should our confidence win!

Say not that "this way is too cheap"—
Its cost was the death of God's Son;
His ocean of anguish was deep,
To rescue the lost and undone.

By grace and its Gift am I saved,
"Works" in this have clearly no place;
The ground of my peace is the Cross,
Its cry is, Salvation by grace.

Some say "this gives license to sin,"—
That "its believe and live as you choose;"
Of the truth they make *a burlesque*,
And God's grace they *more* than refuse.

Grace teaches that being thus saved,
"Good works" must now have a place;
I'm to walk well pleasing *to God*,
And this in the strength of His grace.

And in the bright scene yet to come,
Where His saints will all have a place,
True "fruit" they have yielded, He'll own,
But their song will be of His grace.

O God keep mine eye on Thy grace,
It's dark if the eye is not there;
In grace I can look on Thy face,
It scatters all doubt and all care.

R. H.

SHALL I DISCIPLE MY LITTLE CHILDREN?

IMPRESSED with the importance of the question discussed in *Help and Food* for July, 1898, in the article, "Has Water Baptism a Place in Christianity?", I trust I shall be permitted to say a word on one aspect of the question,—that of infant baptism in Christian households. I have no thought of entering into controvesry, which would be unsuitable in these pages; but because I desire to present the question as simply as Scripture makes it for me. I would thus call attention to the plain "'Thus saith the Lord," which would lay the obligation upon my conscience to straighway baptizet he babe that God in goodness should be pleased to entrust to my care.

Perhaps every reader is familiar with tracts among us which give both sides of the many points in controversy here. Such will recognize that the demand for an explicit scriptural command to baptize infants is the most serious reproach brought against those who advocate household baptism. I, for one, admit the justness of this demand, and if I could not meet it by pointing to what I consider such an explicit text, I would be in some doubt as to the whole matter.

I hold with those who deem it a fair inference that the "households" of Lydia and the jailer, mentioned in the Acts, were average households containing children as well as adults. One may at least say that if such an inference would be erroneous, Scripture gives us nothing is the context in either case to warn us against it. But will mere inference, however plausible, suffice, in such a matter, where we might be in danger of falling into will-worship? I also

agree that the use of the word, *oikos*, instead of *oikia*, is significant in the case of Stephanas, indicating that the members of his immediate family, and not his servants, had been baptized, while it is significant that his "household" is not included among the "you"—the responsible saints in the assembly whom Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians (i. 14-16). But while such delicate phraseology does indeed seem to be a notable recognition of precisely the relations which the practice of household baptism would produce, can we establish Christian procedure in an important matter upon such a hint? At any rate we need not be surprised if many of the most conscientious are unable to do so.

Finally, I likewise believe that the distinction between the kingdom of heaven and the Church of Christ makes clear that there is a relationship Godward of special privilege and responsibility which the unregenerate may be brought into, and that such a passage as 1 Cor. vii. 13-15 certainly accords this to the children even of but one believing parent,—natural birth, however, and not baptism, introducing the children into it. I hold that the parent's baptism of his babe, if intelligent, is simply his formal, but very significant acknowledgement of the special covenant relation which in the goodness of God his own precious faith brings his child into, he thus making open confession by baptism for his child, just as he has already done for himself (if he was baptized as an adult, upon profession of faith in Christ), or as his parents did for him. But many, who believe as firmly as I do that the children of Christian parents enjoy a place of special privilege and are embraced by special promises, fail to see how infant baptism is

involved in this, and rightly demand explicit scripture from those who link the ordinance with the claim of the promises for their children.

One of those who makes this demand has given the following advice to parents who are in doubt as to whether or not they should baptize their babes: "If you can put your finger on a text of Scripture which shows plainly that you ought to do it, do it; but don't be led away by reasonings." To this advice I give the most hearty assent, and without preliminary will point it out.

The passage which conveys to me a direct command from the Lord to baptize the babe He is pleased to commit to my parental care is the familiar text, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, frequently cited in this connection :

"Go [therefore] and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined you " (J. N. D.).

"Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you " (R. V.).

Is this commission to make disciples for the Lord to be taken as addressed to the twelve alone, or ought I to do my share also, according to my opportunities and abilities, to disciple the nations? But if the privilege and responsibility of making disciples to the Lord rests upon me, are my babes included in the commission, or are they alone excluded among "all the nations" of whom disciples are to be made?

This is how simple the question becomes for me, in the presence of this command of the Lord. Shall I disciple my little children? To this question, thus simply put, perhaps every Christian parent would respond with a hearty affirmative. But the moment it is suggested that the rite of baptism is a feature in the case, the question becomes a perplexing one for many. Yet why should it be so? Here, where the Lord commissions us to disciple, He expressly stipulates two features of the work of discipling—"baptizing," and "teaching" His commandments. I freely confess that Scripture makes it plain that of these two features, that of "teaching" is by far of the greater importance, whether the disciple be an adult or a child; yet if I begin to disciple my babe by "teaching," from earliest childhood, why should I deny it baptism, in the face of such an injunction, so worded? Indeed, since in the case of adults a certain amount of "teaching" must inevitably *precede* baptism, I am almost tempted to ask, With whom, except the babes, is it possible perfectly to follow the Lord's order of procedure in discipling, as set forth in this passage—"baptizing," "teaching"? But, of course, I do not doubt that this is the order, virtually, with adults also. While teaching, sufficient at least to enable him to grasp and accept the gospel, necessarily precedes the discipling of one of such years that his own will has to be consulted in the matter, yet even in such a case baptism is only at the threshold of the course of teaching which the Lord prescribes—"all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

But some one may say: "Even if you call it 'discipling' your child to bring him up in the nurture and

admonition of the Lord, you certainly must admit that the willing and intelligent submission to baptism on the part of an adult or of a child that has reached years of understanding, and the subjection of an infant to a ceremony of which it will not even retain a memory, are quite different. In one case—unless all is mockery—the faith of the baptized is in exercise, while in the other case there can be nothing of this."

True, but this distinction is not peculiar to the rite of baptism. In the feature of "teaching," as well, we find a similar difference in the conditions of household discipling and discipling among one's neighbors. And strangely enough, he who would make objections on this score, instead of thanking God for the difference, fails to see that it is precisely here that the advantage of Christian parentage to the child is most apparent. Although I may long to be the instrument of blessing in discipling my neighbor to Christ, his will, alas, may resist and frustrate the love of God in my heart toward him. But if I bend my energies to make disciples of the souls especially committed to my hands from infancy, I can bless God for assurances in His word that their wills (though indeed inherited from my fallen nature) will not be permitted to frustrate my efforts, since God in His own good time will surely set the seal of His quickening power upon my feeble and otherwise hopeless labors in their behalf. I do not have to defer to my child's will or to wait upon his faith, as in the case of my neighbor. The moment the babe is given into my care by God, I know the end from the beginning (provided, indeed, that I have the faith to claim the precious promises), and as the servant of

Christ in this world I claim the child for my Lord and instantly begin to act upon and to enforce the claim, in the many ways which my place as parent gives me title to employ. It is *my* faith and *my* will (bowing to the will of God in the matter) which *decrees* that the babe *shall* be a disciple of Christ, and so far am I from consulting the child's wishes in the matter that, from the beginning, I am resolved that in so far as the wicked will which the child has inherited from me may set itself in opposition to the path of blessing I have purposed for the child, I will use every resource which Scripture sanctions to force this will into acquiescence.

But if I am resolved to inculcate the teachings of Christ, which is the principal thing in discipling, in spite of the will of my child, is its will to be consulted in the less important feature of baptism,—a mere external rite, however solemn and significant, which is simply the open confession and claim of discipleship in the case? The adult who, accepting Christ as his Saviour, obediently makes open and figurative confession of the new ground he stands on before God in the rite of baptism, is, of course, an active party in the transaction. In this ceremony he openly bows to the righteousness of God in a figure, which outwardly answers to the inward spiritual attitude which his will and faith have taken. But in the case of the babe, the transaction is entirely between the *parent* and God. The parent's faith and will are acting in behalf of the child, the latter being the non-willing and unconscious—yet predestined—beneficiary of the spiritual realities of which the rite is the outward sign. It seems to me that those who make the passivity and lack of intelligence of the infant an objec-

tion to such a transaction are the ones who would seem to make of water-baptism something more than a sign and figurative ordinance, rather than those who believe that the parent's faith alone can claim for the child the realities of which the sign speaks, as securely as it claims them for the parent, and thus has as good title to fulfil the ordinance in the one case as in the other. Since "baptism" is, therefore, the *sign* of discipleship (and I claim nothing more), as the "teaching" of all the things which Christ has enjoined is the substantial feature of discipling, in view of Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, I certainly claim that our Lord has most explicitly linked the two things together in the work of discipling all the nations to which He has urged us; and I fail to see how those who confess that the essential feature of discipling—teaching—is enjoined in the case of their children, can refuse the ordinance or sign—the figurative answer of a good conscience—which the Lord has made introductory to the teaching.

In laying hold of Christ with as great assurance for my house as for myself, surely I but imitate the faith of Noah who prepared the ark "for the saving of his *house*." In baptizing each soul as God entrusts me with it, and instantly beginning the work of making a disciple for Christ by sign and word, surely I carry my babe *into* the ark, so far as *faith* can accomplish it, and I well know that God will not dishonor this, but will shut to the door and seal it all in in His own good time. In *forcing* discipleship—ordinance and teaching alike—upon my child, during the tender years when it is quite unable to resist my choice for it of Christ, I believe I am but walking in the footsteps of faithful Abraham, of whom Jehovah

could say: "For I know him, that he will *command* his children and his household after him, and they *shall* keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice, *in order that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what He hath spoken of him*" (Gen. xviii. 19).

Here I rest the case. Without claiming anything for the view, by way of illustration allow me to add a brief statement of the obligation which the gift of a babe to my household would seem to me to imply. With the wailing of the infant as it opened its eyes upon the world I must recognize the fallen nature derived from its parents, and being responsible for this as a natural parent, the least I could do as a servant of Christ would be to at once begin the long and painful fight against the nature I have transmitted to my little one, in training it—contrary to this nature—in the way it should go. But must not the very prospect of such a struggle bow me under the sense of its utter hopelessness, apart from the intervention of God? And would I not—should I not—turn to God instantly, to claim His precious promises for my child, and to enter into covenant with Him as it were, or into partnership, in respect to this precious little lost soul He had placed in my bosom? But on what basis could I claim these promises, this covenant of grace, this blessed partnership in rearing the child? By bowing to God's righteousness, as the cross of Christ has declared it, in the case of the child, just as I had already done in my own case; and of such acquiescence, the rite of baptism is the outward sign.

The discipling,—for so I must dignify it from the beginning,—would commence almost from the first hour, to prevent if possible the course of self-will

which would be inaugurated by the discovery on the part of the tiny creature that it could gain its desires by setting up an uproar. Therefore, it seems to me, I would eagerly desire its baptism at the earliest feasible moment, seeking the fellowship of the Lord's people and desiring them to join their prayers on behalf of the babe and its parents.

The figurative burial of the infant in baptism would be the confession that I could enter into covenant with God on its behalf only on the righteous ground of the utter condemnation at the cross of all that it was by nature,—its birth-right from its parents. In the most open confession of my own responsibility here, it seems to me that I should desire to immerse the babe,—consigning to the tomb of my Lord, in figure, all that my offspring had been able to derive from me, that my faith might be accepted of God for my little one, to give it standing under the blessed Head of the new creation, as quickened together with Him out of death-under-judgment, and raised up together. This burial of the babe in baptism would thus be the open confession of the various moral realities in the case, upon which all my labors in discipling the child, as well as all my hopes for it, would be based. By means of this simple ordinance, carried out in the intelligence of faith, I should believe that I had inaugurated the all-important task of discipling by “the response as before God of a good conscience” on behalf of the precious charge committed to me, in dedicating the little soul to God—not in the sinful life I had imparted to it, but—in the resurrection-life which He Himself now righteously could, and surely would, impart to it, on the basis of the cross of His Son.

In conclusion, let me emphasize the repudiation of all arguments for infant baptism which in any wise insinuate that the ordinance of baptism brings the children of christian parents into the covenant-place which they occupy. Such suggestions justly arouse indignation on the part of parents who have conscientious scruples as to infant baptism, but in faith claim the promises of Scripture for their houses. The unbaptized children of such parents are every whit as "holy" as the baptized infants in other Christian homes ; the fact of Christian parentage, and not the administration of an ordinance, sanctifying the children. Nor can I sympathize with any who would seem to make baptism the chief feature in discipling. This is hopeless distortion. A disciple is a "learner," and "teaching" certainly is the indispensable element in making a learner, who is to take his place at Jesus' feet. If there are any who are more zealous for the *sign* of discipling in their households than for the substance, they are justly put to complete shame by such as withhold the ordinance from their children but faithfully and perseveringly teach them in the Lord.

Nevertheless an ordinance, though merely that, is not insignificant, if it be the command of the Lord. And assuredly the Lord has commanded baptism in connection with discipling in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Can parents who have taken the liberty of eliminating the ordinance, when discipling in their own families, point to any scripture which modifies the text before us so as to make the ordinance of baptism binding only when discipling adults, and not so when discipling children, even though it be those of their own Christian households?

I could not refuse the symbolism of identification with a once dead and now risen Christ to an adult confessor, who might after all turn out to be a mere barren professor. Certainly, then, I dare not withhold the simple rite, without an express "Thus saith the Lord," from one of the little ones whose angels do always behold the face of the Father.

In the breaking of bread have we not realized how precious to the Lord and to us the observance of a mere symbolical ordinance, which He has enjoined, may be? And since a woman ought to have power on her head "because of the angels," do we not see that the observance by His children in the sight of heavenly intelligences merely of that which is becoming by nature is grateful to the heart of God? And in the present case, though it be but a simple ordinance in connection with my unconscious babe, yet it is the *Lord's* ordinance in discipling. I am persuaded that His infinitely tender heart is touched and refreshed by the faith of the parent who in the sight of heaven, in the beautiful figure which has been commanded, buries his helpless babe with Christ by baptism unto death, that just as his child thus symbolically becomes identified with the Lord in the likeness of His death, so in like figure he may receive his little one back again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. May God bless His word!

F. A.

THE HOPE OF THE MORNING STAR.

I. ITS MEANING AND IMPLICATIONS.

WE are going to take up, the Lord willing, a question (or questions) which of late seem more and more to be dividing those who alike look for the coming of the Lord as near at hand. The question is not, therefore, whether that coming be personal and premillennial or not: for, those for whom I write are equally assured that it is both; and the number of those who possess that assurance is, we may trust, becoming greater every day. For those who may still have question even as to this, there are now everywhere at hand abundant means of satisfaction. Nay, they have only, when once inquiry has been awakened with them, to examine their Bibles with a free and honest heart, to find it. They need but to give credit to Scripture for speaking with the same straightforwardness as we use with one another. They need only not to confound Israel and the Church; death or the taking of Jerusalem with the coming of the Son of man, and that in the clouds of heaven, and with all the holy angels with Him. To those simple, and not confused with unnatural interpretations, the word of God will become simple; and the great hope of the Church and of Israel will shine out with unmistakable plainness; nay, with a lustre lighting up every other part.

It is not as to this, at any rate, that we are now to inquire. The question before us is one that will take more attentive consideration to answer. There are apparent difficulties on the face of Scripture itself with that which nevertheless we must accept as the

true one; and there are correspondingly objections which require full examination before we are entitled to do so. Especially as they seem to have led many who not long since held it to abandon it for another.

The hope of the Morning Star may sufficiently characterize the view before us. Christ Himself is the Morning Star, and as such promised to the Christian overcomer. The morning star as such precedes the sunrise; does not enlighten the earth, but is lost in the beams of the sun when it arises. In Scripture it is the seal upon the closing page of the New Testament, as the Sun of righteousness is the seal upon the last page of the Old. It is connected with heaven alone; while the Sun in its rising brings heaven and earth together.

We hold, as many have held it, that Christ's coming as the Morning Star is the hope of the Christian, and introduces him to the enjoyment of his place with Christ in heaven. The dead saints of all the past are raised; the living are changed and caught up to meet the Lord in the air along with these. And this is the first thing now to be looked for, whatever signs may in fact be given before it of the Lord's approach; as even now there are many.

This "rapture of the saints" necessarily closes what we call the Christian dispensation. The true Church is gone from the earth, and what is left is a mere corrupt profession, now to be spued out of Christ's mouth as utterly distateful to Him, and which is soon to give up even the profession, and, not having received the love of the truth, to fall under the terrible delusion of Antichrist.

Darkness is then covering the earth, and gross darkness the peoples; and this is the time, and these

are the circumstances under which the light begins to break for Israel. The day of the Lord begins amid such utter darkness, and not before we are gathered to Him. As long as the gospel is still going out, Israel are "enemies" (treated by God nationally as such) "for your sake"—that is, for the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 28). Now the darkness begins to disperse, and instead of the remnant among them being added to the Church, as in the present time, they "return to the children of Israel" (Mic. v. 3): to Israelitish hopes and promises.

Prophecy as to the world, broken off with the breaking off of Israel, begins again, and time, which ceases to be reckoned when she is wholly (though but temporarily) given up as the people of God, now is reckoned again. The "end of the age," which is in fact the last week of Daniel's seventy, brings with it the ability to reckon prophetic times, and thus amid the gloom to calculate the nearness of deliverance. And they will need and value it, while having to endure to the end, to find the promised blessing: for this is "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. xxx. 7), Israel's travail-time in which the nation will be born to God, when at last every one written among the living in Jerusalem shall be holy, "when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning" (Isa. iv. 3, 4).

Terrible will be the time they come through, "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. xxiv. 21; Dan. xii. 1). It is the time of Antichrist, of the abomination of desolation in the holy

place: when the world is permitted to show itself in its full character, the restraint upon the development of evil is removed, Antichrist shall replace Christ in the worship of the nations, and the "abomination" in the temple of God in Israel, challenge Him also in His Old Testament character, as well as in His New. The denial that Jesus is the Christ will accompany the denial of the Father and the Son (1 John ii. 22).

The end will be delivering judgment by the coming of the Son of man from heaven, as the lightning gleam in the storm of judgment, from east to west over the heavens. The nations assembled against Jerusalem meet with complete overthrow; the leaders in the great revolt against God being cast into the lake of fire, Satan shut up in the bottomless pit; and the saints who have come with Christ to the judgment of the earth taking the place of rulers with Him over it during the thousand years of peace that follow.

Of course, this is not even a proper sketch of what takes place during and at the close of the interval thus indicated between the taking away of the saints to meet the Lord and His appearing in glory with them. The question before us is not of details as to the events that fill up the interval, but of whether it exists at all; whether the rapture of the saints and their return with Christ are separated by any appreciable length of time; whether or not the Church goes through the tribulation; whether the dispensations can so far overlap as to permit of Jewish saints, with hopes and worship corresponding to this, to co-exist upon earth with Christianity and the heavenly hopes that accompany it; whether the calculation of prophetic times is designed for Israel or the Church,

or both; whether we are to look for the events or some of them, which admittedly precede Christ's coming in glory, as to take place before we are caught up to be with Him? The last point seems to be perhaps in special contention, one very vigorous writer regularly characterizing the view against which he contends as "Any moment Adventism." But our decision as to this will be best reached as the final result of answers given to the other questions, which manifestly all so bear upon one another as to make the decision of one very much that of all; while yet they constitute so many distinct lines of proof which, if they agree together in what answer they yield, confirm each the other as well as the whole view. They will be, not a threefold, but a fivefold cord, not quickly to be broken.

But before we take up such questions, in seeking answer to which the full strength of the objections made will be seen and tested, let us take into consideration the proof as to the whole which we may gain from a brief review of Scripture.

It is perfectly plain, and is said in so many words by the apostle, that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). It is quite clear, therefore, if we may take Scripture in its full force, that the taking up of the saints to be with Him, as described in 1 Thess. iv., must be *before* the appearing. This indeed still leaves it uncertain that any sensible length of time elapses between the two. Yet it argues that the Lord's descent into the air to the gathering place for His people is not an *appearing*. It is so far an unseen stage of His coming, and the rising of His saints to meet Him likewise would be

unseen also: for when He appears we shall appear with Him, and "those that sleep in Jesus will God *bring with Him.*"

What is connected with these two phases of His coming it is important to notice. With the first, Christ's reception of us to Himself, and the joys of the Father's house (John xiv. 2, 3). With the second the reward of works, which is in the Kingdom. With the first, thus, the fruit of Christ's work; with the second, the fruit of our own. The order is noticeable. The first is the hope of the Morning Star, Christ Himself the Christian hope, but which leaves the world unblest. The second is the daydawn for the world, the "Sun of righteousness."

The coming of the Son of man, as in Matt. xxiv., is manifestly the appearing. He comes in the clouds of heaven, with all the holy angels with Him, and the comparison with lightning shows plainly the approach of judgment. Now what connects itself with this in this chapter? First, the "abomination of desolation standing in the holy place"—the *Jewish* holy place, for when they would see it, those that were *in Judea* were to flee to the mountains. Secondly, and given as the reason of their flight, "For *then* shalt be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to that time, no, nor ever shall be." This unequalled trouble is to be as short as severe: for "except those days should be shortened no flesh should be saved, but for the elect's sake these days shall be shortened:" Thirdly, *immediately after* this, "they shall see the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth"—or "land"—"mourn; and they shall

see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Now, here we find, in the last days, a Jewish remnant with some knowledge of Christ it must be supposed, for the exhortation addressed to them implies that they will be listening to His words, and yet so little Christian as to be under the strict law of the sabbath (ver. 20), and liable to be deceived by false reports of His being in the desert or in the secret chambers (ver. 25): just such as those disciples were whom the Lord then addresses. What has become of Christians and of Christianity at a time when this is possible, and when once more the holy place is recognized as in Jerusalem? Yet this is before the appearing of Christ, and some little while before, however grace may limit the time of tribulation spoken of. Does not this look as if Christianity were gone from the earth at this time, shortly before His appearing?

If we look further, this impression deepens. Our Lord has just referred us to Daniel. We find the equivalent of the expression for the first time, chap. ix. 27: "for the overspreading of abomination he shall make it desolate." A better translation would be, "because of the wing of abomination, a desolator;" but for our purpose either rendering may suffice. This is in the well-known prophecy of the seventy weeks, and in the latter half of the last week. At the end of the whole period would come the blessing, for Judah and Jerusalem, of which the angel speaks: for then would be made an end of sins, and reconciliation for iniquity, and everlasting righteousness brought in, and the holy place *anointed* (not made desolate); and yet according to the prophecy desolate.

tion continues up to the very end of this time. The blessing must come, then, suddenly indeed. In Matthew we see how it comes, by the appearing of Christ for them, and as in a moment.

The prophecy in Daniel is an instance of that non-reckoning of time, which has been already referred to as characterizing the present period. The seventy weeks are but 490 years. Sixty-nine of them end (483 years) when Messiah first comes. He is however cut off, and has nothing (so we should read the twenty-sixth verse): He does not bring in the blessing, and a time of confusion follows. Plainly the last week has not been fulfilled, and it is of this last week that the Lord in Matthew speaks. Here the doings of the "prince to come" are described, and it is not Christ, but His total opposite. A comparison of the chapters makes this absolutely plain. From the time of Messiah's cutting off until this prince appears there is only a gap of time, the length of which is in no way indicated to us; but we know that all the Christian centuries have in fact come in in that break. The nation of Israel has been set aside, and the heirs of heaven are being gathered. With the seventieth week Israel again comes into prominence, and time begins once more to be reckoned: but instead of blessing there comes for her a time of unequalled trouble until the last week is run out.

Notice the time from the setting up of the abomination till the full end: half a week of years, "time, times and a half," three years and a half; forty and two months; according to Jewish reckoning, 1260 days. We see how divine pity has in fact shortened the days. These numbers are of importance to us just now as a link of connection with other

scriptures which will presently come before us. The covenant also made by this Gentile prince — we should read here “he shall confirm *a* covenant with *the* many,” (the mass of the Jewish people,)—which he breaks in the midst of the week, enables us to understand better the sacrificial worship going on in Israel according to such agreement, and the idolatry ensuing: “the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up”. (Dan. xii. 11).

Thus far it is plain that the prophecies in Daniel and in Matthew throw light on one another. Let us put by their side a third, which links the time of this Jewish distress with the last days of Christendom. I refer to 2 Thess. ii. for the full scripture, which with the help of what we have already got, we shall now easily understand. The prophecy of the man of sin has been so long applied to the head of the Romish superstition, that Protestant Christians are very jealous of another application. Yet the apostle makes the revelation of the “man of sin” to be the sign of the “day of the Lord being now *present*,” as the Revised Version rightly gives it, while popery has been fully manifested, for those that have eyes to see, more than 300 years. Moreover the “day of the Lord” leading us to Zechariah’s prophecy of Israel’s last trouble (chap. xiv.), and Zechariah leading us to Matthew and to Daniel, the “abomination of desolation standing in the holy place” is so simply explained by one who “sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God” (Revised Version), that an unprejudiced mind can hardly refuse the identification of one with the other.

. Every other circumstance corresponds. We find

this man of sin the leader of the grand final apostacy of professing Christians from the faith of Christ (vers. 3, 9-12): God at last giving over to strong delusion those who believed not the truth when it was there,—an awful climax to which everything is surely tending now. Moreover, just as in Matthew the Lord appears at the end of the time of trouble, so here the wicked one is “consumed with the breath of His mouth, and destroyed with the manifestation of His coming” (*R. V.*).

Thus Christendom is apostate, or apostatizing from the faith at the very time that the company of believing Jews, which Matt. xxiv. shows us, are suffering in the great tribulation. Jewish and Christian apostacy unite together at the close (1 John ii. 22).

Now where, we may ask again, during all this time, are the saints of the present day? Where are the real Christians, when the mass of mere professors have become apostate, and the saints of Jerusalem are plainly once more professors of Judaism? and in that “end of the age” which, as the last broken off week of determined times for Israel, is unmistakably Jewish? The apostle beseeches the Thessalonians “*by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him,*” not to be deceived: and we ought now to understand such an appeal.

But this is by no means the full weight of evidence. The book of Revelation as a whole may be brought forward as proof, the most detailed and elaborate that could be given, perhaps; and can only be rightly understood with what we had already before us. We must look at this, however briefly, or we could have no idea how full the proof from Scripture is.

Revelation is divided, and that by the Lord Himself, into two main parts, "the things that are," and "the things that shall be after these" (*meta tauta*). "Hereafter" is not sufficiently explicit, and so far misleading: these divisions give us, as we shall see, the "present things," the time in which the Church of God is upon earth; the "things after these," that which begins when the true Church has been removed to heaven, and God's dealings with Israel begin, for their recovery and final blessing.

Each part has a prefatory vision which is the key to all that follows. "The things which thou hast seen" (i. 19) are the first of these: Christ's own inspection of the Churches (the candlesticks), His witness for Himself during the night of His absence. The candlesticks are seven, the number of completeness; and while they are, in the first place, the seven Asiatic churches, yet these are clearly representative of the Church at large. Only in this way do the addresses in the next two chapters attain due relation to the universal character of the rest of the book; only in this way do we understand the emphatic call at the end of each address, to every one who has an ear to listen; only in this way, question it however we may, does the Church of God on earth come at all into the prophecy. Moreover, it is anything but a new thing to say that these churches, as successively brought before us here, will be found, by any one who seriously inquires into it, to present the characters of the Church in successive stages of its history to the present time.* Thus we can see how more

* The proof of this, which it would be an injustice to it to give in the brief way which would alone be possible here, may be found at length in my "Present Things."

and more urgently, from the address to Thyatira onwards, as warning or as encouragement, the coming of the Lord is pressed; until to the Philadelphian overcomer is given the assurance of being "kept out of the hour of temptation which is to come upon the whole world, to try those that dwell upon the earth." And then, indicating the way of accomplishment of this, the announcement now is made, "I come quickly." How else should they be kept out of the very "hour" of a universal trial, but by being taken up to meet the descending Lord? After which Laodicea gets a final threatening to be spewed out of Christ's mouth; He, though still knocking, being already outside the door!

Thus the "things that are" end, and a new vision begins, with a Voice as of a trumpet calling up to heaven. The scene entirely changes, and the seer becomes in the Spirit afresh. A throne set in heaven is before him; and there are *thrones* around the Throne*. These thrones have human occupants, who are priests as well as kings, and sing the song of redemption when the Lamb appears (chap. v. 8-10). Through the scenes that follow they are still in their places round the throne, "all the angels" being seen again round them in an outer circle. Other redeemed ones take their place "before" that Throne, but not "around" it (chap. vii. 11, 15).

But let us look at the Throne itself: it is a throne of judgment; "lightnings and voices and thunders" proceed out of it. The earth is threatened; nay, but the bow of promise, of the color of new verdure refreshed by rain, assures us that God's covenant as to the earth is not forgotten; rather, it is coming into

* Not "seats" merely, as in the common version.

remembrance, as if anew. This storm is to purify and bless. Heaven's open doors having received the multitudes of heavenly saints, the time of the earth is come; and therefore Israel's. The book of God's counsels as to the future is opened: who can open it? The Lamb! Yes, assuredly it is the Lamb; but notice His character now: "*The Lion of the tribe of Judah* has prevailed to open the book" (chap. v. 5). Judah's, Israel's, conquering King it is who opens the future now, and this makes doubly clear that that which is to follow concerns the earth and Israel.

Pass on: the lightnings flash and the thunders utter their voice; but four angels stand upon the four corners of the earth to keep back the winds from every quarter, until, as the voice of the interpreting angel declares, they have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads (vii. 1-3). And who, then, are these? "A hundred and forty and four thousand out of every tribe of the children of Israel." Can these be simply symbolically such? No: Judah's Lion is opening the book. The Gentiles are not indeed forgotten: look at the vast multitude out of all nations that, in the next vision, are seen before the throne. Ah, the great throng of the redeemed of all time are they? No, says the interpreting voice again, "These are they that come," not "out of great tribulation" simply, as our common translation has it, but "out of the tribulation, the great one," as it literally reads. They are a multitude gathered out of the time of the end, as we have seen it; and of Gentiles, separate from the multitude of Israel's sealed ones: both joining together in testimony as to the period we have reached. The church-scroll that

Peter saw let down from heaven, has been taken up thither again. Jew and Gentile are no more united into one body, but are in different spheres of blessing; the Jew having the foremost place, and becoming the communicator of blessing to the nations round; Israel becomes Jezreel, the "seed of God."

Surely, in all this, it should not be hard to determine the doctrine of Scripture as to the coming of Christ for His saints, or the hope of the Church as the Morning Star.

With the last week of Daniel's seventy, the greater part of Revelation is concerned. What very definitely marks this is the frequent specification of the very time before mentioned, the half week or half-weeks, whichever way we take it, of the last week. It is variously connected (1) with the maintenance of a special Elias-like testimony, the two witnesses, in the time of the end (chap. xi. 3-8); (2) with the flight of the Jewish remnant into the wilderness, and their protection there (chap. xii 6, 14); and (3) with the "practising" of the Roman "beast," when the little horn seen by the Old Testament prophet has become the 8th head of empire as seen by the New Testament one. Here no essential mistake seems possible. In the 19th chapter, after the marriage of the Lamb has taken place in heaven, we see Him descend with His saints to the judgment of the earth. Here from the closing portion of the book, as before from the beginning of it, we have witness that the taking up of the saints precedes by some time, at least, His appearing with them; but this the other passages that we have examined, not only confirm, but develop fully.

For all this, there are many opposers of this doc-

trine; and we are now to look at the arguments by which they would substantiate their opposition.

F. W. G.

CORRESPONDENCE ON BAPTISM.

IN submitting to our readers the following correspondence upon the subject of baptism a few words of explanation may be in place. In the July number of this magazine a paper was published, entitled, "Has Water Baptism a place in Christianity?" It was with the expectation and desire that the discussion there begun would awaken an interest in many minds in the subject. We purposely refrained from taking up any but the primary questions relating to baptism, examining the Scriptures to see whether it had any place in the economy of fully developed Christianity. It may surprise many to learn that there should be any necessity for such inquiry, but such there is. We trust that some who have been tempted to discard water baptism have seen their error, as pointed out from Scripture, and have returned to the "one baptism" which is ever connected with the "one faith."

But it was our desire to see the subject taken further, and we were glad to give place, in the August number, to the paper "Shall I disciple my little children?" This paper treated the question of household baptism, and brought directly before us the fact of our responsibility in regard to our families. As was expected, and desired, exception was taken to much in both papers, but we are grateful at least for the awakening.

Controversy is not our object, but the ascertainment of the truth is. Let us not fear scriptural discussion, even where we may not be of absolutely one mind. Let it be understood that this is no question of fellowship in the Assembly. Thank God, we hold enough in common

to enable us to meet together about the Person of our adorable Lord, while not all of the same mind upon this subject. But let not this make us indifferent to the question. In any event we have a responsibility, connected with which we owe loyal and willing obedience. May the Lord grant that we know His way, and walk in it. We have the word of God; we have the Holy Spirit;—why should it be impossible to reach that oneness of mind, which must be His mind?

We now give the correspondence, taking the privilege of making such comments as may seem to be called for. We need hardly add that the effort is made to give the full meaning of the writer, omitting only personal allusions, or what has been alluded to by others.

DEAR BROTHER:—By reading the paper “Has water baptism a place in Christianity,” my soul was much blessed. I am thankful for the stand you take as to the truth once delivered to the saints. I have felt much grieved that brethren have forsaken the true ground as to baptism, and, as you say in your paper, even neglected it entirely. We are living in the latter days when men shall *depart* from the truth. And of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to *draw away* disciples after them.

I find that laboring brethren *press* household baptism so much. Paul preached Christ and Him crucified; that was his first and last theme, and the other followed of itself, namely baptism. Why is there so much lukewarmness amongst God's children? They are more occupied with doctrines of men than Christ. My beloved brother, keep Christ before the people and we will have happy saints and real Christians, such as know that they are born again, that they are dead with Christ and also buried with Him by baptism and raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

S.

Remarks.—The spirit of our brother is evident. He

sees and deplors the tendency to carelessness and looseness in the Lord's things. We have failed, however, to notice what he observes,—the tendency to press household, or any form of baptism. On the contrary we fear there has been an unintentional avoidance of the question for fear, perhaps, of seeming controversy. Now we believe that *neglect* is one of the great dangers. Let it not be called pressing a subject unduly when the Lord's servants seek to lay before saints the teaching of Scripture and their responsibilities as to it. Let us indeed preach Christ, and live Christ, and surely we will desire to know His will in all things.

DEAR BROTHER:—I had thought several times to write you a word approving your plain scriptural position in regard to baptism, as given in the July "Help and Food." I never could understand why brethren, who are so scriptural about most things, differed so greatly as to this, to me, plain Scripture teaching. I have been asked the question: "Do you believe baptism *essential* to salvation?" Now I do not answer such a question categorically. It is not a scriptural question. "Is it a command of the Lord?" Yes, I answer at once. And further it is a command of the *risen Lord*, giving it place on this side of His death, in this dispensation. And the command is not given to the believer to be baptized, but to the preacher of the gospel to baptize the believer, and it is the preacher who is the disobedient one rather than the believer. But the question is, being a command of the risen Lord, What is the consequence to him who disobeys or ignores it? Knowing now, as we do, that it represents death, His death, and our death with Him, as also our raising up together with Him, its importance, must, at least, be conceded, and the question is: What do we lose, what does the believing sinner lose, because the preacher does not obey His Lord in baptizing him? It is very evident to me why the command was given to the preacher to baptize, and not to the believing sinner to be baptised. We bury dead persons, and dead men

cannot obey commands. But I ask again, what, if anything, does the believing sinner lose, through the disobedience of the preacher, teacher, or evangelist who refuses to bury him with His Lord, into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, as commanded in the great commission? An act done under the solemn command of the risen Lord, could not be a mere formality, but must in some way connect the recipient with the divine blessing. That it shows the utter worthlessness of the flesh, to be excised, cut off with a circumcision not hand made, and buried away, and a new man and a new life to take its place in resurrection, is plainly shown in Paul's teaching, and Peter's also. But is there no connection between baptism and this result? Is the one attained without the other? Could you and I in teaching brethren, enforce our separation from the world, because of our death to it, as shown in our baptism by the teaching of Scripture, and leave it out? Did not Paul enforce his teaching as to our relation to the world, as being dead to it, as not living in it, and our confession of this in the act of baptism? Rotherham's literal translation of Col. ii. 11-13, makes all this wonderfully forcible. "In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not hand-made, in the stripping off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ, being jointly-buried with him in [your] immersion, in which ye were also jointly-raised through the faith of the inward-working of God who raised Him from the dead; and you, being *dead* by the offences and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he jointly made you alive together with Him, in favor forgiving us *all* the offences." Is this all true, and leave out that which signifies it all? Baptism surely stands at the threshold of Christian faith and life, and sets forth our relation to the world, as dead and buried to it, and our new relation to Christ as raised up together with Him, and thus united to Him in resurrection-life by faith. Must not the blessing of God, "the inward-

working of God" to bring out that which by Him is typified, attend an act that puts the believer under the protecting power of the triune God, and the only place where that ineffable Name is given in the Holy Scripture? Do we get rid of the flesh, the old man, without burying it? Yours in the love of the truth. B.

Remarks.—We do not see how anyone fully accepting the doctrines of grace could for a moment hesitate to answer in the most categorical way the question, Is baptism essential to salvation? To confound the two would be Romanism, would degrade the precious death of Christ into equality with a symbol of that death. We would fain believe that our correspondent does not mean this. But he evidently does attach the reception of full identification with the risen Christ to baptism. Is there any thing in Scripture to warrant such a thought? His quotation from Col. ii. 12, 13 teaches the exact opposite;—we are raised through *faith* of the operation (or energy, Gk.) of God who raised Him from the dead. It is faith in the God of resurrection which gives us a share in the blessings of forgiveness, and of all that is connected with the risen Lord. The reception of baptism prior to the gift of the Holy Spirit has been frequently explained. Jews who had up to then rejected Christ, owned in this act Him as Lord, and thereupon received the Spirit. The reverse was true in the case of Cornelius, a Gentile. He received the Holy Spirit and was then baptized. So also in the teaching in the epistles. The reception of the Spirit is connected with faith, not baptism (Eph. i. 13). He would be a bold man to argue from this that faith included baptism which therefore had been administered.

But why should there be any difficulty? Grace is God's, responsibility is man's. Why single out one act of obedience and make all the untold blessings of Christianity depend upon it? One who is disobedient is always a loser, but surely not a loser of what comes with a risen Christ. We would affectionately commend this to our brother, assured that in confounding grace and responsibility he is unconsciously in grave error.

DEAR BROTHER:—While like yourself deploring the

neglect of baptism, there are a few things in your July article which I must beg you and your readers to hear a few words on.

You say, p. 181, "In allusion to the fact that baptism was the act of making disciples." John iv. 1 says, "Jesus made and baptized . . . disciples." When two verbs come together thus, if the one verb denotes an action and the other how that action was performed, the verb which denotes *how* comes first. He poured oil on him and anointed him. You cannot say He anointed him and poured oil on him, unless the anointing and the pouring were two different actions. So, if the baptizing was the making of disciples, it would not be "made and baptized," but "baptized and made." The fact that it is "made and baptized," the fact that "baptized" comes after, not before, "made," proves that they were made disciples first and then baptized. That baptizing is discipling is contrary to plain fact. Many a baptized person, even when the child of a believer, never becomes a disciple, a learner. But water can not make a learner. This is a fact.

It is remarkable to see you restating an argument which the former editor of Help and Food has given up. You say that in Eph. iv. 4-6 there are three spheres. If there are three spheres in Eph. iv. 4-6, why not in 1 Cor. xii. 4-6? The passages are similar. Nobody holds otherwise than that in 1 Cor. xii. 4-6, we have the Spirit, the Son, and the Father, each in His own distinct relation to one and the same sphere. The Ephesian passage is quite parallel. You call Ephesians "the great epistle of the One Body," yet you say that in chap. iv. 4-6 there are two other spheres besides. 1 Cor. xii. 4-6 shows that you are mistaken. It is the Spirit, the Lord, and the Father, each in His own relation to the one sphere, in both passages. Ephesians does not treat of the kingdom, nor of nature; but only of the assembly. If verses 5 and 6 are true of the assembly, as they surely

are, what reason is there for applying them to other spheres?

You say, (p. 183) "Many who accept household baptism do not obey God in having their children baptized." Thus you teach that child-baptism is obedience to God. There is no mention of child-baptism in Scripture. It rests on inference. Can we be blamed for considering it a mistaken inference when we see what baptism symbolizes?—washing away of sins. An infant has no sins to wash away. The putting on of Christ:—this can only be done by one capable of understanding what he is doing. Claim of a good conscience:—an infant cannot claim any kind of conscience. Burial with Christ:—an infant can be buried, but not "with Christ," which plainly implies intelligence; and Scripture does not separate resurrection from burial. Rom. vi. implies and Col. ii. asserts their inseparableness. You say Col. ii, 11, 12, "should doubtless be rendered 'in whom.'" Forgive my objecting. The rule for deciding the antecedent to a relative is:—"The antecedent to a relative is the preceding noun, unless there be a clear reason to the contrary." Of course, you suppose there is here a reason to the contrary, but there is not. J. N. D. never saw one. With him baptism is resurrection (Letters, vol. ii. pp. 58, 330, 335). That baptism is resurrection appears from its being a putting on (Gal. iii. 27) as well as a putting off. Putting on is only in resurrection (2 Cor. v. 2-4) and an infant can neither put off nor put on. C.

Remarks.—Our brother surely agrees with us that baptism is the badge of discipleship. We most certainly disclaim the thought of sundering baptism and teaching. The passage he quotes when taken in its connection explains itself. As to his use of John iv. 1, it is his, not ours. We might add, however, that there is an explanatory use of a second verb. Thus, he made—that is baptized, disciples. But we never thought of excluding the "teaching" from John iv. 1.

• With regard to the three spheres in Eph. iv.; it is not

because of the name of each person of the blessed Trinity that we speak of three circles or spheres, as our brother surely knows, but of the words connected with the name of each Person. "There is one Body and one Spirit . . . one Hope." Who can for a moment question that *none* but believers, true children of God are here alluded to?

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Is it not possible that profession might come in here? Profession could not come into the one body.

"One God and one Father of *all*," surely reaches on to the truth of "God all in all." The similarity to 1 Cor. xii. is but external, and cannot therefore be used as by our brother. A simple comparison of the two passages will show this.

We do not question that the passages alluded to in the last paragraphs refer primarily to the baptism of believers. This was natural and necessary for those just brought into the pale of Christianity, but to say that the passages cannot be applied to the households of saints is assertion without proof.

—: IS IT quite ingenuous to write:—"It is not the purpose of this paper to enter into the discussion of *any* of these questions," one of which questions is, "Who are the proper subjects?" and then to write: "The first is the sphere of the Church, of pure grace; the second is the sphere of the Kingdom, of responsibility. There is a third sphere, that of creation, One God and Father of all who is over all, and through all, and in [us] all?" For this interpretation of the passage in Eph. iv. is caused and necessitated by the desire to prove infants to be the "proper subjects," and is peculiar to those who hold "household baptism" so called. The article does therefore, indirectly, enter upon the question of who are the proper subjects; in fact it is quite impossible to discuss the doctrine of baptism without deciding, by the doctrine and teaching of the epistles, who are the proper subjects. Is not, in fact, the effort to apply baptism to infants, the cause of all the confusion about it, as the saints perceive that the doctrine contradicts the applica-

tion. A paper therefore that avoids the question of the proper subject, fails to clear up the confusion. Scripture shows that the true Church is both the body of Christ and the house of God. Some have assumed that the house of God embraced false professors who are not in the body, and from *that* deduced the doctrine of infant baptism into the house. Others have refused this, but as they held infant baptism, a place for them must be found, and so they found it in the "Kingdom," which is substituted for the "house." The first teaching made the house include all the false material and identified the house with the Kingdom in the present dispensation. The second refused false material in the house and put it into the Kingdom; both justify infant baptism on the plea of false material having a place in one or both! A shaky foundation surely for it to rest on.

The fact is, the "house" of God and the "Kingdom of God" *are identical in the present dispensation*. The Kingdom will go on in the next dispensation, but the "house" will be on high. In neither the house nor the Kingdom does God own anything but what is real. The "house" is the habitation of God the Spirit. That is what constitutes it the house of God. God builds it and He does not build in false material. Man may build falsely but God owns it not. So the Kingdom; it is composed of those born of God, for it is formed by sowing the good seed. The rest is rejected from the beginning and in due time judged. *Never* owned by the King. But the sole foundation for baptismal efficacy for the entrance of infants is that the Lord owns and gives a place to false material in the Kingdom. If Matt. xiii. says nothing of baptism being efficacious to put into it, but ascribes it to the reception of the "word of the Kingdom" into the heart, how dangerous is the doctrine that substitutes the ordinance of baptism for the word, and makes baptism precede the word instead of follow it! According to God, entrance into the Kingdom is by new birth, Matt.

xiii. proves this beyond controversy; and entrance into the house is by the Spirit. The persons who compose both are identical in this dispensation; while the false material in the house is the false material of Matt. xiii. They are identical both in respect of the good and the bad. But the Lord did not own the bad as His, nor introduced by His authority, and linked the interests of the disciples with the treasure, the pearl, (the Church) and the good fish.

The interpretation forced upon Eph. iv. by the exigencies of the case, is strangely false for intelligent brethren to propound. Let us look at it as found in "Help and Food" for July 1898, for they are not all alike, at any rate in detail, and it is when we come to look narrowly into them that we are astonished and grieved at what we find.

"The first is the sphere of the Church, of pure grace." But is the "sphere" of "pure grace" limited to the Church? Is that not just what is going out to the whole world? Matt. xxviii. 19 would seem to say so. One would rather take it that the Church is the sphere of *our* responsibilities, while even there we are not under law but grace, thank God.

"The second is the sphere of the Kingdom, of responsibility." And yet this is the "sphere" into which an infant is baptized! What are the "responsibilities" then of a baptized infant? Some teach that an infant is brought by baptism into the "sphere" of grace, not responsibility, in order to be saved; not baptized because it is saved. It is true the Kingdom and the Church alike are the "sphere" of *our* responsibility, (if I must use the word "sphere," of which there is no need.) In both I must maintain the one faith and confess the one Lord, and I begin to do this by the one baptism. Can an infant do this? the doctrine necessitates the absurd question. Then the baptism of an infant is not the "*one* baptism" of Eph. iv. and is therefore outside Scripture.

"There is a third sphere, that of, creation: One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in [us] all."

Would it be believed that the precious revelation from the Lord Himself, "I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God,"—the revelation of a relationship which it is one of the special objects of this epistle to unfold, should be, by the necessities of this theory, perverted to apply to all born of Adam—creation! And this is a part of the unity of the Spirit, which is wider even than the profession of Christianity, and must include the children of the heathen etc.! Truly there is something to say after all for the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man!

But, thank God, we can turn back to Scripture and there all is plain and simple. The unity of the Spirit, composed of seven parts, in threefold relationship to the Trinity, (compare Matt. xxviii. 19) embraces only those who are born of God the Father and are baptized by the Spirit into the one body, and who therefore can truly own the one Lord and the one faith in the one baptism. No other baptism than this is the one baptism of Eph. iv. Infant baptism is therefore but a superstition.

Water baptism has to do with the Kingdom. But our business is not with the spurious in the Kingdom; they are left to the day when He will purge out of His Kingdom all that offend and do iniquity. He made no place in His Kingdom for them, an enemy did it. Our business, I repeat, is with the treasure, the pearl, and the fish.

Scripture never teaches that baptism "*effects*" anything; then the baptism of infants is utterly meaningless. The confusion of which your paper complains is caused by this very teaching about infant baptism being efficacious to put into the Kingdom. It is the confession of those who enter, not the means of entering. It is not therefore one of the 'keys' of the Kingdom,—a visionary

idea. The keys are simply symbols of authority, and why should there be only two? J.

Remarks.—With regard to the first point made by our correspondent, we must leave the question of ingenuousness for settlement by our readers, remarking simply that the interpretation of Eph. iv. is *not* necessary for the support of either household or believers' baptism. That interpretation must be tested simply by Scripture. If "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" does not refer to the Kingdom as distinct from the Church, then we have, in the body of Christ, the possibility of mere profession. We say possibility, for whether Kingdom or Church, no one contends for the necessity of mere profession. Does not every Christian shrink from the thought—of there being mere professors in the Church? And yet the faith of Christianity may be avowed, sealed by baptism, and "Lord, Lord" be said, without heart acquaintance with Christ. Where are such people? Certainly not in the Church. But with equal certainty are they in the Kingdom, the place of profession, and we add again, of responsibility, though grace be unknown.

As to the distinction between house and kingdom, it seems clear, where it is referred to, as formed by the Holy Spirit and indwelt by Him, that it is an aspect of the Church. As being the place of administration, taken up by man, as in 2 Tim. ii., the house possesses some features in common with the Kingdom. To say that the presence of false material is the ground for the plea for infant baptism, is a thorough mistake. No one pleads for it on such grounds. It is to be feared that only too many who have professed conversion and been baptized in mature years, go to swell the numbers of those in the Kingdom but not in the Church. In fact it is not from the children that the ranks of profession are so largely swelled. No baptized child, who is scripturally taught, could for one moment indulge in false security because of that baptism.

As our brother suggests, the Kingdom has to do with earth and earthly responsibilities. Let that fact be remembered, and we have the justification of the baptism of the children of believers. Are not our children in

circumstances far different from those of unbelieving households? Do they not enjoy privileges of light and truth, of being brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Nay, is not the sad failure so noticeable in many households, where the heads of the family are Christian, due to lack of living faith to count upon God for the children, and to act accordingly? This want of faith may be present as well where baptism has been administered as where it has not. But to that, and not to baptism, must the failure be attributed, from the standpoint of human responsibility. It was while men slept that the tares were sown, and may not the slumber of Christians as to the immortal interests of their children explain the fact that so many of them grow up unsaved? Hence it is useless to use as an argument against household baptism that it introduces mere profession into the Kingdom. Let sleeping parents awake and we shall see. Oh for a divine awakening among us all, a living faith to take hold upon God.

The way to see eye to eye upon this subject is to get before God. Amid the cries to Him, the trembling for the salvation of the little ones, and the faithful bringing up, we believe there would be little room for argument upon this theme. Parents would see that their children had a place in God's thoughts, that "thou and thy house" had a special and tender meaning, and in the anticipation of God's faithful performance of His promises, they would enroll their little ones under the Lord's leadership and name His name upon them. Baptism would fittingly express this relation, even as in other connections circumcision did.

With regard to the error of the "Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," we see no danger in the interpretation of "one God and Father of all etc." He is that of "every family in heaven and earth." He will be manifested as such in the millennial and eternal ages, and as Creator, he is the Father of Spirits. There is no connection between this and that teaching based upon a denial of redemption and the atoning work of Christ.

MY DEAR BROTHER:—I am glad to find while reading the last number of *Help and Food*, August, that you have

opened its pages again to the discussion of household baptism; and I am especially thankful for the article from your own pen, as to the importance and Scripture authority for baptism as a Christian responsibility.

I am also thankful for this article from F. A., on the subject, and that he thoroughly believes in burial—not sprinkling—as the baptism of Scripture,—as all of our brethrem do. But I am especially sorry that some who really believe this, as to the doctrinal and theoretical part, are still willing to go on in disobedience as unbaptized believers, simply because they have been told that they were christened, or sprinkled in infancy. Therefore they cannot say before God, that they have been buried with Christ in baptism. And for two very potent reasons they cannot say it.

First, it was done when they were unconscious of any such thing being done; so that they are dependent on human testimony as to the past.

Second, it was sprinkling; which in Scripture is always symbolic of the application of the Word, never of burial, by which it was done: so that they can only say that, on the ground of two or three witnesses, they have been christened or sprinkled.

And to say, that they have faith to believe that they have been baptized is simply superstition, not faith at all. For “superstition is the subjection of the mind of man, in the things of God, to that for subjection to which, there is no warrant in divine testimony” (J. N. D.). To say that on the ground of two or three witnesses, I was sprinkled when I was an infant in my mother's arms; is no warrant in divine testimony, hence is not and cannot be the ground for faith.

What then is it? A relic of the superstitions of Romanism, which has come down to us through the perversion of a very important truth, in the apostasy of the Church in the third century, as every one knows who has ever read church history. In my judgment, F. A.'s argument

(by inference) is one of the most convincing ever produced in favor of household baptism, and it would carry me back to that position again, but for one point, which he does not bring out. This, I hope, I may be allowed to give to your readers and to my brethren, as God has given me to see it, and which led me to give up household baptism;—for, once I was happy in baptizing children little and large; when *the faith of the parents was united in it*. So that you will understand that I once stood where our brother F. A. stands, though I did not get it out of the twenty-eighth of Matthew. Let me tell you how it was that I was brought to give up household baptism.

I was laboring in the gospel where there were a number of Christians interested and getting blessing, and some were exercised on the subject of baptism. They requested me to take up the subject. I waited on the Lord as to how I should take it up, for I had never lectured nor preached on the subject; and my mind was directed to the sixth of Romans and the second of Colossians.

In my meditations I was led to see, as never before, that baptism was the "burial of the old man," and in order to be valid *must be an act of faith*, on the part of the one baptized, not on the faith of others. Under the law things were done by proxy. The priest acted for the people: so that people who brought offerings, were accepted in the value of a sacrifice offered by a priest. But faith entered into the holiest, in Abiahah's day, without law or priest, but still in the value of a sacrifice, not yet offered but looking forward: we entered into the holiest in the value of the same sacrifice, without law or priest, looking back to the Cross. Grace supersedes both law and priest; but there is no entrance into the holiest but for individual faith; and it is only the individual who has by faith entered into the holiest, who can in the reckoning of faith, "bury

the old man," when faith has reckoned him dead. Now let us read from Rom. vi. 3: "Know ye not, that *so many of us* as were baptized unto Jesus Christ, were baptized unto His death? Therefore *we are buried* with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, *even we also* should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

This is the language of faith. How can I put my child in here? Just so in Colossians. The apostle is writing to those whose individual faith had, in "the obedience of faith," taken this portion. "And ye are complete in Him which is the Head of all principality and power, in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Buried with Him in baptism wherein ye also are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised Him from the dead."

How can I put my child into this? I fully concur also in this, that baptism does not bring the one baptized into anything, neither the Kingdom, nor the house, nor yet covenant relationship. But to faith it is the witness, or sign of subjection to Christ, and the receiving of a testimony which puts one in the place of death; and I believe also brings him into the place of a resurrection life: thus emphasizing, or rather, exemplifying what the blessed Lord Himself gives us in John v. 24—"is passed from death unto life."

This too is clearly seen in what the Lord Jesus says of John the Baptist in Luke vii. 29, 30: "And all the people that heard Him, and the publicans justified God being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." We have been told that John preached the gospel of the

Kingdom, and that John's baptism brought them into the Kingdom. What then did Christian baptism bring them into? For they were baptized again, as we see from the nineteenth of Acts. And if baptism formed any part, or was in any sense preparatory to the entrance into the Kingdom, Why was it repeated? And if as our brother F. A. puts it; the great commission comes down to us, and we disciple and baptize our children in infancy, when they come to years, and have in the intelligence of faith come to the knowledge of salvation, they must be baptized again, according to Acts xix. 5.

Now this is not an argument by inference, but from the simplest and plainest teaching of the Word. For Paul found disciples at Antioch who had believed—doubtless quickened souls—and had been baptized, but had never heard a full gospel, and when he gives them the proper word for an intelligent faith, they were baptized again, and received the Holy Ghost. Does this come down to us also? This settles the question, that an intelligent faith should accompany, or precede a valid baptism. Does it not? How then can I accept brother F. A.'s inferential argument from Matt. xxviii. 19, 20? May the blessed Lord give us to bow to His word.

H.

Remarks.—All who have weighed Scripture would surely agree that immersion is clearly taught, but largely by inference, of which brethren seem so afraid. Our brother, however, in our judgment, in insisting upon the immersion of those who have already been baptized by sprinkling, unwittingly detracts from the honor of the blessed Lord. The emphasis is never put upon the mode of baptism, but upon the *Name* in which the person is baptized. See all through Acts, particularly in the 19th chapter referred to. Here, in the only recorded case of re-baptism, the subjects had already been immersed. They were baptized the second time in the name of the Lord Jesus. Hence if a person has been once sprinkled

in the name of the Lord Jesus, or of the Trinity—the full revelation of the Godhead brought out through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus—to immerse him would be to ignore the value of the precious name already put upon him.

As to testimony of others, it does not bear upon the subject. Scripture warrants the reception of the testimony of two or three witnesses.

We have already spoken of the remainder of his argument from Colossians. As the apostle was writing, of course, to believers, it was natural that he would refer to what baptism meant, into the truth of which his words would lead them. Would it be impossible for children to look back, after their conversion, and see the significance of that which had been done for them years before?

SALUTE PHILOLOGUS.

(Rom. xvi. 15.)

IN this most wonderful epistle written by the apostle to the saints at Rome, these words are found, "Salute Philologus." The epistle itself, the foundation of all the rest, and of the Christian life itself, is worthy of our most careful study, unfolding as it does the utter ruin of the human race, and the redemption and full salvation of God, based upon the blood of atonement, and brought to light by the gospel.

The closing chapter is devoted to commendations, salutations, and personal touches all beautiful and perfect in their place. "Salute Philologus" is one worthy of note. Nowhere else do we read of this name upon the pages of inspiration. We never read that he was an evangelist as we do of Philip, nor yet of his pastoral labors, or teaching as is recorded of Paul, Timothy, Apollos and others; nor is he even commended for things noticed of certain others in this chapter: "Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which

labored much in the Lord," "Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us" etc..

There may have been in his case little or no gift, and perhaps not time nor strength to do much in the way of labor; perhaps little seen or known in public, but of all this Scripture says nothing, but simply those words, "Salute Philologus."

One thought looms up before the mind as we meditate upon this part of the inspired word of God. Is the name an index to the subject? Is the *name* the characteristic of the life of this one so worthy of the apostle's salutation?

If so then we have found the key to a life sweet and precious to God and worthy of a place in the closing part of this epistle; and to those familiar with the word of God, this line of interpretation will not be new, nor yet out of order. Notice this from Gen. iv. down through the inspired word; Eve naming her sons, Cain and Abel; Noah's birth (Gen. v. 29), Leah's four sons (Gen. xxix. 32-35), in fact the whole family; and again the Spirit's interpretation of the name of Melchisedec (Heb. vii). Also the frequent change of names, as from Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter, Saul to Paul, and Joses to Barnabas. These by the way as incidents true and divine in this line and order. But now, to return, if the name gives us a clue to this case, there was abundant reason why the apostle caused it to be placed upon the divine record "Salute Philologus"—a *lover of the word*—for so is his name by interpretation.

What a lesson this name has in it for us! the true secret of the Christian life, progress, and usefulness, the secret of true greatness before God. This epistle Paul had sent to Rome, and it was written by inspiration. Did not the apostle desire all the saints to read it and meditate upon the wondrous and pre-

cious themes therein given? Surely this was the apostle's desire for the saints in that large city. Hence Philologus would be a pattern in this respect, and the mention of his name might inspire all to the same diligence and love for divine truth, "a lover of the word."

Beloved, let us, one and all, more truly answer to this name. These days are dark, evil is on the increase, lack of confidence is felt everywhere, and neglect of the word of God is felt all over, especially among the young.

May we have a reviving every where, and true hearty interest in the study of the word of God. It is written of one, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job xxiii. 12). And again still later, "I rejoiced at thy word as one that findeth great spoil." "I *love* thy commandments above gold, yea, above *find* gold" (Ps. cxix. 127, 162).

Again, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jer. xv. 16). These also were true Philologuses in their day and time, and we do well to draw near, and as the heart warms in communion with the Father and the Son, love for the Word will revive. The range is large, the fields are immense, the mines are rich and full of heavenly ore, and yet many of the people of God are passing over and by, and gather little or nothing. Reading a few verses, or a chapter now and then, good and right in its place, will not give us this Philologus character. But "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word" (1 Pet. ii. 2). "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 treasure; then thou shalt understand the fear

of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God " (Prov. ii. 1-5). Then the Book will not appear dry, and hours spent therein will not grow dreary.

We may be dumb and have no utterance; deaf and hear little oral ministry; yet there lies before us the precious word of God, and if we are never commended, or rewarded for preaching or teaching, will it be said at the end that we have been *lovers* of the Word?

Philadelphia (Rev. iii. 7) is a name akin to Philologus, and one thing is there said to Philadelphia, "Thou hast kept My word." Herein lies the secret of all spiritual power. How refreshing, in a day like this, when Higher Critics are doing their best to weaken and overthrow confidence in the Word, and again Satan in other ways draws away the hearts of men by love of pleasure, love of wealth, love for the world, to find here and there those who love the word of God, those who abide fast by it.

Search it! and love—beyond rubies or find gold—the precious things therein written. Of such we can truly say, The Lord increase their number, and to such we can yet write, "Salute Philologus."

A. E. B.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 14.—Has the Church any authority apart from the word of God?

ANS.—The *Church* has no authority in herself. Her place is that of subjection to her Head and Lord. He makes known His will through the Scriptures by the Spirit. Therefore no action on the part of the assembly, contrary to the word of God is of the least authority. But, believing in the presence of the Spirit of God, and seeing from Scripture the responsibility resting upon the assembly to act for God, no one should raise questions save after prayerful deliberation, and in a scriptural manner.

QUES. 15.—If a matter on hand is put into the assembly to be settled there, and all the assembly except two or three decide that so and so is right, but the two or three see clearly from the word of God that the larger number in the assembly are

wrong, would it be right for the two or three to give in to the others; or should they hold the truth even if the assembly cut them off?

Ans.—The question has been partially answered above. We would add, that an action nearly unanimous would suggest the Lord's presence, *unless* it most clearly contradicted Scripture. therefore great care and patience should be used in expressing dissent. If a vital question is involved, principles affecting the very basis of fellowship, then a firm, definite stand even if but by *one*, must be taken, whatever the cost. But how much prayer, self-judgment and waiting on God should precede such a step. Then, too, the saints should be appealed to from some neighboring gathering, that if possible the entire weight be not left upon the two or three remaining firm at the local assembly. How much is accomplished by faith and love.

QUES. 16.—Are younger brethren in their place if they are trying to rule in the assembly.

Ans.—“Likewise ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder” (1 Pet. v. 5). A principle is involved in this of wide reaching effect. Both in the history of Israel and of the Church the evil effects of its neglect have been manifest. But there is an inherent reason for such direction. It presupposes godliness, gravity, wisdom and the proper government of one's own house, on the part of the elder. Alas alas, how family failure has come in to render God's order impracticable, and then self-assertion on the part of the young is only too easy.

But there is another side; “Let no man despise thy youth.” And if there be a heart for the Lord, a devotedness to Him and true humility, the young man will surely find a place of service. What can be sadder than a forward restless disrespectful spirit on the part of the younger, unless it be the spiritual incompetency of the older that makes it possible.

QUES. 17. If a brother has been cut off from the assembly (it may be justly or unjustly) but he continues to come to the meetings, and at the worship meeting quietly takes a back seat. When a hymn is given out he joins in heartily and sings praise to God and God's beloved Son his Saviour and Lord. Has any one a right to request him to be silent, not to sing in the meetings? Some found fault when a box of ointment was broken.

Ans.—We would say a brother if dealt with by an assembly, would feel the solemnity of the judgment, and as bowing under the mighty hand of God, would be quiet and undemonstrative. His demeanor would indicate this. On the other hand, a hard ungracious spirit should be avoided that checks the work of grace in the soul.

THE HOPE OF THE MORNING STAR.

2. THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW; ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH; AND THE RELATION OF PROPHECY TO EACH.

OF fundamental importance to the discussion before us is the consideration of the distinctive difference between the Old Testament and the New, and as connected with this, of the unique character of the Church of Christ. And this will be found to involve a special relation in which it stands to prophecy. These are indeed matters which have been often taken up, and it would seem as if apology were due for taking them up again. The necessity for doing so could not perhaps be shown more plainly than in the following quotation from one who takes the opposite position to that for which we are contending here; and for this purpose I introduce it in this place. The writer says:—

“It is a pleasure to quote the following admirable words from Dr. Gebhardt, to confirm what we have stated, that this term ‘end’ is applied to the present age: *‘Christianity is nothing and will be nothing else than the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy,** or the realization of the eschatology of the Old Testament prophets, throughout the whole New Testament time, until the Lord comes—and even on to the final glorification of the world.’ Prof. Volck is more definite and to our purpose: ‘Since the ascension of Christ we stand in the last days until the Lord comes.’ With still greater definiteness, Dr Hobart, another profound student of prophecy, says: ‘The whole of

* Italics ours.

the New Testament times is called by the apostles, and by the Lord Himself, the 'end.' It is expressly stated that at His first advent Christ appeared at the end of all preceding ages—an 'end' to be closed up, by His second advent. In this sense our whole Age in the New Testament is conceived of as the end of all the ages that went before.'" *

One can hardly imagine that the words we have emphasized here can be intended by the writer or taken by him who puts his seal so strongly upon them, in the full sense which they would bear for the ordinary reader. "Christianity nothing else than the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy"! All the New Testament, therefore, so far as relating to this, adding nothing even to the Old! Can that be intended? All the mysteries "hidden from ages and generations" and "now made manifest to the saints" blotted out by one stroke of the pen; and the deed applauded by one who would join the apostle in saying, "Let a man so account of us as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God"! No: we must refuse to believe that this can be really meant in its entirety either by Dr. Gebhardt or the one from whom we quote him.

But that the writer does diminish greatly the character of these mysteries will be evident by another quotation:—

"There is no foundation whatever for the assumption that 'the Church which is His Body' is to be made up of the believers between Pentecost and the Parousia. A new body was not formed on the day of Pentecost. The fact that all Old Testament saints

* "The Doctrine of the Ages," p. 83.

had divine life through faith in Christ made them members of His Body. The special revelation given to Paul,—‘the mystery’ revealed through him—was that believers from amongst the Gentiles, without taking a place in subordination to the Jews, as they will do in the Millennial Age to come, *are now, in this Age*, heirs to the inheritance, members of the body, and partakers of the promise given through Abraham to the sons of Israel. This is the new thing—Israel set aside from national supremacy during the present gospel period, and all nations evangelized in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the next Age these national distinctions will again be resumed.”*

Thus we see that the questions connected together at the beginning of this paper are in fact in intimate relation to one another, and that the old contentions still have to be maintained. We may well begin with asking ourselves, Is it the fact that this equality of Gentiles with Jews in the things noted,—things which all believers in Israel already possessed—is the “new thing,” the “mystery revealed through Paul?” If so, there must be, it is plain, a large measure of truth in Dr. Gebhardt’s assertion that we are living only in the last days of the Old Testament prophets; with this reserve, that Gentiles have a co-equal place with Jews which the prophets did not contemplate. Are we prepared to accept this as the fact?

The three things belonging to the mystery of Christ revealed to Paul which are referred to, are better stated in the original Greek of Eph. iii. 4-6 than in the common or revised translations. There

* “The Doctrine of the Ages,” p. 55.

is indeed a difficulty in putting it into English that is not awkward or else paraphrastic. The most literal would read, "that the Gentiles should be joint-heirs, and a joint-body, and joint-partakers of His promise in Christ through the Gospel." It is strange enough that in the reference just made (though it is true it is not given as a quotation) the last important words should be omitted, and the "promise *given through Abraham to the sons of Israel*" should be substituted for "His promise *in Christ through the gospel*." No doubt it may be said the promise was always in Christ, and the gospel is the same gospel. Indeed, the last *is* said, (p. 90;) though proofs of the opposite have been often given. Why should they be disregarded?

The Lord had been preaching the gospel (Matt. iv. 23; Mark i. 14, 15) from the beginning of His ministry; yet it was only at the time when, being rejected, He charged them that they should tell no man that He was the Christ, that Jesus "*began* to show unto His disciples that He must go unto Jerusalem and . . . be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matt. xvi. 20, 21). Now Paul tells the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv.) that precisely *that* was the gospel he had preached to them, which they had received, and in which they stood, that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again." Yet the Lord had not even to His disciples mentioned this before; and when He did, "Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be to Thee."

Doubtless for us there is "one gospel, the only gospel": in that we shall all agree. If any now

preach a "different gospel," as the apostle wrote to the Galatians, it is "not another": for there is no other. Doubtless, also, in type and prophécy Christ's death had been foretold, and the glories that should follow; yet, speaking of this very thing, the same apostle tells us, to whom at first it had been so strange and so unwelcome, that "of this salvation the prophets enquired and searched diligently," and to them "it was revealed that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things." To us indeed they minister these things now; but how has this ministry been made available to us? The apostle tells us: They are "reported unto you by them that have preached the *gospel* unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

This gospel, then, which is our gospel, has indeed its roots in the Old Testament, and to us ministers its blessings. For all that, it was not the gospel of the prophets' days, though faith might and did realize the goodness of the Lord at all times. Now that it has come, it necessarily stands out as if there were no other; and so the apostle says of Israel, "As concerning the *gospel*, they are enemies for your sake"—for the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 28). They are *treated* as enemies,—as having accepted the responsibility of that death which they inflicted, and which the gospel proclaims. *Nationally*, they are thus enemies; and not until the gospel ceases to go forth, will Israel come to salvation. For, as the prophet is witness, it is when "darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, that the Lord shall arise upon" Israel, "and His glory shall be seen upon" her (Isa. lx. 2). The light of the gospel must have gone from the earth for such gross darkness to exist.

Thus "His promise in Christ through the gospel" would by no means be that to the sons of Israel, but Paul the apostle to the Gentiles it is who claims it in some special sense as his: "*my* gospel." And it has been long since pointed out that no other besides Paul gives us the doctrine of justification, or the full development of the place in Christ. The promise here spoken of is the blessing flowing out of this, and (although it be true that "if ye be Christ's ye are Abraham's seed,") goes far beyond anything promised to the sons of Israel. It must do so, inasmuch as the place itself is entirely unknown in the Old Testament.

Then as to joint-heirship, with whom are we joint-heirs? No one can have a doubt, who goes to the New Testament for an answer; none can have the least knowledge, who goes to the Old. Abraham was "heir of the world," but is that our measure? No, we are "joint-heirs with Christ;" and it is Paul again who declares this to us (Rom. viii. 17). Had the "sons of Israel" ever such an assurance? No, in no wise: we are here again not introduced as Gentiles into Israel's blessing, but, whether Jew or Gentile, into what is immeasurably higher.

Lastly, the "joint-body" is, as we are well aware, the "body of Christ." Scripture, and indeed the apostle Paul again, declares that the Church is Christ's Body, and that "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles" (1 Cor. xii. 13). Thus, while it is true that "all Old Testament saints had divine life through faith in Christ," we may not say, unless in the teeth of Scripture, that this "made them members of His Body": for only the baptism of the Spirit does this. And again, though our author says that "a new body was

not formed on the day of Pentecost," yet the Lord Himself tells His disciples that they would be baptized of the Holy Ghost then. What then are we to make of this positive assertion?

If, then, a new body *was* formed at Pentecost, it was certainly a body unknown to the Old Testament Scriptures, which has nothing of the "sons of Israel," even those converted to God, being the Body of Christ. The only passage for it that has been produced, so far as I am aware, is Isa. xxvi. 19, which reads with the omission of the words supplied by the translators, "Thy dead men shall live; my *dead body*, they shall arise." The word used here has no plural, but is joined to a plural verb, and is therefore in the revised version, as by Delitzsch and others, taken as a plural, "my dead bodies." Here all semblance of application to what is before us is lost. But if even the singular were to be preserved, and Jehovah really calls dead Israel "My corpse," when He brings her out of her grave, we may well wonder at the boldness that would apply such a term to the Body of Christ; especially when the whole claim of Israel to be this is to be founded upon it. It is hardly worth while to discuss it further.

But the Church of Christ, as indwelt of the Spirit, is also the "House" and "Temple of God"; and here again is what Israel never was, nor any part of Israel. While, if Israel was indeed the Bride of Jehovah, and is to be again married to Him after her long divorcement, as Hosea declares (ii. 16, 19, 20), the similar relationship of the Church to Christ in no wise can make them identical (Eph. v. 32). The latter is part of the "mystery" of the Church; the former, a well-known truth of the Old Testamept.

The Church is heavenly; Israel, earthly. If they are identical, then the Church and Israel have no separate interests, and there is accomplished, though in a different way, the same gross confusion as long prevailed, and still prevails very much, among post-millennialists. With them Israel's promises were made over to the Church; in this the Church would be merged in Israel.

Thus the marriage of the Bride of the Lamb takes place in heaven (Rev. xix.) before Christ descends with His saints to the judgment of the earth. The Christian book of prophecy, Revelation, is all through concerned with the connection of the Old Testament in this respect with the New. Everywhere it adds the heavenly to the earthly side of the last things; as, conspicuously, in its view of the "thousand years" in the following chapter. There we have no details of earthly blessing. Neither Israel nor the Gentiles come into the scene. But what have we? The reign of the heavenly saints with Christ over the earth, and the defining and limiting the thousand years themselves, giving them their true relationship to the eternity which follows. In connection with all this we find a Jerusalem indeed, but it is the new and heavenly Jerusalem and not the earthly city.

Thus the Church, spite of denials, begins at Pentecost and is complete when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in and it is taken up to meet the Lord in the air. That the Old Testament saints share in heavenly blessing and in the reign with Christ over the earth has always been maintained; but that does not identify the one with the other. On the contrary the epistle to the Hebrews clearly distinguishes between "the church of the first-born ones whose names

are written in heaven," and "the spirits of just men made perfect"—Old Testament saints, who as a body have been subjected to death (Heb. xii. 23). The Church here has the same relation to other heavenly saints as Israel upon earth to the nations there; and this the words describing it point out.

How impossible, then, that "Christianity" should be "nothing else than the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy," when the fact is that it never appears in Old Testament prophecy! As having place in those mysteries which are characteristic of the New Testament, and which were "kept secret from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xiii. 35; Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. iii. 5; Col. i. 26) it lies hid in a mere gap of time only indicated in connection with the judgment upon Israel. In the prophecy of the seventy weeks, for instance, it comes in between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week; and the only event marked there is the destruction of the city and the sanctuary by the Roman people (Dan. ix. 26). In Micah v. we have what is, no doubt, the fullest statement in this connection, where Israel's judge, the Bethlehem-born ruler, being smitten by His people, this is followed by their being giving up "until the time when she who travailed has brought forth: *then*," it is added, "shall the remnant of His brethren return unto the children of Israel." Here it is certainly implied that the brethren of the King had in the meantime been detached from the nation and its hopes; but what they had turned to in place of these is still not indicated.

There is another reason for this omission: that with Israel the hope of the world is for the same time set aside. *Israel* it is that is to "blossom and

bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isa. xxvii. 6). Good reason is there, then, why with her setting aside time should make no progress. Dates are connected with her; the determined times are upon Daniel's people and the holy city; and the centuries of gathering out a heavenly people go all uncounted.

A striking proof of this is found in Corinthians (2 Cor. iv. 4); where Satan is called, not the "god of this *world*," as the common version has it, but the "god of this *age*." Christianity is not reckoned as an "age," among the world-ages, or assuredly this could not be said. A world that has cast out Christ, Israel uniting with the Gentiles to do so, may be still that out of which grace *saves*, but nothing more. As the Lord said to the Jews that took Him, "This is your hour and the power of darkness" (Luke xxii. 53), so "the *age* of this world," as the word really is in Eph. ii. 2, is "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Satan is the "god of this age."

Hence "the end of the age" in the divine sense is, as has been already said, the last week of Daniel's seventy, broken off from the rest, and still to come. And thus also, Christ's death was for us who stand in this gap "the completion of the ages" (Heb. ix. 26, Gk.), and upon us "the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. i. 11, Gk.). That does not mean, as Dr. Gebhardt supposes, that we are in the end-times of Jewish prophets, but the contrary; though the spiritual value of those ended ages is surely ours.

The reaping of this spiritual value of the ages past is indeed a thing of the greatest importance to note, for those who are disposed to even Christianity with

any promises through Abraham to the sons of Israel. According to the apostle some at least of the prime factors of Israel's history "*happened*" to them for types, and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come." Such words are surely not intended to make us feel that we occupy but a place in the latter days of the Old Testament prophets; but rather that all times previous were intended to minister to the present, as (in some sense) time to eternity; the ages (for *us*) being completed when Christ died. We are not in any Jewish "end" at all. And though it is true that Abraham sought a "better country, that is, a heavenly, yet our portion as "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus" (Eph. i. 3) is only in *contrast* with any promise through Abraham to the sons of Israel that can possibly be shown. Abraham himself in this relation is the "heir of the *world*" (Rom. iv. 13), and the sphere of Israel's blessing is distinctly defined in the same way: "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord: the *earth* has He given to the children of men" (Ps. cxv. 16).

F. W. G.

(*To be continued.*)

"THE FIG-TREE."

TWO PARABLES AND TWO TYPES.

THE history of the children of Israel was an eventful one, and with what care the Spirit records its details. From Abraham's time they are compared to an olive-tree, but their rejection of Christ is the end of their place of blessing, as a nation, and the natural branches are set aside by the judicial hand of God (Rom. xi.).

Then again the history of that nation from their

coming out of Egypt, is compared to a vine, but because there was no fruit they are set aside (Isa. v. 1-7; Ps. lxxx. 8).

Then later, from the time the remnant of Judah and Benjamin return from the Babylonish captivity, we get the figure of the fig-tree. Let us pause and devote a few lines to their history, as illustrated by the fig-tree. The fig-tree planted in His vineyard (Palestine) would be the remnant restored to the land from the Babylonish captivity. (See Ezra and Nehemiah.) This is grace giving them a little reviving,—not the fatness of the olive, to be sure, nor yet the abundance of the vine, but the fig. Ezra ix. 8 shews how that grace was appreciated by them at first as in Ezra himself.

Then in grace they are granted plenty of time ere the fruit is sought. Plenty of time we have said, time to grow and develop into ripe fruit; at last He in grace, wondrous grace, came (did not send) and sought fruit but found none.

Here let us note the type first and then the parable (Mark xi.). He was in the vicinity of Bethphage (house of unripe figs), suited name as an index to their then condition, when He came seeking fruit, and we are informed He was hungry (ver. 12); “and seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, He came, if haply He might find anything thereon: and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves.” A house of unripe figs, surely; “nothing but leaves.” As another figure, “a house empty, swept, and garnished,” but no life; and hence there being no divine life there could be no divine fruit for the Son of God: there was nothing but mere form of godliness,—as temple, priesthood, sacrifice, rites, and ceremonies—

but the heart not right; there was nothing but profession—“nothing but leaves.” What a picture of grace abused that had so borne with them! “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” Then we hear of judgment pronounced, “No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever.” Judgment falls upon it and the next day they discover the tree had withered away. This is the tree as a type.

But now we will look at His parable concerning the fig-tree (Luke xiii. 6-9).

For three whole years He came seeking fruit. What an exhibition of grace and patience, surely, but grace on their part refused and abused. At this period they were under law and what was the voice of the tables of stone? the voice of Moses? God in righteousness claimed fruit, but there was nothing but leaves. The voice of the law was “cut it down;” this was truly righteousness; “why cumbereth it the ground?”—removed from the vineyard entirely and set aside by the judicial hand of God.

But grace has not yet exhausted all her stores and says leave it another year, “and if it bear fruit well, and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.”

In grace the tree was planted (restored). In grace they were granted four hundred years before He came. In grace He came and waited three years; and grace says, Spare them this year also. Oh what grace! and this is expressed in that cry, “Father forgive them, they know not what they do.” And the first nine chapters of the Acts shew us this grace in still waiting upon the fig-tree,—yet no repentance, no fruit; and so eventually the tree withers, is under the curse (as the type) and is cut down (as in the parable) and removed.

The Jew is now scattered from Palestine and wanders among the nations (Hosea viii. 8, 12; ix. 15, 17). This is their condition all along, while grace, offered to them but refused, now flows out to the Gentiles and a people gathered out of the world for the heavenly Kingdom. Grace will flow out to them again, but now is the time of their unbelief, the dark night (nearing its close) before the new day dawn for them again. Or the cold stormy winter, ere the new spring opening up another summer, when they will bear fruit, and at the Lord's second coming He will find figs, ripe figs upon the fig-tree. The tree may have withered and been cut down, yet the stump remains as the oak and teil-tree (Isa. ix. 13) and when the new spring comes around, "there is hope of a tree if it be cut down, through scent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant" (Job xiv. 7-9). So we may not be surprised to hear in Scripture of the fig, once again. Two examples, we have given of the past and present while under the judgment of God. One a type and one a parable. Two more we will look at concerning their future, illustrating and completing their whole history to the end. The first will be found in that very remarkable fourth day of the first chapter of the Gospel of John.

Peter appears upon the third day and answers to the call of the Church, of this dispensation on the resurrection side of the cross, the gathering together of the living stones to make up the spiritual and heavenly temple.

Nathaniel appearing upon the fourth day (vers. 43-51) is in figure a return to the earth after the Church is called out, and gathered up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 13-18). Hence he is a figure of the

Jew in the future (near) and the Lord's eye is upon him when 'under the fig-tree. That is yet in the place of distance, death and judgment, but we believe taking his true place before God in confession of the whole past. He had reached the place of repentance and self-judgment, and when such is the case all guile is gone "an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile" (see also Ps. xxxii. 1, 2). This will all be true of the believing remnant by and by, and hence there will be for them in that time of tribulation, as for Nathaniel, a promise of future blessing on the earth. "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending (in attendance) upon the Son of Man." Their new spring-life and summer is near at hand, the millennial period. This is the second typical lesson in the Gospels of the fig-tree. Now we will note the second parable of the same in Matt. xxiv.

Many details are here given of that time of tribulation which Nathaniel's day foreshadows, a time of deepest trouble for the Jew, especially in their land, when they will have their eyes opened which were long darkened (Rom. xi. 25, 26).

This period will be closed by the appearing of the Son of Man. The sun-rise for the nation now about to emerge from their darkness; and then the Lord adds, "Learn a parable of the fig-tree: when its branches are yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh, so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (vers. 32-35).

Thus the fig-tree here is Israel again, but Israel tasting the scent of water and about to revive with a new resurrection-life. She will put forth her leaves

once more, profession, but now true and real, and the fruit, yea pleasant fruit will not be denied Him then. As Nathaniel they will own Him whom they pierced, "Thou art the Son of God. Thou art the King of Israel." What a prospect! What a hope yet for this people! Then they will get their land. "It shall not be sold forever" (Lev. xxiv. 23; Ezek. xxxvi. xxxvii.); long trodden down by the Gentiles and they long rovers among the nations, will be restored, and blest—"the head and not the tail," and all nations blest through them (Zech viii. 1-8, 22, 23; Isa. lx.; Deut. xxviii. 13).

This period of blessing when the fig will revive, flourish and bear fruit will cover over 1000 years as a good long summer, and touch even eternity itself. The day of eternity. What a history! What a record of grace from first to last. A. E. B.

THE KINGDOM, THE FAMILY, AND THE CHURCH ;

AND THE SCRIPTURES APPROPRIATE TO EACH.

IT is of great importance for the correct understanding, and consequent obedience of the word of God, that we should know the point of view of each writer of the inspired book. Every Christian knows—in more or less full measure—the great difference between the Old and New Testaments, the Jewish and Christian dispensations. It is our desire now to take up this last—the Christian dispensation,—and inquire if there are different ways of looking at it.

Before entering upon our subject, we must remind our readers, that the life of our Lord was, in a most

marked way, connected with the Jewish dispensation. There were foreshadowings of His rejection, and the consequent disowning of the nation, but until the fatal words, "We have no king but Cæsar," patient hands were stretched out to "a disobedient and gain-saying people." Our blessed Lord clearly foresaw this rejection and in that which is the gospel of the Kingdom—Matthew—He gives a view of what would take place in His absence. Leaving aside for a moment the great necessity for His atoning death, there was no reason why, as He rode into Jerusalem, the shouts of welcome to Him who came in the name of the Lord, should not have been sincere and universal,—and He as a result have taken His seat upon the throne of David. No reason, alas! save that heart of enmity which would prefer a murderer to God's Christ, an enmity which could only be quenched by the blood it would shed: "having slain the enmity thereby.

It is after the cross and His resurrection and the descent of the Holy Ghost that the Christian dispensation begins. This is the great hinge-point of all history—the descent of the holy Ghost—and from this point onward till the coming of the Lord for His Church, the Christian dispensation reaches.

Our present inquiry is, whether we can look at this dispensation in more than one way. Without question that which gives character to it, as it does to the heavenly city, is the Church, now espoused and then manifested as His bride (Rev. xxi. 9). It is our purpose to look more closely into the nature of the Church at the close, in the order of our title. We must now ask, do the New Testament Scriptures look upon this dispensation in any other way.

In the chapter to which we have already alluded—the sevenfold view of the Kingdom in Matt. xiii.—our Lord describes prophetically, not His Church, but His Kingdom as left in the hands of His servants. This Kingdom is begun by the preaching of the Word and goes on till the Lord comes and establishes it by His own power. The King is absent. His servants sow the seed; the enemy sows *his* seed and the tares spring up. This began at Pentecost and has gone on ever since. Into the Kingdom good and bad, the latter through the carelessness of the Lord's servants, have been admitted. Another view is given in the next two parables. The mustard seed grows into a great tree, and the leaven permeates the whole lump. Here we have the outward growth and inward character of the Kingdom. From smallest beginnings it becomes the great world-power, sheltering the birds of the air—the servants of Satan. Inwardly, it takes the pure truth of Christ and mingling with it the doctrines of men, it corrupts the entire mass. The last three parables give rather the divine side, and include: the purchase of the world for the sake of Israel, the Lord's treasure; the Church,—the pearl of great price,—and the final ingathering of the nations.

But we have here, during the present dispensation, the Kingdom of an absent King. That Kingdom is entrusted to men and as such partakes of the failure so common to men. This gives us the governmental or administrative side of Christianity. The keys of the Kingdom are given to men, but Christ builds His Church. Let this be understood and light is shed upon many scriptures. The parables we have already looked at would not otherwise yield their

meaning; and the same may be said of many other scriptures.

Profession and responsibility go together. There are all through the epistles, passages which refer, and can only refer, to those who have taken the name of Christian and assumed the responsibilities accompanying. It is not said that this profession is false. It is a great mistake to think all professors are false. There are true as well as false, and all alike have a solemn responsibility before God. In this way we can understand Paul's allusion to the possibility of a preacher of the gospel being a castaway (1 Cor. ix. 27; x. 1-12). Falling away (Heb. vi. 1-8; x. 23-29) refers to the same class as does Col. i. 23, and other passages. Now to apply these scriptures to the Church would be to rob believers of the most precious comfort as to their eternal security. But let it be seen that there is a kingdom where responsibility covers the true and the false alike, and it will be easy to see the need of these warnings.

In like manner, there are entire epistles which are written from this standpoint. Take the epistle of James, with its solemn warnings, its characterization of a vain religion, of faith without works and much else. Note the absence there, and in the epistles of Peter and Jude as well, of any reference to a present heavenly standing of a Church which, as in Christ, is partaker of His present position. All is looked at as upon the earth, where responsibility is prominent and where there is room for the false as for the true. Second Peter emphasizes this, as does also the epistle of Jude; we are evidently looking at a kingdom, and there is room for the false as for the true.

Passing next to the family, we are met by thoughts

that are not exactly at home in either the Kingdom or the Church. Birth, life, nature, and communion are the distinctive thoughts here. We are members of the family of God by birth—new birth, and have received life—eternal life. The new nature is divine and therefore holy; "He that is born of God doth not commit sin." The life is endless, and is characterized by the knowledge of God. There is thus individual participation in what is of God. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." It will be seen here that relationship and not position is before us. Now these truths are the prominent features of John's epistles, which we may therefore characterize as family epistles. "My little children" is a prominent expression. He lives in the atmosphere of the family of God, where light and love are pre-eminent, and where nothing inconsistent with the divine nature can be tolerated.

Paul is the great apostle of the Church. To him was committed the revelation of that mystery which had been "hid in God," until He was pleased to reveal it. Paul's epistles—speaking broadly—have Christian standing and Church position as their main theme. Justification, deliverance from sin, law, the world; the presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, linking us with Christ in glory and with one another here—all the precious truths connected with that wondrous fact "in Christ"; the nature, unity, ministry, and worship of the Church—all this and much else forms the subject matter of Paul's epistles. No one can know what the Church, the body of Christ is, who is ignorant of these epistles; no one can fail to understand it who makes them his study.

We have then three aspects of Christianity—the

Kingdom, or earth-side, including all who profess obedience to Christ; the family, where relationship by birth and nature are emphasized; and the Church, the body and destined heavenly bride of the Lamb. The various portions of New Testament Scripture may be grouped under these three aspects: Paul, the Church writer; John, the family; and James, Peter, and Jude, with the Revelation, giving the Kingdom. This is broad characterization. Of course, there are portions in these contemplating other than the main theme of the epistle. But we believe it will be a most important and profitable exercise to trace the subject throughout the Acts and Epistles, and that thereby real progress will be made in rightly dividing the word of truth. What a flood of light would be shed upon the word of God, if His people betook themselves prayerfully and diligently to its study.

ON DISCIPLINE: ITS SPIRIT AND OBJECT.

[It is well to note that this short paper, printed from notes of a discourse at a meeting (1841), refers to the spirit animating the individual in dealing with evil. The putting evil out is assumed; as the word of God expressly commands it. We are bound to keep God's house clean, to look diligently lest any man fall of the grace of God, lest there be amongst us such or such, to judge them that are within, and put out the wicked. But this is a proving of ourselves to be clean. God will have the place of His dwelling clean. The question of withdrawing from evil-doers, a positive commandment of the Word, is not touched. The object of this paper is the spirit in which discipline is to be exercised.]

WE ought to remember what we are in ourselves, when we talk about exercising discipline—it is an amazingly solemn thing. When I reflect, that I am a poor sinner, saved by mere mercy,

standing only in Jesus Christ for acceptance, in myself vile, it is, evidently, an awful thing to take discipline into my own hands. Who can judge save God? This is my first thought.

Here I stand, as nothing, in the midst of persons dear to the Lord, whom I must look upon and esteem better than myself, in the consciousness of my own sinfulness and nothingness before the Lord—and to talk of exercising discipline; it is a very solemn thought indeed to my own mind; it presses on me peculiarly. Only one thing gets me out of that feeling, and that is the prerogative of *love*. When love is really in exercise, it cares for nothing but the accomplishment of its object. Look at it in the Lord Jesus, no matter what stood in the way, on He went. This is the only thing that can rightly relieve the spirit from the sense of an altogether false position in the exercise of discipline. The moment I get out of that, it is a monstrous thing. Though the subject-matter of conduct be righteousness, that which sets it going is love—love in exercise, to secure, at all cost of pain to itself, the blessing of holiness in the Church. It is not a position of superiority in the flesh. (See Matt. xxiii. 8–11.) The character of discipline as “master” we have not at all. Though influenced by love to maintain righteousness, and stimulated to a jealous watchful care one over another, we must ever remember that, after all, “to his own Master” our brother “standeth or falleth” (Rom. xiv. 4). Love alone guides it, and the service of love displays it. We do see that character of discipline in the Lord Jesus, when He took a scourge of small cords to drive out the desecrators of the temple (Matt. xxi.; John ii.); but it was anticipative of an-

other character of Christ, when He will execute judgment.

There are two or three kinds of discipline, full of comfort as showing the association of the individual with the whole body, and with God, which have been ordinarily confounded amongst Christians.

There is, in this country, a great deal more difficulty connected with the question of discipline, than elsewhere, because of certain habits of action, whereby discipline has come to be looked at merely as a deliberative and judicial act. Persons have been *voluntarily* associated, and there has been a habit of legislating for the credit of the voluntarily associated body. Because people must secure themselves, each society makes its own rules. Now that principle is as far from the truth as the world from the Church, or light from darkness. One cannot admit of any principle of voluntary association at all, or of preservative rules of one's own. *Man's will* is that which brings in ruin and destruction. It may be modified, but the *principle* is altogether false. There is no such thing as voluntary action on man's part, in the things of God; it is acting under Christ, by the Spirit. The moment I get man's will, I get the devil's service and not Christ's. This has occasioned a mass of practical difficulty, that those abroad do not feel. When I get the notion of a judicial process going on, for the trial of crime, by certain laws, I find myself altogether off the ground of grace; I have confounded all sorts of things.

The developed statement of Matt. xviii. 15-17, though often cited, does not seem to touch the matter. It is a question of wrong done to a brother; and it is not said, concerning the one who has done the

wrong, that the Church is to put him out; but, "Let him be unto *thee* as a heathen man and a publican." This may have to be the case, as to the Church subsequently, but it is not its character here; it is simply, "Let him be unto *thee*," etc.—have nothing more to do with him. It supposes a case of wrong done to an individual, as in the trespass-offering, where it is said, "If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbor," etc.* There is the sovereignty of grace to forgive, even to the "seventy times seven;" but "thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." An individual has wronged me: how am I to act? I go not to the Father's discipline, nor to the Son's discipline over His own house; but, acting towards him in the love of the brotherhood, I go and say, "Brother, thou hast done me wrong," etc. There is, first of all, this remonstrance in righteousness; yet the path is such that it may not get out of the scope of grace.

Having done this, if he will not hear me, I take with me one or two more, "that in the mouth of two or three witnesses," etc. If that fails, I then tell it to the whole assembly. If he refuse to hear the Church, "Let him be unto thee," etc. The thing prescribed is a course of *individual conduct*, and the result, *individual position* towards another. It may come to a case of church-discipline, but not necessarily. I go

* All acting against God's commandments and doing that which was not to be done, was sin, and called for the sin-offering; but there were trespasses against the *individual*, wrongs done to the *neighbor*, by breaches of confidence and the like, and for these there was a trespass-offering. See the first seven verses of Leviticus vi.

hoping to gain my brother to repentance, to replace him in his right relation in fellowship with myself and God (where there is failure in brotherly love, it necessarily affects communion with the Father): if my brother is gained, it goes no farther; it ought never to pass my lips; the Church knows nothing of it, or any other creature, but we two. If there is failure, I act to restore him in fellowship to all.

As to the discipline of the Father, there is a great deal more of individual prerogative of grace in this. I doubt whether it comes under the care of a body of Christians at all; it is the exercise of individual care. I do not see that the Church stands in the place of the Father. The idea of superiority is true in a certain sense; there is difference of grace as well as of gift. If I have more holiness, I must go and restore my brother (Gal. vi. 1). But then this individual action in grace is not church-discipline. It is most important to keep these things clear and distinct, so that, whilst one is quite ready to be subject to the two or three, individual energy should not be at all restrained, but remain clear and untouched. The Holy Ghost must have all His liberty. I could suppose a case where an individual had to go and rebuke all round, as Timothy, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering," etc. (2 Tim. iv. 2). That is discipline; but the Church has nothing to do with it, it is individual action.

But again, the Church may be *forced* to exercise discipline, as in the case of the Corinthians (1 Cor. v.). The Corinthians were not the least prepared to exercise discipline; but the apostle insists upon their doing so. There is that which is the individual exercise of the energy of the Spirit in the ministry of grace

and truth, and the like, on the souls of others; and church action not at all involved. It is a mischief to make church-discipline the only discipline. It would be a most awful thing if it were necessary to bring every evil before all. It is not the tendency of charity to bring evil into public: "Charity covereth a multitude of sins." If it sees a brother sin a sin which is not unto death, it goes and prays for him; and the sin may never come out as a question of church-discipline at all. I believe there is never a case of *church*-discipline but to the shame of the whole body. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul says, "*Ye* have not mourned," etc.: they all were identified with it. Like some sore on a man's body, it tells of the disease of the body, of the constitutional condition. The assembly is never prepared, or in the place to exercise discipline, unless having first identified itself with the sin of the individual. If it does not do it in that way, it takes a judicial form, which will not be the ministration of the grace of Christ. Christ has not yet taken His full judicial place. The moment it comes to that, the saying—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still," etc., the Church has departed from its place altogether. Its priestly character in the present dispensation is one of grace.

What is the character of *fatherly* care and discipline? How does the *father* exercise it? Is it not because he is the father? He is not in the same place as the child. This is the principle of it. There is one superior in grace and wisdom; he sees another going wrong in judgment, and he goes and says to him, "I was once there," etc.—"do not go and do so and so." It is entreaty and exposing the circum-

stances in love; though, in case of hardness, rebuke may come in. The father can make all allowance for weakness and inexperience, as having passed through the same himself. Make yourself ever so much the servant, the principle of the father must be maintained; and it is a principle of individual superiority, however accompanied by grace. All the world should not stop me. It is the prerogative of individual love, to say, "Though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." It flows from the father's love, and leads me to the other, not to let him go on wrong, for love's sake. It is not a case of trespass against me, but a case of walk or conduct against his place as a child. We fail, because we do not like to go through the pain and trouble of it. If a saint gets into trouble, he is Christ's sheep; and I am bound, in whatsoever way I can, to seek to get him out of it. He may say, "What business have you to come?" and the like; but I ought to go and lay myself at his feet, in order to get him out of the net which he has got into, even though he dislike me for it. This needs the spirit of grace, and the seeking to bear the whole on one's own soul.

The other kind of discipline is that of Christ, as Son "over his own house." The case of Judas is of great value here. It will always be, that, if there is spirituality in the body, evil cannot continue long; it is impossible that hypocrisy, or anything else, should continue where there is spirituality. In the case of Judas, the Lord's personal grace overcame everything; and it will always be so, proportionably, and practically. The highest manifestation of evil was against this grace—"he that eateth bread with Me, hath lifted up his heel against Me: . . . He then,

having received the sop" (grace thoroughly came out, when the evil was shown to be done against Himself), "went immediately out" (John xiii).

This discipline never acts beyond what is manifested; and, therefore, we see the disciples questioning one another what these things meant, before the evil was done; it did not touch the conscience of the assembly. The Father's discipline comes in, where there is nothing manifest, for that which is secret, or which may come out years after. If an elder brother, and seeing a younger one in danger, I ought to deal in this fatherly care, and tell him of it; but this is very distinct from church-discipline. The moment I exercise fatherly discipline, it assumes a communion, in myself, with God, about the thing—a discernment of that working in another which may produce evil, that *he* has not—a perception which I have by my spiritual experience, which authorizes and incites me to act in faithful love toward him, though without, perhaps, any ability to explain what I am doing to a human being.

The mixing up of these three things, individual remonstrance, the Father's discipline in this fatherly care, and Christ's discipline "as Son over his own house"—ecclesiastical discipline—has led to all manner of dreadful confusion.

J. N. D.

Concluded in next issue.

PRAYER AND PROPHECY, CORPORATELY CONSIDERED. ;

PRAYER is speaking *to* God, and prophecy is speaking *from* God; so that we need not be surprised to find them associated together in Scripture (1 Cor. xi. 4, 5; Acts xiii. 1, 2; 1 Cor. xiv. 1, 15). There are in the Church of God various gifts for the edification of the body, but there is no such thing as a "gift of prayer." Fluency, comprehensiveness, eloquence—are not essentials, nay they are often hindrances to true prayer. Every Christian must pray, and we might add, every Christian man in communion with God should be ready, if led of God, to pray in public. We long to see God's beloved people delivered from the last vestige of clerisy. There is no such thing contemplated in God's word as one man or a few men being the only ones used in prayer. As we have just said, prayer is no gift of words, belonging to some few, specially endowed. The babe can lisp its prayer, as the father can pour out the full longings of his heart; but all can pray. Is the soul in communion with God? Are we seeking to please Him? Then what possible hindrance can there be to prayer? Ah brethren, let us own the pride and worldliness which close our mouths and limit our faith. Let us search our ways and ask if we engage much in *secret* prayer. He who is familiar with God in his closet, will find it no difficulty to speak to Him in public.

Closely connected with this question is another: do we speak for God, individually? Are we finding the way open to speak to one and another of the great questions that must be answered? and can we

without hesitation confer with our fellow Christians about the things of God? If we are in abiding communion with God this will be the case. We will not have to plead that we have "so few opportunities," or are "naturally diffident." When the Spirit of God is unhindered, He uses the weak things. Saints have no difficulty in speaking of the affairs of every day life: why this hesitation in speaking of the things of God? Is it not Satan robbing us?

Coming now to the corporate life of God's people, we find simply an enlargement of scope, not a change of principles. Prayer and prophecy are closely associated and interdependent. Wherever there is a spirit of prayer there will be the spirit of prophecy, and the reverse. Both are having to do with God, and imply that reality which is always the mark of one in His presence.

By prophecy it will be understood that we are not referring to any supernatural manifestations, whether in prediction, designation of special persons for special work, or new revelation. We solemnly believe that all claims to such prophetic gift are antichristian and blasphemous. The systems which at this day lay claim to such gifts are ungodly to the core. God's written word is ample and all sufficient, and in it we are told that revelation is complete (Col. i. 25).

But there is another sense in which the term prophecy is used in Scripture. "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men for edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor. xiv. 2). There is no question here of something supernatural. The man speaks for God, conveys His mind to the hearers. It is the word spoken in due season—suited to the need of

the Lord's people, comforting the weak, exhorting the faint, and edifying all. It differs from teaching in that its chief object is not to impart instruction, but to move to action, or to secure a definite result.

Now it is one of the primary principles of gatherings or meetings that no man should or can preside. That is the place of the Holy Spirit alone, "dividing to every man severally as He will."* Here all are alike brethren, ready for the Spirit of God to use according to His sovereign wisdom. We need hardly say that the distinguishing meeting of all others to which this applies is that for the breaking of bread. Saints come together for this purpose, are gathered to our Lord's Name, and He according to His promise is in the midst. He makes His presence known by the Holy Spirit. At this meeting no one should think of assuming charge, but all should be ready as channels of worship and of prophecy. Worship is prominent here.

But there are other meetings of the saints beside that for the breaking of bread, and it is of these

* It will be understood that reference is here made solely to meetings of the assembly. An evangelist may hold a meeting, or a teacher, which is entirely upon his own responsibility as a servant of the Lord. In this no one dare interfere. But when the assembly as such meets, the evangelist or teacher is simply one of many. He cannot assume a place here—to do so would be to usurp the place of the Holy Spirit. There is a constant tendency to forget or ignore this, with the inevitable result of clerisy—clergy and laity—the one or the few taking all ministry, and the rest quite willing to have it so. Need we be surprised where this is done, to see leaders set one against another, with the saints taking sides, forming parties, sects, and divisions in the Church of God? This, we are persuaded, is the cause of divisions assigned in Scripture (1 Cor. i.), and illustrated on many a page of church-history.

chiefly that we would speak. Though most scriptural there is no injunction as to a prayer meeting. The general exhortation is, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another" (Heb. x. 25). We assemble together, for whatever the Spirit of God may have to give us, and for prayer.

It has sometimes been asked what is the special meeting which is alluded to in 1 Cor. xiv. Our reply would be first, that *every* meeting of the assembly is covered by that chapter, but that we would naturally expect the "prophecy" spoken of there to have special prominence at other times than the breaking of bread. We deprecate the use of the term "open meeting" to characterize any special gathering of the saints. Every assembly meeting is open, that is, no man presides.

But the fact remains that freedom in prophecy is, or should be, a special feature in our meetings. We will be pardoned for speaking plainly, so as to be clearly understood. Of the first meeting, that for breaking bread on the first day of the week, we have already spoken. There is usually what is called a Bible Reading, or Reading Meeting. While open for all to take part freely, being more or less of an informal character, the main object is the study of the Word, and naturally those gifted as teachers would come prominently forward. But this would not preclude any from giving a word for the conscience or heart as the reading proceeded. Besides, there is freedom for prayer and praise at such meetings. We have not yet reached however that which is characteristically the meeting where prophecy would be expected to have the prominent place.

Most assemblies of God's people have what is usually called a Prayer-meeting, at which, as its name suggests, it is expected that prayer will be prominent. At this meeting, of course, no one presides—all being free to take part as led of the Spirit. We believe that the spiritual state of an assembly can be gauged by the character and attendance at this meeting. Is there a free and earnest spirit of prayer? do all take part, not formally, but really? If so, we would expect to find an assembly walking with God, awake to its privileges and responsibilities. Let us, beloved brethren, search ourselves as to the prayer-meeting. Is it a weariness? a cold duty unwillingly performed, or neglected? Ah! have we nothing to speak of to God, no word of thanks, no requests for ourselves and others, no intercessions for the Lord's work? We need not be surprised, if such is the case, to find all our meetings heavy, and the Lord's work languishing.

But we must look a little further. It is our purpose to show that prayer and prophecy are closely linked together in Scripture, and as a result that a meeting for one would necessarily include the other. Let us look at a passage strikingly illustrative of this. In 2 Chron. xx., in the face of a great danger, king Jehoshaphat and his people assembled in what might very properly be called a prayer-meeting. They gather together before God, pleading His promises, confessing their weakness and ignorance and casting themselves upon God. How beautiful is their attitude—"we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee" (ver. 12).

They do not have to wait long for an answer!

"Then upon Jehaziel . . . came the Spirit of the Lord *in the midst of the congregation*. . . . 'Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours but God's'" (vers. 15, 16). How speedy and suited was the answer—a word in season, truly. What we wish particularly to notice, is that it is a word of prophecy in immediate connection with prayer. They had been speaking to God, and He speaks to them. Notice, too, the uplifting effect of this word: they worship God, "with a loud voice on high" (vers. 18, 19);—before the enemy has been met or overcome, they celebrate the victory.

But if prayer and prophecy are thus connected at a special meeting, why should it not be so always? "Pray without ceasing" and "despise not prophesyings" come very closely together (1 Thess. v. 17-20). In fact they belong to one and the same closely connected paragraph. Do we believe in prayer? Do we believe in prophesying? Why then should there not be the freest exercise of both at the meeting which is characteristically the one where both would be expected to be prominent?

Need we go into any detail? "Ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted" (1 Cor. xiv. 31). It may be but a few words uttered, but if from the Lord they will come with power. Here no "gift" is required, but simply a soul in communion with God, and so, ready to give His word. Two or three would speak, the rest judging—not criticising, but weighing and testing the word. As one finished another could utter what was on his heart; and as a result the presence and power

of the Lord be manifest, even to an unbeliever who might be present (ver. 23).

Beloved brethren, what an attractive meeting! How the saints would flock to it, what a testimony would issue from it, and what power in individual walk and gospel work would result. Is this the character of our meetings? If not, then let us at once confess it, and turn afresh to our God, crying to Him who delights to hear and to meet His people.

We conclude therefore that the meeting ordinarily called the prayer-meeting is the one where we would expect to find the marks of 1 Cor. xiv.; not, however, as we have seen, to the exclusion of other meetings. Let us become clear as to the teachings of that chapter, and fully alive to the blessedness of the Spirit's presence, and we will prove the reality of all there promised. It is a matter too sadly common, that there is a dullness in the prayer-meeting—only a few attending and fewer participating. This ought not so to be. Let us see to it that it is not, and blessing, rich and lasting, will be the result.

We might add further that when no one is present who has it specially laid upon him to conduct a public meeting, this would be the natural and scriptural way for the assembly to come together. The result, if there were real exercise before God, would be both prayer and prophecy under the power of the Holy Spirit. There would then be no need to complain of unprofitable or dull meetings. Saints would be edified and sinners converted, apart from any special gift. May our God stir us up as to these things.

THE HOPE OF THE MORNING STAR.

3. THE RESURRECTION OF THE SAINTS AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

IT is evident from what we have been considering that the writers from whom we have been quoting are involved in the same great error. Overlooking the meaning of the time-gap in which we are, and ignoring or belittling the mysteries which give Christianity its distinctive character, we can be said to be in the "last days" of Jewish prophets, and "partakers of the promise given through Abraham to the sons of Israel." There is but one passage that I know which may seem to assert the first, and that is the quotation of Joel by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 17). But that is quoted to the Jews to whom through Christ's intercession the mercy of God was yet giving time for repentance (Luke xiii. 8, 9), so that if even yet they repented nationally, the times of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord, and He would send Jesus Christ again to them (Acts iii. 19-21). This was soon ended by the rejection of the message.

That "in the end of these days" (of the prophets, Heb. i. 2, *Gk.*) "God hath spoken to us by His Son" says nothing of our place in them, and no more than Heb. ix. 26, which asserts what in reality is very different. The sanctuary could not have been opened for us if the ages of probation had not been actually ended *for us*; nor could the history of Israel have disclosed its types, if *for us* the "ends of the ages" had not "arrived."

Yet the "end of the age" has in the prophetic

sense not yet arrived (Matt. xiii. 39; 'xxviii. 20): so that we cannot be in it; and the age to come has still a probationary character for men at large. For us the cross of Christ has already manifested the character both of the flesh and the world, and we need nothing else to manifest it. But how important for us to realize the gap in prophetic time in which we stand.

We are now to go in company with some other writers who have given us their refutation—to themselves such—of the views for which we are contending here. If they come to us in fragmentary, and perhaps disorderly fashion, the responsibility is not our own. It is due very much to the lack of seriousness with which the subject seems to be taken up. As Mr. Cameron affirms, "None of the learned students of prophecy in Germany seem to think the modern vagary of a secret rapture of the Church before the end-time is reached is worthy of serious consideration." We can but lament the influence which the attitude of these learned Germans seems to have exerted over others in this matter, even when they can afford some brief moments to it. Their language is too often tinged with a scorn which might be spared without injury to their arguments, and which can only impress favorably those for whom the larger part of the argument is the man who uses it. Their method seems to be to gather up a sheaf of statements in denial of what they are dealing with, point them with scripture references, and launch them at the unwelcome doctrine; leaving the point and propriety of the application often to be determined or taken for granted as suits best the temper of the reader. We shall have occasion to point this out as

we proceed; but it certainly makes less easy the examination of arguments which have often to be first discovered, and perhaps unsuccessfully.

A tract is lying before me of twenty-one small pages, fourteen being taken up with an enumeration of the texts which have the words to show what the Scriptures say as to the question, "Can the Parousia (Coming in Person) of the Lord be separated from His Epiphaneia (Shining upon); or from His Apokalupsis (Revelation)?" The writer (Mr. Robert Brown) cautions us at the outset, "that positive and absolute statements of the Divine Word must of necessity be received before, and must therefore override, all *inferences* from other passages which seem to contradict them; as such inferences are, of course, merely *human*."

He concludes with some inferences of his own, which are, of course, as open to question as those of any other, and which we shall take up as such, but in the order which may be most convenient for us, and putting along with them the statements of other writers, as far as they may serve to give completeness to the subject before us.

But in the first place the question in the title of his tract is misleading, and as a consequence the classification of some of his texts likewise. For no one, as far as I am aware, would contend that the coming of the Lord could be separated from His manifestation or revelation. What is contended for is that the coming of the Lord into the air, as announced in 1 Thess. iv., takes place previous to, and in fact some time previous to, His coming on to the earth with the saints He has gathered to Himself before. Both would be His coming; and therefore the

merely quoting texts with the word "coming" in them would settle nothing.

But the passage itself declares that those who sleep in Jesus God will bring with Him; when He appears, therefore, they shall appear with Him. *That* the Thessalonians needed to know, that the dead had not lost their place with Him in that day. How then would this be accomplished? The dead would first be raised and the living then changed and caught up with them. And so they should be ever with the Lord.

It was in fact a new revelation, and so the apostle announces it as what he said "by the word of the Lord." The twenty-fifth of Matthew had shown that the living saints would go forth and meet Him, but had said nothing about the dead at that time. The apostle adds as to the dead. Dr. West indeed declares with his usual strong assertion, that "the word of the Lord" here is nothing but the Lord's "Olivet discourse" (Matt. xxiv.; xxv.). "It corrected the Thessalonian error as to the 'any-moment view.' Paul appeals to it to decide the question. He calls it the 'word of the Lord.' He had it on his table when he wrote both letters to the Thessalonians (!) He uses its very language. The seventieth week covers his own words in 2 Thess. ii. 1-8."* But that settles nothing as to what is here. Where is the declaration in the Lord's prophecy as to the resurrection of the sleeping saints? One can only suppose that the gathering together of the elect from the four winds is taken to mean this; but the proof of it must be found, if found at all, elsewhere.

* Daniel's Great Prophecy, p. 130.

Moreover the apostle does not speak as if he were citing. In 1 Cor. vii. 10, where he does cite, he says, "not I speak, but the Lord." Here it is the phrase used for a special revelation (See 1 Kings xiii. 2, 32; 2 Chron. xxx. 12; LXX.): "*I* say to you," but "by the word" or "*a* word of the Lord," (for there is no article,)—that is, by a revelation.

Our assurance of this will be still more confirmed if we consider that Paul it is to whom especially belongs the revelation of the "mysteries" (Eph. iii. 3-9), among which is that of the Church as the body and bride of Christ (Eph. v. 32). Could there be a thing which required less (as we would suppose) a special revelation to make it known to him, than the institution of the Supper of the Lord? It is narrated by three of the evangelists, and as the common feast of Christians was known to every one; and yet, as showing forth in the participation of it the unity of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. x. 17), and thus coming into the special sphere of his commission, it has to be the subject of a special revelation to him (1 Cor. xi. 23). It is therefore in perfect accordance with this that the taking home of the Bride (Eph. v. 27) should be in like manner the subject of a special communication. Thus everything unites to refute Dr. West's assertion.

He has more, however, upon the subject of the resurrection of the saints which we must look at as nearly concerning us here. "Its time-point," he says, "is given with the utmost precision in the Scriptures. It is the time-point of the Second Advent for the salvation of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked, even as at the one time-point Noah and his family entered the ark, and the ungodly

perished in the flood; and Israel was redeemed when Egypt was whelmed in the sea; and the Church fled to Pella when Jerusalem was destroyed. It is a time-point for both judgment and salvation. Asaph calls it the "shining of the Lord (Ps. l. 1-6). Isaiah calls it His 'appearing' (lxvi. 5) in order to raise the holy dead, deliver Israel, destroy the Antichrist, and bring to victory the Kingdom. Five times in the Old Testament this illustrious *Parousia* of Christ is described, (1) as the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven (Dan. vii. 13); (2) of the Conqueror from Bozrah descending over Edom (Isa. lxxiii. 1-6); (3) of the coming of the Lord to Olivet (Zech. xiv. 5); (4) and to Zion (Isa. lix. 20); and (5) in clouds both for Judgment and Salvation (Ps. i. 1-6; xcvi. 13; xcvii. 2-8; xcvi. 1-9; cx. 1-7; lxxii. 2, 4, 9-14, 18, 19; cxiii. 2-17)."*

That is not the whole, but we pause here for the present. It is a good specimen of the style of argument on the part of one of the liveliest opponents to what he calls the "Any Moment Theory." One naturally supposes that all these references are to establish the time-point of the resurrection of the saints. That is what he is speaking of; but by a turn which, if we are not to call "dexterous," we must ascribe to his perplexingly involved style, a number of texts which merely speak of judgment and salvation at the appearing of Christ, come to look as if they were proof-texts of what he is seeking to establish;—even the Church's flight to Pella when Jerusalem was destroyed! Let us examine, however, as far as necessary, what he has set before us.

* Daniel's Great Prophecy, pp. 197, 198.

And first as to Noah and the flood, we may frankly admit the application to the coming of the Lord which He Himself makes (Matt. xxiv. 37-41). "The one shall be taken and the other left." But we must handle such things more carefully than Dr. West: "taken" how and for what? Those whom resurrection takes out from among the dead are saints and taken for glory. At the rapture of the living saints, it is the same. In Noah's time, "the *flood* came and took them all away;" those taken are the judged and not the saved.

When the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven, there will be a real correspondence with this. When the purification of the earth is in question, as it will be then, "the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather *out* of His Kingdom all things that offend." But that is neither dead nor living saints. The application here, therefore, fails entirely.

But Dr. West has forgotten Enoch; though, as a living saint removed to heaven before the judgment of the earth, he occupies a sufficiently striking position to attract attention. One who actually prophesied, Jude tells us, of the coming of the Lord, and seems to fill the gap that would otherwise be left in what is really a very striking picture of the times that are at hand. But the application fails Dr. West. If Enoch had been taken away at the time when those shut up in the ark were nearing deliverance, how readily would he have seen and seized so fair an argument.

But Israel was redeemed when Egypt was whelmed in the sea! True; but I see nothing that points in that either to the Coming, the Resurrection, or the

Rapture: everything seems to be lacking here that would give even the semblance of proof of what it is cited for. That Israel will be actually delivered from her enemies again when the Lord appears is true, and her former history may typify her latter: but that shows nothing as to the Church or the risen saints.

As to the Church's flight to Pella, we need not waste time in imagining arguments from it, for those who have not ventured upon the task of pointing them out to us.

And what does God shining forth out of Zion (Ps. l.) prove as to the time-point of the resurrection of the saints? Is it possible that ver. 5 can be the proof? It is clearly *Israel* that is gathered, for the psalmist says so; and nothing about resurrection at all.

In Isa. lxvi. 5, the Lord appears to deliver Israel; but there is not even a hint of resurrection or rapture in it. In Dan. vii., the "saints of the high places," as "saints of the Most High" should rather be, if applied to heavenly saints, as I shall not at all deny when judgment is said to be given to them (vers. 18, 22), infers, of course, that they must be risen to reign as such. But nothing is said as to the time of their resurrection further than this. In Isa. lxiii., there is nothing at all of resurrection or of rapture. In Zech. xi. 5, as Dr. West would even himself contend, the "saints," or "holy ones" coming with the Lord are probably only the angels, and thus every trace of resurrection or rapture is removed; and there is none in any of the texts that follow.

There is perhaps no need of question that upon

none of these texts cited would Dr. West ground a very serious argument for the precision with which the time of the resurrection is fixed in the Old Testament. His real texts have been given before, and we must now go back to see what they have to say as to the matter in hand. He says:—

“Decisive and clear are the words of the angel, ‘*At that time*,’ when Israel is delivered,—‘many shall awake (literally, be separated) out from among the sleepers in the earth-dust; *these* (who awake at that time) shall be unto everlasting life, *but those* (who do not awake at that time) shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt’ (Dan. xii. 2). . . . It is the resurrection of the holy, and of Israel’s holy dead that here is predicted, as in Isa. xxvi. 19, and the non-resurrection of the wicked ‘*at that time*’ (Is. xxvi. 14).”

The translation here given of Daniel is an old Jewish one, not by any means commonly accepted, and yet certainly possible. The application to literal resurrection is in both cases questioned by many, though in Daniel less than in Isaiah; but it would be an unnecessary labor for our present purpose to examine this. The connection in Isa. xxvi. (which is not history nor historical prophecy, but a song to be sung at a future day,) is not of a nature to give any but the most general idea of the time of the resurrection, and certainly not of the relation of this to the “time of Jacob’s trouble.” In Daniel, at first sight, it seems otherwise, and that, if it be a literal resurrection that is here, this must be after the tribulation. Yet Auberlen remarks as to this: “To show the causal connection between the behavior of the individuals during the time of probation and their

eternal state—this is the sole purpose for which the resurrection is introduced; as to the chronological relation between the time of distress and the resurrection, not the slightest intimation is given. It is worthy of remark in relation to this point, that the phrase ‘at that time,’ occurs twice in xii. 1, while no time is fixed in verses 2 and 3.”* This, of itself, seems a sufficient answer; but we shall see, as we go on that we might admit all that is claimed with regard to the order of time without in the least involving what Dr. West supposes.

But let us go on to the New Testament: as to this the same writer says:—

“Ten times this time-point is fixed at the close of the Great Tribulation, and is described (1) as the Lord’s coming *with* His saints, the Holy Angels, *for* His saints, the holy living and the holy dead—a ‘gathering of His elect’ universally, involving first of all, the resurrection of the holy who sleep in the dust of the earth, then the rapture of these and the holy living ones, and their meeting of the Lord in the air (Matt. xxiv. 29–31, 40, 41; xxv. 1); these scenes followed by the deliverance of converted Israel,—‘these My brethren,’ (Matt. xxv. 40); the judgment of the nations (31–46), and the welcome to the Kingdom; (2) as a time-point for “our gathering together at Christ’ (2 Thess. ii. 1), ‘in the air’ (1 Thess. iv. 17); (3) as the *thief-time* (Matt. xxiv. 43); (4) as the coming to judge the World Power (Rev. vi. 12–17); (5) as His coming under the seventh Trumpet, to vindicate the holy dead by their resurrection (Rev. xi. 15–18); (6) as His coming to reap

* Daniel and the Revelation: translated by A Saphir, p. 174.

the holy living (Rev. xiv. 14-16); (7) and at the *thief-time* (Rev. xvi. 15); (8) and after the sixth vial (Rev. xvi. 12); (9) and to destroy Babylon (Rev. xvi. 19); (10) and the Antichrist (Rev. xix. 11-21; (11) and to en-throne and reward His saints (Rev. xx. 1-6) From Moses to Malachi, and from Matthew to the Apocalypse by John, the resurrection of the sleeping saints is placed at no other epoch than at the close of the 'Tribulation Great,' and of the 'Warfare Great.'"

Again we have a number of passages grouped together, with merely a few words of application to mark his point; otherwise supposed to speak plainly for the view for which he contends: for he uses no argument, takes no pains to remove misconceptions, or meet objections; those who examine them must do the whole work both for him and for themselves. We shall attempt it nevertheless, with the more courage, that it is, at least, an enumeration of all the points that he can make, with great apparent precision. Let us attempt the examination.

(1) The first passages are evidently interpreted for us, and the interpretation becomes part of the proof. The "gathering of His Elect" is made to involve the resurrection of the dead and the rapture of the living. Yet we may question whether it does either, or rather applies to the gathering of the elect nation, Israel, from their long dispersion. In all the first part of the Lord's prophecy here to xxiv. 42, Israel is manifestly in the foreground, as all other details show: in the very next verse to the one in question, the parable of the fig-tree for instance. As for the "deliverance of converted Israel" *following* these scenes, he can only appeal to the words, "these My brethren," which certainly does not show where

the deliverance comes in. There need not be the slightest question that the appearing of the Lord itself marks the deliverance of the Jews at Jerusalem (as Zech. xiv. 3-5); which makes it natural to speak of the gathering of those scattered afar off. The place of Christians with reference to the coming is shown in the parables (comp. Matt. xiii. 34, 35); but if the appeal to xxv. 1 is meant to make the "then" with which it commences prove that the rapture of the saints takes place at the time of the appearing, it will not bear the weight of such an argument. The parables are connected by their ends and not by their beginnings. For after this first going forth of the virgins, there is the tarrying of the Bridegroom, the falling asleep, the midnight cry, the rousing and going forth again,—all following the "then." Will it be contended that this all takes place at the time of the appearing, instead of giving us a history of centuries? Let Dr. West defend this, if he can. But indeed he has merely indicated a text and left it. The rest here is not in dispute.

(2) The next two references, from the two epistles to the Thessalonians, need nothing to be said, as we have no controversy with the Scriptures, and the argument is not produced. The first epistle we have looked at already.

(3) The third head takes us back to Matt. xxiv. 43, and has nothing to do with either the resurrection or the rapture.

(4) The fourth brings us to Revelation; passing over the decisive passages in the third, fourth and fifth chapters, as if they had no existence, and bringing us to the "Coming to judge the World-power" (chap. vi. 12-17), to a passage which does not speak of it,

but of the alarm in men's minds as thinking of the Lamb's day of wrath as having come.

(5) The fifth again gives us Dr. West's interpretation "to vindicate the holy dead *by the resurrection.*" The last words are his own, and a comparison with chap. vi. 10 may well raise question of them. Yet did this refer in fact to the resurrection of the martyrs (chap. xx. 4), there would not be the least perplexity growing out of this.

(6) As to chap. xiv. 14-16 again, it is the interpretation that is taken for the proof, as so often. There are harvests of various character and various times; and there is nothing to show that this is in the tare-field of Christendom. We shall have to look at the parable another time.

(7) The coming as a thief is to the *world* (1 Thess. v. 2-4), and has in it no hint of the resurrection or the rapture; and (8) the eighth head is as little to the purpose here. Similarly the 9th and the 10th.

(11) One text only remains, and we shall consider it with Mr. Brown, Dr. West giving us no matter of contention really as to it. Our account with him is closed; although there may be something to add a little later: but as things stand we may certainly say that the strength of his argument is in no wise proportionate to the vigor of his language or the number of his texts.

Mr. Brown also contends that his texts prove that the saints are not to be raised before the great tribulation:—

"For they show that the saints are to be raised at Christ's *Parousia*; and that this *Parousia* will not take place until Antichrist has come to the end of his career; for they tell us that he is to be destroyed

'with the *Epiphaneia*' of this 'Parousia' (2 Thess. ii. 8), and that the saints only then 'rest,' when Christ Himself is thus revealed, *i. e.* at His *Apokalupsis* (2 Thess. i. 7); when only they assume His likeness and are manifested with Him in glory (Col. iii. 4; 1 John iii. 1-3; 1 Thess. iv. 17)."

We have the same peculiar manner of reference to texts that are not examined, as we have had before, the same putting in of words which are not in the texts, the same avoidance of opposing arguments and objections. One would think that our brethren had made a point of not reading the writings of those they are replying to. Think of people having need to refer us 1 Thess. iv., which we have been constantly quoting in behalf of the views in question, to show us that the saints are to be raised at Christ's *Parousia*! and then our needing to be shown that the manifestation of this *Parousia* destroys the wicked one. Why, we have been saying so all along; though perhaps without using the Greek word. What Mr. Brown needed to show us is that it is at the *manifestation* of the *Parousia* that the saints are raised.

Then he says that they "only then" rest when Christ is revealed; but it is Mr Brown who has put in the "only." The apostle tells the Thessalonians that they will have rest recompensed to them when their persecutors are troubled, putting these things together for the sake of the contrast; and it will be just as true when the Lord Jesus being revealed brings out the contrast, though the entrance into rest might be some time before. The next chapter shows that they were in danger of being led into the belief that their sufferings were a proof that the day of the Lord had come. Why, says the apostle, in the day

of the Lord the opposite will be true: your enemies will be suffering, and you will be at rest.

But, says Mr. Brown, "only" at Christ's revelation will they assume His likeness and be manifested with Him in glory! The passage in the first epistle of John does not say when we shall assume His likeness, but that when He appears we shall be in it: for to "see Him as He is" necessitates that. There is again no "only," which is a misleading addition to the text. The resurrection chapter (1 Cor. xv.) shows that the dead in Christ are "*raised in glory*," and 1 Thess. iv. that the meeting with the Lord is "in the air." When we see Him, then, we shall be already in His likeness, and when He is manifested, we shall be manifested with Him. How can the last be made to eke out the proof that we must wait for that manifestation to be changed into His likeness?

"Moreover," continues Mr. Brown, "it is expressly stated elsewhere (Matt. xxiv. 29-31) that the *Parousia* is not to take place till after, although it be 'immediately after,' that 'tribulation,' while it is likewise stated that the martyrs under Antichrist (*i. e.* in the great tribulation) are to be partakers of the '*first resurrection*' (Rev. vii. 13-17; xx. 4-6); and that this resurrection is to take place at Christ's Parousia (1 Cor. xv. 23)! Now, as there are only *two* resurrections, (1 Cor. xv. 23, 24; John v. 25, 29; Acts xxiv. 15; Rev. xx. 4, 5), it is manifest that the saints are not to be raised before the 'great tribulation'—a truth which is further confirmed by Dan. vii. 21, 22, 25, which tell us that Antichrist made war with the saints and prevailed against them, *until the Ancient of Days came*, and judgment was given to the saints

of the Most High; and the time came that the saints' possessed the Kingdom."

We have looked at Matt. xxiv. sufficiently already, and have seen the mistake committed in supposing that the mere occurrence of the word "Parousia" proves anything in the matter. The question as to the martyrs in the tribulation having part in the first resurrection is one of more concern, and the consideration of it may give additional help as to some points which have been already before us.

In the revival of pre-millennial doctrine from its long slumber of centuries, the vision of the first resurrection given to John caused it to be thought that the saints that were to reign with Christ a thousand years were only the martyrs. It was not perceived, as it naturally had not been by the advocates of a "spiritual" resurrection, their predecessors, that there were here, in fact, two companies: first, thrones, upon which persons were sitting, to whom judgment was given; and then a company of martyrs, who alone were seen actually rising from the dead and joining the number of those already reigning.

Moreover these of the second company were not and could not be, all the martyrs that ever were, but specifically those that were slain for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and such as had not worshiped the beast, nor his image, and had not received his mark upon their foreheads nor on their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The context shows, moreover, that, since all together make up the first resurrection, all the dead saints that ever were beside must be included in the first company of those already reigning when this company of martyrs are added to them.

Why, then, this strange division, as it might seem, between these two companies? There can be but one answer: it is a *chronological* division. These martyrs are people who died after the others (the great mass of saints) had been raised or changed and taken to heaven; and must have lived in a brief time at the end only, else no reason could be given for such a company being all martyrs, or at least, to speak within bounds, characteristically composed of them.

But this is again a very striking argument for the view for which I am contending:—the resurrection and rapture of the mass of dead and living saints having taking place before, yet not long before, the time contemplated in the vision. It confirms the truth of their being already in heaven in the fourth and fifth chapters, and agrees with what we find of the Gentile multitude of the seventh, that they had all come out of “the great tribulation.” Thus the vision of the first resurrection in the twentieth chapter, instead of being against the view he is controverting, is in fact a remarkable witness for it. It shows the second company to have come into the first resurrection in an exceptional manner, and accounts for the strong way in which it is announced that all together these are the saints of the first resurrection. God’s grace has overruled man’s sin and violence to bring into it those who might naturally seem shut out.

The argument about two resurrections only, therefore, which Mr. Brown is not alone in advancing, fails entirely here. It is the very passage from which alone he really gets it, which itself makes and accounts for the exception as to it: it still remaining

true that in character there are but two resurrections, the resurrection of life, and the resurrection of judgment, as in John v.

Taking this now with us back to Dan. xii. 2, let us notice how the addition to the first resurrection of this supplementary company (largely Jews also, as they necessarily would be) would set aside the difficulty that is made by Dr. West as to the first resurrection coming *after* the tribulation. It would even help to account for the terms used which express a partial rather than a complete number: "many," but still only a fragment of a larger number.

As for Dan. vii. 21, 22 being in opposition to the view we are contending for, as Mr. Brown supposes, it is merely what all prophecy shows, that Israel's distress goes on until the Lord's coming ends it.

F. W. G.

(*To be continued.*)

ON DISCIPLINE: ITS SPIRIT AND OBJECT.

(*Concluded.*)

THE great body of discipline ought to be altogether aimed at hindering excommunication, the putting of a person out. Nine-tenths of the discipline which ought to go on is individual. If it comes to the question of the exercise of the discipline of "the Son over His own house," the Church ought never to take it up, but in self-identification, in confession of common sin and shame, that it has come ever to this. So it would be no court of justice at all, but a disgrace to the body. Spirituality in the Church would purge out hypocrisy, defilement, and everything unworthy, without assuming a judi-

cial aspect. Nothing should be so abhorrent, as that, in God's house, such a thing had happened. If it were in one of our houses that something dishonorable and disgraceful had happened, should we go on and feel as though we were altogether unconcerned, that we had nothing to do with it? It might be that some reprobate son must be put out, for the sake of the others—he cannot be reclaimed, and he is corrupting the family—what can be done? It is necessary to say, “I cannot keep you here; I cannot corrupt the rest by your habits and manners.” Would it not, nevertheless, be for weeping and mourning, for sorrow of heart, and shame and dishonor to the whole family? They would not like to talk on the subject; and others would refrain from it to spare their feelings: his name would not be mentioned. In the house of the Son, how abhorrent to be putting out! what common shame! what anguish! what sorrow! There is nothing more abhorrent to God than a judicial process.

The Church is indeed plunged in corruption and weakness; but this is the very thing that would make one cling to the saints, and the more anxiously maintain the individual responsibility of those who have any gift for pastoral care. There is nothing I pray for more, than the dispensation of pastors. What I mean by a pastor is a person who can bear the whole sorrow, care, misery, and sin of another on his own soul, and go to God about it, and bring from God what will meet it, before he goes to the other.

There is another thing most clear. The result may be putting out; but if it ever comes to a corporate act in judgment, discipline ends the moment he is put out, and ends altogether—“Do not ye judge

them that are *within*? But them that are without God judgeth" (1 Cor. v. 12).

The question whether I can sit down with this or that person who is within never arises. A person staying away from communion (because of another, of whom he does not think well, being there) is a most extraordinary thing; he is excommunicating himself for another's sake. "For we, being many, are one bread [loaf], and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. x. 17). If I stay away, I am excommunicating myself, because another has gone wrong. That is not the way to act. There may be a step to take, but it is not to commit the folly of excommunicating myself, lest a sinner should intrude.

All discipline until the last act is restorative. The act of putting outside, of excommunication, is not (properly speaking) discipline, but the saying that discipline is ineffective, and there is an end of it; the Church says, "I can do no more."

As to the question of unanimity in cases of church-discipline, we must remember, it is the Son exercising His discipline over His own house. In the case in Corinthians it was the direct action of Paul in apostolic power on the body, and not of the Church. The body claiming a *right* to exercise discipline! one cannot conceive a more terrible thing; it is turning the family of God into a court of justice. Suppose the case of a father going to turn out of doors a wicked son, and the other children of the family saying, "We have a *right* to help our father in turning our brother out of the house," what an awful thing! We find the apostle *forcing* the Corinthians to exercise discipline, when they were not a bit disposed to

do so. "Here (he says) there is sin *among you*, and *ye* are not mourning, that he that has done this deed might be taken away *from among you* (he is forcing them to the conviction that the sin is *theirs*, as well as that of the man); and now put away *from among yourselves* that wicked person." The Church is never in the place of exercising discipline until the sin of the individual becomes the sin of the Church, recognized as such.

There is all this,—“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (1 Tim. v. 20), “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such,” etc., and the like; but, if evil has arisen of such a character as to demand excommunication, instead of the Church having a *right* to put away, it is *obliged* to do it. The saints must approve themselves clear. He forces these people into the recognition of their own condition, gets them ashamed of themselves—they retire *from the man*—and he is left alone to the shame of his sin. (See 2 Cor. ii. and vii.) That is the way the apostle forced them to exercise discipline. The conscience of the whole Church was forced into cleanness in a matter of which it *was* corporately guilty. And what trouble he had to do it! That is, I think, the force of “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; lest Satan should get an advantage over us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” What the devil was at was this—the apostle had insisted upon the excommunication (1 Cor. v. 3–5); and the assembly did not like it. He compelled them to act; they did it in the judicial way, and did not want to restore him

(2 Cor. ii. 6, 7), Then he makes them go along with him in the act of restoration; "to whom ye forgive," etc. The design of Satan was to introduce the wickedness, and make them careless about it, and, afterwards, judicial; and then to make it an occasion of separation of feeling between the apostle and the body of saints at Corinth. Paul identifies himself with the whole body, first forcing them to clear themselves, and then taking care that they should all restore him, that there should be perfect unity between himself and them. He goes with them, and associates them with himself, in it all; and so, in both excommunication and restoration, he has them with him. If the conscience of the body is not brought up to what it acts, to the point of purging itself by the act of excommunication, I do not see what good is done: it is merely making hypocrites of them.

The house is to be kept clean. The Father's care over the family is one thing; the Son's over "his own house," another. The Son commits the disciples to the care of the Holy Father (John xvii.), this is distinct from having the house in order. In John xv. he says, "I am the true vine," "ye are the branches," "my Father is the husbandman," etc., it is all the Father's care. The Father purges the branches, to the end they may bear as much fruit as possible. But in the case of the Son over His own house, it is not individual, but the house kept clean. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged," etc.

There are then these three kinds of discipline:—

1st. That of *brotherly* relationship. Here I go as a person wronged, but it must be with grace.

2nd. That of *fatherly* care—the Father exercising it with loving-kindness and tenderness, as over an erring child.

3rd. Where the *Son is over His own house*, and where we have to act in the responsibility of keeping the house clean, that people should have their consciences according to the house in which they are—not only the individual, but the house, the body: the conscience of the body must act. The effect may be, graciously, that the individual is restored, but that is a collateral thing. When you come to that point, there is something besides restoring; there is the responsibility of keeping the house clean—the conscience of all there; and that may sometimes give a great deal of trouble.

As to the nature of all this, the spirit in which it should be conducted, it is priestly; and the priests ate the sin-offering within the holy place (Lev. x.). I do not think any person or body of Christians can exercise discipline, unless as having the conscience clear, as having felt the power of the evil and sin before God, as if he had himself committed it. Then he does it as needful to purge himself. It will all be for positive mischief—the dealing with it, if not so. What character of position does Jesus hold now? That of priestly service. And we are associated with Him. If there were more of the priestly intercession implied by eating of the sin-offering within the holy place, there would be no such abomination as that of the Church assuming a judicial character. Suppose the case of a family, in which a brother had committed something disgraceful, would it not be for bitterness and anguish of the whole family? What common anxiety and pain of heart it would

occasion! Does Christ not feed upon the sin-offering? does He not feel the sorrow? does He not charge Himself with it? He is the Head of His body, the Church: is He not wounded and pained in a member? Yes, it is so. If it be a case of individual remonstrance with a brother for a fault, I am not fit to rebuke him, unless my soul has been in priestly exercise and service about it, as though I had been in the sin myself. How does Christ act? He bears it on His heart and pleads about it to draw out the grace that will remedy it. So with the child of God: he carries the sin upon his own heart into the presence of God; he pleads with the Father, as a priest, that the dishonor done to Christ's body, of which he is a member, may be remedied. This I believe to be the spirit in which discipline should be exercised. But here we fail. We have not grace to eat the sin-offering. I come to church-action and there I find yet more: it should go and humble itself until it has cleared itself. This is the force to me of "ye have not mourned," etc.; there was not sufficient spirituality at Corinth to take and bear the sin at all; "You ought to have been bowed down there, broken-hearted, and broken in spirit at such a thing not being put out—concerned as to the cleanness of Christ's house."

It is another part of priestly service to separate between clean and unclean. The priests were not to drink wine nor strong drink, that they might keep themselves in a spiritual state by the habits of the sanctuary, being able to discern between clean, etc. This is always true. We must take as our object, in dealing with evil, God's object. God's house is the scene and place of God's order. If it be said, that

the woman must "have power [a covering] on her head because of the angels" (1 Cor. xi. 10), it is as the exhibition of God's order. Nothing should be permitted in the house that angels could not come in and approve. All is in thorough ruin; the full glory of the house will be manifested when Christ comes in glory, and not till then; but we should desire that, as far as possible, by the energy of the Holy Ghost, there should be correspondence in spirit and manner with what shall be hereafter. When Israel returned from the captivity, after Lo-ámmi had been written upon them, and the glory had departed from the house, the public manifestation was gone, but Nehemiah and Ezra could find that in which to act according to God's mind. That is our present condition. But we have now what they had not: we were always a remnant, we began at the end—"Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). If the whole corporate system has come to nought, I get back to certain unchangeable blessed principles from which all is derived. The very thing from which all springs, to which Christ has attached, not only His name, but His discipline—the power of binding and loosing—is the gathering together of the "two or three." This is of the greatest possible comfort. The great principle remains true amidst all the failure.

If we turn to John xx. we find that when He sent forth His disciples, He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." There is nothing like a corporate church system here; but the

energy of the Holy Ghost in spiritual discernment in the disciples, as sent from Christ, and acting on behalf of Christ. Discipline is a question of the energy of the Spirit. If that which is done is not done in the power of the Holy Ghost, it is nothing.

In principle, what was needed has been said. I do not see any difference, whether it be in the hands of a remnant, or anything else; because then we get into the structure of a judicial process at once—sinners judging sinners. It is, first of all, a question what the energy of the Spirit is for ministry in God's house. The unanimity is a unanimity of having consciences exercised and forced into discipline. It is a terrible thing to hear sinners talking about judging another sinner; but a blessed thing to see them exercised in conscience about sin come in among themselves. It must be in grace. I no more dare act, save in grace, than I could wish judgment to myself. "Judge not, that ye be not judged: for with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. vii. 1, 2). If we go to exercise judgment, we shall get it.

As to the difficulty of saints meeting together, where there is not pastorship, my prayer is that God would raise up pastors; but I believe where there were brethren meeting together, and walking together on brotherly principles, provided they kept to their real position and did not set about making churches, they would be just as happy as others in different circumstances. One thing I would pray for, because I love the Lord's sheep, is that there might be shepherds. I know nothing, next to personal communion with the Lord, so blessed as the pastor feeding the Lord's sheep, the Lord's flock

but it is the *Lord's* flock. I see nothing about a pastor and *his* flock; that changes the whole aspect of things. When it is felt to be the *Lord's* flock a man has to look over, what thoughts of responsibility, what care, what zeal, what watchfulness! I do not see anything so lovely. "Lovest thou Me? . . . feed My sheep—feed My lambs." I know nothing like it upon earth—the care of a true-hearted pastor, one who can bear the whole burden of grief and care of any soul and deal with God about it. I believe it is the happiest, most blessed relationship that can subsist in this world. But we are not to suppose that the "great Shepherd" cannot take care of His own sheep because there are no under-shepherds. If there were those who met together and hung on the Lord, if they did not pretend to be what they were not, though there were no pastors among them, there would be no danger; they would infallibly have the care of *that* Shepherd. We must not impute our failure to God, as though He could not take care of us. The moment power in the *Spirit* is gone, power in the *flesh* comes in. J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUE. 18.—Concerning the Lord's Table is it in accordance with God's Word to pray or sing hymns in which one or more verses are prayers, or speak anything save that which bears on the Lord's death or His suffering?

All I can see from the Word is, we come to remember Him, *and not ourselves*. If it is wrong, how is it that so many, even of those who should know better offer prayers at the Lord's Table?

ANS.—The high plane of Christian worship is, alas, too little occupied by us all. Cold neglect on the part of most professors,

of what concerns the honor of Christ, is the rule. Even the true children of God rise but seldom to their privilege. Hence most think that what contributes to their own blessing is of greatest importance. This puts worship in a secondary place, and we need not be surprised that prayer, making requests for themselves, usurps the joyful worship that should be offered to the Lord.

Prayer, even for spiritual blessing, is hardly in place at the Lord's table, where adoring worship, the result of remembering Him, should be the chief occupation. On the other hand *real* prayer is better than forced worship, and if in it a low state is owned, God will surely lift up. Doubtless if there were more secret prayer, and more full attendance at the prayer meeting, less need would be felt for confession and prayer at the Lord's table. Then too we must guard against a too rigid exclusion of prayer, as in hymns. There is such a thing as "making request with joy."

QUES. 19.—Does not the number *twelve* speak of ministry, as well as of government?

There were twelve apostles. The twelve disciples ministered to the multitude of the loaves and fishes.

Twelve officers of Solomon's household procured supplies for his household.

There were twelve wells of water, with the seventy palm trees at Elim.

The tree of life bearing twelve manner of fruits.

If other scriptures such as the twelve "princes of Israel" (Num. vii. 2.) speak of government, are the two meanings intertwined as in Matt. xx: 27—"whoso will be chief among you let him be your servant"?

ANS.—The spirit of rule is that of service. "I am among you as He that serveth;" "the servant is not greater than his Lord." Twelve throughout Scripture seems to be the number of divine administration of the earth. Its factors (4x3) seem to suggest this, each part being taken hold of by the three. Thus the prominence of twelve in the heavenly city is not simply a suggestion of Israel, but is a reminder of that perfect and absolute control of all things, when the throne of God and the Lamb are the centre of blessing throughout the universe.

THE DUST OF HIS FEET.

The clouds are the dust of His feet, Nahum i. 3.

LORD, when the clouds hang dark and low—
 Clouds of affliction, pain and woe,
 Of conflicts fierce that press us sore,
 Of trials, galling even more;
 When by loved ones misunderstood,
 Life taking on its bitt'rest mood,
 Temptations hedging us about,
 Faith giving way to fear and doubt,
 And, seemingly, hope also fled;
 When to us unjust things are said;
 When everything just hurts us, so
 We know not how nor where to go—
 Grant us this consolation sweet:
 Clouds are the dust of Thy dear feet.

Dust of Thy feet.

O, blessed thought! The low'ring clouds
 But form light drapery which shrouds
 Just for the moment, our dear Lord
 And dims the lustre of His Word.
 If we remember, as we should,
 That clouds are meant alone for good,
 To help us in our life of trust,
 And are, at most, but transient dust—
 And dust falls on the earthly clod,
 While LIFE is hid with Christ in God—
 Then evermore, when clouds appear,
 We'll know a blessing hovers near;
 And, as we rise our Lord to greet,
 He'll see the dust of His dear feet.

Dust of His feet.

G. K.

“HE FOLLOWETH NOT WITH US.”

(Luke ix. 49, 50.)

WHILE our Lord was on the mount of transfiguration, an agonizing father besought His disciples to cast the demon out of his child, “and they could not.” Spite of call and authorization to do this very thing, they were helpless in the face of the “strong man” who held captive the child. They can only meet the Master’s indignant rebuke, with the helpless inquiry, “Why could *we* not cast him out?” In His answer they learned the secret of dependence and self-denial—prayer and fasting—as the only means by which Satan’s power could be overcome.

Would we not naturally think that the humbling sense of their own weakness would beget a charity that could recognize the workings of grace in others? But no. “John,” speaking for all, “answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils, *in Thy name*, and we forbad him, because he followeth not *with us*.”

Notice, this man is doing the very thing they had been unable to do—casting out devils. Further, he confessed the power of the name of Jesus. He was not arrogating to himself a power that belongs only to God. But “he followeth not *with us*.” Their jealousy seems to have been for themselves, not for their Lord. One would have thought that the power manifest in this individual worker, would have provoked them to shame, and stirred them to prayer. Ah! they will reduce him to their level of weakness, rather than recognize what is of God in him.

But would it do for us to reason that the twelve were *wrong* in following Jesus? Can we imagine John urging that they must be mistaken in their position, because of their weakness, that it would be better to launch off into independency in order to obtain spiritual power? This surely would be fully as sinful as the other. Let us take the lessons that lie here upon the very surface.

God's grace is sovereign. He works where and by whom He pleases. Wherever He finds one willing to bow to that Name above every name, willing to be used by Christ, He makes such an one the instrument of His mercy. Let it be remembered that God's mercy *must* find an outlet. It cannot be fettered and hindered from going out to a lost world. We are living in the day of God's grace—may we not say at the close of that day?—when infinite love yearns with the same longing as at first to bless poor sinful man, and to deliver him from the thralldom of Satan. Whom is He going to use for this blessed service? Can those to whom He has intrusted more perhaps of His priceless truth than others, arrogate to themselves the exclusive right of declaring the gospel?

More sad yet is the weakness only too manifest. Where is there the power in the gospel that casts out Satan? Where that love for souls, that heart-breaking longing, that travailing in prayer for their new birth? Alas! alas! we must hang our heads and own with shame it is not with us. Is God making us characteristically a gospel testimony, is He using us as the honored channels to convey the glad tidings of His mercy to perishing souls? Blessed be His name for every conversion, for every cloud though but the

size of a man's hand, amongst the assemblies of His gathered people.

But souls are being saved, the gospel is being preached by many who have not a tithe of the precious truth known to us—what shall we do? rebuke them because they follow not with us? or hide our faces with shame to think we have been passed by! Ah! let us ask, why could not *we* cast him out? Let us hear the answer that cuts pride and indolence from us, and casts us upon the living God. How quickly would He turn our mourning into joy, our weakness into love and power.

If Paul could say to the Philippians that he rejoiced even where Christ was preached in pretense, because it *was* Christ who was preached, shall we not thank God for every earnest seeker after souls though "he followeth not with us"?

May we not, too, confess to a pharisaic spirit of contentment with our knowledge and attainments, that ill suits our actual condition ecclesiastically as mourners for the common ruin of Christendom? Is there not too much of the thought (never expressed in words) that we are "just right," and every one else wrong? Place this self-satisfaction alongside of our service for Christ—let us prayerfully examine our works; let us see how much we are sowing broadcast the precious seed of the gospel, *with receiving* (Ps. cxxvi. 6). Let us ask ourselves how many children we are reaching with the pure word of God, remembering that the large majority of those saved are brought to Christ early in life. Let us ask how many of the outcast and fallen we are reaching, remembering who was the Friend of publicans and sinners. Dear brethren, we will honor rather than

forbid those whom God is using, and we will beg Him to fit and use us also.

Far be it from us to exaggerate—there is always a levity about exaggeration that reacts by hardening the conscience. We would thankfully own God's grace given to many a quiet tract distributor, many a faithful witness for Christ at daily work, many who visit the poor and needy with that which is better than temporal succor. We can thankfully own too the boldness given to some to go out into the highways and lift up their voices as the maidens of wisdom. But is it characteristic of us all? Do we all see our work and are we engaged in it?

Let us be sober-minded, avoiding all false zeal, all undue excitement. Let us compare ourselves with Scripture standards, and then upon our knees confess individually how little power we have against the hosts of Satan. Will we rebuke those who follow not with us, or will we learn from them? May our ever gracious God pierce us with this heart-searching fact, and awaken us to the love that labors because it *must*. We will see results, and apart from special "gifts," as well as by means of them, will know the joy of being channels of blessing to others.

But will this make us indifferent to following Christ in His word ever more and more closely? Will we lightly esteem the narrow path of obedience to every word of God, and lay upon the *path* the blame due only to our coldness of heart? Nay. Obedience and service are sisters. Only, pride is not obedience; knowledge, now as ever,—mere knowledge—puffeth up. He who has his heart truly enlarged to take in all the people of God, will find his feet in the narrow path.

Love and sentiment^{*} are widely different. There is nothing weak in love; it is stronger than all else; it is firm and uncompromising, unyielding. Weakness is but another name for selfishness, which will not let itself be disturbed by the disobedience of others. Love can weep and watch, can rebuke and smite, can do all things but yield in that which would injure its object or dishonor God. Such a love has God's will, God's word, and His glory as its standard. It does not imitate men, it cannot sacrifice principle. But it is not puffed up and does not behave itself unseemly by a pharisaic spirit of pride.

May there be a revival of God's work in all our hearts: an awakening by His Spirit, restoring the freshness of the early days, the spirit of prayer and faith, and love for souls. Oh, to be fresh! The taste of the manna was like fresh oil. When Christ is truly fed upon, in the power of the Holy Spirit, there is a freshness of joy and power that must find an outlet in happy service.

So we will not rebuke those who follow not with us, however much we may seek to guide them and help them in God's truth. But, by God's grace, we will stand ever firmer in His place, seeking in that place a freshness and freedom of service whose lack we now deplore.

I HAVE only one precious word to say to you: keep close to Jesus, you know you will find there joy, strength, and that consciousness of His love which sustains everywhere and makes everything else become nothing; there is our life and our happiness.

J. N. D.

THE HOPE OF THE MORNING STAR.

(Concluded.)

4. THE TARES, THE WHEAT, AND THE HARVEST.

MR. BROWN brings forward in further proof the Scripture statements as to the end of the age and the harvest; but these we shall better consider as more fully taken up by another writer, B. W. Newton,* to whose arguments I therefore turn. The parable of the wheat and tares will come before us in this connection, and he believes it decisive as to the whole question before us. I think it will be found that all depends as to this upon how the parable is to be explained. But we must go carefully through his arguments which touch many questions and a considerable range of prophetic scripture. He says:—

“I have long felt the parable of the tares to be quite conclusive of the question we are considering Whatever else may be true, the Lord’s explanation of the parable must certainly stand. We have in it a period definitely, and I might also say, chronologically marked, commencing with the sowing of the Son of man, and ending with the separation of the children of the wicked one. It is said that this separation shall not take place until the harvest; consequently *until* the harvest the field has some wheat in it. ‘Let both grow together until the harvest.’ No words could be more plain than these. They could not grow together until the harvest, if all, or even some of the wheat were gathered in many years before the tares were fully ripened; and they will not fully ripen until the time of Antichrist; indeed, it is

* “Five Letters on Events predicted in Scripture as antecedent to the Coming of the Lord.”

expressly said that the tares are to be gathered first; and let it be remembered that not one tare is gathered except by angels sent forth; not one is gathered except at the time of harvest; not one is gathered without being rooted up; that is, taken out of the world. The *meaning* of the gathering of the tares is not left to our conjecture, but is explained by the Lord Himself: 'As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of this age. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom' [this is the explanation of the gathering] 'all things that offend and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire:' this is the explanation of the burning. The wheat and the tares are to grow together until this is done

"How can any one doubt after reading this parable that the saints of this dispensation (for to them alone the name of wheat, as contrasted with tares, belongs) will continue in the world together with the professing visible body until the end of the age, that is the harvest? for it must be remembered that the harvest is not said to be *in* the end of the age, but that the harvest *is* the end of the age." (Pp. 18-20.)

This is the whole of Mr. Newton's argument; which he defends, however, at the close of his pamphlet from objections drawn in part from some very natural mistakes as to his doctrine, which will serve to keep us from falling into them, while some of them with his answers we shall have to consider further on.

First of all, as to the "end of the age," a term which we have already considered, and which is of very great significance in relation to the whole matter before us: he guards us from the mistake that he

takes it to be "one definite moment, marked by one event, and that the saints remain until it is entirely over and passed away." He regards it "as the name of a certain period, perhaps a considerably lengthened period, during which many events will occur. But this period," he remarks, "must have a beginning, and as soon as ever that beginning comes, we may say, 'the end of the age' has come . . . I have never said that the saints will remain on the earth until the *end of the end* of the age." (P. 95.)

One may agree then thoroughly with this, that the saints of the present time will remain upon earth, neither resurrection nor rapture will take place, until the end of the age arrives. The Lord's concluding words in Matthew are alone sufficient proof of this: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." Nay, more, they should make us also expect that this would be the precise measure of the time in which we should need such an assurance. When the end of the age arrives, we may infer that the period of the Church's stay upon earth will have reached its limit, and His coming to take us to Himself will be no more delayed.

It has been already shōwn that the "end of the age" can in no way be taken as the end of the Christian age; for there is no such age: times and seasons are now not being reckoned, but we live in a gap of time, a blank in Old Testament prophecy, which has Israel always in the foreground. Israel it is that is to "blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isa. xxvii. 6). Israel then being nationally set aside, it is not hard to realize that all is at a stand as far as this is concerned, until she is again taken up.

What, then, must be the significance of times beginning again which are specifically times determined upon Israel to bring her into blessing ! Such times we find in Daniel's seventy weeks, which are to end with this, sixty-nine having already passed when Messiah the Prince having come and being cut off, the downfall and ruin of the nation followed, and all was indefinitely suspended. The one week that remains is naturally and necessarily therefore the end of the age, the last seven years of these determined times. The beginning of this period means that God's thoughts have once more returned to Israel; consequently, that the Church period is just at an end. With the *beginning*, therefore, of the end of the age, the hour strikes for her removal to heaven.

Of all this Mr. Newton has nothing to say. For him the Church and the remnant of Israel are found side by side during at least a considerable time towards the end of the *Christian* age, as he considers it,—a view which we have to consider presently. We have seen already, however, how differently the whole structure of the book of Revelation speaks. But the Lord's words: "So shall it be at the end of this age; the Son of man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather together out of His Kingdom," show that now the Kingdom of the Son of man is come, and the present time of the Son upon the Father's throne is already over.

But this is the Lord's interpretation of the parable, and not the parable itself, which ends short of any actual coming of the harvest. The householder tells his servants what will take place *when* the time of harvest shall have come, but this is when he is comforting them for their own impotence in undoing the

mischief that has been done. *They* are not competent to remove the tares that have been sown amongst the wheat; but angel hands shall do it effectually at a future time. The time is future: the *action* of the parable does not go on to it.

Notice now another thing: the interpretation of the parable is cut off from the parable itself, and begins a second section of the whole series, which is thus divided, as commonly with a septenary series, into four and three. Four is the number of the world, and the first four parables, as spoken in the presence of the multitude, give us the public or world-aspect of the Kingdom in the eyes of men; and *not one of them goes on in its action to the end*. The three parables which follow (the number being that of divine manifestation) give us on the other hand what is told to disciples in the house; and in them we have the divine side, the secrets whispered in the ear of faith. Thus the parable of the treasure gives us the purpose of God as to Israel; that of the pearl, the Church in its preciousness to Christ; that of the net, the going forth of the everlasting gospel among the nations after the Church period is over.* It is with this second series that the interpretation of the second parable has its place, and thus we come in it to the "end of the age," as in the last parable of the draw-net; for we are in both beyond the present time. The interpretation, therefore, carries us beyond the present, and we must not hastily assume that the gathering the tares out of the Kingdom and casting them into the fire is simply the equivalent of

* See for a full detail, "The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven," or the notes on Matt. xiii. in the "Numerical Bible."

the expressions in the parable itself. Indeed upon the face of them they are not so: gathering into bundles to be burnt is not the same as the actual burning, though it may be preparatory to it; just as again the gathering the wheat into the barn is not the equivalent of the righteous shining forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Mr. Newton even allows this, although he does not carry the difference out sufficiently, as we see by the answer he makes to an objection. The Lord Himself explains, he says, the gathering of the tares [into bundles] as gathering out of His Kingdom all things that offend. And to the objector who urges that "All the tares being burned before the saints are caught up at all, nothing remains to be judged," he answers, "I have never said that the tares would be *burned* before the saints are caught up. I make a distinction between gathering them into bundles, and burning them." (P. 100.) This is true, but how far does the distinction go? for he says of the gathering, "Not one is gathered without being rooted up; that is, taken out of the world." Thus the objection is not really met: for the meaning would be the same if it were put: "All the tares being *rooted up out of the world* before the saints are caught up, nothing remains to be judged (on earth)." Then his only reply would be what follows: "Even if the tares were all burned," (or rooted out of the world), "there yet remain Jews, Apostates, Heathen Nations, to be judged." (P. 100.)

He says again: "'Gathering' does of itself imply removal from the field; for the reason given for allowing the tares to grow with the wheat until the harvest is this, 'Lest while ye gather (*συνάλλω*,—the same word) the tares, ye root up the wheat with

them." (P. 101.) Thus the tares he takes to be really rooted up out of the world as the first thing; then the wheat being gathered into the barn, the field of Christendom is entirely empty.

Before we go on to consider what he says is left in this case as objects of the judgments afterwards, let us see if this idea of gathering as rooting out of the world be in this case warranted.

We are told in the parable that the servants of the householder, as soon as they discerned the tares among the wheat, inquired if they should go and gather them up. Are we to suppose that their question meant, should they root them up out of the world—exterminate them? No doubt, Romanists have attempted to do so, and illustrated the inability to separate the tares from the wheat; but is that what the servants wished really to suggest? had they no thought but of killing the heretics that had come in among the orthodox? Alas! the tares were found much earlier than the time in which the Christians could have used or thought of using the arm of flesh to accomplish such a purification; and they must have sought it in other ways than by carnal weapons which both our Lord and His apostles so emphatically condemn. Was it not, in fact a rectification of the *Kingdom* which they desired, rather than of the world? a kingdom which, however easy it may be for us now, primitive Christians would never have thought of identifying with the world, or any portion of the world!

May not this put us upon the track of what the gathering of the tares would mean in the interpretation? Of course, before harvest-time the riddance of the mischief could only be by the hand, and then

rooting up would be what would take place. But at harvest-time it would not be so. Reaping would be ordinarily at least with the sickle, and there would not be rooting up at all. Rather it would be a severing *from* the root that would take place, which might imply a separation from the doctrinal faith, of the heretic from his heresy, but not for good, so that apostasy would be the outcome. Angelic hands might accomplish the severance,—events might take place even which would make it impossible to retain the heresy; the apostasy would be their own. Thus two of Mr. Newton's classes would be one: a thing which Rev. xvii. would indicate as probable, and which would naturally lead to the Beast throwing off the woman, and the kings of the Roman earth helping to destroy her. The "strong delusion" of 2 Thess. looks exactly in the same direction, except Mr. Newton has proof that the professing Christians that fall into the snare of Antichrist are not "tares." Certainly the present antichristian systems should furnish followers for the Antichrist to come; and his rise in connection with the great head of the revived Roman empire, must make us think of Romanism and kindred systems as those out of which the great mass of these followers come. Are not these tares, who become apostates? if not, what else?

It is easy to see, then, why Mr. N. should have to speak as he does of the great book of prophecy in the New Testament. "I see comparatively little," he says, "about the judgment on the tares in the Revelation; it appears to me to be concerned almost entirely with the means which lead to the consummation and the consummation itself of Apostasy. But that apostasy is the result not *merely* of Christianity first

perverted and then renounced, it is also the apostasy of man as man ('worship him who made the earth), and also of the Jew; a threefold combination of Apostasy." No intelligent student of prophecy doubts the combination of other elements with it; but what is this "Christianity perverted, and then renounced," but virtually tares becoming apostates?

Nay, but, says Newton, "I also see that *angels* and not *saints*, are sent to the *Tares*, whereas saints come with the Lord against Apostates." "On the Tares [judgment] is by angels sent forth while they are growing quietly with the wheat." Certainly in this manner we can make plenty of oppositions, by comparing things that cannot rightly be compared. A wheat-field is, no doubt, a very image of quietness; but one may well doubt whether that is what we are meant to gather from it. And angels come with Christ against the apostates; as Mr. Newton himself says: "'His army,' *i. e.* saints and angels." (P. 93.) As to the exact part each may have in the judgment, Revelation does not seem to say.

But to return to the parable: the binding in bundles must come after the reaping, if the figure is to be preserved. Would one naturally think of it as something to follow death? If so, one can hardly expect to translate it into any distinct meaning. If, on the other hand, the tares (though dead as tares) are still viewed as in the field of the world, then we may imagine a various compacting of men loosened from the hold of their religious systems, in ways that are not pointed out, but which lead them on toward their final doom. The gathering out of the Kingdom of the *Son of man*, as in the interpretation of the parable, goes, I believe, further than this: for

the Kingdom of the *Son of man* is not local, but over the whole earth. It is a gathering *after* that of the parable itself, and immediately to judgment.

Mr. Newton's own interpretation is different in so many respects from this, that there would be little profit in proportion to the labor of any extended comparison. For him the end of the age is the Christian age, and although in the tract from which I have quoted, he allows that the "end" may be "a considerably lengthened period," yet elsewhere he charges those with endeavoring to avoid the force of the argument from this parable, who suggest that "the end of the age may mean an indefinitely (?) lengthened period." He replies that it is definitely marked as "the harvest," quotes the interpretation of the parable as if the gathering and casting of the tares into the fire were the whole matter, and asks, "Is Antichrist to arise after this?"

But we shall apprehend his system better when we have reviewed his arguments as to the Jewish and Christian remnants at the time of the end.

5. THE SAINTS IN THE TRIBULATION, WHO ARE THEY?

We have already briefly considered the structure of the book of Revelation, and the evidence that it gives us as to the change of dispensation that is impending. The argument is a connected one of many arguments combined. We have in the first chapter the Lord in the midst of the candlesticks, the Christian assemblies. In the addresses to these which follow in the next two chapters, emphasized in each case by a solemn appeal for our attention, we find what is in fact the history of the

Church of God on earth. As they progress from the address to Thyatira onwards, the promise or the warning of His coming is more and more enforced; ending with the threat of Laodicea being spued out of His mouth, and immediately after this a Voice as of a trumpet calls, and the apostle is caught up to heaven.

There he sees thrones around the throne of God, —a throne of judgment circled by the bow of God's covenant with the earth; and, while the company of kings and priests sing their redemption song to the Lamb slain, he is told that this is Judah's Lion—the King of the Jews—who has prevailed to open the book. We look upon the earth again as the book is being opened; judgments are being poured out upon it; there are saints there still and martyrs; presently a company sealed out of all the tribes of Israel; then an innumerable company of Gentiles also, but who have all come out of the great tribulation; by and by we see the actors in this,—the last beast of Daniel, and the lamb-like, dragon-voiced beast who leads men to worship him; times are reckoned, the half-weeks of the last week of Daniel; and looking on beyond the judgment of Babylon the Great, we see the marriage of the Lamb is come, and presently the Lamb Himself, with a glorious train of saints who follow Him, descends to the judgment of the earth.

Now this is simply the story of Revelation, with scarce a word of comment, and none needed, one would think, to make it plain. Through all this latter part we hear nothing of the Church of God on earth. The Lion of Judah opens the book; the book gives us Jewish scenes, Israel, Jerusalem, the time

of Jacob's trouble, the instruments of it, the false woman and her doom, until after the marriage of the Lamb, He comes with His saints from heaven. Does this fit with Mr. Newton's views, or Mr. Brown's, or Dr. West's, or with that view which they all oppose? What have they to say about it? what arguments do they use against it? I can only speak as far as my knowledge goes, but as far as I know, they use *no* arguments; *they simply ignore it*. They give us proofs of their views, or what they conceive proofs, from Revelation, as from other parts of Scripture; but face this long line of witnesses they do not. We have seen what has been so far offered; we are going on still to see what Mr. Newton offers; but it is well to keep in mind how much of positive testimony for the views they are opposing they leave aside.

Mr. Newton hopes he may now assume, upon the warrant of the parables of the Tares and of the Fishes, and the Lord's parting words in Matthew, that saints marked by the characteristics of the present dispensation will be found on the earth until the end. He urges that their testimony will be most needed, and suffering most glorious in the times preceding the end. He finds that "On all past occasions of destroying judgments, whether on Sodom, or the world at the flood, or on Egypt, or on Jerusalem, some testified and suffered, though all were removed before the threatened judgment fell. He urges also that "all who have thus testified have not been either ignorant of or enemies to the truth peculiar to the dispensation that was closing in; for how then could they have testified at all?" (P. 25.)

He does not notice the Lord's assurance to Philadelphian overcomers that He would keep them "out

of the *hour* of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii. 10), nor that the tribulation to come at the end is "*Jacob's trial*," although it may involve others also, as we have seen. He does not understand that the end of the age is *not* part of the present dispensation, but the time of darkness covering the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, when the light begins to dawn on Israel (Isa. lx.), and that God's testimony for that time is an Elias one (Mal. iv. 5; Rev. xi. 3-6,) and *not* that of the Church.

He does not know that he can "find with any degree of accuracy the *extent* of this testimony"(!), and that on account of that of which he does not know the signification, that "the recorded *facts* of prophecy have always Jerusalem for their centre;" and he needs to remind us that "a Christian in Jewish circumstances is a Christian still"!

Another strange thing is that he has to go to Old Testament scriptures for the main part of his proof of *Christians* giving this testimony, and to justify what seems strange in this, he has to refer to Rom. xvi. 25, 26, taking, as many do, the "prophetic scriptures" there, as being those of the *Old Testament* prophets. (Comp. Eph. iii. 5.) He illustrates this by *types*, however, which we should all admit, and some other passages which show a singular lack of knowledge of the calling of the Church which he says they reveal. But I cannot dwell on this.

From the Old Testament he brings forward Daniel. Here he interprets for us the "wise," who "instruct many" among the Jewish people, without being able to prevent their fall "by the sword, and by flame, by captivity and by spoil many days."

This he calls, though we may well doubt it, "the moment of Jerusalem's *ratified* desolation," and thinks we can be therefore at no loss to understand them to be "Christ and His servants; nor from that time forward would the Holy Spirit give the name of 'understanding ones' to any but those who acknowledged Him and had received His Spirit." But on the contrary, most commentators refer this to the Maccabees, and with apparent reason. We have not time to argue as to it, it is plain; but proof-text it can hardly be when all depends upon a very questionable interpretation. The "wise" or "understanding ones," with this special meaning forced upon them, are then found by him in the time of Israel's great tribulation following; and so his point is proved. But to merge Christ among the "understanding ones" is certainly not the way of the Spirit of God; and the presence of Christians depends entirely upon this. On the other hand "the two witnesses" of Rev.xi.would certainly have this character of "wise," while as certainly they are not what we should now call Christians. All here is mere rash assertion and not proof.

That these understanding ones (as illustrated by the witnesses) will be worn out by the Little Horn, (identified at the last with the Beast itself,) is seen in Revelation, and being raised from the dead they will have a heavenly place contrasted with Israel's earthly one. That these are, in fact, the saints of the high places, of whom Daniel speaks, and who are Mr. Newton's next and remaining proof of Christians in Jerusalem, we have no need to question. He makes no distinction between "heavenly" and "Christian"; but he must certainly know that those

he is opposing *do* make one, and that for them all that he gives for proof is entirely futile.

This closes his argument from the Old Testament: he passes on to Revelation, which he rightly takes as in its "central part" relating to the same period as (much of) Daniel. Here his first argument is from persons being mentioned "who keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus"; and again in chap. xiv.: "here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." No doubt there is difficulty in defining in any perfectly satisfactory way what either expression may mean. "The testimony of Jesus" is said, in the book of Revelation itself, to be "the spirit of prophecy" (xix. 10), and this will be found in the saints of those days. There is no excuse for confounding this with *Church* testimony. "The *faith* of Jesus" will be, no doubt, imperfect enough in the darkness of days from which the light of Christianity has disappeared, and the Spirit itself as now known and enjoyed in Christianity. I presume He will be known as Messiah, not in His own proper glory as Jehovah; and this will be the discovery that will bow them in humiliation and repentance, when they look upon Him whom they have pierced.

The next text (chap. xiii. 7), if parallel with Dan. vii. 20, is nevertheless also, as we have seen, of no importance whatever for his argument.

Again, those on the sea of glass (chap. xv. 2) are saints martyred under the beast, and having got victory over him in this way, and the passage in chap. xx. 4-6, which Mr. Newton rightly associates with the former one, shows that such have their part in the first resurrection, and reign with Christ for the

thousand years of the Kingdom. All this is very familiar truth to those whose views he is opposing; and he certainly must know it. There is nothing about the Church in either passage.

As a specimen of what a more minute interpretation would give, he adduces chap. xi. 1, to urge that the worshipers in the temple of God (the sanctuary) must be Christians. In his argument he says rightly enough that the temple consisted of *two* inner courts, but speaks as though this were proof that for worshipers in it, the holiest of all must be accessible. There is no proof of it whatever. For the priest in Israel the veil was not rent, but he could worship in the temple in the outer holy place, and once a year the high priest went into the holiest. There is absolutely no token of Christian worship: the "clear evidence" of it, of which he speaks, does not exist.

But while all this is to him clear, the witness of the whole book of Revelation, as I have briefly given it, passes absolutely without notice. And yet when he wrote this he must have known quite well that it stood at least to be accounted for.

Of the *Jewish* remnant of the last days which according to Mr. Newton exists side by side with the Christian one he says:—

"They must have an intermediate standing: not Antichristian, for they would be consumed; not Christian, for then as suffering *with* and *for* Jesus, they would also reign with Him, and stand upon the sea of crystal in heavenly glory; whereas they are destined, after having passed through the fires from which the Christian remnant are altogether delivered, to be God's witnesses on the earth: . . . I now request your attention to the following passages which

show that this remnant is not owned by the Lord, nor has the spirit of grace and supplication poured on it, until after the Lord has appeared, and they have been carried through the day of His judgment" (Pp. 43, 44).

He quotes for this, first, Isa. x. 12, 20-22; of which he says:—

"The passage teaches us that they are not regarded as 'returning' and 'staying themselves' upon the Lord, until after He has accomplished all His work upon Mount Zion and Jerusalem." (P. 45.)

I can only answer that to me it says nothing of the kind. It does say that in that day there will be no going back on the part of the saved remnant, to repeat the sad story of declension, so often recurring in the past. They "*shall no more* again stay upon him that smote them, but stay upon the Lord." Then the truth of their return is affirmed: "The remnant shall . . . unto the Mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall return." There is nothing about their only returning after God has accomplished His work. It does not mean that He delivers them in an unbelieving condition, and then they believe. That is certainly not God's ordinary way of delivering, but to wake up a soul to faith and then answer it. Nothing contrary to that is said here.

The next passage is from Zech. xiii.: "And it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined . . . they shall call on My name and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people, and

they shall say, The Lord is my God." This expresses only the full confidence reached as the result of purification; but it is because they are "silver" He refines them. No one ever *refined into silver* what was not silver; and that is not what is done here.

The third passage, Zech. xii. 9-xiii. 1, shows undoubtedly that an amazing discovery is made by them when they look upon Him whom they have pierced; and I think that will be, as before said, when they realize their rejected Messiah to be Jehovah Himself. That they own Jesus as Messiah seems clear from the guidance given to them in His own prophecy of the end of the age (Matt. xxiv.); but the "Man, Jehovah's Fellow" may be yet unknown.

As to what is said about their having to believe nationally, and the nation being born in a day, Zion travailing and bringing forth, he is surely wrong in taking that as *new* birth, a truth of which as such the Old Testament never speaks. That at the time of their deliverance, the remnant will come to the birth, as the new nation of Israel, is true, and is what is meant by this. The implication that as individuals they were not born again before is unwarranted and false.

Again, the principle is a very simple one, that in the Psalms and prophetic Scriptures, we may take out all that is bright and happy and confident, and apply it to a *Christian* remnant, while we relegate all that is gloomy and querulous to a co-existing Jewish one. It is a short road to interpretation, but a most unsafe one. The Psalms, for instance, are expressive of the whole education and purification of

a Jewish remnant, through all the trials of the latter days, until they are brought into full blessing. Of this the five psalms, from Ps. iii. to vii., are an introductory epitome, which shows this very clearly. But they begin with faith (Ps. iii.), the joy of which they can contrast with the restless seeking of "any good" on the part of the ungodly around them (Ps. iv.). Here they reason and plead with these, but in the next, as the evil grows more determined, plead *against* them (Ps. v.), assuring themselves of the distinction God will make between them and the wicked. But the gloom darkens and the shadow falls upon their own souls (Ps. vi.). The prevalence of the evil makes them dread divine displeasure, and the confidence they have had changes into a cry for *mercy*. In the seventh psalm the shadow passes, they can maintain again their innocence as far as their persecutors are concerned and look for divine intervention; which in the eighth is come.* This is only an introduction, of course, but it shows the character of the book, which the arbitrary invention of contrasted remnants completely destroys. All these fruitful exercises become but the wailings of unconverted men; all the expressions of faith belong to another people!

This is indeed a "higher criticism" of a peculiar kind, which by taking texts here and there and applying the moral test, putting in juxtaposition passages of diverse character, from different places, and apart from their context, can make it at least a tedious and difficult thing to expose its unsoundness. And

* See the volume of the Psalms in the "Numerical Bible" for a full exposition.

this is made worse by misleading comments scattered here and there throughout, in which 'truth itself can be so applied as to give apparent countenance to what is error. Who would not agree, for instance, that "to suffer for righteousness' sake in conscious fellowship of spirit with God, is something very different from suffering *penalty* under the rebuke of His heavy hand"? But apply this to the case before us,—a remnant of converted people making part of a nation which as such is away from God, and going on to complete apostasy; suffering penalty thus, and involving these in their sufferings, who from sharing their guilt at first have been gradually awakened, with the light increasing for them, but allowed of God for their good to be thoroughly exercised as to everything. Plowed up as to their sin, they find their way amid the promises and threatenings of His word, without firm footing as to the gospel; and in a time of trouble such as never was! These various exercises, the conflicts of faith with unbelief, the many forms of trial, are given for their help, and for the help of multitudes in any similar ones, as poured out in the utterances of the Psalms and prophets. Think of a criticism like Mr. N's, which ignores these varied and subtle differences, and makes it all a question of the highest Christian communion or of suffering penally! Why the Psalms are a *human* resolution largely—under the control and guidance of God—of problems of the most difficult character. *Are* they suffering penally? there is sometimes their perplexity. They reason upon it all round: the clouds break and return; but no: we are to use the scissors, it seems, separate what is not fit for the Christians, and give it to these poor, unconverted

Jews! and the practical use and beauty of the Psalms are largely gone for us. How much shall we value the miserable experiences of mere unconverted men!

We may close then with this: for here is the rest of his argument, and we have no interest in following Mr. Newton's further account of how, according to his thought, a Christian remnant is not found in Jerusalem at the last, which we have not been persuaded exists there at all. But it may not be without profit to have seen how destructive of Scripture at large is this system which makes hypothetical differences which do not exist, only to ignore those that are real and vital.

There is only one more point, therefore, that we need to consider in this connection, and that is his argument from the eleventh of Romans. He says:—

“I would briefly notice these things:—

“1. That it speaks of Israel as blinded for a season by *the judicial infliction* of the hand of God. It is important to notice the judicial character which attaches to their being broken out of their olive-tree.

“2. The blindness thus judicially inflicted has never been, and never will be anything more than ‘in part’; that is, it has never rested on every individual in Israel, but there has ever been a *seeing remnant*. Some, not all, the Jewish branches, have been broken off.

“3. The fact of there being a *seeing remnant* during the blindness of Israel, is a proof that Israel as a nation is still under the infliction of the hand of God.

“4. That this judicial infliction cannot be continued after the fulness of the Gentiles has come in.”

Thus, he says, “it is proved beyond a doubt that Israel's Antichristian period (when as a nation they

will be emphatically blinded, though there will be even then a seeing remnant) cannot be *after* the fulness of the Gentiles has come in. Observe, I do not say that as soon as all the elect Gentiles have been gathered in, all Israel will instantly be filled with light and knowledge; but this I affirm that the positive action of the hand of God in blinding them will not be continued after the period which He has been pleased to fix—*i. e.*, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in. Consequently, the period of their deepest and most fatal blinding cannot be after the period which He has fixed for the ceasing of His wrath against them. There can be no seeing remnant in *judicially blinded Israel*; no election out of Israel, and therefore no Antichristian period to Israel, after the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; therefore all such conditions of Israel must be before the fulness of the Gentiles has come in." (Pp. 63-65.)

Now, I apprehend that the writer has spoiled his own argument. For if he had maintained that, as soon as ever the fulness of the Gentiles had come in, all Israel would "instantly be filled with light and knowledge" that would have been consistent at least. But he could not say so; only that the positive action of the hand of God in blinding them will not continue. But that would seem to infer that there would or might be still a seeing remnant for awhile among them after the *judicial* blinding was removed. Let us see then what in fact takes place. The beginning of the "end of the age", or the last week of Daniel, shows that the fulness of the Gentiles has indeed come in; it shows also that the judicial hardening of Israel is at an end by this week being the return of

times determined upon her to bring in her blessing *Israel* is now going to be saved, and as a pledge of this, those now converted are no more brought into the Church, but remain Israelites, grafted back into their own olive-tree

Yet this is the time of Antichrist, as Daniel and Revelation unite to show us, and the nation that is to be is refined and purified in a furnace of affliction. It is the remnant that *becomes* the nation, the rebels and apostates being separated and purged out. It is a mistake, surely, to look at Antichrist as a sign of the "nation" being "emphatically blinded," when in fact, it is Israel's travail-time, and presently it will be found, when the followers of Antichrist have received their judgment, that "he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning" (Isa. iv. 3, 4). The fulness of the Gentiles having come in, and so the end of the Church period, is the very thing which allows this *truly Jewish* remnant to be formed, which is the nation in embryo, and to which Antichrist in Jerusalem is Satan's power in opposition. The man of sin in the temple of God there, instead of showing that the judicial blinding of the nation is going on, shows that God is taking up Israel once more, and that the determined times are bringing on her blessing.

Christianity and Judaism, hopes heavenly and hopes earthly, the body of Christ in which is neither

Jew nor Gentile, alongside of Jews *and* Gentiles (if the sheep and goats apply to these last),—all this owned of God alike and going on at one and the same time: this is Mr. Newton's theory; the very statement of which might assure us that it is only theory. Scripture condemns it in every particular.

6. SECRECY, MANIFESTATION, AND SIGNS OF IMMINENCE.

All that remains to be considered can be stated in few words. As to the secrecy of the rapture of the saints, it is a point of small importance, reached only by inference, and need not be discussed at all. It is "when Christ our Life shall appear," that "we shall appear, (or be manifested) with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). Thus we may argue that we shall not be manifested before. But it affects no point of all that we have been looking at, so far as I am aware, however it be decided.

As to the manifestation, or appearing, or revelation of Christ, it is that which is most largely spoken of in Scripture, as we might expect, for various reasons.

1. It is that which connects itself with prophecy and the blessing of the earth. It is the rising of the Sun of righteousness in contrast with the simple heavenly radiance of the Morning Star.

2. It connects thus with the rights of Christ as to the earth, the place of His rejection.

3. It connects with the rewards given to His people, so far at least as these have to do with the kingdom and its displayed glory. And thus we can understand that we are to "wait" for it, as that in which every one will "receive his praise from God."

Timothy's being exhorted to "keep the commandments without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. vi. 14), while often urged to the contrary, in fact shows how such things are to be taken. The appearing is the goal of responsibility; the time between this and the end of the path here would not affect the matter of the exhortation; and no one would contend that the apostle meant to guarantee that Timothy would live until the appearing.

Signs are all connected with the appearing necessarily, but yet so far as they are manifested, will only be more forcible for those who are expecting to be with the Lord before it. We are not taught that we need them, but are not certainly to ignore what is before our eyes. Times we cannot reckon, inasmuch as we are in that gap of prophetic time in which all Christianity has its place. Our Lord has also given us warning with regard to this (Acts i. 7). In the same passage we find Him telling His disciples that they were to be His witnesses "to the ends of the earth." That this and other declarations implied some lapse of time before His return is undoubted. We must remember, of course, that this did not imply for them what it does for us, and that Augustus Cæsar could command "all the world" to be taxed (Luke ii. 1). In the parables of the talents (Matt. xxv. 19) "after a long time" the absent lord returns and reckons with his servants; but it is with the same servants whom he left when he went away. Nothing hints to us as a delay of generations long. We are in other circumstances, in a world that widens no more, looking back over the Church's history as Revelation has at last unfolded it to us, and finding

ourselves certainly near the close, and how near we cannot say. Is there another page yet to be written? We do not know; but certainly of all men that ever lived *we* should be "as men that wait for their Lord."

A clear view gained of what is prophesied as to the end, with the knowledge of what the Church of God is, and its place amid the dispensations, will make all else clear as to what in this respect may not have been considered.

F. W. G.

NOTHING BUT BLOOD.

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11.)

NOTHING but blood, the precious blood
Of Christ, can purge the soul from sin;
He freely gave the cleansing flood,
And all are saved who trust therein.

"I will execute judgment. I am the Lord! . . . And the blood shall be to you for a token . . . and when I see the blood, I will pass over you." (Exodus xii: 11, 12.)

It was redemption's pledge of old,
Salvation's token sent from heaven;
God said, "when I the blood behold,"
It stands for peace and sins forgiven!

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv: 12.)

Nor name nor character will count,
For sin is purged by blood alone,
And Jesus' veins supplied the fount,
The only stream that can atone.