

# HELP AND FOOD

FOR THE

Household of Faith.

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Vol. XVIII.

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## WHAT IS SELF-DENIAL ?

"Let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke ix. 23).

THE ordinary thought of self-denial, whether among saints or the people of the world, is giving up. There may be great diversity of thought as to what is to be given up. Some would limit it to certain characteristically worldly things—card-playing, dancing, the theatre, etc. Others would confine it to a certain season, during which time pleasures which are freely indulged in the remainder of the year are rigidly eschewed, and even in the food and other habits the change may be noticed.

Others who see much more than this, still look upon self-denial as a matter of details. This, that and the other is to be given up, as pleasing to the natural man. Nor is it possible that such an interpretation should not tend to foster spiritual pride; for does not one deserve credit for relinquishing so much?

But is this the thought of the passage, "*Let him refuse himself*"? Self is to be refused, to be given up. A man may give up anything, and well-nigh everything, but so long as he holds fast to himself, he has not learned the first elements of self-denial. "I am crucified with Christ," says the apostle. Did he mean that he was doing this or that distasteful thing, and so practicing self-denial? Ah no! Paul himself was denied; he was done with himself, and now it was Christ who lived in him. Can we think of Paul as occupied with a multiplicity of questions, as to whether he had to give up one thing and another? The cross settled all that for him. There was an end to *himself*, as well as an end to the world,

so far as he was concerned. And with this went the entire mass of questions that monasticism has tried in vain to settle.

And does not this explain the taking up the cross, which comes in the immediate connection? Let him "take up his cross daily and follow Me." The ordinary thought of taking the cross is doing something that is disagreeable. So people talk even of prayer and public confession of Christ as taking up the cross. But to the disciples the cross meant something very definite. They looked upon it as the sign of death, and death at the hands of the Romans. In modern language, we might substitute the word gallows for the cross. The ignominy, judgment and reproach of a shameful death go with it. To follow Christ, to take up the cross, then, means something more than doing a few distasteful duties. It means an end of self. Reckoning ourselves to be dead indeed to sin.

But beloved, what relief we have here, what rest of soul. The root is cut and soon the fading leaves of human pride will drop off. Does the world persecute? does it threaten with the cross? It can have no terrors for one who knows the preciousness of the cross in his own soul. He has already taken it up, applied it, not to a few details; and in the end of himself, he has reached the end of struggling. The whole thing has gone, he is alive now in Christ Jesus, and can walk in the newness of life which goes with that. Now he will find power for laying aside every weight, and instead of a path of sorrow, he has one of unutterable peace and joy—the path of the cross, which ends in the cloudless glory of God.

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## A SIMPLE THOUGHT AS TO PRAYER.

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MANY shrink from public prayer. They say they have no ability for it, and that it would not be for edification for them to make the attempt. And yet is this of God? and if not are we to attempt to excuse ourselves for what is inexcusable? There must be some simple remedy for so glaring a failure—a remedy which the love of God would apply at once if we let Him. Perhaps the cause of this silence in public will suggest the remedy. Let us enquire the cause.

Here is a godly Christian, so far as outward walk and faithfulness at meetings go. Further, he enjoys fellowship in the things of God, and will readily converse with those like-minded with himself. It cannot be supposed that he neglects secret prayer, though doubtless, like all saints, he needs to be more engaged in it. We are not speaking of those who are in a cold state, but of such as realize the grace of God, and the love of Christ.

*Do they pray in the family?* There is small wonder that a brother who does not let his voice be heard at the family altar should be silent at the meeting. The sound of his voice frightens him, he forgets to whom he is speaking, forgets what he wished to pray for, and covered with confusion, resolves never to make another exhibition of himself. Ah, brethren, how much wounded pride is expressed in that resolution. But why was he so embarrassed? Was he not sincere, did he not wish to ask for the desires of his heart? He did, but his voice is not heard in prayer at home, and therefore he is unaccustomed to its sound.

God forbid that we should suggest the thought of using the home as a place of practice for the meeting. Our hearts are too sore to trifle with such a solemn subject, or to suggest a superficial remedy. *Why* is the voice not heard at the family altar? Does not that tell of failure to be head of the house, or of neglect of responsibility to bring up our children for God? Without doubt Satan has a thousand reasons why we should not have family prayer and reading of the Word. We have no time for it, we leave home too early, and return too late; we have too many interruptions, company coming in, children going to school. Oh, dear brethren, how mean and trivial are all such excuses. We are ashamed of them as we speak of them. Let us throw them to the winds, confess our neglect, and this very day go to God as a family.

Is the reader without fellowship at home? Is it a Christian wife whose husband is in the world? Let her gather her little ones about her and count upon the God of all grace to hear her prayers for her home. Is it the reverse? Let the husband in the fear of God declare that he must recognize Him in the home. Few are the wives who would object, and fewer still who would leave the room. But if she did, let him gather the children about him, and pray.

How many questions does such an act raise, and how many does it settle. Has the man's walk been inconsistent? he is reminded of it, and of how many other weaknesses and failures. He may have been selfish and have stumbled his wife, or his sharp temper may have been a reproach before the children. Let him confess all before God, and his family, and let God be implored that all such dishonor to

Him may cease. If there is reality, there will soon be help. Often between those nearest and dearest according to nature there grows up a barrier as to the holiest and sweetest part of the life—the things of God. They shrink from speaking to one another, and so are no longer helpful to one another. Let all such things be owned. Let there be a break, and in family prayer and reading of the Word there will be a sweet recovery.

We are living in busy times, and early and late the mill must be kept grinding. But if there is purpose of heart, God will open the way. There is some time during the day, preferably in the morning, when the family can be brought together. They take their meals together, or they can do so. Let them at the same time devote a few minutes to reading God's word and prayer. A brief quarter of an hour, if no more time can be given, will be better than none, and better perhaps than more, if engagements are pressing. Let the most suitable time be chosen, and dedicated to God. Let nothing usurp its place. We can go without our food better than we can deprive ourselves of this holy privilege.

Dear brethren, this would remedy our silent prayer-meetings, for it is lack at the home that makes the lack in public. It would be no fearsome task to lead in prayer and praise, but the sweetest constraint of love and faith. May our blessed Lord speak to us all.

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**“Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. iii. 11).**

## BRIEF BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

*With a desire to help the "babes in Christ" the following is sent forth, looking to our Lord for blessing.*

### I. SIN.

A CLEAR knowledge of the Scriptural teaching as to sin is necessary for a correct apprehension of the *need* and *efficacy* of the atonement made by our Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary. The following verses will show, in some measure at least, these facts.

What is sin, and who are sinners? Without entering into any analytical definition of the sense of the word or words, as given in the original texts, we will confine ourselves to the meanings as given in our excellent English versions.

1. "Sin is the transgression of the law," or more correctly as given in the Revised Version, "sin is lawlessness" (1 Jno. iii. 4). "Lawlessness" is insubjection; disregard to authority; a lack of sense of responsibility; self-will, as seen in "the way of Cain," as recorded in Gen. iv. 1-5. He had no respect for God's claims and requirements for sin, and God "had not respect" to his offering. Read the entire chapter and carefully note the result of all this :

ver. 5. anger in the heart, shown by the very expression of his face;

ver. 8. murder;

ver. 9. falsehood and speaking against God;

ver. 13. reproaching God, etc.;

while the remaining verses show man without subjection to God, trying to make the best of the world. City building, land cultivation, cattle raising, pleas-

ure seeking, scientific experiment and research, yet "lawlessness" marks the period. Pharaoh is another illustration (Ex. v. 1). The history of the book of Judges is also a sad picture, the key to which is in the fact, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges xxi. 25). See Proverbs xiv. 12. Ecclesiastes viii. 11-13. Romans i. 21-25. 2 Thesalonians i. 7-10.

2. "All unrighteousness is sin" (1 Jno. v. 17). Unrightness is the sense here, and the standard is God's estimate of what is right or wrong, not man's; therefore every thing which is not fully up to God's standard of right is sin. Who can measure up to the standard? Romans iii. 23 says, "All . . . have come short;" and "Tekel; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (Daniel v. 27), can be as truthfully written about reader and writer, as of king Belshazzar (Ps. xiv. 1-2; liii. 1-3; Rom. iii. 10; James ii. 10).

Notwithstanding all this, how truly it is written in Prov. xxi. 2: "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts." How foolish then in poor man to boast, or bolster up his hopes of favor with God upon natural merit (Rom. x. 3; 2 Pet. ii. 10-15; Isa. lxiv. 6; vi. 5; Luke xviii. 10-14).

3. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James iv. 17). Many who are approached concerning their state of soul, say, "Yes, I know what is right, but I don't do it;" to such the above warning might well apply, although in its more special manner it refers to believers. But why cite more passages which tell of the awful inherency of sin, and its display in our actions? Many

can be found in the word of God (Prov. x. 16; xxi. 4; xxiv. 9; John xvi. 9, etc.) The earliest recorded sin, is given in 2 Peter ii. 4; Jude 6, "the angels which kept not their first estate"; and Satan, whom John viii. 44 and Ezek. xxviii. 13-19 refer to, was the introducer of sin into the garden, (Gen. iii. 1-7) and so Rom. v. 12 was the result, making it true of every child of Adam, as Rom. iii. 10-19, 23 show. "But the Scripture hath concluded (shut up *R. V.*) all under sin" (Gal. iii. 22. See also Jer. xvii. 9; Mark vii. 21-23; Eph. iv. 18; Rom. viii. 7. 8; Rom. iii. 9; ii. 11; iii. 22, etc.).

4. What is the result of sin, and of being a sinner?

"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23), *i. e.* separation from God. When God placed Adam in the garden, the warning was, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 17), and expulsion followed as a result of disobedience, as seen in Gen. iii. Of course, there is more than physical death in Rom. vi. 23. By a careful comparison of John viii. 24 with 21, the truth may be seen as to banishment from God's presence forever; for He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil" (Hab. i. 13). And when it is seen that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 12), what can be done, or excuse made? Notice it is an "account of himself," not of others. We could give a record readily of the good actions, or evil deeds of others, but what of our own?—"every one" "account of himself." "Unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" (Rom. ii. 8, 9;



Rev. xx. 11-15; xxi. 8; James i. 15; 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Mark viii. 43-48; Matt. xxv. 45, 46).

Such is the awful result of sin, and inevitable consequence to a sinner who passes out of this world unrepentant. How sweet then sounds the gospel of God's grace; "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country" (Prov. xxv. 25). And such the gospel is, "The angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy" (Luke ii. 10, 11). And the apostle Paul catches the heavenly strain, as in 1 Cor. xv. 1-4 he writes, "I declare unto you, *the gospel* . . . that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures," and he assures them that if they "received" it, ver. 1, they were "saved."

"For God so loved the world (of sinners), that He gave His only begotten Son, (to die for sin, and for sinners) that whosoever (of sinners) believeth on Him, should not perish, (which they must otherwise do) but have (now, a present possession) everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

B. W. J.

## GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

### 6. THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER.

(Chaps. ii. 18-iii.)

**I**N what has just preceded, we have been regarding Ruth as a type of the seeker in general, apart from the dispensational application. But we must not forget that the connection with the history of God's earthly people in the latter days is clear and continued. While every seeker is depicted in the patient gleaning and beating out, no doubt the faith

on the part of the remnant is particularly suggested. There are touching and pathetic intimations throughout the first two books of the Psalms of this reaching out of a faith after a blessing which it but feebly apprehends, and with an evident ignorance of Him who is to be the kinsman-redeemer. There is integrity of heart, a separation from the mass of the ungodly nation, and yet an evident veil upon the eyes. In the sixth psalm, for instance, there is the deepest pressure upon the soul, not only from the persecutions without, but from the sense of wrath from God Himself. It is with apparent difficulty that a little comfort is gleaned at the close. Again, in the thirteenth, under the persecutions of the "man of sin," the soul makes its complaint to a God but dimly apprehended, although real faith is in exercise, and at the close the testimony is that the Lord has "dealt bountifully" with the needy one. Even after the wondrous unfolding of the work of Christ, and His person in the series of Psalms from the sixteenth to the twenty-fourth, we find in the twenty-fifth but a gleaner, gathering comfort and pleading for pardon in view of the remembrance of the sins that will rise up. These will suggest what would be an interesting and profitable line of study, the rise and development of faith in the remnant, as seen in the Psalms. We see, too, brighter days, and hear the "voice of the Bridegroom," if not of the bride, in such lovely psalms as the forty-fifth. But the time of that psalm has not yet been reached in Ruth, and we must follow her through some deep experiences before she reaches it.

After she had beaten out the barley—a grain itself suggestive of poverty and feebleness (Judg. vii. 13)

—she returns to her mother-in-law and shows her little store, sharing it with her. It will be noticed that she first satisfies her own hunger before giving to Naomi, and in this there seems to be suggested the thought that faith must receive before it can give. The nation of the Jews, typified by Naomi, can receive comfort and encouragement only at the hands of the believing remnant, which itself must feed on the store it has gleaned before it can impart it to others. The "Maskilim," the instructors who are to "turn many to righteousness" (Dan. xii. 3), must themselves learn the lessons they are to teach. The very first of these lessons is found in the first of the "Maskil" Psalms, the thirty-second, on the blessedness of forgiveness. And so must it be with all other lessons; Ruth must first be sufficed before she can give to Naomi.

Passing to a more general application, the lesson is as self-evident. Faith must feed on its gathered store before it can impart to others. In John's gospel we see this strikingly illustrated in the "Come and see" of those who had themselves already come and seen the Christ. It is the poor Samaritan, who in her position resembles Ruth, who can take the message to the people of the town.

We are living in days not only of great activity, but when the doctrine of activity is put in the place of feeding upon the truth of God. We are told that the way to grow is to work; but how can we work without strength and guidance and all else suggested in that word, "communion"? We can only give the overflow to others, in any true sense, and that, as its name suggests, is spontaneous.

But how simple this makes all service. We eat

and are sufficed, and out of a full heart we minister to the needs of others. Let the evangelist remember this. Does the deep full joy in a personal salvation fail, and does it seem in any way irksome for him to tell out the same old story? Let him turn in deep penitence to his Lord and Saviour, confessing his emptiness and find again that "grace is the sweetest sound." The same applies to the teacher both in public and private, the pastor, and to all who would be witnesses for our Lord. Thus what might seem like ungraciousness on the part of Ruth conveys a lesson of deep importance to us all.

Naomi, with busy memory going back over familiar scenes long past, asks where her daughter-in-law had gleaned such abundance as it doubtless seemed to her widowed eyes, long familiar with poverty. Her heart already warms to one, whoever he might be, that would permit the lonely stranger to gather in his fields: "Blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee." It is interesting to gather from the blended picture of these two women the faith and exercises of the latter day. Ruth has the faith, we might say, and Naomi has the knowledge. So it is the elder of the women who now is prominent, and who imparts to the younger the wondrous news that her benefactor is a kinsman. The knowledge that the Jews will have of the promises of God in regard to restoration and the blessings of the coming Kingdom through the Messiah, will no doubt serve to awaken and quicken the zeal of their newly born faith. Naomi recognizes in Boaz a kinsman, and sees in Ruth's experience the hand of God, "who has not left off His kindness to the living and the dead." The breach between the happy past and the present is spanned

by the love and care of One who, whether with the individual or the nation, will prove that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

How it cheers the heart of the one whose eyes fail with longing to remember this. How Paul, as he developed the counsels and ways of God in the epistle to the Romans, from the ninth to the eleventh chapters, finds a love stronger than his own, though he had once wished himself accursed from Christ for his brethren according to the flesh. Ah, blessed forever be His name, He has not left off His kindness to His beloved people, and one day the sad heart of the widowed nation will warm into praise as it catches a glimpse of that love.

God will yet make good every one of the faithful promises made to Abraham His friend, and to David the man after His own heart. It will be found that "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock" (Jer. xxxi. 10). Those who fail to see this fact lose one of the most important illustrations of the faithfulness of God. If all the promises to Israel which fill the pages of the Prophets and the Psalms are to be spiritualized into blessings for the Church, what becomes of the gifts and calling of God for His earthly people? Well might we, without the hope of an answer ask, with the psalmist of old, "Lord, where are Thy former loving kindnesses, which Thou swarest unto David in Thy truth?" In the face of such a promise as the following, how could we think that God had forgotten the nation of Israel? "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night . . . , if those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the

Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation from before Me forever" (Jer. xxxi. 35, 36).'

It is this that is suggested by Naomi in linking together God's past kindness to Elimelech and His present care for her, the poor widow. How good it is to remember that His love will yet find its rest in this now despised people. How it thrills the heart to dwell upon it. Little wonder that Paul breaks out in worship as he contemplates it: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

With this unchanging purpose of God in our mind, we can understand how the Church is left out of view in all passages that concern Israel, both in the Old and New Testaments. We understand how our Lord, in sending out the twelve to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," leaves out of view entirely the present interval of the nation's rejection, and says, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (Matt. x. 23).

So the glimmers of faith in the end will connect the little bits of blessing gleaned with the past mercies promised to the Nation. But like Naomi, the people will be slow to apprehend the wondrous meaning of this. She says to Ruth, "The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen." It will be noticed that for her Boaz is not yet the unique and only kinsman but simply one of whom there are others. So when our Lord asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man, am?" the answer was, "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one

of the prophets." They discerned that He was not an ordinary person, that He was a messenger from God, but how feebly did they see the reality, or rather how entirely they failed to apprehend it. For if Christ is but one of the prophets, He is not our redeemer. Thus Naomi is yet far from the truth.

But faith is on the right track, and in her words to Ruth we have an echo of what Boaz had already said, "It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field." In fact it was Ruth, "the Moabitess," as we are touchingly reminded, who repeats the words of Boaz to her mother-in-law. Thus there is a glimmer of encouragement, and happy Ruth goes all through the barley harvest and the wheat harvest, not in the widow's sackcloth like the mourning Rizpah (2 Sam. xxi. 10), but with the light of a great hope growing more and more definite in her soul. Such doubtless will be the attitude of the remnant, during that time of exercise in which God's purposes will be learned. Not all at once will they know the blessing that is theirs, but faith grows with exercise, and will soon take no refusal.

So too, in the history of the individual soul, faith grows, and the more it gleans the more does it want. That which satisfied it yesterday will not suffice to-day. The One who supplies the handfuls is Himself behind it all, and gives a craving which none but Himself can satisfy.

*(To be continued.)*

# "DRAW ME."

(Song of Sol. i. 4.)

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.  
This He said, signifying what death He should die"  
(John xli. 32, 33).

"DRAW me," my Saviour,  
Thou hast been "lifted up,"—  
Draw me, my Saviour,  
Thou hast "tasted" death's cup.

"Draw me," my Saviour,  
From all other trust;  
Thy wounds are my healing,  
*In Thee* is my boast.

"Draw me," my Saviour,  
O draw me from sin;  
Rule my behaviour,  
All, all my heart win.

"Draw me," my Saviour,  
That I too, may draw—  
Win precious souls  
To Thee, and from woe.

"Draw me," my Saviour,  
"The billows go o'er;"  
Draw me, uphold me  
Till they are no more.

"Draw me," my Saviour,  
O draw me to *Thee*;  
Till with Thee in glory,  
My Saviour draw me.

There on Thy beauties  
Forever I'll gaze—  
There in Thy likeness,  
Shall give Thee full praise.

R. H.



## THE LORD'S DAY—THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK—NOT THE SABBATH.

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CHRIST rose from the dead on the first day of the week. See Mark xvi. 2, 9.

Was this the Sabbath-day? See Mark xvi. 1.

Who came "early in the morning when the Sabbath was past" to the sepulchre? See Mark xvi. 1, 2.

Why did they wait till the "Sabbath was past?" See Luke xxiii. 55, 56.

Which Commandment was this? See Exod. xx. 11; xxxi. 12-18.

"Wherefore my brethren ye also are become *dead to the law* by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, . . . being *dead* wherein we were held; that we should serve in *newness* of spirit, and not in the *oldness* of the letter" (Rom. vii. 4, 6).

God's new creation begins with the rest of a First Day, instead of the Sabbath of a seventh, and we esteem the *Lord's Day* to be holy, not because of a legal commandment, for there is none (the legal commandment applying to the seventh day Sabbath, and any violation of it, the picking up of a stick even on that day was death. See Num. xv. 32-36.) but upon far holier ground, because the name of the Lord who died for us on the cross, and who was raised for us from the grave on the First Day of the week, as head over all things to the Church, His body—is placed upon it. How strikingly the Holy Spirit points to this day, the First day of the week, the Lord's Day, when in the book of Leviticus, chapter xxiii. verses 9-11, He speaks to the people through Moses of the "morrow after the Sabbath" and the

offering of "first fruits," and sacrificed on *that day*. It has been said, "That if we fail to see Christ in every portion of the Old Testament, we miss the aim of the Holy Spirit which is to unfold Him." With what plainness and sureness do these words spoken through Moses to the people of Israel, carry us to the resurrection on the "First Day of the week" after the Sabbath was past. "The morrow after the Sabbath" and to the first fruits of "spices of ointment" an offering "prepared" for their Lord. God has manifested His delight in His Beloved, and in the work He has "finished" by raising Him from the dead on the First Day of the week. Christ is God's rest. We keep the Lord's Day, because we can rest from all fear of wrath and judgment, He having endured the wrath of a just and righteous God in our stead and for us, and because we are "new creatures in Christ Jesus," "old things passed away"—"all things made new"—"quickened together with Him"—"justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses"—and "sealed unto the day of redemption" (2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. i. 12, 13, 14; Rom. iii. 24; v. 1, 9; Acts xiii. 39; Eph. iv. 30).

The soul that has been touched by the *Grace* and *Love* of God in the gift of His Son, and has been set free from the curse of the law by faith in the death and resurrection of Him who has borne the curse, and can say, "Who loved me and gave Himself for me;" that liberated soul will be occupied, not with the law and its demands, but with Christ, and be engaged with themes of worship, praise and thanksgiving on the Lord's Day, other than "Lord incline my heart to keep this law."

R. D.

## RE-TRACINGS OF TRUTH:

IN VIEW OF QUESTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN LATELY RAISED.

## 7. RECONCILIATION, AND THE REMOVAL OF THE OLD MAN.

THE presentation of what is claimed to be the truth as to reconciliation is a very good example of the style of argument which largely prevails among teachers of the school we are reviewing; with whom boldness of assertion seems to make up for lack of demonstrative force. It is amazing in these reports of conferences from which our knowledge of their utterances have mostly to be gained, how little serious attention is given to the Scriptures which are professedly before them, and how little serious attempt there is to hold them to Scripture. Texts are cited, of course; and sometimes a feeble demurrer is made, sure to be silenced immediately, though it were only by an emphatic repetition of the statement questioned. It is easily seen, as the present leader, though with a certain wise caution, says himself, that they are not "simply!"—who are "simply?"—expositors of Scripture, but only of what Scripture has taught them; but we are right in expecting that what Scripture has taught them shall be able to stand an appeal to both text and context; and this one finds here indeed little asked or proffered. There are *remarks*, to be sure, upon texts many, the effort to connect which with the context, and so with serious exposition is sometimes remarkable enough.

For instance, in a question raised with regard to the assertion that "fellowship with the Father and the Son," as spoken of in John's first epistle, was

limited to the apostles, reference is made to the sixth verse of the first chapter, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him." The answer is ready: "That is saying, if we say we have it. *It does not say we have it.*" And here is the exposition: "The pretension is, that you have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness. The truth is that we walk in the light, and have fellowship with one another" (!) But the pretension then is, in fact, to be apostles; and the walking in darkness (which cannot be part of the pretension, but is the mournful reality which exposes the pretension) is a strange and round-about proof in denial of so exceptional a claim. The "we," as spoken by an apostle, would in that case be as strange as all the rest. For manifestly he would not exclude himself or any one else from the searching test of such a principle; and in this is putting himself in the common rank of Christians, and not separating himself from them as one of a peculiar class. The "we," all through his various use of it, is that of Christian profession, and the light or darkness characterizes the true or the false profession—nothing else. Notice also whence the light shines: it is that of the sanctuary, where God Himself is revealed. *He* is in the light; and that light is just what creates Christian fellowship: "*we* walk in the light, as *He* is in the light;" and that establishes the true fellowship for us all, into which every true Christian enters. The apostle is bringing to bear upon this the great central truth of Christianity—the open holiest, and thus has already shown the fellowship to be divine, as to which he is now concerned to maintain the fact that no Christian can be found outside of it. "Our fellowship" is thus not a different one from this, but

that into which (by the ministry of the apostles indeed) all believers are introduced; and in the "we" so constantly repeated here, we have the apostle putting himself thus with all the rest, instead of claiming for himself or others a peculiar and exceptional fellowship.

Fellowship is rightly said to be participation in common; but community of thought is strongly objected to: "they that eat of the sacrifices have fellowship with the altar; it is evidently not community of thought there." But if we look at this more closely, we shall surely realize that it is after all the principles which are identified with it that the altar embodies. The altar itself literally is only an inanimate structure, with regard to which the term can only be used as it is idealized. But as to all mental objects, ideas, fellowship in these may be rightly spoken of. One might quote, I suppose, every dictionary that exists, only that, as we shall see directly, the dictionary goes for nothing with those whose views we are examining. Let us take Scripture then, and the very Scripture which they cite against it, and it may be maintained without possibility of successful denial that the altar in this case, apart from the principles which it represents, would mean nothing—be utterly senseless in the connection in which it stands. And just so with the idol of which the apostle speaks in the same relation: the idol in itself is "nothing in the world." Take it in connection with all for which it stands, and for idol you may write "devil."

But there is another interest in maintaining things like these: "Is it not helpful to see that on account of the difficulties and opposition around, there must

be a fellowship?" "The word (fellowship) implies to me a special bond in a scene of contrariety; that is, I believe, the force of it in Scripture. *And there will be nothing in heaven to call for fellowship.*" Thus we see how to preserve consistency, and rule fellowship out of heaven, it must be denied that any element of it exists that would entitle it to be there. Thus it is another of those terms, whose number seems continually increasing, which in the hands of these teachers lose their significance for eternity, and are lowered from heaven to earth; and thus error to be maintained requires continually fresh concessions to be made to it. Alas for him who has committed himself in anywise to it, and has not lowliness to judge his departure and draw back his foot from the ever more devious and downward way!

But to come to what is our theme at present—reconciliation; we shall, as usual, put together the statements made regarding it, and without comment, that they may speak thus for themselves, and make their own impression. Afterwards I shall examine them. It is a pity that the doctrine is only to be found in these conversational remarks which, as already said, can hardly, save by courtesy, be called "readings." Yet the sense is after all sufficiently clear, and the extracts are, save where noted, from one speaker who is entitled to be considered the foremost leader in a movement which is rapidly changing the aspect of many of the central doctrines of Scripture for those who are being carried by it.

Reconciliation, then, we are told, "is one of the terms the force of which you must find from its use in Scripture. The dictionary would not give you the scriptural use of it. In the ordinary use of the

word the sense is that two persons estranged have been brought together. That is not the scripture-idea. It is not *minds* that are reconciled. There was no enmity on the part of God towards the world; and certainly the mission of Christ was not to make people more pleasant. Yet in Christ God was reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. If you say that 'it came out in the Lord's ministry of grace here on earth,' then you will be bound to admit this, that His ministry was ineffective." "The truth of reconciliation is plainly stated in 2 Cor. v.: God was in Christ; He ignored every other man in a sense, for the moment; there was one Man before Him, and that was Christ." "The ministry of reconciliation began with Christ Himself, and meant that in the presence of Christ here everything was under the eye of God on a wholly new footing in connection with Him. That was the effect of the presence of Christ. The new footing was grace and favor. God was in a new light towards man. He saw what was perfectly suitable to Himself in Christ.

"The ministry of reconciliation was effected in Christ in His life. God approached the world outside of it. He was favorable to the world in Christ, not hostile; but when you come to the word of reconciliation it is the testimony that reconciliation has been effected in death. It is not now simply that God has approached the world in another Man, in Christ being here, but the man hostile to God has been removed. So you have both things now, God's approach to man, and the man antagonistic to God removed in death. That is what I understand by the word of reconciliation, and we have to accept it."

"The difficulty," says another, "with many of us as to reconciliation is, that we have looked at it as reconciling us to God, instead of seeing it as the abolition of us, that all might be in a new Man."

"That is the idea."

And now in opposition to the dictionary meaning:—

"We have stopped at this, Alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled."

"*How* could that man be reconciled? you could not reconcile a man who is an enemy in mind by wicked works. He can only be so as being in another individuality."

Again:—

"You cannot reconcile *what* is alienated; it is impossible to reconcile that which is at enmity. If enmity is there, it is there; it is enmity of will; that is not to be reconciled. 'They that are in the flesh cannot please God.'"

"It is you that weré alienated."

"But the point is that you are reconciled by being removed, and where the distance was complacency is, because Christ has come in. Hence it is that reconciliation involves new creation."

"That which you are morally has to go; personally you are reconciled. Is that the thought?"

"I don't object to that, but you may depend upon it, if you press that on people you will give them the idea that reconciliation is some kind of change of sentiment in them. I have no doubt that this is in the mind of the vast proportion of Christians." . . .

"That is, in new creation the saints are presented 'holy, unblameable, and unreprieveable.'"

"It must be that; you could not conceive of any



process which would change the man who was an enemy in mind by wicked works into holy, unblameable, and unproveable; no such process is possible, even to God."

Elsewhere we find:—

"The reconciliation of things is remarkably simple. Everything is taken up in Christ. The reconciliation of persons refers to individuals, and has to be individually accepted. 'Through whom we have now received the reconciliation.' In Corinthians it is, 'We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' Reconciliation has to be accepted when it is a question of persons, therefore there was the ministry of reconciliation."

"Is there any thought of the enmity being brought to an end in reconciliation?"

"The enmity is only brought in to show that the one marked by it must go. You cannot improve with reference to enmity. You cannot reconcile what is at enmity. It is the purest folly to think of reconciling what is hostile."

"It says, 'When we were enemies we were reconciled.'"

"Yes; but it was by learning that what was at enmity had been removed by the death of Christ. That is the way of it. I do not think that the apostle refers to a change of feeling on the part of people, but to acceptance of the truth that what was at enmity has been removed. They had received the word of reconciliation—'When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.' They had accepted that as their death. This is the truth on God's side—on the experimental side it is somewhat different."

Once more, even though it may be *ad nauseam*.—

“Do you think a man, an enemy to God by wicked works, could ever be changed into unblameable and unreprieveable in His sight? It could not be. That *person* could be, but not that *man*.” . . .

“How would you explain our identity remaining?”

“That is the point; the complacency is where the distance was; that is in you. It is not that God sweeps all away and brings in an absolutely new race. He does so morally, but not actually. The old man has gone, and where he was Christ is; this has come to pass in the Church.”

What then is reconciliation?—

“I think the idea of the text is a bringing into conscious complacency with the divine mind and pleasure.” “What I understand by it is, that where distance was there is complacency. . . . The distance has been removed in the removal of the man. I don't see in what other way God could remove distance. The distance came in by man, and the removal of the distance means the removal of the man. But the point is that where the distance was now there is complacency.”

“Would you preach the ministry of reconciliation to sinners?”

“It would not be much good to them.”

“Where is the ministry of reconciliation to be exercised?”

“I think very much amongst those who believe.”

“But do they need to be reconciled?”

“I think so, if they are to be for the satisfaction of God.”

“When the apostle says, ‘Be ye reconciled to God,’ had they touched it?”

"I do not think the Corinthians had touched it. . . . I think it is practical; the Corinthians had not left Adam for Christ. They were practically very much in Adam. They had believed in Christ; I don't doubt for a moment they were Christ's, and had received the gift of the Holy Ghost. But certainly, judging by the epistle, they had very little readiness to leave Adam for Christ."

"The truth for the Christian is this, that in the acceptance of reconciliation he has put off the individuality connected with sin, but at the same time he has put on the new man which after God is new created."

We have now before us—produced, some will think perhaps, at unnecessary length—what ought to enable us to arrive at a sober and sufficient judgment of what is presented for truth with regard to the doctrine. Truth there is in it also, along with much that is new, as generally in these teachings. The misfortune is that here, as in so many cases, the true is not new, and the new is not true. Not merely so, but some of the statements seem absolutely wild and reckless, easily as they were accepted by those who heard them when first made. Only the knowledge that they have been and are being so by so many could make it worth while to repeat or challenge them now. Their currency and the gravity of much with which they connect themselves, give them an importance which in themselves they are far from having.

At the outset we are warned against the dictionary meaning of the word; though it is not and cannot be denied that it is the correct translation of that which

has been chosen by the Spirit of God as fittest to convey His meaning, and it would not seem to be one of those words for which, as is well known, when Christianity came in, it had to coin a meaning of its own. Scripture also, at first sight, would certainly appear to confirm the dictionary use. Any simple person would suppose so upon reading that "when we were enemies, we were reconciled," "you that were alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled," and "to reconcile both to Himself, having slain the enmity." The general consent, one may say, of Christians for many centuries has without suspicion accepted Scripture and the dictionary as speaking in the same way.

It is startling to find, in what might seem to be the same line of things,—that is, in arguing against some kind of change of sentiment, as from enmity to friendship (which the dictionary use favors, if not involves) the strong assertion that no process of changing a man who is an enemy to God by wicked works, is possible to God! To save the speaker's character for sanity, we have to assure ourselves that he is only using the word "change," so confusing in this connection, for "whitewashing," perhaps. God cannot whitewash a man, of course, and take him for what he is not. And we are encouraged to believe that that is his meaning by what he says elsewhere, that "it is impossible to reconcile that which is at enmity; if enmity is there, it is there." Truly; we shall not dispute about this; but why so earnestly and with such extraordinary emphasis, insist upon this? was it ever in dispute? while another passage still, very similar to the one we have been trying to mend, seems to assert for it that "change" is really

meant: "Do you think a man, an enemy to God by wicked works, could ever be changed into unblameable and unproveable in His sight? It could not be. That *person* could be, but not that *man*."

So it is evident that we must walk very carefully, and define very closely, to suit these leaders of the poor perplexed sheep of Christ! How good to have a Bible that always remembers that God has chosen the poor! But we may say then that a "person," an enemy to God, may be changed in this manner; but a "man," an enemy to God, may not! Is that intelligible? Let us go on and see what is to come of this.

Some one asks, seemingly in the same perplexity with ourselves, "How would you explain our identity remaining?" Perhaps he wants to know whether he is after all still a "man," or only a "person." But happily he is assured that his identity remains:—"That is the point; the complacency is where the distance was; that is, in *you*. It is not that God sweeps all away, and brings in an absolutely new race. He does so morally, but not actually. The old man has gone, and where he was Christ is."

"The *old man* has gone!" Ah! does not a ray of light break in there? Is perhaps the *old man* the "man" about whom our guide was thinking, when he spoke of the impossibility of the *man* being changed? But then why distinguish so carefully between the man and the person? The old man is in fact the person that was, before grace had brought him under its dominion, the child of Adam in all the sad inheritance of his fallen father; and because we were all naturally alike in this pre-Christian state, Scripture speaks of "our" old man. But it is not

the nature—the flesh—which still remains in us, and with which so many confound it; “our old man was crucified with Christ,” and for every Christian is put off, and non-existent. Thus the question is never raised of “changing” the old man, nor could be raised by one properly acquainted with its force in Scripture. This new man does not dwell in us alongside of the old, but displaces it; yet it is the same man who was once “old” who now is “new.” He has put off his former self, which the cross of Christ has ended before God in judgment, but from which it has thus liberated him, that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth he may no longer serve sin (Rom. vi. 6).

The old man cannot then be distinguished as man or person distinct from the one individual alone existing throughout. The assertions made are false and preposterous; and, of course, you do not find a trace of them in Scripture. They are simply the inventions of a fertile but unbalanced mind. It *is* the man who was once alienated and an enemy to God by wicked works, who in every case of conversion becomes the holy, unblameable and unreprouvable child of God. There is no impossibility with God of changing the one into the other; and there is no unchangeable “man” to pronounce or speculate about. And reconciliation, instead of being so far on in Christianity that persons who are indwelt of the Spirit (as the Corinthians) may yet be strangers to it, is at the threshold of Christian life. “When we were enemies, we were reconciled;” not as Christians, but as “alienated and enemies to God by wicked works, He hath reconciled us;” “God was in Christ, reconciling the *world*”—and not believers—“to

Himself." No subtle distinctions can take away from us what God has thus written with a pencil of light in His immutable Book. "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

How plain, therefore, that the reconciliation does involve a change in the man from this alienation and enmity, wherever it takes effect! How plain that the answer given to the invitation, "Be reconciled to God," involves the dropping of resistance and estrangement, upon the assurance of gracious provision made by which His banished may be restored to Him. The weakness of God is stronger than man, and the foolishness of God is wiser than man; and the amazing spectacle of the Son of God dying for His enemies has power still, through the might of the Spirit to subdue enemies to the love that seeks them.

Consequently the testimony of reconciliation is not that of the removal of the old man; nor can this be found in connection with it; it is merely forced in in this way where it does not belong. One wonders at the feebleness that can either put forth or accept such triviality as the following. In answer to the objection that Scripture "says, When we were enemies we were reconciled;" it is replied—

"Yes; but it was by learning that what was at enmity was removed by the death of Christ. That is the way of it. *I do not think* that the apostle refers to a change of feeling on the part of people, but to acceptance of the truth that what was at enmity had been removed. They had received the word of reconciliation—'When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.' They had accepted that as their death."

Now the whole of this is necessarily and at once overthrown by the very sentence which it is supposed to explain. We have the testimony of the very man who says this, that [such a] ministry of reconciliation preached to sinners "would not be much good to them;" and the very words he is explaining assert that it is enemies who are reconciled! Where are we told that it was "by learning that what was at enmity had been removed"? One can only answer, "Nowhere." Instead, we have confessedly the speaker's thoughts: "*I do not think!*" And where does it say or suggest that "they had accepted that death as their death," in any such sense as the removal of the old man? Not a hint is given of this in that part of Romans from which the text is quoted. It comes afterwards in the sixth chapter, and in quite another connection from what is given to it here. Would it not be well if there were indeed an expositor to help us, instead of men whose knowledge is of fragmentary texts, threaded together with their own thoughts, and in supreme disregard of context?

Before we close we must look at what is said concerning the ministry of reconciliation on our Lord's part, as it is stated in the second of Corinthians: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Here, as it was in the ministry of Christ on earth that this was accomplished, there could, of course, be no word of the removal of the old man; but here is the comment:—

"God was in Christ: He ignored every other man in a sense, for the moment; there was one Man before Him, and that was Christ. The ministry of reconciliation began with Christ Himself, and meant



that in the presence of Christ here everything was under the eye of God on a wholly new footing in connection with Him. That was the effect of the presence of Christ. The new footing was grace and favor. God was in a new light towards man. He saw what was perfectly suitable to Himself in Christ."

Now that it is the truth that in every intervention of God for man Christ was before Him, the justification of the love manifested, is fundamental truth, surely; and that when Christ was born into the world, His good pleasure in men had not only decisive expression, but its justification in the Son of man. But that does not make the interpretation of the apostle's words which has been given us the more exact. True as what is said in itself may be, it is yet assuredly *not* the truth which is stated in them. God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself is not at all the same as God having Christ before Him; and one may say, manifestly not. God in Christ as seen in His gracious ministry to men, is that identification of God with Him who represented Him on earth which showed Him in a grace which did not deal with men according to their trespasses. It does not speak of Christ as the ground of such favorable regard, but as the One who expressed this regard on God's part. The effect or otherwise of the Lord's revelation of God in this way is not in question; and His sorrowful complaint through the prophet, of laboring in vain and spending His strength for nought, should have hindered this being pleaded as an objection. Yet was His work with His God, as He declares. It could not be in vain, whatever the effect among men, to reveal God thus; and where must

one be to say it? God's attitude is what is declared: "He was favorable to the world, not hostile," is the truth of it. But the whole object of the proposed interpretation of this passage is evidently to make reconciliation in it as far as possible in accord with what I can only call the theory that reconciliation means the removal of the old man. The reconciliation here, therefore, cannot be permitted to involve the invitation to a change of attitude on man's part, however much this is favored by the direct appeal of those to whom the word of reconciliation is now committed, "Be ye reconciled to God." This too is enfeebled as much as possible by being turned into "accepting the reconciliation." You must guard this from any suggestion of *minds* being reconciled, which we have been told is not in it! You are only to think of enmity being removed as this may be contained in the old man being removed.

"*Minds* are not reconciled"; and yet to be reconciled is, according to another definition, to be "brought into *conscious* complacency with the divine mind and pleasure!" How is this to be done *without* the mind? But indeed there is no putting together the various and conflicting statements. Reconciliation is, of course, on God's part towards man—*He* reconciles; man is reconciled—not reconciles: reconciliation is that "where distance was, there is complacency;" and this means divine complacency. God has removed the distance by removing the man; that is the reconciling to Himself, and no work in us comes into this.

Well, then, is the whole world reconciled? Why no! we must accept the reconciliation. After all, then, if divine complacency is to be where the dis-

tance was, and that is in us, reconciliation there is not until *we* are reconciled; the "be ye reconciled" must take effect. Reconciliation awaits, then, the response on our part before it is accomplished; that is, before it *is* reconciliation. This is the opposite of what has been so strenuously contended for, and is proved by the very statements which are meant to be the denial of it! Scripture does not negative the dictionary after all.

But more than this; if this is true, and it is as asserted, Christians who have to be reconciled—people, it may be, as in the case of the Corinthians, who have already received the Spirit of adoption, and cry, "Abba, Father,"—then they must be doing so, and rightly doing so, while yet in them the distance is not removed, and divine complacency has yet no existence! There is no divine complacency, but distance unremoved, for those whose souls refuse the distance and draw near to God in the place of children! This is the contradiction into which men fall who "do not read Scripture in the letter," in which God has been pleased to give it, but in that which their own minds have distilled out of it, and which they call, the spirit. How plain it is, that if reconciliation means divine complacency now where distance was before, then, unless there are believers who are not in the value of Christ's work before God, reconciliation *must* be coincident with the very beginning of true faith in the soul, and not in the place in which these teachings put it; and then, as a further consequence, that the word of reconciliation is not the announcement of the removal of the old man, but the simple story, than which nothing deeper or more wonderful exists, that "while

we were yet without strength Christ died for the ungodly," and that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son" for the salvation of the lost! By and by those who have received the message of reconciliation will still need to know about the crucifixion of the old man; but God's reconciling kiss waits not for this, but meets us in our very rags and wretchedness. When we are enemies, we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son.

F. W. G

(*To be continued.*)

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WHEN Cyrus gave one of his friends a kiss, and another a wedge of gold, he that had the gold envied him that had the kiss, as a greater expression of favor. So the true Christian prefers the privilege of acceptance [fellowship] with God to the possession of any earthly comfort, for the light of His countenance is life, and His favor is as the cloud of the latter rain.—*Buck.*

THE righteous doth bear calamities with patience, but also with joy. For they do not look upon the labor, but upon the reward; not upon the pain, but upon the crown; not upon the bitterness of the medicine, but upon the health which it bringeth; not upon the grief of the chastisement, but on the love of the Chastiser.—*F. Lewis, 1590.*

THERE is as much difference between the sufferings of the saints and those of the ungodly, as there is between the cords with which the executioner pinions a condemned malefactor and the bandages wherewith a tender surgeon binds his patient. The effect of the one is to kill, of the other to cure. Believers undergo many crosses but no curses.—*Salter.*

## JOTHAM'S PARABLE.\*

Read Judges ix. 6-21.

GIDEON has died, and his son Abimelech has risen up as king. His very name, "My father was king," which was given him by some one, (perhaps by his mother, to show his relation to the great man of Israel, and to cover the shame of his birth) shows how the subtle spirit was at work among the people. A "king" is the very thing that his father was not. His father refused to be king, and said God alone should be their king. And yet here is the son of his father who declares that his father was king, and, furthermore, in the strongest way declares that his son also is going to be king.

He sets himself to exercise authority over the people of God, and in order to do so he builds his throne upon violence. There must be violence if there is rule of that kind; if there is the rule of man, it must be by violence. Therefore, he slays all his brothers, all the many sons of Gideon, with a single exception. Having thus cut off all rivals, he goes to Shechem, the town of his mother, the town according to nature, which is significantly in that very tribe of Ephraim, which is always, as you know, reaching out for rule, and gets the men of Shechem to endorse and recognize him as king. Then it is that his brother Jotham, the one who had escaped, propounds his parable, which is most striking, and embodies the whole lesson of this chapter. This parable on rule and government explains all that occurred, and shows what

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\* An extract from "*Lectures on Judges*," now publishing in No. 13 of "*The Treasury of Truth*."

human government always is in the house of God (chap. ix. 7-21).

You have in the parable a picture of what government, or rule, is. The tree itself is a picture of government. You remember that Nebuchadnezzar was a great tree, head of the Gentile kingdom. The mustard seed grew into a tree.

The trees of the wood ask for a ruler, and they naturally turn to those bearing fruit. First comes the olive; they ask it to be king over them, and the olive's answer is that of all the other trees, "Shall I leave my fatness, wherewith they honor God and man, and go to wave over the trees?" In other words, the olive declares that fruit-bearing is its work and not ruling. The fig-tree and the vine return the same answer. When we apply the parable to the government of God's people, it is beautifully simple.

Who is going to rule over God's people? Naturally, the saints turn, of course, to those who are bearing fruit for God. Here is one, for instance, who will represent the olive. The olive with its oil suggests the energy and illumination, the power and fruits of the Holy Ghost. They say to those who are manifesting the fruits of the Spirit in their lives, "Brethren, do you be rulers." Or, singling out one particular brother, who is full of faith and the Holy Ghost, they say, "You take charge, and be governor of God's people." He says, "Ah; brethren, I am too much engaged in the things of God, to attempt to rule His people." "I am too much engaged in the blessed communion of the Holy Ghost, in that which refreshes the people of God, that which is an honor to God (for God is honored and glorified by the fruits

of the Spirit in His people), too much engaged with bearing fruit to be a ruler or a lord."

The fig-tree represents more particularly all that gracious nourishment and healing which is ministered through fruitfulness to God. The fig-tree producing sweet, wholesome fruit says, "If I am to rule, I must stop being fruitful, and I would far rather provide food for the people of God, than I would govern them." And so if the Spirit of God has empowered one in any way to bear fruit that nourishes and refreshes, heals and sustains the people of God,—suggested in the pastor and teacher—who would exchange that kind of a place for any pre-eminence over them as master or lord?

The reply of the vine is only another lesson of the same kind. The vine, perhaps, reminds us more particularly of the gospel ministry, that ministry which emphasizes the precious blood of Christ, of which wine is a type. Here is an evangelist, one whose delight it is to hold up the cross, the finished work of Christ, and the people say, "He is the right one to rule; give us a good evangelist to rule over and govern us, to take charge of the saints." Ah! he says, shall I leave that which refreshes God, as well as man? Shall I leave that which cheers the fainting heart of the dying saint, brings peace to the guilty conscience, and glory to the grace of God? Shall I give up my ministry of the gospel of His grace for an empty honor of ruling over the people of God?

Who, then, is to rule over them? If those who are bearing fruit for God will not be rulers over His people, who really is to be the ruler? Ah, the lesson, dear friends, of government, is the lesson of service, and he rules best who serves best. He is really,

practically, a head of the people, who is at their feet serving them; the ones who bring them the precious fruits of God's grace, the olive, the fig, the vine, these are the ones, and the only ones, by their service, who rule or lead the saints of God.

The spirit of rule is the spirit of service. The moment it passes into that of rule merely, it passes away from that of service and of fruit bearing. The moment you get away from fruit-bearing, you get emptiness, and that is what you have here. A bramble-bush is elected to be the ruler of the trees, and the bramble's answer is a very significant one, "If I am to be ruler, then you have either got to bow to me, or fire will come out and burn up all the trees, from the cedar of Lebanon, in its height, down to the smallest of them." It is rule or ruin.

What is a bramble but a mere fruitless thing, that, instead of giving its energy, sap and vigor to bearing fruit, has shriveled up and turned in upon itself? Just as the thorn, it is the curse of the earth, an abortive branch. That which might have, if it had opened out, been a branch and borne much fruit, has shrunk up and centred upon itself. So the bramble, nothing but a thorn-bush, figure of a self-seeking, self-desiring man, becomes now a ruler. This rule is of that character which says, You must bow to me, or be burnt, no matter who you may be.

What a lesson as to what rule is amongst the people of God! How it searches our hearts, as we think of it; how it makes us realize how easy it is to become mere brambles, and to seek a place, not at the feet of the saints, but over their heads. Beloved brethren, he rules who does as Christ did, ministers amongst them. "Whether is greater, he that sitteth



at meat or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as He that serveth." Do you want saints to look up to you? Ah, you are a bramble, if you covet that. The people who are looked up to are those who do not take the place, but who are seeking to bear precious fruit for God, and for the blessing of the saints. Let us be occupied with that fruit-bearing in our own souls.

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### "WHO AM I?"

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ALL true service of God and His people will be distinguished by a consciousness of being sustained and guided in it by God. But in order to do this, there is commonly a hard lesson to be learned by painful discipline—the lesson of our own nothingness, and the vanity of all our own devices and resources.

Moses occupied the highest place in Egypt under Pharaoh, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in word and deed. All the treasures of Egypt were at his command. We know that even then he was a believer, and by faith turned away from the wealth, honors and pleasures of the world, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God." He had a conviction that God would use him to deliver His people. And no doubt he supposed that all these worldly advantages, which had been so wonderfully bestowed on him, were important means of accomplishing this end. In such a confidence, he chose his own time to interfere in their quarrels; and supposed that they, too, would think as he did, that one possessed of such advantages was the very man to deliver them. But in this

expectation he met only with disappointment, and learned that it was not by the strength and wisdom of Egypt that God was to be served.

At the age of forty, in the vigor and maturity of all his natural powers, Moses is a fugitive in the wilderness, and there he spends forty years in tending sheep. The fires of natural zeal and ambition have burned out; all the advantages he once possessed are lost; if remembered at all at the court of Egypt, the remembrance will render his return thither perilous. He is now an old man, well stricken in years. But God's time has now come; and in solitude with himself He has been preparing His servant; and the last step of the preparation was the manifestation of His own glory to one who was to act in His name. The mode of this manifestation was instructive—"a flame of fire in a bush;" and the wonder was that, frail and perishable as it seems, "the bush was not consumed." That fire which devours the enemy, and will at last consume every evil work, is as a wall of defence to God's people, few and feeble as they appear by any carnal estimate.

There Moses stands unshod in the presence of the divine holiness, while God proclaims His name, and reveals His compassion for His chosen but afflicted people. "And now come," He says, "I will send thee into Egypt." Where is now the forwardness and self-confidence which assumed the office of Israel's deliverer, uncalled and unsent? *Now*, when God sends, Moses is filled with a humbling sense of his incompetence. "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" He has learned his own insignificance. And never yet did a believer

go forth in a service to which he was truly called of God with any other feeling than that which Moses expressed when he said, "Who am I?" All in which nature glories, and on which nature would count, go for nothing when we come to this point. "Who is sufficient for these things?" Brethren, have you been brought to this point? As has been remarked, "There would be much more profitable and happy service if we only served God's order." It is delightful to see activity in service; but then it should be connected with communion with God in secret, and the acknowledgment of God's sovereignty. Thus we should serve joyfully, not as though God needed our service, but as desiring to glorify Him in our bodies and our spirits, which are His; not lightly, but "with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire."

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#### LUKE VIII. 3.

JESUS, who could supply others by miracles, lived Himself by the providence of God. The Lord of the universe, who at first created the world, and who still by His providence makes the earth fruitful for the supply of man and beast, instead of supplying His wants by immediate creation, drew His supplies from His people. Wonderful humiliation! The Lord of heaven and earth condescends to live on the bounty of those who are supplied by His own providence! Thus He gave the most amazing instance of humility, and afforded an opportunity to His disciples to manifest their faith and love. In this way He still acts. He makes some of His people poor, that others may have an opportunity of ministering to Him by ministering to the saints; for what is done to His people is done to Himself.

## THE HOUSE OF GOD.

Ps. cxxii. and cxxvii.

Notes of an Address by S. R., Saturday Evening, Dec. 30, 1899,  
Philadelphia.

THESE two psalms form part of those songs of degrees, beginning with the hundred and twentieth psalm,—fifteen of them. They are all of a similar character, evidently connected together and developed in a very beautiful and orderly way. You know that in the last or fifth book of the Psalms, from the hundred and seventh to the end, we have that which answers, as we have learned, to the book of Deuteronomy. It is the book of results, going over again with God the lessons which have been learned, and getting the completion of all.

It reaches on to the very end, so that what you have at the close are just the repeated hallelujahs of a ransomed people for whom there is nothing left but worship and joy and praise. God has taken every other occupation away, and so filled them with His blessing that praise is their occupation. Thus the book of Psalms ceases amidst an outburst of hallelujahs in which not only ransomed Israel, but all the redeemed and all the earth—nature animate and inanimate, even the trees of the field—join in praises and worship that are the fruit of all that God has done.

Therefore I think, as it is the closing book of the Psalms, that the nation is before us as having begun again a national existence. It is not merely private experience, as you have in the earlier psalms, but it is now the whole people, their corporate place, and they are gathered in connection with Jerusalem and the government of God's house.

It is very suggestive to notice that the psalm which precedes these songs of degrees, is the hundred and nineteenth, that longest of all psalms. It is entirely occupied with setting forth the perfections and sufficiency of the word of God. It is divided into twenty-two parts, each part named after one of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and each verse in that part beginning with that letter. It is as though the psalmist would say that he had exhausted the whole alphabet, the whole language, to give expression to the fulness and perfection of the literal word of God.

Then, as there are eight verses in each of these divisions, it seems to suggest the new creation of which we were speaking to-day, that new covenant that is made with the house of Judah and the house of Israel, which is characterized by the law being written in their hearts. The law, not written on the tables of stone, not a condition now, but written in their hearts, so that they can say: "Oh, how love I Thy law. It is my meditation all the day." That is the word of the regenerate nation, the law of God is now in their hearts, and you have, as a blessed result of that, their ascent up to the house of God.

These songs of ascents, songs of degrees, suggest the approach, drawing near to God's house. You have, for instance, in the eighty-fourth psalm one longing and crying for the courts of the Lord. He is at a distance. It is one of the Levites, the sons of Korah. His "soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord;" his "heart and flesh crieth out for the living God," as he thinks of that home where even "the sparrow," the lonely bird, worth nothing in itself, "hath found an house" for itself; and the "swallow," a restless bird, flitting here and

there, moving about, finds "a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God."

There it is the longing, and what we get here is the longing *fulfilled*. Now their "feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem." They are drawing near to the house of God, and these fifteen psalms, songs of ascent, seem to mark the approaches, the steps. They tell us that they sang these songs on the steps that led to the temple, to the house of God. Be that as it may, the truths which we have in them beautifully set forth the principles on which God's people will draw near to Him and be indeed in His house.

We turn now to the first psalm that I have read, the 122nd. It has been pointed out that these fifteen psalms also form another little pentateuch in themselves, in which three psalms are grouped together. The 122nd is the third, the Sanctuary psalm of that first division. You have, for instance, the lowest step in the 120th. "In my distress, I cried unto the Lord." How simple it is, dear friends, and how blessed that the very first step in approach to God is taken in distress.

Just here, one feels tempted to say a word in case there should be a single soul here in distress as to salvation. Do you know the first step to God is in your distress? There is where Christ meets the soul—in its distress and away from God. And if there is one needy soul here to-night that has nothing but distress because of sin, nothing but a sense of guilt and helplessness and the oppression of sins, like enemies all about them, remember that where Christ meets the soul is in its distress. He does not ask you

to leave your distress before you find Him, but He meets you in your distress. He took our place in a distress which, thank God, we shall never know, in order that He might meet us and take away forever that distress of soul which the guilty sinner has.

I do not apologize for stopping just to ask any stranger that might be here to-night, to come and join us in these songs of ascent in going up to the house of God. You can begin now, if you take your place in distress of soul because of sin; and you can find that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is for you just as much as it has been for any of us. How good it is, as we are enjoying the precious things of our Lord, to be privileged to hold out an invitation to the stranger, to those young men who have not known Christ though they have heard of Him all their lives; to offer Christ to them and assure them that their fathers' Christ, their fathers' Saviour is ready to be their Saviour too, ready to meet you as you are, in your sins,—to save you.

The next psalm—cxxi.—gives us the help that cometh. It is another step, as it were, "the hills from whence cometh my help." "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth."

When you come to the third one, which we want to look at to-night, you get the sanctuary: "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."

Thus we have three plain steps: first, the distress; second, the help,—salvation; third, the access into the place of blessing. How simple this little ascent is for every soul who desires to draw near to God. Your distress, your salvation only in Christ, and then access into the sanctuary, the presence of God.

But, of course, all these psalms apply to Israel.

They refer to the nation in the last days. Redeemed Israel is the people, as I said, who have the law now in their hearts, and who are learning and have learned to sing these songs of access into the presence of God. So you find,—in a way that I do not propose to go into, for I want to speak of something quite different—that the whole thought of this psalm is corporate blessing for Israel. They go up unto the house of the Lord, at Jerusalem, the beautiful city, compact and built together. The tribes all go up there to the testimony of Israel to give thanks to the Name of the Lord. It carries us back to Deuteronomy and to Leviticus, where God made provision that wherever He put His Name, all the tribes of Israel should go up to the feasts of the Lord three times a year, to give thanks to the name of the Lord; at the Passover, where they celebrated redemption; at Pentecost; and then at the feast of Tabernacles at the close of the year, the feast of ingathering after the day of atonement, to give thanks to His Name.

In the epistle to the Hebrews, after having spoken of the blessings of the new covenant, the apostle contrasts the old covenant under the law with the new. He says: "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched," that is, to mount Sinai, but "ye are come unto mount Zion," the earthly Jerusalem. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is mount Zion."

We need not be reminded that as Christians we have not come literally to the earthly Jerusalem; so you will remember that the apostle goes on immediately to say that we have come also to the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem. That is, we have come to our proper and appropriate blessings as Christians.



But it is on the basis of grace, of which mount Zion speaks, and that is in one sense suggested by the new covenant. Mount Zion is where God will establish His blessing with the people according to the new covenant, and therefore, as the earthly place is a figure and shadow of the heavenly, it seems to me that it is doing no violence at all to the real meaning of this psalm to apply it to ourselves as members of the Church of Christ.

Remembering that our mount Zion is simply the grace of God which has brought us into His presence, and that our Jerusalem is not an earthly city nor an earthly government, but that the house of God for us is a real place and that the government of God's house is a real thing; what I want to do to-night is to try and point out for us some of the thoughts that we gather in that way from this Psalm. Grace is always the same, though it may act in different connections; and holiness is always the same, though it may act in different circumstances. I feel sure that we can get for ourselves, as Christians, some lessons both of grace and holiness in connection with the house of God, from this psalm.

"I was glad when they said unto me, let us go unto the house of the Lord." How our hearts have often responded in the same way! How blessed it is to be able to say, from the depths of our hearts, that we are glad to go unto the house of the Lord, that we are glad to have to do with that which speaks of the presence of the Lord and His government.

For that is what is suggested by the house. It is not a question of individual salvation, nor is it a question of individual communion. When you speak of a house, I suppose you might say the simplest

thought of a house is a place where more than one person lives. It suggests the thought of society, of association. The place where God dwells is called His house, in relation with His people.

But here we are confronted with a contrast. For an Israelite, God dwelt in solitude in His house. He might in His mercy call His people about the gates of that house, but then they had no access, no entrance into that house, no way of approach beyond the outer court. It was only for the few privileged priests to enter any nearer than that. Thus in connection with the house of God for Israel, we have suggested that distance which the veil down and unrent always implies, distance and not nearness. But how blessed the contrast is for us, beloved. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. There is access right into the house of God where God Himself dwells. More than that, and most wonderful is what the apostle Peter says; that we have come to Christ, the Living Stone, to be "a spiritual house." We ourselves are built up to be the house of God, or, as the apostle Paul puts it to the Ephesians: "Builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

So the thought of a house with us suggests association with God. It is God's house, and first of all there must be association with God. Beloved, fellowship is a sweet thing, but what is it that binds us together, that makes us in any sense the house of God? It is because God is recognized in the house. It is God's house, and our association is first with Him, or we could not have any true fellowship one with another. I put it to you, dear brethren, when you say, "I was glad," what is the first joy? Is it

not to meet the Lord Himself? Is not that the first joy of all, dear as it is to meet one another and to have the sweetest association together, the gladness that is so spontaneous in our hearts is that we are going to meet the Lord.

Now, I want to be very simple to-night, so simple that we will think of the real lesson and not of the way in which it is put. "Where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst." There is the house of God for us, where the Lord is in the midst; and, brethren, if our gathering together is going to be a real spiritual thing for us, it is always to be a gathering together unto Christ Himself.

We hear people sometimes say they are leaving this and that, leaving system and all that kind of thing. Yes, alas, we have to leave our fellow-Christians oftentimes, if we are to be faithful to the Lord. But it is not anything that we leave that puts us into the house of the Lord. It is not a negative thing that makes us right. People that are always occupied with negative things never have anything real for their own souls. You will find them too often occupied with the failures of their brethren, rather than with the blessings and glories of Him whom they have come to meet. The true coming unto the house of the Lord is to meet the Lord.

You remember, in the early part of the book of Judges we are told that the name of Bethel was Luz at the first. Its natural name was Luz; its spiritual name was Bethel. Luz means "separation," "cutting off," "separating from." The monk is the most separated kind of man. He is separated from his home, separated from his friends; gives up his own

name even, goes behind stone walls and leads a life of rigid separation. That is Luz, the natural name of separation. What is its spiritual name? Bethel, "the house of God," the presence of God. The Lord makes manifest Himself, and, if we are going to have any enjoyment of Bethel, it must not be a negative thing,—separation from,—it has got to be the actual positive attraction to the Person of the Lord Himself.

It is being gathered unto Him; and beloved, let that mark us, let that be the thing that characterizes us, a people who have to do with the house of God. Let it not be that we are sharp critics because others are not clear as to those priceless things, but let us rather be those whose souls are absorbed in one precious thought, that we have met the Lord Himself.

You remember that when they came to this place, Luz, and wanted to get possession of it, they did not seem to have the courage of faith to take it. Thank God, faith can always take what He has given us title to; but they spied out the city and found one of its inhabitants whom they promised to spare if he would show them the way in. So they got possession of Luz, and called it Bethel. But they let the spared inhabitant go off, and he, as will always be the case, went and built another Luz, a city after the same name as the one which had been captured: I sometimes think there have been many inhabitants of Luz who have been spared and gone off and built the same old city again, marked by the mere separation from and not by the presence of the Lord Himself.

That is as to the general principle of gathering. Take now, in a very simple way, our gathering on a specific occasion. We will say, take any Lord's Day morning meeting. I am sure as the Lord's

Day comes around, hearts glow with gladness. O brethren, is there a joy like it this side of heaven? To be gathered to the house of God! Again, let us remember that if it is the house of God for us it is that we go to meet the Lord Himself personally. We do not go to hear gifts and all that kind of thing. We go to meet the Lord; you have an appointment, as it were, with the Lord Himself.

Sometimes we complain of dull meetings. Do you think meetings would be dull if we were really meeting the Lord Himself and not meeting one another? Ah no, "In Thy presence is fullness of joy"—a joy that must find expression in fullest worship. I am sure that we need to remember that as we come together it is to meet the Lord in person, so we will be glad when they say: "Let us go unto the house of the Lord." Our feet then "stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."

That is the first point, and I want to press it. I trust, if the Lord tarry a little season, that which will characterize us will be this positive sense of the presence of the Lord. As we go on further, we will find other things coming in too, judgment and government and all that, but the first thought is His actual presence.

Do you remember what Jacob said when he awoke out of his dream after he had seen an exhibition of God's grace? He says: "How dreadful is this place." "It is the gate of heaven." We do not say it is a dreadful place, but surely if Jacob felt the holiness of the place, realized the holiness of God's presence, how much more should we who have the full blessing of that grace shining in the face of Christ, realize how holy is the house of God where we meet Him!

“Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.” When you have a given centre of attraction and many drawn together, you have compactness. You remember in the epistle to the Ephesians, after the apostle speaks of the body, the whole body joined to the Head he shows the results in the body: “The Head even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint-supplieth.” Here you have the house of God, Jerusalem built as a city compacted together. What is going to compact the saints together? Holding the Head. How much that implies, of individual, living communion with the Lord Jesus, constant, individual fellowship with Him. From that comes the outflow all around. There will be not only the inflow of communion with Christ, but the outflow, compacting the body together by that which every joint supplies; the outflow of grace one toward another. Here you have a centre, and every one is attracted to the Centre. If every one is trying to get as close to the centre of this room as possible, they will be close together.

The secret of real unity in the assemblies of God's dear people is for each to be drawn personally to the Lord Jesus Christ. Beloved, we cannot legislate that kind of compactness. We can talk about our duty to be close together, but if we are drawn to Christ, as, thank God, I am sure our hearts are being drawn, are we not knit together? is not heart knit with heart?

It is not because we are loving one another first. We are not ashamed to say that we love Christ better than one another. The nearest natural tie is nothing compared with that which binds us to Him. We do

love one another, just for the simple reason that we are drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ. That will be used of God to heal the things which you cannot describe. Are things holding together very loosely? Saints not knit together? You cannot force them. Saints are distant toward one another, suspicious of one another, whispering comes in? You cannot deal with it as if it were some overt act that you could discipline about. But if you are drawn, if Christ takes hold of our hearts and draws them together, I defy all the power of the world and all the power of Satan to keep us apart from one another.

Beloved brethren, is there not a need of our being drawn to Christ, not as a means of being drawn to one another, but because the distance from one another tells of a greater distance of heart from the Lord Jesus Himself? If we recognize these things, if any of the assemblies represented here recognize these things here is the blessed remedy. "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together," a united, a living, really vital connection one with another, that the world looks upon and can no more understand than it can understand Christ Himself. "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not."

Now, you have the tribes going up. "Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel." We hear a good deal sometimes about a testimony. We want to be a testimony. You notice it is a single word, one united testimony. As we were seeing in the second chapter of 2 Corinthians, the saints are "manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ." It is not epistles, as if there might be many of them, but only one—one testi-

mony, one commendation. Think of God, as it were, sending a letter of commendation in His living people, that even the world itself can read and understand, that which recommends the grace of God.

Here we have the tribes going up to the testimony of Israel. The Lord's people are to be a testimony for Him, and, dear brethren, let us not forget that if God, in His infinite grace and mercy, has raised up a testimony to the truth of His Church, it is one of the highest honors that can be conceived, to be connected with that testimony. Do you thing lightly of the privilege of being associated even with two or three who are gathered on the principles of God's truth to the Name of Christ? I tell you, brethren, next to the salvation of your souls there is no more momentous event in your history than your being brought by the Spirit of God to see the truth of the testimony which God has raised up.

It is no light thing. It is no trifling thing, which God has put into our hands. It is no trifle, brethren, that we are connected with a testimony like this. From the depths of my soul, I can bless God that in His infinite grace, He has entrusted me with a share in this holy, blessed testimony. O beloved brethren, think of it, a testimony in a time when everything is going to pieces. It is not merely a testimony to God's way of salvation, but a testimony to that which is nearest and dearest to the heart of Christ—of anything in the created universe. That is the Church, the Bride. We are associated with the testimony to that blessed fact. If you believe it honestly—talk about possession of wealth, or learning, or anything of that sort, it is trash, rubbish, compared with this commanding truth.



If Israel, in looking around, could say, "We have a strong city, salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks," beloved, how much more can we acknowledge the amazing grace that has connected us with the testimony as to the Church of God. It is not the testimony of a few people—do not think for a moment, that we are the only people, it is the testimony for the whole people of God. Just as Israel meant the whole twelve tribes; and just as Elijah with the ten tribes and in a day of ruin, builded the altar with the twelve stones that spoke of undivided Israel, as a testimony of Israel, so we, a feeble remnant,—often that which is despised as to its numbers, and ability, and endowments, and things of that kind,—are standing for the whole Church of Christ.

Unless we are sure that we are a witness for all the people of God, we have not a sense of the responsibility and dignity of the position. You may say that is high Church doctrine; but the Church is high; we cannot tamper with it; we cannot trifle with it; we cannot adopt half-way measures in connection with the Church, the Church of Christ, the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth, as the apostle declares it. We cannot speak slightly of it. If we are not connected with a testimony of that kind, we had better at once give up the whole thing. If it is not a testimony for the whole Church of Christ, I am not surprised to see disintegration and every thing of that kind.

If it is a testimony for all the people of God, you need not be surprised that it is going to be assailed and mocked. As in Nehemiah's time the enemies did everything to break up the little feeble testimony to the truth of Israel in that day, so he will do

in this. If the enemy lets us alone as to our testimony, we may be afraid that it is not a clear testimony. If there is difficulty in connection, we may thank God that He permits difficulty, because Satan would never trouble a thing that was not a real menace to himself.

So it is the testimony of Israel—all the people of God. That will keep the heart large. What a despicable thing it is to see a man looking down with contempt upon Christ's beloved people! You will not have that feeling if you realize that the testimony which, by God's grace, you are seeking to maintain is for the whole Church of God. Ah, brethren, we are, by His grace, standing firm and seeking in our little measure to obey God, for whom? Who are these brethren and companions for whose sake He says: "Peace be within thee" Brethren and companions are the whole people of God, whoever they are. The very ones who may despise us and hate us for what they call our exclusiveness are the ones for whose sakes, next to God's glory, we are seeking the peace and prosperity of the house of God.

What a dignity, what a wonderful thing to be entrusted with such a testimony! I repeat it, that if you realize it, you will thank God every day of your life that you are are put in connection with it. You will realize it to be the highest dignity and honor that could be given to any creature on earth.

They go up "unto the testimony of Israel." Then you have: "To give thanks unto the name of the Lord," and that shows what we are gathered for. We are not gathered, as you might say, to be a testimony. That is a result of it, but a man who is

always trying to be a testimony will be occupied with his testimony, rather than with the One for whom he is to testify. But we are gathered unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

What a lovely thought the Lord gave that poor sinful woman of Samaria, when He said, "The Father seeketh worshipers." It is expressing the appreciation of the heart of God. It is offering back to God the appreciation of hearts to whom He has given the knowledge of Himself. We give back to Him our appreciation of what He has made known to us. He is seeking hearts that will respond to the manifestation of His grace. What is your thought of heaven? Is it not worship? It is offering eternally the apprehension of the glories of the character of our blessed God, which He has made known to us through Christ, and which we will there know in its infinite fulness. We are together to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

We come together to the house of the Lord in our little weekly meetings, realizing that it is the testimony for all Israel. What do we give? It is worship, if we are rightly gathered. It is the Lord Himself who is to be before us, and worship will characterize our meeting. Surely our hearts must be in a cold state if giving thanks to the name of the Lord does not mark our gathering as a testimony.

Is praise stunted? is the spirit of worship feeble amongst us? Oh, brethren, worship feeble in the house of God, with all the display of what grace has done for us, with the presence of the Lord Jesus amongst us, with the Holy Ghost unfolding His word to our wondering souls,—and worship feeble?

Take the Levitical offerings. Suppose a company of God's people attempting to offer back in praise and thanksgiving the truths connected even with the burnt-offering. Suppose they sought to present before God the perfections and beauties of Christ as seen in the bullock—in its full strength. They see Him without blemish and without spot, with the outer covering removed, all the hidden springs laid bare, and with the word of God applied, but bringing out only the perfections and purity of His character. They see Him divided apart, head and feet, and all the various parts, speaking of Christ, His thoughts, His ways, His deeds, everything connected with Him. They think of all that going up in death before God. The memory of all this is presented at the meeting for worship where we come to give thanks to God. Would there be any dearth in the praises? But that is only one; take all the offerings. Take all the types. Leave the types. Come to the plain, simple word, the wondrous unfoldings of Christ, as you have them in the Epistles.

Talk about stinted praise, silent lips! My dear brother, is there any one here who never opens his lips to give thanks to the name of the Lord? What are you thinking of? Yourself? Stop that, and think of Christ, and as you think of Christ, I am sure that you cannot keep your lips closed.

"Our hearts are full of Christ,  
And long the glorious matter to declare."

As you have it in the forty-fifth psalm, "My heart is bubbling up with a good matter; I speak of the things which I have made touching the King."  
"Thou art fairer than the sons of men."

If I could only be used here to-night by God's

grace to unseal a single heart, to uncloset a single mouth in the assemblies of God's people, I would bless Him from the depths of my heart. Silent brothers in the meetings where we give thanks to the name of the Lord! Is it a characteristic weakness amongst us? We want to be stirred up about it. It is a dishonor and shame for those who have had such grace and such love shown them. Let us go into our closets. We want no formal praises, but *living* praises, from loving hearts that have been set free in the holy presence of our God.

That suggests a whole line of thought, a whole connection that I will not enlarge upon. Our own conscience, our own sense of need, will lead us on in that line. Beloved, let us remember that we are gathered unto the testimony to give thanks.

Think of a man who is able to defend the position, who has not a word of thanks when he comes to the Lord's table. Beloved, if there is one thing that ought to mark us, it is the spirit of worship. What is it in that little hymn-book that makes it different from any book of praise you ever saw before? It is Christ who is before the soul there. And if Christ is before your souls as you gather to His Name, the praise and worship of your heart will not be the form of singing hymns, but the irrepressible bubbling up that will bring refreshing and joy to our blessed God. He seeks worshipers. We are only giving Him what His blessed heart of love craves, to see His people happy in His love, pouring out their souls in thanksgiving.

"There are set thrones of the house of David." They speak of government and rule. What we have had thus far is grace, that which brings out the love, the

attractive side. He is the God of all grace. But now right in the centre, in Jerusalem, in a very real sense in the sanctuary, you have mention of thrones. What was the mercy-seat? Do you know, we have a very selfish way of looking at the mercy-seat? We think of it as a place where we have access. It was more than that, it was the throne of Jehovah in the midst of His people. What a wonderful thought that the place where God has His throne is the place where His grace is magnified in the acceptance of the guiltiest sinner, and the blood upon the throne and before the throne, tells us of our perfect acceptance according to the will of God, and that His righteousness and judgment have been fully vindicated. His throne established in that which is the foundation of peace, the work of Christ.

There is no doubt the psalmist had in his mind the government of those thrones of judgment, in connection with Messiah's rule. But, applying this to ourselves, as before, that which is to characterize the assembly of God, is judgment, the throne, the ordering of divine government. What is it that makes an assembly differ, we will say, from a sect? You will say, we have no denominational name. Is that all? Why, such are scattered all around—any little company of Christians that chooses to come together—and is that an assembly? No wonder God's people are harassed and scattered if they think that is God's mind of an assembly. An assembly is marked by a throne of judgment, government exercised. It is the place of divine judgment. Of course, I am only adapting the language to spiritual things. The throne of David suggests the Lord's place of supremacy that we recognize in the assembly.

You cannot have true worship unless you have a true sense of the governmental authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not subjection to my brother, not obedience to the assembly, but it is the whole assembly in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the throne of judgment. How much it suggests ! Do we recognize that sufficiently, the absolute supremacy, the Lordship of our blessed Saviour ? Where is self-will when that is recognized ? Where is there any room for self-will ? It is no question of my will against my brother's will. It is no question of seeing who can gather the most saints and pull in opposite directions. It is only the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ. He rules, and by His word He makes known His will ; and whoever may point to that will, to the authority of Christ and His word, beloved, we have got to bow to that word as absolutely as though it were sounded in thunder from Sinai itself or from heaven.

Bowing to the authority of Christ ! Think of Christ being enthroned amongst His people. He is our Lord and we own His absolute authority. But, then, the throne of judgment suggests another line of things. In the East the ruler had to judge the cases of wrong doing and everything of that kind, and in the assembly of God, the throne of judgment not only suggests in a general way the authority of Christ, but in a specific and particular way the investigation and the dealings with all matters connected with the government of the house of God. That is just as characteristic of an assembly, as is the relationship that we were speaking of.

Discipline begins with the examination of persons to be received. Some one comes and says, I have

brought my friend with me and he is a dear child of God, and I would like to have him break bread. Does that settle it? Is that the throne of judgment? Is that letting the Spirit of God discern for us? Is that the solemn weighing and testing whether or not the Lord Jesus Christ desires that this one should be received into the company of that which is to be a testimony for the whole Church of Christ? Reception is a solemn thing, it is not dropping in and then dropping out again. Beloved brethren, it is no violation of the unity of the Spirit, and surely it is no denial of the unity of the body, to exercise the greatest discrimination and care in receiving those who seek to have a share in the solemn responsibilities of the house of God.

Trace the troubles in the assembly of God back to their source and you will find that one fruitful source of trouble has been the reception of those who have not been properly exercised in conscience as to the immense responsibilities of the place they have come into. They have come in lightly, without learning in their souls what it is to be in the presence of God.

They have not learned the end of themselves, and so they bring in that which can only bring discord and sorrow and trouble. Is it not so as we trace our common sins, and common shame? Has not much of it originated with just this, the failure to exercise judgment in reception?

Apply it to the spiritual condition of every one of us in the assembly of God. We were saying that we ought to be intimately acquainted with the spiritual state of every one in the assembly,—not by being a busy body in other men's matters. Never make the mistake of prying into the details of others' lives; let



them alone unless God brings it out for you. It is always a mistake to do that. It brings fresh sorrow and trouble oftentimes. But we can be acquainted with the spiritual condition of every one in the assembly without prying, and without pretending, any of us, to be better than the other. Surely each of us ought to have a godly love, a jealous care for the spiritual condition of our brethren. May the Lord revive amongst us a sense of that real genuine love for every one. May provoking one another unto love, be aroused amongst us more than ever, that we may, as it were, get close to the heart of every one in the assembly and find out just where they stand before God. How often would the evil be checked.

Why is it that evil springs up in the midst of gatherings? Who is to blame for it? If there had been more exercise, more prayer, more discernment, more true fellowship one with another, how much would be checked and cut off that now, alas, is allowed to come out to its full fruitage, to the shame and sorrow of all! May the Lord make us more jealous in this phase of judgment in the house of God!

I do not speak of discipline, except to remind us that it has its place, it must have its place amongst a company who are to be a testimony for the people of God. Painful,—who can tell the sorrows connected with it?—and yet, beloved, it is that which makes us realize that we are together, because we have passed through common sorrows. There must be and will be the exercise of discipline indeed in an assembly of God. Let it be marked by prayer, by a humble spirit. Let the government and discipline spring out of worship, and be but a needful part of that.

Peace is the result of all that. If that characterizes the house of God, peace is the result. So we find that it comes next. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." That does not mean peace at the expense of truth and divine principles. It is in connection with the thrones of judgment that you have praying for the peace of the Lord's people. And, dear brethren, "They shall prosper that love thee." Have you seen brethren who began to awaken to the needs of the assembly? They have made comparatively little growth, perhaps, for many years. They have gone on in a quiet kind of way; perhaps you have lamented that there has been so little progress. But now there has been an awakening to the sense of the needs of the assembly of God, and they have been praying for the peace of the assembly of God, really awakened and exercised. The result is, their souls prosper. "They shall prosper that love thee."

Christ loves the Church. Christ loves every little testimony to His truth. Oh, from the depths of my soul do I pray for the whole gathered assembly of Christ in connection with the grace in which He has put us! "Peace be within thy walls,"—that which separates us from the outside, —and "prosperity within thy palaces,"—the assembly of God which for us is a palace, even the palace of the King. And as I was saying before, "for my brethren and companions' sake," for all the beloved people of God throughout the world that meet not with us, I will now say, "Peace be within thee." It is for His house, and whatever we may do, no matter how menial the service, I am sure that the least thing and the most menial thing, the most self-denying

thing that is done for the house of the Lord has His approval upon it.

Psalm cxxvii. emphasizes the lesson of faith in connection with the house of God. We must ever be reminded that all our effort, all our poor, puny work is nothing in itself. As Solomon says here, or David, who writes for Solomon, as the temple is growing up there in its beauty: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it." I am sure we are not sorry to say this. We will be willing to let our labor be in vain if the Lord is not building His house. If the saints who are being added in grace,—if it is not the Lord's work, all our Bible readings and trying to unfold Scripture is useless. Unless the Lord is working, "They labor in vain who build it." Thank God, He is working, we can count upon Him. Let us never forget it. As Solomon watched that temple rising with its beautiful proportions, and could say that all the labor that was done upon it would be in vain and worthless if the Lord did not build it, so let us remember that it is God who is working and not man. It is not the instrument He may use.

It is none of ourselves who are building. It is God who is building the house, and unless He does it, all our work is in vain. That stops your trying to pull the fruit before it is ripe. It stops all these unseemly arguments about truth that oftentimes are humiliating rather than edifying. If it is God who is doing the work, we can leave it with God. When He is done with us, we drop into our place and the work goes on, for it is God who is building.

Here the watchmen go around the city walls, looking to see that no unclean person comes around.

Watchman, what of the night? They go about, looking, but there is an Eye that never closes, there is One who never slumbers nor sleeps. How sweet it is to know that it is not our watching, it is not our care, it is the Lord, who keeps the city, and unless He does it, all is in vain. Will the watchman go home and go to bed? Not at all. He will watch all the more vigilantly. He will be careful to do God's work with pains, the porter will be careful to see that no unworthy person draw near. His faith in God will only make him all the more careful as he seeks by His grace to keep the city where the name of our God is placed.

How restful it is, how sweet to know it is God who is working. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" How that stops all restless Martha-service. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He giveth His beloved sleep," or sleeping.

"O earth so full of dreary noises;  
O men with wailing in your voices,  
O delved gold, the wailer's heap;  
O strife, O curse that o'er it full—  
God makes a silence through you all,  
And giveth His beloved sleep."

What is a house without children? A house where the children have all gone out, and found homes for themselves,—what a lonely kind of a place it is to the old people who are left behind! They miss the prattle, they miss the dear little hands and feet, busy perhaps in mischief, running around the house, but they miss them. "Children are a heritage from the Lord." What we have been saying applies to Christians. But my heart has often wept, as I have

thought how few spiritual children there are in God's house.

Where does God get most of His children born? Outside. Evangelists who know little about the truth of God, earnest men and women, knowing a little, gather precious souls, saved souls. Why should there not be some of this heritage of the Lord amongst His gathered people? Oh, you say, but we are not evangelists. I do not believe it takes evangelists to see souls saved. Beloved, I sometimes wish there was no such thing as a platform in the meeting room of the saints. It is not preaching that we are after. It is souls born again,—children born. How? By the word of God. There is that mother in the assembly, she has her little children. Are they going to be born again? Who are going to be the ones used of God to bring them into the marvelous light? Some teacher in a mission school, or some one off yonder? What a reproach! Our older ones, are they going to get their blessing in the house of God amongst us or elsewhere?

"He rewardeth them who diligently seek Him." It is the reward. "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." It is as though they were weapons. How many souls have been saved in connection with the assembly where you are, during the past year? "Oh," you say, "don't put it that way." Why not put it that way? Why not have exercise in that direction? Souls born again! "When Zion travailed, she brought forth," and, beloved brethren, if there were that pouring out of soul in prayer, if there were that which would take no refusal from God, if there were that which would plead and claim from Himself this token of His favor and approval

amongst us, we would hear the prattle of the new born souls, praising and rejoicing in our God.

It is said of our Lord Jesus: "Thou hast the dew of Thy youth." He never grew old, blessed be His Name, fresh in communion with His God in His whole life, He never lost it for a moment. How is it with our souls? Is Christ just the same for us as the day when we first found Him for our souls? Is He? Then may you not expect some "children of youth?" If your soul is fresh and tender in your first love, that is what is going to be rewarded in this way.

I was thinking of this in connection with what we always have, thank God, on Lord's days at these meetings, the gospel of the grace of God. What for? Just to hear how nicely this or that brother can put the gospel? Is that what we have been thinking? "A nice gospel," we say. What is a nice gospel, brethren? It is that which will bring some soul to life. What I want to pray for, is that if it be God's sovereign grace to do so, we will see some child born. I do not care who preaches. If we all got down here and wept and owned our departure from God, and some child of some parent would, as a result of it, cry: "Oh, I must find God to-day!" that would be a reward from God.

We want to hear the assemblies of God sounding with the speech of infants. Our own dear children, shall not these be born in the house of God? Where is the natural source of supply for assemblies? I assure you, I do not believe it ought to be picking people out of the sects. I would far rather see souls brought to Christ and find their homes in the assembly, than to have people gathered out of the sects

even. Thank God for every one who sees the truth and comes out clear. Who would say nay? But, O brethren, for a distinctive work in the gospel of God's grace in connection with the house of our God.

We would not be ashamed then. Go right into the gate, right into the place of judgment. Let the enemy come, let him say, "You brethren do not have much blessing in the gospel." But we are ashamed, and sometimes we say, "You know brethren's distinctive work is to edify Christians." Why do we say so? Because we have so few children to show. But if we turn to our God, thanks be to Him, the fresh dew is ever ready for us, and if that freshness of dew is upon us all, I do not believe that He will refuse us this token of His favor that He is using His beloved people.

May God grant it! Amen!

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#### JOHN ix.

BODILY afflictions are all wisely ordered by the Lord. In every case they have an object. But they are not always sent in judgment, though men are prone so to interpret them when others are the subject of them. The disciples, when they saw a man blind from his birth, rashly concluded that it was a judgment either on his own sins or the sins of his parents. Jesus explained that it was not for any particular sin that he was born blind, but "that the works of God should be made manifest in him." He was born blind that Jesus might have an opportunity of giving him sight. All this previous affliction must be endured by the man that, at a particular time, God might be glorified by his cure.

And is not this great consolation to any of the

Lord's people who may be subject to this or any similar affliction? They must not, indeed, expect to be relieved by a miracle; but they may rest assured that God has some purpose to serve by their affliction, and that in it they may glorify God more than they could otherwise have done. There are many ways in which this may be true; and each individual may discern something in his own case in which he can realize this. Christians are sometimes tempted to question God's love when they are greatly afflicted. Nothing can be more groundless. What is for God's glory *in* them, must be for a blessing *to* them; and in the school of Christ, discipline is as necessary as teaching.

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EVERY man has his own natural idea of heaven, according to what to him is perfect bliss. To one it is music; to another, his circle of friends; to another, rest; and so on. "*To be with Christ*" is the Christian's heaven, for the great sum and substance of Christianity is, *Christ supremely loved and enthroned in the human heart.*

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ENVY is a diabolical passion, for it makes war against God Himself; being incapable, in its impotence, of clouding His Sovereign Majesty, it attacks Him in the gifts His beneficence has bestowed upon man.—*Book of the Fathers.*

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I AM more afraid of my own heart than of the Pope and all his Cardinals. I have within me the great Pope—Self. *Luther.*

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## BRIEF BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

### II. GOD'S REMEDY FOR SIN.

**I**T is most blessed to know that God, who alone knows what sin is, in its awfulness, has in love provided a remedy, which alone satisfies the just claims of His holiness, and as completely meets all the need of the very worst sinner on earth: while all may not be conscious of the terrible results of sin, yet surely all must acknowledge they are sinners before God. "For all have sinned" (Rom. iii. 23).

1. What has man, of his own, to offer as atonement for his sin?

Anything to give man a perfect standing must embrace in its efficacy his whole existence from his entrance into this world to his entrance into eternity. To illustrate, a person born into this world lives say eighty years here and then passes out into eternity. At the age of thirty, such an one is brought to see his sin and desires to be saved. In order to have perfect rest of conscience and heart he must see that what he proposes to present as an offering for his sin must not only atone in the fullest sense for the thirty years past, but for the future fifty years of his life, and give right to God's presence in eternity, fitting him forever for His holy eyes to look on with favor. Now what can one bring? Righteousness is what is needed; has man any of his own which will avail? (Ps. xcvi. 2). "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all *our* righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6; Rom. iii. 10, 20; Eph. ii. 9; Gal. iii. 10, comp. Deut. xxvii. 26; James ii. 10. Thus the sinner can never get acceptance with God by *self-right-*

eous character, works, or amendment of life by law keeping.

2. What does God require for sin? "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23), is the uncompromising sentence of God who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and can not look on iniquity" (Hab. i. 13). He further tells us, "the life of the flesh is in the blood." . . . (Lev. xvii. 11), and that "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). Thus His justice and holiness demand the full requirement to be met, while for the sinner there can be no settled peace for his conscience and heart in anything less—which is death, or life given up, as an atonement. This was what made the difference between Cain's and Abel's offering; the latter, of course, was based upon faith in this very truth. Comp. Gen. iv. 3, 4 with Heb. xi. 4. See also Gen. ii. 17; iii. 24; Rom. v. 12; vi. 23; Rev. xxi. 8; xx. 15; Mark ix. 42-50; John viii. 21, 24.

3. God's provision and remedy for sin.

"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). Thus God speaks, not in an arbitrary manner, but according to justice, which demanded the offering up of the life forfeited by sin. It will be observed too that it was "upon the altar" where the settlement was to be made through substitutionary sacrifice. Thus the Old Testament pages are tinged with the blood of bulls, and goats, and lambs, "which they offered year by year continually" (Heb. x. 1), but which could never "make the comers thereunto perfect," *i.e.* completely purged as to position and conscience. All

pointed on to the one great atoning sacrifice of Calvary.

So when John stands at the Jordan and cries, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29), it was an announcement that God had provided Himself a Lamb, whose sacrifice should be once for all, absolutely complete.

In the Tabernacle worship, the animal was slain and burned without the camp, the blood taken by the high-priest inside the veil, sprinkled once on the mercy-seat and seven times before it, satisfying the justice of Jehovah and giving a perfect standing to the high-priest as the representative of Israel. This was repeated every Day of Atonement.

But what do we read of the Lamb of God, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ? On Calvary's cross, He bore our sins in His own body (1 Peter ii. 24), having offered Himself without spot to God (Heb. ix. 14), endured the full judgment of a holy God for sin, and completely satisfied all God's claims as to sin for those who believe on Him. He was "delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25), and by His own blood has entered into heaven itself, having obtained eternal redemption, salvation for us.

Read carefully the following, John iii. 16; 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 24; i. 18-20; Gal. iv. 4-7; Rom. v. 6, 8, 10; viii. 3; Heb. x. 12-14; 1 John i. 7; Rev. v. 9.

4. How may sinners obtain the benefit of all this?

In that familiar verse, John iii. 16, we read, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Here God makes a plain, clear, unmistakable

promise, but for whom? Why surely for sinners—who else can it be for? Notice God “loved” and “gave;” the sinner “believeth” and “hath.” Again “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life” (John v. 24). Again, “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts x. 43). Here then are three positive declarations from the Triune God, against whom we have sinned, declaring it a fact that any sinner, conscious of his sinnership and its consequences—for this must first of all be realized—*believing* on the Lord Jesus Christ *has* “everlasting life” and “remission of sins.” See also John x. 28-30; Rom. viii. 1; 1 Tim. i. 15.

But the question may naturally be asked whom and what and how are we to believe.

First, it is indispensable to believe in the Deity and sinless humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Read 1 John ii. 22; iv. 2, 3, 14, 15; John i. 1-3, 14; v. 18, etc. If our Lord was merely a man, He could never be our Redeemer, because divine righteousness would not be satisfied by anything less than itself. He was also sinless, for He “knew no sin” (2 Cor. v. 21); “did no sin” (1 Pet. ii. 22); and was “apart from sin” (Heb. iv. 15).

Second, to believe that His death upon the cross was a full and complete atonement for our sinful condition, position, etc. (Isa. liii. 1-6; Matt. i. 21); (read with emphasis on “He shall”); xx. 28; Luke xix. 10; John iii. 14; xii. 32, 33; Rom. v. 8; Col. i. 20; Heb. ii, 9; 1 Cor. xv. 3; Acts iv. 24, 25).

Thus it can be seen divine justice has been fully met, and the need of sinners as well—in One who was God Himself, and yet became man (Phil. ii. 8).

Third, How are we to believe? (Rom. x. 8-11); "with the heart," *i. e.*, a trusting confidence based upon God's word (Rom. x. 17), not on our feelings. James ii. 19, shows the devils have feelings, yet they are not saved (2 Pet. ii. 4).

"Dost thou believe on the Son of God? (John ix. 35).  
B. W. J.

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### "THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST."

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THE brief sentence which forms the heading of this article presents to us the earnest aspiration of one who had found an absorbing and commanding object in Christ—the utterance of a soul whose one desire was to grow in the knowledge and appreciation of that blessed One who fills all heaven with His glory. The whole passage from which our motto is taken is full of power. We must quote it for the reader, "But what things were *gain to me*, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, *that I may win Christ.*"

Let us specially mark the words, "what things were gain to me." The apostle is not speaking of his sins, of his guilt, of things of which, as a man, he might justly be ashamed. No; he is referring to his gains, his honors, his distinctions, his religious, his intellectual, his moral, his political advantages—of such things as were calculated to make him an

object of envy to his fellows. All these things he counted but loss that he might win Christ.

Alas! how few of us understand anything of this! How few of us grasp the meaning of the words—the real force of the expression, "That I may *win* Christ!" Most of us rest satisfied with thinking of Christ as God's *gift* to sinners. We do not aim at winning Him as our *prize*, by the surrender of all those things which nature loves and values. The two things are quite distinct. As poor miserable, guilty, hell-deserving sinners, we are not asked to do, or to give, or to surrender anything. We are invited, yea commanded to take—take freely—take all. "God so loved the world, that he *gave* his only begotten Son." The *gift* of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. "If thou knewest the free giving of God, thou wouldst have asked."

All this is blessedly true, thanks be to God for it! But then, there is another side of the question. What did Paul mean by winning Christ? He already possessed Christ as God's free gift to him as a sinner. What more did he want? He wanted to win Christ as his prize, even at the cost of all beside. As Christ, the true merchant man, sold all that He had, in order to possess Himself of what He esteemed "a pearl of great price"—laid aside His glory, stripped and emptied Himself of all—gave up all His claims as man, as Messiah, in order to possess Himself of the Church; so, in his measure, that devoted Christian, whose words form our thesis, gave up everything in order to possess himself of that peerless Object who had been revealed to his heart on the day of his conversion. He saw such beauty, such moral glory, such transcendent excellency in the Son

of God, that he deliberately surrendered all the honors, the distinctions, the pleasures, the riches of earth, in order that Christ might fill every chamber of his heart, and absorb all the energies of his moral being. He longed to know Him not merely as the One who had put away his sins, but as the One who could satisfy all the longings of his soul, and utterly displace all that earth could offer or nature grasp.

Reader, let us gaze on this picture. It is indeed a fine study for us. It stands out in bold contrast with the cold, selfish, world-loving, pleasure-hunting, money-seeking spirit of this our day. It administers a severe rebuke to the heartless indifference of which many must alas! be conscious—an indifference expressing itself in numberless and nameless ways. Where do we see that which answers to the words, "*That I may win Christ?*" C. S.

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## TWO PARALLEL LIVES, AND THEIR CONTRAST.

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(A Meditation on Mark I., ii., iii.)

**I**N those three chapters we get the divine record of two parallel lives, and, at the same time, the greatness of their contrast will be observed by the thoughtful reader. One record, perfect and divine, the other that of human nature away from God, hence sinful, and in the end demonstrated (as in chap. iii.) to be exceeding sinful.

In the gospel of Matthew (the first twelve chapters), the Holy Spirit goes over the same ground, and gives the same development of good on one hand and of evil on the other, but with more material added suited to the object of that Gospel. The two, if

studied together (Matt. i.-xii.; Mark. i.-iii.), give much light, and the lessons are full of profit for meditation, but we will devote ourselves in this meditation to those three chapters.

In the first chapter we are at once introduced to the Lord Jesus as the perfect Servant. How wonderful, we exclaim, the grace, that sinners ever should be brought into His presence and introduced to Him before whom seraphims veil their faces, yet it is true, and as we trace His every step we behold the face of Deity, yet veiled with a true and perfect humanity.

In these three chapters they hear Him preach, teach, and see Him heal, and also deliver the oppressed, and as a Shepherd call His own sheep by name. But if they thus behold a prophet, teacher, and servant, it was none less than the Son of God who was all this.

As we open the chapter we note the sevenfold witness to Himself given:

1. Prophets prophesied of Him (ver. 2).
2. John bore a faithful testimony to Him (vers. 4-8).
3. The Holy Spirit descends upon Him (ver. 10).
4. The Father's voice proclaims Him, "Thou art my Son, etc." (ver. 11).
5. Satan has to leave Him, after tempting Him forty days and finding nothing in Him.
6. Wild beasts are harmless and tame in His presence, Lord of Creation (ver. 13).
7. Angels at such a period of trial and temptation, yet of triumph and victory, come and minister to Him the Servant of servants, and yet Lord over Creation. Thus, as we view Him presented to Israel



and the earth, the glory of His person is recognized and borne witness to. Blessed truth which commands the worship of our hearts now and forever.

He commences His service by preaching the gospel and calling upon men to repent, the first lesson for man away from God and in his sins, "Repent ye and believe the gospel (vers. 14, 15).

Next He calls His servants, four in number (fishermen), to follow Him. At this time we begin to trace His path as servant here below (16-20). What an honor conferred upon those men of humble life to be called to follow Him during the time of His sojourn here! They were vessels, no doubt, long thought of, and already prepared for the occasion (although, doubtless, unknown to themselves), and by their humble life fitted in this way to be companions of One who was the very embodiment of humility; hence suited to Him they were, as suited to them was He.

Next we trace His steps from the seaside to Capernaum, and there He entered the synagogue upon the Sabbath where we are informed He "taught," as before He had preached (ver. 14, 21, 22). Then as the Shepherd of Israel He delivered one of His sheep from the grasp of a cruel foe (vers. 23-27).

When we reach this stage of His ministry we observe how the masses are attracted by His word and work. "They were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught as one that had authority, and not as the scribes" (ver. 22). Note here with care, "Not as the *scribes*," for the contrast between His ministry and theirs could be readily seen. The scribes were mere formalists; religion was their business, and they

taught simply as they learned from their books. His ministry was far different. He came forth from the presence of God, and in the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit spake the word of God, presenting it to the heart and conscience of men. The masses felt preaching of that character was the very voice of God to their souls. This is where we note the *first contrast* of the two parallel lives now before us in those three chapters.

If this new teaching was received by the masses, the scribes felt their popularity as teachers would wane, and their teaching fade away. Here we see human nature put to the test, and we see it manifests itself in the presence of One the very embodiment of perfection itself. Man cannot tolerate being set aside, cannot take a low place. And if even Jesus, the Father's gift to men, is introduced, and in the power of the Holy Spirit manifests Himself, on the part of man there develops envy and bitterness. Such was the case in the history of the religious leaders of that day. These things, we observe, develop until at the end they place Him upon the cross (chap. xv. 18; Rom. viii. 7).

But to return again (vers. 27 and 28). The people are further amazed, and His fame soon spreads through the whole province. He commences at the seaside, then passes to the synagogue, and from there the report of His teachings and miracles spread, until all Galilee hears the message. "The Lord hath visited His people in giving them bread." Wonderful days were those days for that favored land and people!

He pursues His labor of love and enters Peter's home, giving proof of His mission by raising up his

mother-in-law from a bed of sickness. "And at even, when the sun did set they brought unto Him all that were diseased and them that were possessed with devils, and all the city was gathered together at the door, and He healed many that were sick of divers diseases and cast out many devils." Marvelous was the work and marvelous the grace and love that met their need that day.

The next day we trace His footprints, and very early; "In the morning rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed" (ver. 35). What an example is here given us for the profit of the after servant, and what a lesson for those just called, and now walking by His side day by day. What lovely perfection we behold in the lowly life of Jesus here on earth, and what a contrast to that of the scribes and Pharisees who prayed, not in "a solitary place," but upon the corner of the streets to be seen of men.

Here we behold in the early morn the Lord of life and glory upon His knees, as a man, as a servant, expressing His dependence upon the Father. Lord, may we here pause and learn the lesson more fully, drink in this sweet, lowly and dependent spirit that ever characterized Thy life when here among men, and learn from this "solitary place" the importance of following the example, using our knees, as well as hands and tongues, for Thee.

Simon and they that were with Him soon follow, and when they found Him, they said, "All men seek for Thee." A busy day had just been passed, till evening the masses had thronged Him. But again, early, the disciples say, "All men seek for Thee." Let us again pause and note another lovely perfec-

tion of that life which was perfection itself at every stage. "And he said unto them let us go into the next towns: that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth" (vers. 37, 38). He, ever perfect in doing His Father's work, desired to press on and finish His work. He was not deterred in the least from any part of that work by the popularity of the hour. That was nothing to Him, no bait that the enemy could use to hinder Him pursuing His Father's work, caring for His glory alone while here. Yet it is a bait often used by the enemy since to turn servants aside from quietly pursuing their course with humility of heart.

Nothing could hinder Him being in the "solitary place," nor yet pursuing His work from place to place with a decided and steady purpose, seeking His Father's glory and not His own. What a lesson, we repeat, for us all. Let us know the power of those two lessons; let us know what it is to look and care for the smile of the Master of every true servant. Let us seek His approval; let us watch against the wiles of Satan, who may suggest, as a bait for the flesh, that we are important, and that all seek for us. Let us imitate what the Lord here sets before us as an example so needed if we are to be here on earth servants for Him. How much this implies. "And He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee and cast out devils."

Next the record of cleansing the leper is given and the result was, as he published abroad the fact, they came to Him from every quarter (vers. 39-45).

In chapter twenty-one we see Him once again in Capernaum, where we first beheld Him casting out a demon, and now upon His return He still finds it the

place of need, the field was white, the harvest ripe, the need was great. We will next see how unable were the leaders to ease the burden for the oppressed, and how little the desire they had to do so. At this time they bring a palsied man, and through the roof they let him down, and He seeing *their* faith grants the blessing, and even this beyond their faith; they desired the body healed, but He grants forgiveness also, and the man receives a double blessing. "Thy sins be forgiven thee." How sweet these words must have been to that man's ears; what music they contained to cheer his drooping spirit. But for the scribes it was far otherwise, to forgive and bless had no charm for them. This work was new, the ministry powerful, the results marvelous, so that the populace were carried away: "We never saw it on this fashion."

Now we note the development of a life so different to His, so opposite, and even hostile; envy was deep seated in the hearts of those men, the scribes; their popularity as teachers was on the wane, and the teaching of another was growing in acceptance. "But there were certain of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" This was the thought of their hearts; true, not yet expressed, but the Lord read it there. He was a teacher, so were they, and their own glory as such they sought, but with Him different. What a lesson for us as servants now! When nearness to Him is cultivated and the drinking in the lowly spirit that so characterized Him, the perfect Servant, the moral characteristics of His life will be displayed. When we see God attaching special honor and bless-

ing upon others, when we see them advance, then let the heart beware, for the flesh within is ever ready to manifest itself as do the scribes in this chapter. They complain, look for some accusation, but the spirit of the Lord was the very opposite. An old writer wrote, "None are so slow to recognize gift in others as preachers themselves." This fact is truly exemplified by the spirit of the scribes, and here every servant, every teacher, every preacher, no matter what the sphere of service may be, needs to pause and seek to cultivate that spirit. "Let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. ii. 3-11). Beware of the flesh within that seeks its own glory and the advancement of self. Let us turn from that unholy spirit, the envy, the jealousy, the bitter feeling which we see here in its germ with the scribes, and which when fully developed led them to put Him upon the cross. What a hateful thing the flesh is in the presence of holiness!

But all this opposition on their part did not deter the Lord in the least. The need lay before His eyes, and the desire to meet that need lay heavy upon His heart. So He adds to the palsied man: "Arise and take up thy bed." What grace! What power! How strengthening and cheering to Peter, James and John, as well as the others whom the Holy Spirit had attracted to Jesus, were these things. Yet with the scribes it was far otherwise. They watch Him with a keen eye, yet He goes on with His work, as the Shepherd of Israel, seeking the sheep however far astray.

A. E. B.

*(To be continued.)*

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## EXTRACT FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

THE moral activities that are abroad are surely immense, and the pressure upon the social system of influences full of deceivableness, I suppose, is beyond all precedent. It is desirable to keep the soul increasingly alive to the fact that the path of the Church is a narrow and peculiar one. Even her virtues must have a *peculiar* material in them. Her common honesty, her good deeds, too, her secular labors, her fruitfulness, purity, and the like, are to be peculiar in their functions and their springs. Her discipline does not act after the pattern of the mere moral sense of man. Society, as another has observed, would disclaim the offence contemplated in 1 Cor. v.; but society would never deal with it as the Church is there called to deal with it. Society, for instance, would never put covetousness or extortion in company with it, but the saint is instructed to do so. The moral sense of man would there make distinctions, when the pure element of the house of God resents all alike as unworthy of it.

This is "fine gold" dear brother—gold refined again and again. Even the morals of the Church are to be of another quality from those of men. What sanctions are brought in in 1 Cor. v. vi. as to the common matters of life. If the saint be to abstain from fornication, it is because his body is *a temple*: if he be to refuse the judgment of others in the affairs of this life, in their most ordinary ways of right and wrong, of debit and credit, it is because he himself is destined to be a judge in the seat of the world to come, even from a throne of glory. Is not this "*fine gold*?" Does not such sanction make

morals *divine*? What, in the world's morality, is like this? And I ask further, is not the need of this divine or peculiar agency to the effecting any moral results intimated in Luke xi. 21—27? If it be not the *stronger* man possessing himself of the house, is anything done for God? If it be merely the unclean spirit going out, the end of the history of the house is, that it becomes more fitted for deeper evil. The emptied state, even accompanied by sweeping and ornamenting, is only a preparation for a worse condition, and nothing is done for God but when the stronger enters the house. No instrument of garnishing according to God, but Christ. And in the remembrance of these verses, dear brother, ask yourself what is doing in and for the house of Christendom at this moment. Is not many a broom, many a brush sweeping it and painting it? Is this making it God's house, or getting it ready to be the house of the full energy—the sevenfold energy—of the enemy?

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## JESUS, PREACHER AND TEACHER.

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THE following paper is intended to treat of our Lord's manner and ways in teaching and preaching, and it is hoped that not only the heart may be refreshed by coming in contact with Him, but that also we may learn practical and valuable lessons. Nicodemus styles Him the "Teacher come from God," and His adversaries bore witness that never a man spake like this man. While, of course, we know this as to the substance of our Lord's teaching, yet, His method, because it clothes like a well-fitting garment, attracting little



attention to itself and enhancing the beauty of that which it covers, is, perhaps, very often lost sight of. Do we know to what extent He used metaphor and simile? Have we a clear conception of the way in which He met the objector? What external means did He employ upon occasion to emphasize the lesson? Wherefore did He use so much parable, and how were these parables adapted to the circumstances amid which they were spoken? Such are some of the questions which force themselves upon us.

But they also serve to bring us closer to Himself, and this is the purpose of every study of Scripture. His words are a mirror in which we behold Him, and far more than we might expect does the method of them bring us into contact with Him. Our manner is often assumed to meet the occasion, and is the product of surrounding elements, but with Him it was never so; it came fresh from His heart. Every attitude, every gesture was full of Him and the mission which had become part of Him. You remember how in the tenth chapter of John, the Lord seems to take delight in the knowledge that His sheep know His voice, and that they are so occupied with it, that they know not the voice of strangers? And as His voice would correspond to the character of His words, our study should be one that is pleasing to Him. Oh that we indeed so knew His voice that the voice of the stranger repelled with that fear of the unknown that seems innate in the animate creation. Then would we indeed walk aright with His word a lamp for our path and a light for our feet.

The first topic that naturally presents itself in this subject, is what we may call the external character

of His speech, such as clearness, energy, bodily position, etc. Of these indeed there is very little given us, and yet there are some things that surely must prove of profit to him that considers them. While there may be no scripture which directly asserts it, we may be sure our Lord ever spoke distinctly and clearly.

Now, perhaps, it may seem to be a small thing to say that the Lord spoke clearly, so that all could understand Him, yet we will the better attach a value to it if we consider how indignant we should become were one to assert that He did not thus speak. We should regard it as nothing short of blasphemy, and very rightly. He was the Word who created the worlds, the universe, that wonderfully adjusted mechanism in which part is fitted to part with divine precision, and from which arises a harmonious melody to God. How then should this Master Harmonizer fail to utter His truths in a voice attuned to their importance? It would be absolutely impossible. When we consider too how mind and matter are related, and how the Creator has framed us so that one should play upon and answer to the other in this dwelling-place of our spirits, who can doubt but that the voice was ordained of Himself to awaken music in the soul? No slurred over words ever troubled those who listened to Him, and are not His ways Divine?

Now this clear voice was sometimes raised so that it became loud and powerful. Thus we read in John that on the last day of the feast "Jesus stood and cried," and in another place it speaks of "His great Voice" as it rose over the weeping and wailing at the grave of Lazarus. And so when the storm

that gathered over Calvary was hushed to its close, "Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up the Ghost." Now apart from the physical necessity there was of prevailing over the sounds that existed, on at least two of these occasions, there was in all of them an especial need that spoke to the Lord's heart, and to which we do well to give heed. There is a peculiar danger that on our feast days the things around us may lead us to forget the Giver and our need of Him. The feast of which we have been speaking is said to be the feast of Tabernacles, a time in which Israel was to remember her wandering in tents through the wilderness, and which very probably became a means of celebrating the fact that they no longer thus wandered. Now although not the object of the feast, spiritually this may be all right, but there is then danger of forgetting that wherever we are we need Him as much as ever to watch over us; and such moments are full of peril.

At other times there are feasts of Satan's spreading, and the one who sits down thereto will be in dire need of hearing that urgent cry from the risen Jesus. "If any man thirst let him come unto *Me* and drink."

But to refer to the suitability of that raised voice in the other instances, there are moments when some burden is laid upon us such as that which lay on the grief stricken crowd lamenting at the grave of Lazarus. How wonderfully thrilling that "Great Voice" must have sounded, and with what eager expectation and joy must they have looked for the response. When the cares of the world, its sorrows and griefs, flood in upon our lives, how refreshing will it be to hear it rise above our storms

and quell our fears. Then shall we burst into singing:

"How sweet the voice of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear,  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, and drives away  
his fear."

The last instance which we have mentioned answers to the time in which "he that hath the power of death" sows such fears as he is able, when we are called to leave it. Will it not be good too to recall that He over whom death's billows deeply went, cried out with a loud voice as they closed upon Him, proclaiming His power and triumph over them, and then yielded up the Ghost? "No man taketh it from Me, I lay it down . . . and I take it again." How eloquently do these words and that voice proclaim "The Prince of Life."

The expression of our Lord's face is, as I remember, given but once, and yet that same instance, in its impressiveness, is referred to in two of the Gospels. It is on the occasion of the healing of the withered hand, when, because of its being the Sabbath, they seek to bar the path of His mercy. He then looks round about upon them all with anger. But how wonderfully touching is the moment. They seek to hinder good reaching another, and His shepherd's heart is aroused and His anger blazes out. "Is it not lawful to do good on the Sabbath day?" He cries, and in answer heals the hand. They might seek to kill *Him*; they were going to nail Him to the cross on Calvary, and He would cry in wonderful compassion, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," but let them try to injure another and indignation shines in His Face. When we consider how that by and by, before it, heavens and

earth will flee away, we no longer marvel at the impression it made, and we wonder at the beauty of the thought, that on such occasion *alone* have we mention of it.

When our Lord teaches He is generally seated. The attitude is one of repose and authority. His words are so certain, and carry so much authority with them, that any other position would seem less suited. He was seated all through the Sermon on the Mount. Such words as "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy," appear to stand on such pillared foundations as rather to lose than anything else by seeking to enhance their value. So also was He seated in a boat, when giving forth the parables of the Kingdom, in the thirteenth of Matthew. In contrast with this position, however, He rises to announce the fulfilment of, and read His Father's words; while when in the Temple He momentarily relaxes His stooping posture when confronting the Pharisees with that majestic charge, "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone at her." How well adapted are these attitudes to the sentiments which they accompany, and how they should prevent us from getting careless with what we may call minor matters.

There is one other beautiful position which our Lord assumes, and coming as it does at the end of His earthly sojourn, seems to sum up the whole of His ministry on earth. "Having loved His own which were in the world He loved them unto the end," and as He is about to leave them He leads them out to Bethany, and body and spirit uniting together in one long, lingering attitude of protection, those blessed hands but so recently stretched out in

such a different way, now spread themselves broodingly over them, while from His lips the words of blessing fall, and a cloud receives Him out of their sight. "Out of their sight?" Yes, and yet that sight, which no earthly cloud should be able to obscure, shall be their last recollection of Jesus, and all through their lives hover in Divine benison over them.

Although not directly connected with our subject, the words following in Luke, have such a beautiful touch to them, that one would fain linger for a moment to meditate. "And as He blessed them He was parted from them and carried up into heaven." In the opening of His ministry we see Him going to John and saying, upon the latter's protest against baptising Him, "Suffer it now for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Baptism is a burial of self. John says he has need to be baptised of Jesus. The Lord in effect replies, "That is true, but consider not what I am as to right, for I am come to lay all that personal right of Mine aside, yea to lay self aside, to work for the people among whom I have come." Having then taken such a position, as He comes up from Jordan, as if they no longer could contain themselves, the heavens are rent asunder, and the voice of God breaks out, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." So now may we not think of that same delight as expressed in the words, "carried up"?

One of the most marked features of our Lord's teaching is its parabolic form, and this so marked that it could scarcely escape even the cursory reader. We know that among the nations of the East the parable is a very much used method of communica-

tion, and yet, however true that may be, it would scarcely suffice as a reason for our Lord's using it, unless, indeed, there be something in the parable itself that meets a special need in all climes and countries. We all know how fond children are of it as a means of instruction, and learned men assert that in what they call the childhood of the race, the early days, it was constantly employed in ordinary conversation. But are we not all children in heavenly things? And what after all in the words of Jesus makes things so plain as the parable? How the gates of heaven seem thrown open to us as the father's arms are clasped around the prodigal, or the shepherd lays the sheep upon his shoulder. They speak with a plainness that reaches even the lowest depths.

But we must notice that although this be true as to a great many of them, yet our Lord says that some others were given with a distinctly opposite purpose. "For unto you it is given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them it is not given." The parable then is often used to hide truth, and we are led to ask the further question: If to hide, why then speak them before all those from whom He would wish to conceal the truth of which they speak?

Our answer may, perhaps, be twofold. Of course it is very plain that for the Pharisees, who entered not into the Kingdom, the mysteries would scarcely be a subject to explain to them. Such would be a veritable casting of pearls before swine. And yet, on the other hand, it must be that after all He is seeking the Pharisee, otherwise our question would remain unanswered. We who know the Lord, know

also that He loved even the Pharisee, and to them a mystery was a great incentive to study. Here, however, were mysteries that no human mind could very well fathom without the key, and a search for the key might indeed bring the poor Pharisee into His presence. I cannot but believe that this was the Lord's object, and any other thought than this would militate against plain scriptural teaching. If He ate with publicans and sinners He also sat down in the house of the Pharisee, and both Pharisee and Publican were welcome at the feast of the great King.

Taking this then as a correct interpretation of His words, we may remember that to speak plainly is not always the part of a good teacher. Often and often is the scholar to be aroused by that which he does not understand. Thus we may learn a lesson of the "Teacher come from God," and remember that if we attend the lecture of another, and do not understand a great deal that is said, even so, we would not have understood the One like whom man never spake. He knew that the disciples would not understand Him, and yet was in no wise deterred from speaking in the form in which He did. "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings to search it out." Oh, brethren, are we among those kingly ones whose glory it is to search out the things hidden by our great Teacher? Be assured that he who does will find much pleasure. It is true in heavenly, as well as in earthly things, that we must labor for those things which are of most value, excepting necessities, which God asks us not to labor for, such as water and light and salvation.

F. C. G.

*(To be continued.)*



## THE LORD JESUS IN JOHN XI., XII.

THESE chapters show us in what different channels the Lord's thoughts flowed from those of the heart of man. His ideas, so to speak, of *misery* and of *happiness*, were so different from what man's naturally are.

The eleventh chapter opens with a scene of human misery. The dear family at Bethany are visited with sickness, and the voice of health and thanksgiving in their dwelling has to yield to mourning, lamentation, and woe. But He, who of all had the largest and tenderest sympathies, is the calmest among them; for He carried with Him that foresight of resurrection, which made Him overlook the chamber of sickness, and the grave of death.

When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He abode two days longer in the place where He was. But when that sickness ends in death, He begins His journey in the full and bright prospect of resurrection. And this makes His journey steady and undisturbed. And, as He approaches the scene of sorrow, His action is still the same. He replies again and again to the passion of Martha's soul, from that place where the knowledge of a power that was beyond that of death had, in all serenity, seated Him. And though He have to move still onward, there is no haste. For on Mary's arrival, He is still in the same place where Martha had met Him. And the issue, as I need not say, comes in due season to vindicate this stillness of His heart, and this apparent tardiness of His journey.

Thus was it with Jesus here. The path of Jesus was *His own*. When man was bowed down in sor-

row at the thought of death, He was lifted up in the sunshine of resurrection.

But the sense of resurrection, though it gave this peculiar current to the thoughts of Jesus, left His heart still alive to the sorrows of others. For His was not *indifference*, but *elevation*. And such is the way of faith always. Jesus weeps with the weeping of Mary and her company. His whole soul was in the sunshine of those deathless regions which lay far away from the tomb of Bethany; but it could visit the valley of tears, and weep there with those that wept.

But again.—When man was lifted up in the expectation of something good and brilliant in the earth, His soul was full of the holy certainty that death awaits all here, however promising or pleasurable; and that honor and prosperity must be hoped for only in other and higher regions. The twelfth chapter shows us this

When they heard of the raising of Lazarus, much people flocked together from Bethany to Jerusalem, and at once hailed Him as the King of Israel. They would fain go up with Him to the Feast of Tabernacles, and antedate the age of glory, seating Him in the honors and joys of the kingdom. The Greeks also take their place with Israel in such an hour. Through Philip, as taking hold of the skirt of a Jew (Zech. viii.), they would see Jesus and worship. But in the midst of all this Jesus Himself sits solitary. He knows that earth is not the place for all this festivity and keeping of holy day. His spirit muses on death, while their thoughts were full of a kingdom with its attendant honors and pleasures. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

Such was the peculiar path of the spirit of Jesus. *Resurrection was everything to Him.* It was His relief amid the sorrows of life, and His object amid the promises and prospects of the world. It gave His soul a calm sunshine, when dark and heavy clouds had gathered over Bethany; it moderated and separated His affections, when the brilliant glare of a festive day was lighting up the way from thence to Jerusalem. The thought of it sanctified His mind equally amid grief and enjoyments around. Resurrection was everything to Him. It made Him a perfect pattern of that fine principle of the Spirit of God: "Let him that weepeth be as if he wept not, and he that rejoiceth as though he rejoiced not."

Oh for a little more of the same mind in us, beloved! —a little more of this elevation above the passing conditions and circumstances of life!

May the faith and hope of the Gospel, through the working of the indwelling Spirit, form the happiness and prospects of our hearts!

J. G. B.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 1.—Please explain 1 Tim. v. 6. Is the widow here spoken of a Christian? It seems as if the "true widow" is described in the fifth verse, and in the sixth only a professor is spoken of. Is this correct?

ANS.—The contrast is clear, and the broad distinction is as noted by our correspondent. The sixth verse would describe one who still found her portion and pleasure in the world. Thus while alive in the world, she has no spiritual life. In striking contrast with this is the one who is desolate, but has all her faith and expectation centered in God. She is the true widow, whose consolation is not in the pleasures of this world, but in Christ alone. In this connection the apostle instructs Timothy not to recognize as belonging to the *class* of widows any under sixty years of age. This seems to indicate that some spiritual importance was attached to this class, and doubtless

the "mothers in Israel" were thus recognized. The younger widows were able to provide, to some extent for themselves, or at any rate they were not to be definitely recognized as the older. It is not to be thought that the apostle was forbidding either the care for or remarriage of the younger widows, but was warning against what might easily become an abuse.

QUES. 2.—Why was there no provision made in the Levitical law for sacrifices for presumptuous sins?

ANS.—Doubtless to emphasize the weakness and unprofitableness of the law. The very sins that would weigh most heavily on the conscience, and enhanced the guilt of man, were the very ones for which no provision was made. Thus David, who could not plead ignorance, realized that no sacrifice of the law would avail for his sin. In his broken-hearted acknowledgment, in the fifty-first psalm, he does not even offer a legal sacrifice. "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it." But in what blessed contrast with this is the sacrifice of Christ our Lord, whose blood cleanseth from *all* sin.

QUES. 3.—What is the meaning of the expression, "baptized for the dead," in 1 Cor. xv. 29?

ANS.—"Baptized in place of the dead," that is new converts taking the place of those Christians who had died. It is as though the apostle said, "Why should new converts be made to take the place of the fallen Christians, persecuted, suffering, dying—why perpetuate this suffering, if there is no resurrection?" But resurrection answers the question. Christians are living for the future, and those who take the place of the dead will one day share in the glorious resurrection.

QUES. 4.—How wide is the application of such scriptures as Matt. x. 19, 20; Mark xiii. 11; Luke xii. 11, 12; xxi. 14, 15. Do they refer simply to those who are brought before kings, rulers and magistrates, or to any child of God who is questioned regarding his belief. And need he fear that the answer will not be given him because he forgets at the moment to ask for it, if the whole attitude of his mind and heart is that of dependence upon God? Is there anything inconsistent in these passages with 1 Pet. iii. 15; "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you?"

ANS.—While the passages refer primarily to the circumstances of the disciples during and immediately after our Lord's life—abundant illustrations of which will be found in the book of Acts—there is not the slightest reason why faith should not make the fullest use of the promise in every case of need. And how often has God honored the faith based upon these very scriptures. With regard to prayer, there will, of course, be the need for it, but our gracious God knows the constant attitude of the heart. However, as the soul goes on to know Him, distraction becomes less and less possible.

## FAITH'S RESOURCE IN SICKNESS.

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**W**HENEVER a truth is ignored and neglected, the enemy will pervert it, and introducing error into it, will make it the basis of some evil doctrine. No doctrine that appeals to professing Christendom can afford to throw off the mask of scripturalness, if it claims to be Christian at all. All heresy contains a measure of truth, which acts as the bait upon the hook to attract the unwary. It will also usually be found that the truth so used is that which from general neglect has become unfamiliar to most.

This association with error renders the truth itself obnoxious to those loyal in heart, so that they are confirmed in their neglect, not realizing that that neglect has made the evil use of scripture possible.

In this way the precious truth as to our Lord's coming, and the general outline of the events of the last days, had been for long years neglected by the Church. We might almost say that since the days of the apostles, they had been ignored save in a most general and vague way. As a consequence the enemy linked these truths with the wicked, extravagant or absurd blasphemies of some system of error. In this way Irvingism, Seventh-Day Adventism, Mormonism and various schools of Restorationism and Annihilationism have obtained the ear of the uninstructed conscience, by making use, in greater or less degrees of accuracy, of the neglected truth of prophecy. Thus prophetic truth became identified in the minds of most with these errors, and this in turn has served to render it all the more neglected. On the

other hand the enemy has intruded his poison into the minds of many by the cunning admixture of truth.

We can never afford to ignore truth, any part of it. Were a single book of Scripture ignored, generally and persistently, we might expect Satan to draw from that book some doctrine and cunningly mingle it with deadly error. What an argument we have in this, if there were no other reasons, for constantly and systematically reading and studying every portion of the word of God.

What has been said of the truth of the Lord's coming, applies with equal force to the subject now before us. Rome has always claimed the power, through her saints, to heal the sick, and the false systems already mentioned, with scarce an exception, claim a similar power. It is, on the other hand, a well-known fact that evangelical Christendom has almost entirely shrunk from looking at the subject at all. Wherever there has been reaction from this, the teachings of Scripture on the subject have been distorted or placed in undue prominence, or given wrong connections. Thus "Faith Healing" in its varied forms, has become a doctrine of such prominence as well-nigh to eclipse the truths with which it has been associated, if nothing worse; while such awful blasphemies as that of "Christian Science" have found an acceptance among the many, which shows the need of a clear understanding of what the word of God has to say upon this subject.

We may truly say that nothing is more common in this world than sickness. What a comment this is upon its condition and relation to Him who, when it came all fair from His hands as the habitation of

man, pronounced it "very good." Every sickness is a premonition of death, and is but the echo of that solemn word to fallen Adam, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Sin has come in, and death by sin, and the universal sway of death is witnessed by the universal prevalence of sickness.

How infinitely pathetic it is!—all humanity groaning under suffering or in sympathy with it! Think of the anguish of mothers over their little ones, whose entrance into this world was at the risk of their own lives, and who sicken and linger and die at the very threshold of life. Think of the blight that sooner or later falls upon every home—the support taken, or the tender loving mother, or the pride and hope of the family removed in the fresh vigor of young manhood or womanhood. Sickness is but the precursor of all this, even when there is recovery for the time. We need not be surprised then at the efforts to restore the suffering. It is a witness of that natural affection which lingers in fallen man, a relief to the all-prevailing selfishness of the race.

And can we think that God is indifferent, the only indifferent One, to all this suffering? Of course, we reply, No. But is there not a real danger of our shutting Him out, in our thoughts, from the sick room? Are not the thoughts of most, even of most Christians, that God is good, merciful and pitiful, but that we must let things take their course, do the best we can, and hope and pray?

Far be it from us to say a single word against most of that. But the fact is that God is looked upon as at a distance by most of His own, and it is considered presumption to bring Him too near. As a result little comfort is obtained, save of a most

general character. Thus there is failure to see the hand of God in the sickness. It is regarded as "providential," but not by many as a distinct voice to sufferer and to all concerned.

We should recognize His special presence and attention in sickness. All comes through Him, and if a father who calls to his son expects to be answered, so does our Father when He calls to us in sickness. Oh, that the saints of God realized this more fully ! We have to do with *Him*; sickness is His appeal to us, and our first care should be to say from our hearts, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

If God has spoken, He has said something. It would be wanton cruelty, if He had afflicted us without a definite purpose. We dare not harbor such a thought for a moment. Let us not then *act* as if we had such a thought. Of whom do most of us think first in sickness, of God or the physician ? Far be the thought to despise any human means to relieve suffering, but God must be first. Asa sought to the physician rather than to the Lord, and he was not cured. How much restless anxiety would be spared if we immediately turned to God, and submitted the entire trouble to Him. We would be none the less faithful in the use of means, but the heart would have found its rest with God at the very outset.

And what needful and holy lessons He would be teaching us. Many of these are necessarily personal, but there are certain general features that we may point out.

Perhaps one of the first lessons to be remembered in sickness is that we are part of God's creation, and subject to the governmental consequences of the fall. None are exempt from this. It brings home to us in



an unmistakable way the reality of disobedience. It bridges, as we might say, the distance between Eden and ourselves, and we hear God saying to us what He said to Adam. It is a holy and profitable lesson to bow under His mighty hand as one of His creatures. Our salvation has not affected that, and while His grace has put us into a new place, our bodies are still in the groaning creation, and we wait for their redemption.

We will thus be reminded of our frailty, our dependence. How prone we are to forget that! Man's breath is in his nostrils, and yet he exalts himself and does and plans as if he were his own master. God lays His hand upon him, and what is he? a poor feeble vessel of clay. His boasted strength is gone, and, helpless as an infant, he must fall into the Arms of everlasting strength. The child of God cannot because of that expect to be immune from sickness. He must, as to his body, take his place with all mankind. This will keep him humble. He will not presume upon grace, as though it granted an immunity to nature in a place where sin is inherent in that nature.

And what wholesome exercise, of heart-searching, prayer and patience will result from thus being with God about our sickness. We will "hear the rod and Him who hath appointed it." Faith will be called into exercise, and the purpose of the affliction will be understood. We have been speaking of some of the general lessons common to all. Without doubt there will be many a lesson known only to the soul and to God. Even in the most blameless life outwardly, there is much that the holy eye of Love has seen which it cannot pass by. Devotion that has seemed

well-nigh complete, has had the stain of spiritual pride. Conduct that has seemed most loving, has concealed the *feeling* of envy. Duties have been neglected, spiritual sloth fostered, opportunities have not been availed of. Ah, brethren, when we are in the holy presence of God, our best things need to be judged, the iniquity of our holy things is disclosed. We need not suspect or accuse one another of grave outward evil, but there will always be room for searching of heart, and for confession to God.

But there are others concerned besides the sick one. "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it!" There is surely a voice, not only to the immediate family, but to the people of God who are connected with the afflicted person. "For this cause many are weak and sickly *among you*, and many sleep." It does not necessarily follow that the sickly ones or those who fall asleep are the ones who have failed to judge themselves. They may be godly ones whose departure would be most sorely felt, and thus their sickness would be calculated to affect the assembly far more than that of some careless or useless one. "The righteous perisheth," said the prophet to the careless nation. God removed the faithful if by this means the indifferent might lay it to heart. Alas, he had to say, "and no man layeth it to heart." Is it not to be greatly feared that this has been the case in our day too? God lays His rod upon His people; it matters not who the individual directly afflicted may be, the voice is for us all. "Let us search and try our ways and turn again to the Lord" (Lam. iii. 40).

Is not this the great object of all affliction, to turn us afresh to God? How prone we are to forget, to

neglect, to grow cold by imperceptible degrees, until some chastening is required to bring us unreservedly before our God. His love must have us in His presence. There only can we walk in holiness, and be conformed to the image of our Lord. "If thou wilt return . . . return unto Me" (Jer. iv. 1). He wishes no mere reform, no mere correction of this or that point of conduct; He desires the entire change of the attitude of the soul that has wandered from Him.

Ah, brethren, when a company of His people thus recognize the hand of God upon them in the affliction of a single individual, how precious are the results. Instead of being confined to the immediate circle, the peaceable fruits are produced among all. Is not this the purpose of our God, and shall we not lay it seriously to heart? Corporate truth is most wide-reaching.

We have now reached the point where we can act together. The tendency of nature is to drift asunder. Grace unites. A common object, a common life, and a common Spirit dwelling within us—all these draw us together. Thus too a common trial has the same effect. Have the saints been growing cold? Have they been falling asunder? Ah, how a common affliction, laid to heart will draw them together, because it draws them to God. United humbling and confession will be the result, and a practical unity be again manifest.

Until some such state has been reached, individually and collectively, all the objects of the affliction have not been attained. How can we ask for the removal of the chastening if we have not learned in some degree its lesson? We might almost as well

apply to a physician to heal as to the Lord, if *only* healing is our object. May this not explain much of the delay in answering our prayers? It would but harden, if God granted the prayers of unexercised souls.

But affliction has had its blessed results, and the saints, humbled under the mighty hand of God, seeing the needs-be of the chastening, and turning with all their hearts to Him, can now see what His word offers for comfort and help.

"Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him" (Acts xii. 5). Never was case more hopeless than this, so far as man was concerned. The thirsty sword of persecution had just had its appetite whetted by the blood of James. One more day and Peter must die. But the church, the assembly, not a few but all, were before God in prayer. The word suggests both the intensity and the perseverance of their supplications. We know the result. And He is the same God to-day.

But we have a special scripture upon this subject which we are now ready to examine.

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is there any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as

we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (Jas. v. 13-18).

James writes, as we know, to the nation, "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." He looks upon them still as the people of God, and seeks in the spirit of one of the prophets to draw them to God. He recognizes of course that Christ has come, but he does not take up the truths of redemption and the descent of the Spirit, as Paul, Peter and John. He is thus, we might say, the last voice of God to the nation. It is a book of moral principles for the conscience, rather than dispensational. Rightly to answer to the word here they must have new birth and faith in Christ, but the question of outward separation from Judaism is not raised as it is in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Hence we have allusion to the synagogue, with the respect of the rich to which the Jews were specially prone, as not being heavenly people. We need not be surprised therefore to see the governmental side of truth emphasized, and special directions for the comfort of the sick. But it is striking at the very point where we would think the Jewish features most prominent, we find the Assembly. But let us look at the passage somewhat in detail.

The general resource in times of affliction is prayer, just as joy also leaves us in the presence of God, with thanksgiving for His mercies. Nothing is to take us out of His presence, we pour out our sorrows in prayer, and our joys in praise. How simple is the walk with God.

But now sickness has come. We first see the exercise of the one who is laid low: "Let *him* send for the elders of the assembly." This shows a heart that bows under the hand of God, and that recognizes the share His assembly has in all that concerns each one. The elders are the representatives of the entire assembly, and more particularly of its oversight, care and government. They are of course godly men of faith, age and experience, who have themselves been trained in the school of God, and who know what sorrow is. They were appointed by the apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and thus had in that day an official position under the designation of inspiration.

This official position seems to accord with the anointing with oil spoken of in connection with prayer. It was used we remember by the disciples when sent forth on their mission of healing to Israel (Mark vi. 13). It was the invariable mark of official designation of kings, priests and prophets (when the latter had any designation). It is a well-known type of the Holy Spirit, who alone can fit for service, or restore to it.

But it is the prayer of faith, and not the oil that saves the sick. This is evidently the essential and permanent part of the direction. Prayer links us with God, forms never can. These men of faith and experience, with the care of the assembly upon them, unitedly pour out their hearts to God. In faith they lay hold upon Him, and he does not disappoint. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." The affliction was recognized as from the Lord, His mercy was sought, in

connection with the order and government of His house, and His hand of power raised up.

More than this, if sins had been committed, they would be forgiven. This does not mean that sin necessarily had been committed, save in the general sense we have already seen, but that the sickness might have been as chastening for some special sin. The restoration to health in that case would be a witness of the restoration to communion also.

This leads the apostle to speak further of this feature of governmental dealing for sins, and the place of confession. It will be noticed that he does not speak of confession to the elders, though that may have been done, but "confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." Grace has brought us into the light. The holiness of God manifested our sins, while His grace has put them away. We abide in that light with all naked and open to His holy eye. This sense of being in the presence of God will give real fellowship with all who are in that presence. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." Thus confession of faults will be natural and unforced to those whom we realize are in the light. If we have been before God truly about our sins, pride is gone, and there will be no hesitation on that account to speak to one another. This does not mean that we should be constantly pouring out the tale of our failures into our brethren's ear. There may be those who are in no spiritual condition to receive such confidences. The lesson may have been learned with God. All will one day come out at the judgment-seat of Christ, but there are times when it can most profitably come out now.

If there is the confidence in the Lord and in one's brethren, it may often be a most sanctifying lesson to all concerned.

This confession of faults is spoken of as mutual, and so with the prayer that follows. It shows that it is to be done whenever there is need and faith for it. Most surely it could not be made a condition of prayer, nor be held before the sick one as the priest would hold up the confessional, as the only door to absolution. This would be neither grace nor holiness.

The apostle closes the subject with an example of the effectual—"the energetic"—prayer of a righteous man, one who is walking with God. Elijah closed and opened the heavens by his prayer. He was a man like ourselves, weak, liable to attacks of unbelief and discouragement, and yet he wrought with and for God, and obtained the answers to his prayers. What an incentive to do likewise.

But it will be said, and truly, that we are not living in the days of the apostles, that elders cannot now be officially appointed, and therefore this scripture is inoperative. Most surely there can be no assumption of official dignity, and more sad than that, there is a state of ruin which makes us even ask, Where is the assembly? The world has crept in, discord and strife have followed, till the church of Christ, to man's eye, is a rent and divided thing. Elders of the assembly! Alas, the assembly itself has crumbled into fragments, and if grace has enabled a few to act upon the truths of the assembly, it is but the feeblest of remnants. Weeping and shame become us. Elders and anointing would then seem to be out of place where our common ruin witnesses against us.



But blessed be the God of all grace, *He* has not failed. Christ and the Holy Spirit have not changed, and the word of God, with its precious promises, remains the same. Eliminate then that which speaks of the unfailed church, and we have still, fellowship, experience, care, and above all the prayer of faith. Nothing can alter that. God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

Nor is it presumption to recognize those gifts of rule which abide for the church. Brethren of age and experience, of piety and faith—there are these, thank God, whom faith can call in to unite in the prayer that lays hold of God. There is still the brotherly confidence that can pour out sorrow and the failure into the ear of loving sympathy.

How much, then, dear brethren, we have left from this scripture for our comfort and guidance even in a day of ruin. Shall we not then make practical and experimental use of it? "Prove me now herewith," may we not plead if we have morally complied with the conditions (Mal. iii. 10, 11).

We cannot dictate to our blessed God, nor would we demand the restoration to health of the sick. We would however ask if it be His will that He show us mercy. Thus was Epaphroditus raised up. May we not count upon the same mercy? Particularly when it is some useful and faithful servant of Christ and the Church, either locally or more generally, may we not claim the promise, in submission ever to higher wisdom and purposes than ours?

Nor is this the least inconsistent with the believing use of means for recovery. The same prophet who announced Hezekiah's recovery in answer to prayer, prescribed the means which was to be used for that

recovery. It is pernicious to antagonize God and His instrumentalities, to turn the back upon His mercy because brought in the hands of a physician. This begets a pride which will need humbling so surely as any other sin. Some may be mislead, and humbly refuse the use of means, but the system which does this is based in pride. It dictates to God.

Let us now turn to the house where God has raised up the loved one in answer to prayer and exercise. Joy and gratitude are there, chastened by the memory of the sorrows and exercises passed through. The glory is given to God, and this by a circle as wide as was engaged in the previous exercise. Let the reader ponder "the writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness" (Is. xxxviii. 9-22). There is the memory of the bitterness of the chastening, the hourly expectation of death, the cry to God. Then comes the grateful acknowledgement that "Himself hath done it," and the sense of a holiness in God that will impel him to walk softly all his days.

So may it be with us, beloved and sorrowing saints of God. Let us learn from the great Teacher, and while bereavement does come, and blessed be God is not a sorrow without hope—nay, is far better for the one who departs—let us learn too to make use of this resource for faith in times of sickness. Lord, awaken Thy people, and sanctify to them all Thy ways.

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# BRIEF BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

## III.—SONSHIP.

ONE of the most frequent expressions which one hears now in public, is "brother," and while it is true that God was creator of man, and consequently all men in that sense are equally His creatures, yet if such a word is used to express "the universal Fatherhood of God," Scripture very clearly shows the untruthfulness of such a theory, which at present has become quite common in "religious circles." Of course, such a thought ignores the fall of man, denies the atonement of Christ as a necessity, and does away with the need of being "born again." But "to the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. viii. 20).

### 1. Our position naturally.

"Wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were *by nature the children of wrath*, even as others" (Eph. ii. 2, 3). "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 7, 8). And our blessed Lord Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." . . .

(John viii. 44), and this latter is spoken too by that blessed One who was to undertake the work which was to free from the bondage of Satan and bring all believing on Him into the place of sonship before God. It is said of Him that "He knew what was in man," (John ii. 25) and no one was more tender and compassionate than He, and none more frank in all His words and manner, and yet dealing in complete justice as to sin. See also Eph. ii. 12; James iv. 4, etc.

## 2. How Sonship is obtained.

It might be well to recall the fact that "sons" in Scripture, refers to dignity of position, while "child" or "children" refers to relationship of the believer with the Father. Jacob in his parting blessing to his sons, calls, "Reuben thou art my firstborn . . . the excellency of dignity" (Gen. xlix. 3).

It is also noteworthy that while "sons" are found in Paul's Epistles, believers are always called "children" in John's Epistles, which have reference to the family relationship. Faith must precede filial relationship to God: "As many as received Him, to them gave He the power (right or privilege) to become the sons (children) of God, even to them that believe on His Name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13).

It is to be observed all this honor is conferred by actual spiritual birth which takes place when any poor, guilty, condemned sinner, receives by faith, not by feeling, the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour.

The expression:—

"Not of blood," means not by lineage.

"Nor of the will of the flesh," not anything flesh can do, or any improvement in it.

"Nor of the will of man," not anything man can do, no resolves, such as "I am going to be a Christian, and live a good life."

"But of God" means it is a work of God in the soul, the moment a poor guilty, lost sinner, conscious of his condition, believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, as made known in the gospel (1 Pet. i. 23-25; 2 Pet. i. 4; Eph. ii. 10.)

3. When obtained.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not."

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God." . . . (1 John iii. 1, 2).

Much of the truth of Scripture is missed by passing over the small words in the verses, which often give special force to the expressions; as for instance, the little word "so" in John iii. 16, "as," and "so" in Heb. ix. 27, 28, etc, and the word "now" in the verse quoted above. See also Phil. ii. 15; Gal. iv. 7; John i. 12; Eph. ii. 19, 20; Rom. viii. 14; 2 Cor. vi. 14-18. These with many other verses, show this to be a present blessing, the portion of believers now, in this world (Gal. iii. 26).

No wonder the apostle seems struck with wonder, as the Holy Ghost speaking by him, calls attention to the "*manner of love*" i. e., the character of God's love. Oh wondrous blessing, marvellous grace; that God who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil" (Hab. i. 13), would and does confer this precious honor upon any and every poor sinner, who with re-

pentant heart turns in faith to our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Present blessing, and future glory.

"And because ye *are* sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

"Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. iv. 6, 7; Rom. viii. 14, 15). Beloved Christian reader, do you really believe these things, that they are yours, aye, for the very weakest, youngest, babe in Christ, not merely to be possessed by some old saints who have endured a long life of conflict, but they are the free gift of God to the youngest in the faith? and all by sovereign grace—think of the dignity, the wealth, the cause, as the words "a son," "heir of God," "through Christ" come prominently out in the verse.

And think of the future,

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be *with* Me, where I am, that they may behold My glory" . . . (John xvii. 24), "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2).

"For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile (humiliated) body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" etc. (Phil. iii. 20, 21).

For the manifestation of this the dead in Christ wait (1 Thess. iv. 14-18). Creation waits with groaning (Rom. viii. 19-22). Space does not admit of more extended research into these gracious blessings, which if the Lord please may come before us later,

for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10). O believer, how rich and honored thou art of God thy Father. How responsible too to walk worthy of the dignities conferred.

B. W. J.

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### EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

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OF course, the Christian grows. Jesus Himself grew as a human being, in wisdom and stature and in *favor* with God and man. It is a great law of the natural and spiritual kingdoms. First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. In first John, you find repeated mention of little children, young men and fathers, *i. e.*, different grades and stages of Christian life. "Desire the sincere milk (or spiritual milk, Rev. Ver.) of the Word that ye may grow thereby (1 Pet. ii. 2; 1 Cor. iii. 1-6; Heb. v. 12,-13). A man may have been a Christian for years and yet be only a little, puny babe in Christ.

It is a most blessed privilege that we may depend on our gracious God and Saviour to direct our paths and supply our needs.

The old man or our old man which is spoken of as crucified with Christ I understand to be the *man*. I, myself, as I was born, a *descendant* of fallen Adam, an individual *reproduction*, a living specimen of the *old stock*, with a selfish perverted *will*; a darkened *mind*, unholy *affections*, corrupt *tastes*—dead in trespasses and sins; as such a man I had a perverted, diseased, degenerate nature.

*I*, that old man, died, was crucified (Rom. vi. 6) with Christ; *I live* no more, CHRIST liveth in me, a new self substituted in place of the old *I*. Now although the old *I* is dead and gone before God and for faith, yet the old *nature* is left behind, is here with its evil tendencies and desires. It wants to do this and does not want to do that. It is ready to flare up and get hot, or get cold and indifferent, to stuff itself with anything that tastes good, and to gratify or indulge any desire or appetite that is excited for the time being. But the *new man* is a human being of a Christly, Divine order. Christ in you, with a nature that is marked by love, joy, peace; that is gentle, patient, etc. One nature is fleshly, the other is spiritual. One wants to do just as it pleases, the other just as the Lord pleases.

These are contrary the one to the other, and if left to fight it out between themselves the old nature will get the upper hand.

But God by His Spirit, through the Word, teaches us that "our old man has been crucified with Christ." That Christ "died unto sin once," and rose again and "liveth unto God," and that we, who are His, are to *reckon* ourselves to be dead to sin by *His* death and alive to God with *His* life, by reason of the fact that we *are in Him* now by *new* birth as we *were once in Adam* by the *first* birth. And we are not to let the sin (to which we died in Christ our substitute) have dominion over us, but yield ourselves *unto God* as alive *from* the dead, and let Him *have control* of us and *rule* us by His own almighty loving Spirit.

Not only that but being *dead to sin*, and *dead to law* (by the body of Christ), we are *married* to another, even to *Him* that *was raised* from the dead,



*joined* to the *Lord* (by the one Spirit by whom we are baptized into one body) and are now *one spirit* (Rom. vii. 1-6; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13). Depending on our adorable Lord and Head, *occupied with Him*, we bring forth fruit unto God. And thus though *sin the old slave master is present*, yet his authority and power over us are *gone*. We *know the truth* (the *truth* of Christ as our precious Redeemer, Deliverer, Emancipator. We know Him as the *truth*, and the way, and the life) and the truth has made us *free*. Hallelujah.

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## TWO PARALLEL LIVES, AND THEIR CONTRAST.

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(A Meditation on Mark I., II., III.)

(Continued from page 86.)

WE were seeing the patient service of our Lord, and will trace Him further in His lowly mission. Levi (Matthew), hears a word behind him "follow Me," and he rises up and follows Jesus. Matthew knew the Shepherd's voice and beheld in Him the grace that came to save the lost. This man makes the Lord a feast, and invites a number of publicans and sinners to meet Him and hear His word. This was a double feast, a feast for the Son of God while a Servant among men; a feast such as these scribes and Pharisees had never afforded the Shepherd-Servant. A true love feast this was, and then a feast that widened out and thought of men just like what he had been, whom he desired to see, taste and share the grace of a *Saviour-God*. What a treat Matthew must have afforded Jesus that day! publicans and sinners heard that day the wonderful

words of life. How beautiful to see this grace, the Son of God sitting among publicans and sinners. This heavenly life of Jesus unfolds itself in those chapters like the rose of Sharon, and as it unfolds itself, at its every stage it emits its sweet fragrance of love and grace. But for those, as we have first noticed, who had feelings of envy because He was advancing as a teacher and then because that envy was not judged, we read they "reasoned." Now we observe their character also unfolding itself side by side with His. He the very perfection of *good*; in them the principle of evil.

At this stage they speak out (not as in vers. 6, 7, in their hearts) but not yet directly to the Lord. They move cautiously and drawing near, ask the disciples, "How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" (ver. 16). These words are proof of how far their hearts were away from the God of Israel, and also of the wickedness that lay therein, in thus seeking occasion against the Lord of life and glory as He went about doing good. The Lord when He heard it takes up the question Himself and gives the answer, in lowly grace making it the occasion to present to them the very glory and joy of His mission.

"I came not to call the righteous, but *sinners* to repentance" (ver. 17). Such was Matthew, and such were those whom Matthew had invited there that day, and hence the whole work was according to God's plans. The grace of Christ was expressed among that company.

At this feast, the Lord was enjoying another feast, "meat to eat they knew not of." What a contrast between those two lives! He delighting to meet the

need of the needy; they opposed to such grace flowing out. By this time we observe the Pharisees have joined the scribes. (In ver. 6, we read of the scribes, in ver. 16, the scribes and Pharisees.)

At this juncture we observe another question asked. Till the end of chap. iii. the contrast develops, and becomes more manifest. But this question was not to the disciples, but to the Lord. If Matt. ix. 14 be consulted, we observe the questioners here were John's disciples. Yet even in them we learn how far all were from understanding Him who was in their midst. "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Thy disciples fast not?" The previous question was addressed to the disciples and concerning the conduct of the Lord; this question is addressed to the Lord, but concerning the conduct of the disciples.

The Lord's presence among them was truly giving character to their lives and others could see the change. Observe the contrast, and the answer which the Lord gave them truly and fully explains this. "Can the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?"

What grace is expressed in this answer. Not only do we observe the grace and patience in answering such questions and waiting on them for a response, but we would pause and meditate upon the grace expressed in the words of the answer. The Son of God was present among men, His own voice was heard following that of His forerunner John. This voice sought to reach men and draw them to Himself. Men were refusing, but the few fishermen respond. The publican does also. The sinners hear His words, and oh the blessedness, we exclaim, for those whose

hearts God had touched. For there was the Messiah long looked for by Israel. There was that great Prophet. There was the Son of God, there the Bridegroom and there the grace waiting to reach them and bless. Would they respond? The Lord saw they would not. His rejection by them becomes clear to Him, and this He now intimates. "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away." The condition of the leaders was as old bottles which could not contain the new wine. This precious ministry of love and grace the Lord had already begun to unfold, and although the Bridegroom is absent now, yet the Spirit is here and the work still continues among sinners of the Gentiles.

But we will proceed another step and observe another objection to what was transpiring: "Why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?" He had taught in the synagogue and they refused His teaching. He healed and forgave, and they find fault. He gathered publicans and sinners around Him to tell them of the grace that would save, and they question about it. Now as the disciples walk through the cornfields, we might say despised and rejected as associated with their Lord and Master, their conduct is questioned. The Lord again answers, and every answer only develops the grace of His heart, as well as the truth of His ways. At this time He refers to David's course when the nation had refused him. In this typical history they might have seen the parallel. They were careful about the sabbath, the shadow, and to this they clung; but the One the sabbath pointed to ("the body which is of Christ") they had no heart for. They were jealous of Him, the Lord of the Sabbath. What a contrast

we here behold in those two bands — Christ and those following Him, and the scribes and Pharisees.

But we observe none of those things move Him nor deter Him from His holy purpose to bless, if they curse. "And He entered again into the synagogue, and there was a man there which had a withered hand, and they watched him" (chap. iii. 1, 2).

"They watch Him," not to admire and adore Him for the love and grace there expressed, but to detect something "that they might accuse Him." This is the very character also of Satan as given in Rev. xii. "The accuser of the brethren," and by this we see how much they were under his power and unholy influence.

Let us also pause here and learn the contrast as developed in that lovely life of Jesus, a contrast still pursued by Him in the courts above; for there He acts as Priest and Advocate; there He prays and intercedes with God for His own redeemed by blood—His own blood. But He never "accuses." This is the enemy's work as seen in Satan and in the scribes and Pharisees. It is recorded as one of the unholy characteristics of the last days prevalent among professing Christians (2 Tim. iii. 3).

Let us be warned ourselves by these scriptures, and "watch," not that we might detect defects and flaws and "accuse," but watch against that unholy work of the flesh and judge the spirit of it, and cultivate the lovely graces of the Holy Spirit. Let us look upon others, not with the cold, heartless suspicion that characterized those who opposed the Lord. Eventually this very spirit of criticism and accusation, largely the development of envy, was that which said, "Away with Him, Crucify Him." Let us cul-

tivate what the divine word enjoins upon us. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. iv. 8, 9).

This life so beautiful and lovely, when developed as the Holy Spirit here unfolds it, was a life foreign to that of scribes and Pharisees, but it was most fully and perfectly expressed by the very One they accused. As often since, the evil, the wrong is with the accusers, not the accused. Let us then be warned by this example and choose the side true and lovely, that of Christ.

But, to proceed. He healed the man with the withered hand, a fit emblem, had they but known it, of their whole condition, a lifeless withered up profession. Grace was there even for them, but another purpose was theirs. They no doubt felt their weakness, and so we are informed; "The Pharisees went forth and took counsel with the Herodians against Him how they might destroy Him" (ver. 6). First we saw but scribes, then the Pharisees, now the Herodians. Things which have begun, develop very fast; He came to give life, they would take His away; He came to save and bless, they to condemn and destroy.

But we note also the grace of Christ, "Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea" (ver. 7), foreshadowing what would soon be true in reality, His final withdrawal from them, and the grace that would flow out to the Gentiles. Great multitudes now follow Him, and even already some of those Gentile. The Lord ever perfect as a Servant discerns the

great need and retires to the mount. There He selects the twelve. The need and press was great, "So that they could not so much as eat bread." What a life was that of Jesus here below, full of love that desired to serve others, unselfish and self-denying, and that side by side with a life as seen in others, full of malice, hatred, selfishness and self-indulgence. May we here again pause and meditate the contrast, and copy that life so true and unselfish. The very perfection of servants was He, given us here as an example. Well might we pause and admire as well as worship and adore as we behold Him in dependence "*the solitary place*" in prayer, our example. In His grace at its every stage, our example. Unwilling also to be hindered in His service by the popularity, unswervingly devoted to His Father's interests, and not seeking self-glory; in this our example. The diligence, the faithfulness and self-denial, "They could not so much as eat bread," our example was He and they with Him at this time. (At this stage His friends cannot understand Him, but the Father did) (ver. 21).

But we will follow on one step further and behold another stage, the seventh of the contrast and the close of our meditation. "The scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth He out devils" (ver. 22). By this we learn how far away their hearts are from the God of Israel, how far their hearts differed from that of the Lord before them, and how opposed were their words and ways to the work of the Holy Spirit there working in such a wonderful way. Their cup of iniquity was full. Their life and ways but manifest the heart they bear about, and now the Lord answers them (not plainly as before) by parables. There was little use reasoning; little use waiting longer. The more grace is shown the more do they take advantage of it to accuse and gainsay. They had heard Him preach, teach, and seen Him heal, and this every part of it as a man, their Messiah, anointed by the Holy Ghost. Yet they say that all was by "Beelzebub."

At this stage we behold righteousness. They are given up; they are set aside by the just judgment of God (vers. 28, 30). They commence with envy, when Jesus comes to the front and is honored of God in His ministry of grace, and in these three chapters their wickedness develops in all the stages of their opposition and accusations until now we behold violence there, and murder is before them, which terminates eventually in the Cross. Man's life here has been before us in the religious leaders of that day, not only proven to be a failure, but tested in every way and proven to be evil. But the life of Jesus in all His ways, in every answer, in all His words—how beautiful and lovely, worthy of our admiration and imitation.

At the close (chap. iii.) He turns from them; all links with Israel (man as in flesh tried, tested, and proven bad) are broken. We observe the grace that rises over every barrier and the word, "Whosoever" appears. Next He goes to the seaside (typical of where He works now, among us Gentiles) and there as Mark describes by parables, He has labored ever since (chap. iv.).

True He has been crucified, but now risen and glorified at God's right hand. This is the testimony of chap. xvi. at its close. His servants who began then and have continued since "went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them." He still abides the Servant, He still labors with those sent forth. He still, blessed be His glorious Name, maintains a hearty interest in the gospel. Let us cultivate hearty fellowship with Him in this service, which will continue "till He come." Then He will still be the Servant, He will serve us, His people, His redeemed (Luke xii. 35-37), and this service will be as the Hebrew servant,—reckoned for thirty shekels of silver—a service that will abide forever. "He shall serve him forever" (Ex. xxi. 1-6, 32). May the choice of our hearts be Himself, not in doctrine and theory only, but in deed and in truth.

A. E. B.



## GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

## 6. THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER.

*Continued from page 15.*

## Chapter iii.

RUTH'S diligence in gleaning has not only supplied the wants of herself and her mother-in-law, but has evidently awakened in Naomi the slumbering hopes which had apparently been dead. The knowledge of Scripture becomes her guide, and as faith has increased, so it will now make use of that which, though well known before, had seemed to be of no special value. How true this is in every case. How Scripture seems to lie dormant in the mind of the child of God away from Him, and yet when once faith and desire are quickened, the neglected Word is found to be bright indeed with its provisions exactly suited to the needs.

There was a merciful provision in the law (Deut. xxv. 5-10) that no man's family should be allowed to die out, while a brother survived to perpetuate the line. In Israel, to be childless was a reproach, and for a man's name to be blotted out—his family to become extinct—was regarded as a special mark of God's displeasure. The Sadducees, in our Lord's day, might seek to ridicule the truth of resurrection by bringing in this merciful provision, but they only showed their ignorance of "the Scriptures and the power of God." It was provision for the earthly not the future life, that God had made. Most appropriate was it, therefore, that He should see that names should not be blotted out in Israel, save to mark, as in Achan, His solemn judgment of an awful sin. There seems, too, to be a recognition in His provision of that hope in the heart of every Hebrew

woman, that through her in some way the promise of "the woman's seed" might be fulfilled. This was to be done literally in the line which was to be preserved through Ruth.

Naomi is the leader here. It is her knowledge both of the kinship of Boaz and the law of Deuteronomy which guides Ruth in the most trying of all her experiences. "Shall I not seek rest for thee?" Ruth had been gleaned food, but it had been through constant toil, and but for present needs. She was now to have rest, all her needs met, her labor over. What a change in the state of Naomi, from her unbelief at the beginning, when she would have turned Ruth back to find rest in the heathen home of some Moabitish husband. Would she not now be ashamed of such unbelief, and shudder at the thought of her own folly, which might have resulted so disastrously both for herself and her daughter-in-law? Yet unbelief in the nation checked any turning that it saw in the people to our Lord when He was here, and did not rest till there was no hope—as they thought—of a national acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. So too in the days of national return to the land, the spirit of unbelief will turn the newly formed hopes of the nation, to seeking rest in some union not of God. False prophets and false Christs will claim, and receive, recognition from many—the man of sin will draw off the most into alliance with "the beast." But faith and the word of God will seek rest for the widowed remnant only with One who is a Kinsman, with a divinely given right to redeem the inheritance and perpetuate the name of those whose hopes had long since died.

In the history, too, of every soul, there comes a

yearning for something more than the merest satisfaction of pressing hunger. Every gift from the hand of such a Giver makes us long, not merely for more *gifts*, but for the rest which can only be found in Himself. It is a blessed fact that the Person of Christ is the necessary goal toward which the Spirit of God ever leads. Nothing short of the Lord Himself will do: "Our souls were made for Thyself, and can never rest save in Thee."

It is this longing after the Person of our blessed Lord which gives the peculiar charm to the Song of Solomon. The affections are the same in all dispensations, and anything that describes the longing of the heart after Christ meets a response in every Spirit-taught heart. From the beginning of the Song throughout, there is a good measure of acquaintance with the Lord, and a conscious though not clearly defined sense of relationship with Him. In Ruth this is not so clear. She is rather seeking an acknowledgment of relationship, which she is not sure will be recognized. But the resemblance between the two books can be seen. We must, however, return to the narrative.

Harvest time is now over, and threshing and winnowing have succeeded. All work will soon be over, and Naomi recognizes that if anything is to be done, it must be immediately. The plan is a simple and bold one; Ruth is to prepare herself, and on that night, at the threshing-floor present herself to Boaz, claiming kinship and pleading the divine provision for cases such as hers.

It was a bold stroke, and would either succeed or ignominiously fail. She would either leave the threshing-floor recognized by Boaz as the proper and

honored object of his affection, or, spurned from his feet, be forever after branded as a bold and shameless woman. All hung in the balance; how would it be decided?

Is it not significant, when we pass from the narrative to its spiritual application, that this trial was to be made at the threshing-time and at night? It is in connection with "the great tribulation,"—literally the great threshing-time,—when the remnant will put forth their claim to the Kinsman, whom yet they so dimly recognize. This is the testing time for the nation, when, through the trials of persecution, the wheat will be separated from the chaff of mere profession. When all goes well, it is easy to profess, but "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word," the stony-ground hearers are manifested. Thus the time of threshing is the suited time for faith to be manifested as truly that, and for all else to fall away.

The figure of threshing is found quite frequently in the prophets, and nearly always as applied to the nations (See Isa. xxi. 10 with Jer. li. 33; Is. xli. 15; Mi. iv. 13; Hab. iii. 12). Israel herself will one day thresh the nations, but before that time she herself must pass through the purifying chastening, which will result in the chaff being driven away, and the pure grain alone remaining. It is during this separating time of suffering and trial that the remnant will in faith lay claim to Him who is Lord of the threshing.

Is it not also suggestive that the site of the temple was the threshing-floor of Ornan, and that it was at the time of God's chastening the people that He revealed Himself to David, and thus established the

basis for His dwelling-place? David offered sacrifices, and the place where sacrifice and chastening had met was to be the lasting abode of a holy and faithful God. So at the last will the Lord reveal Himself to His people, and re-establish His sure house to all generations.

Ruth is now to lay aside the garments of her widowhood, washing and anointing herself, and thus to present herself as a bride to Boaz. So too the remnant will lay aside their hopelessness, and washed by the Spirit and the Word, will array themselves in a beauty not their own, claiming in faith Him whose mercy they have tasted. They will have learned of Him who gives "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." They will have heard the voice calling to them, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem the holy city . . . Shake thyself from the dust; arise and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion."

Carrying out the directions of Naomi, she is recognized by Boaz at midnight, the darkest hour, and makes her bold claim. Instead, however, of being repulsed, she is blessed by Boaz, who declares it is kindness on her part, greater even than she had shown to her mother-in-law at the beginning. She is reassured, he promises to do all, and affirms that which slander might have denied: "All the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman."

So will the King, reassure the trembling remnant who draw near to Him in the dark midnight hour of trial and persecution. The joy of His own heart in

their faith will be greater far than their own. "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." Who indeed can measure that joy, save He who wept over Jerusalem? Who can know the delight of seeing them turn to Him, save the One who was rejected by His people? "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee."

All this part of the narrative is so entirely typical of Israel's relations to our Lord, that we can only in a secondary way apply it to the history of the individual in the present dispensation. Yet, as we have seen, the affections are the same in all dispensations, and faith nourished will develop in strength and intensity. It is most blessed to know that God has provided infinitely beyond our highest thoughts and strongest faith. So that we have not to *obtain*, as did Ruth, a place of the nearest and closest relationship, but to apprehend that which is already ours—the gift of grace.

But in the soul's experience, there is much that answers to this progress which we have been tracing. We come as poor outcasts, gleaning bits of blessing with faint heart,

"Not worthy, Lord, to gather up the crumbs,  
With trembling hands, that from Thy table fall,  
A weary, heavy-laden sinner comes  
To plead Thy promise and obey Thy call.

Such is the language, not surely of intelligent faith, but of the soul as it dimly sees mercy even for it. But grace leads on, as we have seen, encouraging and strengthening, until at last the soul, entering into the marvel of divine love, lays hold upon the wondrous secret of Christ's heart—"we are members

of His body" . . . : "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it . . . that He might present it to Himself." We see Him not only as Saviour, Lord, Shepherd, but find our rest upon His bosom the beloved of His heart, forming with all the redeemed of this age the Bride who shall be His companion throughout the endless day of God. - "That in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace."

Not at once does the soul grasp this wondrous relationship; alas at best how feebly do we respond to His love. But if the soul follow on under the leading of the Spirit of God, it will surely find its place at the feet of Him who is indeed "a near Kinsman," "not ashamed to call us brethren."

Ruth returns to Naomi with the distinct promise of Boaz, to do all that her heart desired, should there be no obstacle. That possible obstacle is, as we shall presently see, a nearer kinsman. But, even during the suspense of waiting to know the outcome, she receives from Boaz ample provision for all needs.

What a contrast are the six measures poured into her veil, to the ephah of barley gathered by painful gleaning. He would not allow her to go empty to her mother-in-law, and this in itself was a pledge of more bounty to come, yea of himself lord of it all. Thus Joseph feasted his brethren and sent them back with full loads before the union with his family was consummated. And thus the Lord in grace provides for those who yet do not know the fulness of blessing that is theirs.

Naomi meets her returning daughter-in-law, not with her previous question "*where* hast thou gleaned to-day?" but "*Who* art thou my daughter?" It was

not a question of benefit, but of relationship. It was not "What hast thou," but "Who art thou." For the bride is called by the name of the bridegroom. "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Fitting words are these to describe the changed relationships of one but lately called Ruth the Moabitess.

But, as we have seen, there must still be a brief delay. Brief indeed it is, for, as Naomi declares, "The man will not be in rest until he have finished the thing this day." Ruth can well afford to "sit still" and wait, for all is now in the hands of Boaz himself.

What a glimpse these words give of the tireless love of our Lord both for His Church and for Israel. He did not rest till He had accomplished redemption, and now His love will not rest till all is consummated. What force this gives to those words "the patience of Christ." How He longs to have His people with himself.

"Thy love had not its rest

Were Thy redeemed not with Thee fully blest."

He waits now, He longs and looks for the time appointed. How is it with us? Can we say "Lord tarry not but come."?

(*To be continued.*)

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

*Dear Brother—*

In perusing the article on "Ruth" contained in January *Help and Food*, I found a little difficulty in reconciling a statement therein, with what had appeared to me



as a correct rendering of the portion in point. On pages ten and eleven it says—

“After she had beaten out the barley—a grain itself suggestive of poverty and feebleness—she returns to her mother-in-law, and shows her little store, *sharing it with her. It will be noticed that she first satisfies her own hunger, before giving to Naomi,*” etc.

Now the difficulty I had was just here, as I had previously understood that what Ruth shared with her mother-in-law was what she had left over of the parched corn given to her by Boaz. That, in fact, the passage would read somewhat in this form—

17—“So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned : and it was about an ephah of barley.

18—“And she took it up, and went into the city; and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned : and she brought forth, and gave her (Naomi) what she had reserved (of the parched corn) after she was sufficed (at the house, or at the table of Boaz).

It seemed to me that Naomi *saw* what had been gleaned, that being so, Ruth need not have “brought *it* (the barley) forth, the results of the gleanings *had been seen*. It was in all probability understood to be common property. Then Ruth “brought forth” what she had *reserved* after she was supplied. It was at the table of Boaz she had been *sufficed*, and had some over. Then again, it would appear to me somewhat out of harmony with the affectionate relationship existing between Naomi and Ruth, to understand it so, to the effect that, Ruth should first cook a meal of the barley, then eat, and that to sufficiency, before giving any of it to Naomi, for this is what it would amount to, and would be very different to Boaz's treatment towards herself. H. G. M.

We thank our brother for his notice of what indeed seems a more correct view than what is given in the passage referred to. He is probably correct in his view, which is the usual one. This does not invali-

date the force of what was deduced from the passage, simply applying the same thought to her being sufficed before she could give to another. ED.

## SAVED BY GRACE FOR EVERMORE.

*"By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain" (1 Cor. xv. 10).*

©NCE, a lost and helpless sinner,  
At the cross of Christ I stood,  
Saw the SON OF GOD there dying,  
Sealing pardon in His blood;  
And, by grace, on Him believing,  
As the "Lamb," who bore away  
ALL MY SINS "in His own body,"  
I was saved that very day.

Rom. iii. 23.  
John iii. 14, 15.  
Mark xv. 39.  
Isaiah lv. 7.  
Eph. ii. 8.  
John i. 29.  
1 Pet. ii. 24.  
2 Cor. vi. 2.

### *Refrain:*

Saved by grace, to God be glory!  
I would sing it o'er and o'er—  
Gladly sing redemption's story—  
Saved by grace for evermore.

Eph. i. 6.  
Col. iii. 6.  
Eph. i. 7.  
Heb. vii. 25.

I had often heard the gospel,  
And, as often, failed to see  
That the SON OF GOD, in dying  
For lost sinners, DIED FOR ME.  
But my rebel heart to Calv'ry  
By the grace of God was led,  
There to find that, for my ransom,  
Jesus' precious blood was shed.

Heb. iv. 4.  
2 Cor. iv. 4.  
1 John iv. 14.  
1 Tim. i. 15.  
Rom. v. 10.  
Titus. ii. 11.  
1 Tim. ii. 6.  
1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

Now I love to tell to others  
How, a fellow-sinner, I  
Found a loving God had given  
His own SON for us to die!  
Found that Jesus, once for sinners,  
Was "made sin" upon the tree,  
And from judgment all believing  
Are for evermore made free.

Psalms xl. 3.  
Gal. iii. 22.  
John iii. 16.  
Rom. v. 8.  
Heb. ix. 26.  
2 Cor. v. 21.  
John v. 24.  
Rom. viii. 1.  
G. K.

## BRIEF BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

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### IV. ASSURANCE.

ONE great cause of failure in many Christians as to their walk and conduct, is the lack of assurance, or confidence as to their eternal salvation. Some seem to be carrying a mirror constantly before them, in which they vainly seek for the reflection of themselves as an evidence of their acceptance with God. Others are searching their hearts, in the endeavor to discover some inward change or emotion to rest upon for their acceptance before God, and as all views of *self*, whether the sinner's self, or the believer's self, are discouraging, Satan takes advantage of such, and strives to draw them away into deep sin, or failing in this, causes great disquietude and unrest of soul.

Now the word of God gives no "uncertain sound" upon this subject.

In Rom. i. 16 it says, "The gospel of Christ" is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and 1 Cor. i. 18 speaks of the great division which "the preaching of the cross" makes between "them that perish" and "us who ARE saved;" and in ver. 21 it may be clearly seen that, by preaching the gospel, God declares His purpose "to save them that believe." Heb. v. 9 shows that Christ "became the Author of *eternal* salvation," so that any one believing the gospel in accordance with Rom. x. 9, 10, must be *eternally* saved. See also 1 Cor. xv. 2; Tit. iii. 5; 2 Cor. vi. 2.

This salvation includes complete

Redemption, (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14; Tit. ii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 18, etc.);

Forgiveness, (Col. ii. 13; Acts xiii. 38; 1 Jno. ii. 12);

Justification, (pronounced clear of any charge)  
(Rom. iv. 25; v. 9; Eph. v. 27; Acts xiii. 39);

Acceptance, (Eph. i. 6).

Here is where the trouble lies, souls do not see that one's acceptance with God is "in the Beloved," not in one's self or changed manner of life, or self-denial, or emotions of sense, whether good or otherwise, but in Christ, in the value of all that He is to God. It is an act of God Himself, not through any evidence in our senses, but the plain, clear proclamation of God based upon *His value* of Christ's atonement, and this declared to us through the Word. "Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven" (Ps. cxix. 89), "whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever" (Eccl. iii. 14), so that the believer is proclaimed forever accepted with God in the full value of Christ, by the word of God. Thus the same basis of knowledge of one's sinnership is also the foundation of the knowledge of the believer's acceptance. It is this which gives settled peace and rest of soul (Col. i. 20; Rom. v. 1).

Should this meet the eye of any believer who has a doubt in his soul as to full acceptance with God, look away from self, no matter how marvelous a change may have taken place in your life; look away from your ever changing emotions, your resolutions, self-denials, and see *Christ*, in His unfailing preciousness to the Father as the One in whom your acceptance lies, and rejoice in Him and be at peace.

Eternal life, (Jno. iii. 16; v. 24; Rom. vi. 23; 1 Jno. v. 13, etc.).

The Holy Spirit, (Gal. iv. 6; Eph. i. 12, 13; iv. 30; Jno. xiv. 16).

Access to God, (Eph. ii. 13, 18; Heb. x. 19).

Fitness for Heaven, (Col. i. 12; Rev. i. 5, 6; v. 9).

Such are *some* of the blessings obtained for us by the Lord Jesus Christ; for God "hath blessed us with *all* spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3), and assured to us by His Word.

Thus let every doubting, trembling believer be encouraged to believe the record that God gives us of His Son, and looking away from self, know "that ye have eternal life."

B. W. J.

## ANointed FOR THE BURIAL.

⑥ MARY, all thy sins forgiven,  
Thy place beside the Master's feet,  
So holy, if divinely sweet,  
Had taught thy chastened soul its need—  
Thou knewest thy dear Lord must bleed,  
His spotless bosom bruised and riven !

Not thee rebellious pity stirred,  
But deeper grief to hear His word  
That told His hour of passion nigh—  
That He, the Lord of life, must die  
And rise again ! The sorrow fell  
In crushing, unresisted spell  
On thy submissive heart that heard—  
Thy broken heart that knew too well  
Its vileness and its utter need  
To dare to reason or to plead  
To stay Him from the agony !

Thou knewest in thy feeble measure  
That Glory veiled in manhood's dress,—  
Knew He was God, heaven's priceless Treasure  
Revealed in human loveliness;

Yet knew that curse and death must be,  
His person crushed in penalty  
And all that glorious preciousness  
Atoningly outpoured for sin,  
Ere even such a One as He  
Thy worthless wretchedness could win  
Or save one sinner righteously !

Perhaps thou knewest Jesus dying,  
His God and Father glorifying,  
Would fill with fragrance perfectly  
(As there made sin and made a curse)  
The whole created universe  
For time and for eternity

At least thy faith set forth the token—  
As by the Father gently taught  
Thine alabaster box was brought  
And by thy hands of love was broken,  
To pour the spikenard, pure and sweet,  
On Sorrow's head and Love's worn feet !

Thine alabaster casket white  
Was like His stainless Flesh, the vase,  
The temple of Eternal Light,  
Of Godhead-fulness, Love and Grace !  
Broken by loving hands, 'twas like  
The Father's Son resigned to spike  
And cross—His being crushed—His breath  
By wrath consumed for sin in death !

And even as it was the spilling  
Upon His sacred Person there  
That spread the grateful sweetness, filling  
The house with incense-perfumed air ;  
So His atoning sacrifice  
Unveils all beauty to our eyes  
While love—outpoured in sweet libation  
Upon His agony and shame—  
Makes odorous the whole creation  
With incense of His fragrant Name !

## JESUS, PREACHER AND TEACHER.

*(Continued from page 96.)*

THERE are about twenty-five parables in the Gospels, as well as numerous parabolic sayings beside, although different numbers may be obtained according to the place where we put the dividing line. They are largely drawn from the various occupations of the people of that day, and cover most of them.

It has been said that the parable of the sower was given to draw the farming class, that of the merchant seeking goodly pearls, the traders, and that of the net let down, the fisher folk; and although perhaps there is room to differ as to the specific application, yet the principle is a beautiful one and serves as another of those side lights which illumine the Lord's life with their radiance. The apostle speaks somewhere of becoming all things to all men, and this our Lord was for the very blessed reason that in a certain sense, we may say, men were all things to Him. He had a wonderful and touching sympathy with toiling humanity around, entering into their daily duties in a manner that is very precious, and ready always to address the heart thereby. So there is scarcely an occupation in life from which His parables are not drawn. There are about eleven of these and though to the Christian they are, of course, familiar, it may be profitable to take a sort of bird's eye-view.

They dealt with high life and low life. We hear of the rich man's son running away and spending his all, and of the poor woman with her ten pieces of silver, of the shepherd tending his flock. We see

the merchant entering on a large venture, or the fisher gaining a precarious living in the great Deep. Then again we sit in the palace of the king in high festival, or wander with the sower at noon tide. We go with the traveler to Jericho and see the thieves strip him of all that he has, or we visit the courts of the city, where high handed injustice for long resists the cry of importunity.

But not merely is the world of man a field of illustration, but a number of the facts of animate and inanimate creation are summoned to bear their testimony. "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow," and remember that not one of the sparrows falls to the ground without your Father. Ye read the signs of the sky, and why not the signs of the times? The reader can think of other fields which are covered.

But now let us remember that no one can imitate save in a very imperfect way, our blessed Lord, and yet if our heart grow more into that Divine compassion that filled Him, we too shall be able to find in sea and sky, in life and death, avenues to the consciences of our fellow-men, and all things shall subserve the work of our ministry. Some like anecdotal preaching, (which in a certain way answers to the parabolic), and some a more purely didactic discourse, but in the parables and in the sermon on the mount we have parallels of each, and we know that His ways are divine. And more or less we can grow, to be like Him in this. One man is anecdotal because he has a healthy sympathy with the pulsating human life around, and another is preceptual and doctrinal as entering warmly into God's ways and laws in Holy Writ. Both are needed and each may gain of



the other as each learns more of the heart for everything that moved Him.

When we come to consider the didactic and preceptual part, we will be surprised to find how much it is illumined by metaphor and simile. There are about two dozen metaphors and similes in the so-called sermon on the mount, and much of the same is scattered through the Gospels. To examine into the examples of these and consider their beauty would be rather beyond the purport of this paper, and yet some are so beautiful we fain would pause and consider them.

"Ye are the salt of the earth," says the Lord. Salt is known for its preservative qualities. It prevents rot and decay. And so Christians are those who "having escaped the corruption that is in the world" are God's witnesses in it. But evidently the primary application is to the usefulness, the preciousness of salt—its savor, which is such that, where absent, men have risked their lives to procure it. It is as if He had said, Ye are the choice ones of this earth; but then if you lose that which makes you this, you are like savorless salt, good only to be cast away. Salt too is that which turns the fertile place into a desert. O brethren, have we so much salt in us that this world has indeed become a wilderness to us? "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid." By day its gilded domes glitter in the rays of the sun, and by night its lights shine out, a beacon to the wanderer and the weary. Christian, do you too shine in the full day of prosperity and in the dark time of tribulation?

But this use of metaphor and simile by Jesus points clearly to the amount of lesson there is in the

world around, which we might use to draw our fellow-men, and by which we might admonish our own heart. In preaching as in teaching let us remember how our great Teacher pointed his remarks by metaphor and simile.

Throughout our Lord's teaching there is also a large use of what is called antithesis or contrast. Thus in the very portion with which we are dealing, the sayings of those of old time are brought into vivid juxtaposition with His own blessed precepts.

What the disciples should do is contrasted with what the hypocrite actually does. We have the contrast of the two roads, one broad and leading to destruction, and the other narrow and traversed by few, but ending in life. Finally, a vision of two houses is presented to view, one standing on the unstable sand and swept away by the rush of the flood, and the other grounded on the rock, presenting an immovable front to all the torrent of the tempest.

What a mass of contrast there is even in this short sermon, and when you come to examine the rest of the Gospel, you will be surprised to see how often these vivid contrasts confront one another. There is at least one powerful use of what we may call suggested contrast; when He asks the standers-by, "What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? A man in soft raiment? In king's palaces?" One can imagine the people crying out: "No, no indeed, that certainly John was not." But, O reader, how much those contrasts weighed upon His loving heart. Do they weigh upon yours? The light and joy of Heaven? The blackness and doom of hell? The purity of Divine holiness? The loathsomeness of sin? How

many lights and shadows are falling on the shores of time, and how miserable our thought of the things around if we fail to see them?

But do not let us close this portion of our meditation with the mere remembrance of the facts just brought to our notice; let us ponder very often the reason for their use on the part of our Lord, and let us seek to be drawn closer to Him by it. Was it to attract or move His hearers that He used metaphor, simile, and antithesis? It was; but consider that He also saw that in them which was worthy of use, and let us seek to see these parallels, these strange antitheses in Nature and in life. One philosopher has been so impressed by these likenesses that he has built up a theory of the universe, in which each atom or "monad," in addition to that which gives it its own individuality, has contained within it all the qualities of the monads beneath it.

Another thing to be observed is the frequency of the use of the specific for the general, the concrete for the abstract. Thus although we have the so-called Golden Rule given as a general principle of action, yet before it is enunciated there is much specific example of the same. For instance, we are told not to turn away from him that would borrow of us, and when smitten on the one cheek to turn the other, etc. So hell is never spoken of in a general way as a place of torment, but as a place of darkness, symbolic of its hopelessness, or as a place of fire, typical of the burning of the wrath of God, or as a place where the worm dieth not, portraying the pangs of conscience. Instead of saying, If there be something about you that causes you to do wrong, get rid of it, He declares: "If thy right hand cause thee to offend," etc.

General principles alone are too broad to probe, the keen edge of the particular must be used.

This brings us face to face with a question that is certainly worth a close examination. Does our Lord, and do the apostles in preaching, speak usually of men being sinners, or of their being committers of specific sins? Certainly they are punished for the fact that they have committed specific sins. They must give an account of the deeds done in the body. Then again, men are perfectly ready to acknowledge that they are sinners, but scarcely, that they are liars, or selfish, or of violent and cruel temper. In conformity with this, I think that examination will reveal that the Lord and the apostles too, more often charge men with the specific sin than with being sinners in a general way.

Compare His terrific arraignment of the Pharisees and His interview with the woman at the well. Take in fact, almost any of His charges and I think this truth will be made manifest. Then if we pass to the discourses of the apostles, Peter charges the people with the crucifixion of Jesus; Paul, in preaching to the Athenians, asserts that superstition is one of their prominent crimes; and even when we go to the epistles, although they do not so much deal with the individual as with doctrine, yet how largely are such charges as, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," followed by long catalogues of detail. Even when he comes to speak of a nation, and through Timothy to them, he says, "The Cretans are liars." Is there not too much generality in the preaching of many, and should not this proposition be examined in the light of God's Word?

As to the use of the concrete for the abstract, we

merely adduce the following instances, which may be supplemented at will. "I came not to send peace on the earth but a *sword*." "If he ask for a fish will he give him a serpent?" This usage however is not so extensive as that of the general for the specific.

The next subject which we have to consider is our Lord's use of "object lessons." Perhaps the most familiar example of it, and one that will occur to every mind, is the taking of the young child and placing it in the midst, and saying: "Except ye be converted and become as this little child, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven." What a beautiful scene it was: the group of grown up men that had once barred the way of the children into His presence, and the little creature before them. How they must have been ashamed of their proud thoughts and felt the power of the rebuke. But how much more vividly it must have been brought to their minds, to see the little one there. To take another instance. We all remember how He asked for the coin upon which was the image and superscription of Cæsar, and pointing them out, demanded whose they were and said: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

If metaphor and simile and object lesson be used by our Lord, if He thus summon analogy to bear Him witness, He also avails Himself of citation of authorities. This seems so obvious and plain to any reader of the Scripture that it will perhaps not be considered necessary to notice it, but there are some lessons that may be drawn which if duly considered ought to be of profit. Is it not wonderful that He should have so often cited those who held a station

so much beneath Him? We say that He came to glorify His Father and His Father's word, and all that is very true. We say that it was *Scripture* that He quoted. Now there is truth in that remark and yet it is one of those half truths that often blind us to what is beyond them. For instance, when David went into the house of God and ate the show bread, it was scarcely scriptural to do so, although the fact itself is found in Scripture. The Lord, of course, knew that what David then did was right or he would not have cited him, but still it is the citation of David's action and in support of His own, and Scripture itself does not lend authority to the action of David. This is a wonderfully gracious thing on the part of the Lord to do. Are we always ready to cite one whom we know to be beneath us in knowledge, just because he is trusted by those to whom we speak? It is a part of true humility at any rate. But we have something further to learn. Is it not a justification of what learned men call "the argumentum ad hominem"? Is it not as much as to say, "You make your boast in David, and although a greater than David is here, yet I will take you on the ground on which you place yourselves, and so doing find justification for what I Myself have done?"

Just to touch for a moment on a subject which might better have had an earlier place in this paper, and then to pass to the Lord in conflict with those who oppose themselves. It is another of those trite remarks which when stated in all their nakedness seem so obvious as to be taken for granted, and which, for that very reason so often are passed over. The Lord said the right thing at the right time. Now a man may give a perfectly correct answer, and

yet that answer may be far from the correct thing to say. This is paradoxical and yet true. When He spoke the parable of the sower going out to sow, He was seated in a boat overlooking the green fields that swept away in their verdure from the shore of Galilee. It is even quite possible that one of those sowers may have been in sight as He spoke, and the mustard-tree have waved in the fresh breeze from the lake, as He passed on to speak of the smallness of its seed. Again, the hiding of the leaven in the meal, although spoken from the same place may easily have been suggested by some domestic scene within view. No doubt too the house into which He entered, and where He talked with His disciples about the net let down and the merchant seeking goodly pearls, was in the near neighborhood of the scene in which they had just been, as well as in consonance with the trade of those to whom He was speaking. Some of the other parables are a little hard to judge of because the place in which they were spoken is not clear, but I think that you will notice that very largely what I have been trying to bring out, has exemplification in those incidents in which locality is more prominent. There is in all these facts, much that goes to show the perfection of that Manhood which, while never in harmony with that which was evil, seemed always, in so far as was fit, to adapt itself to the environment in which it moved.

Passing now to our last topic, how often does He meet objection by a question, either in reality, to which he expects an answer, or else in interrogatory form. "Whose is the image and superscription?" "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as

long as the bridegroom is with them?" "Whether is easier to say: Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk?" "If Satan cast out Satan, how then shall his kingdom stand?" In this latter instance He had first of all made the direct assertion that a house divided against itself could not stand, and the interrogation is a formal one. There are so many of these questions asked by our Lord and they are so familiar to the reader of the Bible, that there will be no need of further citation, but I want to pause a moment and consider the wisdom of this style.

When people are compelled to confute their own reasoning, the confutation is much more thorough, greater attention to the answer being necessarily given, and furthermore, where an answer is vouchsafed, the position of the objector is more clearly seen and there is no possibility of his falling back on some unacknowledged point after the whole argument is over, and of thus breaking its force. He stands self-convicted before all. Then too he is necessarily more open to the argument because he has already granted points, which if he had seen their bearing, he might have absolutely refused to grant. He answers truly, with unbiassed mind and must necessarily, even if he afterward withdraw his concession, see that there is at least a very large amount of probability on the side of his opponent. Here then is wisdom; but how often this wisdom is adorned by a touching grace. The interrogatory method in itself is a less dogmatic, self-assertive method. Of course, the person that uses it may be the most dogmatic of all persons and may use it purely because of its advantages, but with Him, who



was meek and lowly in heart, how well it consorted. I think that at times when He saw that some poor man was bolstering himself with the pride of his knowledge, and answered in this questioning way, a sort of shame must have fallen on that falsely proud heart, and inward reverence and worship must have arisen as he beheld the meekness of that mighty Miracle Worker. Surely we can pray to Him as we close:

"O teach us more of Thy blest ways  
Thou holy Lamb of God!  
And fix and root us in Thy grace,  
As those redeemed by blood."

F. C. G.

## EXPECTING TOO MUCH OF FELLOW SAINTS.

THIS needs to be put before the people of God, and their attention called to it. It is strange, but we are always looking for a sort of perfection in our fellow believers. The word of God while providing for a life of faithfulness shows us the failures of the most illustrious saints, and reminds us that "in many things we all offend;" and yet we are so surprised and disappointed when failure comes. It would save us all a great deal of disappointment if we would not expect so much from our brethren, if we were prepared for things to turn out very differently from what we expected and from what we think is the right way. We need to remember that our way may not be God's way, that whatever the failure on man's part or on His people's part, He cannot fail.

Too often we are so much taken up with the failures of others that we forget the faithfulness of our

God. We think so much of what is being done down here, that our hearts and eyes get off from what He is up there. Our God never fails, never changes. His word and truth are always the same. We can turn away from all here below and should do so often, and fix our eyes on the things up there where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. The Man in the glory should so fill our eyes and fix our hearts that the things of earth, failure and sin, would not move us as they often do. We would then have the priestly power of intercession, and perhaps be used in restoring one who had been "overtaken in a fault."

It makes a great difference whether we are in communion with the Lord about the failures of fellow Christians. To dwell on them apart from communion with Him is great loss to the soul. Many are thereby ensnared and their peace destroyed, their usefulness hindered or ruined entirely. Satan likes nothing better than to get saints to thinking of the failures of others, occupied with them so as to forget the power, grace, and love of God. From this comes much of that backbiting, gossip and whispering which so often grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

J. W. N.

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## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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QUES. 5.—Please explain Acts xxii. 16, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins." Can anything but the blood of Jesus Christ wash away our sins?

ANS.—Nothing can *really* wash away sins—for eternity and before God—but the precious blood of Christ. But baptism is a figure of salvation through the death of Christ, and therefore the language of the verse can be used. Where there was real faith there was real forgiveness, otherwise there was the mere

outward discipleship of which baptism was the badge. The following correspondence on the subject of baptism is added as furnishing further remarks upon this subject.

Your question as to "baptism" takes us into a large field, although if all were ready to accept the plain inferences of Scripture the task of explaining it would be an easy one. There are five aspects of baptism in a general sense, in their order—viz: Repentance (Matt. iii.) performed by John the Baptist; the Holy Ghost (Matt. iii. 11; Acts ii.); Water (Mark xvi.; Acts ii.; Rom. vi.; Eph. iv. etc); the CLOUD, and the sea (1 Cor. x.), and that which related especially to the Lord (Luke xii. 50). But as water-baptism is mainly before us, we will keep to that one point. Christian baptism was not instituted until after Christ had risen from the dead, when it became the official mode of entrance into the Kingdom. (See Acts ii. 41.) Peter was the first one to use it together with the key of knowledge to the Jews, and in Acts x. he uses it to the Gentiles. Now one reason why we find in the Acts of the apostles that *every believer* was called upon to be baptized was, because *no one* had hitherto been baptized in (or to) the Name of the Trinity or in (or to) the Name of Jesus; those who had been baptized prior to that had simply been baptized unto John's baptism of repentance, but in Ephesus they had not heard whether the Holy Ghost that had been promised, (see Matt. iii.) "had yet come," (Acts xix. 2, Rev. Ver.).

What does baptism of the believer typify? Let the Word tell us: in Rom. vi. 3, we learn that Christians are baptized *unto* Christ Jesus (J. N. D.) consequently *unto* His death. Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism *unto* His death, just as in the same figure *we* say that *we* died on the Cross, *we* rose again; or to simplify it, our going under the water refers to His death and burial and our identification with Him in it, just as the grave shut Him out from the world, for the last the world saw of Him, was when He was on the cross—so, as Christians when we became that, we were practically severed from the world—our old man, what we were in Adam was, in God's mind, also buried out of sight, so that what linked us to the world and the first Adam has been annulled. Baptism has absolutely nothing to do with the work of salvation, but is the "confession of Christ's death as our own, just as His resurrection is the ground of our justification. (Rom. iv. 25.) The bread and

the wine surely did not save us but speak to us of a Saviour that *did*. If baptism were a saving ordinance, then men could save themselves just whenever they chose, surely a false impression. No! His work and His alone did that. (1 Pet. ii. 24.) Baptism then is my confession to all, of my faith in Christ who died for my sins, and typifies my identification with Him in that death—just as I eat the bread and drink the wine to show His death. It is but a figure—Noah was saved by or through the water, *i. e.* the water that was judgment to the world was what bore him away in safety in the Ark, so we—for the water of baptism typifies death, or rather is to me the grave of Christ. Christ passed through death and is risen. We pass through death in baptism, in figure, but it was the *Ark* that rode the waters of judgement and bare Noah in it. So now Christ having passed through death has atoned for our sins, and we also passing through it in spirit (surely not literally) leave all our sins there (in death) just as Christ really did for us—as another has said, “We pass through death in spirit, and in figure by baptism.” Trusting that this may make the subject a little clearer to you,

Your affect. bro.,

F. J. E.

QUES. 6.—What has been the employment of our Lord since “He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God” (Mk. xvi. 19). Is He still seated there?

ANS.—“Whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things” (Acts iii. 21). “Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool” (Heb. i. 13). “He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7. 25). These and similar scriptures show that our Lord will remain upon the throne till His enemies are put under Him, till He sets up His Kingdom. During this time He is engaged in the blessed and needful work of intercession for His people, and fulfilling His work as Head of His Church.

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## GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

## 7. NEARER THAN THE NEAREST.

## Chapter iv.

*Continued from page 136.*

WITH the promptness and energy of a heart fully engaged, Boaz goes up to "the gate." This was the place of rule, where all matters were settled, all transfers made. It would correspond to the courts of to-day, where all legal transactions are consummated. In the matter upon which he was engaged, nothing was to be done "in a corner," but all was to have the full concurrence of those concerned, and be witnessed in the light of open day, by those judicially authorized to give their sanction.

The first person who appears is this "nearest kinsman," whose claim must first be met, or whose right of redemption must first be set aside, before Boaz, no matter how willing he might be, could interpose as redeemer. It is significant that this person is not named. The nearest kinsman of Elimelech, and the natural redeemer of his inheritance, we have no clue to his name; and this of itself has significance when we look at the spiritual meaning.

Who then is this nameless person who has the first claim upon Israel, and the right to redeem the inheritance? Who or what is "nearest of kin" to Israel according to the flesh? We have under the simile of the marriage relationship, but the reverse of what is before us here, a scriptural hint that is suggestive. The two sons of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, were children respectively of Hagar, the bondmaid, and Sarah. We are told that these things are an allegory: "for these are the two covenants;

the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children" (Gal. iv. 24, 25). It would seem clear from this that, with slightly altered conditions, the nearest of kin would be this same "legal covenant." Just as Hagar first brought forth a child before Sarah,—“that is first which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual”—so the law was the first basis upon which Israel sought to bring forth fruit to God.

This is clearly seen from the history of the nation. They never nationally and consciously entered into God's thoughts of sovereign grace. They did not realize that He had taken them up to fulfil the promise made to Abraham—the promise made in purest grace. Some feeble glimpse they may have had of it, but when they had passed through the Red Sea, and had experienced nothing but grace and mercy at the hands of God, they were ready at Sinai to enter upon a legal covenant, without a thought of how it set aside the mercy and grace of God.

To be sure, they never tasted the bitterness of a purely legal covenant, for Moses broke the first tables of stone before he came into the camp, after the giving of the law and the idolatry of the golden calf. It was indeed mercy that he did so, for *what* would have been the judgment upon that guilty people, had God dealt with them upon the basis of pure law? Surely, as Jehovah said to Moses, “Let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them.” But as a matter of fact He spared them for the time being—a thing utterly impossible under pure law—and went on with them

on a basis of mingled law and mercy. The second tables of stone were prepared and given to the people in connection with the revelation made to Moses of, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7). Here is a mingling of mercy, with a final intimation of judgment on the guilty, which formed the basis of all further dealing with the nation.

They went through the wilderness on this covenant, entered the land and settled there on the basis of obedience to the Lord. Provision was made for failure, by sacrifice; and yet all provisions failed just where most needed. There was no sacrifice for presumptuous sins, only for those of ignorance. There could therefore be no peace for the most guilty, and king David in his broken-hearted prayer (Ps. li.), must turn from the sacrificial provision of the law to a mercy to which he held fast in spite of the law.

It was under this covenant that the nation divided, became mingled with the heathen, and were finally carried captive. This is dwelt upon to a great extent in the twentieth chapter of Ezekiel, where the Lord enlarges upon Israel's disregard of His covenant, their failure to hallow His Sabbaths which were the sign of the covenant, or to walk in His statutes. When Daniel made his confession of sin, for himself and the nation (Dan. ix.) it was in the light of that first covenant. So was it with Nehemiah after the return from captivity (Neh. ix. 29). In the last chapter of the Old Testament (Mal. iv. 4) the people were exhorted to "remember the law of Moses My

servant which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments."

Thus throughout their entire history there was a distinct covenant relationship recognized by God and the people. There was a provision made for forgiveness and recovery, oftentimes made in the most touching way. "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword" (Is. i. 18, 19). "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" (Is. lv. 7). "If the wicked will turn from all his sins which he hath committed . . . he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live" (Ezek. xviii. 21, 22).

These and many other scriptures show the close relation between Israel and the legal covenant. They have never had any other relation to God—save the secret one, on His part, of electing grace and promise. So when the remnant turns in repentance to Him in the latter days, this legal covenant will have, so to speak, the first right to put in its claim of kinship.

Returning now to our narrative, we find Boaz, figure of the risen Lord, calling in and offering to this kinsman the right of redemption. We have already noticed the provision of the law for raising up a de-



ceased relative's family (Deut. xxv.). We have now an allusion to another law of similar character, the redemption of a forfeited inheritance. The law will be found at length in the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus. In brief, it declared the divine right of "eminent domain." The land was God's, and could never be finally alienated from those to whom His grace had given it. All was to go free in the year of jubilee, or could be bought in by a near kinsman.

The land of Israel is literally the Lord's, for His ancient people. In spite of all their sin and folly, it abides—strange fact in these days of universal ownership on man's part, of the earth—practically a land without a people, as though it were waiting for its rightful owners; and such is without doubt the case. The land itself will yet be redeemed for Israel, and they will yet be put in full possession of that which they have forfeited by their sin and disobedience. But who will redeem it, and for whom will it be redeemed? These are the questions to be settled "in the gate."

*(To be continued.)*

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## THEN AND NOW.

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**I**T is now twenty-seven years since I began my college life, a life which stretched out through eight years of good, hard work, four at the classics and four at medicine. During the college period and after it, and again, especially in these latter years as a teacher, I have always been most profoundly interested as a student of human nature and of medicine, in trying to find out what ailed the world about me. Why is it, as I have grown older,

that I have come to find out that there is so much misery and unhappiness in the world? Why is it that each successive generation of young men begin to run the life race that is set before them, full of vigor, of fine enthusiasm, and with a determination to accomplish great things, and then one by one, drop back into the same indifference, and the same routine as was done by those who preceded them, the fire and all the enthusiasm gone, content in the end to make a good living and to take good care of themselves.

I well recall my own class, as fine a lot of fellows as you could wish to see, shouting "'77 forever" daily in the assembly room until we were hoarse, and each one certain beyond a peradventure that with our advent into the affairs of the world, the golden era was about to dawn. We each knew individually that we ourselves were destined to do some great deed, and we each looked, too, with secret admiration upon his fellows, picturing in our minds the great future which lay before each one.

A quarter of a century has elapsed and what is the outcome? Untimely death has claimed not a few of the dear boys (boys ever in spite of the added years), and those of us who survive have entered upon life's duties, just as our fathers did before us; good, faithful work has been done, but we have failed to bring about those startling changes which we had fondly hoped would make "'77" renowned forever, and a sad little stone in the old college wall, commemorative of ivy day, and a blighted ivy plant below it seem emblematic of our shattered hopes. What is the reason of the failure? Or was it a failure, after all? Was it then impossible to realize those great

aspirations which thrilled us as we entered life's arena? These are the questions to which I will briefly address myself in this short letter to the college men of a younger generation; and in my reply I shall have to adopt the personal individual standpoint.

I would say of my own life that I have both lost something and I have found something. I have lost that which I at first esteemed great, for I discovered as I went on that it was, after all, but a bubble, a glittering semblance of a jewel, evanescent and temporal. But wondrous to relate, I have found in its place something infinitely more precious, eternal, a possession which increases in value day by day, lending a reality and a value to life in all its relations far beyond all possible anticipation of my early years.

Let me look at my life a little more closely; what have I actually lost? I think the loss can be pretty well covered by one word which used to figure largely in our college debates and chapel speeches, a word which covered the one great qualification in a man, which marked him out for success, and that word is "ambition." I remember well setting success in life before me as the one great desideratum, and anxiously analyzing its essential elements, which seemed to resolve themselves into ability, ambition, opportunity, health, and adding various adjuvant qualities, such as judgment, memory, tact, etc. I found, by God's grace, as I went on, that this, after all, was but a selfish scheme of living which, even if I might attain my end, was possible only for a fortunate few; I saw, too, some who were just about to take their fill of the cup of ambition suddenly

snatched away by an untimely death, while others with all the other qualifications, were restrained from grasping the prize by the hand of disease; others, again (worst mockery of all), who gained all the world could offer in the way of fame or of wealth, remained, after all, most miserable and dissatisfied with life.

My first aim was, therefore, manifestly a false one. What was I then to do? Conclude that life was naught but a mockery? I thank God that when I found the emptiness of the aims of the world, I also found that He was not so sparing of His best gifts as I had begun to imagine. When I discovered that life and self were failures, I then found in Him more than heart could desire. Having no longer any good thing of my own, and now content to be as one of the servants in His house, I found instead that He had a glorious robe of righteousness of His own providing, and He was willing to set the very beggars who trusted Him among the princes at the gate. The glorious grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, which God in His great mercy has offered, not to a forward intellectual few, but to all men everywhere, came as a blessed solace to one who found on all sides the vanity of setting the affections on the things of this world.

I would like to dwell on this noble theme, for I would that young men everywhere could only see that there is just one thing in the world that is worth making the object of our ambition, and that is to know, to love, and to serve God, and to know Him in the only way we can know anything about Him, through His Son, Jesus Christ. Christ's service is not a theory of life or a philosophy, but a life, a new

principle, a new birth, a new creation. Behold, old things are passed away, and all things are made new. And this knowledge, which brings the peace the world knows nothing of, is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who calls out and leads God's people in their earthly pilgrimage.

The great effective instrument of the Holy Spirit by which these truths are authoritatively taught, is the inspired word of God, the old Bible. Satan is gaining great victories in these days by holding men back from a loving, searching study of the Bible. Without this study, Christians remain weak and spiritually in a condition analogous to the bodily condition of a man fed on insufficient food at long intervals; they are often found languishing in Doubting Castle, or like the poor Galatians, confessing a faith in Christ but struggling to eke out an existence by the works of the law. If a man desires above all things, to feed his spiritual man, he will not neglect to eat the daily bread of the Word any more than he neglects his ordinary meals. Who ever hears a man say he is too busy to eat at all? and yet many are too busy to read the Bible.

My own daily life, (if I may be excused for continuing the personal part of the narrative), is as full as that of any man I know, but I found long since that as I allowed the pressure of professional and worldly engagements to fill in every moment between rising and going to bed, the spirit would surely starve, so I made a rule which I have since stuck to in spite of many temptations, not to read or study anything but my Bible after the evening meal, and never to read any other book but the Bible on Sunday. I do not exclude real Bible helps, which always drive one

back to the Bible, but I never spend time on simply devotional books. Since making this resolution, God, in His mercy, has shown me that this Word is an inexhaustible storehouse from which He dispenses rich stores of precious truths to His servants as He pleases, and as they are ready to receive them. I have found that faith in Jesus Christ is a wonderful foundation rock upon which stands a marvelous superstructure. I have found that the Holy Ghost is not an influence, but a real, living, active Person, whom Christians must know personally if they will grow in grace and knowledge.

I see wonderful truths relating to Christ in types and prophecies which I never dreamed of before, and "the blessed hope" has a new meaning. The messages of the epistles I once thought full of hyperbole, now glow with meaning. And so I might go on, and so doubtless God, in His great grace and goodness, will lead us all on through the ages of eternity, beholding new glories and new graces in His Son.

What more can I say to arrest the attention of young men?

Once my interest was in things which will pass away, now I am an actual partaker of the divine nature of Him who made all these things. What are they compared to Him? He is truth.

"And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: they shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail."

H. A. K.

## BRIEF BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

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### V. THE TWO NATURES.

**O**FTEN it happens that the young believer becomes distressed in spirit as he realizes the continued existence of sin in him, which at times will assert itself by thought, word and action, much to his sorrow. Such an one does not see fully that while he is "born again," and has thus received a new nature, yet the old nature is not remedied, removed, or eradicated, but two distinct natures exist in him as opposite as day and night, good and evil, in their desires and operations, and can be no more assimilated than oil and water.

A lack of apprehension of all this may, and often does, lead into what is called a "back-slidden" state, causing distress of soul, sorrow to God's people, and dishonor to Him.

1. *The natural man, i. e.,* a person in his unconverted state, having only one nature, and that received from Adam by natural, fleshly descent.

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 7, 8).

This God states to be the condition of every person naturally, no matter how cultured, refined,

talented, amiable, or liberal, they "cannot please God."

See also Psa. li. 5; Mark vii. 21-23; Eph. iv. 22; John vi. 63; 1 Cor. i. 18; Heb. xi. 6; John. iii. 6.

2. *The spiritual man, i. e.*, a person such as above, but who has been born again; thus receiving a new nature from God *in addition to* the old Adamic nature, in all its unchangeableness; just as bad in the believer as in the unbeliever.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power (right or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were *born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God*" (John i. 12, 13).

"Whereby are given unto us, exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the *divine* nature" (2 Pet. ii. 4).

"Which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. iv. 24).

See also John iii. 3; Gal. iii. 26; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. ii. 20; Col. iii. 3, 4; 1 John iii. 9).

Thus these two extremes of nature, Adamic and of God, existing in the same person—a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ—there must be, and is constant conflict, as each asserts itself.

3. *The fruits of each nature, and the conflict.* "For the flesh (Adamic nature) lusteth against the spirit (the divine nature), and the spirit against the flesh: and *these are contrary* the one to the other: so that ye cannot (or may not) do the things that ye would" (Gal. v. 17).

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance,



emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like" (Gal. v. 19-21).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. v. 22, 23).

"But as then he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, *even so is it now*" (Gal. iv. 29). See also Rom. vii. 14-24.

It is very profitable and helpful to study carefully the conflict between the two in this last chapter.

4. *Victory.* With these two conflicting powers, one displeasing and the other pleasing to God, it is evident that as either one has control or sway, the life of the believer must be in approval or disapproval to God; so the apostle writes in 2 Cor. v. 9, that he endeavored to be "acceptable to Him," not accepted of Him in the sense of salvation which was "in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6), and is therefore unvarying, but as to his life and service.

With the new birth God gives a mighty "Helper" in the Holy Ghost, who dwells in the believer imparting energy and overcoming power, so that the secret of victory is to "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh" (Gal v. 16).

It is to see the place and manner in which God has dealt with the "old man" and then to reckon or count ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth, for ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. . . . Mortify (put practically to death) therefore your members," etc. (Col. iii. 2, 3, 5.)

How God deals with the old man?

"Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should *not serve sin*."

"Let not sin therefore *reign* in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. vi. 6, 9, 11, 12).

"I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20).

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh . . . but if we *through the Spirit* do mortify the deeds of the body we shall live" (Rom. viii. 12, 13).

So it is to realize our identification, in God's sight, with Christ,—that we have died, been buried, risen, seated in the heavenlies in Him, and that such is the end of the "old man" before Him, judged at the cross; and thus walking, or living in the Spirit, is making practical here in our lives this exalted position in the energy of the Holy Spirit who bears witness through the word of God to these facts:—

"Ye are dead . . . ye then be risen with Christ" (Col. iii. 3, 1).

"Hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. ii. 6).

But while truly believing all this, the believer at times may yield to the flesh, and, alas, sin is the result. What then is to be done?

God is His wonderful salvation has made provision for this.

"My little children these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John ii. 1).

Our blessed Lord did not exhaust His interest in His believing people on the cross, but His advocacy

now avails for those of them who may be overcome by sin. But does not the believer have something to do? Ah, yes, the saint who has thus fallen into sin, by which his communion is interrupted, must be led to "see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God" (Jer. ii. 19), and that it is no light matter to yield to that which his Father hates and which brings not only trouble to himself, but dishonor to our Lord, and will be led by the Holy Spirit in deep humiliation of soul to true self-judgment (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32), and to make confession of his sin.

But let it be clearly understood that this is not to be done in a mere *formal manner*; it must be *real heart work of sorrow*, for sin is as hateful to our God in His children, as it is in the unbeliever, and surely it is not the normal condition of children of God to practice or allow sin any rule in their lives, but on the contrary it should be an exception.

The apostle Paul writes, "sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. vi. 14).

Peter "went out and wept bitterly" (Matt. xxvi. 75), and

John calls attention to the Advocacy of Christ. (1 John ii. 1).

David says, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Psa. cxix. 11).

This latter, then, is the great preventive, as in the power of the Holy Ghost it takes practical effect in our lives, and as the word points to our Lord, the sure remedy is to be continually occupied with our Lord Jesus Christ.

B. W. J.

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## THE RELATION OF INDIVIDUAL GIFT TO THE ASSEMBLY.

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THERE is nothing in Scripture more beautiful than the truth as to the Church of Christ. It is called "His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Our risen and glorified Lord is the Head, and all believers are united to Him by the Holy Spirit, and thus baptized into the One Body. This determines the dignity, permanence, and heavenly character of the Church. Let us never forget this holy and wondrous truth, nor let us ignore the responsibilities connected with it.

Our Lord has made ample provision for the "nourishing and cherishing" needed by His Church during His absence. "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men." These gifts are as varied as the needs of the Church, and are included under the general heads of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. These three last would include the various activities which remain until the Lord's coming—the supernatural gifts of apostle and prophet being connected more particularly with the foundation, or still active through the "prophetic Scriptures" (Rom. xvi. 26, R. V.)

The special gifts above referred to are for "the perfecting of the saints to the work of the ministry" (Eph. iv. 12). That is, special gifts are for the preparation of *all* to the general exercise of a mutual ministry in which each one in the body of Christ has his share. "... The Head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the

effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. iv. 15, 16).

There is nothing more contrary to God's truth than clericalism, nothing that quenches the Spirit of God more effectually. What is evidently contemplated in the scripture just quoted is a vital organism, where each one has a distinct function. It may be truly said there can be no testimony to Church truth which does not hold and exhibit this fact. Every member of the body receiving and giving; mutual edification in love! How beautiful! What a privilege to be connected with the feeblest testimony of this kind!

But it would be the greatest folly to ignore the special gifts which our Lord has bestowed through the Holy Spirit. To do so would be to introduce the principles of socialism into the Church. "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?" (1 Cor. xii. 29.) "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, etc." (Rom. xii. 6). It is the purpose of our present inquiry to ascertain the relation between the special gifts, as evangelist, pastor, and teacher, and the assembly as a whole, and with the local gathering as an expression of that assembly. We wish to learn the mutual responsibilities of assembly and gift, and of each to the Lord with regard to the other and themselves. It is an inquiry of great practical importance and not a mere theoretical question.

The source and authority for all ministry is our Lord in glory. He calls, and bestows the gifts, and to Him is the responsibility for their exercise. The Holy Spirit is the agent and power; all ministry is through Him alone. No man or men dare intrude

between the Lord and His servant, between the Spirit and those whom He uses "as He will." It is therefore true that the servant is responsible to His Lord, and to Him he stands or falls.

The usual thought of ordination is a contradiction of all this. Here a man, or body of men—it makes no difference which—undertakes to pass upon the call and fitness for service of those purposing to enter upon "the ministry." If they decide the person is qualified, he is ordained, set apart to the work, by his fellow-men. We say nothing of the intrusion into the priestly functions—the common portion of all the saints—but confine ourselves to this ordination to ministry. It was something even apostles did not do. No gift of ministry was ever hampered in this way. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. iv. 10). This is the simple and apostolic provision for their own and all time.

But we are creatures of extremes. In the reaction from human ordination, the tendency is to ignore entirely those divine safeguards against merely human energy. Most certainly the opposite of ordination by man is not self-ordination. Were we compelled to choose between the two, we would undoubtedly prefer the choice of the many rather than the self-appointment of the one. But we can thank our blessed God that we are shut up neither to the one nor the other. The word of God makes a sufficient provision here as everywhere. A careful examination will show the provision.

In physics all action necessitates reaction; in the animal organism every organ that ministers must also receive nourishment. The heart, the wondrous

organ of circulation, has a circulation which supplies it with that which renews its waste. So it is with the whole body—all activities are mutual and reciprocal. The equilibrium thus preserved is what we call health. Wherever there is failure sickness comes in.

Now the Spirit of God has used the natural body not merely as an illustration, but as a type of the spiritual body. The details of the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians and the fourth chapter of Ephesians forbid our thinking of the Body; the Church, as superficially and not really a living organism.

Let the reader carefully examine the passages referred to, particularly 1 Cor. xii. 12-31. He will find here the unity of the Body, with diversity of members and of function. He will note too the interdependence of the various members, and the sovereign disposal by the Spirit of the members in the Body. Thus all are affected by the suffering or the health of any one member.

But it is not our purpose to dwell upon that which is well known by every one with even an elementary acquaintance with Church truth. We wish however to show how this means the closest vital connection between individual gifts and the entire Church. The evangelist is not merely an individual servant of Christ, but a fellow-member with all saints in the body of Christ. So with the pastor and teacher. These not merely give to, but receive from the Church all needed nourishment. All flows from the fountain head—Christ our Lord—but through every channel in the Body. Thus responsibility to the Head does not mean the overlooking of the will of the Head as expressed through the agency of other members.

Let our readers elaborate the truth barely hinted at. They will find that the "gifts" are just as dependent upon the other members of the Body, as these are upon the "gifts." They will find that it is just as true for the humblest member of the body of Christ that he is responsible to the Lord, as for the gift. In other words, to distinguish thus between gift and private member is the essence of the clerical system.

Nor let it be thought that this will in any way degrade the servant of Christ in the eyes of the saints. No official position can add to the honor of one who serves the Lord and His people, nor is that truly honor which belongs to him in contrast to the humblest believer. All who are Christ's are dear to Him, and honored by His people. We may and should value those specially useful to the edification of the body, but the esteem and honor will not differ in *kind* from that given "to one of the least." We recognize those who take the lead among us and admonish us, and "esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake," but this does not give them a "place." Their work will bring love and esteem, as will the work of every child of God, but it will not put them in a class as distinguished from the mass of the people of God. This is always adjusted where there is spirituality and subjection to the word of God.

The "gifted brother" is therefore simply a member of the Body of Christ, dependent upon and responsible to the Head, as is every other member of the Body. He will exercise his gift, just as every other member will exercise *his*, subject to the limitations and benefiting by the ministries provided by our Lord. It is for us then to see what these minis-



tries and limitations are. His gift is larger, more prominent, and in a certain sense more useful than that of some quiet, humble saint, whose voice is never heard save in the priestly function of prayer or praise; but he takes his place simply as any other saint in the Body of Christ

The local Assembly is but the local expression of the whole Church. If it be truly an assembly, it will possess the features that mark the entire Body. The chief of these are the recognition of the Headship and Lordship of Christ, the unity of the Body and of the Spirit, with all that goes with these:—subjection to the entire word of God, the maintenance of godly order and discipline, and the freedom for the Spirit of God to act unhampered by human restrictions. The local assembly will also acknowledge, on the principle of the unity of the Body, all other local assemblies gathered in the same way, each assembly being but one of many expressions of an absolute unity—which includes the entire Body of Christ.

Even in these days of ruin and confusion there is still the path for faith to walk in as to these truths, and a testimony to be maintained, feeble though it be, to these essential characteristics of all Church order. It may be called high-handed exclusivism to seek to maintain these truths practically among a little circle of those who in their souls bow to them, but that can safely be left to the Lord, who marks the path of obedience for His saints, and sees if their desire is to walk in it. But we must return to our theme.

The local assembly, then, is but one of a number of such gathered in various places throughout the

world, who are seeking to maintain a testimony as to the Church of God. The brethren of gift, may or may not, be confined to one such assembly; they may pass in their service from one to another of these companies, and reach out, as the Lord enables, to His beloved people everywhere.

From what has been said, it will be seen that there is no such thing as separate membership in the local assembly. All membership is in the Body of Christ; we can join nothing else than that to which we have been joined by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13). But it follows equally, that if one recognizes his place as a member of the Body of Christ, he will also see his place with those locally gathered to the Lord in any one place.

Thus the evangelist, pastor, or teacher, is like all the saints of God, a member of the Body of Christ, and, wherever he may be, is locally connected with the assembly at that place. He simply falls into his place as naturally as though he had long lived among these saints, and takes up in his measure whatever of service or responsibility the Lord may put into his hands as one of the assembly. He is also as subject to the discipline and order of the assembly in exactly the same way as any one else in it.

No doubt as to details there will need to be care as to undue activity in matters or with persons with whom he may not be familiar, and similarly the assembly will recognize that their acquaintance with the brother has been limited. But the general facts remain as stated, and it will be a great relief to see and act according to them.

We disabuse our minds entirely, then, of any thought of difference between "visiting" and "local"

brethren—save with the limitations intimated—and will again ask, What is the relation between the assembly and the individual gift?

The assembly is the home of all the Spirit's activities. Every act of service has effect, and receives influence from the assembly. Gospel work, even if done outside, pastoral visitation, Sunday-school work and all else, is, or should be, done with the fullest fellowship of the assembly. So far from quenching the Spirit, this but furnishes fresh opportunities for Him to act through the various channels He has at His disposal. How much of cheer and brotherly counsel and practical fellowship does this suggest. No one stands alone to do his work as best he may, but is assured of loving fellowship in prayer, counsel, and all that may be needed.

We have a beautiful scriptural illustration of this in the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas from Antioch (Acts xiii.) There was the normal, perhaps we may say more intense, work of the Spirit, among the gifted men and the assembly at Antioch. The Spirit of God made known His will for Barnabas and Saul, who are sent forth from the assembly, with fellowship, prayer and fasting. On their return they narrate God's work to the assembly, who unite in thanksgiving for the blessing.

So it should ever be. There are special features, what we might call "supernatural," yet the prayer and fasting, the ministering to the Lord, the asking and receiving His mind, the fellowship and prayer should mark the Spirit's work to-day as always. When we think of the vast fields of labor practically untouched, of the needs that cry aloud, of the fewness and feebleness of the laborers, do we not see the

need for assemblies to come thus before the Lord in prayer and expectation for rich and lasting blessing? Might we not expect to see one and another separated unto special service to "the regions beyond"?

But we need to trace from the beginning this mutual relationship between the assembly and the "gift." We have already seen that all activities are exercised in fullest fellowship with the assembly. In fact, we would not be far wrong were we to say that the assembly will be the first to recognize the beginnings of a helpful ministry. A young brother shows a love for souls, an aptitude for speaking a word in season, or a grasp of divine truth and ability to state it plainly. His brethren see and rejoice in this perhaps before he is conscious of it himself.

Just here is where the divine provision of mutual helpfulness comes in. One may have his future usefulness marred by undue praise or blame, be puffed up or crushed. But if the assembly wisely meets its responsibilities, how such a gift may be nourished and developed by the Spirit under the faithful counsel and prayers of the saints.

The apostle warns against any of God's people engaging in work while still novices. The quiet of the assembly is the divine school till the young servant has gained experience, knowledge, and prudence, and where he profits by the encouragement and counsel and prayers of the saints. How much sorrow would saints be spared if this were always remembered. There is real danger in despising this time of training, and of having a restless spirit which would be "out in the work." Let us never forget that most of God's work is done by those who never go "out," that souls are saved, saints taught and cared for, and

much other service done by quiet saints, who never dream of having "gift." It may be trying, but it will work "peaceable fruits of righteousness," for brethren to "bear the yoke" in the assembly, and "first be proved" before attempting to give up work with hands to devote themselves exclusively to "prayer and the ministry of the word."

We would emphasize this matter, and seek to press upon assemblies their responsibility as to these things. If the Lord has called out "gifts," He has also provided assemblies to help, counsel, uphold in prayer these gifts in their service. How many a servant of Christ craves the fellowship and counsel of his brethren. How it cheers him to be assured of their prayers and loving interest. How he would profit by their advice, and, if needs be, correction. There need not be a spirit of criticism in this. In fact, criticism is far more apt to flourish where the responsibilities to which we have alluded are neglected. How often has a work of God been blighted by fault-finding, which would have been advanced by a few faithful words to the ministering brother. We do not enter into details, which will suggest themselves to most, but would affectionately point out the vital principles involved here.

Summing these up, we would point out that the scriptural and usual way for the manifestation of gift would be in the local assembly, which would encourage and help the brother by loving counsel and prayer, seeking to develop what was of God, and by wise counsel to correct any mistake to which those are liable who engage in the Lord's service.

The local assembly is at all times responsible for the walk, doctrine, and associations of the Lord's

servant. This responsibility may be, and ordinarily will be, met by loving and prayerful counsel and fellowship. Any error in teaching may be pointed out, and part truths supplemented, thus preventing him from becoming one sided in his ministry.

We are quite aware that this will seem to many impracticable and needless, a menace to freedom for the Lord's servant on the one hand, and a heavy yoke upon the assembly on the other. It will at once be admitted that there are dangers in both directions indicated, but is there not the greatest danger of all in ignoring or neglecting the grave responsibilities which must be apparent to all?

We are persuaded that the Spirit of God already exercises both assemblies and the Lord's servants in these things, and we rejoice at every evidence of mutual care. But let it abound. Should not assemblies be much engaged in prayer that God would raise up, equip and maintain the needed gifts for His Church? Should they not be looking for an answer to these prayers? And may they not expect the answer to come in connection with fresh exercise as to the whole subject of the relation of the gift to the entire assembly?

And for those who are engaged exclusively in the Lord's service, may we not have the deepest sympathy, the fullest fellowship and confidence, and the most ceaseless prayer and care. May our God lead us into His mind regarding these things.

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## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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QUES. 7.—Please explain 2 Cor. v. 10, "That every one may receive the things done in the body." Has this any reference to our life before we were born again?

ANS.—“The things done in the body” seems clearly to show that the entire life is contemplated, and not merely that part after conversion. In the government of God all must be answered for from the time when responsibility begins. Grace has blotted out *all* sins, past, present, and future, through the precious blood of Christ, but as this does not affect the appraisal of the life *after* conversion, neither would it that before. All will be manifested, that God may be glorified, and we receive the blessed lessons to be learned.

QUES. 8.—What is the Lord’s table? Is it where any truly and with brokenness remember the Lord, or does it exist only where saints are gathered to the Lord’s name according to His word?

ANS.—The Lord’s table is the opposite of the “table of devils” (see 1 Cor. x. 20, 21). Saints of God may be thoroughly unintelligent as to the scriptural ground of gathering, and be remiss, through that ignorance, in maintaining the Lord’s honor at His table. But it would be dreadful to speak of their remembrance of Him, as being a “table of devils.” We could not consistently be identified with what we know to be disobedience to His word, and so could not break bread with those going on in disobedience to the truths of Christ as to His Church; but let us not sin against God by calling their ignorance the “table of devils.” Alas, individually, many may put to blush, by their devoted and adoring love, those far more intelligent.

On the other hand, we would shrink from applying the title “Lord’s table,” to the idolatrous service of the “mass” in the Church of Rome, or to the act of those holding fundamental error, such as denial of the atonement or any other foundation truth.

QUES. 9.—Will the “great multitude” mentioned in Rev. vii. 9, be on earth or in heaven?

ANS.—The entire chapter shows that the earth is in view, and not heaven. The Church has been taken up, and the martyred remnant is not yet seen. This is the multitude of Gentiles, who, with the spared remnant of the nation of Israel, are brought “through the great tribulation,” into the millennial blessing of the earth. That they stand “before the throne and before the Lamb,” has seemed to indicate that they are a heavenly company. But this language is the general usage of the book, and suggests that close intercourse between heaven and

earth, to which, alas, earth is now a stranger. Then, "I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth" (Hos. ii. 21). This multitude has a place of priestly nearness and access to the earthly temple. The Church is seen *above*.

QUES. 10.—Please explain John xii. 32, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

ANS.—The next verse shows, "This He said signifying what death He should die." He was "lifted up" (John iii. 14) on the cross, rejected by earth, forsaken of God, and accursed for us, but drawing weary sinners to Himself.

QUES. 11.—What is the difference between "the Kingdom of heaven," and "the Kingdom of God"?

ANS.—The Kingdom of heaven is used in Matthew, and almost always means the kingdom or rule of the heavens over the earth, in a dispensational way. It may, and often does, include mere profession as in Matt. xiii. "The kingdom of God" is used similarly in Luke, though it seems to refer in many cases more to the moral than the external. Thus it is used by the apostle in the Acts and Epistles.

QUES. 12.—If a man is scripturally separated from his wife, for no fault of his own, can he marry again?

ANS.—The tie that bound them having been broken, it seems clear that the brother or sister would be free to marry in such a case. But on the other hand, one can understand and sympathize with the spirit which would go on in widowhood, walking softly and alone the remainder of the pilgrim journey. Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind before God, and the conscience of the saints and of the world be respected.

QUES. 13.—In the Lord's supper, should thanks be given only at the breaking of the bread, or at the cup also?

ANS.—Our blessed Lord's example gives the answer. "And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them" (Mark xiv. 23). We give thanks at the breaking of the bread, and "after the same manner" we give thanks at the cup. Both acts are distinct parts of the same feast, and it would main it to omit the thanks at the cup.

The opposite error is for one brother to give thanks at the breaking of bread and another at the cup. This makes two *separate* acts, and is equally foreign to Scripture. It is one feast, and if one is led of the Spirit to give thanks at all, it should be both at the bread and the cup.



## "THE TILLAGE OF THE POOR."

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"Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed (ruined) for want of judgment" (Prov. xiii. 23).

THE truth of this statement is confirmed in the natural world every day, and in the spiritual also, among the redeemed of the Lord. How often in the humble cottage with but a few acres of ground around the dwelling, yet the home warm and cozy, the well filled table, all bear witness to the fact, while it is the humble dwelling of but a poor man, yet he has been diligent in using all he has, and there is "much food in the tillage of the poor." The spade and the hoe are well used: he *digs* and *sows*, he weeds and cares for his little crop; and his precious time is utilized and the result is the comforts of home are there. Wise, and happy in the end, is such a poor man. "The diligent soul (if even poor) is made fat."

But on the other hand, how many a man is ruined (destroyed) financially and morally "for want of judgment." With every advantage and much ground to use, yet through "lack of judgment," in improving time, and talent, and diligence in using all within reach, in the end there comes a crash. The fields may be large and the house great and wide, yet there is a lack, and all bears witness to the truth of what we have just read.

But we will turn from the scenes of nature that afford us seasonable lessons indeed, and take a look at this passage in the light of our lives spiritually. "Blessed are the *poor* in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 3). This is one of the

characteristic marks of the Christian life, till the bright day of manifested glory.

As we thus rightly view the Christian life, as associated with Christ in His rejection, while He is in heaven, we ought to see these marks distinct and plain. "Blessed are *the poor in spirit*." The whole life now takes shape from the place Christ occupies. He is rejected and so are we (if true) rejected. He is outside this scene altogether, and we are also separated and to walk as strangers.

He is in heaven, and our life and walk, aims and objects are to be all heavenly, formed and shaped by His present place above, and in view of His return so soon, when we will have the blessedness of association with Him forever.

The world has another sphere of existence altogether, that is the life of the unconverted as away from God; and, to a man of the world, people with such aims and objects and characteristics are a poor people indeed. And, in truth, compared with what they aspire after, we are poor. See what the priests and elders of Israel said concerning the apostles, "Ignorant and unlearned men." They had not much of what gives men a place in life, nor what makes men heroes in the world, yet they were all this in the eyes of the Lord. But they were linked by the Holy Spirit to Christ in heaven, while associated also with the assembly, or Church of the living God on earth.

Now from this house of God, the home of the poor in spirit till He come, let us look for a little and see if we can discern the well filled table—"much food in the tillage of the poor."

If the two things are kept distinct and clear, it

will be seen that one is dependent upon the other, "the field" and "the house." What a poor farm if it has no house to turn into as night comes on, and hunger is felt ! What a poor house and table if there is no field around to replenish and sustain it ! This is what the same preacher meant when he wrote, "Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in *the field* : and afterwards build thy *house*" (Prov. xxiv. 27).

The poor man's place, then, we, as Christians, can associate ourselves with (Zeph. iii. 12), and these the Lord has left here while He is away. But let us first look at the field without, and see how things go there. For the application of what is upon the writer's mind, as to the ground which surrounds the dwelling-place, we will partition, or draw a fence-line, and call the field that lies to one side of the house the field of study and meditation, and this comes first; and just on the other side lies the field for service. In both these places we require diligence of soul, and the assembly, the house, depends upon both to be replenished and sustained.

To grasp rightly the truth of what the assembly of God now on earth is dispensationally and locally is a great help in Christian life, serving as an anchor in many ways, and furnishes each believer with a true home. We know there have been abuses of this important truth from the assumption of Rome for so long, down to those among ourselves, with whom we have gone into the house God and taken sweet counsel together, yet the extremes of some, or arrogant assumption of others ought not to hinder us using and enjoying what is dear to the heart of God and Christ.

To these two fields we will briefly turn, and look at what they furnish our home and table with. The first field lies open before us,—it is the precious word of God, our Bible. We see written over the gateway as we enter, "In the beginning *God created*," etc., and we exclaim as we enter such a sacred enclosure, What need for diligent carefulness and prayer! There lies before us, the whole book, not for preachers and teachers merely, but for the weakest and feeblest of Christ's flock. From the start then, we feel what neglect there is here by the mass of Christians; what darkness prevails for the lack of the light which the Word supplies; how much worldliness and failure we perceive — as weeds growing up — that mar and in the end ruin the believer's testimony for want of knowing and following the holy precepts therein given! As we enter this gateway, as before said, we are introduced to the gracious Giver of all good, the Author of the book. "God created" "made" "gave" and "said." (See also John iii. 16.) As we enter this sacred enclosure, we feel truly it is not a newspaper, nor book of fiction that is before us, but the precious words of the Eternal. Who is sufficient for these things? human nature here is often heard to say. Yet at the same time we feel the warm clasp of a Father's hand, guiding His children through those fields of profit and blessing.

Oh what a privilege, beloved reader, to be in possession of such a book, such a revelation. May we know better this year than last to use our pick and shovel, our spade and hoe, and gather from its precious fulness as the man who diligently works every foot of ground around his dwelling, or as the miner

that turns up the mountains and discovers the wealth beneath. (See Job xxviii., J. N. D. translation.) “That is a path which no fowl knoweth and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen.” No! none but the busy miner knows these places and discovers this wealth. Let us beloved, be more diligent to use our time and remember every foot, every inch of that holy ground is ours (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; Josh. i. 3).

The *historical* lessons are there full of interest and profit from the examples set before us for instruction.

The *typical* lessons are so closely woven into the texture of these histories of old, that,—while the mind needs always to be curbed in this study, yet, having the guidance of the Holy Spirit, on the other hand to neglect this portion is to neglect one of the most fruitful and profitable parts of Holy Writ.

Then there are the *prophetic* lessons also, as the apostle terms it “a light that shineth in a dark place till the day dawn and the morning star arise” (2 Pet. i.). All these things furnish the child of God and equip him for testimony and service.

Then the *practical* lessons are not to be forgotten, as we study the historical, typical, and prophetic in communion with God; and under the guiding of the Holy Spirit with the glory of Christ before us, we will welcome all that is practical and be sanctified by the Word; we will gather from those fields, fruit, and food to supply the table. Oh for more hearty diligence in this line of things! our hearts would be full of matter; our assemblies week after week would be supplied and the table laden with this food. Never would souls then turn away disappointed and unfed. The little assemblies all over the land would be as the humble home, with a well filled table, if we were

in the field of reading, study, and meditation upon the precious word of God. "Much food is in the tillage of the poor." Beloved, my heart is stirred as I think of the neglect here, and would fain abide here, and exhort and expand further, but now must close this part. As we pass on from this field of God's word to the side opposite, we are encouraged, comforted, and strengthened, for there falls upon us as dew from heaven as we enjoy its pages and themes, bringing a divine benediction,—“the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Christ and His glory is the theme of the whole Book. It is the written word of God; He the living word of God. His work is seen in creation and His glorious power manifested therein, but in the four Gospels we are brought face to face with Him in all the perfections of His humanity. Then, as we stand beside the cross, we view Him as the sin-bearer and at the sight we are lost in wonder, love and praise.

But, passing on, we soon discover an empty tomb, as well as a vacant cross; and now as the Man Christ Jesus rises, and the cloud receives Him, we behold the throne filled with His presence, and the heavens with His glory; and from that scene He sends down the Comforter to abide with and instruct His people, and conduct them through life's journey “till He come.” The Book, the precious word of God, is our chart along the way. May we use it and feed upon it, as the prophets of old, until we see Him face to face.

We verily believe the carelessness and indifference in other parts of the Christian life are due to the neglect of the word of God, in prayerful dependence

on the Holy Spirit. When the Word is diligently fed upon and enjoyed, it will awaken desires to impart to others. Such is the gracious spirit of Christianity, which takes its shape and pattern from God's great love in the gift of Christ" (John iii. 16).

Let us now look over into that great field of need close by the assembly,—the world of living beings, hurrying on to eternity: and, beloved, as we look upon each one, weigh well the fact that each human being that we see and know has a soul which will spend eternity either among the redeemed in a scene of bliss, or among the damned forever. Let us think again seriously, and carry the fact to our quiet room, and, as we bend the knee in silent prayer, ask, "Lord, what will Thou have me to do," in respect to this great need around us?

Some of our gatherings are dwindling down in numbers, and is there not a need for examination with care, and a search for the cause? and may not this worm—neglect of earnest gospel zeal—be what is sapping the life, and hence leaving us without fruit in build up the gatherings. Eccl. x. 18, is a picture of many an assembly, once fair and beautiful, but now decay has set in. The assembly is dependent upon the field of service. Just as it is dependent upon the field of study for the building up and profit of all within as to ministry, so it is dependent upon the gospel for keeping from decay. As time passes on, some are taken home, and the young soon become old, and who are to take their place? Here is the need of constant gospel energy and zeal, and where this is lacking there is a loss for us now in the gatherings, and then loss in eternity.

May we find here "much food in the tillage of the

poor." True, we will need to work, and in this work there will be need of self-denial; but again, as we note the joy of souls born into the family of God, delivered from the coming wrath and saved for the coming glory, even here the soul is well repaid for any outlay, any self-denial.

God's mind is surely that the assembly is the proper place, and only proper place, for such people as those born again. (See Song i. 8.) Any ministry that fails of this end, falls short, we are sure, of being like the apostle Paul's. The field here is large, and the need great and varied. Oh what need of a faithful united testimony among the people of God according to the Word, of earnest and hearty interest in the preaching of the gospel to the unsaved, of prayerful interest and sympathy with those wholly given up to such a service, and a generous use of the printed matter which is so accessible in our day.

The zeal of Adventists, Millennial-dawnists, Christian Scientists, and even Mormons, scattering their pernicious and soul destroying doctrines ought to stir us up to scatter the truth of God's word. If we are thus earnestly and heartily engaged in this, doing what we can according to our measure, we are sure God will honor His Word. He cannot deny Himself, and there will be "much food in the tillage of the poor,"—fruit in the salvation of souls and in the advancement of Christians. Thus the gatherings will be kept from decay, by the infusion of new blood, new material.

But on the other hand we are as assured of the truth of the other portion of the verse: "there is that is destroyed (ruined) for lack of judgment. When there is not a prayerful godly united assembly, how



can we look for anything but a blighted testimony. When the hours are spent in criticism and gossip instead of prayer and conference as to the interests of Christ, how can we look for fruit in the gospel? When there is indifference as to preaching the gospel, distributing the gospel and truth furnished by the press to-day, how can we look for fruit?

And again, when there is a neglect to care with pastoral hearts for the weak and young among us, and when over severity is manifested instead of love and gentleness caring for the weak and even erring, how can progress and development be expected in the assemblies? Ezek. xxxiv. 1-6 is a word we all need to weigh well, and ask ourselves how far we have had a hand in these things. In many places we are assured the testimony among the people of God has been destroyed for this lack of judgment. We are now near the end of the journey. While grace may linger a little longer, and we be left here, may we beloved reader, have grace to keep from the evils around us, and profit, and reap, and enjoy food, and feed others by the diligent toil in those two fields; the first, the study of the word of truth; the other, earnestly winning souls for God our Father and Christ our Lord, and for an eternity of bliss.

A. E. B.

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IN CONFLICTS, not only is Satan defeated, but the tried saint learns fresh secrets about his own feebleness and the resources and grace of God. So, in the wanderings of the heart, in departure from the power of faith and hope, not only is the soul chastened and exercised, but it learns, to God's glory, that it must come back to that posture in which the Lord first set it.

J. G. B.

## SOME THOUGHTS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

ALTHOUGH for well-nigh nineteen centuries, the people of God have been assembled to commemorate the Lord's supper, how wonderfully touching still are the thoughts that gather about it and what precious moments do those spend who weekly assemble to carry out our Lord's injunction "This do in remembrance of Me." To such one scarcely need apologize for treating of this theme and the search for the better comprehension of its veiled glories, and even should the search be unproductive of new discovery, it may prove an incentive to further effort.

Those, who spiritualize the memorial, miss one of its first, and a very salutary and blessed, lesson. The commemoration has to do with the "material;" it is not merely a memorial, but as being material, it becomes a reminder. It is a voice to those who are in the flesh, who are creatures of the dust and need as such a divinely given ordinance to remind them of Him, who instituted it and who was figured forth therein. It teaches us to be humble. O brethren, what a sweet, sad thought is here! We *need* reminder of Him. We stand in need of continual reminder of what He has done, of what He is. It is a sad thought. The "material" must speak to that which is still subject to the influence of the "material." It is a sweet thought. One thinks of the words of a little child, who when asked what was one of the sweetest things replied, "Repentance; it is so sweet to lie humbled before our God." Brother, do you feel thus, when you partake of that bread and wine? Do you recognize that it thus speaks?

But it is a *simple* memorial. Rome surrounds it with great pageant and forgets two things. Its simplicity is well adapted to commemorate the One who was despised and rejected. It is not so much the Son of God as the Man Christ Jesus, who is set forth therein. But she forgets also that frailty of which we have just been speaking. God ordained it to be simple. The "material" is needed to speak to our frailty but we are so frail that should we surround it with pageant, it would obscure Him, the material would become *all*. The simple ordinances of Christianity have been chosen with wonderful wisdom, but as with everything else, man has added his foolish adjuncts, and turned a help to a hindrance.

From Corinthians we find that the supper was instituted on the same night in which our Lord was betrayed, and from the Gospels that it was at the feast of the Passover. God's works are all wrought in "due time" and the proximity of the "*delivering up*" and the "feast" make an impressive combination.

The Passover was a commemoration of Israel's deliverance *from* judgment and is now associated with our Lord's "*delivering up*" *to* judgment. They who had just been celebrating their own deliverance, the deliverance of the first-born, set in judgment upon and condemn the "first-born" of God. Man's enmity and God's love are drawing nigh to that "crisis" of the ages wherein they meet, in the cross of Christ. What a wonderful juxtaposition. What awful hatred, what divine compassion! and as in Adam all die, how much more, in Christ shall all be made alive. Here is bread and wine; true sustenance for life.

But now please consider a fragmentary clause from Luke. "And gave unto them, saying" etc. I want you to notice that *that* participation was a memorial of Him, though He was still with them. He does not say, "In the future this shall be done for remembrance of Me" but "this *do* in remembrance of Me." It was, if one may so call it, an anticipative retrospect. They were with Him and yet were called upon to remember Him. *Him*, not His death; *Him*! We show the Lord's death in *partaking* of the bread and wine, but in the act in which each too has part, though it be performed by one, we act in remembrance of *Him*. Oh that we might remember, that even though to-day He be present in our midst, and faith's vision may often behold Him, that it is still *Him* whom we have to call to remembrance, (strange word!) by His life given up. Not merely what He has done, brethren, but Him *in* what He has done. How sad when we think only of what He has done as a reminder of what we have got. "This *do* in remembrance of *Me*."

He distributes bread and wine to the group around. It is a domestic scene. It speaks in its character of home, the home where we shall be with Him. This He, in His death, has brought about. In such a scene He shone pre-eminently. He had such a way of breaking bread and inviting to a feast that upon two occasions after His resurrection, the disciples are overwhelmingly convinced that "it is the Lord."

No wonder then that the apostle in Corinthians remembers that we keep it until He come. "He will make them sit down and come forth and serve them."

"And He took bread and gave thanks and brake it." There are here several thoughts worthy of con-

sideration. Let us notice first that He gives thanks before He breaks, while it is over the *cup*, wine *already* out-poured, that He gives thanks again. Here is divine order, and one may read easily the simple lesson. That time of agony would indeed be bitter to Him. He came for affection and found hatred; He came for a kingdom and found a cross; He came bringing in His own person, life, eternal life, and found death; and yet that Body, that holy Temple which they should destroy was gladly offered. He gave thanks that He had still an offering to bring. Of old had Abraham the father of the faithful found a ram caught in a thicket by its horns, but here is one not caught, only held. He gave *thanks*. Often may we find one who gives thanks when he has already endured, but not often that he has means wherewith to endure. Surely, herein is love made manifest.

The bread speaks of the Person, His body given, the breaking, of His dying; while I think the cup speaks of life already outpoured, and thus it is wine that we find therein, that which gives joy to God and man. He gives thanks after its outpouring. It is the cup of blessing. How appropriate the symbol. It is wine—joy. How appropriate the time of thanksgiving; death *past*, judgment *gone!* Rememberer, enter now into the joy of your Lord. We have the *fruit* of the Vine, the result obtained.

"Now He praises in th' assembly  
Now the sorrow all is past;  
His the earnest of our portion,  
We must reach the goal at last."

He breaks the bread. "No man taketh it from me; I lay it down . . . and I take it again." The break-

ing of the bread is, as we have said, His dying, and so we get no pouring out of the wine, for the breaking of the bread is that, and there before us is the Cup.

Oh may the Lord grant us as we gather from week to week and year to year and as the rolling years pass on "until He come," fresher, deeper, more real participation in a memorial which as divinely instituted, should so present Him as to make us cry yearningly, "Come Lord Jesus," and more and more may we, as images grow brighter unto the shining of the real, ourselves be merged into His image, until "these broken lights of Him" be swallowed up in His glory, who is "more than they."

F. C. G.

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### REST!

AS earthward the Eternal from His throne  
 Gazed on His offspring earnestly and long  
 To know if any sought Him—found not one,  
 So o'er mankind this feebler eye hath hung  
     Wistful and sad and burning  
     Searching around, within,  
 And through the grievous file of ages gone,  
     My aching vision yearning  
     In scene of curse and sin  
 Some purity of man to rest upon!

So flew the bird of sorrow and of love  
 Forth from her sanctuary in the ark,  
 With gentle eye strained anxiously above  
 The weary waste of waters wild and dark,  
     Dread depths of devastation  
     Wrapping with sullen shroud  
 Foul earth, whose guilt the wrathful heavens reprove—

Flew, in her desolation,  
 Restless above the flood,  
 Till homeward to the ark fluttered the dove!

Not so, alas! the brood of natural birth,  
 In sin conceived and cankered from the womb:  
 Once, like the raven, kindred with the dearth—  
 That evil spirit flapping through the gloom  
   Guided by vile attraction  
   Unto congenial rest  
 On the stale carrion floating o'er the earth—  
   Sin's ghastly satisfaction  
   Sated my filthy breast  
 Amid the wrath, lust, misery, and mirth!

Anon my quickened spirit, purified,  
 Forth from the Saviour's bosom like the dove  
 Flew with glad tidings o'er earth's troubled tide,  
 Expectant messenger of peace and love:  
   Found but rebuff, rejection,  
   Lewd man's imperious jeer—  
 Wedded to vanity in the bonds of pride,  
   With mine own heart's defection,  
   Her sin and legal fear—  
 Then to God's bosom fled back terrified!

Vanish vain arts that flatter and allure,  
 That travesty the tragedy of life,  
 Tuning to ditties of the troubadour  
 The raging fury of man's covetous strife!  
   Ye bards and minstrels singing,  
   Ye weary the ear of God—  
 Piping to pride and glossing lusts impure!  
   Earth's cries to heaven are ringing  
   For wrath's avenging rod!  
 Think ye fore'er God's patience will endure?

Genius, thou spirit fallen, wouldst thou call  
All things to pause to embalm thy rank conceit?  
Thy painted forms and chiseled figures pall!  
The slime-worm lurketh in thy poesy sweet—  
Be't Homer's bloody story  
Of lusting gods and men,  
The pomp of Milton o'er hell's pride and fall,  
The passion, filth, vain-glory  
Reeking from Shakespeare's pen!  
Away! away! degenerates are ye all!

On Thee, Thou Son of man, on Thee alone  
My fainting soul may rest her weary eye,  
Lost in a Life of love whose pureness shone  
From God's own Self—to such vile worms drawn nigh!  
Here in our land of mourning,  
O lowly Man of grief,  
Thy spotless Radiancy from heaven's throne  
Passing through hate and scorning  
Reached depths beyond belief—  
For the hard hearts who mocked Thee to atone!

To me dost Thou the rest of God disclose—  
Crowning each circle of Thy ransomed host,  
The stainless purity of Love's repose  
Shall flow from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:  
With Thee shall I inherit  
Thy filial joys and place  
Whilst God the riches of His love bestows;  
And by Thy power and Spirit  
In Love's own perfect grace  
The current of communion ceaseless flows!

Thou vast Infinitude of love and light,  
Bosom of God, abyss of bliss divine,  
In Thee I hide me from the pain and blight—  
In Thee, my Rest, my Refuge, and my Shrine!



By love-chains nought can sever  
 Bound to Thy Godhead-breast,  
 Enshrined in Triune depths of pure delight,  
 With deepening joy forever  
 Profoundly shall I rest  
 While endless ages trace their blissful flight!

F. A.

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## BRIEF BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

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### VI. SALVATION AND REWARDS

**H**ERETOFORE we have been looking into God's Word with reference to the necessity, assurance, and blessings of salvation, and now it might not be amiss to look at the same unfailing source of truth concerning the distinction between salvation apart from the effort of man; and rewards as the result of the faithful service of believers. Some of God's saints seem to be confused upon this point, and are in distress of soul, or at least, not in assured peaceful rest, in consequence.

1. Salvation is *God's free gift* to any one who realizes himself or herself a poor, lost sinner.

In the fourth chapter of John's Gospel Jesus is seen speaking to a poor woman whose life was stained with sin of the most open and defiling kind. She "had had five husbands" and he whom she then had was not her husband, and yet to her a despised Samaritan, Jesus breaks the blessed news that salvation is a free gift. "If thou knowest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water" (John iv. 10).

What marvelous love, amazing grace, wonderful picture, the spotless One of heaven offering to the sin defiled of earth salvation as a free gift.

See also Rom. vi. 23; Is. lv. i. 2; Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 17; John iii. 16; v. 24; x. 28 etc.

So that the very first thing required of a sinner is that he or she accept the gift from God, and He publicly proclaims to all who take their place as such, forgiveness, justification, eternal life; in other words, salvation with all its attendant blessings.

On the contrary rewards are mentioned in Scripture as the outcome or result of faithfulness in the life and service of the believer, *i. e.*, the one who by simple faith, believing God's statement as to salvation accepts it as a free gift; so that while salvation is obtained by faith, rewards are obtained by works.

2. The apostle Paul writing to the Corinthian saints distinguishes clearly as to the distinction this article is intended to bring out.

In the third chapter of his first epistle to them he says the foundation "is Christ," and in vers. 14, 15 he speaks of those on the foundation as being saved, apart from their works, for which however a reward will be given if the works will stand the test, otherwise they will be burned up. "If any man's work abide which he hath built, he shall receive a reward.

"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; *but he himself shall be saved*: yet so as by fire." The believer is saved, because his salvation is the result of *Christ's work*—His death on the cross—but no reward for *his works*, unless they be able to stand the searching eye of God's holiness. How God's grace is thus seen in saving sinners apart from their works (Eph. ii. 8, 9), and how His holiness is

magnified in a test of the believer's works afterward, in that all that is done must have as a motive, not the benefit of man merely, nor in expectation of a reward, but for "the glory of God." "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye *do*, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31). This last verse will govern decision in every doubtful moment, and action.

See also Matt. x. 42; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25; Rev. ii. 10; Phil. iv. 1; 1 Thess. ii. 19; James i. 12; 1 Pet. v. 4, etc.

3. God's salvation is a present possession of the sinner the moment he accepts it by faith.

"He that believeth on the Son **HATH** everlasting life" . . . (John iii. 36).

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power (right or privilege) to become the sons of God" (John i. 12).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me **HATH** everlasting life" . . . (John v. 24). See also John vi. 37; 2 Tim. i. 9; 1 John v. 11; 1 Cor. i. 18; Tit. iii. 5. Notice the words "*hath* life," "are saved," "saved," "hath saved," as clearly showing a present position and standing before God.

We are nowhere told in Scripture that we have to wait until we come to die, either to be saved or to have knowledge of it. 1 John v. 13, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, *that ye may know*"—that salvation is ours now, the moment we believe.

4. Just the reverse is the matter of rewards which will be future, conferred upon the believer at the judgment-seat of Christ, and manifested before the

world at the coming of the Son of man. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and *then* He shall reward every man according to "his works" (Matt. xvi. 27).

The apostle realizing his course on earth was about over, writes to Timothy: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge shall give me *at that day*" . . . (2 Tim. iv. 8). Surely he could not mean salvation here, or righteousness conferred, for he claims in his first letter to his "dearly beloved son" that he was saved, see 1 Tim. i. 9; and writing to the Corinthians claims that as sin and its judgment were borne by Christ, so he was made, as all believers are also, the righteousness of God, in Christ (2 Cor. v. 21).

It is only necessary to read 2 Cor. xi. 24-29 to see that Paul did not receive any reward here for his services, although in all his utterances stating he was saved.

See also 1 Pet. v. 4; 2 Tim. iv. 8; Luke xiv. 14; Rev. xxii. 12; 2 Cor. v. 10; Matt. xxv. 19).

Thus as believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, we have God's free gift now; and, with purpose of heart to serve Him, for "the glory of God," by life or in death, we may expect a reward hereafter, when with our blessed Lord in the glory. But we are not to labor or live with any lower standard than to be "acceptable" unto Him (2 Cor. v. 9); and even as Abraham looked for a city, so we have an expectation, we look "for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 20).

May reader and writer ever have Him, and Him only, before them.

B. W. J.

## LESSONS FOR TO-DAY DRAWN FROM PSALM CXXXVII.

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"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.

We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones."

**W**HILE this psalm, as may be plainly seen, applies primarily to a godly Jewish remnant in the days of the Babylonish captivity, yet it seems to be equally clear that it has a deep and very solemn meaning for ourselves, both as individuals, and as members of the true Church of God. It has lessons for these days in which, as all godly Christians must own, that which professes to be the Church has sadly departed from the truth and is, in great measure, under the control and influence of the world in its varied forms, as pictured in Babylon.

In ver. 1, we see these captives sitting down (under compulsion no doubt) by the rivers of Babylon. As these rivers were formed from the small brooks and streams which came from every part of the land, we find, in type, as they pass along before the eyes of

these captives, the combined influence of the world in its most attractive forms presented to us. And what is the result? Do we, like these captives, turn away from it and with weeping "remember Zion," or does it attract our attention, occupy our time and engage our thought? Alas that such should be the case, that there should be so little weeping, so little turning away to the things of the Lord and to the city of His Name! The harp is silent, and in its place there is weeping and earnest prayer that, "in the day of Jerusalem," which to faith will surely come, vers. 7-9, vengeance may come upon those who now triumph over them.

The songs and mirth required (ver. 3) of these captives by their conquerors were probably a means of furnishing amusement and sport to these heartless victors. At least, the refusal to continue to "sing the Lord's song in a strange land" would seem to indicate as much. Surely had it been that some were really moved by the reality of these things in the hearts of the singers, there would have been no complaint whatever. As the apostle says, (1 Pet. iv. 14), "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye." The world, ruled over by Satan, "the god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4), is indeed a hard and heartless master. How sad it is to see the professing church so thoroughly submitting to his power without protest! Truly it is a cause for much weeping, prayer, and confession of sin to God.

But we can thank God that there are those who have been brought to realize that such a position is, in truth, "a strange land," and that "the Lord's song" cannot be sung there. Of the wicked, Jer. xii. 2 says, "Thou (the Lord) art near in their mouth,

and far from their reins." In contrast with this, John iv. 23, 24; Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16 all show that true worship and praise must come from the heart. If, in the first place, the heart is not right with God, we may be assured that all the cold formalism of so-called worship is nothing but a mockery. In view of this, is not the question of ver. 4 raised at once in the minds of honest Christians? If so, let us face the question squarely, let us remove that which so seriously hinders our spiritual growth, and so deeply dishonors the name of our blessed Lord, and let us not be satisfied with anything which deprives us of the great privilege of meeting together with His own where we can, "in spirit and in truth" sing "the songs of Zion."

Through God's goodness, this may now be the happy privilege of each one of us, but for the Jew of those days it was a glorious event for which, as we have already seen, faith was steadily and persistently watching, and in vers. 5 and 6 we see how this question so completely occupied the attention of this godly remnant, that other things which natural men regard as of utmost importance were not in any measure to be compared with it.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." All the natural skill, energy and strength so carefully trained and developed for providing the many necessary, useful or enjoyable things of life were to be entirely forgotten or laid aside. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem." No other subject of conversation was to be considered of such importance, neither was any earthly pleasure to be allowed so large a place in the heart.

And why did Jerusalem fill such a place in the

mind of the Jew? It was the city that the Lord had "chosen to place His Name there." It was here that the people came together for worship. It was indeed to them, as its name implies, the foundation of peace. To us it speaks, no doubt, of the presence of God reached through the cross, the true foundation of peace, where He "made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20). It is on this ground that we may gather in His name to worship Him "in spirit and in truth" and to "sing the Lord's song" not "in a strange land" but in His very presence (Matt. xviii. 20).

In closing, I would simply call attention to the important spiritual application of vers. 5 and 6 to ourselves in the light of these things. May the sharp rebuke which is found there, right upon the surface, be taken home by each one of us and may it be blessed to us all, turning our hearts, our thoughts and our lives more and more away from this dark scene unto Him who loves us and gave Himself for us. We may be assured that such a return to the things of the Lord would be owned by Him and would result in large blessing and spiritual growth in our midst. In the words of the beautiful hymn—

Lord, let us ne'er forget  
Thy rich, Thy precious love,  
Our theme of joy and wonder here  
Our endless song above.

O let Thy love constrain  
Our souls to cleave to Thee,  
And ever in our hearts remain  
That word, "Remember Me."

F. W. H.

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# THE KINGDOM OF GOD NOT IN WORD BUT IN POWER.

1 Cor. iv. 20.

THE Corinthian assembly was not walking in the truth and light as becometh the children of God, and Paul wrote his first epistle apparently for the purpose of instructing and admonishing them. They had but recently "turned to God from idols," as had the Thessalonians, "to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven," and consequently were not well instructed and established in the truth as it related to the assembly. Hence we have much of what may be called church or assembly truth set forth in this epistle.

In that part now before us the apostle admonishes them of their ways as already reigning, while here in the world, and intimating that if they did reign here it must be as men in the flesh, because the Christian portion here cannot be in the pleasures of this world. He teaches them that in this world we must, if faithful to Christ, suffer with Him. That the world is necessarily in hostility to Christians, as it was to their Master and if they are reigning here something must be out of place with them. He cites the case of the apostles themselves who are suffering here as the outcasts of the world while some of the Corinthians are reveling in sensuous enjoyment. He then tells them that "some of them are puffed up as though I would not come to you, but I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, *but the power*. For the Kingdom of God is not in speech, *but in power*." "Puffed up" is never of the Spirit, but al-

ways of the flesh. "Puffed up by their fleshly minds" (Col. ii. 18). The Spirit humbles. He teaches us our own nothingness. As to the flesh, "We are weak with Him; for He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God." So we, to faith, are crucified with Him, ended, dead men, as to the flesh; but we too, like Him, blessed One, live by the power of God!

This life is a new one. It is from above. It is out of death. It is a new creation. It is as born again. It is of God. It is resurrection life. It is beyond the Cross. It is beyond death and the grave. It is divine and eternal, therefore the power of this life is its source. It is of God by the Holy Spirit. "Of ourselves we are not sufficient to think anything, as of ourselves, but *our sufficiency is of God.*" "We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and *not of us.*"

This is the power that Paul desired to see in the Corinthian assembly. It was not human power as manifested in eloquence of speech or the wisdom of human words, but the power of God in the demonstration of the Spirit. The power of the new life that is in Christians. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God *dwelleth* in you." This is the power of Christian life, for worship and service of every sort and kind. Without Christ we can do nothing. With Him all things are possible. He acts in the assembly by the Holy Spirit when it is in the normal Christian condition. That is with every member conscious of his connection with the Head of the body, and of his place in the body, in full subjection to the Head, as the mem-

bers of the human body, in health, are subject to its head; acting in obedience to the head. So in the assembly, all of one mind and heart, all in communion with the Father and the Son, having been—once for all, by the blood of Christ—cleansed from all sin. In this condition gathered by the Holy Spirit unto Christ the Head, He is there in the midst, leading by the Spirit, and His power is manifested; manifested through the earthen vessels. It is—

“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.”

It is this power that is so much lacking in the assemblies of the saints. These cannot be worked by human power. It must be of God. The Holy Spirit not only dwells in individual saints but also in the assembly; and this is wherever two or three are gathered unto the name of Christ,—there He is in the midst; and “whatsoever ye shall ask it shall be done unto you.” Of course, there will be no asking for any but spiritual blessings, and these God is concerned that we should ask and desire more and more. He is always pleased to give, and more willing than we are to receive.

In our normal place then as a Christian assembly there will be no lack of this power manifested, but we cannot expect it when an assembly is leavened with unbelief, worldliness and disobedience. It must be in the faith, by the power of God; man subjected, ended. “They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” All must be of the Spirit. Neither should the enthusiasm of the flesh be mistaken for the

power of the Spirit. The former excites, exhilarates; the latter subdues, humbles, subjects; so that like Paul when caught up into Paradise, we lose sight and knowledge of the body, the flesh altogether, and know not whether we are in it or out of it.

J. S. P.

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THE revelation of the grace of God, the style of the revelation of it, is as wonderful and different from all beside, just as is the grace itself.

The love of God disclosed in the gospel is a love which passes knowledge. And yet the story of it is told without glowing expressions to give it effect, or any help, as from language or description, to set it off to the heart.

This is a wondrous thing. Attempts are not made in Scripture to carry the sense of this love to the soul beyond the simple telling of the tale of it. It is told, but told artlessly. This is the style, the general style or method, of the Book of God.

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## EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

119 GROVE ST., PLAINFIELD, N. J.,

*July 12th, 1900.*

BELoved BROTHER,—I trust that this may be a first instalment, so far as correspondence goes, of a large indebtedness.

I am, through mercy, daily and uninterruptedly going on towards recovery. It has been that all round, and with a steadiness which surprises the doctor, who while not professing Christianity for himself, says that the prayers of Christians, and not his medicines, have brought about my recovery. May the after-fruit manifest still more that it is indeed the work of Him who delights to answer His people's prayers; and whose every thought is blessing for them.

"Afterward, the peaceable fruits of righteousness" should now apply, although one feels the dreadful shallowness of our deepest convictions. The negative side of the world's worthlessness I can realize in good measure, but the touch of death naturally dispels illusion here. The positive enjoyment of our own things is where one's weakness shows itself, and in the dulness that thus creeps over the soul. The medicinal effect of evangelistic activity is I think of the highest use self-ward here, which no constancy of occupation with the Word even can replace; and the lack of general activity amongst us in this respect seems to lose for us often the brightness which many have with so much less light. I long for that combined evangelistic effort among us I have often advocated and yet, alas, let drop through lack of spiritual energy to persevere in face of the indifference which seemed to greet it.

However, I am not upon this theme now, though I trust the future may have something for us in this. I am only, as it were, just lifting my head to look around, and

my first duty to the Lord and to my brethren is to own with a thankful heart how He has been repeating to us in living example the first lessons of Paul as to ministry in the epistle of ministry (2 Cor. i), and how God has joined the body together so as to make this a necessary consequence of membership in it. My sickness has in this way gained me much by showing me what was indeed mine already but had not had the same opportunity of displaying itself. I thank the brethren heartily for the expression of a love which is rooted and grounded in that which is beyond knowledge. May we keep ourselves in the love of God, as the apostle enjoins,—in the enjoyment of the fulness which necessitates the outflow again of what we have received from Him. Let it only be remembered that now I need prayer for the fruitfulness of the life restored, and that the hand of God may manifestly not have wrought in vain.

We were glad to hear of the many at the T—— meeting, trust for permanent blessing. There has been plenty of plowing of the soil there; may the time have come for the quiet growth of that which has been sown there, which has not been a little. It was my first place of meeting with J. N. D.;—of those who gathered round then how few remain. That, in the natural way, is not to be wondered at; but the spiritual history of many, alas, what has it been? A startling warning, surely, of the need we have of Philadelphia's exhortation. God is the God of resurrection, and the old fields can blossom afresh. This lesson well learnt, the discouragement becomes encouragement. We need not, because amid the fruits of a long history of failure, dwell under the shadow of this, but under *His* shadow, and still "with great delight."

I have really no news, and can only cover paper with repetition of familiar things. Yet they are not things of which we weary. Please give my love and

thanks to all, and let them give me large credit for what I do not say.

Very affectionately ever in Christ.

*F. W. G.*

[It is with deep gratitude and joy that we insert the above from our beloved brother, feeling that it will be received by the saints in the same way. As widespread prayer for his recovery was offered, and deep and general exercise of soul before God resulted from what we realized to be a chastening upon us all, it is but proper that now in equal measure thanksgiving to our God should abound. May we not, too, take earnestly to heart one of the evident lessons intended for us—a fresh interest and deeper concern in the salvation of souls? Our brother has himself referred to this, as it has also been laid upon many other hearts. May our God's mercy to us awake us as never before, and deepen in every way His work among us. Ed.]

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### A CIRCULAR.

The following circular is inserted in the belief that it may be of interest to all our readers, as manifesting somewhat at least the unity of the Spirit in which the Lord's beloved people are held together, and which it should be the endeavor of all to keep "in the bond of peace." Ed.

To the Saints gathered to the Name of our Lord  
Jesus Christ :

*TORONTO, July 2d, 1900.*

BELOVED BRETHREN—

Having been assembled here from various parts, it is on our hearts to send a word of loving greeting in recognition of the unity that binds us together in the body of Christ, and in the endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Our conference has been a happy and profitable one. Saints gathered in goodly numbers both from points near by and a distance, and we have enjoyed together sweet fellowship in the things of God. Our time has been occupied with the study of the Word—the first part of the epistle to the Romans,—meetings for mutual exhortation and prayer, and in addresses to the saints, with a good hearing for the gospel, both within doors and upon the streets. We have been reminded of our common privileges, warned of our common dangers, and aroused as to our common responsibilities. It was indeed a joy to sit down together at our Lord's table in such large numbers, and to have a foretaste of that worship which shall soon be given by all the saints when we are gathered to our Lord on high.

Truly, beloved brethren, we are a "happy people"—blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ; pardoned, justified, made nigh; possessors of eternal life, members of the family of God; sealed, baptized, and indwelt by the Spirit; members of Christ's body, enjoying the precious ministrations of our glorious Head, by the Spirit through the various "joints and bands"—yea each of us privileged to be a channel of blessing from the Head to our fellow members. We have in our hands the precious word of God, which unfolds to us these and other wondrous truths. Surely we can thank and bless our God.

Nor can we ignore the fact that we have been intrusted with grave responsibilities corresponding to these wondrous blessings. What manner of men should we be in walk and testimony! How we should prize the precious word of God, and how careful we should be to maintain the holiness and order of His house! Sadly true it is that we are living in days of ruin—even the people of God do



that which is right in their own eyes—but let us never forget that the truth of God remains unchanged, the word of God is ours, and the Spirit abides with us.

When we remember the watchfulness of our adversary the devil, the allurements of the world, particularly for the young, and the deceitfulness of the flesh, we realize in some measure our dangers. Surely, beloved brethren, we are living in difficult days, and need to “put on the whole armor of God.”

How unfeignedly should we thank our God for the mercy which in these days has left a testimony, even if comparatively feeble, to the truths of His grace and of His Church! With no lofty pretensions, and with much brokenness because of our manifold failures, we would bless God for the mercy which has put us in this place—as gathered to our Lord's Name—of privilege, responsibility, and danger. Knowing, from our own experience, the dangers by which we have been beset, we would mention in a few words some of the responsibilities which concern us as individuals and as gatherings.

I. ESTABLISHMENT IN THE GOSPEL. We need to remember the exhortation to “keep ourselves in the love of God.” Let us never lose our “first love,” that tender, lowly apprehension of His grace, which will compel us also to tell out the gospel to others. May we all realize that we have been “put in trust with the gospel,” and in public and private may we, out of full hearts, “testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Oh, to see souls saved through the gospel amongst us! Let us all awake more earnestly to this work. To this end we trust to see an awakened interest in tract distribution,—a work in which all, sisters and brethren alike, may constantly engage.

2. A WALK WITH GOD. May we be a holy people, truly separate from the spirit and ways of the world, walking in all lowliness, and thus adorning "the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." To this end shall we not afresh turn ourselves to the word of God, and devote more time to its prayerful study? May the written ministry be used to this end, and may we not urge one another to read and circulate the periodicals, tracts, and books devoted to unfolding the word of God?

3. ASSEMBLY CARE AND ORDER. We are deeply impressed with our responsibilities in connection with the assembly, realizing that God's thought is that our entire lives are connected with it. We would point out a few matters of great importance in this connection: *Care in reception*—that none be received without prayerful and faithful examination. How much sorrow would assemblies be spared were there more care, and above all more prayer, in receiving those who seek fellowship. We would also emphasize the importance of giving letters of commendation to saints visiting gatherings, and thus maintain scriptural order (2 Cor. iii. 1-3).

*Pastoral loving care.* Reception is but the first act, and if the Lord's beloved saints expect to see His work prospering, there must be that self-denial of love which "seeketh not her own." We long for ourselves, and for all the Lord's people, to exercise more pastoral care and oversight. This leads us also to refer to our great need of wisdom, gentleness and love, as well as faithfulness, in *all matters of discipline*. Let us guard against the extremes to which we are so constantly exposed, of laxness, weakness and indifference on the one hand, and undue haste, harshness and severity on the other. We rejoice to know that we are learning these lessons and our de-

sire is that we may enter more fully into these grave responsibilities.

We also desire, beloved brethren, to point out our mutual responsibilities as assemblies in the various localities where our God has placed us. We are separated upon the wall, and the work is great, but the wall is *one*. We have been drawn very closely together at our conference, and while not desiring to intrude into purely local matters, feel the need of common principles of divine truth being clearly understood and maintained in all the firmness of divinely given conviction. May we present, beloved, a united front against every form of attack upon these principles.

We would also send a word of cheer to our beloved brethren and sisters who may be standing alone, or who are but few in number. Let such remember that one Eye is upon them, one Heart cares for them, and that they are not forgotten in prayer by their brethren at a distance. Let them not be discouraged nor cast down. "David encouraged himself in the Lord His God" (1 Sam. xxx. 6).

May we not also express our earnest desire for the recovery to the Lord of any who have grown cold and wandered far? Nor can we refrain from praying that those who have sacrificed truth in any measure, may be brought to value it afresh, as that which God has committed to us.

Our present meeting has impressed us anew with the great importance of frequently gathering together thus. Saints from small assemblies, and those who stand alone, received great encouragement; the faith and love of all is revived, and heart is knit to heart. A little earnest faith will overcome most obstacles, while the gain resulting will far outweigh the needed labor.

May our God bless us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

Affectionately your brethren in Christ our Lord,

for the saints gathered	{ C. B. STREET, F. L. NICHOLSON, F. J. ENEFER.
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## GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

### 7. NEARER THAN THE NEAREST.

#### Chapter iv.

*Continued from page 161.*

THE nearest kinsman promptly consents to redeem the inheritance for Naomi. The law, as we have seen, had this merciful provision, and whenever one or the people turned truly to God and kept His law, He would be "merciful unto His land and to His people." So long as it was of Naomi's hand that the purchase was to be made, and for her, the kinsman consents at once, for she was the widow of "our brother Elimelech." So long as it is Israel according to the flesh, and merely disobedient, the law, with the merciful provision to which we have referred, could interpose and bring back the forfeited inheritance.

We have more or less complete illustrations of this in the history of the people. Again and again, during the period of the Judges, they sinned against the Lord, and were delivered over to the hands of their enemies to be oppressed. But when they turned in penitence to Him, He raised up a deliverer who restored them to their heritage. But the nation went on in the downward path of declension, until the ten tribes were carried off into hopeless captivity

and merged into the Gentile nations by whom they were taken captive, beyond all human recognition. The two tribes also were carried off to Babylon and the throne of God, the ark of the covenant, permanently left Jerusalem. Truly a brighter Light shone in the temple at a later time, but not to be accepted by the people. Of this we will speak in a moment.

Even after the captivity at Babylon there was a partial recovery (though the throne had passed from the house of David to the Gentiles). It was as though the law, the nearest kinsman, was going as far as possible in seeking to buy up the inheritance.

But at last after the restoration from Babylon, God sends His Son, the rightful heir of the inheritance. "This is the heir, come let us kill him and the inheritance shall be ours"—how fully this shows a mind absolutely alined from God and His thoughts. God's Son, the true redeemer, the only deliverer, is slain. The blinded leaders cry "we have no king but Cæsar," and thus they deliberately and permanently forfeit all right to be considered the people of God. They have identified themselves absolutely with the Gentiles and are now on the same ground as the despised Moabites or Ammonites. They are "lo-ammi, not my people," and are as fully Gentiles as though they were not of the seed of Abraham.

The law, even with the most merciful construction, could no longer interpose. "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever" (Dent. xxiii. 3). The apostate people had deliberately given up all claim, and so far as the law was concerned, were cut off.

This explains why the kinsman, no matter how willing he might be to restore the heritage to Naomi, could not take it to raise up by *Ruth* the name of the deceased kinsman. His own inheritance would be marred. How truly that law, "holy, just and good" would be marred if the smallest jot or tittle of its righteous demands were abated. It abides in all its majesty and perfection. It is not made void, as it would be were a single item of its requirements ignored. So for the guilty people who rest in the law and vainly boast in their privileges as a nation there is nothing but condemnation. They are in the place of the Moabite.

But if the law does not and cannot do aught in such a case, it does and can relinquish all right to the inheritance, and transfers those claims to Another. The kinsman draws off his shoe, the usual mode of procedure when property changed hands. The shoe was that which trod upon the land, and to draw it off and pass it to another would seem to indicate that all claims upon the property had passed from the one to the other. How good it is to know that "the law was our schoolmaster till Christ." That it transfers all its own claims to Him.

But let us notice also that this is done before a jury of ten men, witnesses of the law and facts. These ten may well remind us of those "ten words" or commandments which bear full testimony to the claims of God, the ruin of man, and their own powerlessness to redeem. All is done legally. "*I through the law*, died to the law," says the apostle. The law itself witnesses to its own powerlessness to redeem. "That I might live unto God," he adds—the law transfers its claims to Another. All is settled right-

eously and "witnessed by the law and the prophets." Thus "we establish the law."

Boaz is now left free for his heart to act upon its own gracious impulses, and in presence of the same ten who had witnessed the refusal of the first kinsman to purchase the inheritance he buys all—the inheritance and Ruth too, the Moabite, as she is called to remind us of the grace of the transaction. It is now his, and she is his, truly owned as his bride, and yet linked with poor Naomi the barren, widow of the dead Elimelech.

How beautifully does all this speak of the grace of Christ shown to a poor and unworthy people! Christ risen, beyond death, beyond all claims of the law, betroths to Himself forever in righteousness; the poor stranger and the wanderer finds rest at last.

Such, in some feeble measure, is the teaching of this lovely portion, and we will presently look at the further teaching of the prophets upon this subject. But it is important to dispose of that which too often disturbs the beloved people of God, through ignorance or misapplication of the word of God.

This nearest kinsman, the law, was, as we have just seen, absolutely debarred from taking a gentile into association with himself. And yet, in face of this plain fact, Christians will persist in looking upon all men as under law, and then upon the saints now being still under it as a rule of life.

As to the first, the apostle in the early chapters of the epistle to the Romans, shows the difference between those "without law"—the Gentiles, and those "under law"—the Jews. The law was given only to Israel. God was trying man under the most favorable opportunities. A nation was rescued from serv-

itude, brought into an inheritance and fenced off from the surrounding nations. They were the recipients of God's bounty, the object of His constant care. What more could He do for a people? He challenges the disobedient nation, and waits in vain for a reply. Thus the law was tried under the most favorable circumstances and proved helpless.

But this practically settled the question of justification by law for all mankind; so it is written, "By the deeds of the law shall *no flesh* be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Thus "*every* mouth is stopped, and *all the world* becomes guilty before God." In the trial of Israel, God has tried the world, and settled forever the question of justification by the law. That trial need never be repeated, it is final and conclusive.

But should one say that *he* desired to be put under the law, he is not as a fact under it, though as a matter of fact it always works in the same way, and he will find—if he truly and honestly makes the effort—that he is condemned before God. He will learn that God's trial of Israel was perfect and complete, and he has but confirmed the results of that divine probation.

A great deal has been made, however, of the distinction between the law for justification, and as a rule of life. It is impossible to separate these two—in fact Scripture does not separate them. Under law, in any way at all, is to be under the curse. The law can only pronounce a curse upon disobedience. Thus if a saint were under the law as a rule of life he is, "debtor to do the *whole* law," and if he sins in one point is guilty of all, and condemned. Sinai has but one voice. What folly to think of a rule of life



from a place which but thunders out death and judgment for the least disobedience. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Gal. iii. 21). As a matter of fact the law is "the strength of sin," and the apostle, in that wondrous seventh chapter of Romans, shows that it is as powerless to produce righteousness in a saint as in a sinner. Would to God that His people realized this. How much abortive effort, and despairing longing would they be spared!

No, beloved brethren, we are in no sense under the law; as a matter of fact we never were. Let us then not mar that perfect witness which perfectly declares God's mind for man, but as perfectly declares he failed to answer to God's mind. We leave it with its testimony, and bow our heads to that testimony, humbly acknowledging that were life or liberty to be gained in that way our case was as hopeless as the widowed Naomi, or the Moabiteess Ruth.

But, blessed be God, this leaves our risen Lord free to pour out His heart's love to us in fullest measure. We are dead to the law by the body of Christ that now we might bring forth fruit unto God, being joined in links of everlasting union to Another, even to Him who is raised from the dead. So our Lord has His way, and the very law but witnesses to it, and to its own relinquishment of every claim upon the poor helpless "sons of strangers," who find their home close the heart of the Mighty One.

*(To be continued.)*

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## THE CRUSE THAT FAILETH NOT.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

IS thy cruse of comfort wasting?  
 Rise and share it with another,  
 And, through all the years of famine,  
 It shall serve thee and thy brother.  
 Love divine will fill thy storehouse,  
 Or thy handful still renew;  
 Scanty fare for one will often  
 Make a royal feast for two.

For the heart grows rich in giving;  
 All its wealth is living grain;  
 Seeds which mildew in the garner,  
 Scattered, fill with gold the plain.  
 Is thy burden hard and heavy?  
 Do thy steps drag wearily?  
 Help to bear thy brother's burden:  
 God will bear both it and thee.

Numb and weary on the mountains,  
 Wouldst thou sleep amidst the snow?  
 Chafe that frozen form beside thee,  
 And together both shall glow.  
 Art thou stricken in life's battle?  
 Many round thee moan;  
 Lavish on their wounds thy balsams,  
 And that balm shall heal thine own.

Is the heart a well left empty?  
 None but God its void can fill:  
 Nothing but a ceaseless fountain,  
 Can its ceaseless longing still.  
 Is the heart a living power?  
 Self-entwined its strength sinks low;  
 It can only live in loving,  
 And by serving love will grow.

(Selected.)

## THE BEAST OF REVELATION XIII. I.

**D**ANIEL vii., having an important bearing on the beast of Revelation, I will first refer to that chapter. The fourth beast, or Roman empire, is here seen in vision by Daniel from its beginning in ver. 7, to its close in ver. 26. We find in the last clause of ver. 7, that "it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns;" while ver. 8 further states: "I considered the ten horns, and behold there came up among them another little horn before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; and behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." It is these ten horns, and the little horn, with which we shall mainly have to do when we turn to Revelation, but principally the latter.

Now Daniel, we are told in ver. 19, would know the truth of the fourth beast; and this is given in vers. 23-25,—"The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth etc., and the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." It will be seen that the ten horns and the little horn, will be in existence at the same time, and it is of some importance to be clear as to this, as the kingdom in its revived form, will comprise the ten horns and the little horn, and will com-

mence some time before, and run on to the close of Daniel's seventieth week.

Turning now to Rev. xiii., we get John's description of the beast. "And I stood upon the sand of the sea; and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast" (vers. 1-3). Also the last clause of ver. 5,—“And power (or authority) was given unto him to continue forty and two months.”

As in Dan. vii., so here, the beast is seen to rise out of the sea, which is generally interpreted to mean, the multitudes in an unsettled state. And it may be well to note in passing, his close similarity to the dragon from whom he derives his power etc., which chap. xii. 3, supplies,—“And behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns.” The resemblance is striking and significant. It will also be seen that he combines in himself the leading distinctive features of the first three beasts of Dan. vii.,—viz. the leopard, the bear, and the lion; the order in which they are given in Daniel, being here reversed.

Before turning to other scriptures, it may perhaps be well to gather from those already before us, what they would seem to unfold concerning the beast. First then, Daniel's vision of the fourth beast, or

Roman empire, clearly points, through the typical meaning of the ten horns, to another phase of this great empire, when it will be revived in a ten kingdom form; this we gather from chap. vii. 24,—“And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that *shall arise*,” from which it is evident that it looks forward to a future time. We are also told in the same verse that “another shall rise after them,” foreshadowed by the little horn of ver. 8. Now it is this king, or little horn, which Rev. xiii. speaks of as *the beast*.

In proof of this I would point to the striking similarity between the little horn of Daniel, and the beast of Revelation. Dan. vii. 21 says, “The same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them.” Rev. xiii. 7, “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.” Dan. vii. 25, “And he shall speak great words against the Most High.” Rev. xiii. 6, “And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God etc.”—Dan. vii. 25, “And they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time.” (The same period spoken of in Dan. xii. 7, as “time, times, and an half;” or an exact period of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years.)\* Turning to Rev. xiii. 5, we get the same period of time allotted to the beast. “And power (or authority,) was given unto him to continue forty and two months,”† which is equivalent to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years. Thus the identity of the little horn of Dan. vii., with the beast of Rev. xiii., is complete.

There are also other features connected with the beast of Revelation which demand some consideration. In chap. xiii. 1, he is seen to have “seven

\* A Jewish year consists of 360 days.

† I. e., Jewish months, which consist of 30 days each.

heads," which chap. xvii. 9, informs us are "seven mountains." I do not interpret this, as some have done, to mean "the seven hilled city of Rome," which I consider would destroy its significant meaning; but rather as seven states, or kingdoms. Now we are told in Dan. vii. 24, that "the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings." As before stated, the Roman empire will be revived in a ten kingdom form, and the time of such revival will be soon after the rapture of the saints; then another king, or "the little horn," which we before saw to be identical with the beast of Rev. xiii., will arise and subdue three kings out of the ten, thus leaving seven; and I strongly incline to the belief, that these seven kings, or kingdoms, are symbolized by the "seven heads" of Rev. xiii. 1, and xvii. 9, and so identified are they with the beast, who now becomes their imperial head, that the woman, or harlot, of chap. xvii. 3, is seen sitting on the beast, having the seven heads and ten horns; while in ver. 9, the seven heads are viewed as seven mountains (or kingdoms) on which the woman sitteth.

It yet remains to account for the ten crowned horns of chap. xiii. 1, the angel's interpretation of which will be found in chap. xvii. 12, which reads: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." That these ten kings are quite distinct from "the ten kings, or horns," of Dan. vii., is clearly evidenced by the fact that three of *their* number are *not* subdued by the beast, but rather, under the hand of

God, *the whole ten* "agree to give their kingdom unto the beast," ver. 17, for the destruction of the harlot (papal Rome) as ver. 16, shows—"And the ten horns which thou sawest, and (not 'upon') the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

Moreover we find these ten kings allied with the beast right up to the close of his career; this will be seen from ver. 14, where we are told—"these shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them etc.," thus running on to the same time when the beast himself shall be overcome and cast alive into the lake of fire (chap. xix. 20). Viewed in another way, three of the first ten kings (i. e. of Dan. vii.) are subdued by the beast, and he becomes the imperial head of the remaining seven; whereas the last ten kings, as we have seen, are the beast's allies, "giving their power and strength to him," ver. 13, and thus under this second aspect, the two are manifestly distinct the one from the other.

Reverting again to chap. xiii. ver. 3 gives us another event connected with the beast. "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." I would gather from this scripture that the beast, or imperial head, will be subjected to some very severe reverse in battle, which the words "wounded to death," would imply; and the latter clause of ver. 14, would support this view, "that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by *a sword*, and did live." This would seem to clearly point to a reverse in battle by the sword. But that this wound will

only be partial may be gathered from the fact that, only *one* of his heads is seen as wounded to death, which would seem to me to imply, that his reverse will only be temporary, and his recovery so rapid, that all the world will wonder after him.

Turning to chap. xvii. 8, we get something further—"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, . . . when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is," or "shall be present." This, taken in conjunction with ver. 11, "The beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." Also chap. xiii. 3, "And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast," forms an important factor in determining the identity of the beasts of the two chapters.

Reverting again to ver. 11, a difficulty presents itself as to how he (the beast) is the eighth, and yet of the seven. I think this may be explained as follows:—The Roman empire, as we have before seen, will be revived in a ten kingdom form (the seventh phase of this great empire) three of these kingdoms being subdued by the beast, or little horn, who himself becomes the imperial head; and so it can be said of him, he is the eighth, and is of the seven. Chap. xvii. 10, also speaks of this *seventh kingdom* in the following words: "The other is not yet come; and when he cometh he must continue a short space." Why a short space? Because the empire, i. e., in its ten kingdom form, after a brief period of its restored existence, passes into the hands of the beast, who as



its imperial head will form an eighth, which will further tend to explain the difficulty why he is the eighth, and yet of the seven.

I would here add another thought, that I believe the rider of the white horse of Rev. vi. 2, is identical with the beast seen rising out of the sea in chap. xiii. 1; the latter showing his origin, while the former would point to the beginning of his victorious career. And if this be so, it adds force to my contention, as to "the other yet to come" of xvii. 10, and who continues for a short space; which I interpreted as the Roman empire in its revived, or seventh form of government. That it will only continue for "a short space" is evident as it will have ceased to exist in its ten kingdom form previous to the opening of the seals, when the rider of the white horse will have become its new imperial head. And I am more than ever convinced that it is in this last phase it is seen in chaps. xiii. and xvii., and in no sense retrospective, as some have viewed it.

I might just add, for the sake of clearness, that where I have used the words, "the beast," throughout my remarks in connection with chaps. xiii. and xvii., I have done so to preserve the scripture appellation, but in almost every instance it must be interpreted to mean the imperial head of the revived Roman empire. The empire may, in one or two instances, be associated with the head symbolically.

To these remarks I add a brief history of the beast:

1. The little horn of Dan. vii. 8, 24. 2. The one who shall confirm a covenant with the mass of the Jewish people, and cause their sacrifice and oblation to cease in the midst of the week (Dan. ix. 27).

3. The rider of the white horse commencing his career of conquest (Rev. vi. 2). 4. First seen to arise out of the sea, (i. e., the multitudes in an unsettled state) and characterized by seven heads and ten horns (Rev. xiii. 1). The seven heads symbolizing seven mountains (chap. xvii. 9), i. e., states or kingdoms, of which he becomes the imperial head. The ten horns symbolizing the ten kings of chap. xvii. 12, but wholly distinct, as I have shown, from the ten kings of Dan. vii. 24. And here I would add an additional reason in support of this. The ten kings of Rev. xvii. 12, it will be seen, had "*received no kingdom as yet,*" (ver. 12), whereas the ten kings of Dan. vii. 24, were already reigning previous to the beast coming into power, for it is three of their number whom he subdues before he becomes the imperial head; whereas these latter ten kings, none of whom are subdued, "*give their power and strength to the beast,*" (ver. 13), and are allied with him to the close of his eventful career. 5. Identified with the dragon (Satan), by the seven heads and ten horns, compare chap. xii. 3. 6. Possesses the leading distinctive features of the first three beasts of Dan. vii., and derives his power from Satan (chap. xiii. 3). 7. Receives a severe shock in his military career, described in chap. xiii. 3, as "*one of his heads as it were wounded to death,*" see also last clause of ver. 14. I believe we get the symbol of this in the eighth chapter under the fourth trumpet, compare also chap. xvii. 8, 11. 8. Becomes an object of worship, (chap. xiii. 4, 8). 9. Becomes a blasphemer of God, and his name and temple and them that dwell in heaven, (chap. xiii. 6; compare Dan vii. 25). 10. Makes war with the saints (chap.

xiii. 7; compare Dan. vii. 21). 11. Upon the sounding of the sixth trumpet his time of power will be limited to forty-two months, or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years, (chap. xiii. 5), being the same period as the two witnesses of chap. xi. 3, whom he will overcome and kill (ver. 7). 12. Will favor the Antichrist, who will cause an image of the beast to be set up and worshiped (chap. xiii. 14, 15). 13. Will ultimately be associated with the harlot of chap. xvii., see vers. 2, 7, 9, and subsequently under the hand of God, aided by the ten kings of chap. xvii. 12, will destroy the harlot (i. e., papal Rome) see vers. 16, 17. 14. Finally assisted by the ten kings and others, will make war with the Lamb (chap. xvi. 13, 14; xvii. 12-14; xix. 19). 15. His doom will be cast alive into the lake of fire (chap. xix. 20).

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## THE PRAYER OF JABEZ.

“AND Jabez was more honorable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow.”

“And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested” (1 Chron. iv. 9, 10).

The fact that honorable mention is made of this man, and that God granted his request, should be sufficient to attract our attention and lead us to a closer inquiry, if we would seek His approval and

blessing. What is said in a general way of this man is, that "he was more honorable than his brethren."

This in itself surely is enough to stir our hearts to diligence to know what it is that God so honors, and makes honorable mention of. We shall find too, that such lessons will not be mere statements of doctrine or fact; but living lessons that appeal to our inmost being, and that will lead us to Christ.

As to the details recorded: "His mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow." Here at the beginning we may find connection with another "son of sorrow" called by his mother Ben-oni—that is, "Son of my sorrow"—called by his father, Benjamin,—"son of my right hand" (Gen. xxxv. 18), pointing on as by the prophet's finger to the Christ, that should first suffer, and enter into His glory. And here may we not see, in a spiritual way, this man, put in company with his Master while waiting for the inheritance, cast upon God in true dependence?

Now, we behold him praying; simple, earnest, believing prayer, to "the God of Israel." He does not forget His connection with His beloved people chosen in grace, and destined for glory, while he turns to seek for himself faith's present portion.

"Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, *and* enlarge my coast, *and* that Thine hand might be with me, *and* that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!"

Four things are requested, and how suited! How short, how simple the earnest prayer! How full its blessed answer! "God granted him that which he requested."

"Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed." This

is the simple language of trust, and although a "son of sorrow" he knows, that, "the blessing of the Lord it maketh rich; and He addeth no sorrow with it."

"The God of Israel is his God" and if sorrowful he may yet be "always rejoicing."

"Enlarge my coast." He asks no mean possessions of Him whose delight it is to give; but more land to till, more fruit to enjoy, more to "earnestly contend for" in the country surrounded with enemies. God had said, "I have given you the land," and faith takes Him at his word; and God honors the man that so honors Him.

He asks according to His word—His word was abiding in him—and he gets the sure answer.

Here, may we not say, he is in company with the wholehearted Caleb? God is with him, and he has no cause to fear. Covetousness of such sort is not that "which is idolatry" (Eph. i. 15-23; iii. 1-21; Col. iii.).

"And that Thine hand might be with me." Not "the wisdom of man" does his faith stand in; "but the power of God." "The mighty hand of God;" opened to satisfy "the need of every living thing," he would humble himself under. The guiding hand of Him who "knows the way He taketh" is the hand he desires should undertake for him; and lead him into his inheritance. And last, as one having "no confidence in the flesh;" and who would "with fear and trembling, work out his own salvation" prays; "That Thou wouldest keep me from evil."

Here we read the sweet testimony of what "the grace of God" does; grace that has brought salvation, and fixes the eyes on the glory of God, and assures

the believing soul it is its own. Grace that teaches, *not*, "Let us do evil, that good may come," but, to abhor evil, and cleave to that which is good; "that having denied ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

The man born in sorrow, brought to know "the God of the living" as his God, received His promises in faith, learned to trust Him for every blessing, now prays in a day of failure, while waiting for the full possession and enjoyment of the promised inheritance, to be "kept from the evil;" adding, "that it may not grieve me." He thus witnesses to his soul's condition, and that that which would grieve the Lord, into whose companionship he had been brought, would be a grief to him.

How quickly the eye is now turned from the man "more honorable than his brethren," to his yet more honorable Master, and to hear Him pray, as He considers His own yet in the world:

"Holy Father . . . keep them from the evil." He who was the true "Son of sorrow," born in the very midst of it, and in His life a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," "who bare *our* griefs and carried *our* sorrows" in loving sympathy: and still more "who His own self bare *our* sins in His own body on the tree."

Then, if we have known sorrow, and sin which brought all the sorrow; if we have known that blessed Man that "was made sin for us" to save us from the sorrows of eternal judgment; if we have heard Him say, as He dies under the load that He took for us, when the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, "IT IS FINISHED;" giving peace to our souls, shall we

not uncover our heads, and bow our hearts, as we listen to Him pray:—

“Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are.

“While I was with them in the world I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

“I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

“I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world; but that Thou shouldest *keep them from the evil*,” and add our earnest Amen! The same God that honored Jabez, and granted his request, “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” shall grant *us* His blessing, and keep us from falling.

May the Lord lead us for His own name's sake.

“The Lord is faithful who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil” (2 Thess. iii. 3). W. M. H.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Ques. 14.—Please explain the meaning of the Rider on the white horse, Rev. vi. 2. Does he go forth as an antichrist or as a warrior? Is he a real man or only a symbol?

Ans.—He goes forth “conquering and to conquer,” so evidently he is not an antichrist, but a warrior. The bow also would speak of this. He thus stands for the victorious spread of power in the latter days. The horse is symbolic of power and rule, but the rider is something more than a symbol. Being the first to come forth, he seems to be the ruler of the revived Roman Empire. Later on we see this ruler as “the beast”

(ch. xiii. 1), revived in satanic power after he had received the deadly wound.

It is of solemn interest to note that this Rider comes forth at the call of the first living creature—the Lion. Christ as King is represented as the lion, and if He is rejected by man, there is nothing left but this warrior ruler. The Jews declared “we have no king but Cæsar,” and in this last of the Cæsars we see the heading up of that apostasy of the world from its rightful Ruler.

QUES. 15.—Please explain the expression “sons of God,” Gen. vi. 2. To my mind it seems undoubtedly to point to the children of Seth. Yet I believe some hold and speak of the words in Jude 6, 7, as pointing to another view.

ANS.—We have no doubt the first is the correct view. “Sons of God,” it is true, is used of angels (Job i. 6; xxxviii. 7). But as in all Scripture, the connection must be examined. In Genesis there is no mention of angelic beings in connection with these times, on the other hand there is a distinction between the descendants of Seth and those of Cain. Let this be seen, and all is clear, while the other thought is not only incongruous, but contrary to the entire teaching of the word of God. The passage in Jude gives no support to the view mentioned. It treats of an entirely different subject—the fall of the angels, which occurred doubtless before the creation of man. There is no connection between vers. 6, 7 which is sought to be given.

QUES. 16.—Is there a difference in character between the judgment-seat of Christ and the great white Throne?

ANS.—Of course it is understood that there is the widest difference between these two judgments as to time and persons involved, as well as what comes into judgment. The judgment-seat of Christ takes place at the beginning, we might say, of the millennium, and that of the great white Throne at its close. Only the saved are at the former, and only the lost at the latter; while *works* are reviewed at the former and *persons* judged at the latter.

But as to the *character* of the judgment, of the holiness which is its basis, there is no difference. The light in which the saints' works will be manifested is just as intense as that which will search out “the hidden things of darkness” in the unsaved. Does not this explain the apostle's expression, “knowing therefore the terror of the Lord” (2 Cor. v. 11)? He would entreat sinners, in view of that judgment before *them*, to be reconciled to God, for he knew the solemn reality of that judgment which would search out all the life of the saints.



## WHO WILL BE SAVED IN THE COMING PERIOD OF JUDGMENT?

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**E**RE seeking to answer this question, which seems to be a perplexity to some, it might be well to state, as briefly as possible what is meant by the period of judgment, as this paper will probably fall into the hands of some, who, as yet have given but little attention to prophetic teaching. In doing this it will be necessary to do little more than refer to a large number of passages of Scripture, many of which lack of space will forbid quoting in full, but it is hoped the reader will refer to any that are unfamiliar to him.

First, then, let it be noted that Old Testament prophecy *never* refers to the dispensation in which we live (extending from Pentecost to the Lord's coming for His own) save in a most indefinite way as, for instance, in Dan. ix. 26, a passage which will come before us a little farther down. From Moses to Malachi, Scripture is mainly occupied with one nation, Israel, (Amos iii. 2; Deut. vii. 6; Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20) and the hope of that nation, namely, the raising up of the Prophet (Deut. viii. 15), Priest (Ps. cx. 4; Zech. vi. 5), and King (Is. xxxii; Ps. ii. 6), who is to bring them into everlasting blessing as a people (Ps. cxxxii. 11-18; Is. xxxv. 10; li. 11; lxi. 7), though not until they have been born again (Ezek. xxxvi. 24-30).

The Gentiles shall share in that blessing (Is. lvi. 6; lxxv. 1) but not as on the same footing with Israel; rather in subjection to them (Is. xiv. 1-3; lx. 3-5; lxii. 2, 3).

Ere the ushering in of that day of Jehovah's power and Messiah's glory the prophets, however, predicted the rejection of both the looked-for Redeemer (Is. liii.) and the nation (Is. l.), the former by Israel to whom He came, the latter themselves set aside by God (Zech. vii. 13-14) while the rejected Messiah takes His place in the heavens on Jehovah's throne (Ps. cx. 1) which He will occupy until the future repentance of the people (Hosea v. 15). This setting aside of Israel is, however, not final, as the thirtieth and thirty-first chapters of Jeremiah, together with many other portions of the Word, plainly declare. But before their restoration to divine favor and the land of Palestine they must pass through a short period of unequalled persecution and chastisement called the "time of Jacob's trouble" in Jer. xxx. 7. At the close of this time they will be ready to acknowledge the crucified as their Lord and will "mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son" (Zech. xii. 10-14; xiii. 6, 7). In the darkest hour of their sorrow when Jerusalem is compassed about with armies and they are in direst distress, He will appear as their Deliverer and to the destruction of their enemies, after which the tabernacle of David will be raised up and the reign of righteousness ushered in (Zech. xiv.; Amos ix. 8-15).

Thus far, the Old Testament. Turning now to the later revelation we find many new data introduced without which the present working of the Spirit of God in the world would be inexplicable. In Rom. xi. we are told that upon the breaking off of the natural branches (Israel) from the tree of promise, wild branches (Gentiles) are introduced in their place; in other words, Israel's rejection has but

made way for unforetold grace to be shown to the nations though Old Testament prophecy of blessing to the heathen can be quoted as proof that such grace is not in collision with the Word. This special work among the Gentiles is not to go on forever though, for if these continue not in divine goodness they too shall be cut off and the natural branches grafted in again, for God is able.

God, then, is doing a work, unmentioned in the Jewish oracles during the time that His earthly people are "Lo-ammi" ("not My people," Hosea i. ix.) and unacknowledged by Him, and "blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. xi. 25). This, however, is a "mystery" (of which there are several), one of the secret things (Deut. xxix. 29) till now unrevealed. The Lord Jesus confirms this (but rather from the political side) in His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem—the long period of desolation and Gentile supremacy following it, and finally the end in His personal appearing (Luke xxi.). In verse 24 we read, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

This connects us again with Dan. ix. where we get the great prophecy of the "seventy weeks." A lengthy exposition of this passage cannot be attempted here, but we briefly notice the main points. From the cycle of time, seventy weeks (or sevens) of years (note the periods before the prophet's mind in ver. 2) making in all 490 years, are "determined" or "cut off" and given to Daniel's people, of course, the Jewish nation.

Ere this length of time expires six important events will have taken place: 1st, transgression will

be finished; 2nd, an end will be made of sins; 3rd, atonement (rather than "reconciliation") will be made for iniquity; 4th, everlasting righteousness will be brought in; 5th, vision and prophecy will be sealed up, or finished, i. e., all fulfilled; and 6th, the most holy, or holy of holies of the millennial temple at Jerusalem will be anointed (see Ezek xl.-xlviii).

The seventy weeks are divided into three unequal periods; 1st, seven weeks or forty-nine years; 2nd, sixty-two weeks, or 434 years; 3rd, one week or seven years. During the first seven weeks "the strait times" (see margin) the city and wall of Jerusalem were to be rebuilt. The date from which to count is found in Neh. ii., when a "commandment went forth to restore and build Jerusalem." The sixty-two weeks seem to have immediately followed and ended in the coming of Messiah. After the conclusion of this period He was cut off and had nothing, but by this, atonement was made. Then comes in the present long interval of Jerusalem's treading down. The city is destroyed as our Lord foretold also, and "even unto the *end* shall be war" until one arises who confirms a covenant with the mass of the Jews for the last final week. Clearly, then, this week is still future. The prophetic clock stopped at Calvary. It will not start again till "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." The present is a timeless epoch, parenthetically introduced between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks, in which God is taking out from among the Gentiles a people to His Name (Acts xv. 14). Not that He has utterly given up the Jew now, but both Jew and Gentile stand on one footing, "there is no difference for all have sinned" (Rom. iii.). Both alike are saved through faith in

Christ, and all such are made members of the One Body, the Church, by the Holy Ghost, and united to the Lord Jesus Christ as Head in heaven, another mystery, hitherto unrevealed. (See Rom. xvi. 25-28; 1 Cor. xii.; Eph. iv.; Col. i. 24-29). This began with the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.; 1 Cor. xii. 13). It will be completed at the coming of the Lord to call His Church to be forever with Himself, an event which may take place at any moment (1 Thess. iv. 15-18; 1 Cor. xv. 51-54; 2 Thess. ii. 1). Then the long delayed seventieth week will begin to run its course. At its conclusion Daniel's prophecy (as all other millennial prophecy) will be entirely fulfilled. Atonement was made for iniquity after the expiration of the sixty-ninth week. Everlasting righteousness will be brought in at the end of the seventieth.

This brief period, though, will be one of judgment throughout, and that threefold. It will include judgment on apostate Christendom, on Israel, and on the nations at large. It is to be the awful result of the rejection of the Prince of Peace.

The book of Revelation from chap. iv.-xix. is occupied entirely with its solemn events. The saints—of all prior dispensations, as well as the Church—are seen enthroned in heaven, as the twenty-four elders who have been redeemed with the blood of the Lamb (chap. v.) at the beginning of the week. They ride forth as the "armies of heaven" with "The Word of God" at His glorious appearing at the close. The last three years and a half will be especially the time when Israel shall receive "of the Lord's hand double for all her sins" (Is. xl. 2), the "time of Jacob's trouble" of Jer. xxx. 7 and

Dan. xii. 1, and the "great tribulation" of Matt. xxiv. and Rev. vii. 14. The covenant-breaking prince of Dan. ix. is doubtless the beast, the head of the Roman empire who makes a league with the wilful king of chap. xi. 36-39—the Antichrist of prophecy (1 Jno. ii. 18), the idol shepherd of Zech. xi. 15-17, who will "come in his own name" as foretold by the Lord Jesus in Jno. v. 43, and be received by the mass of the Jews as Messiah, but who will become the cruel persecutor of a faithful company designated as "the remnant" (Is. xi. 11; Ezek. vi. 8; Rev. xii. 17, etc).

Trusting that the above will be clear to any who "search the Scriptures" to see "whether these things are so," we will now devote our attention to the subject proper of the paper. To many the preliminary remarks were doubtless quite unnecessary, but others may find them helpful.

The seventh of Revelation, with its sealed 144,000 of Israelites and white-robed multitude of saved Gentiles, is proof positive that many will be brought to know the Lord *after* the taking away of the church and before the establishment of the millennial kingdom. These are not saved for heaven, though we have an additional martyr company who are (Rev. xiv. 13; xv. 2-4); but the companies of chap. vii. are saved for the earth. They will be "left" to enter into the kingdom as set up in power at the appearing of Jesus Christ, when others are "taken" away in judgment (Matt. xxiv. 40; Luke xvii. 34-36), and are probably identical, as to the Gentiles, with the "righteous" of Matt. xxv. 31-46 who "inherit the kingdom."

Where then will they be found? Will any who

have rejected the gospel as now presented be among them ?

In 2 Thess. ii. we read of the hindrance to the full manifestation of the evil of the period of judgment referred to, which is evidently the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church on earth. He "lets" or hinders until "He be taken out of the way." When He goes up with the Church at the Lord's descent into the air, "then the lawless one shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall annul by the appearing of His coming; whose coming is according to the working of Satan in all power and signs and wonders of falsehood, and in all deceit of unrighteousness to them that perish, because they have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this reason God sends to them a working of error, that they should believe what is false, that all might be judged who have not believed the truth but have pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 8-13, J. N. D's Trans.).

This is certainly a most solemn passage deserving to be carefully weighed. It refers to something which may take place very, very soon; a state of affairs many living now may enter upon shortly. The more minutely it is examined the more clearly it will be seen that it cuts off all hope of any being saved in that coming "hour of temptation" (Rev. ii. 10) who have heard the gospel of the grace of God in this "day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2), but heard only to reject it. It puts a terrible responsibility on those who listen again and again to the proclamation of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, yet have never rested in Him for themselves. To

believers' children and unsaved members of their families it speaks loudly and warningly, for soon those who know the Lord will be "caught up"; then dire judgment will rest upon those who trusted Him not for themselves.

All who "believed not the truth" and who "received not the love of the truth" when it was presented to them are given up to a "working of error" or "strong delusion" that they might be judged. In the day when the truth was preached they turned carelessly from it because they had pleasure in unrighteousness. They were "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. iii. 4). Now they are given up to error, and that by God Himself. Like Elymas the sorcerer, who rejected the light of the gospel and was smitten with blindness, so upon these, having turned from the truth, God *sends* the delusion that causes them to believe the lie of the Antichrist.

For former instances of God's sending men delusions and visiting them with judicial blindness, see the cases of Pharaoh (Ex. xi. 10), of Ahab (2 Chron. xviii.), and of the nation of Israel (Is. vi. 9-10; Matt. xiii. 13-15), all who hear the gospel and believe it not are "condemned already" (Jno. iii. 18). If the Lord comes while they are still in that state, the condemnation is final, and we note their dreadful doom in 2 Thess. i. 7-10, together with the contrast of the blessed place that might have been theirs, had they but believed the testimony so graciously given. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that *obey not the gospel* of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the pres-



ence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe (because *our testimony among you was believed*) in that day." There could be no stronger declaration that all who reject the testimony now, will be unable to avail themselves of the testimony then, while the result of the outpouring of divine wrath upon the scene will only harden in place of bringing to repentance (Rev. xvi. 9, 10, 11, 21).

The teaching has become current among many that the taking away of the saved will result in an awakening in nominal Christendom, so that many who now have a name to live, but are dead, will in that day turn to the Lord. As to this, Scripture, as we have seen, states exactly the opposite, which is confirmed by the Lord Jesus in the Gospels. At the end of the age the tares are gathered in bundles and burned (Matt. xiii. 30; 40-42); the man without the wedding garment on, is cast into outer darkness (Matt. xxii. 13); the unfaithful servant is appointed his portion with the hypocrites (Matt. xxiv 48-51); the foolish virgins, though they go for oil, are shut outside the door (Matt. xxv. 11); the unprofitable servant has even his profession taken away (vers. 28-30); those who neglected to enter in at the strait gate seek in vain to enter then (Luke xiii. 24); even as those who refused to be warned by Enoch and Noah perished in the flood, and those who listened not to Lot were destroyed in Sodom (Luke xvii. 26-30).

In short, we search Scripture in vain for one hint "that any gospel-rejector will be saved in that day. Nor does the expression in Rev. vii. 9 militate against

this: "Of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," for manifestly none of Israel will be among them, as we see the 144,000 of the twelve tribes quite distinct from the great multitude. The expression really declares the universality of the response to the everlasting gospel among the heathen nations, but Christendom, as Israel, is not counted, unless indeed, there be found even there some who never heard the gospel before. We leave then this solemn part of the subject, to look at the other side of the question, Who then can be saved?

And, first of all, we are reminded that this will be the period of Israel's awakening, as we have already seen in several passages. In Dan. xii. 3, we read, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever," and this, as the first verse assures us, during the time of trouble, but "at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

The hour of their darkest trouble and deepest sorrow will result in the elect among them returning to the Lord. The 144,000 of Rev. vii. picture to us those who will say, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn and He will heal us; He hath smitten and He will bind us up" (Hosea vi. 1). Zion's sore travail shall result in a great bringing forth of children as predicted in Micah v. 3, and Is. lxvi. 8. We quote the latter passage, "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children." The

verses following are deserving also of special notice in this connection. See too Zech. xii. and xiii.

And so the "blindness in part" is to be done away, the "fulness of the Gentiles" having come in, as shown also in Hosea iii. 4, 5. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim; afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness, in the latter days." This is true not of the nation as a whole. (See Zech. xiii. 8, 9; Is. xxiv. 13, also Ezek. xx. 31-44), but of the remnant. The mass will be destroyed for their apostasy. The remnant will be acknowledged as the nation, "and so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. xi. 26). To be of the sons of Jacob even, does not insure an opportunity of grace. None who refuse the truth now, whether Jew or Gentile, can be saved then.

Through the Jew, the gospel of the Kingdom will, during this time, be preached in all the earth for a witness, ere the end shall come. Sent forth by the Spirit from on high they will proclaim far and wide the approach of the Kingdom and call upon men to repent as John the Baptist did of old. See Matt. xxiv. 14.

The everlasting gospel of Rev. xiv. 6, 7 is probably identical with this. There it is the calling on the creature to acknowledge the Creator-God in a day when all the world will be wondering after the beast (Rev. xiii.). Is. lxvi. 18-21 is instructive in this connection: "It shall come, that I will gather all nations, and tongues; and they shall come and see

My glory. And I will send a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Jovan, to the isles afar off, *that have not heard My fame*, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles, and they shall bring your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses and in chariots and in litters, and upon mules and upon swift beasts, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord." Here we doubtless have the ingathering of the ten tribes, for the Lord will "save the tents of Judah first" (Zech. xii. 7). Connected with it however we see grace going out to the Gentiles who have not heard the truth previously. The great result of this is seen also in Zech. viii. 20, 23.

A word on the judgment of Matt. xxv. and we have done. This takes place at the Lord's coming to the earth. The *living* nations are gathered before Him. The separation is made according to the treatment accorded the Jewish missionaries mentioned above whom He owns as "My brethren." Intelligence in divine things is not marked in any, but at least they did not reject or neglect the messengers. They are saved and enter into the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. They are the "blessed of [His] Father."

And so even though the sword of judgment is unsheathed, grace is still exercised according to the word, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy" (Rom. ix. 15). From Israel and the Gen-

tiles a countless number will go into the millennial kingdom and acknowledge the sway of the blessed One, once made a curse for them, as for us. But not one who has spurned the Lamb of God in the present period will be among them.

There will, as briefly noticed above, be some who will be numbered with the heavenly saints after the Church is gone. They will be exclusively Jewish as evidenced by the fact that they sing "the song of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb" (Rev. xv. 3). Their part will be, not with the Church, the body of Christ and Eve of the Last Adam, but doubtless with those of old who "desired a better country, that is an heavenly" (Heb. xi. 16). In Rev. xx. we see them enthroned with the rest who live and reign a thousand years. With the Lamb they will be forever, but not theirs will be the special place enjoyed by those who now believe in Him and who are identified with Him in the present hour of His rejection.

H. A. I.

## BRIEF BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

### VII. THE GREAT FOES.

THE child of God has three great enemies in his life on earth—seductive, selfish, unrelenting in their warfare. They are:

*1. The World.*—In the New Testament, "the world" is used for "the habitable earth," "the people dwelling on it," and the customs, habits, ways, usages etc. of the people (Rom. xii. 2); and it is in this last sense we use it. "All that is in the world,

the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John ii. 16). The child of God having been delivered from this present evil world (or age) Gal. i. 4, is to remember its "friendship is enmity with God" (James iv. 4), and so is not to love it (1 John ii. 15), nor to be conformed to it in any manner (Rom. xii. 2). Because "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (or the wicked one), (1 John v. 19; 2 Cor. iv. 4; 1 Pet. iv. 3). The customs, society, usages, etc. of the world, would allure the child of God from whole heartedness to Christ, by their seductive attractions, amusements etc.; just as the "mixed multitude" coming out from Egypt with the Israelites "fell a lusting," and caused them to sigh for "the cucumbers and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic" of Egypt (Num. xi.). Following those who were sheltered from judgment by the blood of the Lamb (Ex. xii.), and delivered by passing the Red Sea (Ex. xiv.), their heart goes back to the fruit of that from which they had escaped. Do we try to excuse or justify our action, by saying many "good people" do likewise? This, alas, may be only too true, but "thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Ex. xxiii. 2). It is not a question of approval or disapproval of "good people" but whether it is of God or not. 1 John ii. 15 and 1 Cor. x. 31 should be decisive. It may be a matter of dress, some "harmless amusement" in these days of summer relaxation, the desire for the worldly position, or wealth, but, alas, if yielded to it may sever the saint's communion, grieve the Spirit, and cause much prayer, and brokenness of spirit ere it be restored.

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, in shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" (1 Tim. ii. 9).

"They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things" (1 Tim. vi. 9-11). Beware of "the little foxes which spoil the vines" (Song ii. 15). It is against a disposition to this "the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy," i. e., earnestly desireth the whole heart for Christ.

2. *The Flesh*.—This is self, the most subtle enemy of the three; we may withdraw from the world's alluring power, and yet so vain is the natural heart, that it may gender in a Christian, a spirit of self-complacency, near akin to self-righteousness, or a "holier than thou" spirit, or self-gratification, vain display, either in dress or speech, or manner, so different from Him who has left us an example (1 Pet. ii. 21), "meek and lowly" (Matt. xi. 29), and "made Himself of no reputation" (Phil. ii. 7). The injunction is "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lust which war against the soul" (1 Pet. ii. 11). Is it some habit, considered by many as not inconsistent? "That they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him, which died for them and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 15), and so we are not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, for it is just as bad in the believer

as in the unbeliever and cannot please God (Rom. viii. 7). Thus we are to have no confidence in it (Phil. iii. 3) and make no provision for it (Rom. xiii. 14).

3. *The Devil*.—He is the one who gives activity and power to the two former enemies, bringing them into living action against the child of God, with an energy which only the Son of God can overcome. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jno. iii. 8). Sometimes he appears in a most attractive garb, as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14) often hindering the movements of God's people (1 Thess. ii. 18), calling in question the truth of God's word and His love (Gen. iii. 4; Matt. iv. 3-11; Luke iv. 3-13; Eph. vi. 11, 12), and in open opposition 1 Pet. v. 8. His great aim ever is to cast a slur or dishonor upon the name of our blessed Lord, or to mar His work, if such were possible. Imitation is his most powerful weapon in these days especially presenting "the form of godliness." Thus he works through the world by suggesting conformity to it, and through the flesh by pandering to its taste and gratifying self.

*The relief, deliverance, and victory.* There is but one method for this, and this is complete subjection to the word of God. God places every believer on His blessed Son before Him, as dead.

"For ye are dead" (Col. iii. 3).

"Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6).

"The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14).



Such is the *position* in which the weakest, youngest believer is placed before God, just as the Israelites were sheltered from judgment by the blood of the Lamb, and brought out of Egypt (a place of bondage, type of the world) given victory over the Egyptians, and Pharaoh (types of sins and sin) by the passage of the Red Sea, as God, in the death of Christ grants each believer shelter from a worse wrath, deliverance from a worse bondage; victory over spiritual foes, and places His people in a new position, on the resurrection side of the grave, and with a new life to live for Him. Victory is then not a matter of personal *attainment* in holiness of character, accomplished by some struggle, or *yielding* process, but is a matter of believing God's word, and reckoning oneself in the place *practically* in which God places such positionally (Rom. vi. 4).

"Likewise *reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin *therefore* reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead" (Rom. vi. 11-13).

"And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him" (2 Cor. v. 15).

But it must ever be remembered that this is only accomplished by the energy of the Holy Spirit applying the word of God to the heart, for practical effect in life, and the believer recognizing his responsibility by complete obedience to the Word.

"Therefore brethren, we are debtors not to the

flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. viii. 12, 13).

"This I say then, walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye can not do the things that ye would. If we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. v. 16, 17, 25).

"And this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith" (1 John v. 4).

"And take . . . the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God" (Eph. vi. 17).

Thus and thus alone can the child of God be fortified against these three foes or overcome them, and should he succumb to any of their attacks God's grace still provides a relief in the advocacy of Christ, and deep contrite confession of the sin.

"If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John ii. 1; i. 9).

As to the devil, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Jas. iv. 7). He is a conquered foe, whom Christ has "destroyed" (Heb. ii. 14). We need not fear one already overcome, but can overcome him practically in our daily life "steadfast in the faith."

B. W. J.

## GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

## 7. NEARER THAN THE NEAREST.

## Chapter iv.

*Continued from page 225.*

AS we have already seen, Boaz takes Ruth as his wife in the presence of the kinsman and of the witnesses. Nothing is "done in a corner," no righteous demands are ignored, or any necessary claim set aside. The very law which witnessed against the apostate nation will witness also to the righteousness of Him who restores to Himself on the basis of grace the penitent and believing remnant. The prophets bear abundant witness to this, linking, as we have already seen in some measure, the people's past unfaithfulness as Jehovah's espoused, and the future grace which will restore them.

"Of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest playing the harlot" (Jer. ii. 20). God had rescued them from Egypt, and they had promised, at Sinai, not to transgress. Alas, the golden calf was set up before the law was brought into camp, and the long list of subsequent idolatries told how they had broken the covenant. "High places," for idolatrous worship had dotted the whole land, while in the shade of every green tree the abominations of heathenism had been practised. Spiritually and literally did these unholy and unclean rites deserve the name of harlotry so frequently given them in the prophets. What could God do with such a nation but put them away?

"They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord." "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." "Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord. . . . Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold we come unto Thee, for Thou art our God" (Jer. iii.). This whole portion of Jeremiah is exceedingly beautiful and touching. The tender pleadings of divine love to a bold, faithless, and wanton people, the assurances of forgiveness and everlasting mercy are touching in the extreme.

"Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant, . . . and I will establish My covenant with thee and thou shalt know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. xvi. 60, 62). Here again, after depicting in the utmost faithfulness, the originally helpless condition of the people, their "time of love" and the beauty with which He adorned them, their wanton shameless, faithlessness, and hopeless degradation. God assures them of a recovery and a re-union in the bonds of a marriage covenant "never to be broken or forgotten."

Similarly, in the familiar passage in Hosea, the past unfaithfulness of the people, their present rejection as "Lo-ammi," and their future restoration are presented. "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 for 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. . . . And I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord" (Hos. ii. 14-23).

These touching and beautiful passages may well serve as the link between Naomi and Ruth. The nation departed as Naomi, they are restored—the remnant of them—as Ruth, in deep and true penitence and a faith which renounces all claims in themselves, yet for that reason cleaves all the more fully to the Lord and His grace.

So, as Boaz calls the elders and all the people to witness to his having purchased all the forfeited inheritance and the Gentile widow Ruth, will our Lord call all to witness to His redemption of His desolate people. "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins" (Is. xl. 1, 2). "With a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, the Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob" (Is. xlviii. 20).

The grace too which will redeem the people will also restore the land to them for their enjoyment. In fact all during their captivity and estrangement from God, the land has enjoyed its sabbaths—sign of the covenant between God and the people. So in a

sense the very desolations of the land are a reminder of the unfailing promise of God, who would not give to others that which was reserved for His own. "Thus saith the Lord, Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them. . . . Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses . . . for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxii. 42, 44). "And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me. . . . Again there shall be heard in this place . . . the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts; for the Lord is good; for His mercy endureth forever; and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land as at the first, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxiii. 7, 10, 11). Mercy to the people must necessarily be accompanied by mercy to the land. The one will not be without the other. "He will be merciful unto His land and to His people" (Deut. xxxii. 43). "I will hear the heavens and they shall hear the earth (or land); and the earth (or land) shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel" (Hos. ii. 21, 22).

This is dwelt upon at length in the beautiful sixty-fifth psalm. Praise silently waits upon God in Zion until the hour appointed for the overthrow of enemies and the final establishment of peace in the land.

Then God's mercy to His land will be celebrated; "Thou visitest the earth and waterest it; Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water. . . . Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness, and Thy paths drop fatness. . . . The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing" (Ps. lxxv. 9-13).

Thus the purchase of all that was Elimelech's and his two sons', the land and inheritance, includes also Ruth the widow. And Christ's redemption of His people includes the land as well. How suggestive it is that at this present time we have not only a people without a land, the Jews, but a land without a definitely settled people. Each is waiting for the other, and both, yea all things, wait His time who surely will fulfil all His word. "If My covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob" (Jer. xxxiii. 25, 26).

Gladly do the witnesses respond to the declaration of Boaz. "And all the people that were in the gate"—the ten men, representing the law, and all the others—said, "We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel." These two mentioned were the mothers of the twelve patriarchs, the founders of the nation. When all has apparently failed, the Mighty One comes in and restores, nay far more, the nation to its original greatness. The original redemption from Egypt will no more be the standard, but that last and final one, when He will gather His beloved people, and Rachel, to whom allusion is here made, will refrain

from weeping for her children. "There is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border" (Jer. xxxi. 17).

They also allude to Tamar and her children—the one who, we might say, founded the tribe of Judah to which Boaz belonged. Looking back at that history, we find it a sadly blotted page. Sin seems to be written all over it, yet a faith that desires, and Jacob-like will get by artifice, the blessing. Here is the blessing without the stain, but reminding us, as we have been seeing, of grace to a sinful and unworthy people.

Thus the law, magnified and made honorable, not only transfers all its rights to Christ, but claims for the people—unfruitful so far as the law was concerned—a blessing beyond its own through this new relationship.

All is consummated and Boaz takes his bride to himself. Ah soon will the poor cast-off nation be gathered to the arms of Eternal love and "as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee."

A son is born to Ruth, but in a beautiful way it is not Ruth but Naomi who comes into prominence here. The aged mother, with blasted life and bitter memories, is before us now with the young babe in her arms. All the past is forgotten save to contrast it with the joyful present. They bless the Lord, as they rejoice, who has not left His desolate people without a Redeemer, and who is indeed "famous in Israel." Ruth too is not forgotten, and her faithful devotedness is acknowledged by all. "Thy daughter-in-law which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him." Israel according



to the flesh would indeed have been utterly worthless towards restoring blessing, but this Gentile daughter-in-law—speaking, as we have seen, of faith and penitence—is better than all excellence of the flesh.

This child is to be, as they tell Naomi, “a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thy old age.” So the child is called Obed, “servant.”

Passing to the spiritual meaning of all this, we can hardly fail to connect this child with that other wondrous Child born of this same line, and who will invert while He makes good all we have been seeing, being Himself also Boaz, the Risen and glorified One; “For unto a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” (Is. ix. 6).

It is fitting too that He should have this name of “servant.” Israel was God's servant, but how unfaithful! Then this faithful One comes, who is indeed God's servant, “Mine elect in whom My soul delighteth.” Through Him and by His grace the remnant is called out and they too are designated by that same title; while finally all the nation will be restored and rejoice, as once they did in disobedience, to be called the servants of the Lord.

And how perfectly has our blessed Lord illustrated the beauty of faithful service! He came to do God's will, and His meat and drink it was to do it. All along His earthly path He was ministering to the suffering and the sin-sick. Upon the cross He served—blessed forever be His Name!—that we might never know the awful penalty of sin. All this He did gratuitously. He was one who owed no

service—the heifer upon which no yoke had come. Yet He took the form of a servant and did a servant's work—to God and for man's need. Even now in glory He serves His needy people by His Spirit, His word and His all availing work as advocate and intercessor, and His crowning act of service will be to gird Himself and serve His own faithful ones—faithful only by His grace—in token of His approval. Well has He gained this title, and for us no higher honor exists than to follow, in our measure, His own lowly path.

“And Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom.” So the aged Simeon took the Babe in his arms and, as we might say, vanishes out of sight in his own song of praise, leaving us to gaze upon the cause of his joy. How the aged widow found joy and warmth as that fresh young life nestled near her heart. Ah, there is the nation's hope, and till He is taken to the people's heart they abide in widowed loneliness.

Returning to ourselves, here we see the one great remedy for all our wretchedness. Has the heart grown cold? Has our joy like Naomi's waxed faint? It is our privilege in reality, as it was hers in type, to clasp to our bosom Him who once a Babe, still in glory yields Himself to His people's embraces. We never grow warm save as He has His place in the heart.

Grant, Lord, that we may know more of this—Thyself held fast to our hearts by a living faith, as we realize too a mightier love that holds us fast, forevermore to Thee.

*Concluded.*

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## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 17.—What path is described in Job xxviii. 7?

ANS.—The connection shows it is the path of wisdom. "Where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding (ver. 12)? Part at least of the answer is given in ver. 28, "unto man He saith, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

QUES. 18.—What was the vow of Jephthah the Gileadite regarding his daughter? If the thought of putting her to death is here, kindly explain in full.

ANS.—"If Thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me . . . shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a *burnt offering*" (Judg. xi. 30, 31). Ordinarily there would be no doubt that Jephthah meant to sacrifice in death whatever came out. It being his daughter has raised the question with thoughtful students of God's word whether he could have put her to death, so repulsive to nature ~~and forbidden~~ by the word of God. On the other hand, remembering the sternness of the man, his rashness and the generally lawless state of the people, it does not seem at all improbable that the first impression of every reader of the account is correct—that she was put to death as a sacrifice. This view can be seen at length in "Lectures on Judges."

QUES. 19.—Why were only eleven tribes mentioned by Ahijah the prophet, to Jeroboam (1 Kl. xi. 31, 32).

ANS.—Benjamin is the one tribe who, with Judah the tribe of David, makes up the twelve. See chap. xli. 21.

QUES. 20.—Please explain the words, "take, eat, this is my body." Do we in partaking of the Lord's supper literally partake of His body and blood?

ANS.—"I am the door," "I am the true vine." No one for a single moment mistakes the meaning of these words, or applies them literally to our Lord. As symbols they are beautiful; force them in a literal way and all beauty and meaning is lost. So with the symbols of our Lord's body and blood. As symbols they are the sweet precious memorials of One who loved us unto death; taken literally, they become the food of

superstition and a carnal religion. We need but to look at the blasphemous use Rome has made of the Lord's supper to see the danger of which we speak. Think of a few words of the priest *creating* Christ, and that in His divine character!

But even where such gross and blasphemous use is not made of the Lord's supper, any teaching that leads us to look at the bread and wine as anything but simple memorials, feeds superstition. It is Christ with whom we are to be occupied, and we simply "do this" to call Him to mind.

QUES. 21.—What was involved in the act of Samuel in honoring Saul before the people (1 Sam. xv. 30)?

ANS.—In refusing to obey God in the utter extermination of the Amalekites, Saul had fully manifested his unfitness for the throne. This Samuel faithfully and unflinchingly presses upon him, and refuses to sacrifice with him on that ground. As a last resort Saul, tacitly admitting the right of Samuel's refusal to go with him as one in whom God was pleased, asks simply that his *office* be recognized. There was nothing amiss in this, as it was not God's purpose immediately to overthrow the disobedient king.

QUES. 22.—What does Scripture teach about Satan's ability—or inability—to know man's thoughts? Are all evil thoughts in man the product of his own wicked heart apart from Satan?

ANS.—We are not aware that Scripture directly teaches as to the first part of the question, and would be slow to assert positively as to it. We would suggest however that Satan, being a spirit, can detect the movements of man's mind, as man in the body could observe the physical movements of men. As to evil thoughts, Satan cannot *give* them, save as there is a readiness to receive them. Thus man is fully responsible for what Satan has suggested. "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost" (Acts v. 3)?

QUES. 23.—What is holiness according to Scripture? Was Adam holy before he sinned?

ANS.—Holiness is a positive, inherent character, the product of a nature. We would therefore prefer not applying the term to Adam, but rather to say he was innocent. Holiness is the character of God, and it is His children who through chastisement are made partakers of that.

# VERBAL INSPIRATION.

*Substance of an Address by A. E. B.*

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“AND it came to pass, in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord” (1 Kings vi. 1).

There can be no mistake in the understanding of this statement, can there, beloved friends? There is nothing ambiguous in it, as if it feared contradiction, is there? But it has been contradicted—by bishop Colenso. He says he discovered that from Egypt to Solomon there are 573 years.

I believe we shall find blessing in looking into the matter.

In the thirteenth of Acts, eighteenth verse we read: “And about the time of forty years suffered He their manners in the wilderness.” This gives us 40 years

Twentieth verse, “And after that He gave them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years.” 450 “

Verse 21, “And afterward they desired a king: and God gave them Saul, the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.” 40 “

“And when He had removed him, He raised up unto them David to be their king.” 40 “

Now turn to our chapter in the book of Kings—"The fourth year of Solomon's reign," gives us

3 years

Making a total of

573 "

Is it not good that a man who does not believe the Bible should give us something? Perhaps we would not have looked it up if the bishop had not disputed it. But Scripture is right, and the bishop wrong spite of appearances. Let us, my young brethren, take the shoes from off our feet and worship as we turn to Him who has inspired every iota of His word.

There are 573 years from the inspired record itself and yet we have seen in that same inspired record that there are 480 years. Where are we going to get light about the ninety-three years of difference? Go back to Judg. iii. 7, 8, "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years." Put down these

8 years

Vers. 12-14, "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord; and He gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel and possessed the city of the palm-trees. So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years." Note down . . . .

18 "

Chap. iv. 1-3, "And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead; and the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord: for he had 900 chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel." Note down . . . . . 20 years

Chap. vi. 1, "And the children of Israel did evil, in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years." Note down . . . . . 7 "

Chap. xiii. 1, "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years." Note down . . 40 "

Now sum up these five captivities and — there are the 93 "

Job says: "Doth He not see all my ways and count all my steps?" God goes over the whole history — 573 years. The first eight years they were away from Him, and He will not count that. Next there are eighteen years of being away from the Lord; He says, Drop those out. The next twenty years under Jabin — drop those. Again seven years in captivity to Midian, the Lord drops them out; then forty years they fall under the power of the Philistines, and God drops them out. He could not—He would not count the time when His people were out of their right place. Ninety-three years altogether

His people were away from Him, and God counts them out and says, "Four hundred and eighty years." What a solemn lesson for us all, my brethren.

I was wondering what was going to be accomplished in our souls as the result of our coming together these few days; and I thought that among us, as Christians, I would like to see a deeper, a truer, a fuller work of the Spirit produced in us through the meeting, to the glory of God. I wonder if, in our meetings, some of God's people are not right with Him—if any of them are walking at a distance from Him and not in their right place. Let me tell you, dear brethren, at the judgment seat of Christ our time is all going to be counted. Abraham came out of Mesopotamia, and when they got away, as we have seen in the book of Judges, that is the place *where they are carried back*—carried back to the very place from which He brought them. We used to have card-parties in our parlors, but earnest evangelists came who gave us better things, and we gave them all up. If we should get the card-parties back there again, will that be to our reward? No, it is all lost for eternity. When we, as Christians get away from our God and under the power of any form of vice or evil, or wrong, mixed up with any worldly association whatever, walking in any wrong company, the Lord whose eyes are holy, who sees us through and through, says I cannot count that time, and that will all be deducted from your account of time before the judgment-seat of Christ.

A brother said to me once, "I see now, as I have never seen it before that the judgment-seat of Christ is going to be pay-day for believers. I had been



absent from my work two weeks," he said, "and on the monthly pay-day I went down to get my wages; they handed me the slip, and there were just two weeks of time. There was not a word said about the two weeks I was away from my right place. I see now at the judgment-seat of Christ it is pay-day for the believer." Every day, yes, every hour, yes, every moment that is spent out of communion with the Lord, He is going to deduct it from your time and you will get no reward for it.

And now dear brethren, receiving the truth is a sacred trust. We are responsible to commit that truth to others. Notice the difference between the little butterfly and the honey-bee. The butterfly will start out in the morning and go out in the garden, light on one flower after another, and then return. If you could talk with the butterfly and ask, Where have you been? it would say, "I have seen many things; heard many things, but brought nothing back. And sad to say, that is the way sometimes with people. They say, "I have read forty-five chapters this week." Well, what have you got from those forty-five chapters? They cannot take and write down one thought that the Holy Ghost has given them. Now go to the little honey-bee, and ask, Where have you been? "Oh, just to one or two spots; I went to a flower and I went right down to the heart of the flower, and took a lot of honey there; then I brought it back, and here it is." I have thought as to this verse we have considered in the sixth chapter of Kings: Oh, that God would make us like that little honey-bee, to drink the precious honey we can find there.

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# KING SAUL :

## THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

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### INTRODUCTORY.

**I**N a certain sense, a king is the product of the times in which he lives. He represents the thought and condition of the masses, and while he may be beyond the individuals composing the nation, he will represent the ideal, which they exhibit but partially in their several lives. The king, though above the masses, must be one of themselves, only a greater. Just as the gods of the heathen are but the personification of their own desires and passions enlarged.

In a similar way, every man is a representation of the world at large—a microcosm. He is a sample, as we might say, of the whole, having certain characteristics in greater or less proportion, certain ones obscured by the overshadowing prominence of others; but all features which compose the mass as a whole, present in greater or less degree. It is a solemn thought, and illustrative of our Lord's words to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

We have been looking simply at the natural man and from a natural standpoint. Every observant and thoughtful man will confirm what has been said. Water will not rise higher than its source, and the great leaders of men have been but great *men*, like the rest of their fellows, only with enlarged capacities and greater force. In fact, the world would boast of the truth of this, and glory in the fact that their great ones are but the exhibition of the quali-

ties that mark all. Thus it makes demigods out of its heroes, and then claims kinship with them, thus climbing higher and exalting themselves. It is man's effort to make good the lie of the serpent, "Ye shall be as gods."

It need hardly be said that there is a distinct limit to all this greatness. Between man and God there is still the "great gulf" impossible to pass. Nor is this merely the gulf between creature and Creator, fixed eternally, and which it is the joy of the child of God to recognize—for our happiness is in keeping the creature place of subjection and of infinite inferiority to "God over all blessed forever"—but sin has made the impassable gulf between man and the true knowledge of God. All his development, knowledge, excellence and greatness is on the side away from God, and every fresh instance of human greatness but emphasizes the fact that man is away from God. "Ye must be born again."

Looking, then, at this mass of humanity, "alienated from the life of God"—solemn and awful thought—we see here and there, towering above the rest, some prominent and striking character who naturally attracts our attention. Opportunity, ability, force of character, have separately or unitedly put him in the place of eminence. It will surely give us a clearer idea of humanity to study it in this more excellent form, just as the mineralogist would seek for the richest specimen of ore to determine the quality of the entire deposit. Having found that, he would then remember that this was the *best*, the rest not yielding so much as his specimen.

So we take up the great men of earth to see what is in *man*. We take the best specimens, where natu-

ral character, opportunity and education have combined to produce the nearest approach to perfection, and having learned thus what *he* is, we remember that the mass of humanity are but poor specimens of the same class. We will have to confess with the psalmist that "every man at his *best* state is vanity."

Nor must we leave out the religious element in all this, but rather expect to find it prominent. Man is a religious being, and we will see where his religion leads. This may be a religion based upon God's revelation, and in outward connection with the ordinances of His own establishment. It may make "a fair show" in all this, and under the influence of God-given ministry seem well nigh to have reached the true knowledge of God, and be born anew. We will find food for most solemn thought in all this.

Such a man was king Saul, the ideal of the times in which he lived, and combining in himself traits of character which all admire, and all possess in some degree. Added to this natural excellence, he was the favored son of a favored nation, with abundant opportunities for the knowledge of God, both by revelation and prophecy. He will be found to have possessed in himself those qualities of ability and excellence most admired by man, and added to them the nearest approach, at least, to the true knowledge of God. It will be our duty to decide, so far as man can decide, whether he was in any measure a true subject of grace.

But we have said that every man is but a specimen of the mass—possessing in greater measure what are the common characteristics of all. We can thus get help in determining the character of Saul by seeing the general state of the nation, more particularly at

the time just prior to his reign; and our knowledge of Saul will in turn enable us more fully to put a just estimate upon the people.

We must also remember that Israel was representative of the whole human family. A vine was taken out of Egypt and planted in a fruitful hill, surrounded by a hedge and tilled with all the skill of a divine husbandman. He asks, "What could have been done more in My vineyard, than I have done in it?" (Isa. v. 4.) But it was a natural vine. It was simply the vine of earth given every opportunity to show what fruit it could produce. We therefore, and all humanity, are under review in this examination of king Saul.

So far we have looked merely at the natural man, leaving out of view that gracious work of God which imparts a new life and gives new relationships with Himself. This has doubtless gone on from the time of the fall; God has always had His children—"the sons of God" in the midst of an apostate, godless world. These, His children, have been born of the Spirit, and faith has ever been the characteristic of their life. Whatever the dispensation or the circumstances, faith has been the mark of the people of God, those possessed of life from Him.

We find, therefore, in the history of Israel, no matter how dark the days and how great the apostasy, a remnant of the true people of God who still held fast to Him. It will be for us also to trace the workings of this faith which marks out God's people from the mass of humanity; and here too we will find, no matter how bright the individual instance may be, that this divine life has a character common to all the saints of God. We may see it very clearly

in a Hannah, and very dimly in an Eli; but there will be the same life in each. To trace this in contrast to the activities and excellences of the natural man will help us to understand each more clearly.

But here again we will find that our subject is more than a question of persons. We will find that in the same person both these principles may exist, and that this will explain the feebleness of manifestation of the divine life in some, and apparent inconsistencies in all. We will find, and Scripture confirms the truth, that the nature of man remains unchanged—flesh remains that, and spirit also remains spirit; "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

May we not, then, expect real profit from this study of Israel's first king? Should it not give us a clearer view of the helpless and hopeless condition of the natural man, of the utter incorrigibility of "the flesh" in the believer, and enable us to discern more accurately than ever between these two natures in the people of God? Thus we would answer more fully to the apostle's description of the true circumcision: "who worship by the Spirit of God, and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh."

Lastly, we will more fully understand the dispensational situation, and see how fully is illustrated the fact that all things wait necessarily for God's true King, for the Man after His own heart, of whom David was the type. King may succeed king, but it will be but the ever varying forms of human excellence as displayed in king Saul. Alas! the true King did come, and the people desired one of the class of Saul—a Barabbas—rather than the True, for their

king is but the expression of their own heart and life. Therefore it is only the "righteous nation" who will desire and have that King who shall "reign in righteousness."

*(To be continued.)*

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## THE CROSS.

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**W**HAT hour like thine is clothed in depth of gloom,  
O Cross! thy speech is that of judgment for  
man's sin.

For in that hour the Christ of God is seen,  
The Sinless burden Bearer of man's sin,  
His breast all bared to ward the Judge's stroke;  
The gathering clouds of wrath divine on Calvary's  
hill—

They burst with anger on the centre cross,  
Whereon that precious Victim hung, the Life of men.

That cry speaks forth the sorrow of Thy heart,  
And yet Thy voice sends forth its note of victory  
Which tells of judgment passed, the work all done,  
The darkness of that hour now pierced; the cloud,  
too, gone,

The scabbard holds the sword; the sinner freed  
And all the claims of righteousness are fully met  
Whilst now the stream of love has found it's course.

O Cross! Thou tellest forth that God is love;  
Thy story, too, the summing up of ages past—  
The consummation of the sin of man.  
Yet fully in it all we trace Divine decree  
And see the shining of eternal truth!  
There from the Lamb of sacrifice the blood has flowed  
Which washeth every stain of sin away  
And changes all the depth of sin's deep scarlet hue  
To snow-white purity.

Thus opened are the channels of eternal love.  
The purposes and counsels of the past eternity

Converge and meet, encircling round Thy thorn-crowned brow—

Their answer fully given; the heart of God is satisfied  
In that blest One the cross has borne twixt earth  
and heaven

For us to gaze upon, and life be given to every one  
Who, with the heart believing, looks upon that  
stricken One.

But, now we see Thee on the Father's throne  
No longer stricken; Thou art now the Glorified.  
Thy once piercèd brow is crowned with many crowns,  
And with eternal glory Thy blest visage shines.  
We gaze upon Thee there, we wait Thy call—  
The Victor's shout, heraldic note, the angel's trump;  
And with Thee we shall rise, and, like Thee; then  
Forever in the glory Thou hast made our own  
With Thee abide.

J. B. JR.

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## HEZEKIAH'S TWO YEARS ASSOCIATION WITH AHAZ.

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EVERY event or fact recorded in Scripture is significant. There is some purpose in its being recorded. This is true not only of events or of facts that are directly stated, but also of those with which we become acquainted by comparing two or more passages. Our knowledge of those which belong to this latter class, of course depends on our diligence in the close study of the Word which such comparison of passages necessitates. But "the diligent soul shall be made fat." All effort of this kind, if really in humble faith, will result in abundant reward.

As an illustration I call attention to the fact of Hezekiah's association with his father Ahaz for about



two years. It is nowhere directly stated that it was so. But we know it was so by comparing the passages which describe the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and Hoshea king of Israel. Hoshea began to reign in the twelfth year of Ahaz (2 Kings xvii. 1), Hezekiah began to reign in the third year of Hoshea (2 Kings xviii. 1), and Ahaz reigned sixteen years (2 Kings xvi. 2). 2 Kings xviii. 9, 10 shows that the fourth and sixth years of Hezekiah respectively correspond with the seventh and ninth of Hoshea. At first sight it might be thought that these verses are in conflict with the first verse of the chapter which apparently makes the first year of Hezekiah correspond with Hoshea's third instead of with his fourth, as consistency with vers. 9, 10 requires. But it may be that in the troubled times which followed the death of Jeroboam II., the beginning of the year for the Israelitish kings was somewhat later than it was for the kings of Judah, even if it was not so from the revolt of the ten tribes under Jeroboam I. This supposition entirely meets the difficulty and avoids resorting to the conjecture of a scribal or copyist's error in ver. 1 as formerly I have done. If, then, Hoshea's third year began somewhat later than Ahaz's twelfth, it is easy to see how Hezekiah's first may have begun in Hoshea's third and yet for the most part have corresponded with his fourth. But Hoshea's first corresponds with Ahaz's twelfth, only beginning later; therefore Hoshea's fourth, corresponding with Hezekiah's first, corresponded also with Ahaz's fifteenth, and since Ahaz reigned sixteen years Hezekiah must have been associated with him for two years, or at least for parts of two years.

If now by the comparison of the passages we have deduced the fact, it is necessary to inquire what it signifies. For what purpose is it thus put on record? Has it any meaning? Is there any lesson to be learned from it? That the fact is significant we need not doubt. Everything in Scripture has significance. That the Spirit of God had some purpose in putting it on record we must accept. That there is design in the form of the record is also evident, and the study needful in order to discover the fact and which is necessitated by the form of the record only the more emphasizes its importance. The trouble to which we are put in order to find out what the fact is fixes our attention upon it, arouses our interest in it and provokes in us the inquiry, What is its meaning? The assertion that every scripture "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," impels us to ask, What doctrine, reproof, correction or instruction in righteousness has this fact to give us? If the things that of old happened to Israel were for "ensamples," in what is this, then, an ensample? If they were written for our learning, what, then, are we to learn from these two years' association of Hezekiah with Ahaz?

A glance at the personal charter of Ahaz and the distinguishing features of his reign will start us on the road to what we are seeking for. Unbelief seems to have been the predominating element in Ahaz's character. He had no faith in God and put no reliance on His word. This principle of unbelief was accompanied with hypocritical pretension and mock humility. (See Is. vii. 10-12). Being a man of such a character we need not wonder at the sad

features of his reign. He did not take David for his pattern, but the kings of Israel. From the beginning of his reign, and as his own deliberate choice, he turned away from the path of faith to follow the wicked kings of Israel and to imitate their example in sin and disobedience. What an unhappy choice!

But one misstep leads to another, and so we are told next that he also imitated the heathen, making his son "to pass through the fire" and sacrificing and burning incense "in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree."

Insubjection to the chastening hand of God is another element in the character of Ahaz. On account of his sins God delivered him into the hands of the kings of Syria and Israel, and also to the Edomites and Philistines, who inflicted upon him a terrible humiliation. They reduced him to very great distress, but instead of bowing to God in self-judgment and repentance he appeals to the king of Assyria for help. Isa. vii. shows, too, that he does this in the face of gracious encouragement and warning from God. It is therefore in headstrong self-will that he turns to the king of Assyria for aid. He will not submit to God, but he must have at all cost the help of man. He gave to the king of Assyria, to secure his help, not only the gold and silver in the treasuries of the king's house, but also that of the house of the Lord, appropriating thus what had been dedicated to God to his own personal ends.

Having thus voluntarily placed himself in the position of dependence upon the king of Assyria, he trespassed yet more against the Lord. He sacrificed to the gods of Syria, he put a stop to the worship of the Lord, closing the doors of His house, and estab-

lished instead idolatry, making altars in every corner of Jerusalem and high places to burn incense to other gods in every city of Judah. He gathered together the vessels of the house of God, cutting them in pieces, and sent them to the king of Assyria, taking what belonged to God for his own uses.

What a dark picture! How plainly the reign of Ahaz sets forth the pre-dominance of those principles of unbelief by which the people of God are turned from walking in the steps of Christ—the one blessed path of faith, to perverting and corrupting the faith, and finally to the complete denial of it. It is a very solemn warning and example.

But we must turn now to the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah. While Ahaz is *yet* reigning Hezekiah is in some way, and for some reason that we are not told, put upon the throne. But whatever the reason and in whatever way, this is the simple fact. We cannot be far astray in supposing that there must have been great exercise on the part of those who sought to be faithful to the Lord in those exceedingly dark and difficult times. They may have urgently demanded the exaltation of Hezekiah to the throne. Discerning in the heir-apparent one who gave promise of the energy of faith, his association on the throne would satisfy them and rally them to a brave effort to reverse the obnoxious policy of Ahaz. But we need not speculate on what may have been. The one thing with which we are concerned is the fact that simultaneously with Hezekiah's coming to the throne a new movement began which gathered the faithful and true, and which under the wise counsel of Hezekiah, and by his authority, irresistibly established itself, and this, too, while Ahaz

was *still living*. The predominating forces were powerless to prevent it. The doors of the house of the Lord were opened, the priests and Levites sanctified themselves and cleansed the house of the Lord, and the worship of the Lord, in the form which He Himself had required, was again established. It was a return to faith, to the truth, to obedience to God and to dependence upon His word.

What a picture this movement under Hezekiah is of the recovery of the people of God to the faith once for all given them, and of the re-establishment of that faith at a time when they have been in departure from it and are giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils!

Now the point which I wish to emphasize above all others is that this movement was initiated and established *before* the death of Ahaz. Hezekiah, after coming to the throne, did not wait for Ahaz to die before he undertook to reverse the policy of his father. In his first year, and at the very beginning of the year too, he began the work which so distinguished his reign. This year we have seen corresponded with Ahaz's fifteenth year. He was then associated with Ahaz for two years. Is this fact significant? Has it a lesson to teach us? Let us see. Principles of unbelief are predominant now—principles which destroy our precious faith. How generally prevalent, too, they are. The word of God is ignored and set aside, the truth as He gave it is trampled on, pure human inventions are substituted in place of what has been ordered of God, and divine things prostituted to purely human ends. It is a time of departure from the faith and the truth which is from God. Such is the state of things

which exists to-day. Figuratively speaking, Ahaz is reigning now. The principles for which he stands, and of which his reign is the expression, still prevail.

But must faith wait till they cease to act or exhaust themselves before it claims its God-given portion? No, thank God! Faith has a right to the word of God, to the truth as God has revealed it. Though unbelief in certain popular phases usurps it and uses it to further its own interests, Ahaz-like, still it is faith's prerogative to claim it. This is what we see in Hezekiah. He claimed and used his liberty to obey the word of God, to do what was right in the sight of the Lord, to pattern after David. He had the energy of faith to do it.

We do not read of any resistance to this movement on the part of Ahaz. But whether he assisted or not is no concern to us. Our picture is that of faith in irresistible strength on the one hand and of the powerlessness of unbelief on the other to hinder.

If there is energy of faith to claim and obey the word of God, unbelief is helpless. It cannot stand before one who submits in simplicity to the Scriptures. It is weak to hinder simple dependence upon God. Unbelieving principles, however prevailing, have no power to prevent faith's enjoyment of the things of God or hinder its efforts to recover and possess itself of the inheritance which belongs to it in the word of God.

Let us, then, be like Hezekiah. Let us follow his example. Let us waste no time in brooding over the ruin unbelief has wrought all around us, and in wishing the prevailing conditions about us to change, but in the face of them and in spite of them, let us put our trust in God, go forth to obey Him and live

in simple-hearted dependence upon His Word, that Word being our only warrant for the path of faith. In such a course we shall receive not simply greater, but higher blessing than that given to Hezekiah.

C. C.

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## THE DAY OF TROUBLE.

"Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Ps. l. 15).

**I**T has been said that man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. So that we may be quite sure a text such as this appeals to a great many. It presents to us four points, each of which is worthy of consideration. They are: First, "the day of trouble"; secondly, what we are to do in it—"call upon Me"; next, what God will do in answer to our call—"I will deliver thee"; lastly, the end God has in view—"thou shalt glorify Me."

Let us notice first how comprehensive is the statement—"the day of trouble." It is not any particular trouble that is mentioned. This is a great comfort, for if any particular kind had been referred to it might not have been ours. Troubles are so varied; and the thing that is troubling you at the present moment may be altogether unknown to some others. Indeed, someone may be reading these lines who is ready to say, "Surely no one else has endured what I am now called to pass through." Even so, the text applies in your case, for does it not say "the day of trouble," without specifying what may be its nature? "Call upon Me in the day of trouble."

There is the trouble of ill health, pain, weakness.

How many wish they had never seen this day! Time was when they could go where they would, and do what they would. Like Peter, it could be said to them, "Thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest." But now it is different. Nights of pain and days of weariness are a matter of constant experience. It is the day of trouble. What is to be done? We lately called to see one who, though once a very strong man, injured his spine, and is paralysed. He frequently suffers intense pain, and for years has been confined to bed. This verse has been his comfort, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." This is what we are to do. It is often said by those similarly placed that they cannot understand why God leaves them here. This is the explanation—"thou shalt glorify Me." No one can preach such a powerful sermon as a bed-ridden saint. Without uttering a word he or she may be a living sermon on patience, fortitude, and joy; in the midst of suffering setting forth the way in which the grace of Christ can enable them to endure. How is it to be done? "Call upon Me: . . . I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." Not deliver thee perhaps from the infirmity, but a greater deliverance—from being under the power of it.

But there are other troubles. Trouble which arises from poverty, or loss of property, or what is far worse, some loved one; trouble in connection with business and a thousand other things; trouble brought upon ourselves by our own failure, or what is even a darker trouble sometimes, through the sin and failure of others. Thank God, it is all included in "the day of trouble"—the anxious parent solicit-



ous about the welfare of a child; the individual who finds life a long-continued struggle; the tempted; the tried, the downtrodden, the oppressed, are all referred to here—"Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

But we surely need not enlarge upon this. "The day of trouble" is familiar to most of us in some form or other; we rather need to pay attention to the precious injunction with which the verse commences, "Call upon Me." This has a double value. In the first place it is an immense relief to be able to speak to anyone about our trouble, and in the next place that one is God.

It does not say how many times we are to call. Simply, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble." A call does, however, imply earnestness. It is not, "Speak to Me." We may sometimes speak to God as though we hardly meant what we said. But here it is more vehement—"Call upon Me," as though we were in real earnest to make God hear. A child in danger or fright calls to its parent, it does not speak as though nothing was the matter. Now while God knows everything, and can hear even a whisper and read even our thoughts, yet His direction here is, "Call upon Me." If you have called many times before and not yet been delivered, still continue calling. Deliverance will surely come in *some form or other*, and in the meantime the blessing to your own soul will be immense. You will learn more of God. For it says, "Call upon ME." Upon God Himself.

"*I will deliver thee.*" "I will," not "I may." No "perhaps." It is definite, certain—"I will deliver thee." Mark, it does not say *when*. We often fix a

time; it must be immediately. And so we get disappointed. It does not say *how*. We would like it brought about in a way of our own; and because it does not appear to be coming in our way we are tempted to rebel. Nor does it say what form the deliverance will take. We have already made up our minds, perhaps, what form we would prefer; but it may be God has something better for us. Let us leave the form of the deliverance—the how and when—all to Him, resting only in the certainty of the fact “*I will deliver thee.*”

There may be reasons why deliverance is delayed. God has other aims in connection with your life beside the immediate deliverance you are seeking. And He sees how He can in the end use the waiting time to achieve those ends. You have waited, not only days and weeks, but months or even years; and maybe you are still waiting. Sometimes you are almost tempted to think God has forgotten you; but remember, God is not to be hurried. He has His eye upon the whole of your life—yea, upon eternity; and God wants everything to work in for eternity.

“There with what joy reviewing  
Past conflicts, dangers, fears;  
Thy hand our foes subduing,  
And drying all our tears.  
Our hearts with rapture burning,  
The path we shall retrace,  
Where now our souls are learning  
The riches of Thy grace.”

May we learn, then, to take a larger view of life, and not be occupied too exclusively with one point. The hour of our deliverance is fixed. It may take the form of actual deliverance, or it may come in the form of such an abundance of grace that, like the

apostle Paul, we shall be enabled to take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in distresses, for Christ's sake. In either case may we remember these words, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

Yes, there is more than mere deliverance in view. "Thou shalt glorify Me." It is to come about in such a way that He should be glorified, not only in the deliverance itself, but afterwards. How blessed! We thought ourselves almost neglected, as though God had completely withdrawn His former loving-kindnesses, and we seemed like so much flotsam on the ocean of time. But now deliverance has come, and we learn the amazing fact from the very lips of the One we thought had left us to drift hither and thither,—“thou shalt glorify Me.”

Can we desire anything more than this? When we discover that God is working in and through our life, is it not complete? Is the day of trouble a mistake if it leads to the glory of God? When we see the end, can we regret the way which led to that end? Not only was it not a mistake: it was a necessity. And that "day of trouble" is encircled with a three-fold cord for the Christian, "Call upon *Me*," *I* will deliver thee," "thou shalt glorify *Me*." That three-fold cord is God Himself.

But "the day of trouble," to one who knows not God, can only be a day of blank despair. Come it must to everyone, sooner or later. If one such should read these lines, may you turn to the God of all comfort through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, confessing your sins, and seeking pardon through His name.

Many of God's brightest saints have known full well the meaning of "the day of trouble." Abra-

ham, when he had to cast out Ishmael, and when called upon to offer up Isaac. Joseph, when hated by his brethren and sold to the Midianites, who took him down into Egypt, where he became a servant, "whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: until the time that His word came: the word of the Lord tried him." Moses, when rejected and obliged to flee. But they were all delivered, and God was glorified. And it was not otherwise with David. Think of him at Ziklag on that day when he and his men found it burned with fire, and their wives carried away. The people too spake of stoning him. And this coming upon the top of all he had been suffering for years at the hands of Saul. Surely never did a mere man suffer more acute anguish than David at that moment. But we read he "encouraged himself in the Lord his God." Yes, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." This was eminently true in his case, for he was delivered, and shortly after ascended the throne. One day to be stoned; the next we might say, crowned. Such are the vicissitudes of God's people.

Reference might be made to Elijah, to Paul, and many others in a similar connection, but most wonderful of all is it to think that the Lord Jesus was not exempt from "the day of trouble." One of the most reassuring and comforting truths is this, that the Lord Jesus was acquainted with grief, and that He passed through a darker day than we can ever know, with unshakened trust and confidence in God. It is not that the human family alone knows what sorrow and suffering mean. God has taken His part in it in the person of His Son, and in a deeper way than any.

Can anything be sweeter to the heart that knows God than this—"Thou shalt glorify Me"? Who would have supposed "the day of trouble" could have yielded such rich fruit? There are many men and women too on earth to-day who would not be what they are but for "the day of trouble." It may seem a dark foreground to the picture, but God's pictures have glorious background. "Call upon Me . . . I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." What a cluster of jewels does this verse contain; and "the day of trouble" is like some dark stone in the centre that makes the others shine the brighter. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones" (Isa. liv. 11, 12). In this way will God be glorified.

"Call upon Me  
In the day of trouble:  
I will deliver thee,  
And thou shalt glorify Me." R. E.  
From "*Simple Testimony*."

I ask and entreat you to look and to see, whether in the present time, when through mercy page upon page of Scripture has been brought out before us, we are walking in the power of the truth to the eye of God, to the eye of the Father who loves us, to the eye of Christ who cares about the state of our affections and of our thoughts. He is large-hearted enough to take notice of everything in each one of us; and He desires that we should be practically consistent, since we are sons, and therefore servants of God.

G. V. W.

## THE TRUE CONDITION OF THE HEATHEN.

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THE subjoined testimony as to the condition of the heathen is inserted with the desire to remind the people of God of their true state. There is a tendency to think of them as merely unfortunate and scarcely responsible. It is even taught that many of them have the true knowledge of God, by the light of nature, or by some gracious work of God in their soul apart from revelation. The word of God says nothing of this, and leaves us to the awful conclusions stated in these remarks.

But what effect should this have upon those saved by the precious blood of Christ? Will it give them a self-satisfied assurance that they hold the truth, or will it stir their souls afresh with ardent desire to carry the good news to the perishing millions who have never heard the gospel? Surely every saved soul has a responsibility as to this. May we not pray to see awakened interest in sending the gospel to foreign lands, and may we not also ask that the Lord will raise up and send forth more laborers, more heralds of the gospel into the dark places of the earth?

“The second speaker of the evening was Rev. L. D. Morse, returned missionary. Mr. Morse spoke of the doubts entertained by some Christians as to the condemnation and lost condition of the heathen. He had not to settle the fate of the heathen. But nothing could change the law of God. It is impossible that God can create sin. Paul teaches in Romans that the wrath of God is revealed against those who hold the truth in unrighteousness. The heathen have the testimony borne to God in nature;

and yet knowing God, they reverence Him not as God. It is not true that the heathen do not know sin, as their fierce condemnation of those who sin against them shows. There are plenty of words in the Telugu language to express the idea of sin. Their doctrine of transmigration and their confessions show it. Their sacrifices also show their consciousness of sin. The converted heathen never utter a word to indicate that they have hope of the salvation of their ancestors. He had not found men among the heathen seeking after God, until influenced by the Word and the Spirit, through the preaching of the Christian missionary. Let there be no doubt about these people needing the gospel in order to salvation. Of the 330 million gods of India, the vilest are the most popular. He had mingled with all kinds and castes of the heathen men, and had not found a holy man among them.

The pictures exhibited in their temples in the name of religion are altogether too vile for description. Have we any message, the speaker asked, for these people? Let us go with the gospel to them and save them from sinning and suffering eternally. The great commission properly understood is the great condemnation of the heathen world. Christ came to save the lost, and if the heathen are not lost there is no reason why we should send the gospel to them. It was not for him, Mr Morse said, to say to any man that it was his duty to go to India but he could say to every one that it was his duty to be surrendered to God's will, and for himself he counted it joy to go where God wanted him to go and be what God wanted him to be.

*From the "Messenger and Victor."*

It is characteristic of faith to reckon on God, not simply spite of *difficulty*, but spite of *impossibility*. Faith concerns not itself about means; it counts upon the promise of God. To the natural man the believer may seem to lack prudence; nevertheless, from the moment it becomes a question of *means* which render the thing easy to man, it is no longer *God* acting. It is no longer *His* work where means are *looked to*. When with man there is impossibility, God must come in; and it is so much the more evidenced to be the right way, since God only does that which He wills. Faith has reference to His will, and that only, thus it consults neither about the means nor the circumstances; in other words, it consults not with flesh and blood. Where faith is weak, external means are, beforehand, reckoned on in the work of God. Let us remember that where things are feasible to man, there is no longer need of *faith*, because there is no longer need of the energy of the Spirit. Christians do much and effect little—why?

(Selected.)

To “offend,” in a scriptural sense, is a vastly different thing from the worldly thought. “We study to please,” is the world’s motto. It is ours also, only we seek to please God, not man. We may most surely “offend” a brother by trying to please him. To offend is to put a stumbling block in a person’s way, something by which he is made weak. This is often done by trying to please him.

In the widow’s mite we see that our Lord values work not by the quantity but the quality. It is not how much we do, but how we do it. “By Him actions are weighed.” Oh for devoted hearts.



## "CHRIST IN GLORY."

AN ADDRESS BY S. R.

(Phil. II. 1-11; III. 1-14; Eph. I. 15-23.)

IT is very striking, as you have often noticed, to find how the most precious portions of the word of God spring out of apparently trivial and ordinary exhortations—exhortations which are well nigh commonplace in themselves, and which are so self-evident that one would scarcely say they required more than mere mention and a word of exhortation is to seeking to make them good.

But you find it is just in these places throughout the New Testament that God oftentimes brings in the most priceless illustrations of His truth, giving us that which is absolutely necessary to our knowledge of the truth, or illustrating it in a most striking and wonderful way. You all will think of passages which illustrate this point—how God brings the strongest motives to bear on the least duties. It reminds one of the border of blue on the fringe of the garment that trailed, as you might say, closest to earth, the color of heaven being that which was closest to earth.

It is heavenly truth we need for the daily path: we need the light and joy of heaven to carry out our daily responsibilities, and if we are realizing that this earth is indeed a wilderness, that it is a barren and empty waste, and if the routine of our daily life here is indeed dulness itself, all the more we need within the greatest motives, the strongest inducements and the mightiest power to enable us to go through it

well. It is the place where God has left us; it is earth, nothing but earth, but we need heaven's light to go through the earth aright.

It is to those who are servants, to those who are in the place of lowliness and subjection that God opens heaven, as it were. It is lowliness which gives the power for faithful service, because you will find that God never gives us truth merely to amuse us: He never gives us truth merely for the sake of giving it: He gives us truth to give us power for the place He puts us in. "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth."

In this second chapter of Philippians the apostle is exhorting the saints to let their conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ, and to walk in all lowliness. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind;" and then he adds, "Let nothing be done through strife," on the one hand, "or vainglory" on the other; contention with one another, or else vainglory, seeking to be elevated the one above the other. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

You might say, How are we going to do it? The apostle says, "I will give you an example of lowliness of mind," and in giving the example, he gives the power for us to be lowly. But whom does he give as an example? Select some faithful servant? Unfold some precious truth of God as to our responsibility for walk? If he is going to give us an example of lowliness, he selects the perfect lowly Man, he

selects Christ Himself, and gives us His history. He traces Christ from His position on high. There He was with God and in the form of God, partaking of all the glory of God. He traces Him from that point down to the lowest point on earth here, and he says, "There you have an example of lowliness. There is One who had everything, and who had it by divine right, but who gave up everything willingly and gladly, and went down to death."

You cannot reach higher than the throne of God, and you cannot reach lower than the cross of Christ; these are the two limits, of glory and humiliation—from the glory down to the cross.

Does that take you in? It takes in every one. It takes in all creation. So you have the example. One says there is a limit to all self-emptying, to humility. Yes, there is; the cross is the limit. One says, What must I give up? How far am I to go? How far did Christ go? and in the light of that great humiliation we can only hide our faces and confess with shame how little we know of humility and of emptying of self. You have the example, you have more than the example, you have that which humbles you and breaks you down. It is that that gives you power. Christ's humiliation gives us power to imitate Him in our feeble measure; and I ask if that precious wondrous humiliation of the Lord were present in our souls, in the Lord's people as they are gathered, in our intercourse with one another, do you think it would be hard to humble ourselves?

We hear Him as His disciples were gathered to Him there, as He was going into the depths, and He had them around for that last supper, which meant so much for Him, and which means so much for us.

We have Him there, and His poor disciples do not want to do a kindly act to one another; they are not willing to serve one another; they each of them wonder whether his dignity would not be offended if he were to undertake the office of servant; and what does the Lord do? He knew that He came forth from God, He knew His dignity, He knew He was going back to God, but in the full consciousness of all that He girds Himself, girds Himself with the linen girdle and takes His place at the feet of His disciples. I am sure as we see Him there and realize His glory, realize the place that He relinquished, we see what humility is. I look at my brother and I am tempted to say, "I am as good as my brother, I have the same rights as my brother, and I am not going to relinquish my rights." I look at Christ, and I have no rights to relinquish. I look at Him, and I say: "Do not talk to me of my position and my rights and my dignity. Let me be but a faithful representation of Himself, the One who stooped from the glory that He might reach our feet. Let me be a faithful imitation of Him."

That is what gives power. The one thing that will give power—Christ Himself: He will give you power to imitate Himself, if you are occupied with Him.

The apostle sets Christ before you, and he says in a very strong and simple way, "Let that mind be in you." You cannot take your position as He took His, but you can get His mind,—the desire that your own dignity and your own position may be sacrificed in order that you may please God and serve God's people.

But I wanted to speak a little more particularly about our blessed Lord alone. We have Him in this passage traced from heaven's throne back to heaven's throne—alone as you might say. You do not find redemption in these verses. The cross of Christ is spoken of, and it is after all the cross which brings peace to the sinner. It is not considering the cross as where He was made sin for us. Here He is the burnt-offering. He goes down into death for God Himself, and He is brought up out of death for God Himself, and He takes His place on high for God Himself. God puts Him there. If there were not a sinner saved in all the universe of God, the emptying of Christ, and His death upon the cross would fill heaven with everlasting fragrance.

We sometimes say, and say rightly, that the Lord sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied when poor sinners are saved. Blessed fact, it is true, and God's love comes out to the guilty lost ones, reaches out to them, but back of it all God has a delight in Christ, unaffected by the question of whether men are saved or whether they are lost. God has had Christ before Him, has Him before Him now, and in this wonderful description of our Lord's progress from the glory to the cross, there is no eye which watches Him as the eye of God, and apart from its effects for us, apart from our salvation we see God's delight in Christ. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him" not *a* name, as it reads, but "*the* name which is above every name." There is only one such name, and that name, beloved, is connected with His emptying and obedience unto death, apart from our salvation at all.

And so it will do us good to stand afar off and see

the burnt-offering ascend to God. Surely we can say our redemption is in it, our salvation is in it, but we want to see that God has His share, has His delight in Christ, and it is important that we should get God's point of view rather than our own.

How do you gauge spiritual things? Which part of your Bible is most marked? Which part of your Bible are you most familiar with? I venture to say, that you are most familiar with the part that concerns you. We are all alike in that particular, the part of the Bible we are most familiar with is what concerns us. Our spiritual interests are selfish, we speak of *our* benefits through Christ and through His death, and we are losers oftentimes because we are not familiar with God's part, that which gives God's delight in Christ.

So you and I are left out of this part we have been reading—we are not there. God's eye is only for Christ in that passage. He is watching Him. He sees Him lay aside His glory, leave that place which He had with the Father before the world was, leave all the glory by which He was surrounded, the place of dignity and the place of honor in heaven, being in the very form of God, the very dignity, honor, glory, which belonged to Him by right because He was God; He lays all that glory, all that dignity, all that honor aside. He counted it not a thing to be snatched at, not something to be grasped and held fast and clutched—we clutch our dignity, we hold fast to our reputation; the Lord did not esteem it a matter to be clutched and held fast that He should be equal with God. He humbled Himself, emptied Himself, made Himself of no reputation and took

upon Him the form of a servant and became in the likeness of men.

God watched Him, God saw all He was doing, and I repeat it, it was God and Christ and none other. He saw Him humble Himself, He saw that wondrous, that amazing self-emptying: that relinquishment of His rights. It furnishes the object lesson for all eternity.

And so God's eye is upon Him. He goes down. He is found in fashion as a man. The manger is not the lowest point reached; His whole life is a downward path. At His birth the angels worshiped, and a few whose hearts were open to recognize. But He goes on down and down until He goes to Gethsemane, He goes to death, even the death of the cross. God heard the lonely Weeper in the garden of Gethsemane; God heard Him pouring out His soul with strong crying and tears. God heard Him who said, "O, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

What is God's answer to all that? Christ take His place down in death. What is God's answer "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him." was the Lord's will to humiliate Himself: it was God's to highly exalt Him, and give Him the Name which is above every name; and so we bow at that Name.

And so you have the whole course traced from the beginning until He is back there. We are to be occupied with that priceless, wondrous exhibition of obedience and lowliness. God is first to have leisure to see it, and then we are brought in as happy worshipers to bow at the name of Jesus.

Do you get the thought which I would seek to set before us. It is true that He came to seek and to save that which was lost; that He died the Just for the unjust. But leave your side a little, and take God's side; get God's thought and you will bow in the place that God would have you, bow at the name of Jesus, ever at the name of *Jesus*:

"The mention of Thy Name shall bow our hearts to worship Thee."

I rejoice and I am sure you rejoice that while He has saved us, delivered us from wrath and judgment, and given us a place in heaven, yet we can say somewhat as the poor Hindoo woman did that she was satisfied if she saw Jesus glorified, no matter what became of her.

You remember what Mephibosheth said. He is brought in from the distance, eats at the king's table. He says, "I am a dead dog." He is brought into that place by grace; the kindness of God is shown to him. David flees from the face of Absalom his son; he has been rejected. Mephibosheth has been misrepresented by Ziba as being desirous of claiming the throne again, and all that, and when he comes back David treats him severely, till Mephibosheth makes plain that David is under a mistake, and that Ziba has lied to him. David says, "Well, thou and Ziba divide the land." Oh, Mephibosheth says, "*The land*, I am not thinking about the land; let him take all; the king has come into his own again." And as we realize Christ glorified up there, we join in the acclaim which says He is worthy to be there, worthy to be in that place, for He humbled Himself down to death. Oh, that is the sweetest song in heaven, and that is the sweetest note we can strike upon



earth; the unselfish devotion of hearts that have seen Christ glorified for what He did for the Father, apart entirely from what He did for us.

I would lay it on all our hearts: let us seek, let us crave, let us not rest until we enter into the thought that gives the Lord His place apart from ourselves, apart from blessing, that gives Him the place He has because God has put Him there. Oh, the joy, the rest, the exaltation of spirit that comes from seeing Christ in His highest glory, and seeing Him there for God, and we delighting in Him. We see what Christ is to God, we see Him as the burnt-offering which has gone up to God as a sweet savor, and the only response that God could give to it, the only response was to place Him on the throne.

In the third chapter the apostle Paul speaks of the Lord in glory in another way.

You know how the apostle shows that all fleshly excellence is nothing; that our own standing, our own righteousness, everything of that kind is fleshly. He says, "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more;" and then he goes on through his whole little stock of righteousness, fleshly glory and honor—small enough it is when measured by Christ's glory.

"Circumcised the eighth day;  
of the stock of Israel,  
of the tribe of Benjamin,  
a Hebrew of the Hebrews,  
as touching the law a Pharisee  
concerning zeal, persecuting the Church;  
touching the righteousness which is in the law  
blameless."

He has not much to say of his zeal, except that he was persecuting. He had been exceedingly diligent, exceedingly zealous. He says, "I will show you where my zeal was." "Concerning zeal persecuting the Church." He speaks of his righteousness, and then he says, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

Of what effect was the eighth day circumcision? being an Israelite, a Benjamite? what did the zeal amount to? Go with him on his trip from Jerusalem to Damascus. He falls down before that light from heaven, and there his righteousness disappears. Damascus was called the pearl of the East. It is said of Mohammed that as he journeyed to Damascus, and reached the hills that overlooked it, and saw its lovely gardens and its white houses gleaming through the green, he said: "There is only one paradise we can enter and I want to enter heaven," so he would not go to Damascus. It was a lovely city, a beautiful place, everything was there to attract the eye. Here is one whose genealogy was above reproach, whose life was blameless, whose zeal was all that could be desired; here in mid-day glory, the fairest city of the East before him, into which he was about to enter and do what he thought a good work, and in a moment it has all crumbled into dust and blackness before him.

What makes the change? It was God's Son whom he hated up to that time, whom he now saw in the glory of God. A voice comes to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me." "Who art Thou Lord." He knew it was the Lord. He knew it was the Lord Jehovah. The Lord is Jehovah. Jehovah is Jesus whom he is persecuting! What was the result

of his being in that place? Like Job, he has heard of Him by the hearing of the ear, but now his eye sees Him. The light that is above the brightness of the sun is but the reflection of His glory; he sees Him, and all his mantle of self-righteousness, all he glories in drops off: "What things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ."

He had seen Christ, he was convicted of his sin, and he lost his self-righteousness. There was an end of his self-righteousness; and if he had lost self-righteousness, what had he gained? Christ was his righteousness.

"When it pleased God," he says, "who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace to" what? "to *reveal* His Son in me." That was it, Christ revealed in him; Christ now for him, his righteousness, his standing before God. Everything now is loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord. He has seen Christ, that is it; Christ in glory revealed in him, and the result is that all he had boasted in is disgusting and loathsome to him. Christ has been substituted, Christ in glory his righteousness; and he says: "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Not only that he may be my righteousness before God, but that it may be Christ who takes possession of my life, who fills my soul, who is also the measure of my standing before God. Christ eclipsed everything else, took possession of his soul; and Christ in glory marked the career of Paul from that day until he went home to be with the Lord.

Christ at God's right hand is now the measure of our standing, our acceptance, our righteousness. Talk

about dignity, talk about righteousness, talk about law? Where is that boasted circumcision, that self-righteousness? Christ has eclipsed everything else.

And so the apostle says: "I count all things but loss"—not only these things I have mentioned, but "*all* things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." There He is on high, my righteousness, but more than that—my Lord and my God.

Christ on high. What a perfect righteousness. How well delighted God is with it; how satisfied God is. Your righteousness incomplete? then Christ will be incomplete. Is there anything lacking about Him? He has fully glorified God, He has fully magnified His will, and God has put the mark of His approval upon Him by placing Him there at His own right hand, and He is there as our righteousness, and if you want to get rid of self-righteousness completely, the only way is to behold Christ in glory, and as you behold Him in glory you will be delivered from the last shred of self-righteousness that you have here. That is Christ in glory for our righteousness, and as I say I want to keep that constantly before us—a glorified Christ as the measure of our standing before God. We want to keep fast hold of that. I believe Satan seeks to rob us of it. I believe he seeks to draw our minds away from the understanding of what our perfect standing before God is. Let us remember that we have the gospel of the glory of the blessed God as a testimony in this world. It is the gospel of the glory—Christ in the glory of God, the measure of the believer's standing before God. How many truths are connected with it, cluster about it.

Here is a poor soul groaning as if he might be lost. He may say, "Lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." What is the remedy? To see our standing before God as connected with a glorified Christ. We stand accepted in Him; He Himself beyond death, beyond judgment, beyond the question of sin. How could we be lost? Could Christ descend from heaven? He is our righteousness up there.

That settles many a question. As I say, our security, our responsibility, and all that, is connected with Christ in glory.

Take another thing. You believe in the Lord Jesus, but you do not *know* whether you are saved. Satan perplexes you with doubts. He tells you it is right not to be too sure. But if Christ in glory is my righteousness, I cannot be lost. My assurance is Christ on high, and we will refer every doubt and every question to Christ on high, not to our feelings here.

Now in the latter part of the chapter, we have that he had not already apprehended. He has Christ for his righteousness, but he says, "I have not yet attained." What does he want? It is a wonderful thing. He wants more of Christ. Well, you say, have you not Christ perfectly for your righteousness. Oh yes, I have, but I want to be with Christ. I am in Christ, but I want to be with Christ.

People say to us: "Do you not get tired of preaching and speaking of only one Person all the time?" I do not, brethren; do you?

"Jesus, of Thee we ne'er would tire;  
The new and living food  
Can satisfy our heart's desire,  
And life is in Thy blood."

"In their hearts they turned back to Egypt," but the more we know of Christ, the more we want of Him. We can say with the poet:

"To Jesus, the crown of my hope,  
My soul is in haste to be gone."

Why are we longing for the coming of the Lord? Is it to get out of our troubles? People in the world would like to get out of their troubles. What makes us heavenly minded? It is the view of a glorified Christ. That is what makes us pilgrims here. That is what takes our feet out of the mire. That is what makes us racers. The prophet girded himself and ran before the chariot of Ahab. Our hearts have been taken captive by Christ on high. The apostle would not rest until he was with Christ in glory. He was pressing forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

That is what makes heaven for us. Christ up there; that is what makes us pilgrims. We know Him. The Lord of glory appeared unto Stephen. That is it. Stephen had the glory in his heart; then they saw it in his face. The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, and took him from home and kindred, and everything else. It was a glory that made him a pilgrim to wait until he could enter into the glory. The glory will make you a pilgrim to the glory; it shines in the face of Jesus Christ. We are pilgrims here. We have no continuing city. It is not that we want to be pilgrims; we *are* pilgrims.

Suffer a word for our consciences just here. How is it with us? I have been speaking of Abraham, it was the glory that made him a pilgrim. Look at the other side—there is Lot. What was the matter with Lot? What was wrong with him? The poor

man's life was the very opposite of the path of the just. It closes in that lonely mountain cave, and we draw the curtain on the scenes enacted there.

Lot went down. What made him go down? He was attracted by the plains of Sodom. It was not the wickedness of Sodom that attracted Lot. It was not the corruption of that city that drew him. What drew him? Self-interest. In this same chapter the apostle speaks of those who mind earthly things, whose god is their belly; it is characteristic of mere profession. Is there not a danger of our taking the place of Lot instead of the place of Abraham? Is there not a danger of our settling down? People say they do not want much here; still you want it *here*. That is the point. You want it here. But we are pilgrims; and we ought to want it *there*. In the sermon on the mount the Lord said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal."

How can you lay up treasures in heaven? If Christ is our treasure it is very simple, for He is there. Our treasure is laid up in heaven where Christ is, and our hearts are there because He is there.

I need not want to know what you are engaged with, if your heart is in heaven. If your heart is there, you will be satisfied only when you see Him, and your only desire will be to please Him. To know Christ where He is will make us pilgrims down here. To know Christ there makes us pilgrims here. What a blessed portion. What is wealth, position, dignity, reputation, compared with that? Who would exchange them for Christ in glory. Brethren, where

is our treasure? Is it Christ on high? Then I am indeed a pilgrim here.

"'Tis the treasure we have found in His love,  
That has made us pilgrims below."

Let us look now at the passage in Ephesians. Ephesians gives us in an especial way the Church. You can say that the characteristic word of Ephesians is "in Christ." You have in a wondrous way His people associated with Him risen and glorified. In the second chapter the believer's position is seen as in Christ. We were dead in sins, but we are quickened together with Christ, and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. That word "together" tells us something. "When we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." It is not only that we are quickened, but quickened "together" with Christ. We, both Jews and Gentiles, are associated with Him. We are co-quickened, as you may say, with Christ. After the Lord rose, He said to Mary, "Tell my brethren." He did not call them His brethren until after His resurrection. There He associates them with Himself, "Go, tell my brethren," He says, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God." Thus He associates His people with Himself in glory, and sets aside all distinctions which would separate them from one another.

In the epistle to the Ephesians we have Christ in glory as the Head of His Church upon earth. You have Christ in glory as marking our corporate position. We have seen Christ in glory for God alone. We have seen Him as the measure of our standing, our righteousness. We have Christ in glory as the One toward whom we are to press on; but here you



have a view of a glorified Christ as the centre of gathering. The corporate view of our Lord in glory is one which we must not lose sight of.

Just let us look at it for a few moments. It is precious to those who understand it. If it is dull, it is dull only to those who do not understand it; but it is precious to those who do, and who are familiar with it; and this precious truth of the body of Christ, which is the precious truth of what the Church of God is, is doubly precious to those who are alive to the value of it, who dwell upon it and praise God for it.

He speaks of three things. In the eighteenth verse he says, "That ye may know what is the hope of His calling." He has called us for heaven. We are from heaven and heavenly men by birth. Exodus xii: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months." That is our birthtime; and the eighty-seventh psalm, "This man was born there." That is our birthplace.

The birthday. What is your birthday? When you found the Lord Jesus Christ? You were born again. The day of your birth was the day on which you came under the precious blood of Christ. What is our birthplace? Where were we born? I was born again, one says, in this or that place. Do you know where you were born? You were born from heaven; that was your birthplace. The Lord said to Nicodemus that he must be born again. We must have a nature to fit us for heaven. It is not like one who has been away from the old country, the old homestead, and who says, "I would like to go back to the old place where I was born and see it again;" and he crosses the ocean, he sees the old house, but

everything is changed; and he says, "After all, my birthplace is marked by the dear ones; it is not the house or the material, but it is marked by those who live there."

You do not have to go back to your spiritual birthplace. You have been born from above; we are born there and there we are. That is our birthplace. That is what the apostle is saying to these saints. He says, "I want you to know what the hope of your calling is."

Second, "The riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints." He wants them to know that. It is a wonderful expression, "God's inheritance in the saints." I suppose many think of it as God's inheritance in us. Israel went into Canaan; but it was God who went into Canaan in Israel. Israel took possession of the land, but it was God's land—His inheritance in Israel.

We are going to have an inheritance there, but after all what a joy it is to think that it is God's inheritance and not ours—His inheritance in us. It is like a father buys a farm, he stocks it, puts everything on it, and gives it to his son. He says, "My boy you live there and enjoy it, it is my place: I got it for you."

And so the inheritance is God's inheritance, but He inherits it in the saints, and our portion there is ours, because it is God's, and ours will be God's. You have known some fathers who have had sons to whom they could not give their property. They would have mortgaged it, or sold it, or done something unwise with it. The fathers have kept it.

God holds our inheritance. I have the blessedness of it, but God has the title. It is His inheritance, and it is in the saints. They enjoy, and He keeps it.

Third: “What is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.”

The power. How much power have you, how much have I? Do you say, very little—very little power to live and act for God. We see the saints have very little power. How much have we? What kind of power? How am I to know? It is feeble enough. But how am I to measure the power? Look at Christ; Christ raised from the dead; Christ lifted from earth to heaven; Christ exalted 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. God says *He* is the power. It is right *in* us—the resurrection power of Christ Himself.

You have got power, you have all the power of heaven. All the power of heaven has been shown in raising Christ on high, you have that power for present use.

The trouble is, beloved, that we have separated between the power and ourselves. We have not allowed the power to work. It is like some mighty engine: there is an immense amount of steam upon the boiler, but the engine is almost motionless, why? Because the throttle valve is closed. If you open the trottle the steam passes in, and you find that the engine is powerful. It had the power, but it was not in use. There was a hindrance. How often

there is a hindrance to the working of God's mighty power, that resurrection power. There is a hindrance because of the throttle. Communication with God is closed, and there is no practical power in the life. The apostle speaks of this power, in the third chapter, as the power of the believer's life. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." The very power that worketh in us is the power by which we are to be filled unto all the fulness of God. There is no limit—the only limit is God's fulness, and our capacity.

If we know the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and if we know the wondrous power that is in us,—what next? It is that Christ is Head of His Church; Lord and Head of His people, and when we see that truth we see what the Church is.

Christ in glory. Christ at God's right hand as Head of His Church, and if you realize that you are a member of a glorified Christ, a member of His body, I believe things will drop off; self-righteousness will drop off—all low thoughts of His Church—all thoughts of the Church as being divided by parties and that kind of thing, will drop off if you see Christ glorified as the Head of His Church.

If I see the Lord as Head of His Church, I will see that church-truth is not a theory. God has linked church-truth with Christ on high. If you say there is no church-truth, you may as well say, Christ is not glorified, that He had better get off the throne of God.

But He is Head of His Church. He is sovereign, His people are gathered to a glorified Christ. It is

the truth of a glorified Christ that will gather His people here. Some talk about our being all one. If there is anything further away than another from the truth of God as to the Church of Christ, it is that believers are all one, in themselves. "Let us merge our differences; let us all recognize one another as dear brethren; let us be one." If I could bring together every child of God on this globe by turning over a page of this book, I would not do it; it would be a failure, it would be the worst kind of pride.

Leave out Christ glorified, and put man in His place! Think of it. Put in the place of a glorified Christ your dear brethren, and what have you got? You have made an idol of man, and God is going to break your idol to pieces.

You have put something in the place of Christ. The only kind of unity that God recognizes, the only kind of unity that faith recognizes is the unity which puts Christ in His place, which gives Him His place as Head of His Church. There can be no unity that leaves out the person of Christ, and the authority of Christ, and the sovereign rule and direction of Christ Himself, who is the Governor of that Church which is linked to Himself as His body. Just as He said to Saul of Tarsus, "Why persecutest thou *Me*." In persecuting the weakest and humblest of His people, he was persecuting Christ, so dear brethren, every believer is a member of the Church of Christ and therefore a member of Christ.

Do you see the point of view? Do you see that Christ in glory is Head of His Church, the body of Christ here? The Church is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all

When the doctrine of this one body, of which we

are members, is seen as linked with Christ in glory, you have that which will deliver from many things. Only those who are occupied with a heavenly Christ, and whose souls are in obedience to a heavenly Christ, will form an expression here of the oneness of the body of Christ which His heart yearns to see.

The Lord's people are divided. You can bring them together only in one way, and that is in subjection to a glorified Christ, and you will have practical unity. Leave that out, and instead of doing away with divisions, you make trouble and strife.

No, we keep our eyes simply on Christ, and we have Christ's will and Christ's authority, and Christ's headship, and the truth of the body of Christ here on earth.

Let us fix our hearts upon Him alone. First; What He is to God alone. Second; We see Him in glory as our righteousness: we discard all forms of self-righteousness. We see Him there as the One on high who is beckoning us, who has taken our hearts.

And then we see Him as Head of His Church.

The apostle said, "To me to live is Christ." Beloved, may it be so for us all.

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"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe."

"The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as a high wall in his own conceit" (Prov. xviii. 10, 11).

Here we have two contrasted shelters—the name of the Lord and the rich man's wealth. The righteous runneth into his shelter—the name of the Lord—and is safe; the rich man surrounds himself, in his own conceit, with the wall of his wealth, and imagines he is safe. Which is our shelter?

## GOD'S GLORY IN JESUS' FACE.

(G) SOUL-INSPIRING story  
 Of holy love and grace,  
 In lustrous lines of glory  
 Engraved on Jesus' face!  
 Transfixed in contemplation  
 Of Thy transfiguring rays,  
 In fervent adoration  
 We hymn Immanuel's praise!

Blest Face, in what completeness  
 There Godhead-fulness dwells—  
 Outshines unearthly sweetness  
 That love in us compels!  
 The Father, oh, how sweetly  
 Unveiled to human scan—  
 Yea, God's own face completely  
 Revealed in that of Man!

Yet once, meek Face, afflicted,  
 Wan, haggard, vigil-worn—  
 In tender signs depicted,  
 Our griefs and sickness borne!  
 Thy sympathies how freighted!  
 Thy heart how burdened then!  
 Thy gentle frame how weighted  
 To bear the ills of men!

Ah, once depressed, dejected,  
 Thy lot the outcast's shame,  
 Thy love rebuffed, rejected—  
 Reviled and mocked Thy name:  
 Thy deep love's every token  
 Was pierced by hatred's dart,  
 Until reproach had broken  
 Thy lacerated heart!

And once marred, scarred, disfigured,  
 Dishonored, spit upon—

In mockery transfigured  
 With robe and thorny crown—  
 Scourged, crucified, torn, bleeding  
 In pain upon the tree—  
 Reviled, yet interceding  
 For those reviling Thee!

Then, love-bound Lamb, there taken  
 When ire 'gainst us awoke,  
 Thy bosom bared—forsaken—  
 To quench for us wrath's stroke!  
 Unfathomable anguish  
 In that appalling hour  
 Love bore for us to vanquish  
 In weakness Satan's power!

Amazing blaze of glory  
 Deep-carved in Jesus's face,  
 May Thy transcendent story  
 These hearts transform in grace;  
 Till soon, conformed completely,  
 With love-lit eyes we'll scan  
 God's features beaming sweetly  
 From Thine, Thou Son of Man!

F. A

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## KING SAUL : THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

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### THE STATE OF THE PEOPLE.

#### Chapter i.

**I**N contrast with the book of Judges, and its supplement Ruth, the books of the Kings deal largely with the national centre and the nation as connected with that, and a responsible head. The previous books had given the history of individuals and of separate portions of the nation. While the victories of the judges benefited the people at large,



there does not seem to be that cohesion, or that recognition of a divine centre, so clearly provided for in the book of Deuteronomy. It is significant that the first allusion to Shiloh, in the book of Judges, is the mention of an idolatrous rival in the tribe of Dan (chap. xviii. 31).

The book of Samuel begins with Shiloh, and shows us the state of things there, as Judges had shown the general condition of the people. We have in the earlier chapters the state of the priesthood, in Eli and his sons. We might have hoped that, spite of national unfaithfulness, the priests, whose nearness to God was their special privilege, would remain faithful to Him. Alas for man! Be he never so near outwardly, and intrusted with the most priceless privileges, there is nothing in *him* to bind his heart to God. All must come from God alone; His grace must keep us, or we will not be kept.

There is no such thing as succession in grace. The son of the most faithful father needs to be born again as well as the most degraded of mankind. This is written clearly on many a page of the word of God. "Ye *must* be born again."

Eli, the high-priest, was personally righteous and loyal in heart to God, but he was weak. This is bad enough in any position, but when one is intrusted with the priesthood of a nation, responsible to maintain them in relationship with God, it is a crime. Eli's sons were godless men without conscience, and yet in the priests' place, and one of them successor to the high-priesthood.

The carelessness of Eli is so dreadful that nothing but the tragic circumstances of his and his sons' death, can fittingly express God's judgment. We

will look at that later. We turn now to something brighter.

God has always had a remnant among His people, even in darkest days, and it is most refreshing to see in Hannah a faith and a desire in lovely contrast with Eli's feebleness, and his sons' wickedness. She lays hold of God, and spite of nature's impotence, and the discouragement of a reproof from Eli, she holds fast. What a reproach to Eli! He has no energy to control his wicked house, and therefore has no discernment in administering reproof outside.

Faith may wait and weep, but it has its joys later on, and in Hannah's song of praise we get fresh encouragement to pray and wait. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." This remains ever true, for the individual saint and for the Lord's people at any time, and more particularly is it applicable to the remnant in the latter days who will in affliction stay themselves upon the Lord.

This narrative of Hannah gives us a glimpse of what may not have been entirely uncommon among the people, while the mass was in a state of declension. There were always, even in the darkest days, the Lord's "hidden ones," the salt of the earth who preserved the mass from utter corruption for a time at least. It is a comfort to think of this, and to remember that there is at the present time also, a remnant whose heart is turned to the Lord.

But this remnant was not among the official class. The leaders were either too weak or corrupt to help the people. There could be no relief through the ordinary channels, and God must therefore come in by a new way. Samuel, the child of this faith of the remnant, is the first of the prophets.

The prophet was God's special means of communication with the people when the ordinary means had failed. This explains why the message was largely one of sadness. God will intervene; He loves His people too much not to deal with them, but that dealing must be according to His nature and their condition. The presence therefore of the prophet tells the true condition of the people.

Hannah herself is practically a prophetess—all subsequent prophecy is foreshadowed in her song. She exults in the Lord over the conquest of her enemies; she celebrates the holiness of God and His stable purposes of mercy for His people. She rebukes the pride and arrogance of the scoffer, and rejoices in the overthrow of the mighty. The rich have been brought low and the needy lifted up. The barren has become the joyful mother of children. The Lord humbles and exalts—He is sovereign. His adversaries will be overthrown, and His King and His Christ shall be exalted.

Faith looks on ever to the end. If for a time there seem to be partial recovery, still faith does not rest until God can rest. Thus the prophets in a certain sense were not reformers. They accepted and rejoiced in a true turning to God, but they were not deceived by appearances. All reform was but partial and temporary, to be succeeded by still greater darkness. All things wait the coming of the King. He is the desire of all nations, and all who are awakened to see the true condition of the world and of the professed people of God, know there is no hope but in the coming of the Lord.

So too in the history of the individual, whether for salvation or deliverance, there is no expectation from

the natural man. The eye of faith is turned from all human excellence to the Christ of God. What peace of soul, what Hannah-like exultation of spirit there is, when He is the object ! Christ alone the Saviour ; Christ alone the One in whom is deliverance from the power of sin.

But this complete setting aside of the flesh in all its forms by Hannah, shows at once her own deliverance and the bondage of the mass of the nation by whom she was surrounded. The people's condition was the very opposite of hers, and their confidence and expectation was in man. In this negative way, then, we may learn the true state of the people,—a state of ease and self-sufficiency on the part of many, of more or less open enmity to God, and a weak, helpless sense of need on the part of those partially aroused to the true condition of things.

The state was similar, under altered circumstances, in the days just preceding our Lord's advent. Then too there was a feeble remnant which stayed itself upon God, and a self-satisfied, hypocritical clan of rulers, who led the people as they wished. Then, too, faith waited for divine consolation, and was rewarded with a sight of the wondrous Babe of whose coming Hannah's song spoke. She could well have mingled her praises with those of Mary. But how few felt the need which had been satisfied in those few who had turned entirely from themselves to God and His remedy.

*To be continued.)*

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# KING SAUL :

## THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

### Chapter i.

#### THE STATE OF THE PEOPLE.

*Continued from page 324.*

**R**ETURNING for a little, we must look at the state of the people as exemplified in that of the priests, for as the Scripture shows, the one corresponds to the other. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people *love* to have it so" (Jer. v. 31). Here we see the false prophets, claiming to reveal God's mind, and the priests bearing rule by this. But such a state would be impossible were the people not willing. The people, if only outwardly connected with God, are glad to have a carnal priesthood. So in the history of the professing church, with the awful iniquity of the priests, we must remember that it was but the reflection of the state of a carnal people; in name only the people of God. No doubt a godly priest would do much to check the abounding evil of the people, and a godless one would accelerate their decline. Hence, the solemn responsibility of those in such a place. But the point of importance to remember is that a people away from God make possible a wicked priesthood, as the latter intensifies the alienation of the people.

But what a picture of reckless blasphemy and grossest wickedness have we in these priests. One bears the honored name of a faithful predecessor and relative—Phinehas, "the mouth of brass." The name is suggestive of what he was, an unyielding witness for God in a day of apostasy and corruption,

who by his faithfulness wrought righteousness, stayed the plague and obtained "an everlasting priesthood," as type of the Priest who one day will put down all evil and maintain abiding relationship between God and His people (Num. xxv. 7-13). With this one, however, nothing remains but the name. Is it not suggestive also that Eli was not a descendent of Phinehas, but of Ithamar, the other son of Aaron? So that at this time, for some reason, the proper line of descent had not been observed, which in itself may indicate the disordered condition of everything. For Phinehas had been promised an abiding priesthood. "A mouth of brass" indeed had this younger Phinehas, but not on God's behalf, as a faithful witness for Him. Rather, he hardened himself against God, and would be one of those who would say, "Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?"

Hophni, too, while there is no historical connection with his name, seems to answer to it only in an evil way. "My hands," seems to be the meaning, which some have thought to suggest "fighter." But the root with which it is connected is used for describing the hands as capable of holding, rather than of striking. Very noticeably it is applied to the priest entering the holiest on the day of atonement, "with his hands full of sweet incense" (Lev. xvi. 12). It would thus be a good priestly name, and fitting companion for Phinehas. "Hands full" of incense and an unyielding testimony. Alas, the hands of Hophni were full, but not of the materials of praise. They were filled with ill-gotten gain and the fat of the Lord's offerings appropriated to his own use. The sin of these men was twofold, the one resulting

from the other. In the judgment of the world they would not have seemed equally heinous. They were guilty of sacrilege and of gross immorality, the latter a fitting consequence of the former.

And is not this always the case? Where God is displaced, His service despised, is not the relation between man and man also corrupted? The unspeakable corruption described in the early part of Romans is the direct result of man's turning from God. So here. The priests will have their own part out of the sacrifice—not that in mercy provided for them in the law of God, but of the best, and of that which belonged to Him alone. When the worshipers, with some remains of a tender conscience, would plead that God have His part first, the rough answer and threatened violence was all the satisfaction they could get. Thus the Lord's offering was despised, and the sin of the priests was "very great before the Lord."

If there is one form of sin more abhorrent than another, and which will bring more fearful punishment, it is that which disports itself in the presence of holy things. This is why religious corruption is the worst. The conscience is seared, and God's holy name is dragged into the most unholy associations. Will He allow it? Ah, He will no more allow it in a formal, Christless church than He would in a formal Israel. Men despised holy things, because of their abuse by the priests. And is it not true, not only in Rome past and present, but in the professing church to-day, that the world despises divine things because those who should be "holy priests," do not give God the chief place in their professed service of Him? When people cease to fear before God, when they

see in His ministers mere selfish disregard of God's will, we have apostasy. It is not extravagant to say that such is largely the condition in Christendom to-day. The Lord's offering is despised.

Eli hears of all his sons' wickedness and calls them to account. His words are strong and good. But of what avail are good and strong words when the strong arm of judgment should fall? The law provided the penalty for such sacrilege as this, in death. Why did not Eli show himself to be truly zealous for the Lord's honor? Ah, words, mere words no matter how strong are worse than guilty complicity. Worse, for the man who utters them knows the evil and goes on with it.

There is solemn instruction in this. It is not enough to see the wrong of a thing, or even to bear witness against it. *Action* is necessary. This is why so many—Lot like—fret and talk against evil and find no relief or help. Action must be taken, either by inflicting true discipline upon the evil-doer, or, if this be impossible, by separation from a state of things which makes it impossible. Otherwise men will be engulfed in the judgment of the very thing against which they so loudly declaim.

This may seem harsh, but it is in accord with the witness of the man of God who is sent to Eli. He associates Eli with his sons: "wherefore kick *ye* at My sacrifice and at My offering . . . and honorest thy sons above Me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel My people!" Not one word of commendation for his own faithfulness, or personal piety. "Them that honor Me, I will honor." And so Eli and his house go down in a common dishonor, branded with the common shame



of having despised the Lord. Would that the lesson of this could be fully learned. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ *depart* from iniquity."

It is refreshing and yet most sad to think of the child Samuel growing up in an atmosphere like this. Refreshing, for the Lord kept him inviolate amidst "the obscene tumult which raged all around;" but sad that one so tender should not only witness, but be obliged to witness against this awful state of things. "But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod." "And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the Lord, and also with men." "And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli" (1 Sam. ii. 18, 26; iii. 1). The mention of the ephod, the priestly garment, would suggest that on a little child had fallen the only spotless robe in the priesthood. He represents, as we might say, for the time being, the house of Aaron, fallen into ruins in the hands of Eli and his sons. The child grew on and ministered to the Lord before Eli.

Be he but a child, no one who is truly before God will be long without a message from God. So Samuel gets his first revelation from the One till then but dimly known by him. Poor Eli! eyesight has well nigh gone, as well as faithfulness, and lying down to slumber he fittingly suggests the spiritual state he was in. How hopeless, to human appearances, was the state. How unlikely that God would intervene. And yet it is just then that He does speak, and to a little child. Thrice He must call before it dawns upon Eli that the Lord is speaking to the child. He had told him to "go and lie down again," even as many careless ones would seek to quiet

those to whom God is speaking. But at last it dawns upon the old man that it is God who is there, and he dare not—weak as he may be with his sons—he would not silence that Voice, slow as he had been to obey it.

How touching and interesting is the scene which follows, familiar to every Christian child. What a moment in this child's life—God, the living God, deigns to call and to speak with him. What an honor; how lovely and yet how solemn. Well may the child say "Speak Lord for Thy servant heareth."

But what a message for a child's ears. Why should this awful story of sin and its judgment be the first words which the Lord should speak to the little one? Does it not emphasize for us the fact that the judgment of sin is as necessary for the young as the old? and that God's messenger in a world like this must hear all His word? How many plead that they are not suited for such testimony. They love to hear the sweet and precious things of the gospel, but when it comes to the solemn declarations as to the state of the Church and the path for faith, how many plead that they are not ready for such things. A child can hear and declare the message of God.

We can think of that little lad, lying open eyed till the morning, with the great awe of God's nearness upon him; and naturally shrinking from the responsibility of declaring this message to Eli. He quietly opens the doors of the Lord's house—significant act—fearing to speak of what he had heard. But Eli calls him, and, faithful to himself; if not to his sons, hears and bows to the awful sentence of God pronounced by the lips of a child.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE KEY OF THE TREASURY.

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"Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matt. vii. 7-11).

THESE words are indeed the key of an inexhaustible treasury. The apostle James draws from them a simple and irresistible conclusion (iv. 2, 3): "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts (or pleasures)." How blessed, how divine, how solemn a word is here! If we do indeed simply and without qualification, believe it, what an admonition we have as to the secret of so much poverty that our lives manifest, when all heaven's abundance is, as it were, poured out around us, with an earnest invitation to possess ourselves of it!

The words seem only too wonderful to be laid hold of as the simplicity of a child would lay hold of them: and yet here, if the lips of absolute truth are speaking to us,—if they are the words of One upon whom we rest with assurance for the fulfilment of all our "exceeding great and precious," yea, eternal, "promises,"—are we not to depend upon them, as having that fulness of meaning and literality which the Lord emphasizes in the reiteration, "*every one* that asketh receiveth," and the apostle in his application of

them, "Ye have not *because* ye ask not"? Yet can that be the whole account of the matter? We look back upon the long list of unfulfilled prayers—prayers put up, as we cannot but think, with much sincerity, often with much importunity, and ask, "can this be the whole account?" Were this the record of our own lives alone also, we might better accept it; but think of how our own history is echoed in the experiences of all around us; listen to the testimony on every side: how can we disregard this? And can we write upon all this tale of sorrow and unmet need, as the simple and sufficient account of it, "Ye have not because ye ask not"?

And yet again we hear the words of Christ to His disciples that, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you" (Matt. xvii. 20). And again, "Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, Whatsoever things ye desire; when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mk. xi. 22-24). And again, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do; that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (Jno. xiv. 13). And still again, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (Jno. xv. 7). And yet once more, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (xvi. 23, 24).

These are all familiar texts to us, no doubt; but how much in earnest is the glorious Speaker, that we should believe their testimony! And this is no wonder, surely, when we hear with what He associates such petitions and their success: the Father's glory, and for His disciples, fulness of joy. Nor is it hard to understand this: heaven opened to men after this manner and its gifts poured out without stint upon earth; the people of God enriched, and proclaiming the fulness and glory of their ascended Head. This, as the end of such a testimony, is at once an enlightenment which makes it easy to realize the importance, and so the naturalness, of it. If God is acting for the glory of that beloved Son who on earth glorified Him and still does, by the revelation of His love and righteousness,—how much will suffice to show the delight He has in the Accomplisher and His accomplishment? We stand before God as those who are the demonstration of its value, "made the" very "righteousness of God in Him," as well as to declare to the principalities and powers in heavenly places the exceeding riches of His grace. We bow our heads in adoration as we ask ourselves, What may we not expect from divine love which has displayed itself in such a place so given us?

Yet it has been asserted, and not by an enemy, but by one zealous for the authority of Scripture, that "many there are, who in intensest earnestness have claimed such promises, and have reaped bitter disappointment which has staggered their faith. It is easy," the writer goes on, "to explain the fail-

ure by reading into the promise conditions of one kind or another, though the Lord Himself made no conditions whatever." He proposes therefore another solution of the matter in this way:—

"Here the striking fact claims attention that while the record of the Pentecostal dispensation presents us with the practical counterpart of all such promises, the epistles, which unfold the doctrine of the present dispensation, and describe the life which befits that doctrine,—the life of faith,—inculcate thoughts about prayer which are essentially different, and which are entirely in accord with the actual experience of spiritual Christians.

"Some perhaps may urge that while the earlier Gospels may be thus explained, St. John cannot be treated in this way. I can in reply but plead with the thoughtful reader to consider whether every word addressed to the apostles is intended to apply to believers at all times. Take Jno. xiv. 12 as a test of this. Is every believer to be endowed with miraculous powers equal to, or greater than those exercised by the Lord Himself? We are prepared at once to limit the scope of such words: is it so clear, then, that the words which immediately follow are of universal application? We have the fact, I repeat, that both these promises were proved to be true in the Pentecostal dispensation, and that neither has been proved to be true in the Christian Church. So also of chapter xv. 16, and of xvi. 23, etc.

"But it will be asked, Is not the promise explicitly repeated in St. John's first epistle (1 John iii. 22 and v. 14, 15)? I think not. It seems to me that the apostles were *in a special sense* empowered both to act and to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus, where-

as the Christian should bow in the presence of the words, 'according to His will.' As dean Alford remarks, 'If we knew His will thoroughly, and submitted to it heartily, it would be impossible to ask anything, for the spirit or for the body, which He should not hear and perform. And it is this ideal state, as always, which the apostle has in view.' But the Christian too commonly makes his own longings, or his supposed interests, and not the Divine will, the basis of his prayer; he goes on to persuade himself that his requests will be granted; he then regards this 'faith' as a pledge that he has been heard; and finally, when the issue belies his confident hopes, he gives way to bitterness and unbelief. True faith is always prepared for a refusal. Some, we read, 'through faith,' 'obtained promises;' but no less 'through faith,' 'others were tortured, not accepting deliverance.' '\*

I have quoted so much because of the great interest attaching to this subject; and because the quotation also furnishes us with most of the points to be considered. The discussion of them will involve all or nearly all, that I have in mind to say with regard to it.

Now, in the first place, what Dr. Anderson cites from the late dean of Canterbury is undoubtedly the truth, and may be accepted heartily. The apostle has certainly in view an ideal state, and one below which we may be indefinitely; while nevertheless the attainment of it is to be our aim, and capable of being reached with regard to the matter of our prayers indefinitely also. We can hardly suppose that in

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\* "The Silence of God," by R. Anderson, App. 187-189.

the Lord's words, "Ye shall ask what ye will," He meant that His disciples were empowered to set aside God's will in favor of their own. An apostle could here have no advantage (if it were an advantage) beyond the least of all that have ever followed Him. And His connected condition, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you," remind us plainly of this. It is only as Christ's words have place in us that we are capable of effectual prayer: and such conditions necessarily underlie all promises of this kind, whether they are expressed or not. They are fundamental in order to blessing; and no one with one right thought could desire it otherwise. As the Lord reasons with us in the passage with which we began, it is to a Father that we come, and that which is our fullest encouragement in coming, and the guarantee of abundant answer to our prayers, is that also which guards from abuse of privilege,—guards, therefore, our own best interests. Our Father will give *good* gifts to them that ask Him: could any other be counted or coveted as gifts at all? No distinctions to be made between any imaginary Pentecostal dispensation differing from the present need to be insisted on, therefore, to explain what is said to stumble so many. God never meant to put the reins of His own government into the hands of even the apostles; and Pentecostal times were not different in this respect. The need of miracles to call men to give heed to heaven's new proclamation has passed: no earthly wealth was ever so trumpeted abroad as the riches of God's grace have been; and it is no wonder if with the need of them, the miracles themselves have passed away. No paralytic need now arise and take up his bed to make men know that the



Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins; and if he did, it would scarcely add an appreciable particle of evidence to that which, through all the progress of the centuries, has been, in fact, piling itself mountains high. For the unbelief of the *heart*, alas, miracles are no cure; and that is all that hinders the knowledge of the glory of the Lord even now covering the earth as the waters cover the sea. This accounts for a wide difference, as to the display of power, between Pentecostal times and our own,—a display which none with intelligence of His Lord's will could seek or expect to revive now. What has been foretold as to the closing days of Christianity as a dispensation is rather the revival of *Satan's* power; and this is really what we are beginning to see in the marvels of spiritism and kindred things. But the limit which in this way we may find to the "all things whatsoever ye shall ask," and which is only part of that which has been already freely acknowledged, is no reason for taking away from us all promises of this nature, and relegating them either to past or to the future, in the manner attempted here.

We may concede also "that the apostles were empowered *in a special sense* to act in the Name of the Lord Jesus," if by that is meant that they had authority to act in a certain way. That, of course, is implied in the fact that they were apostles. Nevertheless that does not in the least interfere with the fact on the other side, that we are to "do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus," as an apostle himself teaches the Colossians (chap. iii. 17). Where we are taught that the apostles had any special right to "pray in His Name," I have not found; and I think no one can

produce the passage. An official place, God-given *among men*, we must all acknowledge to be theirs: but as approaching *God*, Scripture does not teach us that apostleship conferred any special rights: it belonged to another sphere; and there all Christians as such are of a holy priesthood,—their one High-priest is Christ alone.

In fact, no Gospel is so unofficial as that of John, which furnishes us with the passages which speak of prayer in the name of Jesus. The very word "apostle" cannot be found in it. Christians would not readily resign, it may be hoped, their interest in these precious promises; and, instead of finding in that ideal state of knowledge which, according to dean Alford, they imply, a deterrent from putting in their claim to them, should surely recognize with joy and gratitude that God in them is calling them to a higher elevation and a nearer intimacy than they have yet perhaps even imagined possible. He has opened all His heart to us. And this privilege of praying in the Name of Jesus imports for us, not a mere asking for His sake, but God's identification of His people with Himself—with all the value that this Name has for Him. We represent Him; and His Spirit given to us is the practical qualification to represent Him. We are to do in His Name whatsoever we do, as those for whom their own wills are ended; their interests in His omnipotent Hand,—men who have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free; but Christ is all, and in all (Col. iii. 10, 11). How complete is this change

of view! What a clearing of spiritual sight for those who have gained it!

Now to pray in His Name, how different is it from the mere dependence upon the efficacy of His atonement for our acceptance, the putting His Name in this way at the end of our prayers. It is the taking a place which at once declares what is to be the character of our petitions. It does not by any means rule out the personal element: on the contrary it opens before us a wondrous inheritance into which we are invited already by faith to enter, and make it our own. Here we may covet—covet—covet; and the more we do so, the more pleasing shall we be to God our Father, whose glorious gift to us it is. Here is a sphere in which prayer will never be denied, if it be the prayer of the whole—and not the half-hearted. Here are precious harvests to be reaped, of which yet the indifferent shall and can know nothing. While on the earth there are precious harvests too, and still spiritual harvests, in which the fruit of labor shall abide with us forever; when the very scene of man's gaudiest achievements in art, in science, in the various conquest of a world put under him, but in which he knows little more than a great Babylon which he has builded, is passed away like a shrivelled scroll in the fire of God's anger!

But as fellow-laborers under God, there are still limits to successful prayer. Nor is it because the thing prayed for is in a certain sense undoubtedly according to His mind, that we can necessarily pray with full expectation of answer. There was with Paul, as we know, a heart that yearned after the salvation of Israel; yet the voice of the Lord sent him out from among them with the assurance, "They will

not hearken to thy testimony concerning Me." And if all Christians were to unite in heart and voice to Him who willeth not that any should perish, for the salvation of the world *en masse*, who could rightly expect answer to such a prayer? The word of God has barred it in the emphatic statement as to the Spirit of God, that "the world cannot receive Him" (John xiv. 17).

These are words absolutely plain, surely; but can we then wonder if we find the same principle applying in other relations? If in the things which seem most manifestly according to the character of God we may yet need the check of His ever perfect will, how evident it is that we may much more need it in things of more doubtful nature. Here we are privileged still to make our requests to God, and never in vain; though the answer may be like that of the apostle's for the removal of the thorn in the flesh, in a very different way from that which we anticipated. Can we never, then, rise to that perfect certainty with regard to these which is implied in the exhortation, to believe that we receive them and we shall have them? Most surely we can; but there is no way to this but by drawing near enough to God to gain such assurance. Here is the high place in which we ought to dwell; nor can we expect to attain it when sought temporarily under the pressure of some present need, while content in general with a greater distance. Our weakness may indeed claim His strength, our ignorance His wisdom to enlighten us, but not our waywardness ability to use and cast Him off again,—to claim His gifts, with the best and highest of all unvalued. In the Christian place, where the

Lamb is the light and glory, and in His light all is seen, what may we not attain ?

Beloved reader, how far do you and I know the reality of praying in His Name ?

F. W. G.

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## THE OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS.

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WITH many the associations of Christmas are suggestive of childhood's joys and of tender reminiscence of scenes of delight in the home circle. In this spirit it is perhaps still observed socially in the family, for the children's sake, by some who are aware that the day itself, in its religious claim and character, has no foundation in Scripture. The question that presents itself therefore is: Can the day be observed innocently in this social way, apart from its false religious character ?

It is said that the day celebrated as Christmas, was once the day of a wicked heathen feast called *Saturnalia*; and the season suggests the winter solstice as the occasion of the feast—the period of daylight being about to increase. The day being handed down as a Christian festival, and its name, "Christ - Mass," tells the rest. A corrupt church, a corrupt ritualistic sentiment, introducing a novelty among many other novelties, to please—not God, but men. This consideration, of course, is a very serious one, and calls to mind a fertile source of shame and sorrow to the Church: self-will at work—human choice in place of obedience; as among the Galatians, giving occasion for the rebuke, "Ye observe days and months and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain."

Let us consider the serious nature of this departure from simplicity. It is that setting aside God's word which, as an evil principle at work, has wrought confusion and corruption far and wide in the Church's history, as of old it wrought the ruin of Israel.

This, then, is the meaning of the day—the establishment of a religious custom, of a sacred day without any command from God. If we do this, where shall we stop? There is no stopping place; and the evil result we have referred to in the previous paragraph.

What, then, is the obligation of the faithful Christian? Should he not consider the observance of the day as a dishonor to the Lord, being disobedience, and therefore opening the door to further departures and dangers, as we have seen? And as to observing it socially with the children in the home circle, ignoring its origin and ecclesiastical claims, can this be done if we have at heart the things that are Christ's? Can we do it without giving up our character as warriors—leaving to others more faithful than ourselves to fight the Lord's battles and defend the truth? Would it not be a compromise as to the truth, a provision for self indulgence, and a dangerous allowance of the enemy within our borders? The very notice that may be taken of a refusal to observe the day becomes a testimony to the truth, both to people without and to the children at home. And the absence of such testimony tends to perpetuate indifference to an evil which the day represents.

The day is enjoyed with zest by the world in common with the Church, and this is a sufficient warning to us. It is one of the wiles of the devil, against which we need to take to ourselves the "whole armor

of God." It is a victory of Satan if he can get our hearts attached to a thing that is unscriptural and worldly in its origin and character. Such an attachment must enfeeble us in the conflict for the enjoyment of our Canaan possessions, and mar the clearness of testimony in the family that should direct the children in the way of reverence for God's word and uncompromising obedience.

"The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it" (Prov. x. 22).

E. S. L.

### HYMN.

THE bands of death Thou brokest,  
 Almighty Saviour Thou,  
 And to Thy rest hast brought us;  
 No more at distance now.

Thou hast Thy work completed  
 Which was for us performed;  
 Thy sufferings are ended,  
 And our heart's fear disarmed.

In Thee to us is given  
 Salvation ever sure;  
 Thyself our precious portion,  
 Our life that shall endure.

And by the Spirit guided  
 Thy yoke is light to bear;  
 Thou hast the way made ready,  
 Dost go before us there.

Who can Thy mercy fathom,  
 Who what Thy love has wrought!  
 To Thee, while on our journey,  
 Let constant thanks be brought.

*(From the German.)*

## BRIEF BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

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### VIII. THE BELIEVER'S POSITION AND CONDITION.

**I**T is important to a correct understanding of Scripture as well as to peace and rest of soul to the child of God, to see clearly the distinction between his position, or righteous standing before God, and his earthly walk. The former is unalterable, unchanging, while the second may be, and alas is, variable.

1. Position, before God, is alone by the finished atoning work of Christ, and from the moment He is appropriated by faith, is permanent and eternal. Faith alone is the means of obtaining this priceless boon of God's grace, and no works of the sinner, or deeds of the believer, can add or aid in any way to obtaining it, or keeping it when once obtained. The title to it is Christ, and it is the free gift of God's grace as fully to the youngest, weakest, most ignorant babe in Christ, as to the oldest, strongest, most learned saint on earth.

It is a position of new relationship.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He the power (right, privilege) to become the *sons of God*, even to them that believe on His name" (John i. 12).

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26; see also 1 John iii. 2; v. 1).

Joint heirship with Christ.

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17).

Royalty and nearness.

"Unto Him that loved (loveth) us, and washed us



from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father" (Rev. i. 5, 6).

Complete forgiveness, justification, and peace.

"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you 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).

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. i).

These and many more blessings as to position before God are the unvarying portion of the believer and are dependent upon Christ alone.

See also 1 John v. 1; 1 Pet. i. 4, 5; Eph. i. 11; ii. 13; i. 13; v. 30; i. 3; Heb. x. 19; 1 Cor. vi. 19; John vi. 47.

2. This position is unchangeable and forever.

Every one of these gracious blessings is the portion of every child of God, the moment such by faith receives, or believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and is entirely apart from religiousness, character, ordinance, or prayer of the recipient either before or after such faith displayed.

Being then dependent upon Christ's work, they must be the permanent possession of all to whom conferred, for "whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God doeth it, that men should fear before Him" (Eccl. iii. 14).

Hear the words of the Lord Jesus:

"I *give* unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My

hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (John x. 28, 29).

"And ye are complete in Him" (Col. ii. 10).

"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost (forevermore, margin) that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25).

"For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14).

"Clean every whit" (John xiii. 10), "no condemnation" (Rom. viii. 1; John iii. 18, 36). "Sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30). Thus backsliding Peter could say, "Kept by the power of God" (1 Pet. i. 5; see also Jude 24; Eph. v. 25-27 etc.).

3. A believer's condition may be far below his exalted position and yet not affect it.

This is, alas, only too true. The church at Corinth were "sanctified in Christ and called saints" (1 Cor. i. 2), and yet it is only necessary to read through the epistle to discover the truth of this.

The apostle writes of them,

"But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11), and yet he speaks of them as "carnal" (iii. 1-3), "puffed up" (iv. 18), and resorting to law (vi. 7). A striking evidence of this is seen in the apostle Peter; compare carefully Matt. xvi. 17 with ver. 23. And of the same Corinthians even while in the above state it is written, that their body was "the temple of the Holy Ghost" and they were not their own but God's; see 1 Cor. vi. 19 20.

4. The effect of this should be a holy obedient walk.

It should not for a moment be thought that because all this is by the free undeserved favor of God, that a believer has no responsibility consequent upon upon it, or may walk loosely, or in self-will; far from it, God in grace having placed one in such a position requires he should walk as becometh the dignity of the same.

To the same Corinthians the apostle writes,

"The love of Christ constraineth us" . . . because "He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15).

"Be ye therefore followers (imitators) of God, as dear children," "walk in love," "fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks. . . . For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph. v. 1-8).

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pet. i. 14, 15).

"For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (1 Pet. iv. 3).

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and

pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet. ii. 11).

"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" Col. ii. 20).

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 1, 5; see also Eph. iv. 17-32; vi. 1-9; Phil. ii. 3, 12-16; iv. 5-9; Col. iii. 1; iv. 6; 1 Thess. v. 12-22).

"And the very God of peace, sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 23).

B. W. J.

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## THE HOUSEHOLD.

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**I**F it was of sovereign grace that Abraham was called out of his heathen state and made to know the living and true God; it was no less of that grace to be one born in his house, for Abraham was one of whom God could say: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."

To *know God* was no small matter now to Abraham; he appreciated it, he found his delight in it, and to communicate it to his house would be a moral necessity in his soul, and thus subject it to that God to whom to be subject is the height of man's blessing and honor.

To be born, therefore, in such a man's house is but

a part of the sovereign grace that called and separated him from his heathen state and position.

What a high and blessed, as also responsible position, therefore, is that of a Christian at the head of his household—God's means of perpetuating the knowledge of Himself in a world where everything tends to destroy it. Alas, for the Christian who fails to realize this, and who allows his house to drift at will. Woe also to the child who fails to recognize the grace of God in having been born in a Christian household, where God's character was manifested, the truth daily taught and practiced, and everything ordered to maintain what God loves and delights in.

As Abraham's children got more and more remote from him, they lost more and more the knowledge of God, until finally God Himself—the God whom Abraham had so readily recognized, and adoringly entertained, when He passed by his tent door—visiting them in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ, was unrecognized, hated, and cast out by them. Their punishment is not small, but how much greater must become the punishment of those who sin against greater light and blessing.

Oh, that every Christian man, in the energy of the Spirit of God, would shake off all this guilty indifference, this unholy pursuit after earthly goods, this dreadful idleness of soul, which cannot trouble itself with the pains of household government; this self-will, which forbids the government of self; and, looking at himself *and all his house* in the light of the glory where our Lord is now, which is soon to be manifested and we taken into it, take up his task in

faith, and give honor to the God who has shown us such marvelous grace and love.

Much failure in detail will even such a man of God have to confess as he goes; but as Abraham will yet behold the glorious ending of his faith in his house when Israel is in her glory, so will every man who has treasured up in his heart the promises of God, and, in faith, turned them into practice.

P.J.L.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 24.—What is the New Testament teaching as to the Lord's day? I have been much exercised as well as grieved to see the carelessness of many as to that day, who might be expected to know better. Some have quoted Rom. xiv. 5: "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike." They have said this provides for entire liberty on the Lord's day. Is this correct?

ANS.—Our brother's question, not the only one on the same subject received of late, touches upon a most dangerous error, and a very common failure among the people of God. In the first place, the scripture adduced from Romans has nothing to do with the subject, but refers to the observance of Jewish days and ordinances, and is similar to the passage in Col. ii. 16, 17. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. i. 10), shows that the day is one of spiritual and not carnal observance. But does the fact that we are not under law but under grace give us license to live in carelessness? Supposing even that it were not contrary to the New Testament, have we not a responsibility to give no occasion of stumbling to the world? What does the world think of a Christian who engages in unnecessary labor on the Lord's day? What is the effect upon a man's own family? Further, what can be said of the spiritual state of one who, with all the week for secular work, takes the precious hours of the Lord's day for his own use? Surely there is more than enough to fill and occupy the few hours of that day of privilege. We meet to remember and to worship our Lord, and again to preach His precious gospel, and to teach the young. There are sick or needy ones to be visited, and a few precious hours to be devoted to reading and meditation. Oh, the

olly of wasting such a day with temporal labor. Let the beloved people of God turn from the thought with abhorrence. We are persuaded that it is one of the signs of the latter day apostasy. God is despised, His word neglected, and the day of our Lord's resurrection made a time of carnal enjoyment or worldly business! May we be aroused as to this, and make conscience before God of our conduct on this day.

QUES. 25.—Please explain Isaiah xxviii. 23-29.

ANS.—The connection shows that the prophet is pronouncing God's judgment upon both Ephraim and Judah. He foretells the conflicts of the last days—the coming of the overflowing scourge, the Assyrian, or king of the north; the alliance with the Beast, or head of the western empire, in order to ward off the attack; and the end in overthrow and death for those who thus make lies their refuge. Then God tells of His provision in the "tried corner stone," Christ, and of the security of those who believe in Him. It will thus be seen that the scene is laid in the last days, and the purposes of God will be fulfilled in His "strange work" of judgment. In this connection he asks, Is it always plowing time? After the land is plowed, is not the seed sown—each in its appointed way and place? Then later comes the threshing-time. So with His people: God is longsuffering, but He will not always be preparing the soil. Nay, He has plowed His people and cast in the seed of His truth. Then comes the harvest and threshing time when He will beat out and thresh—the time of judgment. All will be done in divine wisdom and suitability. But judgment will surely come.

This principle can also doubtless be applied in other connections. Everything is to be done in due proportion. In preaching the gospel, we are to plow the ground and then cast in the seed. Souls are to be convicted of sin and then the precious gospel has a place in which to take root. Then comes too the time of discrimination when souls are set free from the chaff of unreality and manifested as precious grain. But this is only a secondary application of the figure.

QUES. 26.—Referring to the article in the October number on Verbal Inspiration, where it is shown that if all the periods of captivity during the time of the Judges were added together, it would be found that exactly this number of years was to be deducted from the entire period from the deliverance out of Egypt till

the building of the temple. The lesson was that God cannot use lost time, spent in captivity to evil. But there is another captivity of eighteen years which was omitted, and which seems to overthrow the teaching. Judges x. 6-9 was not included. What is the reason for this?

ANS.—This has been noticed before, and the answer given, which seems probable, that this captivity was not a complete one. They were oppressed by many enemies, but we are told they were "sore distressed." For instance, the Ammonites only threatened, had not completely taken possession. We see that Jephthah prevented them from going further. Thus the lesson remains, and we see God's desire to count as much as He can. It might be well to mention that another explanation is that these periods of oppression were not necessarily at different times, but some of them may have occurred at the same time in different parts of the nation. Of one thing we may be certain. God's chronology, as all else, will be found to be absolutely correct, and apparent contradictions are not really that.

QUES. 27.—What are the four fasts referred to in Zechariah viii. 19?

ANS.—They could not be regular set times such as the day of Atonement, for these were never abrogated. The whole connection would show that they were special commemorative fasts connected with the captivity. We find these dates given in Jeremiah—

The fourth month, Jerusalem was taken (Jer. lii. 6).

The fifth month, the temple was burned (Jer. lii. 12, 13).

The seventh month, Gedaliah was slain by Ishmael, and the remnant scattered to Egypt (Jer xli. 1, etc.)

The tenth month, the siege of Jerusalem began (Jer. lii. 4).

These would seem clearly to be the events commemorated by the fasts referred to, and therefore in the restoration they would be changed to feasts.

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